

# Sea Stories<sup>★</sup>

STREET  
AND  
SMITH  
PUBLICATION

AUG. 1929

25¢

30¢ IN CANADA

POUNDRING BRASS

by  
Thomas H. Raddall



H. C. [Signature]

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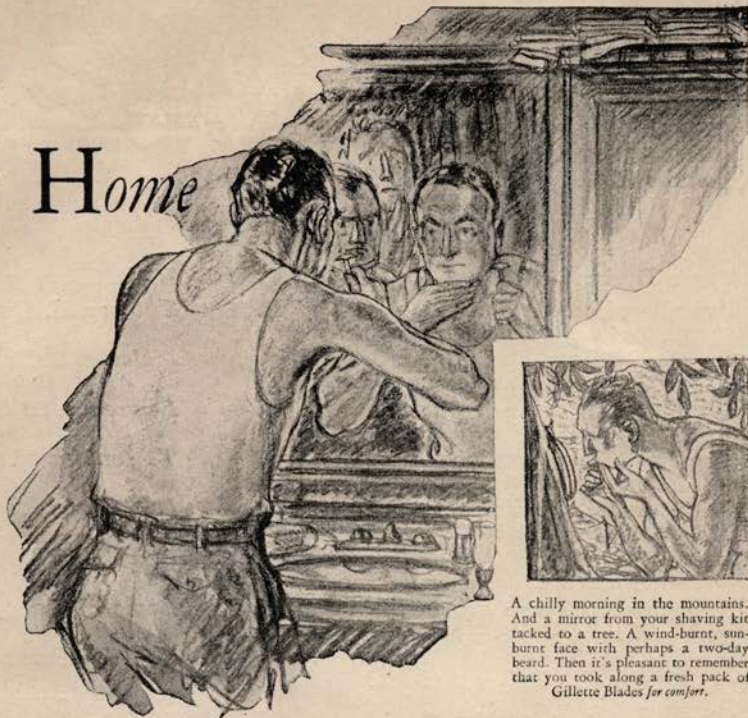
J-28



# Away from Home



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## Gillette





# Sea Stories

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AUGUST, 1929

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**CHARLES HOUSTON**

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mind the vision of his girl back home who would some day be the first to cross the bridge.

And then another girl came out of nowhere, a girl dressed in trousers and a flannel shirt like a boy's, and before the young engineer could stop her, she had swung down the lone cable above the rushing waters and was the first of her sex across.

From this thrilling start the book plunges the reader into a maelstrom of adventure. There are those who would destroy the engineer's lifework and come dangerously near doing it. But always he has for ally that girl whom he almost hated at first, the flaming beauty who swung down the cable.

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# Forhan's for the gums



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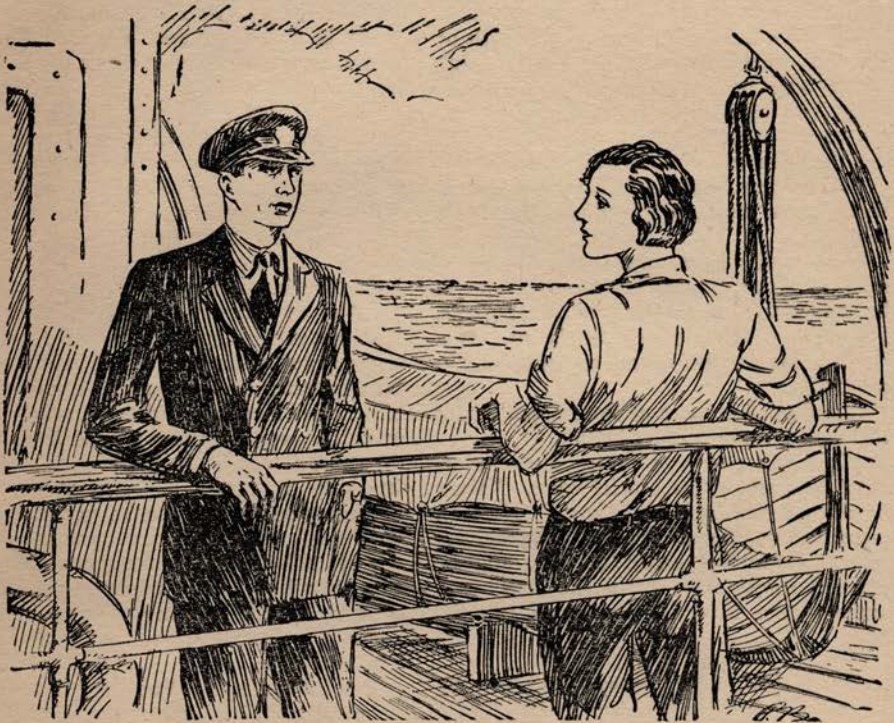
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# Pounding Brass

By Thomas H. Raddall



The radio key appeals to more than the auditory sense.

**B**ILL KEMPTON'S fingers strayed slowly over the dials, tuning in and out, for night had fallen on the North Atlantic and the confused radio voices of the ocean were booming in with the darkness. The phones that lay hot and heavy on his oppressed ears were filled with sound. The high keening of American ships with their quenched sparks, the low metallic drone of British tramps with their harsh rotaries, clear bugle notes from the Canadian national ships with their easily recognized synchronized rotaries, soft *pop-pop-pop-ping* of the Germans with their Telefunksens. Japs, bound to and from the Nippon Yusen Kaisha piers at New York, hissing away in their own queer code, and sounding—Bill soliloquized—like two Christian ops on a drunk. Frenchmen,

easily distinguished by their characteristic A's and E's and the funny space between the first two dots of their F's. The fast and smooth stream of snappy dots and dashes that flowed from brass keys under experienced hands; the halting stuff, spattered with erasures and repeats that betrayed the ham on his first trip.

Ships that had been loud by daylight were now an offense in Bill's eardrums, and myriad others, inaudible at tea time, were coming in with the darkness like an approaching fife-and-drum band or a host of bullfrogs in a swamp. Out on the blue water the six-hundred-meter wave length is a pandemonium after nightfall.

There was a step on the deck outside the cabin and the door opened behind him. "Old Foghorn," muttered Bill irreverently, "comin' for the time sig," and slid

a phone off one ear in readiness for the skipper's, "Evenin', 'Sparks.'"

There seemed to be some hesitation in the doorway, which was strange, for there was nothing hesitant about Foghorn Houston. Stranger still was the trim ankle in gray silk that appeared over the weatherboard. An ankle followed by a length of slim leg very different from the skipper's baggy blue one, and, since the weatherboard was high, by a round and captivating knee. A girl stood in the cabin, closing the door carefully behind her.

"Passengers," began Bill in his official voice, "are never allowed in the radio cabin."

"Any messages for transmission," mimicked the lady astonishingly, "should be handed to the purser. Well, Mr. Sparks, I don't like your fat old lady's man of a purser, so I'm delivering my message in person."

She flipped a sheet of note paper under the eyes of the annoyed Bill.

"This will cost you pretty high," muttered Bill, still in the official voice. "Must be all of a hundred words in it." He took his pencil and began to count. The address struck a familiar chord in him, and he skipped suspiciously from the street and number of a Miss Felicia Corning to the text.

Having wonderful trip home after hectic tour Yurruup. Doing Paris with mixed party schoolma'ams more excitement than you'd think. Wireless man this boat Bill Kempton too stuck up recognize me account I was in pigtails when he went away sea. Better looking than used be but less fond girls. Almost crab. All girls in party writing steamship company complain as understood thing all ship officers flirt. Love.  
Pops.

"So," grinned Bill, "you are little Polly Falkham of the pigtails. How you have growed! I didn't know you, honest."

"Miss Falkham, please," said the lady coldly, "and I'd like that message sent right away."

The grin faded from Bill's face. "What—that?"

"That." She drew herself up to her slim height and tapped her foot impatiently. "And P. D. Q., or whatever the correct radio term is."

He threw the sheet down on the table. "I will not," he said flatly. "And why?" he snorted. "Because it's a fool message, that's why."

"Is that the reason?" she asked coldly. "Or is it because some of your friends on other ships might hear it going through and have a laugh at your expense?"

He flushed to the back of his neck and gazed at her with surprised eyes. "Right you are, Pol—Miss Falkham, ma'am. Too many birds on this man's ocean know me and my mitt. They'd all jump to their keys and kid me."

"Mitt?" asked the girl.

"My hand. More difference in the way two men make dots and dashes on a brass key than there is in their thumbprints. After you've been at this game a while, kid—that is, Miss Falkham—you recognize a man by his sending style as you would by his handwriting."

"And of course," her tone was caustic, "you are the famous 'Thirty-per' Kempton, and not to be laughed at. Considered the best operator in the service, *n'est-ce pas?* Thirty-per Kempton, who can send Morse at thirty words a minute and keep it up till the cows come home. Stuck on your itty-bitty reputation, *n'est-ce pas?* Just because you've had twelve years' experience and the Lord gave you a rubber wrist! All the green young operators like this poor little Mr. Turpin of yours look up to you as a little tin god, *n'est-ce pas?*"

"So," uttered Bill grimly, "that's where you got it."

She bit her lip. "You needn't kick him in his nice little blue trousers, Mr. Thirty-per. I wormed it out of him. Thinks you're the first and last thing that ever happened. Once I got him started, the rest was easy."

He shifted comfortlessly in the chair. "No need to rub in that Thirty-per stuff, Polly, ma'am. They pinned it on me when thirty a minute on a heavy brass key was the frozen limit. Kinda proud of it, I admit. Nowadays they're gettin' so they don't pound brass at all. They're usin' bugs—cute little keys that make your dots for you—and there's plenty men hittin' thirty. And at that"—a sly dig this—"I'm no prouder of my title than you are of this funny 'nessy-pah' you picked up in Paris."

"Picked up, indeed!" snapped the lady pettishly. "I s'pose you never heard of schoolma'ams being familiar with the French language."

"Where is the sister of my grandmother?" Bill was in high glee at this

fortunate change of subject. "Is it that she is under the umbrella stand of the father of the gendarme? Oh, see the pretty little horse. It is eating of the cheese of the nephew of the charcoal burner."

"Pah!" said the lady in high dudgeon. "Will you send my message?"

"I wouldn't send that," declared Bill stoutly, "if I was a ham makin' my first trip. And seein' that I'm the mighty Thirty-per——"

"Then," giving the shapely bobbed head a toss, "I shall file my message with the purser, including some additional matter that I've thought of since. And I shall mark it 'Rush.'"

He stood across the doorway with arms folded. "Have a heart, Polly."

"A heart? What do you know about my heart, Mr. 'Thirty-years-old-and-never-been-kissed'?"

"Not much," admitted Bill ruefully. "You was a leggy li'le fourteen-year-old when I left Haileypport."

"Yes. And the day you went away in your spandy new uniform with the shiny buttons I followed you down to the pier to watch your ship sail. You were my 'Prince Charming,' Mr. 'Roving Bill' Kempton, though you didn't know it. But you saw me on the pier waving my timid little hanky and you wouldn't even wave back, for fear the other officers would see. 'Fraid cat!'"

"No," Bill protested. "Honest, Polly, I didn't realize you was wavin' to me. I knew you was the little girl from across the street, and I wondered what you was doin' way down there on the dock."

"And I," pursued the lady whimsically, "went home pretending I was the 'Fayre Ladye Rosamund' and had just seen my lover off to the wars. I pretended so darn well I couldn't eat any supper and cried myself to sleep on my little bed."

"And if I know your mother," grinned Bill, "you got a stiff dose of castor oil out of the racket."

"All of which," said the lady, letting whimsey fall with a dull thud, "isn't sending my message."

"Ah, yes; the message, to be sure," sighed Bill hopelessly.

"I will tear it up, Mr. Thirty-per, on one condition."

"And that is?"

She made a disdainful motion of her

nose. "No need for yelling, sir. My condition is that you attend the masquerade ball to-morrow night in the saloon and dance with me all evening."

"Impossible!"

She wrinkled her retroussé nose again. "Possible. You're going to tell me that officers may not enter into the social life of the ship, speak only when spoken to, and all that stuff. Hooey. And likewise sauce à la pomme. You will be provided with a costume—an extremely appropriate costume—and a mask, and nobody will know you from a hole in the ground. And as all the girls think you're a woman hater, and I've a bet with 'em that I'll have your scalp in my belt within twenty-four hours, you shall be my dashing, handsome cavalier."

She struck an attitude, unfurled an imaginary fan before her face, and rolled her eyes at him over the imaginary top of it.

Bill eyed the offensive sheet of note paper. "You win," he said.

**T**HE never-to-be-forgotten costume ball on the *Stella Maris* swung swiftly into that giddy height of lilt and fun that only shipboard parties achieve. Costumes, by some deep magic of the sea, were contrived of odds and ends in the space of a few hours, revealing a collective designing genius that would have put the gesticulating modistes of Paris to a green blush. Harem beauties, hobos, sailors, male and female, a gorgeous King Charles—a masterpiece, the cloak obviously a cabin curtain, the frilly shirt and lace-edged silken breeches contrived, it was suspected, from borrowed lingerie—hitch hikers complete with packs, farmers, colored ladies with bass voices, and clowns, many clowns. One of these—and not the happiest—was William Kempton. The baggy suit covered his uniform from shoes to neck, a paper foolscap wobbled precariously on his head, and a mask cut from a black-silk stocking of Polly's secured him from recognition by the master of ceremonies—no less than the dapper little purser himself. One by one a bewildering array of young ladies was introduced to Bill, always in a discreet corner of the saloon, where he was obliged by the triumphant Polly to raise his mask for a moment and be recognized. And always, when these pouting young persons asked boldly for dances, he told

them he was booked up for the evening and danced away with Polly.

There was dense fog on deck, which proved a damper to sitting out, and the siren was blowing dismally. Otherwise the ball was a huge success right up to the crash, which everybody afterward agreed was nine twenty p. m. In the midst of a particularly lively fox trot the saloon deck slid suddenly sternward, and the motley throng sat down with more speed than dignity upon the floor. The orchestra died with a wild, discordant crash, darkies and instruments flying in all directions. A grinding shock passed along the side of the ship and abruptly ceased. To his credit, be it said that the smoking-room cut-up, a florid person with comic spectacles and a braying laugh, was the first to recover. "'Tis but the car," he uttered shakily, "rattling o'er the stony street. On with the dance, let joy be unrefined."

But the ship began to heel perceptibly before the words were out of his mouth, and the next of the smitten dancers squealed, "We're sinking!" and there was chaos.

Bill took the companionway in exactly six strides, a performance rendered easy by the sharp list of the ship. He tore off the mask as he ran—the absurd hat was on the saloon floor under the suddenly seated dancers somewhere—but the clown suit remained to make little Turpin's eyes pop as he surrendered the phones to his chief.

"What's up?" gasped Bill, running a keen eye over the log.

"Dunno," said Turpin. "We struck something on the starboard side and the engines stopped."

Thompson, the second operator, awakened rudely from a snug watch below, stepped into the cabin. "Struck an iceberg or somethin'," he announced almost cheerfully.

The squat figure of the Swede boatswain was in the doorway, an ape of a man with great hams of hands and the clear blue eyes of a surprised child. "D' errial, sir. She's foul'n' d' stays."

Bill squinted up into the foggy murk. "How d'ye know, bosc?"

"Ay bin aloft, sir. Ay allus leave a liddle slack in d' halyards—dey shrinks in wet wedder, sir—an' Ay knowed she must be afoul o' d' stays wid dis list."

"Can't you lower the aerial a few feet?

I could take in the slack o' the down leads an' keep it steady."

The ape shook its head. "D' halyards, sir; dey won't run t'rough d' blocks, way she's listin'. Snubbin' in d' blocks, sir."

Bill did some quick thinking. "She can't stay that way, bosc. Our juice will leak away into those steel stays—they're not insulated, damn 'em. There's only one wire foul'n', eh? The starb'd wire? The port wire's at the other end of a fifteen-foot spreader an' can't foul so long's the down leads are taut."

He rummaged in the tool-box and produced two pairs of pliers. "Gotta go aloft. You take the foremast, bosc. Cut away that starb'd wire, see? You, Thompson, stand by to take in the slack o' the down leads when the spreader swings."

The boatswain was in the forward rigging already, more like an ape than ever. Bill followed suit aft. It was ticklish work in the fog and darkness. The mast-heads were well out over the water, and the aerial with its several hundred feet of phosphor-bronze wire and stout fifteen-foot spruce spreaders swayed unmanageably with every lurch of the ship. By the fortunes of war the slack in the halyards was not enough to sag the spreaders beyond reach of the ratlines and by leaning perilously at the right moment they snipped the starboard wire at each end simultaneously. It coiled like a vicious spring and fell into the dark sea. The spreader canted vertically under the weight of the port wire, swayed a little, and steadied as Thompson, on the roof of the radio cabin, gathered in the slack of the down leads. The deck felt good to Thirty-per Kempton.

The little wall telephone rang. The skipper's voice. "Kempton?"

"Sir?"

"We've struck an old derelict, Kempton, I think," said the calm voice on the bridge. "Ripped our starb'd side pretty bad. Makin' a lot of water forward of the engine-room bulkhead. And—just a minute." Bill heard him talking to some one on the bridge. "Kempton? The chief says he's got a foot of water in the fire-room, so you'd better get off a distress call afore the dynamo fails. Our position is—got your pencil handy? Latitood forty-five an' ten north. Longitood forty-eight an' eight west. Yeah."

Bill leaped to the apparatus. The starter

switch snapped on and the motor generator awoke from inertia to a howl. He clipped in all the gleaming spiral of aerial inductance to compensate as far as possible for the lost starboard wire, setting the wavelength changer lever at six hundred meters. He seized the coupling handle and screwed the primary of his oscillation transformer hard up against the secondary, at which Thompson muttered admiringly, "Atta boy. Wave as broad as the ocean. Wake 'em up on every wave from three hundred meters to kingdom come."

Turpin was setting the clips of the spark gap for high power. Bill leaned across him and shoved the motor rheostat to all out, and the motor's howl became a scream. He shoved up the generator rheostat to the limit.

Thompson plucked at Turpin's sleeve. "Stand by, m'son," he grinned. "'At set's rated for two kilos an' she's gonna do five or I'm a cross-eyed pantry boy."

Bill pressed down the key for an experimental dash and dot. The watt-meter needle swung hard over against the stop, broke, and stuck there. The safety gap on the transformer arced once, a vivid violet crack of flame.

"While she cracks, she holds," said Bill, and commenced his rhythmic three dots, three dashes, three dots. *Dit-dit-dit, da-da-da, dit-dit-dit.*

SOS SOS HR SS *Stella Maris* KXGO Sink-  
ing lat. 45.10 N, long. 48.08 W Require immedi-  
ate assistance KXGO K.

He snapped the aerial switch to the receiving position. The ether fell silent with the silence of death before that mystic symbol. Some distant ships were telling others to stand by for the distress signal, with the terse QRX SOS. Somewhere a faint piping said plaintively, "WO SENT SOS QRM HR RPT PSE." An English tramp, by the sound of his spark, and a junior operator at the key, by the style of his Morse, asking "Who sent SOS? Interference here. Repeat, please."

The powerful voice of Cape Race broke in, repeating Bill's message with his high wailing spark. The piping note of Sable Island that sounded like a small brother to Cape Race repeated also. Bar Harbor caught it and passed it on in a treble whistle. The navy boys at New York called for silence with a peremptory "QST DE NAH QRT," and passed the message

again, and the bee droning of Cape May flung it south. The whole ocean stood by and strained keen ears.

"Now for the ships," muttered Bill.

Out of the silence came the tuneful pipe of a tube set. "KXGO DE MAA."

"K," snapped the key under Bill's fingers.

The tube set "K'd." "HR *Lusania* 150  
MLS ARV UR POSN 8 HRS K."

"Arrive your position eight hours, eh?" muttered Bill. "Not so good, MAA. The ol' hooker'll be under in thirty minutes by the feel of her." The *Stella Maris* was heaving and falling in the fog swell with a lumpish motion that was not good. His fingers went to the key. "MAA DE KXGO R TKS STD BI PSE."

Little Turpin, listening to the hissing crack of the spark, repeated mechanically to himself, "Received. Thanks. Stand by, please," and Thompson, the second operator, leaning across the desk, grinned and said:

"*Toujours la politesse*, Bill, m'son."

The ship lurched suddenly to her wounded side as if a bulkhead had given way somewhere. "Won't be long now," said Bill, and braced himself to meet the new angle of the table.

On the deck outside boats were being cut free of their gripes and swung clear of the blocks, ready for launching. Stewards were passing out life belts and helping people into them. Up on the heeling bridge old Foghorn Houston was directing operations in the great voice that was famous over the seven seas. To his chief officer he said in a quiet voice that was more potent, somehow, than his roar, "Get those port-side boats away, Mr. Bellamy. The ship is still safer than an open boat, but I daren't hold 'em any longer. They'll be useless in another fifteen minutes at the rate she's listin'—the port bilge chock's awash now. No more than a boat's crew in 'em till they're afloat, understand? And tell those women to wrap up warm, the air's as deadly as the water in this latitude."

Bill clamped the phones tighter to his ears. There was a tumult of hoarse voices and clattering feet on the sloping decks, and much creaking of blocks and falls on the boat deck outside.

"KXGO DE KFY," sang a musical spark in the phones.

"K," snapped Bill.

"HR General Washington ARV UR POSN 5 HRS WT Happened. K."

"R TKS Struck derelict—sinking fast—getting boats away NW," crackled Bill.

The *Stella Maris* lurched again, and the little telltale clinometer on the wall swung over to an angle that made them gasp. The lights went out. The motor generator rotated a few times under its momentum and came to a stop. Bill switched to his emergency battery.

"Haul down those motor rheostats, Turp," he said in the darkness. "Gotta run the ol' mill at half speed to save juice. Tommy, you tell the Old Man the nearest ship is five hours away." He turned to the key again.

"Listing 36 degrees," he snapped into the night. "Engine room flooded—lights out—using emergency—QRK?"

"QRK," sang KFY cheerfully. "QRK," piped MAA, and added, "UR SIGS weaker though." They were getting him all right, then. So much for the emergency battery.

There was uproar on the tilting deck. Farmers, houis, hobos, and bona-fide sailors and firemen, bloated and awkward in life belts, were milling to and fro, and crowding about the few lanterns as if there might be some intangible safety in those feeble beams. Men had been calm, and women had been magnificent, till hysteria raised her ugly head in their midst. And fear had followed in her evil footprints, infectious as the smallpox.

The skipper appeared in the doorway, looking in and down upon them from the steep angle of the deck.

"Better come away!" he shouted. "You can't do any more. An' you're needed at the boat stations. The fireroom gang got the wind-up when she heeled a while ago an' rushed a couple of boats, the lousy scum."

"Tommy an' Turp, you go down an' see what you can do," Bill said. "I'm stickin'."

"Don't be a fool!" bellowed Foghorn Houston from the dark doorway.

"Good thing he can't see this clown outfit," thought Bill.

Aloud he said, "Those ships won't reach us for hours, sir, an' the boats'll be scattered all over the ocean by then. Got a nunch there might be a ship just over the sky line somewhere that could get here while the ol' hooker's still afloat."

"Huh," grunted the Old Man. "Why don't they answer, then?"

"Lots of tramps," Bill said earnestly, "only carry one operator. Irregular watches, see? An' most tramps only run their dynamas at night for the sake of the lights—"

"I know all that," snapped the skipper. "What's that got to do with it?"

"—and ranges are greater at night, anyway, so lots of tramp ops come on for a while in the evenin' to send the owners the daily position report. I'm hopin' one of those birds is handy an' that I can catch him when he comes on the air."

"Sounds like a fool hope to me," grunted the skipper morosely, and stumped away. Bill heard him bellowing again. "Lower away. Easy! Easy, now! Both falls at the same rate. The same rate! You'll spill if you don't! Fend'er off, there, or you'll smash. Hey! That boat's plug ain't in! Put your plug in. *Put your plug in!* It's tied to the thwart with a lanyard! Who put those women in with those crazy fools, anyway?"

Bill was alone in the darkness, sitting on the edge of the table now, for the stricken *Stella Maris* was at a violent angle. Fear was not in him. There is no room for fear where there is pride. Thirty-per Kempton was at the key, and the whole ocean knew it! All the northern ocean straining ears to catch the smooth and rapid Morse that flowed from the brass key under his fingers. The ripple of dots that made an H; the swinging C's, with the first dash slightly longer than the second; the trio of dots sliding easily into a dash that made a V—writing on the wide ether with a flowing, unflinching hand at the rate of thirty words—one hundred and fifty letters per minute. Only one man on the blue water could pound brass like that! Methodically he sent his calls, feeling in the dark ether for the hypothetical ship over the sky line. Holding his wrist like iron, the wrist Polly'd said was rubber. Steady. Steady as when swapping greetings with a passing ship, with light to see by, and a table that was right side up.

She's going—slow but sure. Oughta write up the log. No light, though. No log, either. On the floor somewhere. Anything that could slide had slid. Funny slapping noise against the wall—which is more floor than wall. Water? Huh!



Ears goin' woozy. Overstrain. Slapping again. Water, sure enough—must be nearly under! The clinometer—strike a match and look. No. Scared? Here goes. Forty! Great heavens! Seems quiet, somehow—everybody gone? Shouting off to leeward in the fog. Boats trying to keep touch. Here's KFY again:

"SA OM If ur listing 40 U must be GNG over."

Say, old man, if you're listing forty you must be going over. Right, fella! Feel her going—this is the end, m'son. Tell KFY—Steady now—scared of making a fumbled sig as a kid op taking exams—*da-dit-da, dit-dit-da-dit, da-dit-da-da.*

"KFY DE KXGO GNG NW OM SK." Very appropriate, that "SK." I am finished, deuced approp—

The girl's voice came astonishingly from the doorway. "Bill!"

Calling down into the dark hole of the topsy-turvy cabin as though the doorway was a cellar hatch.

"My heavens, Polly. You still aboard? Where's everybody?"

"Gone!"

"You an' me, too!"

As he clambered over the weatherboard he heard the high humming of the motor drop down the scale to a moan and die, and knew that the water was in the battery locker at last. His head brought up all standing against a black mass that proved to be a lifeboat, cut clear of its gripes and hanging incredibly inboard from the davits. The deck was like the wall of a house.

"Good," he said thickly, amid a sudden constellation of stars and pinwheels. "You take the bow, here, an' I'll take the stern. Should be an ax in each end. Got yours? Good. If the ol' hooker sinks under us, hop in an' cut your falls clear minute you strike water. Got that? Yeah. If the ship goes right over, we're dished, but she's not tippin' any farther an' she may sink on her side this way. Meantime we lower away. Like so. Atta girl. Easy. Lower again. Easy. Little more. Touch-in' water. Now, down the falls with you! Wrap your legs around 'em and slide. Atta girl. Praise Heaven for those harem trousers, you couldn't have done it in a skirt. Now, when the swell lifts her, unhook. Now!"

They were adrift. Bill took a pair of oars and pulled mightily.

"Heard a lot of arg'ment, kid, about

when a packet sinks. Some say there's suction, some say just a splash. Me, I'm not takin' chances." The heavy boat moved sluggishly under his single effort. He pulled away for some distance and lay on his oars. The fog seemed to clear in patches, for the *Stella Maris* was still visible, a darker shadow in the dark night.

"Flares in this thing somewhere," said Bill. He fumbled under the thwart. "Here they are. Punch a hole with the little gadget an' chuck the packet in the water. So!"

A red glare made a small world for them and the sinking *Stella*.

"She's goin'!" Going she was. The ship slid under with a quiet suddenness that was frightening. A swish, a deep gurgling as of a giant bottle suddenly immersed, and a splash. They were rocking in the boat alone with the dying flare and a multitude of bobbing gratings and deck chairs.

**T**HE girl in the scanty harem costume crept against him for warmth, and he peeled off the cotton clown suit to wrap about her pump-clad feet, and arranged his brass-buttoned jacket awkwardly around her bare shoulders. They drifted for an eternity. Out of a long silence he said suddenly. "I'm through."

She raised her head from his shoulder. "Through with what, Bill?"

"With poundin' brass. Wireless operatin'. Thought a lot about it lately. No future in it. Roamin' the sea all your life, on watch, off watch, day in, day out, Sunday an' Monday. An' when you're all done, what are you? Just another brass pounder."

"I see." There was a vague caress in her voice.

"Yeah. Or some day, that." He waved toward some floating ruffraff that was bumping gently against the boat.

She said, "You talk as though this day's not some day," with a little rueful laugh.

"Where there's life there's hope," he told her. "But take ol' Foghorn, now. There's a man spent all his life on the blue water, livin' an' breathin' just for his ship an' owners, an' what's he got out of it? A trip to Davy Jones!"

"Captain Houston? Wasn't he saved? Why, I thought we were the last to leave."

He shook his head with a motion that was almost a shudder. "Caught a glimpse

of him just as the ol' *Stella* went under. Standin' on the side of the wheelhouse in his heavy bridge coat, with his feet wide apart an' his shoulders braced against the post of the soundin' machine as if he didn't plan to be separated from her ever."

She put her face against the fog-damp breast of his shirt and sobbed quietly. His arms went about her as though they had always belonged there. He patted the bare white shoulder gently.

"What are you going to do, Bill, if you leave the sea?"

The change of subject was welcome. "Why, Mack Doran wanted me to go in with him, Polly, last time I was in Haileyport. Remember Mack? He's got a radio supply store down on Boyce Avenoo that's makin' plenty money for him. Wants to branch out an' make receivin' sets—his father's a cabinet maker—with me in charge of the store. I've got some jack saved away from long trips, an' a heap of experience with radio gear, an' the fact that I've been a seagoing op won't exactly hurt me with the customers. Mack says a sure-nough seagoin' brass pounder could sell stuff with his eyes shut. Goes big with hams."

"Where'll you live, Bill? The old home's been closed since your mother died, hasn't it?" He did not catch the wistful note in her voice.

Yeah. Didn't altogether like the idea of strangers in the ol' place. Board somewhere, I guess. Handy to the store somewhere."

She turned her face up to him, a white oval in the dark. "I'll come in sometimes, Bill, and buy tubes and things."

He kissed her. Afterward he wondered vaguely why. His head had dropped somehow, and lo! there were her warm, moving lips under his. Funny. Her arms, white and round, stole about his neck, and one hand stroked his rumpled yellow hair. Her eyes were closed. The scent of her damp hair was a strange incense in his nostrils. Queer little thrills up and down his spine made him arch involuntarily the muscles of his back.

"Polly," stammered a deep and strange voice in his chest. "Polly, d'you—d'you think—"

*Boooooorp! Oooooorp!*

"A ship," said the normal of Thirty-per Bill Kempton. "And near."

The girl sat up, silently, and leaned away from him, resting her chin upon her cupped

hands. What she might have thought he never knew. He took the oars and pulled painfully toward the sound.

"Can't be either of those birds that answered my SOS," he grunted; "must 'a' raised a handy tramp after all."

*Boooooorp-ooooorp!* The siren echoed again through the fog, so loud as to startle them.

"Easy all," muttered Bill. "Get run down, first thing we know."

A distinct throb of machinery, ship engines, *tunkety-tunk, tunkety-tunk*, pulsing through the fog and darkness. Then a bell, sharp and distinct. *Ting-ting, ting-ting, ting-ting, ting-ting.*

"Eight bells," breathed Bill. "Kid, we've only been adrift an hour or little more." He fumbled under the thwart for another flare, and hurled the little packet in the direction of the bell. Red light flamed as the chemicals touched salt water, showed them the bulk of a ship. There was a faint shout and a jangle of engine-room bells.

"Goin' astern," muttered Bill.

A searchlight reached into the fog; a white and sickly finger that swept about the flare and finally came to rest on the boat. "Boat ahoy!" bellowed a voice.

"Ahoy yourself," answered Bill, standing up.

"Can you pull over 'ere to us?" asked the voice.

"Comin'!" shouted Bill.

The voice addressed somebody as "Bos'n," ordered that person to "lower a jacob's ladder from the well deck," to "stan' at the fut of it," and to "wave a lantern."

In a very few minutes they had the clanking deck of a British tramp underfoot. The captain turned over his comfortable cabin to Polly, regretting in honest cockney that it wasn't better, and adjuring his deft little gray-haired steward in a tremendous voice to "see that the young leddy 'as everything she wants."

Bill found refuge with the English wireless man. "I put my phones on," said that worthy apologetically, "just as you sent that last bit about going, and I guessed there was something wrong. I'm astonishin' clever at times, y' know. I started to call, but my main transmitting condenser busted as soon as I touched the key. Course, I knew from the strength of your sigs you were right on top of me somewhere, and then I heard KFY checking

your position with MAA. And—well, here we are.”

“And very nice, too,” said Bill.

“How the deuce,” admired the other, “did you send that letter-perfect Morse with your packet on her beam ends?”

Bill grinned delightedly. There were men on the blue water, then, who’d never heard of Thirty-per Kempton. It was a sweet thought. Bill was an involuntary king and his throne—that throne of pounded brass—irked him not a little.

“Sittin’ astride the table edge,” he said whimsically, “an’ reachin’ down to the key like a fella on horseback fixin’ a stirrup. Must ‘a’ looked like a bit of a circus, with that clown suit an’ all.”

**M**ORNING brought the problem of clothing Polly, which was solved at last by a red-faced apprentice, who offered his shore-going clothes. She made a charming boy.

Bill was giving the English operator a hand with the broken condenser.

“Of course,” he declared, “spark sets’ll soon be a thing of the past. But while they’re here, fella, let me tell you these little ol’ oil-immersed, glass-plate-an’-foil condensers of yours are a delusion an’ a snare. They’ll bust as quick as any other, an’ take a darn sight longer to fix.”

“Efficient in operation, though,” returned the other, quick to the defense of gear he had cursed for six months. “What’s better?”

“Glass jars,” declared Bill eagerly. “If you bust one, slide it out, slip a new one in, an’ there you are. Two minutes an’ you’re goin’ again. But this”—waving a contemptuous hand toward the offending condenser—“is a day’s work to fix. Gotta dump out the oil an’ pull all those messy leaves apart, an’ then maybe have to connect a spark coil across it to show up the busted plate. Never fixed one yet but what I finished up ravin’ wild an’ oil from truck to keel.”

“Yes,” the Englishman joined battle vigorously, “but what about efficiency in those Leyden-jar things, old chap? Those pretty blue flames around the edges, eh? Losses, my dear feller, losses. You don’t get that with the old oil-plate affairs.”

“All of which,” said Polly, a slim and flushed figure in the doorway, “is very technical and dull. Why not discuss some-

thing interesting—me for instance. What do you think of this?”

She strode a few paces along the deck in a droll imitation of the wide-apart seafaring roll, swinging her arms from side to side *au matelôt*.

“Best-lookin’ ’prentice I ever saw,” said the Englishman gallantly.

Polly bowed her thanks. She took Bill’s arm and steered him to a nook among the tramp’s grubby lifeboats.

“The captain tells me all the rest of our people were picked up by the *General Washington* and *Lusania*.”

He nodded absently. “Yeah. Barrin’ those in the boat that upset. And the skipper.”

He was leaning against the rails with his fists jammed into his jacket pockets, with a lock of his yellow hair down across his forehead, and his sea-blue eyes staring far out across the sunlit dancing water, as though the hurrying radio waves were visible to his inner eye and he could read them without the aid of man-made apparatus. Always afterward, when she thought of Bill Kempton, she saw him in that attitude on the deck of the grimy tramp. Long after a fickle world ceased to thrill over the operator in the absurd clown costume, long after she married Winslow Bates of the Haileypoint Bank, long after there was a Winslow, Jr., and a little Polly, the picture flitted through her mind.

He was clearing his throat. “Polly.”

“Yes, Bill?”

“Member what I said last night?”

“About quitting the sea?”

“About quittin’.”

“You’ve changed your mind”—in a small, careless voice.

He gave her a surprised glance and looked away again hurriedly.

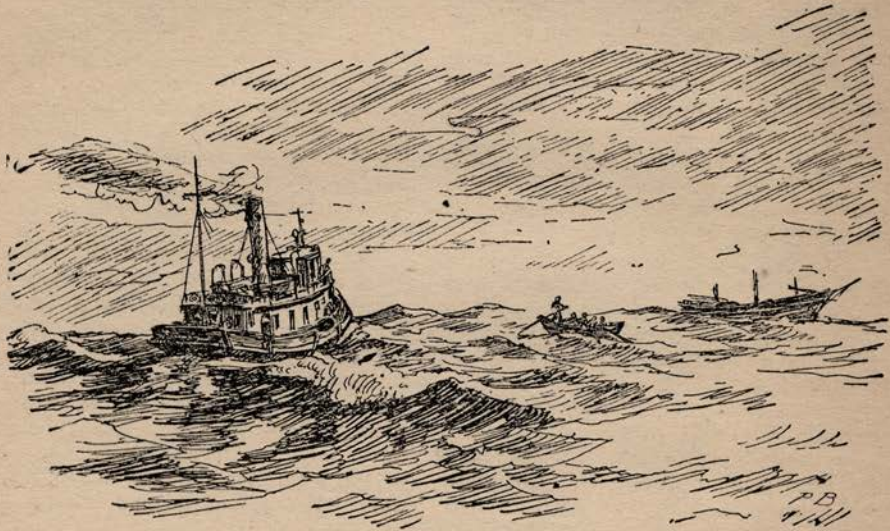
“How’d you guess?”

She laughed, a hard little laugh. “As soon as I heard you arguin’ with that operator. Any one could see you’d be a fish out of water in a shop, even a radio shop. Your heart’s all tied up in aërials and coils and things, and no room for anything else in it—not even a woman, much less doing up parcels with string and passing them across the counter. No music for you in the wide world but that muzzy jumble in a pair of head phones, is there?”

“Yeah,” he said dreamily. “Poundin’ brass, kid; it gets you.”

# Skybo Williams, D.G.S.

By Malcolm S. Brainard



## Off the Virginia Capes

**Q**UARTERMASTER on watch! Sound recall on the whistle!" Captain Steven McNulty, young old man of the sea, bellowed from the head of the slip as he came on the double.

"Tell Callahan to single up the lines, and pass word to Mr. Hanes to get ready below."

A hiss of water and steam came from the giant chime of the naval tug *Potomac*. The letters "PD" in the continental code reverberated three times up and down the Elizabeth River and over three cities summoning a handful of men—the *Potomac's* crew.

On the Charles and the Cooper, Potomac and Piscataqua, the Rio Grande and the Rappahannock, the deep blasts of this famous whistle are still a fond memory to all old seamen.

Captain McNulty was a commander of sailormen. Wooden ships and iron men, or iron ships and wooden men, Steven McNulty was a respected master mariner. Thirty-two years in uniform at sea had

molded his body and his soul into its mass.

Disdaining the short ladder from the slip, the old salt dropped to the white, sloping deck of his command.

"Callahan! We leave as soon as possible for a wreck off Beaufort. Word just came in to the yard office and we shall probably have rough weather outside. As soon as Mr. Hanes gets up steam, most of the men should be back."

"Yes, sir," answered Callahan, with his hat shoved well back on his graying head. With nearly as much experience at sea as his commander, it was unnecessary for him to be told to put up weather cloths, huse the awnings, stow loose deck gear, clear away the towing engine, and do all the other odd jobs incidental to a deep-sea tow-boat faring forth.

Scotch boilers are slow steamers. Rousson, black of skin and white of soul, knew just how to slice the fires, coal them over, and push them back. Spread the coal thick and even, and mighty little draft at first. Heavy smoke poured from the stack.

A painted towboat on a painted river was being transmuted into a challenger of the deep.

By six o'clock a thin wisp of smoke rose steadily toward the heavens, a feather of steam from the safety valve, and a foot-thick stream of yellow-green water pulsed from the overboard discharge.

Hale, grease covered, was turning the engine over slowly, working the water out and warming up for the run. A teacup full of water will burst out cylinder heads, and large masses of metal must be heated and expanded evenly.

"Quartermaster, how many men are aboard?" called Captain Steve.

"Twenty-one, sir," came the prompt reply.

"Mr. Simonds, have you enough men to sail?" asked the skipper of his first mate.

"Yes, sir. My best men are back, and those that aren't will not be missed."

"Is 'Sparks' aboard?" Radio men are valuable at sea.

"Yes, sir."

Swinging himself up the vertical ladder to the tug's flying bridge with the ease of a midshipman, Captain Steve called over his shoulder.

"Cast off!"

Eyes of six-inch hawsers jerked over the bollard heads on the dock and were dragged aboard carefully so as not to get them wet. Mooring lines are mooring lines, and wet lines rot when stowed.

One long, sonorous blast from the whistle told three quarters of a million people that the *Potomac* was outward bound, if they cared to know.

A rattle of the engine-room telegraph was answered by a swirl under the tug's stern, pushing the dregs of the Dismal Swamp back toward Gilmerton Locks and a steel stem toward the open sea.

A staggering, running, towheaded boy raced down the slip, neckerchief flying and hat gone.

"Come on, 'Skybo'!" yelled half a dozen lusty gobs from the tug. "Jump her!"

A blue-clad mass hurled itself into space.

Overboard from the tug went a dungareed figure, heaving line in hand. Skybo came up, grabbed a rope-bellied fender and swung himself aboard, the dungareed figure following. Many a good man has left this world between a dock stringer and a crunching steel plate.

"What the hell you goin' out without me

for?" asked the figure in sozzley blue of Callahan.

"We can't wait for all the sleepers," answered the boatswain's mate. "You'd better go below, change your clothes, and sleep a while. Too much Avon Street."

Alcohol usually engenders loquacity, but not in disciplined seamen aboard their own ship. The tipsy one, born and bred in the cotton fields of Mississippi, sqdged forward and down the ladder to the crew's quarters. Ashore, like his mates, a roaring good fellow; aboard, like his mates, a seaman.

"Starboard your helm," came down the voice tube from the flying bridge to the wheelhouse.

"Helm's starboard, sir," snappily rung in the skipper's ears.

"Steady."

"Steady, sir," answered the helmsman.

Slowly eight hundred tons of brawn and sinew slid down the river. The deep whistle sounded when they met craft passing up but never a blast for one passing down. The tug overhauled few, but her way was unchallenged in a pull.

"All right, sailors. All you men not on watch, go below and turn in." Callahan chased his gang below. Ahead might be hours in swashing water, hunger, and cold to numbness. No ruckus in the forecabin to-night.

Red Cape Charles light glowed across the port quarter and steady white Cape Henry over the starboard. The quartering swell rolled the sailors in their bunks; knowing, even in their slumber, where the vessel should change course, their rest was but shortly interrupted.

Captain McNulty could snore! Book captains would have been pacing the bridge issuing orders, but Captain Steve, a smooth round peg in a neat round hole, slept the sleep of Thames Street.

Ambiguity at the wheel: Healy, so his enlistment record named him, but who always got leave for Yom Kippur. Healy could judge a mountainous wave to half a revolution of the wheel, and he needed to with a skipper named McNulty.

Rearing and diving, port roll and starboard lunge, they grunted their way toward the graveyard of the Atlantic seaboard. Many a man has seen Hatteras, but no man knows it as the salvage man does. The Lord is not master in that latitude when it is shut in by a clay-colored dome.

**M**ORNING broke late through the scuds of rain. The wind howled a gale. The barometer was falling. Fast-driven clouds brushed the hem of their tattered skirts on the tug's low, reeling mastheads. No standing on the flying bridge for four hours, nor even two hours, in this weather. Lookouts, lashed to the railing, were changed every hour.

Old Jeff, twenty-seven years ship's cook, sick unto an ashen hue unknown to his African ancestors, managed coffee. Paddy Bright, erstwhile Baltimore chef, now coal passer, rustled a scout's kettle full of hot burgoo. Paddy knew good wadding to fortify sailors against rough weather.

"Sail ho!" called the wet and hatless Skybo from the lookout.

"Where away?" came a calm voice up the tube.

"Dead ahead, sir. A schooner, cleaned; down by the head and awash, sir."

Sailormen unconsciously acquire the knack of stating facts without embellishments.

A moment's pause while the tug sank between two mountains, crossed the short floor of the valley, and clawed up the concave, snarling comber.

Another hour's leading and feinting, and the derelict stood out—a lifeless hulk. Imaginative artists could clothe the splintered stubs with sails. A poet could weave an *Odyssey* around that creaking hulk. The navy towboat captain saw only a possibility of saving life, of removing a menace to navigation.

Bracing himself against the flying bridge, Captain Steve, a stubby mass of baggy oilskins, roared down the voice tube, "Half speed!"

Bells jangled.

"Starboard, half."

Somewhere below a steering engine clattered and the tug headed into the wind.

"Steady!"

"Quarter speed."

A voice called up from the deck below, "Can make out two men on the wreck, sir. One near the heel of the mainmast and another down, awash, lashed to the binnacle."

"Are they alive?" called Captain Steve.

"Can't make out, sir, but I believe the one at the binnacle is moving."

"Callahan, get ready to make a shot."

"All ready, sir."

"Watch your chance now, Callahan. I'll

ease her over a little closer. I think it is too rough to shoot a line over."

Slowly, steel slithered sternward in a boiling sea.

Don't go too close to a wreck in heavy weather unless you have learned how from experience. If you are over twenty-one years old you will never learn.

"Stop!" roared the skipper.

"She's stopped, sir," came up the answering voice.

"Helm a quarter starboard. Back half speed."

All hands were on deck now. There was work to be done, and few enough hands to do it, even with a full crew. Forgotten, now, were the double watches; forgotten sleep, forgotten grub. Every one about the decks was soaked to the hide.

Everything was against shooting a line across the hills and valleys of that roaring sea. No shot could make headway against such odds.

"Mr. Simonds," called Captain Steve, gripping the hand rail with two knurled paws.

A red-faced figure in a rustling sou'wester popped a head out of the wheel-house door just below where the skipper was standing.

"Yes, sir."

"Can you make it with a whaleboat?"

"Yes, sir."

Callahan was already clearing away the gripes. Skybo and "Frenchy," seaman and oiler, were at the boat falls ready to lower away on the word. Feet were shuffling in the gangway swash. It takes seven huskies to man a whaleboat, and there were more than that on deck. Some one was going to be left.

"Jump up here, four of you, and get on your life belts," called Callahan. There was little, if any, choice among the men below him, and Callahan knew he had two good men to go from their temporary station at the boat falls.

No sane man would attempt to scramble up six feet of slippery steel with no hand or toe holds, especially when it is careening over a hundred fathoms of cold, seething brine. A score of men had a fair start—no handicaps. The only precedence was agility and sinew. The first four grabbed life belts. Coal passer and oiler, seaman and carpenter—a crew to pull the thwarts off any Kittery-built whaleboat.

The six men, some hatless, some shoe-

less, donned their life belts—the old cork kind that stiffened a man's guts and warded off body blows. They swung out on the manropes, quietly dropped into the swaying boat, and grabbed the oars.

"Hop out there, you, Skybo, and get a ball of white line," Callahan called to the towheaded seaman.

"It's here."

An end of the ball was passed clear of all the deck gear and attached to the after thwart of the whaleboat to be used later in hauling a hawser to the derelict. Too much drag for the small boat to haul across a heavier line.

Firmly gripping the deck-house rail, the mate, Mr. Simonds, reeled his way abreast the laden boat; sou'wester off, rubber boots left behind—ugly things to try and swim with.

"Gimme a chew, Callahan."

Callahan passed the mate a smoothly whittled plug of navy tobacco. Without comment the mate gnawed off a slug, passed it to the man nearest him in the boat, and it wended a losing journey. Much history has been written because of a good chew of tobacco.

"All ready. Lower away when she heels over," ordered the mate, his cheek bulging.

Boat falls rove easily out of the flakes, and, when the sea willed, the oaken shell with its precious crew dropped swiftly into the water. Stoppers were loosened, the bow and stern men jerked the hoofs free, and leaders snatched the heavy blocks, swinging in death-dealing blows, away from the heads of the boat's crew.

Staggering in the bow of the whaleboat, a thin cherub-faced lad stood tense with a gaff in hand, ready to fend off. With the strength of a young devil, he shoved clear the bow of their frail craft when the sea thrust it toward the ship's steel side.

"Out oars, port," called the mate in the stern.

Three ashen blades poised over the swells.

"Give away, port."

They dipped. Slowly the whaler swung away, dangling over the brink of Hades.

"Out oars, starboard, and give way together."

Seven good, likely candidates for Davy Jones' locker.

Straight and strong, at the steering oar, stood Boatswain Simonds. A son of the Virgin Islands, reared in the shadow of

Bluebeard's castle when Danish was taught in the schools of Charlotte Amalia. To him fell the duty, a plain job.

For the first few minutes the whaleboat soared and plunged within sight of those on the tug. As time dragged her absences grew longer. Steady sweeps from arms already numbed urged the frail craft toward the wreck. Drifting hither and thither, the white line rode over the swirling spume, useless to the whaler in case of trouble.

Darkness was falling. Leaden clouds shorten the days. Just get the line aboard and the job would be done. The rest would be as simple as stowing a heaving line.

"Ahead half! Port your helm!" roared a voice from the flying bridge.

"Callahan, break out all your heaving lines and get them on the after deck house. Sea anchor over the side with plenty of line. Break out some oil. I'm coming about. Have a line on all hands working about the deck."

Every man, visible and invisible, sprang to action on the double. Captain McNulty could voice two sentiments at once. Even the kinky, gray head of old Jeff bobbed out of the galley in the swirl, keen for a chance to lend a hand.

"Callahan, the whaleboat has turned over end for end," Captain Steve yelled through the gale when opportunity offered.

Heading into a tremendous sea, Mr. Simonds had been outwitted for an instant, but the mate's wits were very quickly gathered unto him. One by one Mr. Simonds counted the spluttering heads bobbing up here and there, dodging tethered oars. Frenchy, Lees, "Chips," Olliger, Bright; but where was Skybo? No Skybo in sight.

A speck! Far up on the crest of a comber, a bundle of black in a corselet of dirty gray. Mr. Simonds shut his eyes. No one saw but him. Pray Heaven no one would see. Yelling would have been as useless as table tapping in a boiler factory.

Poor Skybo!

Knight says a vessel may be turned in a mountainous sea, but at great peril. Captain McNulty did not consult Knight at the moment. He made the turn anyway. May as well lose the ship and all hands as lose seven such men.

Slowly maneuvering the tug to wind-

ward, the old skipper ordered Callahan to let go the sea anchor. Its line was passed through the eyes of the ship and back to the midships chock, where it was safer to handle. A little sternway on the engine lowered the towboat slowly against the pull, and the wide-mouthed canvas bag filled with water and retarded their drift.

They settled back toward the overturned boat. No one spoke. There was a man aloft, gripping the bridge rail, who could take care of that.

Heaving lines were carried aft, and when the tug approached heaving distance, Callahan secured an end of a life line, knotted about his waist, to a towing bitt, and scrambled through the swashing water in the short quarter-deck to the grated fantail. There were enough men in the water now.

"Mistah Callahan, I'm passin' you de heavin' lines, and here, you, 'Frisky,' you an' 'Beavers' haul in de no 'counts. Mind you flakes 'em right or I bust yo' head wid a cleaver 'fore we passes de nun buoy." Bareheaded, aproned Jeff; Thomas Washington Jefferson, ship's cook.

No need of a life line for Jeff, his bare feet each covered thirteen inches of three teak deck planks, and he could pick up a ten-pound can of tomatoes in the span of his fingers.

Carefully dividing the tarred line, just enough in the right hand and just enough in the left, Callahan tested the balance. If you don't get the right lay in making a heave you'll foul and fall short.

A tattooed arm whipped out. Hempen coils rolled into the air and the heavy hexagonal nut embedded in the wall knot drew the line out straight, and it fell, fair across the upturned keel. Nerveless hands snatched it—a thread of life.

Mr. Simonds managed to hook the whaleboat's painter with his stockinged toe. With one hand he knotted the line from the tug, keeping his weight on it, spring-like, to ward off the snapping jerks of the sea. When it was tied he waved to Callahan.

Slowly, with Jeff bossing, the men on the towboat hauled in the line, hand over hand, as Callahan eased it over the stern rail, steadying himself between the surges.

When the whaleboat with their clinging shipmates was about fifty yards astern of the *Potomac*, another heaving line was floated out, attached to a life ring. Ticklish, slow work.

Mr. Simonds caught the ring with his toe and motioned the nearest man to grab it. There was no time to argue, no place for hero stuff. Slowly Frenchy was hauled up under the tug's weaving stern. Callahan, gripped about the waist by Jeff, reached down for the little oiler. Watching the swells, Callahan grabbed and flopped him aboard the instant the stern swept down.

One after another the men in the water were brought aboard the tug until none were left but Paddy Bright, erstwhile Baltimore chef, and Mr. Simonds. Again the life ring was floated back.

Those on the tug saw that Mr. Simonds and Paddy were conversing. Paddy ducked under the water. Where had he gone? After what seemed to be an age, the coal passer's head bobbed back, and he held a line in his left hand. Callahan looked at Captain McNulty standing above him on the deck house.

"They've got a rolling line on her, sir. We'll try and h'ist her in."

No one had a thought of the small boat being government property! Just a damn good whaleboat, old issue, Kittery built.

Paddy came over the counter next, shins skinned pink and clean from the knee down. His cheek still bulged with a chew.

Again the life ring was floated back, and off came Mr. Simonds, who just missed being crushed under the stern by an angry sea. Releasing his hold on the life ring, a couple of wiry strokes propelled him a hair's breadth from death, and as the stern settled he virtually stepped aboard.

"Skybo's adrift, sir," reported Mr. Simonds to the skipper.

"Too bad," and Captain McNulty, an older man, staggered his way forward along the heaving deck.

For reasons far removed from ancient theology, men have much cause to love their fellowmen. Words are common to all, a shell is but a memory, but guts are guts.

The darkness of Hades enshrouded them. Nothing could be done but pull away from the wreck and lay to until daylight.

Below decks, during the lull, Mr. Hanes had dragged out canvas and spread it on the engine and fire-room gratings where it was nice and warm. The coarse, dirty folds, made fairy-soft beds for the sodden sailors.



Old Jeff, soaked to his hide, staggered about with a scout's kettle full of sizzling-hot bean soup, ladling it out to his boys. Yes, sir! Skipper, mate, chief engineer, and all—all his boys! No one but Jeff knew or cared how he managed to cook over a dancing galley range.

Skybo was missed. No one spoke of him, yet the very ship crooned his name, and the wind mourned "Skybo" through the rigging.

With her engine barely turning over, the *Potomac* headed into an angry sea all night—just steerage way, not enough to move her far from her task.

**M**ORNING broke at last. One by one, tired, stiff, aching bodies came to life. Clothes dry and stiff, eyes caked with salt, hair like hog's bristles. A slug of hot, black coffee and to work again.

All hands were out to look, even men who had toiled most of the night. Perhaps some one would see Skybo, or worse, what had once been Skybo.

"Some one moving aboard the wreck, sir," called MacFarland from the wheelhouse.

Captain Steve narrowed his little, slitty eyes. Perhaps Mac saw and perhaps he didn't. Yet, Mac's eyes were younger and might be better.

"There's a man braced against the taff-rail, sir," came from a sailor perched on the engine-room hatch.

Captain Steve joined Callahan near the after end of the deck house.

"See if you can signal him, Callahan."

The boatswain's mate braced himself against the mainmast and extended both hands aloft, the attention signal of the navy semaphore. The figure on the wreck answered with one hand.

"Tell him we'll float over a line," ordered the skipper.

"Watch for floating line," was slowly spelled and repeated across the waste.

The figure on the wreck waved back. Was the message understood, or was he just waving to bolster his tense hopes?

"Sail thread, and plenty of it," demanded the old salt.

A sodden seaman reached up two balls of stout cotton thread. Callahan attached a large cork to an end of the ball and tossed it into the water, applying a light coating of grease as the thread passed through his hand. The wind and the

waves forced the cord with the thread attached back and forth, yet always toward the wreck. Half an hour and the first ball was gone, the light thread having been driven this way and that, over an area of perhaps a half mile in width. Surely one of the parts would strike the derelict. A second ball was bent onto the end of the first and started paying out slowly.

When this second ball was nearly gone there came a jerk—a bite, and a human one!

"He has the end, sir," called Callahan, and the figure on the wallowing wreck was waving frantically. The drowning man had truly grasped a straw.

"Bend on the white line," ordered the captain.

A roll of cotton twine as large around as a knitting needle was quickly attached to the sail thread, and the skipper waved to the figure on the wreck. The white line was drawn over the side of the tug, slowly at first, as the sag was taken up in the thread, then faster, faster, until the reel ran smoothly. The end of another ten-pound roll was hauled out, inch by inch, until it was nearly gone. It stopped paying out altogether, and the hand on the wreck again signaled.

"Small line," said the captain, and a sailor appeared with a coil of light hempen line about as thick as his knotted, little finger, but strong enough to hold the weight of two men—strong enough to haul across the towing hawser.

Again the boatswain's mate signaled across to the *Crusoe*, and slowly the small line, running freely over the side, sank in the angry green seas. This was going slower—a heavier drag through the water.

After an hour's hauling the figure on the wreck again gesticulated.

"Bend on the hawser. He's a man if he makes it," said the old skipper, his face tense.

"Two men on the wreck now, sir," called MacFarland from the wheelhouse. MacFarland was right, before.

It was torment to the men on the tug to glimpse those poor devils pulling their lives out on the plunging wreck.

Hours dragged by, and the leaden pall was again settling on an angry sea. Healey, with three hours' sleep since leaving the dock, took the wheel.

"He's waving again, sir."

Every muscle aboard relaxed.

"Thank Heaven!" said the skipper, standing bareheaded, facing the wreck.

"He's taking the line aft, sir," MacFarland bawled from the flying bridge. "There's a man for you."

A long breathless wait.

"He's waving again, sir, and I can see the hawser tending over their stern."

"Make fast, Callahan, and put chafing gear on the line," roared the old skipper through the gale. The sight of the work on the rafted hulk braced him like a glass of strong liquor.

Canvas and marline were wrapped over a couple of fathoms of the hawser, and a heavy coating of grease was applied to the wrapping to prevent the line from weakening with constant friction on the tug's steel stern rail.

Captain McNulty reached for the signal cord to the engine room, and above the roar a gong clanged once.

"Steady," he bellowed over his shoulder, and the word was relayed through the gale to the man at the wheel.

Slack came out of the hawser with the increasing strain. The gong clanged again. The engine was stopped, and slowly the line straightened.

"Tell Mr. Hanes to go ahead very slowly."

Thrusting his head in a porthole, Mr. Hanes passed word to the greasy machinist at the throttle. The big engine was barely turning over.

"Tell him to increase his revolutions very slowly, sir," and again word was passed to the engine room.

Ever so carefully Hanes drew back the throttle. It was no time to part a towline now.

"Callahan, set a watch on the line, and all hands turn in," said Captain McNulty as he headed forward. "Mr. Simonds, set her on a course to Cape Henry. I'll relieve you as soon as I have a cup of Java, and then you may turn in."

All hands obeyed silently.

Again the tired, dirt-and-salt-incrusted sailors swallowed bean soup and sagged down. A man went to sleep behind the ash hoist and awoke near the boiler-maker's chest. He could roll in and out of hell and not awaken.

"Poor old Skybo," thought the old captain. "Left out there off Hatteras. Too short a span between the county home and just the grave he would have chosen."

**W**HEN morning broke it found them in what looked to be the same surroundings. Nothing told of their night's passage but the revolution counter and a growing pile of ashes on the floor plates below.

Over the tug's fantail, now up, now down, could be seen the wreck being towed, ignominiously, stern forward. Would she hold together? Were the poor devils on her still alive?

About noon the barometer started to rise, steadily, and the sea began falling off. The swells were longer now, but best keep out plenty of line.

By the end of the afternoon watch the sky broke; scudding clouds, hurrying like gulls to the eastward, showing a setting sun.

Morning burst in a glory over a pleasant sea. Fresh water was issued, and blessed baths.

You who dally an hour in a porcelain tub, squared by white tiles, know not the elixir of a bath! Get out on a surging, pure-white deck, a bucket of warm, fresh water and a deck hose running from the clear, cool sea. Cold? Sure! Rub down to the red, dress, and have two strong men bring on the grub.

Noon and calm, with Currytuck Light standing seven miles off the port quarter. The capsized whaleboat, having been righted and none the worse for wear, gayly shot its gleaming whiteness from side to side, astern.

"Mr. Simonds, we had better shorten tow, and you can drop back to the wreck," said the skipper to his mate.

Callahan took his place near the after towing winch. Two men were removing the badly worn chafing gear, and soon the dripping hawser was being hove in over the stern with all hands flaking it down in the gangway until the wreck was about a hundred yards astern. The line was made fast and the chafing gear applied.

With a lively cadence the whaleboat bobbed its way back to the wreck. In half an hour it was returning and slowly regained the tug's side. All of the crew were leaning over the towboat's rail.

"Hy, Skybo!" yelled Captain Steve from the top of the deck house. A shadow lifted from his weather-worn face.

What a jargon went up! Epithets and anthems! Old Skybo alive!

Drawing alongside, Mr. Simonds held the whaleboat fended off from the guard of the tug.

"I have two gentlemen here from the wreck, sir," reported the mate. Guests first.

Soon two badly twisted and bruised blobs, seemingly held in human form by their tattered clothes, were spread on the deck house for the doc to look over.

"Pretty bad, sir," reported the hospital apprentice. "Many bones broken. They should be gotten into a warm bunk right away, sir."

"Give a hand here, men. Take one of them to my stateroom and the other to Mr. Simonds'," ordered Captain Steve.

Mr. Simonds was preparing to hoist in the whaleboat. Sitting on a stern thwart, Skybo remained smoking a cigarette, the first in years, it seemed.

Slowly the boat was raised dripping from the sea, was swung inboard and dropped into its cradles. Clumsy, tender hands helped Skybo to the engine-room hatch, an arm and a leg swollen and useless.

"What's this, Skybo?" Captain Steve demanded with gruff kindness.

"I got a hell of a bump, sir."

The butt dropped from his lips, and Robert Lee Williams slumped down.

"Captain McNulty," said the hospital apprentice at his commander's side, "the man in Mr. Simonds' room wants to see you, sir."

Helping hands, rough and sea cut, were making Skybo more comfortable.

Captain Steve hurried forward.

A wan, stubby figure was stretched out in the mate's bunk.

"I am sorry and I thank you, sir. Name's George Wilkes, captain of the schooner *John W. Pickles*, of Portland, Maine. Brunswick to Bath with naval stores. Old hull, and too damn much weather all at once. You're a good seaman, sir. That man, washed aboard from your ship is a good seaman. A damn good seaman. Came aboard with an arm and a leg broken. Told me his head was all right and mine wasn't. He was right. Between us we hauled over your line and secured it. But I don't remember much before or since. Some one rigged a stopper and chafing gear on it. 'Twa'n't my mate, he was unconscious, and your man

**SEA-2**

hauled him below out of the weather first thing and lashed him below. Damn good seaman, your man."

"Thank you, Captain Wilkes. You just take it easy now, and get a good sleep."

Captain Steve drew the curtain aside and stepped out, making his way aft along the deck house.

"Where is Skybo, Mr. Simonds?"

"Aft on a tarpaulin, sir. He wants to see you."

A group of squatting men around the prostrate figure on the stained canvas drew back. Captain Steve knelt down nearer the dirt-splotted, pale face.

"Skybo, Captain Wilkes in there, says you're a damn good seaman. I'm glad you're on my ship. I shall recommend you to the secretary of the navy for promotion."

Skybo waited a moment.

"What to, sir?"

"To coxswain."

Another pause. A fellow had to have a chance to think.

"This tug doesn't rate a coxswain, sir. I'd rather be a seaman and stay on your ship, sir."

Captain McNulty pulled his visor down, jamming his hat tighter on his bowed head. Slowly turning from the scene, he wended his way forward, down the companionway into the crew's mess room, in a corner of which was the ship's writer.

"Let me see Williams' record," he demanded.

The yeoman rifled through a thin bundle of manila-bound pamphlets, selected one, and passed it to the officer.

"Pen and ink," demanded the old salt without looking up.

In a boyish hand the skipper slowly entered the name of the vessel and the date in the proper columns. Next "C. R."—change in rating—he penned the following:

I have this day designated Skybo Williams a damn good seaman, and so recommended to the secretary of the navy in a letter of even date.

STEVEN McNULTY, Chief Boatswain,  
United States Navy, Commanding.

"See that the quartermaster enters that in the log and have this record aft for me to read Saturday at inspection," ordered the skipper.

Unfavorable comments on Captain Steven McNulty's actions have too often proved inadvisable.



# Sea Mecca

## By Lawrence G. Green

A pilgrimage by sea.

**S**TRANGE craft," said the trader at Duncan's table. "They come down on the northeast monsoon and clear off again, and no one knows much about them."

The steamers anchored off Beira were dark shapes against the crimson of sunset as the dhow came sailing wearily upstream. A relic of earlier centuries—that was the way Duncan saw her. "Where do you think she's from?" he asked eagerly, watching her beating against the current with the hot breath of the African river just filling her tattered lateen sail.

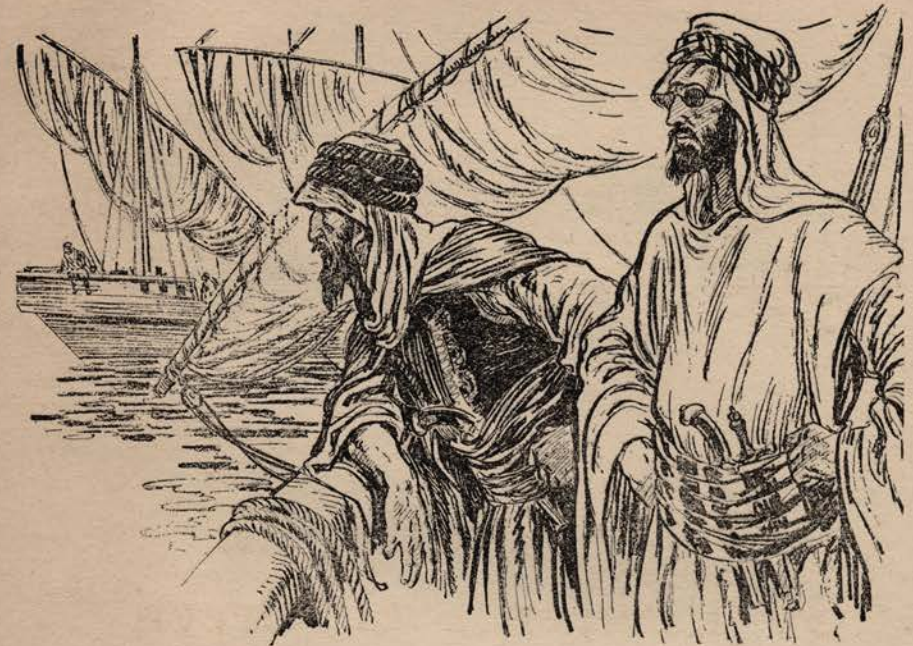
The trader shrugged. "India, Persian Gulf, Arabia—thousands of miles, anyway. They were coasting East Africa long before the Portuguese, the same crazy-looking type of ship. Black ivory they carried in the old days—slaves and gold made fine cargoes. I don't know what brings them now."

Duncan's imagination stirred. The tin-roofed houses of Beira on their spidery wooden supports, the loafing sundown drinkers at the cafés, royal palms and chattering black humanity all faded out. The tired dhow making for harbor with her air of mystery was like an elusive shadow from the East falling into the sweltering

gold of the African evening. Duncan had traveled far to hear the sort of talk this trader gave him. His escape from the life sentence of the eight fifteen and his daily task as shipping clerk seemed long ago, though it was only three months since he had started happily to follow the rich freights he had so often sent away. He had sought romance deliberately—sought that intangible thing which cannot always be brought within a man's experience by the mere chance of a legacy and a pocketful of travel tickets.

So Duncan had found since leaving the ledgers of Fenchurch Street for the coasts and backwaters of Africa. Reality had been disappointing. Seamen on the decks of steamers in the Thames had suggested more romance than any sight or story during his journey.

He had wearied his soul in pursuit of his ambition. Traders, officials, hunters, engineers, all the flotsam of the tropics found themselves speaking frankly to this earnest young man. The straight eye behind the spectacles—those tragic spectacles which had thwarted the sea career of his young dreams—invited something more than the usual cynical gossip of the white man in the land of the black. Yet Africa



had revealed nothing but railway lines and cement villas and telegraph poles where he had expected some glimpse of adventure or ancient mystery. The natives wore cast-off khaki tunics. Days of travel brought him to places which bored him after an hour. The Victoria Falls were nothing more than a torrent going to waste. Rhodesian ruins that would have enthralled scientists were only heaps of rock, an African Stonehenge without a living present to link up with a dead past.

Drifting east to Beira he had that day seen a lion shot on the golf course outside the town. No thrills in this experience. One neat shot and the lion had gone down like a great tawny dog. If he could have heard that lion making a kill in the far-away bush, roaring its triumph through the silence of the African night he would have been satisfied. But he was still on the fringe, still trying to thrust aside the veil of the commonplace which covered the things that were worth while.

Then came the dhow. Duncan followed her to the creek, where the dugout canoes of the Swahilis were the stay-at-homes and the dhow was a true sea rover come to rest. From her hull now rose the acrid smoke of a wood fire. He could see an aged man with a green turban and a thin

beard, the red glow illuminating the seams and wrinkles of his olive face. This, plainly, was the master. He sat with his legs crossed, gravely waiting for his crew to prepare the evening meal.

Duncan marveled that such a vessel should cross the ocean without disaster. Her slender mast leaned aft drunkenly, supported by crude fiber rigging. There was a great clumsy rudder and tiller, and her planks were rough-hewn balks of mahogany. A roof of palm leaves sheltered the stern, but cabins she had none. Greasy black water covered her bilge, smelling of such a variety of tropical cargoes that it would have been difficult to distinguish any one of them. On the splintered timber of her bows stood a name in Arabic, *El Salaam*—the peaceful.

**T**HOUGHTFULLY Duncan strolled away to his hotel. He was still fascinated by the picture—the medieval ship with her inscrutable Arab master and the old secrets that surrounded her. At dinner he tried to make his companion—a prosaic Scottish engineer—discuss the dhow trade along the East African coast.

"Aye, they're mysterious little ships," admitted the Scot. "They put into creeks that the steamers never visit, and they cer-

tainly cover enormous distances. If a cyclone sinks a fleet o' them we hear nought about it here. Their cargoes don't figure in the trade returns, and the Portuguese don't worry them much for papers and suchlike."

Duncan wandered out again through the sandy streets of Beira to dream over the dhow. When he reached the rickety wharf where she was moored the Arab master was still on deck. A lantern swinging from the boom made his golden slippers shine, and revealed the chessboard over which he was meditating. Surely an intricate problem, Duncan decided, to rivet the attention of a player whose ancestors understood chess before the crusaders brought the game back with them to Europe. He drew closer to study the pieces, for chess was his own game, just as romance was his absorbing quest.

"No—the knight now!" exclaimed Duncan involuntarily as the Arab made a false move. "Checkmate!" For the Arab had taken the advice that came suddenly from the dark wharf, and the problem was solved. Now he peered toward the voice, saw the hesitating figure in white drill, and rose to smile a welcome.

"Sayid bin Omar invites you to a game," he said in slow English. The double hand-clasp of Islam, two cups of exquisite Mocha coffee, and they arranged the pieces of carved ivory for the contest. In the bows the Swahili seamen were crooning a song of the tropic ocean. From the native quarter sounded a fast crescendo of drum taps, and all around the frogs of the creek were singing their staccato chorus. From overhead the menacing whine of the fever-bearing mosquitoes filled the muggy air. A strange setting for the play between the young Englishman and the aged Arab.

They struggled with sharpened wits for mastery until the café lights vanished and the Swahilis had spread out their mats under the moon to sleep. When it was all over Sayid bin Omar smoked his hemp with slow relish and spoke of his voyages. Then Duncan knew that his own roving had not been in vain.

For the wanderings of the dhow *El Salaam*, described by this seawise old navigator, would have made a page of Arabian legend. Isles of birds and turtles where no man dwelt she had visited. Her antiquated hull had rested for a night off an island inhabited only by packs of wild dogs

that had lost their barks. Not a coral atoll from the Red Sea to Madagascar that this nomad had not lifted during her years of restless odyssey.

Sayid bin Omar, silently observing the excitement in Duncan's eyes, made his narrative more real by unfolding a creased parchment covered with old-fashioned names—names that have long vanished from modern admiralty charts. Some were Portuguese, like Sofala and St. Miguel, but most were Arabic, bestowed by early explorers out of Muscat, forefathers of Sayid bin Omar. Yet when he had scanned the chart from Bab el Mandeb to Pemba, Duncan still did not know why the dhow had come to Beira, or where in the maze of queer names she would presently sail.

"They tell me there is little for dhows to carry since the slave trade was stopped and the gold mines of Ophir passed to the white man," he said at last. "What freights do you find now?"

Sayid bin Omar pondered. "Supposed you sailed with me," he suggested, his far-seeing black eyes fixed on Duncan's face; "could you look back only on a dream and never speak of what you learned?"

"I'll promise that," replied Duncan solemnly. He was so plainly honest that the Arab, with his penetrating sense of character, held out his hands.

"A promise is a debt," quoted Sayid bin Omar. "We leave on the tide to-morrow—and there will be time for many games of chess as we sail north." Thus was the compact made between instinctive friends.

**T**HE *El Salaam*, it seemed, had put into Beira only to replenish her water jars. While the morning was still cool Sayid bin Omar steered downstream for open sea.

Enchanted, Duncan watched his own civilization drop astern. A bugle shrilled somewhere in the brown upper works of the B. I. liner, calling the passengers to breakfast. Strings of lighters were sending load after load of copra into the holds of a paunchy Clan boat. There was a deserted sailing ship with yards untrimmed and rigging slack. A Portuguese tug with a large red-and-green ensign, burning bad coal. Native fishing craft rocking in the estuary. Then the last buoy came abreast and the *El Salaam* lifted to the offshore

swell that smelled keenly salt and promised liberty after the heat of the river port.

With the drone of a southerly wind in her sails, the dhow was now alive and filled with a purpose, a sense of direction. Fresh strips of green coast appeared, here a white beach and there an island with its tuft of palms. Northward through the reef-scarred ocean swung the *El Salaam*, timbers creaking their song of wide oceans, bows falling with gentle hissings into the warm rollers. Duncan stared and listened, until he felt himself being lulled into tune with the rhythm of this new world.

At noon Sayid bin Omar found the sun's altitude with an astrolabe of polished wood that probably came out of some looted Portuguese three decker. The Swahilis had speared a sleepy turtle, and there were yams and bananas to round off the meal.

Faint smudges on the horizon showed the tracks of the coastwise steamers. The dhow sailed in the pale-green shallows with the sure hand of her master taking her clear of sand spits and coral reefs, but never far from land. Once Duncan's curiosity forced him to ask when they would sight the place—that unknown and secret harbor—for which the *El Salaam* was bound.

"Do not count the days of a month which do not belong to thee," spoke Sayid bin Omar, the fatalist. And indeed it was not hard to be patient on that sunny, friendly sea.

Day after lazy day of blue and gold, of West and Eastern wisdom poured into Western ears, night after night of brilliant tropic stars. Duncan sometimes wondered how the dhow would fare in one of the sudden cyclones that ravage the East African coast, but it was plain that such thoughts never troubled Sayid bin Omar. "There are no devils save imaginary devils," he told Duncan—a creed which Duncan immediately decided to take back to his old life when he returned.

Sayid bin Omar sailed fearlessly, drawing his philosophy from the Koran and the religion of Islam. Each morning before dawn he summoned his crew to prayer with a deep call of "*Allaho Akbar!*" In the evening, when the sun touched the blue sea rim, he would act as priest again, and reverently Duncan would watch the line of Moslems facing Mecca, drooping to the deck with their foreheads touching the

woods, kneeling until the last words were chanted. "Peace and the mercy of Allah be on you!"

The compass on board the *El Salaam* had only eight points, but on that primitive card and the mercy of Allah, Sayid bin Omar placed his trust. While it was dark one morning the dhow turned her bows from the coast and headed toward the faint line between sky and sea. Then Sayid bin Omar spoke:

"When the sun lights the water this day you will see the end of our voyage," he announced. "You will know why the dhows still cross the ocean to reach this coast. It is a revelation which you must always carry behind the closed doors of your memory because of the promise you made. Now it will be necessary for you to dress as an Arab. I know that you will not betray us, but my brothers may be displeased if I bring a stranger to the secret lagoon. You must be careful—and silent."

Duncan draped himself in cool white robes. The sun had tanned his lean face, but he stained it darker still and covered his fair hair with a turban.

"Your eyes are too blue," declared Sayid bin Omar. "Take these dark spectacles." Then, studying the change in his guest, he gave his approval. "Now you might safely visit the tomb of the Prophet in Mecca."

When day laid open the color of the living scene, Duncan observed a fleet of dhows all shaping courses toward some unseen spot ahead. The climbing sun revealed their destination. It was a long dark line, seen now and then through the spray that rose from each wave crest—a line that became more firm, gained depth and detail, and finally became an island of coral with groves of coconut palms and a cluster of huts, dominated by the faint uplifted finger of a gold-tipped minaret.

"The secret harbor of the dhows," said Sayid bin Omar, pride in his quiet voice.

**A**S the *El Salaam* sailed close under the lee of the shore, Duncan discovered that the island was shaped like a horseshoe with one narrow break in the pink barrier. The reef lay so low on the emerald of the water that he could see over the coral, into the lagoon beyond. Here many dhows rode at anchor—two hundred at least, with sails stowed and men stirring

busily on their decks. Between the dhows and the beach glided scores of canoes.

Sayid bin Omar put the helm up for the entrance. In a moment the ocean swell had passed and the *El Salaam* was picking her way through the crowded anchorage. The anchor splashed into water so clear that Duncan observed the flukes gripping the clean sand on the floor of the lagoon. In this sheltered harbor no typhoon could play havoc with the Arab craft.

Duncan was longing to feel the land underfoot again after days of endless motion, and when Sayid bin Omar left the dhow he went on shore with him. A fine sight the beach was—a clearing house for all the riches of the tropics. Stacks of ivory, the tusks of long-dead herds, so Sayid bin Omar explained. When an elephant is dying, after its hundreds of years in the forests of Africa, it goes pounding across country to one of the lonely graveyards of its kind. White hunters never find these immense stores of vague legend. Only the natives know, and they barter the precious relics of the jungle with Arab traders. To the secret harbor of the dhows comes the ivory to be shipped to those craftsmen of the East who carve it back into the monstrous shapes of elephants.

Great heaps of spices—rarer and costly spices beloved by the wealthy epicures of Persia and India. Piles of ebony and sandalwood. Stores for the dhows about to embark on the long ocean passage to the north. Limes and rice for them, fruit to ward off scurvy, fresh vegetables and meat. Not in Liverpool or Marseilles could the urgent task of preparing ships for sea have been carried out with more intense vigor.

Under a palm avenue an Eastern village had grown up, a mosque and white houses with overhanging balconies, green jalousies and flat roofs for evening meditation. Here Duncan, in his silent wanderings, found several markets. In one, pearls were being sold—pearls such as Cleopatra might have envied, pure crystals with rainbow tints and black gems shot through with radiance. In another a throng chattered for pearl shell—the greenish mother-of-pearl that decorates the thrones of sultans. The lagoon, Duncan learned, was a bed of shell where tough Swahili divers filled

their sacks in the seaweed forest fathoms down. Sharks did not often enter this ring of water, but there were giant clams that shut suddenly and trapped a man who carelessly touched their sensitive mouths.

Duncan was about to pass through the arched doorway of another doomed market building when he felt the restraining hand of Sayid bin Omar on his arm. "In there I dare not take you," whispered the Arab. "You have seen how we trade—that must be enough."

One tantalizing glimpse Duncan had, and then he was forced to hurry after his guide. In that second or two he had seen a tense crowd grouped round a gigantic pair of scales.

Sayid bin Omar, after long reflection on the way to the dhow, turned to Duncan. "One more game of chess, one more meal together, my friend, and we will sail back to the coast."

And that night the *El Salaam* dropped the secret harbor under the horizon and headed for a port where steamers load their cargoes with cranes and winches. Not pearls and unknown treasure, but unromantic copra, hides and coffee.

**T**HE night swept past them, and dawn revealed the coast. For Duncan it was a night of longing and regrets and puzzled reverie. Only in memory now could he recapture the romance of those glowing days and throbbing moments Sayid bin Omar had given him. He tried to thank the old Arab as the dhow came to anchor in a creek below the town.

Sayid bin Omar listened with a smile in his fine sea-wrinkled eyes. "It will be good to read a letter from your cold land in the north," he murmured. "A letter is half a meeting. Now I will answer the question you have not asked." And he told Duncan of the treasure that was being weighed in the last market—of the gold from the ancient workings in the African bush.

"Peace and the mercy of Allah be on you," said the Arab as they parted. Through a mist Duncan watched the dhow vanishing into the blue distance—back into an age which has not changed since the days of Solomon. "Strange craft—slaves and gold made fine cargoes."

# The Lost Boat Survivor

By T. Jenkins Hains

A Complete Novelette



On the Martin Vas rocks.

## CHAPTER I.

**T**AWNEY" SNAH watched the white thing come slowly in through the surf. When it rolled over and over in the rush of foam he saw at once that it was a boat, a ship's boat. The craft rolled sluggishly in the slatch between the seas and was thoroughly swamped, down to her gunwhales when she lay on her keel, and only showing a white side when turning over. No oars, no bottom boards showed near her. She looked as though she had been in the sea a long time, for her paint was dull, washed off almost, showing spots of bare cedar.

Sniah pondered, watching her. He sat in the shade of a coconut tree and stretched at ease, his bare legs lying in the soft warm sand. It was no use to hurry matters. The boat would come in on the beach soon when it was washed up in the surf. No use going out to it and hauling it up on the sand until it came all the way in. It was too hot to exert oneself a

great deal, and although that boat might mean the difference between life and death to Sniah, he tried to be unconcerned about it and refused to be excited.

It was plainly a ship's boat. He tried to catch a glimpse of a name. They usually had them painted on either bow or stern in black letters. No name showed at all. The sides were just white where the paint had held, and he judged that the boat had been in the sea for a long time to get so sea washed. A broken line, the painter, trailed from the breast hook in the bow. That line alone told a story, for it was dark and looked rotten with age; it had evidently been submerged for a long time until the hemp turned color. A number showed in black on one side of the bow, and he had a chance to read it. It was "No. 2." That was all, but it confirmed his original idea of its being a ship's boat. It was small boat No. 2, and it was coming ashore.

But the surf was very heavy. It was always heavy here on the Martin Vas



rock, about twenty-odd miles northeast of Trinidad, seven hundred miles distant from the coast of Brazil, the nearest continental land. Trinidad was a cable station, but it was too far off to signal, and almost out of sight even from the top of the rock—the isle upon which he was marooned. The Martin Vas rocks stretched away for miles into the deep southern ocean out of the path of ships. Only whalers came in at times and took aboard turtles and water.

Trinidad had been the subject of controversy at one time, it was the island Baron Harden-Hickey had declared himself king of; but as his subjects were giant turtles and sea birds, he had never taken up residence. Thereafter the British had used it as a cable station, and it was visited at intervals in calm weather. The Martin Vas rock upon which Sniah found himself was not very distant from Trinidad Island, but as he could not swim the distance, he might as well have been upon the moon for isolation. He had been upon the rocky islet now for six months, subsisting upon a sort of bean which grew on the higher parts where the land was fertile, birds' eggs, and turtles. Turtles were large and plentiful, and were unafraid.

The greatest trouble was that surf. It rose like a wall at all times, and rolled shoreward upon the shelving coral ledges which stood out like dark or white teeth in the bursts just a little way from the rocky shore. The steady breath of the southeast trade wind swept the ocean, and before it rolled the slow but powerful sea. Unending seas and the deep, thunderous roar of the southern ocean had filled his ears until the dull, roaring diapason became part of his life. The surf was always both strong and dangerous.

He watched the overturned boat now with this in mind. He would only venture out into it after the craft had come through the worst of the seas and was in shallow water.

Lying in nearly twenty-one south latitude, this Trinidad is not the island under that name where asphalt exists in a huge lake. The asphalt Trinidad is another place entirely.

Sniah had just reacted from a wild and passionate outburst and he watched the sunken ship's boat furtively, hardly realizing that what he saw was real. He had stood on the rock top each morning now,

and, with hands thrown upward, implored his gods to rescue him from his situation.

"Save me—save me before I go mad," he would implore the blue sky above him, and the dull roar of the southern ocean, thunderous and sustained, was like the chorus of a litany, of a powerful following which gave his prayers amen.

And here was something which, after months of prayer, looked like an omen of help, of succor. His prayers would perhaps be answered after all. He rose, and, throwing his naked arms high above his head, screamed his prayer again for help; and again he was aware of the dull, thunderous roar which followed upon his regained attention. He must help himself, so without further hesitation he flung aside the garment he wore about his waist and made his way down the rock to the edge of the sea.

The coral ledges swarmed with sharks. He must be careful. Yet he must not allow that boat to get in broadside to the beach and crash down too heavily, or it would soon be matchwood. It had, apparently, not struck any of the jagged teeth of the outlying rocks. His rock had a shore line of a few hundred fathoms, running almost straight, with a pure-white coral-sand bottom which ran clear up to the edge of the clifflike face of the rock, and upon which a boat could be hauled with room sufficient to keep it from smashing headlong into the rock itself.

The steady bursting seas had ground this sand out of the coral. Centuries of pounding and rolling shoreward had hammered it down to a hard surface, over which the last inshore breakers swept upward and foamed and roared. Through this he must steer the foundered craft, and by the aid of the upsweep of the seas he would finally haul and drag it clear and right it. Then it would be but a question of launching her again properly and keeping her afloat until he drove her outside the coral reefs which surrounded the rock proper. He could go free. Far away on the horizon he could see, from the top of his rock, the dim, blue, ragged outline of Trinidad. He thought this bit of ragged sky line was probably the continent of South America, for he had no way of finding out just where he was, and Trinidad is about five miles long, which gave it a sizable appearance.

The swamped boat came in slowly. The

seas were quite moderate this day, and she was lifted over two dark outlying points without hanging up on the outer reef. Then it was just a question of waiting until the scend of the seas, the sweep of the inner breakers, would wash her ashore. Sniah waded in until the seas broke over him, and followed the boat slowly along the sandy shore. There was apparently some slight current, for the boat drifted clear down to the end of the rock before he dared venture out for it. It might go past and so on out to sea again; this dread roused him to sudden action. He pushed his way out and swam a few strokes to grasp the bow just as a breaker swept over.

Luckily he seized the trailing painter, and with this in hand, he swam back to a footing and hove desperately upon the line. Slowly but surely the boat swung toward him, and he made headway to the shore. A sea swept over again and hove the craft well into shallow water. Sniah now seized the bow and swung it around toward the beach, pulling with all his strength. A following breaker swept the boat up until in its backwash the keel struck solidly; and, as the water receded, the swamped craft fell over on its side and allowed plenty of water to wash out of it. Sniah saw that the bottom was intact, that there were no holes burst through, and with mighty efforts he hauled on the painter, taking it to a rock pinnacle and getting a turn to take up the slack. Another sea filled the boat again, but he managed to heave her up a few feet farther in the wash of foam.

After half an hour of this kind of work he had the satisfaction of seeing his find now almost clear of the undertow on the shore, and he made the line fast and got to work getting the water out of the boat. After that he dragged and hove, making a few inches at a time, and finally he worked the craft up high and dry above the wash and righted her upon her keel. He had worked for a couple of hours and was hot and tired, but he only stopped to get his wind back while he examined his find. She was a ship's boat, all right, and quite small—probably a dinghy for going ashore in, for she was only about fourteen feet long, whereas a whaleboat was twice that length.

He was glad she was small, for a whaleboat would have been too much for a man alone on that shore. In tropic weather a

small boat was as good as a large one when it came to standing an ordinary sea and wind. He knew he would be able to launch this craft again and go free. He would not be in too much of a hurry. There were specially calm days when the surf was not bad for a small boat, but he would make sure, for a wreck would be fatal to his chances. Yet he would not leave the boat on that narrow strip of sand too long. It might breeze up, and sometimes the surf broke clear over it, and that would smash the boat against the rocky cliff.

He went dutifully to the rock top and knelt down with bowed head, and, in the sunlit silence, gave prayers for his find, prayers for his rescue; and, rising up again, he threw his hands aloft with a wild gesture, facing the blue void overhead, through which the little trade clouds traveled slowly toward a goal which was never attained.

## CHAPTER II.

**H**AWNEY SNAIH had been second mate of the *Rio Grande*, the passenger steamer which had burned and sunk just north of the River Plate some months before this. The boatload of passengers and seamen—there had been twenty-six of them altogether—had been thrown ashore on the Martin Vas rock during the night with a heavy sea running and half a gale blowing out of the trade wind. They had run for miles, for days, and this had been their end—a crash in the dark, and the rolling surf in which they had all drowned, except the second mate and a young couple just married and on their wedding voyage. The young man from Buenos Aires, a Mr. Warthier, was an Argentine of German parentage, and his girl wife was American. Both were young, not over twenty-two, had never been away from home before, and had never been exposed to any hardship.

They had made a shelter, with Sniah's help, at one end of the rock, about a quarter of a mile from where the second officer elected to stay; but as the rock was small, they came in daily contact and often ate their meals together, Sniah doing most of the producing of food. He had saved a knife, a hatchet, and some line from the wreck of the whaleboat; also some matches in a waterproof case—but these had long since been used up, and for three months

they had been without fire. As fire is the most essential thing next to food for castaways, they had degenerated to eating raw turtle meat, drying it in the sun until it was almost like leather. Fish also they had been eating in a sun-baked state, and with the peculiar beans which grew high upon its rocky crests, they had managed to live somehow without quite starving to death. Turtles abounded and laid eggs enough to supply a regiment. They buried them in the sand of the shore, where they were easily found and dug up. The knife was rigged into a fish spear, and Sniah found it easy to capture fish in the shoal water. The turtles were rushed when on the shore and turned over on their backs, where they were dispatched at their leisure. A big turtle would often weigh five hundred pounds, and the steaks were cut and dried out in the hot sunshine until the meat was not unlike the jerked beef of the Pampas. It was not a satisfactory diet, but it had kept all hands—the three—alive, and now had come the small boat, the possible means of rescue.

As soon as Sniah had the boat far enough up to be safe to leave alone he made his way down to the eastern end of the rock to notify the pair of his luck. Warthier could help him with the craft, even though the fellow was soft and unable to do very heavy work. The two could launch it on a smooth sea, and the girl could be placed aboard. There were no oars, no sails, and it would be a question as to how they would give the craft headway enough to make that twenty-odd miles to that distant blue and ragged line which told of land in the southwest. Trinidad looked, of course, like the island it was, but they hoped that it might be part of the mainland. They had no idea of their whereabouts except in a general way; Sniah had traced their course northward without compass or chart, for their boat had been equipped with neither. The disaster had occurred in the middle of the night, and the boats had become separated in the darkness. Then had come the squalls and bad weather, driving them along before a wild sea which gave them no choice but to run before it.

Warthier was sleeping when Sniah approached the rocky shelter made of stones. The girl was out on a projecting ledge, lying in the sunshine, her body more than half nude because their clothes had long

ago given up the fight against the weather and constant use. Sniah was clad in a loin cloth and his bare chest and shoulders were burned as brown as mahogany from exposure. He was a very strong man, well muscled up, a good athlete, and a very able seaman. He was forty and grizzled, and he always kept aloof from the pair, whose privacy he respected. He had been a good officer, and knew his position regarding passengers. Even under the existing conditions he felt that he must consider their welfare first. He hailed the girl from a rocky shelf above her.

"I've got a boat—we'll go as soon as we can get away," he called loudly.

"Got what?" answered the girl, raising herself partly and gazing at him.

"Small boat came ashore a while ago, and I've hauled her up on the sand. We'll get started as soon as we can—get over to that land there." He pointed at the distant blue outline of Trinidad.

The girl sprang up and stood on her feet. She had a beautiful full figure, browned and smooth in the sunlight. She had kept her health. A short skirt made of her dress and helped out with grass reached to her knees. Sniah thought her beautiful, a magnificent naiad of the rock.

"I'll call Walt—what?" she said.

"Yes, get him awake and we'll start making something to navigate her with and sail away," said Sniah.

Warthier was a large blond boy, more than six feet tall. His father had been academic, the type of German who is most efficient in certain lines of business. Walter had been brought up carefully in rather luxurious surroundings. They called him Walt. He had married Alice Renshaw a week before starting on the fatal voyage which had ended disastrously for so many of the *Rio's* passengers. With the rest, he had sailed from the Argentine for London, bound for Paris to enjoy a somewhat prolonged honeymoon. He had come through the ship's disaster alive—the burning of the vessel, and also the wild night in the small boat. The ship had been posted as lost with all hands, pieces of her upper works having been found in a partly burned state. And now, after six months on a desert rock seven hundred miles from the mainland, he was still alive.

Surrounded by the warm ocean, the temperature of the rock seldom changed more than a few degrees during the entire year.

Clothes were not a necessity, except to protect the body from the sun. In the shelter built of broken stones and thatched with brush and grass, Walt lay sleeping in a garment made from the wings of gannets and man-of-war birds, a weird and somewhat startling costume, but answering the purpose of a skirt.

His wife aroused him with the news of the second mate's find. Sniah lived down at the other end of the rock a full quarter of a mile distant, and together the three made their way toward the sandy shore where Sniah had hauled in the boat. There were a few palms growing along the edge of the surf. Coconuts seldom grow back from the shore. They are often washed about for a long time and, floating, come in on a sea and are swept up high enough to grow in the sand of the high-water mark.

They were of little use to a boat, for they could not be fashioned into oars. The trees or growth of the upland part of the rock which extended for several acres high above the sea in a sort of plateau, were almost equally useless. There was nothing that could take the place of tough pine or spruce for oars, and the single hatchet and knife—which was used as a fish spear—were hardly tools that would work the gnarled and knotty growths. Yet something had to be done, and at once.

Sniah had saved some of the wood from the wreck of the *Rio's* boat, and had been using it as a roof for his shelter down at the other end of the rock. One board—a bottom board more than a fathom long—was shaped quickly into a sort of paddle. A side plank was chopped into a rough sort of blade for Walt to use forward. With one paddling aft and another forward, Sniah thought he might make the distance to the island which showed on the horizon.

The strong, brisk southeast trade would be well to the eastward just now, and that would bring the wind aft. He knew he would never be able to drive the craft against a breeze and sea with the almost useless gear, but with a following sea and fair wind, he would be able to steer and cross the breeze somewhat with it on the port quarter.

"It's a chance, but I vote we take it," he said.

"Yes, so do I," said Walt; "anything

to get away from here before we starve or go crazy."

"Yes," said Alice; "but I remember not long ago you said that you would be happy with just me on a tropic island, far from any one—just us two." She smiled the remembrance.

"We had never tried it then," grinned her husband, "but if you want to, I'll stick here with you and let the mate go for help."

"Not so you'll notice it any," said the girl. "I care a lot for you, Walt, but after all, we are partly civilized, you know—and just love—love in the raw— Well, it's all right, perhaps, in books, but I'm strong for a dress and proper living. We'll go together or not at all."

Sniah smiled at them. He was ready to go at once, but it was better to wait a little. They went to the beach where the boat lay, and there they cut a few branches of a tree for poles and a couple of sections from a coconut palm for rollers to run the boat down the sand quickly. Their belongings were not many, and they were thrown aboard. Then they waited until Sniah decided what to do.

"The trade will die down toward evening," said he, "and that'll be the best time to run her off. We'll watch for a smooth, a slatch, and try her and see can we get clear. Soon as we get her off we'll run well to leeward of the reefs, and then it's paddle all night. The missis can sleep in the bottom of the boat; but we'll have to make it go during the dark, when the sun won't hurt us so much. It'll be cool enough, and eight or nine hours of paddling will do the trick all right. Can you stand that much?"

"Sure I can—I'll have to, anyhow; that's all there is about it. I'm tough enough when it comes to a pinch," said Walt.

Water, of course, had been their greatest trouble. The water breaker of the *Rio's* boat had floated in, and for days they at first subsisted on what was left in it. Afterward they found a depression in the rocky plateau which held rain, and this foul-tasting and guano-soaked stuff they had been forced to drink. It had rained often, and they had scooped up what was the least foul and kept it in the breaker. More by luck than anything else had they lived, for they seldom had a week's supply ahead.

The rock was at times covered with

gannets, gulls and man-of-war birds, and the presence of the strange human animals did not in the least deter the birds from nesting and hatching out their broods. This fouled the entire top of the rock, but they had finally managed to keep a sunken place clean enough to catch water fit at least to maintain life. They had become accustomed to eating a dozen or more raw fresh eggs daily, and this probably did much to quench the thirst caused by the torrid sun. It was an almost liquid food. They piled a few hundred turtle eggs and a like amount of birds' eggs into the stern sheets of the small boat and now waited for the breeze to slacken and allow the surf to die down a little. This would not be much, but they could not take chances.

The turtle eggs had the usual leathery skin or shell, and would not break easily. These, with a lot of dried turtle beef, would last them for several days. The water breaker was filled and placed aboard. They were ready long before dark.

About sundown the breeze slackened off a little, and Sniah decided to try for it. The rollers were placed under the keel and the three took hold of the gunwales, Walt and his wife on one side, and the mate on the other. They shoved the boat down into the sea and waded out, holding her against the wash of the inner breakers, standing up to their armpits. Then Sniah gave the order and all shoved with their full strength and climbed aboard. The two men grasped the poles and shoved her out into deep water, then paddled furiously for the open sea beyond the reef. She went clear, but shipped plenty of water. They were off.

With the quartering wind, they headed for the distant land beyond the horizon, and soon settled down to steady paddling. Alice bailed the water from the boat, and soon they were going dry and safely toward a new world.

#### CHAPTER III

**T**HE sperm whaler, *Georgia Hope*, was cruising to windward of Trinidad Island and had about filled. Two or three more fish would finish her loading for the year's cruise, and she would start for her distant home in New Bedford, Massachusetts, in the United States. Captain Greene, her commander was well satisfied with his luck, and his only fault just at the present was found with Bill

Spurling, his efficient mate, who had lost a small boat. They had been towing two whalers astern, going slowly along under topsails and fore-topmast staysail, and the captain's dinghy had been tied fast to the stern of the second whaleboat, the three boats towing easily in the smooth sea.

The *Georgia Hope* was almost full up with sperm oil, and as there was only stowage space aboard for half a hundred more barrels, they lowered all their boats when they struck into a school of blackfish. Blackfish are not large, but they are proper whales, and a good big one will net a few barrels. Shooting them with the harpoon gun was like shooting mosquitoes with a shotgun. All boats that would hold men were lowered, and every one who could throw an iron went into that school.

Mitka Jarns, of the mate's boat, threw three gun irons in rapid succession into three blackfish. He had all three pulling at various angles, and almost lost his boat. The other boats shot and threw irons into a dozen more fish, killed and buoyed their carcasses, and still went after the school, which swam slowly away toward Trinidad.

That night, after all boats had been accounted for, the ship had enough cutting in ahead to fill up entirely. The boats were allowed to tow astern, and the dinghy was made fast to the last boat. Only two of the boats were hoisted in on the davits. There had been five boats out, and three were towing when a squall struck the ship.

"Bull" Spurling was a proper mate, but as the ship was almost ready for the run home, he had tried to wear out worthless gear while lying around in the Martin Vas grounds, where the winds were steady and not too strong. He had allowed the fore-topsail parrel to chafe a lot on the yard for lack of chafing gear. The groaning of the tye block aloft should have warned him that while there was plenty of oil on deck there was little aloft, and when the squall struck it had a strong puff in it. The fore-topsail came aback, and the parrel jammed. The halyard was let go, but the yard would not come down on the cap.

"Hard up on the helm—hard up!" yelled the skipper, who had jumped on deck at the outcry. The wheel was put hard up, and, with the main-topsail still full and the fore-topmast staysail pulling, the ship's head was swung off and she was run to leeward, while the fore-topsail thrashed and thundered and threatened to split in half.

However, it soon filled, and, with the sail half lowered, the ship went through the sea at a good nine knots, with the boats towing astern on taut lines and riding on their heels with the rush. The light from the try-works showed a weird scene. It was not nearly daylight yet, and it was Spurling's watch on deck. The crew worked oil watch and watch during good weather after a catch.

"Up on that topsail yard, one of you!" bawled Spurling. "Get up there and clear that parrel!"

A man sprang into the weather ratlines to obey. He carried a good-sized piece of blubber in his hand for grease. In the light of the try-works the little gold earrings in Spurling's ears shone and glinted against the hairs of his face and neck. He was an angry mate, and his vocabulary was something loud and grand, expressive and articulate.

The men at the halyards hove strongly to start the jammed gear. The topsail tye parted and down came the yard in a mass of thrashing canvas and jerking lines. Luckily the man going aloft had not gained the yard. He was safe, and clung for his life.

"Glew up the main-topsail," roared the skipper. "All hands, there—weather topsail brace—ease the sheets!"

Meanwhile the ship, having run off before the wind, was in no danger whatever, but the towing boats were pulling hard on the towlines. By the time the men aloft had cleared up the mess and Spurling had worn out his voice, one of the small boats was missing. This was the dinghy which was towing at the end of the line. Most of the blackfish blubber had been sent on deck, being cut in before midnight, and very little oil was lost by the time the breeze let up and all hands had a chance to look about them.

"How's she head now?" asked the skipper of the helmsman, when he came aft again from the fracas.

"Nor'west three quarters west, sir," said the man.

"That'll bring us right to Trinidad about daylight," said Greene to Spurling. "Heave her to again in about an hour and let her drift. We'll cruise about in the morning and pick up that boat and then stop off at the island for water and wood before we start north."

"Aye, aye, sir," said the mate; "but if

you would only throw away a lot of that rotten gear you've got aboard we wouldn't have this mess. That boat's painter was rotten—or it wouldn't have parted."

"Who's buying this gear—you or the owners?" snapped Greene.

"Well, you hold me responsible for it, and that ain't fair when it's no good," countered Spurling.

"Aw, I haven't said anything—yet, have I? Hoist them other boats in and look to their lines before you trust them astern—that's all."

**S**PURLING backed the main yard just before sunrise, and the *Georgia Hope* lay hove to, riding easily in the trade swell. Her boats were hoisted in, and after breakfast Greene laid a course athwart the wind to cruise to and fro on a line to leeward of where the dinghy would most surely be. Far to leeward a bluish line, ragged and hardly discernible, rose from the horizon's rim—it was Trinidad Island. After breakfast the try-works were taken down and the bricks thrown overboard. The ship was almost full up and would boil down no more whale blubber. The false deck, where barrels had been worked, was also torn up and piled away for dunnage.

The whole deck was cleared and worked over all day by one watch, and the other spent their time aloft reeving new gear for the run home. Old braces were sent down, new ones rove off, old clewlines were sent into the shakings bag and new ones sent aloft; even the old topgallant sail on the main, which had done duty for more than a year, was now sent down and a new one bent for the run home.

All the time this was taking place, Greene was sending the ship back and forth across the wind, while keeping a lookout for his small boat. The man on the masthead lookout, where he had spent so long a time looking for whales, was now looking for the white sheen of the dinghy, her white sides against the deep blue of the tropic ocean. But the day ended and the boat was not sighted. Greene stood about on the port tack and let the ship drift slowly all night, and the next day he again stood back and forth, looking for his boat. He was gradually working to leeward, and the island now showed plainly. It was also now plainly a case of lost boat.

"It's strange where that blamed boat could have gone to," said Greene on the second day of the search.

"Well, it was blowing right hard—she might have gone faster than you think, for she was mighty light. Anyhow, we won't find her now. She's either sunk or gone far to leeward. Maybe she fetched up on this here island. It's almost dead to looard of where we was at," said Spurling.

"We'll stand along to-day, and if we don't sight her we'll go in and get our wood and water for the home run," said the skipper.

#### CHAPTER IV.

**D**URING the first night, Sniah and his two passengers paddled fast and hard to gain the distant land they had seen. They were almost to windward of it, but still had a little southing to make. It was easy to head a true course by remembering to keep the wind on the port quarter. The wind coming from the southeast steadily would mean that the boat was making better than west. She would have to make a nearly westerly course to be sure of hitting the island, but as the wind had been well to the eastward, and at one time that afternoon well up to east by south, Sniah had only to use due caution and keep the wind as well forward as the boat would run with. Of course, they could not go to windward with those makeshift paddles.

They could keep her going with the wind, but not either against it or right on the beam—it must be far enough aft to send her along and not retard her. At night the land was quite invisible, but it was cooler to paddle, and there was really no cause to believe that the wind would shift.

That is what must have happened. Some of those small squalls like what had made trouble for the *Georgia* must have sent the wind a few points to the southward. Anyhow, in the morning the sunrise showed Sniah and Walt that they had passed the land they had headed for and were now to leeward at least five or six miles. Sniah threw up his hands as he stood in the bow and prayed aloud.

"Paddle, fool; don't stop to pray," yelled Walt from his place aft.

Alice awoke from where she lay in the

stern sheets and gazed about her in alarm. They were indeed in desperate straits—to leeward of the land and with nothing but the light paddles to drive the boat up against the wind and sea which was now running strong and regular with the breath of the trade.

"I prayed for this boat—an' I got her," said Sniah. "I'll pray for help and I'll get it—you see."

"Man, pray all you want, but don't stop paddling," sang out Walt, and he drove his own paddle fiercely into the water and tried to force the boat ahead and to windward.

They had really gotten well to leeward of the island, but right to leeward there was little or no wind and sea. This made matters better than they had hoped for. Still, five or six miles distant, the island stood high and forbidding, hazy and blue in the morning light. The sun came up red and tinged the cloud banks a rosy hue. The high table-land of the rock could be seen now, and it was giving them shelter. The boat was going ahead slowly toward the land, coming in from the northwest, or lee, side, and Sniah saw that he would probably make it—gain the land after all. The horror of an open boat seven hundred miles from land with little food and no oars had struck him forcibly, and he had, as usual, prayed for help. But he was not a man to give up to prayer alone. He dug in his paddle and strove mightily and together they sent the boat slowly along. The birds' eggs in the stern sheets had been smashed in the surf, but the turtle eggs, being of a leathery covering, were fit to eat. They all ate them and chewed turtle beef, washing it down with water.

It was now seen that there must be a relief. Neither of the men could stop paddling, for if the bowman stopped the boat would swing off. If the stern man stopped, the boat would not steer. After an hour, with sweat pouring down from their faces and the sun high enough to burn, they decided that Mrs. Walt must do her share. She was set to paddling aft to steer the boat, and now they took turns relieving each other. This gave the one relieved a chance to get his wind and cool off for a little. In the main they held to the job and paddled steadily.

They paddled for hours—for days, it seemed. But the land apparently stood

away, miles distant. They were growing exhausted. By the time the sun rose overhead and it was noon, Walt gave up and dropped in the boat.

"Take his paddle, Mrs. Alice; take it, and go along slowly—we're getting in, and that's certain," cheered Sniah. The wife took up the labor and kept on.

As a matter of fact, Sniah knew he was nearing the land at last. The wind was dying away, the sea had already gone down to a gentle swell, and he knew that he was being sheltered by the high and forbidding shores of Trinidad. The high, cliff-like sides seemed distant, but that was an optical delusion; they were really now within a few miles, and suddenly they could make out the trees and also deep gullies in the rocky walls. The hazy blue of distance now took on the green of tropical verdure. They were coming slowly in. By afternoon even Sniah had to give up for a time. They let the boat drift while they rested and they were not three miles distant from the reef running alongside the shore. Sniah figured that with three more hours of labor at the rate of at least a mile an hour he would be right in the breakers.

He was mightily cheered, and spoke feelingly to Walt.

"Aw, I'm all in—I can't do any more," said the young man. "I'm not hard like you are."

"Yes, but you used to say, Walt, that you could live with me on a desert isle and be more happy than anywhere else on earth," said his wife. "You haven't quite made good. I bet Mr. Sniah could have stayed and won out with his girl."

"Lady," said Sniah, "I would be glad to go back and live with you on that rock through all eternity, but that is not for me—I'm not cut out for a married man."

"Say, listen, Mr. Mate, you seem to get rather personal—cut it out—quit that line of stuff; I don't quite approve of it," said Walt peevishly.

"I meant nothing but what I said," answered Sniah. "You know I'm not a trifle. I have done my duty to you both—haven't I?"

"Oh, sure. But cut out that marriage stuff with Alice here—too personal," said the young husband harshly. "This is no time to be flippan't."

"Listen, son, I don't mean to be flippan't," said Sniah.

Walt was too exhausted to continue the quarrel. He took up the bow paddle again, and both men set to and drove the small boat forward toward the distant shore. An hour of terrible work under the blistering sun and the surf was visible. It showed, bursting high against the coral reefs which lay outside the island proper. There was now almost no wind at all on this lee side of the land, and the boat made faster headway through the smooth swells which rose to a towering height and burst over the coral in a smother of foam. The sound reached them plainly now, the deep, dull thunder of the sea breaking over that reef. Sniah watched cautiously. To try to go through it would almost certainly mean an upset and a swamped boat. To remain outside was not to be considered. It was now late in the afternoon, and they would have to get in by dark or stay out all night.

They paddled steadily, slowly but surely in, and they came in close enough to see plainly that the surf was high and strong in spite of the lee.

"We are all good swimmers," said Sniah. "I think we had better rest up a bit and then run it, make a good try and get as far as we can. We can swim the rest of the way and be ashore at all events. What do you, both of you?"

"I'm too tired to do much in a strong sea," said Walt; "and I'm sure Alice can't do much either."

"Well, we can't lay off here," said Sniah; "that's sure."

"I'm good for what you two are," said Mrs. Walt with finality. "I can swim with either of you—perhaps better. I vote we go in, and go right now."

"We'll eat what we have left first," said the mate. "If she turns over, there won't be anything more until we meet some one. There might not be any one on that blamed island, anyhow. It's nothing but an island, and it's not more than five miles long by the looks of the shore. This old sheath knife of mine and that hatchet are not much to hustle grub with."

They ate heartily of the dried turtle meat and sucked what eggs they could in spite of their rawness. Then they drank all the water they could hold and calked the breaker so in case it came in they might find it again and get more out of it.

The sun was sinking low in the west when they started for the outer surf, which



was breaking about a quarter of a mile offshore. Between it and the beach was a foaming stretch where ragged heads broke through the white, and where swimming would be exceedingly dangerous.

Just as they started, Sniah stopped paddling and suddenly stood up in the bow. "Look!" he yelled.

Just around the headland of the island a tall shape came slowly. Beneath the white canvas showed the dark hull of the *Georgia Hope*. She was fully five miles distant, but she was heading off before the wind and coming around the point at a fast clip. She was running to leeward, and would soon be right up with the boat.

"That settles it. We'll stick right along out here!" yelled Walt.

"That's luck, indeed," said his wife. "I hope they see us and pick us up."

"What did I tell you?" said Sniah.

"Oh, blah—you give me a pain," said the young man.

"Pain, hell!" said Sniah. "I've prayed for a ship, and I've got one."

"Oh, have it your own way," said Walt; "but remember to keep this boat right in front of her. I want her to see us before dark."

"She's coming around to leeward and will certainly lay off the land to send in a boat. Looks like there's no harbor," said the mate.

They paddled easily to just keep way on the dinghy and have her heading to cross the path of the oncoming ship.

## CHAPTER V.

**T**HE *Georgia* ran down to Trinidad to get aboard her wood and water. Greene had given up all hope of finding his dinghy, and he decided to waste no more time hunting for it. The oil from a dozen or more blackfish he had recently killed nearly filled his cargo, and he was now going home to New Bedford. He had his try-works overboard and his decks cleared, and there were new sails aloft. Altogether, the *Georgia* was not a bad-looking ship, and would look better by the time her chief officer, Mr. Spurling, had gotten through with her. He would dress her up properly, polish her down, and paint her from trucks to water line before she reached the latitude of Cape Hatteras.

Just now he was busy with the watch

on deck handling canvas and looking for a place to leeward to make a landing on the island. He knew perfectly where he was. Trinidad was on all admiralty charts. But the surf was too heavy to try to land to windward, and the ship had been run off before it to go around to the leeward side of the island, where the surf would not be so high. It was growing late to make the shore, but the ship could lie off the land under easy sail and send in her boats at daylight. Land is not a pleasant thing for a deep-water sailor to get close to unless he knows for sure it is to windward of him in the darkness.

Mitka Jarns, the harpooner of Spurling's boat, was on lookout. He was an old whaleman with a keen eye.

"Go aloft there and keep a sharp lookout for that dinghy," said the mate. "It's a chance that she came to-looard and ye might see her before dark."

"I am der *zeeadler*—yes, sir, I'm der *zeeadler*—vot you call der sea eagle, yes; und if dot boat is afloat, Mr. Mate, I see ut," said Mitka as he went into the fore-top to look about. Spurling could hear him singing in a low tone, just a murmur:

"Whack fol der riddle diddle,  
Shoot 'im in der mittle.  
He vos der goot mans but he's gone—  
Det—det—det."

Spurling smiled. Mitka would see anything that floated within ten miles.

"Weather cro'jack brace," yelled Captain Greene. "Now, then, Mr. Spurling, stand by to brace her sharp on the larboard tack when we come around that head. I'm going to run her close in under that land and see if there's a decent place to send in a boat. Some surf, what?"

The men took their places and hauled, the ship swung up on the wind until she was well to windward of the rocky coast, then swung off again, and, with the wind well aft, ran down along the rocky shore line to look for a landing. The shore line was clear. Just high seas breaking and the foam flying until it formed a slight mist which obscured nothing. Greene settled down his topgallant sails after furling the lighter sails and then under topsails managed to navigate along the island.

She moved ahead slowly now, under topsails, and the setting sun shone upon her canvas. The loose upper canvas, belly-

ing out in the breeze into great balloons looked like captured trade clouds. The sea under the land was smooth, but still the swell caused the heavy surf to burst on the shore dangerously. It was a most desolate-looking shore. Myriads of sea birds came out to greet the ship, gannets, man-of-war birds with their shrill cries, and big bos'ns, with now and then a molly-hawk, screamed and squawked about the tops, annoying Mitka, who swore at them loudly to frighten them off. Under the land a slight squall brushed past with a hissing sound of rain, and it darkened the canvas in passing. Not a thing in the way of a bay or harbor showed on the coast, and Greene was disappointed. The island was not much over five miles long, and he was now well down to the leeward end of it.

The men had just taken their stations when Mitka hailed the deck. "Boat right ahead, zur—right ahead, zur!" he bawled from aloft.

That brought all hands up standing. Captain Greene grabbed his glasses and peered ahead. Spurling seized a backstay of the mizzen and looked, and the second mate jumped to the sheer pole to get a better view. Right over the jib-boom end lay a speck on the sea. The sinking sun shone on it and brought it out plainly as it lay right in the path of light between the ship and it.

"Dinghy right ahead, zur—our dinghy, zur!" bawled Mitka from aloft.

"Looks like there was some one in it. Now who could have stolen that boat, I want to know?" said the skipper.

"How could any one steal it? There ain't no one left this ship," said Spurling.

"Well, there's three people in that boat, and it's my dinghy all right—I can see the number on the bow. They didn't jump out of the sea, did they?"

"There might be mermaids about these here islands," said the second officer solemnly. "If they are, they'll jump overboard directly, and that'll be the last of them."

"The boat probably went ashore here, and them people just took it out for a row around," said the skipper in disgust. He turned to the helmsman. "Keep her right for the small boat—right ahead—steady as you go."

"Steady, sir," came the answer.

"Get a line ready, Mr. Spurling, we'll

pick her right up in a few minutes," ordered Greene. "There seems to be a man for'ard, standing up with his hands over his head. He's praying—sure, he's praying—or something; looking right up into the sky and waving his arms——"

"He's signaling us, sir," said Spurling.

"No, he's looking away—hands up in the air—he's praying, I tell you," went on the skipper.

"Well, it hasn't hurt him a mite—he'll git his prayers answered all right if he hasn't stolen that boat."

The ship ran easily down before the wind with her decks now cleared for the evening watch. There was silence aboard as the men watched the boat ahead. Only the swishing wash of the foam alongside and a creaking of gear now and then from aloft reached the ear. Greene's voice to the helmsman, "Steady as you go—spring your luff a little—steady. Keep her off a mite, so—so, steady as you go, now," was the only word spoken, the only voice sounding loud enough to be heard.

"You can furl the cro'jack, Mr. Spurling; we won't want it any more to-night," he went on in a low tone.

The setting sun burned low, a crimson flame on the western horizon, and in its red glare the small boat ahead took on a magnified shape. The ship, running at five or six knots, was coming down on it, and the occupants were now all waving their arms frantically to attract attention. The wind eased, but the ship continued her headway from inertia. The second mate stood at the fore rigging with a small line coiled for throwing.

"Stand by and catch this line!" he roared as they came close.

The line of heads looking over the rail saw the second officer throw the light coil far ahead and a little to port. The man in the bow of the dinghy caught it, took a turn around the forward thwart, and, as he did so, he called to the young man aft to swing the boat's head so that she would fall alongside the slowly running ship. She was drawn about, swung head on with the ship, and as the ship kept her way, the boat drew alongside and struck just forward of the main channels, towing safely and being held off from the ship's side.

Lines were dropped, and one with a bowline was placed under the arms of the young wife, and she was whisked upward

to the deck above, where many hands reached out to steady her and set her on her feet. Then young Walt went up, and lastly Tawney Sniah. All three stood on the deck of the *Georgia Hope*, where they were surrounded by the wild and half-naked crew. Captain Greene came to them.

"Welcome aboard my ship—is there anything I can do for you?" he stuttered, for he saw that they were all white people in spite of their sunburn. Nothing was asked about the possession of the dinghy, but the three were ushered below to a good meal and whatever clothes the ship could spare. Afterward Sniah told his story.

"I prayed for deliverance—and I got it," he ended. "When I saw your boat coming in I knew that my prayers had been heard."

"The boat's painter was rotten," put in Walt with a grin. "It must have broken adrift and come down on us at the rock up to windward there. You say this is Trinidad? Well, then that was one of the Martin Vas rocks that we ran on and got stuck so long."

After the dinghy was hoisted in, the ship was hove to for the night and lay off about five miles from the land under her topsails, with her fore-topsail to the mast. The castaways came on deck after a rest and general clean up with a good dinner to top off with. The lady was tired, but she averred that she rested better out in the air, as she had been used to doing for the past few months, and that she would lounge about until sleepy. The night was fine and the tale of the three was listened to by Captain Greene and his officers, with the steward also hearing it. The second mate of the ill-fated steamer *Rio* stuck to his belief that his prayers were responsible for everything, and Walt took amused exception.

Spurling listened also, and said nothing until it came to a case of a rotten line on the dinghy.

"I admit the line was rotten—there's lots of this old gear that's no good, and we're getting rid of it fast as we can. But that don't explain it all. Not all, by a long shot," said he. "That boat was dead to windward of that rock—must have been when it broke loose in the squall. Why was it? Do you know? No, you don't know. I don't know lots of things, but they somehow work out right. You take

the secant of the latitude and add the cosecant of the polar distance to one half the sum of the angular distance the sun is above the horizon at prime vertical to the latitude and polar distance—and when you add the cosine of the half sum and sine of that minus the angular distance, you get what? The sine of half the time—which, if you look it up in the tables, you see is the local time where you're at—"

"What are you talking about?" asked Walt with amusement.

"Damn it if I know just what; but any fool can tell that if you get the time and have a good chronometer and can read it, the difference in time reduced to distance is your longitude east or west of Greenwich—see? And there you are. It's in the book there, and that's the reason—the only reason we know that this is Trinidad Island. Who told you it wasn't?"

"No one, of course," admitted Walt. "You are probably right."

"I am dead right—it all comes out that way, and by the same token, I don't know why or how I'm right; but I know I'm right and will bet the life of the ship and all hands on it—see?"

"You mean you've got to believe some things that you can't quite explain?" said Walt.

"Well, now you've said it, son—that's what."

## CHAPTER VI.

**T**HE sun rose in the morning and the ship took on new life. The damp dew of the tropic ocean was upon the rails, the salt dew with the smell of the fresh salt sea. A whiff of smoke poured from the galley smoke pipe, and the smell of coffee drifted aft to the noses of the castaways, who had not smelled or tasted that beverage for a long time.

The watch on deck, with trousers rolled high, and naked from the waist up, sluiced the decks and squeegeed the planks while the deck pump was worked with a will and two men with a canvas bucket rigged with a whip hoisted water from overside. The ship rolled slightly, but was almost on an even keel, for the fore and main-topsails, with the fore-topmast staysail, was not enough canvas in the light morning breeze to more than give her just steering way. The man at the wheel, holding the spokes hard over, left it at times and ex-

peccorated overside, and the wheel would hardly roll back.

The *Georgia*, hove to with the main-topsail aback, just drifted sidewise over a smooth sea with the rising sun shining on her port side, to windward. The land had fallen away somewhat during the night, but it was still in plain view. The high parts, covered with a cloudlike mist, topped it like with an umbrella. They were close enough to see the green foliage of the slopes, and here and there a bare spot like a landslide in the hills. Not a break in that shore line, not a bay or slue to get even a small shelter. It would be right through the surf with a will to make a landing. The ship had now been at sea for a long time, and her water was gone. Her fuel for cooking—wood—was also used up, and she would have to take in enough to last at least two months or more for the run north to the States.

Hakluyt, in some of his voyages, remarks about Trinidad, and so also does Doctor Halley in 1700. Amaro Delano shortly afterward visited the place, and less than a quarter of a century later Commodore Owens visited it. But in the '80s Mr. Knight visited the spot with the avowed intention of digging up buried treasure, and he spent a good deal of money and time there in his own yacht trying to find it. He claimed that a landslide swept over the place he had indicated, and so gave the matter up, leaving, but believing that the treasure was still there.

In 1821 a great store of plate and gold was said to have been buried there, being treasure that had been captured by pirates who plundered it from the Peruvians. It was buried there when the Spaniards fled that country and tried to carry it away. The pirates who frequented the southern ocean at that date came upon them and took it and buried it somewhere on what was called Sugar Loaf Hill.

Walt had read of this, and was the only one aboard who knew the details. Captain Greene had often heard the legend, but paid little attention to it. Spurling, who had read nothing much all his life, knew nothing about the story. It was just before this time when the *Georgia Hope* arrived off the island that the British seized it for a cable station, as it lay almost directly on the route for their cable to Brazil. The cable company had not wasted time digging for pirate gold. It

hauled the deep ocean cable ashore in what they called Southwest Bay, a slight indentation of the leeward side of the island, and built a small cable hut for their relay. Walt had read "The Cruise of the *Alerte*," by E. C. Knight, and he was mightily interested when he found that he had, by this unexpected turn of fortune, been taken to Trinidad.

He had not known until Spurling had told him, that this was indeed Trinidad of the south seas, the treasure island of fable and romance—and perhaps reality.

After breakfast the two boats, Spurling's and Watson's, took four men each and made ready to go ashore. The ship was braced up and headed slowly in until she lay within a mile of the shore. Then, with her main yard backed, she lay hove to while the boats were dropped. They got away handily and rowed briskly for the beach.

The three castaways were too much exhausted to take a great interest in this first exploration, and they rested aboard, the young wife sleeping in a spare stateroom for hours to make up for the hardship she had gone through. Greene sat about aft under an improvised awning over the stern and smoked and read his Bowditch. The men on deck worked at reeving new gear and sending down some of the worn-out lighter sails from aloft to replace them with new ones for the run home.

Spurling came in close and found the surf very heavy in spite of the wind being so light. It burst over the outer reef in dull thunder, and piled high and dangerous, shooting jets of foam into the air. The second mate held off and waited for orders, or to see what the mate would do first. Whalemens are the best small boatmen in the world. They actually live in the light craft which they use for hunting—and for handling them in deep water they cannot be surpassed. But surf is another thing entirely. One must know surf to make it safe in heavy weather.

A dull thunder filled the air and seemed to reverberate up the heights, through the woods, and into the mist cap above.

"Steady the port oars," said Spurling in an even voice which carried through the sullen boom of the sea. Mitka, his harpooner, who was pulling No. 2 oar, turned his head apprehensively, and Howarth, the powerful stroke, eased and let his oar lie

flat on the sea. The mate gazed steadily seaward. There was no sign of a smooth, no slatch, nor any let-up in the serried columns of rollers which swept in with majestic grandeur from the open ocean.

"We'll have have to run her—stand by when I give the order and send her through with a will," said Spurling.

The second officer lay off and waited to see what would happen before trying it. His boat remained motionless, save for the gentle rising and falling on the swell. Spurling headed straight in and went slowly, looking over his shoulder and holding the steering oar firmly in both hands. The whaleboat topped a high swell and started down its slope shoreward. It gained momentum and held true.

"Give her hell!" roared Spurling. "Drive her in now while she's going right; break those oars—bust 'em—"

The four men lay back with a will. The mate seemed to tower above them as he stood in the stern lifting in the air. The whaleboat shot forward with the speed of an express train. There was a snarling hiss aft, a great sea raised its head high, higher, and the light of the sun shone through the clear water, making it appear greenish—blue—scintillating. Then, with a hissing roar, it broke.

But Spurling held her true. In a wild smother of foam the boat shot ahead, and then dropped down the back of the roller and lay within the outer reef. Right ahead on the shore, and about halfway up the hillside, they could see a stone hut showing through the green shrubbery. A man stood in the doorway. He was dressed in dirty white cotton clothes, and wore a cap of blue cloth. He came down to the beach and waved a hand at them, motioning them to come farther along toward the point to the westward. He was joined by another dressed like himself, and the two walked slowly along the beach to a point which they indicated was the place to land. They were the two cable men stationed at the hut, and they showed no signs of excitement. Spurling followed their directions and came in on the shore where they waded out and helped beach the boat, hauling her high and dry up the sand. The men had jumped out before she struck, and all, with the exception of the mate, were wet to their armpits. The second mate's boat followed in and the wood crew were safe ashore. Water casks

were thrown out and rolled up the beach, and axes were seized for wood cutting.

"I thought you would roll her over, blimme," said the first of the cable men. "Whalers, hey? Wood an' water—what? I say, me lad, I'm right glad to meet you—name, please?"

"*Georgia Hope*—New Bedford. Yeah, we want plenty of wood and some good water," said Spurling, holding forth his hand, which was grasped heartily.

"Blimme, me lad, but you've come to the right spot—there's lots of both, an' damn little else except turtles an' them bloomin' land crabs. Come along an' we'll show you. I say, but ye're Yanks, I take it?" said the cable man.

The crowd went up the trail leading to the high land above, and the mate lost no time getting the men to chopping wood. A stream of clear water ran down the slope of the shalelike rocks, and, while it was not large, it was sufficient to fill the casks handily. Two men were set to work filling them, while Spurling and the second mate went with the Englishmen to the cable hut.

"A bit of a lonesome life, hey?" asked the mate.

"I say, it is that; but the cable ship was here five months back, an' she's due here now within a month or two more. Me an' my matey get along all right enough, but the whack is gettin' sort of low. Jest a few air-tights left—like turtle meat?" he went on as they entered the hut.

The little house was not more than ten by fifteen feet, and built of stone, with a wooden roof. The bare floor was clean and hard-packed dirt. A couple of bunks and two rough chairs furnished the place. A small wood stove in a corner and a few shelves for utensils made the cooking outfit. As Trinidad is nearly twenty-one south latitude, or well down toward the tropic of Capricorn, it is midsummer there in January, and as it was the fifth of this month, the sun was now almost directly overhead. It was warm. Only during the smoother summer months could small boats land in that surf. It was a most isolated and deserted spot. A few hogs, half a dozen sheep, and a few goats, left by the cable company, were the only animals on the island. The cable men lived mostly on chickens, having an immense flock wandering about the place. The place was fairly crowded with birds of

all kinds, and one could eat chicken or birds' eggs daily.

Spurling got his load off early, but left two men ashore to cut wood for the next load. He made five trips that day, and was only upset once in the surf.

**T**HE next day Walt Warthier had rested enough to beg permission to go inshore with the water boat. He remembered Knight's book, and he was now anxious to explore the strange island and see what he might find. His wife was also recovered enough to want exercise, and she also asked Captain Greene to allow them to go with Spurling in the whale-boat. Sniah turned to with the crew of the *Georgia* and worked on deck. He had been thoroughly satiated with islands, and needed no more of them for some time.

The mate did not object to passengers. In fact, the girl interested him in a certain way, but he was respectful always, and held her in proper regard. Alice was dressed in a suit of men's apparel—there being no women's things aboard the ship—and she was a strong and hardy-looking person in jumper and trousers rolled to the knee. She was really a beautiful girl, but now sunburned to a deep mahogany brown from her long honeymoon on the rock of the Martin Vas. The steady diet of turtle beef and eggs had not hurt her physically at all. Walt Warthier did not speak to Greene of what was really in his mind, the idea of that treasure; but Greene suspected strongly his object and smiled an inscrutable smile.

Young people, he thought, had many strange fancies. Especially those who spent honeymoons on deserted rocks in mid-ocean. The skipper had read "The Cruise of the *Alerte*," and had set down Mr. Knight's story as a flight of fancy, not popularized like the book of Stevenson.

Walt and his wife went along with Spurling, and the little gold earrings in the mate's ears scintillated in the sunshine as he shook his head at their fancies. Spurling was rough, but he was not too rough, and his past as a bucko mate in western ocean packets had been forgotten by most. Heavy-bearded and square-faced, brown and hard, he was rather piratical looking, but he was polite withal.

The boat's crew looked like pirates. All were half naked, and wore just cotton

trousers rolled to bare knees, their tattooed chests were burned to a deep brown from a year's service in the tropics on the deck of a whale ship. All carried sheath knives, long knives in leather sheaths strapped to their sides by their belts. No sailor went about his work without a knife. He might need it any minute on a line. One or two allowed their hair to grow long all around, but most of them chopped it raggedly about the neck where it joined their beards. Walt and his wife had been in steamers, but no steamer ever carried crews like this. The boat swamped going in, but it caused little inconvenience, as it kept afloat until it passed over the outer reef and came into shallow water.

Walt found himself ashore on Trinidad, and with his wife, wandered into the uplands to look the place over. The hut where the cable men lived did not interest him, nor did the cable hut where the wire came in do so either. He set out for Sugar Loaf Hill at once, and tried to remember just exactly the location set down by Mr. E. C. Knight in his book on the *Alerte's* cruise. Alice followed him and enjoyed the climb in spite of the thick tropical growths.

Together they made their way inland, and steered for the highest part of the hill, which could be seen at times from clearings. There were no trails except those made by the goats and hogs. Wild pigeons or doves flocked about them in the woods, and along the edges of the cliffs thousands of sea fowl screamed and hovered.

They came finally to a few stone huts. These showed at once a great age. Doctor Halley speaks of them, and they were probably built by the Portuguese pirates a couple of hundred years back. The walls of two or three were still in good repair after these centuries, but the roofs had disappeared as had also the doors and other woodwork. The plateaus were overgrown, but from the edge of the shelf Walt could guess about where a trail formerly led upward to the higher hill beyond. At the base of the rise they found a stone hut of large size. It was very old, the walls just showing through the green foliage. Walt examined it, broke through the jungle of shrubbery, and, followed by his wife, gained the inclosure of the four standing walls. He kicked about in the dirt floor, which had not so much grass on it, and in a corner found the barrel of

an old gun. It was red with rust, but it could be distinguished easily. The stock had gone, but the flintlock was still intact and with the flint in it. The affair had a muzzle like a bell, flared out several inches in diameter. It was very old.

"Now, Alice, you've always said I didn't care enough for you to live alone with you on an island, far away from every one—how about it? Do you want to stick around here for a few months with just me?" he asked his wife.

"Well," she said, "we don't want to go to the United States, we want to go home to our own Argentine. The whaler is going on a long voyage north and we'll probably never be able to pay our way home after we get to New Bedford. Besides, we've been gone half a year, and every one thinks we're dead. Yes, I'd just as soon stick it out here for a few months until the cable ship comes in and takes us to Buenos Aires. That's only a week's run, then we're home again and all right."

Walt put his arm around her and drew her close to him. "You are a bit all right, girl," he said. "Any girl who would agree to live on a desert island with her man must care for him a lot—and I sure do care for you."

She put her arms around his neck and kissed him. He held her a moment and then let her go. "No," he said finally, "it wouldn't do; not at all—not at all. I just wanted to try you out, Alice—you're all right."

She smiled at him, and they wandered on, hand in hand.

"Right up there where that slide is, right on the edge of the hill, there, that's the place Knight says the treasure was buried. There's a thousand tons of rock and earth over it——"

"Treasure—what treasure?" she asked.

"Well, there was treasure buried here or placed here years ago—probably more than a century. Pirates took it from the Spaniards, who in turn took it from the Peruvians—from their churches, their homes, in the days of the Incas. Pirates often watered here, got wood same as Captain Greene is doing now, and this place was never visited at all—it was a safe place for anything."

"Were you thinking of digging for it?" asked his wife slyly. "Is that the real reason you want to stick around here?"

"We are not going to stick around here,

treasure or no treasure—I've found the greatest treasure a man ever finds in this world—a good loving woman who'll stick with him—even on an island," and he gave her another hug. "After all, money isn't everything. We'll get along somehow after we get back home."

"Yes, we started off our honeymoon on a sea voyage—we might as well finish it on one. We can get back all right, but I'm willing to stay right here and help find that gold—if you want to," said his wife.

"Pirate gold, pirate gold—it does sound interesting, doesn't it, now. But we're not going to dig for it. However, that won't stop us from looking the place over a bit. Maybe we can find something, and we'll be here two or three days yet, cutting wood."

Walt carried the barrel of the old blunderbuss along with him, and they wandered all day through the uplands, coming out on the edge of the cliffs to the northward. The cliffs were solid guano from centuries of bird inhabitants. There was enough guano deposited in the countless thousands of years to fertilize the entire British Islands. The air was filled with flying bodies, the ground was covered with birds of all kinds. These did not appear to mind the approach of the two humans, and sat perfectly still while the pair poked them with their feet to make them rise. Late in the evening Walt and his wife went back aboard the ship, and Captain Greene grinned as he asked for details.

"Going to do any digging?" he asked. "We'll be here several days yet."

"Well," said Walt, "we don't want to go back to the States with you, for we live down in the Argentine, and it's a long way home for us, but we don't expect you to carry us all the way back, either."

"I certainly can't do that," interrupted Greene. "I'd lose too much time, and it'd cost you too much."

"We could wait here for the cable ship—if she is really due soon—but I reckon you'll have to give us a berth to New Bedford," said Walt.

"And no staying on and digging?" grinned the skipper.

"I'd like to spend the next three days while you're here at it," said Walt; "but no longer than that—can you lend me a pick and shovel?"

"I sure can do that easily," said Greene. "And I hope you find millions."

## CHAPTER VII.

**I** WOULD like to stick on the island until the relief ship comes in," announced Sniah to Captain Greene. "Gimme a little flour, and coffee, and a few matches—that'll be all I'll ask. I'll make out on chickens and turtle beef with them coster fellas."

"Going to dig?" grinned the skipper.

"Well, why not—you can lend me a pick and shovel, can't you?" said Sniah.

"Hope you all make a million," laughed the skipper; "but your two passengers are going north with me."

"I'll stick alone until the cable ship comes in. About two or three weeks that Britisher says. Then I'll get to B. A. in another week and try and get a ship. It was great to have met you, skipper; and I surely owe you my life——"

"Forget it, mate," said Greene. "I was looking for my dinghy, not you; but I'm glad we picked you up, just the same. I'll stake you to a bag of flour and some coffee and matches. Can't give you much, you know—we're short now, but you're used to turtle steak by this time, and there's a lot of chickens and eggs ashore there. Maybe you'll find something after all." He stood up from his deck chair and shook the officer's hand.

Sniah put his meager belongings into a small cask, sealed it up to keep his matches dry, went in with the second officer, and was duly rolled over in the surf. He managed to get ashore safely and save his cask all dry inside, and with it he set up house-keeping with the two cable men to await the coming of the relief ship. The two men were glad to have him for company. Walt and his wife took tools ashore and prospected for the lost plate supposed to have been buried under the landslide, as told by the former hunters.

"Like eating soup with a toothpick, this digging into a mountain," said he to his wife, who helped him and made jocular comments during his work. "If I only had a map, some sort of guide—nine fathoms from a skull—two northeast, and twenty strides farther than you can throw a pickax by the handle, then dig."

"Ridiculous," agreed his wife. "Why don't you quit and cool off?"

He dropped the tool and kicked the dirt at his feet. Something broke out of the ground. He stooped to pick it up.

It was a small object, and he rubbed it on his trousers to clean it. Then he saw it was an ivory cross—a cross about ten inches long by six wide, and in each ivory end was set a large stone, with a larger stone set in the center. It was somewhat yellow with age and dirt, but it had evidently been a piece of value in some ancient cathedral or church. Walt kicked the dirt about some more and unearthed a silver standard, into which the cross had been fixed.

"Well, here's something, anyhow—shows that the tale is not all foolish about buried treasure," said he.

"Dig some more," said Alice with a smile.

He dug. He dug all day. Nothing more showed.

For three more days he dug into that hillside. But not a thing of value showed. The third day Greene announced that he had his wood and water aboard and would sail at once. There was nothing now to do but either stay or give the matter up. Sniah took the pick and shovel from him with the announced intention of digging when the humor took him. Walt and his wife remained aboard the *Georgia Hope*, and the boats were hoisted in.

Down on the shore three figures showed—the two cable men and Sniah, and that second mate of the *Rio* was standing with his hands thrown high above his head with his face lifted to the sky.

"Look, Walt, the mate is praying for us," said Alice, pointing to the figure. Bull Spurling watched him with set face, his little earrings shining in the sunlight. Walt waved his hand, but Sniah still held his position.

"Damn good man—wish we had him aboard here," said Spurling in a low tone. "We'll need all the prayers we can get before we run this hooker home."

"Stations," bawled Greene from the quarter-deck. "Now, then, Mr. Spurling, get your men along—lee main brace, there; swing those yards handily; smartly, now, smartly—loose the main-t'ga'nts'l, fore-t'ga'nts'l, main royal, and fore royal—mizzen topsail, main-topmast staysail."

The men swung the heavy yards, the main-topmast swung again, pulling fair.

"Dray away the fore-staysail, jib, fore-topmast staysail."

The ship swung off the wind and gathered way, the gurgling of the side wash



grew louder as she went along. Men raced aloft to loosen sail. Those on deck stood at the halyards and let go clewlines and buntlines. The second mate stood at the little bow gun and pulled the lanyard.

*Boom!* A loud report and a cloud of white powder smoke flung away to leeward in the breeze. The *Georgia Hope* was off, off for the northern hemisphere, and would see Trinidad no more. The last they saw of Tawney Sniah was the figure of that husky second mate of the *Rio*, standing on the shore, with hands aloft and face upraised in prayer.

The *Georgia* stood away with the trade wind on her starboard quarter, and she did a full nine knots, loaded deep with her cargo. She crossed the line ten days later, ducked about in the doldrums for a few days, and then picked up the northeast trade and stood up the north Atlantic for home. The weather grew cooler. Men put on clothes. The half-naked look of wild savages disappeared, and jumpers were worn, then oilskins.

By the time the ship was up to the Bermudas and laying a course for Nantucket Shoals Lightship the weather grew rough. It was winter in the northern hemisphere, the month of March, with its storms and rains, and it was bad weather for coming on the coast. Greene had so far had good luck. His ship was heavy with oil, but he had made a good passage, and was nearing home. The decks were spotless, the smell of rancid oil had long disappeared. New canvas had been bent, new lines rove off, and Spurling had been busy painting, until the old *Georgia* looked almost like a yacht. Heavy and slow she logged along, until abreast of Hatteras.

"When the Bermudas let you pass  
Then beware of Hatteras."

So hummed Spurling as he watched the vessel driving along at nine knots through a white smother of foam, her topsails wet from water and stiff as boards, and her main-topgallant sail the highest sail on her.

The glass was low. In fact, it was very low, and falling. Greene watched it with concern. The wind was southeast and blowing fresh, the little scud flying fast and low across a dull, steel-colored sky.

Walt and his wife stayed mostly on deck. The motion below was rather hard to bear without something to do. Beams creaked and groaned, bulkheads crashed

and quivered, and the noise wore out the nerves.

"I wonder how poor old Sniah is by this time?" said the girl. "Do you think he would ever find anything in that awful hill?"

"Anyhow, he has good weather down there," said her husband, "and he don't have to pray for it, either. This is going to be bad before it gets better."

"Well, that fine weather, that tropic heat, gets tiresome for always. I for one don't mind a bit of change—even a good old storm, anything to break the monotony of the same old thing over and over all the time."

"Girl, you'll want plenty of monotony before we get in if this breaks like I think it will," said Walt.

It was then late in the morning. By eight bells it was blowing harder and coming in squalls, the weather thickening up, and the glass going down. A tremendous sea was now running strong and fast from the eastward. It broke over the *Georgia* and smothered her decks, swamped them clear to the topgallant rails. Lines, gear, everything not lashed down was being washed about.

Spurling had the boats lashed in with extra gripes. They hung high from the wooden davits and strongbacks, and they were much in the way. A sea coming along at two bells rose high above the starboard quarter and lifted its head into the air.

It was menacing, dangerous, and the light of day shone through its crest, making it appear a dull green. The top broke with a hissing roar and swept over the *Georgia* in a Niagara of water and foam. The ship, caught unfairly, broached to and lay down on her side, burying her port rail deep below the surface. Captain Greene, hanging to the quarter rail, yelled frantically to the helmsman to hold her. Spurling, at the mizzen, roared orders to settle down the topgallant sail. Men, half swimming, half wading, up to their necks in foam, endeavored to obey orders. Some one let go the halyard, and the topgallant sail started. It slatted, the parrel jammed a little and slowed it, then it was all aback, and instantly it burst and blew to pieces, stripping from the yard and streaming away in Irish pennants to leeward. A dark squall swept low over the ship, and the noise of the wind droned into a deep boom-

ing roar as it tore past shroud and backstay, downhaul and clewline, and went to leeward.

The port side of the main deck was several feet under the sea. The *Georgia* lay dead and lost her headway, hardly moving in the turmoil.

"Get below—get below—both of you!" bawled Greene to his two castaways.

But Walt and his wife refused to go. They decided that it was better to be on deck in such a fracas. At least they could see what was taking place. Below, the motion and racket of straining timbers was too nerve trying. Men worked on the mizzen topsail and finally got it down, then the main; and all the time the ship lay in the trough of the sea and seemed like she would never rise again. Finally, with the fore-topsail and staysail on her forward, and nothing aft save the main-topmast staysail, she began to pay off and gather way. She dragged her side through the boiling foam and suddenly she righted and rolled viciously to windward, sending a cataract of water across her decks. Men were washed about, shouting and clinging to whatever they could lay hand to.

With another man at the wheel spokes, she was held firmly, and in a little while she was going again before the gale, with the wind now almost aft, and the sea following her. All the boats on the port side had vanished. Greene, regardless of the laws of storms, ran his ship northwest before a gale which promised to develop into almost a hurricane. He was heading for home, and he would go fast indeed. The foresail held, the topsail over it was eased a bit, and with just the two fore-and-aft sails to help hold her—the two staysails—she drove along through a smother of white, and, rolling and pitching, ran headlong to the northward as if inspired with a wild yearning for the home port.

The taking in of that main-topsail was a piece of work to be remembered. The men came down on deck afterward, all tired out and exhausted. Now, with the foresail slacked off and the topsail above it eased at the sheet, there would be no more going aloft, for those sails would have to stay until they burst. The fore and main-topmast staysails would never be furled, for if they once started, they would go to pieces.

The *Georgia* trembled from truck to keel. She shook and groaned, rolled and

wallowed; but she drove onward at twelve knots, and the men were more cheerful. The wheel was relieved, and, with tackles to help hold it, the ship tore along all day and all night, and the next day was far to the northward.

**A** FEW days later she came into New Bedford with her rigging slack, her painted sides sea-washed, and her gear looking like she had been through a stiff fight. But she was safe at last, and she docked to discharge her valuable cargo. Greene had finished his year's work, and was richer by several thousand dollars. The men had a good wide cut with bonuses, and Walt and his wife went to the consul's to try and get some means of going home to their Argentine.

They were sent down to New York, where a ship was almost ready to sail for Buenos Aires, and there Walt took the ivory cross to a specialist in jewelry.

"The middle diamond is probably worth a thousand dollars," said he; "and the three emeralds set in the ends probably that much more. May I ask where you came to get hold of this piece?"

"You may, but I would hardly be likely to tell you," said Walt. The man handed it back with a smile.

It took a week of careful study and maneuvering to sell the thing, for no one cared to buy anything so evidently out of place as an ivory cross in a man's pocket. Finally he sold it for three thousand dollars. Then he went to the consul's and got a proper passport and ticket for home. His story was now well known to all, the loss of the steamer *Rio Grande* had not been forgotten.

"That second mate of the *Rio*—you left him ashore at Trinidad?" asked the consul.

"Yes, he refused to come all the way north with the *Georgia*—what about him?" asked Walt.

"Well, it might interest you to know that he was your friend. He was taken off the island by the cable ship a few weeks later, after you left, and he carried several barrels of stuff with him. He and the two cable men shared the stuff, whatever it was, and he deposited a draft for five thousand dollars to your credit at Buenos Aires. Then he shipped in a steamer and went East about around the Cape."

"Five thousand dollars?" yelled Walt.

"Left it to us—my wife and I? What for?"

"There is nothing said what for. We two consuls, both at New Bedford and here, just received the news. It was sent because he knew you would soon be up this way and would probably need the money—but just how he got hold of all that money is a question," said the consul.

"Well, I'll be eternally sunk—what do I think of that? Poor old Sniah," said Walt as he hastened away to tell his wife.

"It would be just like him," said Alice after receiving the news. "After all, he was a good man for all his roughness—and he always liked me."

"I'll say he must have liked you aplenty," said Walt. But he grinned as he took his wife in his arms. They were well pleased, and talked the matter over,

holding hands there in the dusk and waiting to go aboard the steamer to take them home.

Walt could envisage the sturdy mate, the rough but steady second officer of the ill-fated *Rio*. He could see him again as he used to stand on the top of Martin Vas, holding his hands aloft and praying with his face to the sky.

"Save me from this desert rock before I go mad!" And the deep, thunderous roar of the southern ocean would sound again upon the ears like the wild chant of a giant litany. He could see again the faithful and retiring man, working and trying to keep all hands alive on that frightful rock in mid-ocean.

"Yes," he said finally, "that mate was a good man—I would like to see him once more."



# Smell of Salt Horse

By Don Waters



## Runaways from a hard-living whaler.

**A**YE," muttered "Tops'l Tom" in a complacent, far-away tone as he wiped his mouth with the back of his hand, "aye, that's the life. I dream of it often."

He drew a long breath, tipped his mug, drained it, and after a dramatic pause, repeated. "That's the life. No work and no worry. Warm, it is, no summer nor no winter—like spring all the long year, wi' vittles aplenty, wi' the boom o' the surf far off, like distant thunder, wi' fish, and wi'—wi'——" He winked knowingly to his listener across the table, who winked roguishly in reply.

"To the life," he announced.

Then he gazed in mild surprise at the bottom of his mug, as though it were a

mystery to him how it had become empty. His companion was quick to thump on the table and bawl out an order in a voice that echoed and boomed through the long low-ceilinged taproom of the Harpooner's Haven.

When the mugs had again been filled, Tops'l Tom took up his interrupted discourse.

"Aye, coconuts, breadfruit, and bananas, fair droppin' ripe from the trees. Turtle stew," he smacked his lips. "Fish ye've never seen their like. Gorgeous they be to see, grand they be to eat! And we'll forever get away from weevily hard-tack, from tough old salt horse, from slithery lobscouse."

Tom warmed up to his subject. A bit

of an artist was he. He half closed his eyes, and in a low, deliberate voice, continued, "We'll get free from cuttin' in and tryin' out, from slidin' around on blubbery decks, from takin' orders, from obeyin' them. Far beyond the sound of 'Thar she blows!' Far off from the call of 'Lower away!' A peaceful life, I says, a peaceful passage of the days, a quiet passin' o' the nights, wi' never 'All hands on deck!' to break up a man's rest. We'll go thar, aye, that we will."

His partner nodded, open-mouthed, his eyes big and round with interest.

"Aye, that we will," he repeated. "Ye tickle me fancy, Tom. As sure as me name is Denny Murray, I'm wi' ye." Then a thin doubt entered his voice. "But these Squeeze Islands ye mention, how will we make our way to them? A long beat to windward they be. How——"

His words were interrupted as the door of the Harpooners' Haven flew open. The two seated at the table saw a squat, broad-shouldered man, powerfully built, his hands like two hams, his face marked with the scars of many a fight, standing in the doorway. Behind him in the feeble light from the lantern hanging outside the entrance they caught a glimpse of the white, snow-covered street, the big fleecy snowflakes floating slowly down past the blob of light as feathers fall.

"'Portygee Joe'," Denny whispered. "Call him over. We'll get more news from these Squeeze Islands from him."

Portygee Joe noticed them. "Ah," he called. "I glad to see you. We sail in morning." He held up a couple of fingers. "We two men short. Cap'n say, 'Joe, you find two boat steerers; find two good mens what can reef, steer.' Now I find. Come," he invited. "Help work ship."

But the two were in no hurry. They wanted to know first. The *Finback*? A doubtful, hesitant expression swept across their faces. Captain Forse, a scrummy man, that, the *Finback* a hard ship. Boot, toe, and belaying pin followed, often preceded, an order on the *Finback*.

They pulled out their pipes and leisurely shaved tobacco off the plugs as they listened, quite unimpressed by the mate's encouraging picture which he painted of the advantages to be gained, the money to be made.

"We go on line cruise. Cap'n find lots whale last time on line."

Tops'l Tom's disinterested expression changed.

"To the Squeeze Islands?" he questioned quickly.

Portygee Joe nodded, a disgusted look on his face. "Island no good," he said. "We go Brava. Ah, we all have fine grand drunk there. We go round Horn. Cap'n Forse mebbe gone shore leave Payta. We all raise hell, eh?"

The mate's black eyes sparkled in anticipation. A nod passed between the two white men.

"A line cruise," Tom whispered.

"To the Squeeze Islands," Denny added.

Then both spoke: "We're your men. One more drink and off we go."

They held up their mugs. "Luck!" they called. "Luck to the venture!"

The mate wore a puzzled frown on his face as he drank to their ready acceptance. He had foreseen a hard task ahead of him. It usually was a difficult matter to recruit a crew for the *Finback*. Captain Forse had a reputation for hard work and short victuals. Seldom he brought the same crew back home that he had taken out. The Portuguese had been first mate on the *Finback* for several voyages only because he owned a thirty-second share in her. He wondered why these two, who knew the reputation of the vessel, were so easily induced to ship.

Down the street, white with its blanket of snow, the three scrunched along arm in arm. They stopped at a boarding house. Tom and Denny packed their sea bags. A quarter of an hour later they pulled out to the old bark *Finback*, lying in the stream. The soft snowfall had turned to a cutting sleet, the wind blew cold and raw out of the northeast. The whaleboat clinked and bumped against the floating ice in the harbor, and finally came alongside the bark. Captain Forse himself met them as they came over the rail. He could scarcely conceal his astonishment, not so much as that they were reasonably sober, but that they should ship at all, drunk or sober, with him.

For Tops'l Tom and Denny Murray were two as good men as could be found in New Bedford. They could pick their ship.

He watched them walk aft, their bags on their shoulders, and muttered, "There's something up, something up. I'll keep my eye on the pair."

**E**ARLY next morning the *Finback* was towed down the harbor and cast off the hawser from the tug, beyond Cuttyhunk. Under courses and lower topsails, she laid her course for the Cape Verdes. It was a miserable, cold day, alternating sleet and snow, and a cutting wind that drove through thin clothes—a day of numbed fingers and chattering teeth. Their faces pinched, their lips blue, the green crew swept the deck a dozen times. The afterguard stamped nerveless feet or swung their arms to keep up the circulation, cursed the leaden sky, the biting wind, double cursed the crew who, seasick, chilled through, stumbled around, driven to their work by club and fist.

Every one on board was depressed and nasty tempered, all save Tom and Denny. Warmed by an inner fire of contemplation, in their minds' eyes they saw, not slush and snow, but clear sunshine on a coral beach. Gazing into the future, they looked on ease and comfort. The chill northeaster swept by them, turned off by the armor of their hopes.

Portygee Joe, the mate, swore long and earnestly at half a dozen of the crew who were shoving the slush off the deck with short boards fastened to the ends of harpoon shafts. Then, calling Tom, he turned the task over to him and went below to where the stove in the cabin, red-hot and glowing, invited his company.

Crouched in the lee of the try-works aft of the foremast, Tom, in a low voice, muttered to Denny, who huddled beside him.

"Sleet and snow, bitter cold, ice and frost—aye, Denny, there's none o' that in the Squeeges."

Denny wiped his dripping nose and said, "Aye, Tom, we've not long to put up wi' such discomforts."

A boy came teetering across the slippery decks, a bucket in one hand, a coffee-pot in the other, making his way from the galley to the forecastle with dinner. Tom's face wrinkled in a wry grimace.

"Salt horse and lobsouse," he muttered, as though the very thought of those filled him with a deep disgust.

The *Finback* shouldered her path across the trackless highway of the seas, over the obliterated trail of many a New Bedford whaler that had gone before. For the trip to the Cape Verde Islands was a regular one. Crews were hard to procure

in the States. The West was opening up. There were rich, fertile acres to be had for the mere taking beyond the Mississippi. There was gold in California—nuggets, so the wild reports proclaimed, as big as hen's eggs, lying free and unhidden along the rivers' edges. A migration had started; the adventurous, the romantic, the youth of the East, were leaving their homes by thousands, putting out on the long traverse toward the setting sun.

The hard work of whaling offered few inducements and fewer hopes of gain. Most whaling ships left short-handed, sailed to the Cape Verdes, and recruited foremost hands from among the Brava Portuguese. So Captain Forse, with half a crew forward and scarce a half complement of officers aft, was on his way to fill his lists before starting on his venture.

**T**HREE weeks later he anchored at Brava. The first night ten men of the crew jumped the ship in spite of a double watch on deck to prevent it. It was an easy matter to slip overside and swim to one of the bumboats hovering around the *Finback* in the darkness.

As was to be expected, some of the foremast hands were but work-aways, and had taken this opportunity to make their passage home, thus saving the fare on a packet. The following morning Captain Forse was in an ugly humor. When the desertions were reported to him he cursed the officers on watch, cursed the hands that had taken French leave, and wound up his tirade by a fervent, lurid promise that till the *Finback* came to a mooring in New Bedford harbor the only way another man would get clear of the ship would be to die off of it.

Tom and Denny were none too well pleased at the turn affairs had taken. They foresaw a difficult time ahead. Even the possibility that no chance for escape would open up loomed large. Yet neither by word nor act did either betray their desires or their plans. Good workers, they anticipated orders, never shirked duty, never grumbled.

The *Finback* drove leisurely, angling across the South Atlantic. The boats were all in readiness, the mastheads manned; yet, as the old bark wallowed along in the sweep of the equatorial current settling westward, nothing happened to break the monotony. The northeast trades were left behind. For two weeks she was in the

grip of the baffling horse latitudes; then the southeast trade winds bulged her sooty canvas, and, carrying a bow wave up on her blunt nose, the *Finback* shoved down toward the Horn.

There was some talk of putting in at Rio—talk that came to nothing, for the *Finback* was five hundred miles offshore when she passed the mouth of the Rio de la Plata, reaching down for the wind-scoured antarctic. Down around the tip of the continent of the Americas, where the boisterous gales sweep screaming across the gray waters, the *Finback* worked her way, tack and tack against the prevailing westerlies. A long leg down to the southward, a long leg back; and Captain Forse, squinting through the eyepiece of his wooden hog yoke each time the sun was visible, cursed long and earnestly at the slow progress.

**A** WEEK, ten days, passed. One morning Tops'l Tom was standing his trick at the wheel. Close-hauled, the old bark shoved against the long-running seas. Suddenly from up ahead a wall of water rose. The *Finback* sluggishly rose to meet it. The sea broke with a roar. There came a glimpse of the larboard boats splintering into matchwood—a hissing, racing, steep-fronted wave swept clear over the deck, obliterating all signs of ship save the three masts, and the men who had jumped clear, clinging to the shrouds.

As the sea ran off, Tom heard the dreaded cry, "Man overboard!"

He shook the water off, caught his breath, and looked. There, just alongside, a head bobbed—a face, terror-stricken, turned on him.

It was Denny crying: "Help, Tom, help!"

No time to lose. Tom left the wheel, grabbed the end of the spanker sheet, rove a bowline in it, and looped it through the air. It circled the bobbing head. He cast off the turns around a cleat. The spanker flew out with a rush. The sheet came whining in, and Denny with it, jerked clear up, even with the rail. Just as Tom grabbed him there came the screech of splintered timbers and the rip of torn canvas. The ship was caught aback. The jib boom twisted, snapped. Down came the fore-topmast; the main-topgallant mast followed with a loud crunching roar—a

roar that was echoed by the captain's voice a moment later.

All hands were set to work to clear the litter of wreckage that trailed alongside. That done, Tom's turn came. There were no preliminaries and no resistance. He was triced up to the mizzen shrouds and a knotted rope wielded by Portygee Joe whistled through the air and cut his bared back cruelly, time after time. He went slack, and limply hung by his wrists, his toes dragging back and forth across the deck as the ship rolled. Denny, tears streaming down his cheeks, could only stand by and bite his lips till they bled.

If the *Finback* had been a hard ship before, it became a hell ship now. The wind had shifted to the southward, and the vessel, under short rig, cleared the Horn in the next two days. Down in the fore-castle the crew spoke hopefully and in whispers of their chances to jump ship if they put into port to rereg. They need have no hopes, as they soon found out. Carpenter and sailmaker, blacksmith and mates, went to work, and the crew had no watch below daytime. While the *Finback* drove before a brisk southerly breeze, repairs were made. Two weeks later there was small evidence left of the damage she had sustained. Yet on Tops'l Tom's back were the half-healed scars, and in his soul were scars that would be longer in healing.

**C**HRISTMAS DAY came. There was little to tell of its coming save that day the cook made up plum duff, a sticky mass of flour seasoned with ginger and cinnamon. The "plums" were but pieces of dried apple, the whole mass boiled in a bag. It was greeted with loud shouts of approval when it made its appearance in the fore-castle. Even this small cheer was begrudged, for when Captain Forse discovered the cook had been into his private store of dried apples he rated him soundly.

"Fruit! Good fruit for my table, and feeding it to those swine forward! No more of this, or——" He nodded significantly toward the mizzen shrouds.

And there was no more. Hard-tack and salt horse, lobscouse, small pieces of beef, pounded biscuit and a few potatoes, boiled up together, and liberally seasoned with pepper became the regular fare. Even the "scouse," as the days passed, became more and more destitute of potatoes.

Up the latitudes, the *Finback*, borne on the bosom of the Pacific and pushed by the steady southeast trades, worked her way. One monotonous day died, another was born, with little to separate them save the setting sun sinking in a blaze of glory each evening, the night whisking down star-spangled, and the rising orb popping up over the far lip of the sea in the morning. The blue indigo of the ocean, the clean sweep of the wind, the fleecy trade clouds scudding above, all seemed to Denny and Tom to mock them, sitting on deck working up oakum, weaving thrumming, or doing the other useless jobs that Portygee Joe invented to keep them employed.

The watch on deck, bad as it was, could not compare with the watch below. The forecabin, dark even on the brightest day, was foul with the stench of bilge water, moldy with the hot damp of the tropics. A heavy, fetid aura of unwashed men and souring bedding welled up from the open forecabin hatch. Yet in its narrow confines twosome foremast hands ate and slept—a motley crew, black and tan, white and brown, men drawn from all the world, ignorant, credulous, taking no pleasure in the present, having small hopes for the future.

Aft in the officers' quarters while living conditions were better, still the same gloomy, depressing atmosphere prevailed save in Tom and Denny's little cubby-hole off the main cabin, which they, as boat steersmen, occupied. A secret was there to brighten it up—a secret and a hidden hoard that, as opportunity offered, was added to piece by piece and bit by bit as the days passed.

**T**HE voyage, six months old now, had been unproductive. They were on the line. Sperm whale should have been sighted weeks ago. Back and forth in an aimless, casual zigzag the *Finback* weaved, a few miles north, a league south of the equator, and, as day followed day, save for porpoise breaching or a fish leaping clear of the water, never a sign of life met the searching eyes of the lookouts perched high up on the mastheads.

A morning broke clear and the trades blew steadily, rustling across the canvas; the ocean, blue, spattered with little whitecaps, stretched out, out, till it met the infinity of the sky line. The place of meeting seemed as clear cut as though it were

a painted circle with the *Finback* in its exact center.

Tom and Denny were aloft in the fore rigging, leaning lazily over the padded hoops, dreaming, swaying in a little arc as the ship methodically rolled along.

Tom muttered, "Aye, Denny, 'tis hard, but I've a mind 'tis not for long. I heard Portygee Joe and the 'Old Man' gamming in the cabin yesterday as I stood my trick at the wheel. Through the open skylight, I heard them. The Squeege Islands are not far off. We head toward them. Our chance is coming. We——"

He stopped and gazed ahead. His expression changed. There, a few miles away, a white sputter broke the blue expanse of the ocean—a white sputter like waves cresting over a rock wash. No rock, that, for it moved along, submerged and rose, lifted ten feet above the water. A little puff of vapor shot up, up, and out. Another, a series of three or four, scattered; then a dozen of the thin white-gray tufts rose and disintegrated.

Denny saw it at the same time. He tensed himself and drew in a long breath. In another second he would have roused the ship with his cry of discovery, "Blows, ah, blows!" Tom reached across the mast and grabbed his partner fiercely by the arm.

"Be quiet," he muttered. "Look," nodding his head up toward the bow.

There, just showing above the sky line, a tuft of clouds floated. Below them, a little speck, scarce a pencil point of blue black, spotted the indigo water—land. Between that scarce-seen spot of land and the ship a dozen black spots arose, minute, yet unmistakable—sperm whales. There came the sun flash on a glistening hump. Denny looked back at the two men in the main rigging. They were casually surveying the crew below, swabbing decks. Portygee Joe was working at the bench aft of the try-works, a couple of harpooners were sharpening cutting spades on the grindstone. Save for the two of the foremast head, none on the ship had seen the pod of whales ahead. When next Denny glanced forward he caught but a half glimpse of a couple of upturned flukes.

Tom whispered, "There they go. Flukes, aye, and toward the land. Toward the land," he repeated. "Aye, they're workin' to windward. Each time they sound they get closer to the island."



Then the whales came up right ahead, a large school. Lazily rolling, their blows dotted the ocean's surface dead before the ship, not a mile off. Tom glanced apprehensively back to where the other two look-outs hung in their rings. One had his head pillowed on his arms, evidently stealing a cat nap. The other lay with his head and shoulders over the circular guard of the crow's nest, idly watching the men on deck below. The whales ahead spouted regular white tufts of vapor that rose, drifted down the wind, and dissipated in the clear morning sunshine. Then they dove.

Tom again glanced back, muttered, "We're in luck, in luck, indeed."

Ahead now the land had taken form. The high peak in the center was green with vegetation. How soft and soothing that green appeared to the sea-weary eyes of the two. A faint almost intangible smell of growing things, of warm, moist earth, came to their nostrils. Right ahead was the solid earth—clear, cool water, fruit—all the things they had lacked for six months. And right ahead was the thing the ship cruised for, sperm whales. Tom glanced back in time to see the lookout who had been dozing raise his head. He saw him stiffen, point.

Before the other could call, Tom lifted his voice.

"B-l-o-o-ow-s, ah, blows!" he shouted.

"B-l-o-o-o-w-s! Thar she blows!"

Instantly at that yell the men on deck below galvanized into action. Questioning faces turned upward. Captain Forse came hurrying from below decks, bareheaded, his coat off, as though he had been awakened from a nap.

"Where away?" he called.

"Dead ahead, sir!" Tom answered. "A big pod, working to'ard land."

"Come down, come down!" the captain ordered.

A few minutes later Tom and Denny had slid down the backstays and got the covers off the line tubs. Their boats, with whining creaks, swung free and struck the water. The other two boats were a good cable's length astern of them. They were off, bellying jib and mainsail, after the whales that surged along leisurely to windward and to landward. Luck played right into Tom's hands, for he sighted a big bull that trailed after the school as though he found it hard to keep up. Close-hauled,

the whaleboat gradually came up on him as he, with considerable difficulty, surged along. Two seas separated them.

Portygee Joe, at the tiller, called: "Let 'em have it!"

Tom arose, notched his knee into the clumsy cleat, hefted the harpoon, glanced back to where the line ran aft around the loggerhead. Then he set himself, drew back. Two-handed, he pitched the iron. It struck with an audible thud right behind the whale's flipper, a well-directed cast.

Portygee Joe, at the tiller, grunted: "Good! Lower sail, mens," and started to come forward to use the lance. He stopped, wonder in his eyes. The whale had come up, a blurt of crimson spray blobbed out his spout. Tom had mortally wounded the whale with the iron, a lucky shot indeed.

Portygee Joe yelled, "Dat good works, Tom! I bet Old Mans like this, all right."

He was right, for when the ship drove up and swung into the wind, the Old Man leaned over the rail. His face, usually so glum and forbidding, was wreathed in smiles.

"You're a good man," he informed Tom. "Come up, come up. I've a drink for you."

Tom was surprised at the invitation, but he was astonished a couple of minutes later as Portygee Joe burst into the cabin, his eyes round with excitement.

"Cap'n!" he exclaimed. "I t'ink we got ambergree."

Captain Forse uttered an exclamation almost of unbelief. He hurriedly set his untouched glass down and rushed from the cabin.

"Ambergris! Ambergris! Come to anchor! We're in soundings! We'll see, we'll see!" he shouted excitedly.

Tom calmly drained his glass, then upended the captain's. The grate of the anchor chain running through the hawse pipe sounded. He wiped his mouth with the back of his hand, grunted complacently, and then went slowly up on deck, where wild excitement and conjectures raged.

Denny ran up to meet him.

"Tom, Tom," he whispered in a hoarse, chuckling voice, "aye, we're fixed now. See," he pointed to where Captain Forse, leaning through the gap where a section of the bulwarks had been removed, laid

down the cutting spade, reached below and brought up a gray-brown mass, a clinker-like lump of ambergris from the gash he had cut in the sperm whale alongside.

"Aye," Tom agreed. "We're fixed," indicating the island. "We're fixed. I've a plan. This"—nodding to where the crew grouped around the break in the rail—"this is luck indeed for us."

The captain passed, grinning broadly. "Ye've got a nice day's wage here," he said. Then he indicated to Tom the square of canvas that held half a dozen big lumps of the ambergris. "A nice day's lay for all hands."

Tom watched him go below, a grin of complete satisfaction spreading over his face. Then he turned to Denny.

"Come, we must get this job off our hands."

They helped rig the cutting stage, two planks set out from the side of the ship, another laid across the two, a rail over one side of it. On this platform Tom and Denny stood, chopping at the carcass below them that strung alongside the ship, held by the fluke chain. Haul and slack, the crew toiled at the windlass, heaving the big strips of blubber up on deck. A fire was started in the try-works and the operations of cutting up the blanket-pieces into the squares of horse-pieces, the slicing of them into bibles—thin cuts held together by the hide—went on.

By mid-morning a dense black column of smoke trailed away from the whaler, trailed across the clean blue ocean, and smudged its dirty streak across the clear horizon to leeward. By noon the job was finished. A poor catch, this, as far as oil was concerned. The whale that should have made at least fifty barrels of oil, only tried out thirty. Yet, as the mates and boat steersers sat down in the main cabin, eating dinner, none complained. One who proudly announced himself a clever mathematician, was calculating what the morning's catch would bring him.

"A fiftieth lay, I've at least a hundred dollars coming to me." He swept his arm around, indicated the other boat headers, sitting on the bench opposite. "A hundred dollars each one of us. Like finding it on the street. And, oh, the time we'll have when once we set foot ashore!"

Tom grinned at Denny. The speaker noticed him.

**SEA—4**

"Aye, Tom, me bully lad, grin ye may. Ye're in high favor now. I've no doubt he has you in mind for a rich bonus, mayhap he'll double your share. The Old Man would give you anything you ask him."

Tom's expression became calculating. He stirred the greasy mass of lobsouse in his plate with a grimy forefinger and muttered to Denny, sitting beside him, "Right he is."

His nose curled, disgusted as he surveyed his food. He shoved it away from him and mumbled in a low voice, "We're soon through with such as this, Denny."

"But how, Tom?" Denny asked as they left the cabin.

"Just you wait. 'Twill not be long in coming now. When an opportune time comes the Old Man himself will be the means of our getting ashore," Tom replied, much to his partner's mystification.

**L**T was late in the afternoon before Captain Forse came on deck. The crew were busy cleaning up. Broom and pail, with holystone and swab, the decks were being cleared of oil and gurry.

Tom touched his cap respectfully. "Captain, I've a favor to request."

Captain Forse eyed him shrewdly. Tom, noticing the expression on the captain's face, was quick to explain.

"There's fish aplenty right around us. I noticed big schools as we went on the whale this morning. How is it for Denny and myself to take a boat just off the ship, sir? A mess—I'll promise to bring a mess aboard in an hour or so. 'Tis bound to be fine fishing, just at sundown."

Perhaps Captain Forse's private store of food was running low. He was in a genial mood. He had just weighed the ambergris on his steelyard in the cabin. A hundred pounds it tallied. He'd make a good voyage this trip even if he did not take another gill of oil.

Besides, what inducement was there for Tom and Denny to jump ship? That bit of an island set in the immensity of the Pacific, far from any other land, out of the track of vessels, what sane man would maroon himself on it? What sane man who had just made a grand day's pay would give it up? He surveyed the island, saw the reef encircling it, and looked sharply at the two before him. Then he nodded.

They wasted no time. Down into their

tiny stateroom off the main cabin they hurried. Underneath their donkey's breakfasts—the straw-filled mattresses over the seats of their berths—was their store they had been secretly collecting for months, marline and sail twine, palm and needles, a couple of sheath knives, flint and steel, an ax and adz head, stolen from the carpenter. Tom peeled off his shirt. Denny carefully wrapped a long strip of canvas around his body. Bulky, Tom looked, his pockets suspiciously bulging. Their preparations were soon made. Denny shifted the coil of light lance warp he carried over his shoulder under his shirt.

If any one had taken the trouble to study the two closely when they came on deck it would have been plain that they had suddenly both acquired breadth across the shoulders and girth around the middle. But none of the officers paid the slightest attention to them. Tom called a couple of the crew to help lower a boat. A few seconds later the bearers had been swung clear and, in the sweet *squeal* from the davit blocks, they were free.

With clumsy oars they pulled away from the ship, white-faced with suppressed excitement, trembling with eagerness. Ridiculously easy, their escape. Denny, after they had gotten a couple of hundred yards away, voiced the probable reason. He nodded his head to where the surf crashed and foamed over the reef.

"Aye, Tom," he said. "How are we to jump that and get ashore?"

Tom set his doubts at ease. "Aye, Denny, Captain Forse no doubt had that same thought in mind when he so readily gave us permission to leave the ship. But"—Tom winked—"I know what he doesn't. From the masthead this morning I saw just around yon p'int ahead. I saw a break. 'Tis there we go through."

Denny was all for making the attempt at once, but Tom cautioned him to curb his impatience.

"The sun will soon set and darkness will whisk down on us, then we will make it successful wi' no fear of early pursuit."

The sun even then lipped the edge of the horizon. Blood-red, like a globe of molten iron, it rolled slowly into the sea and was extinguished.

"Now," Tom grunted as he bent the oar. "Now," he repeated, "we're gone."

Five minutes later they shot through the gap in the reef, drove across the lagoon,

and grounded on a pebbly beach. Tom took the boat's hatchet and a short-handled cutting spade. As he hurriedly picked up the spade the wooden guard slipped from its edge. Razor sharp, the blade cut him across his forearm. It was not a deep cut, but one that bled freely. Denny was all concern over the accident. Tom took this misfortune lightly, however, and with quick wit turned it to his advantage. He dripped blood over the thwarts along the gunwale and let a puddle spatter on the floor boards of the whaleboat. Ere the flow ceased, the boat was well marked with the glistening crimson spots. Then he set the anchor shackle carried for mooring weight, balanced it carefully in the notch in the bow, and coiled the anchor warp neatly on the floor boards. Wading out in the water, he shoved the boat clear. The offshore wind caught it and it drifted out into the fast-gathering darkness.

He came ashore, chuckling. "The beginnings of a fine mystery goes out there," he said. "The weight will drop free and anchor the boat when she strikes the rough water on the reef. They'll find it wi' all the signs of a hard-fought battle. Aye, Denny, we're numbered already among those who have mysteriously vanished without a trace. "Without a trace," he repeated as, on hands and knees, he crawled backward, obliterating all signs of their footmarks on the beach.

**A** HALF hour later the two, sitting on the slope of the hill far above the beach, saw the dancing flares swinging over the water. A loud shout welled up.

"They've found the boat," Tom announced. "They'll make no attempt to come ashore to-night, and to-morrow we will easily elude them. To-morrow, aye," he chuckled triumphantly. "To-morrow we will be our own men. This night we are free, and for all the nights and days to come."

"Aye," Denny agreed in a deep, thoughtful voice, "all to come."

They made their bed of palm branches and moss up on the slope of the mountain, and slept peacefully all night. At the sudden break of dawn next morning they aroused in time to see two boats drop down from the davits and pull toward shore. Silently they watched the white whaleboats, like long, slim, water beetles,

inch along the edge of the reef and move through the gap. One lay off a few yards, its crew holding ready muskets; the other drove up to the beach. The crew, armed with cutting spades and boarding knives, came ashore. Portygee Joe led the way, cautiously peering into the fringe of the jungle that grew thick and rank almost down to the water's edge. Their search was brief and casual. In a half hour the boats left, were rowed back to the bark, and, a few moments after they had been hauled up, the *clank-clank* of the anchor chain and the rattle of the windlass pawl sounded.

By the time the sun was an hour high the *Finback* had made sail and was a toy ship off to the northward—a toy ship that gently, imperceptibly dropped down below the sea's edge. Her courses sunk from sight, then her topsails. Her main-top-gallant, a little sooty square of canvas, alone remained etched against the blue of a far horizon. One second it was there, and the next it, too, had gone.

The two deserters faced each other.

"Aye," Tom spoke after a long silence, "aye, we've outwitted the Old Man. Now to make ourselves comfortable, now to explore a bit."

The rest of the day they spent in tramping over the half-obliterated paths that crisscrossed the island. By noon they had learned that it was uninhabited. By nightfall the reason for this fertile spot being without a human life became suddenly apparent. For never a sign of pig nor goat met their eyes. On the stone platforms where houses once had stood they found numbers of charred bones and coconut shells aplenty. Tom, late that afternoon, sat down on a big piece of coral overlooking the sea.

"We're alone, Denny, alone," he repeated. "The natives have killed off the meat and had a big celebration and left. But why, I can't tell."

As he spoke, from far off a rolling rumble sounded. The ground trembled, the tops of a group of leaning palm trees suddenly became violently agitated. The heavy thuds of dropping coconuts came from the grove to one side. Then quietness again fell—quietness broken by the low, steady roar of the surf crashing against the reef, and the rustling of the palm fronds in the sweep of the trade winds. There was no need to question

what that sullen rumble denoted. Both knew.

They simultaneously glanced back up at the peak high above and saw what they expected. A big cloud of blue-gray smoke lipped the stark knob, a red glare showed through a rift in the clouds for a moment and as suddenly vanished. Their island was a volcano which apparently showed moments of activity. That, then, accounted for its desertion.

Denny spoke timorously, hesitant: "Perhaps, Tom, perhaps we—we——"

His partner interrupted him, "'Tis nothing. A little shake, no danger." His words lacked force, and Denny noted their tremulous, half-hearted manner.

Yet, they had made the jump; they had no choice now but to stay where they landed and make the best of it. Both were industrious and set to work. Inside of a week they had cleared a place up on a level bench on the hillside and had built a hut.

Then they began to construct a boat. They found a large log, rolled it down to the beach, and started to shape it. At first they worked hard, spending long hours laboriously hewing the tough wood. Then, as the days passed, other things seemed more important. A swim, a bit of fishing, finally they ceased making excuses. They had fallen under the spell of the tropics. They rested in the shade. To work, to struggle; and why? It all seemed so futile now. There was no need to labor to procure food. Fruit and coconuts were to be had for the mere reaching out of a hand. Fish? The ebbing tide always left scores flopping in the shallow pools, stranded by the falling water. The big sea turtles crawled up on the beach on moonlight nights to lay their eggs. Small effort to turn one over on her back. Life was indeed simple and carefree here under the sweep of the trade wind on this speck of land out in the center of the wide ocean.

Their first scare when the volcano rumbled had gone. For never another sign of life came from that high cone above them. And they no longer looked for visitors, no longer searched the sea for a sight of canoe. For as day followed day, the blue, smiling ocean was barren of sail or boat. It was as though nothing ever had floated on its surface since time began. And time itself—they had stopped reckoning the days. For two months Tom had notched a stick each morning. Then even

that had become too much of an effort. Of what use? A day, a month, a year, what difference did it make?

Their tobacco came to an end. That was hard to do without, but they soon came to seldom think of smoking. As Tom had promised Denny long ago, there was neither spring nor summer, fall nor winter, here, a monotonous succession of sunrises and sunsets. The moon waxed and waned, the wind always swept across the island from the same direction, the afternoon showers always poured down at the same time each day. The two who at first had been so active and industrious now did nothing. Clothes, they had quit wearing. They hung, damp, sagging, limp bundles on pegs in their grass house. Their shoes, green-molded, set in a corner. A canvas breechclout was the sole garment of either. They grew soft from inaction, bronzed, copper-colored from the burning rays of the sun.

Even speech became an effort. They often sat in the shade of the palm trees, gazing out over the reef, out to where the world of water met the bowl of the sky, sat for long hours without a word, with scarce a movement, dreaming, chins cupped in hands—dreaming of a world that lay off beyond the sky line, a world whose memories were growing dim and vague.

It might have been six months, perhaps seven—neither knew for certain since that evening when they had deserted the *Finback*. They lay on the warm sand, gazing out to where the sun was setting. The point that made out from the island was bathed in sunlight, behind them a purpling vista spread beneath the shadow of the grove of coconut palms. The trade wind, with the falling of evening, was dying. The palms that had struggled with bending trunks and rustling tops all day against the shove of the wind shivered their dried leaves gently. A coconut fell in the grove behind them with a heavy thud. High overhead a frigate bird, as though suspended on a string, circled round and round in lazy spirals on motionless wings.

Suddenly Tom, with a movement startling in its abruptness, leaped to his feet. He stood leaning forward, tense, rigid, like a bronze statue.

Hoarse, vibrant, his voice arose. "Salt horse—I smell salt horse a-b'ilin'!"

Denny, thinking that Tom had lost his reason, tried to calm him.

"Now, now, Tom, be you seated; take it——"

Abruptly his words stopped. His eyes grew round in wonder. Open-mouthed, he stared. Just beyond the rocks before them a jib boom poked, lengthened. A bowsprit followed, the dolphin striker rising and falling gently. A triangular piece of canvas fluttered down the stay, the bow of a ship came into view. A hoarse, clattering rumble of the anchor chain grating through the hawse pipe raised a screaming cloud of sea birds that had come to roost among the rocks for the night.

In an unbelieving voice, Denny said, "The *Finback*."

His nostrils spread, assailed by the pungent, briny odor of boiling salt beef. Tom stood motionless for a moment, then walked slowly away. Denny watched him disappear into the shadow of the trees, going toward their hut. He shook his head.

"Poor Tom," he muttered aloud. "He takes it hard, he regrets gettin' me into this. But I'll not give way. He'll never know I've longed for the ship many a time."

**A** HALF hour later darkness had swept over the island. Slowly Denny went up the path. He came to the hut. His mind was all made up. He'd not fail his partner. Tom need not go back to the life he loathed on his account. He'd stay here with him, with never a word to tell of his longings.

"Tom," he called softly.

No answer.

"Tom!" The mournful cry of a night bird was the only reply.

Denny reached inside the door of their hut, reached into the corner, where Tom's clothes hung. They were gone.

Five minutes later Denny had dressed and was swimming out to the ship. He caught hold of the main chain plates and started to haul himself aboard. He stopped. Tom's voice arose.

"They came on us sudden and unexpected. We knew nothing till we came to, bound and helpless on the island. Aye, bound and helpless and destined for a savage banquet. But we outwitted them, Denny and I. After you sailed they had a jamboree. Drunk they got, all of them. Aye, and Denny and I worked free o' our bonds. We tied them up, piled them in their canoe and set it afloat wi' a hole in the bottom. It sunk off the reef. And

now, captain"—Tom's voice took on a pleading note—"come, let me have a crew, go ashore, and bring Denny back. A bit touched wi' the solitude he be. A bit——"

Captain Forse's voice raised. Sardonicly he laughed.

"A likely tale, a yarn to delude old women. I take no stock in it. You both jumped ship. You both lose your lays. Not a penny do you get when we arrive home. As to him"—he turned and pointed to where Denny's head stuck over the rail—"and to you," he spoke to Tom, "you're disrated. Go forward. I've shipped boat steerers in your places. I took them on at Honolulu."

He turned on his heel and walked away. Shortly after Tom and Denny crouched

down in the lee of the bulwarks forward. They had begged the cook for a meal. Tom reached down into his wooden mess kit and pulled out a piece of salt beef. He bit deep into the tough, stringy meat.

"Aye, Denny," he muttered complacently, "salt horse and lobscouse, 'tis hard to beat."

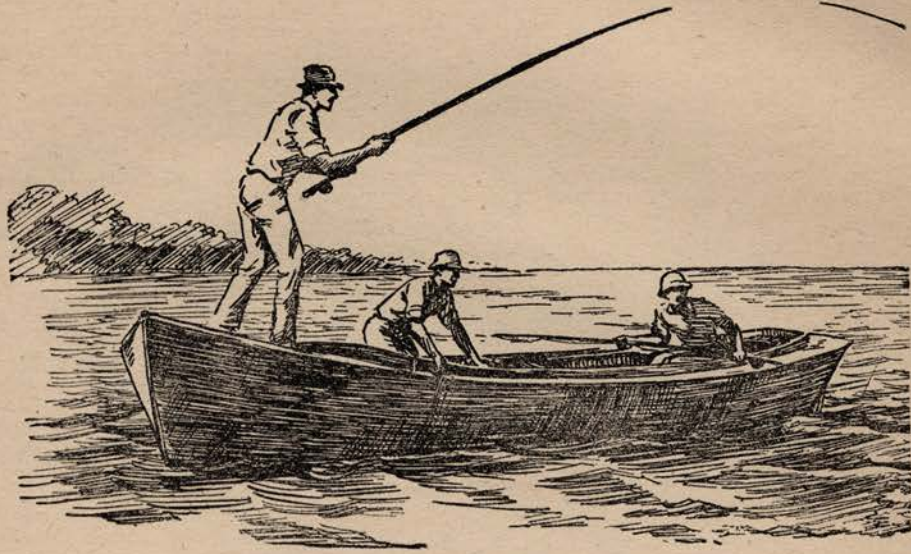
"Aye," Denny agreed as he flipped a biscuit against the capstan, knocking out the weevils, "aye, salt horse and lobscouse, the natural food of men."

They lit up their pipes, stretched out on the deck, and smoked peacefully.

Down in the captain's quarters aft, Portygee Joe chuckled.

"Salt horse, the smell of him raise 'em quick like you say, eh, cap'n?"





# MITAFRI

By Eric H. Wilkinson

A subsurface swashbuckler of the South Seas.

**S**AILORS, whose observation is necessarily keener than that of other men, and who have to name the wonders they encounter for future reference, have always called him the swordfish—when they did not call him something worse—and they have known him for a long time—a very long time.

Doubtless in prehistoric ages the Cro-Magnons, drifting round the coast of Spain in their frail cockleshells, knew him; although, since the sword had not yet come into use as an offensive weapon, they probably called him the equivalent of "the-fish-to-be-avoided-if-possible."

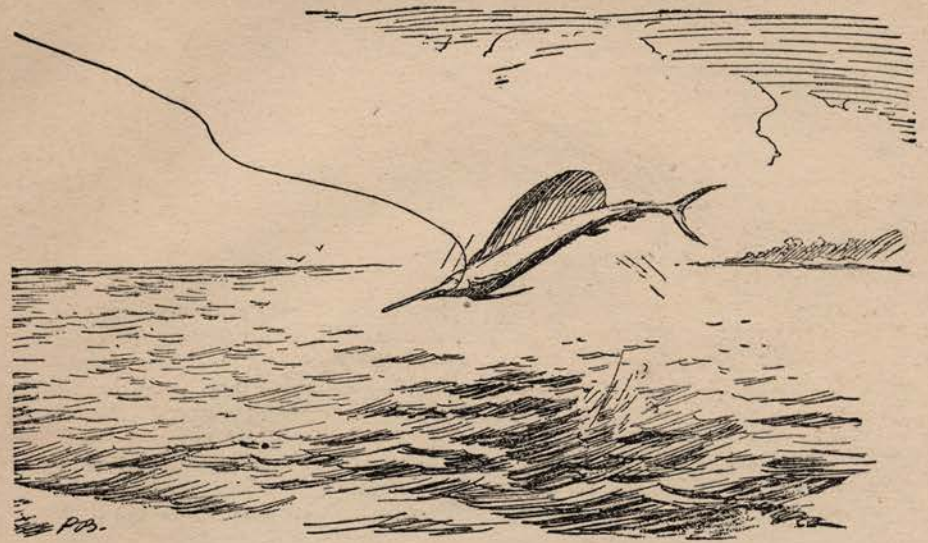
Later the Phœnicians, the founders of the mercantile marine, became quite familiar with him—not too familiar, for they took care to give him as wide a berth as possible. And perhaps the Cretans, the first to develop fighting ships, learned a wrinkle or two in tactics from him and equipped their ships with rams, conceived in flattering imitation of his sword, stout-based, sharp-tipped, and serrated on the

lower edge to prevent the prey from escaping when once impaled.

To-day, armed with harpoons, Mediterranean fishing fleets hunt for him, for his flesh is very palatable; and the sword, varnished and made up into such vanities as walking sticks or fire-guard supports, will always fetch a few pieces of silver from curio-hunting tourists.

Even so the hunted will sometimes turn on the hunter, and woe betide the light fishing smack or dinghy once a full-grown swordfish has decided to attack. Imagine a three-foot spike, as solid and unbreakable as ivory, and driven by the combined force of ten men each armed with a sledge hammer. What chance has a small boat against such a weapon which can and has been known to pierce the hull of a four-masted ship?

Take nine feet of bone and muscle weighing some six hundred pounds, driven by a strength greater in proportion than that of any other fish—equip it with the above weapon, which is really a prolonga-



tion of the skull and so part of the rugged frame, and not merely attached—add a furious temper and utter lack of fear, and you have the Mediterranean or Atlantic swordfish. *Double* all this, including the fearlessness and temper, and you have the giant swordfish of the Indo-Pacific.

Mitafri, the natives of the South Seas called him. Perhaps some scientist had tried to teach them his classical name, and this was the nearest pronunciation they could get to *Histiophorus*, *Xiphias Histiophorus*. His original home as a youngster was New Zealand, or rather the densely populated waters around the coast of the North Island, where even when quite small he wrought havoc among the schools of mullet and lesser fry.

Scorning carrion, for he was no scavenger and preferred to kill his own food, he began hunting at a very early age, thereby developing the wonderful strength and speed which later was to be both danger and salvation to him. Nor did he have many enemies, except those which his own quick temper and utter fearlessness incurred. Sharks he despised. They were arrant cowards as a rule, although they could occasionally put up a fair fight when forced to it. But they were garbage hounds, preferring the leavings of others to hunting their own. Poor trash.

Perhaps his dislike was partly due to the fact that they were a humble relation of his, claiming kinship on account of the

similarity of their skins—scaleless, leathery skins—in the case of the sharks, so rough that it was like the surface of a wood rasp. But here all similarity ended. Excluding of course his sword, Mitafri was heavier and stockier in proportion. His remarkable tail, unlike the more or less single, tapering affair belonging to the shark family, was bifurcated from base to tip, a design to which he partly owed the unerring aim and speed of his charges. His dorsal fin, instead of being the comparatively small triangular-shaped wedge as in the shark tribe, extended the whole length of his back, and when hoisted, equaled in height the diameter of his body. The extraordinary size and his use of this fin has gained for him his other though less popular name of sailfish.

One fine morning—fine for that coast of fierce gales and mighty seas—Mitafri was taking a little cruise, his sail spread to its full extent to catch a light easterly breeze which, without any effort on his part but a slight adjustment of his rudder, carried him at about four or five knots down the coast. Now and then he caught sight of a wandering Kau and other smaller fish which, had he wanted, he could have taken easily; but this morning he had hopes of surprising a school of mullet, his favorite sport and incidentally his preference on the menu.

Once a huge black shadow glided across his course many feet below him, and

Mitafri imperceptibly checked his speed, ready to dart aside should the giant stingaree suspect that the apparently lifeless piece of driftwood above him was worth while investigating. Mitafri had seen a fight between one of his own people and a stingaree, and before the sharks had demolished the victim, he had come close enough to observe the hideous wounds which the giant sea bat's scorpionlike tail had inflicted on the loser—observed and taken notice for future reference.

Pugnacious little ruffian though he was even at that early age, he was no fool, and he realized glumly that his experience as yet was not sufficient to cope with a fish—at least he supposed it was a fish; anyway, it swam—which recognized no rules of the game but fought with its tail.

Somewhat relieved when the stingaree vanished as mysteriously as it had appeared, Mitafri hoisted sail again and proceeded on his course. Suddenly, as he rounded a point, he came upon a school of mullet playing in the sheltered waters of a little bay.

As he had hoped, his arrival was a complete surprise to the school. Fish are very sensitive, not only to sight, but to vibration. Had Mitafri been hurrying they would doubtless have heard, or rather felt, him even before they saw him, but his effortless approach, little more than drifting, deceived the sentinels of the school until he was almost among them. Reefing his sail with a snap which added impetus to his charge, Mitafri drove headlong at the school with such speed and deadly aim that he impaled three victims on his two-foot skewer before the school broke up in fluttering panic and scattered to the four currents.

Quite satisfied with the result, Mitafri shook his victims off—not such an easy job, for the lower edge of his sword was serrated, the rudimentary remains of what in ages past had been teeth—and leisurely dined. Nevertheless, he kept his eyes open as a silver streak emerged from the shelter of the point and hurtled past him after the scattered mullet. But the latter had already gained cover, and the silver streak, a stalking barracuda which had been biding his time waiting for the mullet to come a bit closer to him, returned bitterly disappointed to his post. Seeing Mitafri, and knowing that he was the cause of his discomfiture, the sea tiger paused,

baring his teeth and twitching his tail angrily.

Mitafri was quite ready. Gulping down the third mullet with a relish calculated to goad his rival still further, he swung around until his sword pointed directly at the crouching tiger. In fact, had the barracuda delayed another instant, Mitafri would probably have attacked first, but the former, though furious, was not yet ready to commit suicide. He was no coward; in fact, next to Mitafri, he was the fiercest and most reckless of all sea fish, but Mitafri had the advantage—a deadly sharp, two-foot advantage, plus extra weight, for the sea pike would have scaled sixty-odd pounds, whereas Mitafri was nearer a hundred by now.

With a soundless snarl, the luckless sea tiger darted—obliquely, so that if Mitafri attacked his aim would be more difficult—into the shelter of a submarine cavern behind the point.

Rather disappointed, for he was spoiling for a fight, Mitafri circled slowly and tauntingly in front of the cave mouth, but finding that he could not tempt the barracuda to try conclusions with him, he departed, leaving a piece of mullet tail for the barracuda to see by way of a kindly afterthought. Barracudas are not scavengers either, and bitterly resent such an imputation.

His own temper, which was exceedingly short, beginning to rise at the thought of losing an enjoyable fight, he sullenly toured around the little bay, although he knew the scattered mullet would have given warning and no game was likely to be found. The appearance of what at first sight he took to be a piece of driftwood, but which presently he saw could apparently move slowly in any direction it desired, provoked his easily aroused curiosity, and he swam over for a closer inspection.

Only its size—although but little wider, it was almost three times his own length—prevented him from attacking immediately. Moreover its extreme slowness made him suspicious. The stingaree had taught him that it was well to know an enemy opponent's tactics before starting anything. As nothing further happened; in fact, from its increased speed, it seemed that the creature was feebly trying to escape from him if possible, Mitafri made a complete circle around it—just to be sure that



there was no funny stuff—before he charged.

Suddenly his attention was drawn to a small shiny object about three inches long—in reality a fishing spinner of pearl shell—which bobbed and sidled behind the creature, gradually drawing closer to it, yet apparently quite unconcerned at Mitafri's approach.

Mitafri was annoyed, then enraged. According to all previous experience, this miserable little fish should have dashed away in panic at his approach, but instead of that, it bobbed leisurely along, as if, trusting in the protection of the bigger creature, it was actually trying to mock him.

Protection! Huh! Snapping down his sail, Mitafri charged, his sword striking the canoe squarely in the middle just at the water line.

Had the Maori fisherman not been sitting in the stern he might have received a serious if not fatal injury, for Mitafri's sword penetrated the shell of the canoe up to its hilt. This was the fisherman's salvation, for, as he dived overboard and struck out desperately for the shore some two hundred yards away, Mitafri was too occupied in extricating himself from the wrecked canoe which clung persistently around his nose to notice anything else.

At first he backed away, but the canoe, though nearly waterlogged, was so light that its resistance was not sufficient for the serrated saw to disengage itself. Frightened for the first time in his life, he tried shaking himself like a dog, with no more success, for the canoe merely gave with him, without the hole becoming enlarged. It was lucky for him that the barracuda did not come out to investigate the disturbance, for he was completely disarmed and helpless.

Perhaps some thought such as this may have entered his head, for, thoroughly panic-stricken by now, he made for the shelter of the rocky point on the farther side of the bay. This was his salvation, for as he tried to back into a deep shelter, the ends of the canoe caught on the rocks, and with this leverage to pull against, Mitafri easily rid himself of his encumbrance; so easily that he sat somewhat violently against the unyielding rocks behind him.

Finding himself free, he made for the outer sea, the wide-open spaces where fish

are fish—in fact, never again did he hunt so close to the shore.

Soon his spirits returned, fear was unnatural to him, and he never stayed long, but remembrance of the canoe remained. Apparently there were some things so darned helpless that they were positively dangerous.

Lunch off a sea trout, a rare but delicious course, completely restored his self-confidence, and he ventured on southward.

**A** FEW days later he came to another bay, so deep and wide that the shore in the center was almost invisible from midway between the two points. Here he encountered a small outward-bound steamer.

Mitafri eyed it suspiciously. Apparently, though a thousand times bigger, its habits were somewhat similar to the helpless creature which had given him such a shock. It never dived, but moved slowly on top of the surface with such labored effort that the vibration could be felt for miles around. Nor, on seeing him, did it veer from its course either toward or away from him. Moreover, a couple of sharks were following it within easy charging distance, so that there could be no danger whatever from the thing itself, only from its sheer darned helplessness, no doubt.

Mitafri scowled as it passed him, horribly tempted to give it a vicious jab, but prudently restrained himself. The revolving and pulsing of the screws puzzled him; he could understand a creature's motive power being in its tail—that was only natural—but why make such a fuss about it!

One or two similar creatures, little larger than the canoe but white in color, were also moving about the bay, sluggishly driven by their tails. However, none of the other fish seemed to mind them; in fact, the mullet were fairly plentiful, but so scattered that catching them was not easy. Urged on by his insatiable appetite, Mitafri persevered with fair success.

Once he spotted a mullet, alive but either injured or oblivious, of any danger, so slowly was it moving. Still hungry or else he might have been more suspicious, Mitafri made for it, not troubling to spear such an easy captive, but seizing it in his jaws. A sharp prick in the side of his mouth annoyed rather than alarmed him,

and he discovered that to the mullet was attached a piece of weed, so thin and yet so tough that he could not bite through it. With the idea of shaking it off, Mitafri broke water.

"Look out, sir, you've hooked a small un!" said one of the men of the launch.

The other, a lean, sun-browned man seated aft in a pivoting chair, nodded, frowning as he hastily examined his reel.

"I know—this confounded reel is going to jam again, I'm afraid. It's——"

"He's off, sir! He's off!"

Mitafri had been surprised and still more annoyed at his failure to shake off the weed. Then suddenly finding that not only had the pain in his mouth increased, but that he was slowly yet surely moving against his will toward the launch, he turned, and with all the speed and strength of which he was capable, dashed blindly in the opposite direction.

Not until he began to tire did he again feel that weak but insistent pull on his mouth. Then for a second time fear came to his rescue and lent him strength to continue his headlong rush.

Then there came a jerk which turned him almost completely around in his tracks, followed by a fierce stabbing pain in his mouth. A moment later he realized that he was free, the weed was gone, and with it that intolerable persistent pull toward the launch. A quick dive and he was down, far down in the shadowy depths, where he could fill his panting gills and aching mouth with refreshingly ice-cold water.

"Lost him—thanks to this damn reel!" sighed the lean, sun-browned man resignedly. "Sporting little chap, too! I'd like to get into him again some day!"

Perhaps it was lucky for some launch that Mitafri's experience of them at such an early age had been so unpleasant—he connected the clinging weed as being due in some way to the launch. Doubtless he would have been caught sooner or later, but had he been hooked again his fury would have made him charge, and even a motor launch is not improved by being perforated in the hull.

As it was, Mitafri left—hurriedly—for the north again. He had had enough adventures for the time being, and here, far from the popular fishing grounds, in fact, out of the course of any ship save an occasional coastal tramp or trading schooner, he grew and thrived.

**F**OR several years he led a quiet and uneventful life, making an occasional hundred-mile jaunt—but never southward—and usually in the mating season, for swordfish when seen far from land are generally in couples. As time went on he found it more and more difficult to satisfy his appetite, which increased in ratio to his size. At last he decided to pull up stakes and move to more populous waters, where the fish were bigger and would not necessitate so many per square meal.

By this time he was about thirteen feet in length, of which the sword comprised three tenths, and weighed over a thousand pounds. His dorsal sail, which as a youngster had been all one piece, was now divided into two—the sign of maturity. A magnificent specimen of Pacific swordfish.

Mitafri at first had no definite ideas as to his ultimate destination, but his local forages had taught him that the farther north, the better hunting. And so, one fine morning in January—midsummer in the south—he set out, heading north by east, accompanied by a stalwart matron who had been won in a glorious fight; for, like that other game fish, the salmon, swordfish are temporarily monogamous.

For two or three weeks they proceeded leisurely through the rapidly warming water, sailing whenever the wind permitted, and taking the lower trails when the surface conditions were unfavorable.

To keep in trim they chased schools of flying fish whose proportionately huge lateral fins, like wings, enabled them to elude their pursuers by skipping from swell to swell just above the surface. Occasionally they managed to impale one before it could take to the air or was too exhausted to fly for any distance; but, stripped of their wings, they were little larger than a herring, and even bonier, and decidedly less palatable.

A couple of hundred miles past Fiji they saw in the distance a big bull whale which had been cut off from the main herd by a school of killer whales, who set on the brute whenever he came up for air like a pack of wolves attacking a giant elk. But the whale, though sorely harassed, was still strong. The furious killers could do little damage to him below the surface, in fact they rarely tried; and on his brief trips to the surface for air they had a

hard time of it at first. The powerful brute would occasionally catch a luckless thirty-foot killer and with a flip of his mighty flukes hurl it with stunning force, to fall some fifty yards or so away.

Mitafri quivered with anticipation as he took in the details of the fight. Although he had never encountered a whale before, age-old instinct told him that he was needed here and what to do. Followed by his wife, he dived until he reached a point some twenty fathoms immediately below the giant cetacean.

The next time the brute dived to escape the furies, the two swordfish attacked him from below, burying their swords to the hilts in the descending mountain of flesh, easily extricating themselves afterward with a twist from the soft, yielding blubber.

Goaded by these stings, the unhappy whale rose hastily to the surface, only to be driven down again by the waiting pack. Half a dozen times he tried to submerge, each time his dive becoming shallower as Mitafri and his wife, seeing their victim weaken, grew bolder and lessened the length of their charge.

At last the whale, exhausted with his efforts and wounds, floated dying on the surface, and the pack closed in, tearing the still-quivering bulk to pieces. Mitafri and his wife joined in the feast unmolested by the killers, who seemed to recognize the assistance they had given; although a greedy shark, one of a horde who were prudently waiting until the slayers had finished, paid with his life for his impatience.

Gorged with this rich meal, Mitafri was thankful to be able to set sail and travel without much exertion on his part for the next day or so. Twice more during his voyage he encountered and was lucky enough to assist killers, each resulting banquet making him more and more determined to push on in spite of the remonstrances of his wife, who, for the sake of the future generation, was anxious to make shoal waters.

At last he came to a pass between two islands, a very deep pass about four miles wide, through which traveling hordes of fish made use of the strong currents. Bounding the pass and surrounding the islands were coral reefs, beyond which, on an occasional foray in search of O Fee, the octopus, a new and delightful delicacy which he had discovered during his voy-

age, he caught a glimpse of canoes drifting on the lagoon. Although he never ventured into the lagoons, it was from no fear of the canoes. Even if he had remembered the incident of his younger days, his strength and size were now so great that to demolish a canoe would be but the work of a second. But Mitafri was by preference a deep-sea fish, his hulk and charging tactics demanded plenty of room; moreover, each time he ventured close to the coral cliffs, he had the same imprisoned feeling which a backwoodsman experiences when visiting a city.

However, Mitafri decided that this particular corner of the ocean was as near to his ideal as he could ever hope to find. A sea of eternal summer tempered with occasional rains and winds which, compared to those in the far south, were but little more than sailing breezes. Nor was it attacked by that dread menace of the tropics, the hurricane. He was soon joined by other swordfish seeking a marine Utopia. At least, they also hunted the pass, but refrained from getting too close to Mitafri. His temper and size precluded any attempt at sociability. However, there were plenty of Terahi and Paiheri, besides countless other smaller courses on the menu; so, provided they did not interfere with him, he was content to suffer their presence.

**A**S the years passed, although he had long since reached maturity, Mitafri still increased in size until he was almost three quarters of a ton in weight, seventeen feet of steel-muscled, undisputed power; king of the seas, demanding and receiving tribute by reason of his five-foot scepter. Rarely did he have to use it as a sword now, the mere sight of it being sufficient to scatter in panic the most unruly of his subjects.

One day as he loafed through a sapphire sea so calm that except for the eternal Pacific swell it might have been some huge landlocked lagoon, he passed near a trim white launch. Mitafri scarcely heeded it, except to notice that it was somewhat out of its course. He was accustomed to seeing the daily passenger and mail launches from Tahiti to Moorea laboriously breast the swells and choppy seas off Cook's Point. They never interfered with him, nor even spoiled his hunting; neither did the occasional liner or copra schooners,

hurrying through the pass on their own business.

But what did attract his attention was the peculiar antics of a fair-sized Paiheri, a large and very succulent variety of mackerel to which he was particularly addicted. Paying no heed to the awful presence of his majesty, the Paiheri cavorted and bounded about like some playful little trout at the first fly hatch of the season, instead of concentrating his energies on the usual single-minded dash for safety.

Mitafri's sight may have weakened, but it is more likely that his absolute supremacy had obviated any need for suspicion. Whatever the reason, he failed to notice the slender strand of copper wire attached to the Paiheri.

Displeased with such impudent frivolity, more especially since he was quite in the mood for the gentle exercise which normally preceded a light snack of this sort, he gulped down the offender, and then—

Perhaps the almost insignificant prick of the hook may have struck some dim cord in his memory. Certainly the tautening of the line in a feeble strain of some fifty pounds or so was no more than a slight discomfort to him, and had about as much effect in controlling his movements as a clothesline would have on a wild elephant.

For a moment he lay still, literally paralyzed, so great was the shock of anger at the realization that he, Mitafri, king of the sea, had been subject to such an enormity. Then, his fury tempered by the absurdity of attempting to hamper his movements or freedom, he dived—not the blind, panic-stricken dash of the past, but a steady downward glide, wonderfully fast in spite of the lack of effort.

On board the launch, a lean, sunburned man whose dark hair was now graying slightly about the temples, tensed as the screech of the reel shrilled a call for action, and a smile flickered for an instant across his tightly compressed lips, the grim smile of a fighter who has met a worthy opponent.

For several seconds the reel, an enormous affair capable of holding several hundred yards of line, howled with protest against such terrific speed, and the fighter frowned as he saw that his reserves of line were rapidly becoming exhausted. Soon, to his relief, the howl of the tortured brakes diminished to a creaking pur,

and finally stopped. There is a limit to which even such a giant as Mitafri may descend, for though a deep-sea fish, he was a surface hunter; his lungs were not constructed to withstand the enormous pressure of the lower depths any more than those of a man will permit him to ascend far into the rarified atmosphere above.

Winded by his effort, Mitafri rose slowly at first, and then, astounded that the slight but persistent pull on his head still remained, his fury got the better of his reason. Had he continued to swim leisurely away from the launch it would have been but a matter of seconds until he was free. As it was, he rose—rose with a superb rush, which carried him twenty feet out of the water, where for the fraction of a second he poised, his body arched in mid-air, shaking his head with a magnificent fury wonderful to see, to fall with a splash which sent inquisitive spectators darting to cover. Then, changing his tactics, he tore off at right angles with all the speed of which he was capable, and dived.

But the lean, sunburned man had also learned a lot, more than any other whose favorite sport was big-game fishing. Many a time, single-handed he had fought and beaten a fish five times his own weight, fighting it with rod and line which he himself could easily have broken had he wished.

As Mitafri rose, his enemy rapidly and skillfully reeled in the slack so that when Mitafri returned from his brief flight to his own element once more, he still felt that slight check, maddening in its terrible persistency. Once more he broke water, only to fail in his purpose.

"Heavens!" ejaculated a friend of the hunter's, who had been driven speechless by Mitafri's first appearance. "What a whopper! What a whopper! You'll never tire him out, Gray! Shall I lend you a hand?"

"No!" said the hunter firmly. "It's between him and me!"

It seemed almost as if Mitafri heard him, or perhaps it was just the spirit of one fighter calling to another—at any rate, there ensued a battle royal, worthy of any king; an age-old struggle in which man pitted his skill and wits against brute strength. For three long hours Mitafri tried every trick he knew, but always the

hunter managed to maintain his hold, although the sweat poured from him and the lines of his face betrayed the agony which the constant strain on his arms exacted.

But Mitafri was in even worse shape. Just as a comparatively light weight becomes an intolerable burden after a time, so had the slight pull on his head become a resistless drag to which, exhausted by his own futile efforts to escape it, he was gradually succumbing.

At last, after summoning all his failing strength for one final dash for freedom, he lay spent and beaten on the surface. Had he known it, he was within an ace of freedom, for this last charge had taken him a quarter of a mile from the launch, and but a few scant yards of line remained on the reel.

"Quick!" gasped the hunter to his friend. "That other spool—I'll splice it on. He's beat, I think, but I daren't pull on him or he may have another spurt left in him."

Still maintaining the strain, the hunter began to attach the extra line, but just as the actual splicing began, he was forced to relax the strain for a moment or two. Mitafri, rolling helplessly on the surface, subconsciously felt the strain relax, and although he was past caring, some instinct, not waiting for orders, urged him to a feeble switch of his tail sufficient to carry him on, only for a few yards farther, but enough.

In vain the hunter made a grab at the line as it slipped through the guiding rings of his rod. Had he caught it he might still have won, for Mitafri had not the strength of an average salmon by now. As

it was, the line went overboard, where it floated tantalizingly on the surface, just out of reach; and then, as Mitafri mechanically dived, a poor, weak effort more like a gradual submerging than a dive, both line and fish vanished.

"Lord—what rotten luck! You had him—I'll swear you had him!" groaned the friend, whose disappointment seemed greater than that of the hunter himself.

"Y-yes, but you see—I didn't!" said the latter sadly, relaxing with a sigh of relief, for he was very, very tired.

"I wonder the brute didn't charge the launch, though I suppose we would have got him if he had," observed the friend. "Still, it wouldn't have done the launch any good."

The hunter smiled. A successful writer, whose stories were known the world over, the loss of a launch would not have distressed him much; in fact, he would cheerfully have sacrificed the value of a launch for the chance of another bout with Mitafri.

"No, it wouldn't!" he admitted. "But I'm glad he didn't—I'd have hated to have to harpoon the old boy. No, Jim, it was a good fight, and the best man won. But," he added wistfully, "it isn't often that one has the chance of getting into such a fish; must have been around fifteen hundred, I should judge, Jim. I wonder—I wonder if he'll give me another go at him?"

"I doubt it!" said the friend. But could the game old king, slowly recovering his strength in the cool depths, have heard, it is more than probable he would have accepted the challenge.



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**TIME!**



...in a cigarette it's

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*TASTE above everything*



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MILD...  
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# Adventures of an African Slaver

By Captain Canot

## Synopsis of Preceding Chapters.

**T**HEODORE CANOT, a young Italian seaman early in the last century, fell in with a band of wreckers on the Cuban coast. Escaping from them he entered the slave trade, sailing first as mate and then operating as an independent trader on the Slave Coast. On a trip to the interior after slaves he wins the friendship of a powerful chief, who is a great aid to him.

Returning to his factory, he was captured by the captain of a French ship, but was subsequently released by the captain of a Spanish schooner. The captain died soon afterward, and Theodore decided to take his ship to sea. He succeeded in this design, but was captured by a British cruiser, whose captain set him adrift thirty miles off the coast. After various adventures, he made his way back to his own factory, but the baracoons were burned shortly after his arrival.

As his fortunes were then at a low ebb he decided to take a cargo to Cuba, which he was successful in doing, and realized a good profit on it. Then he joined a French slaver that was trading to the Mozambique Channel. After many vicissitudes they completed the voyage, narrowly escaping capture by a strange cruiser.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

**T**HE beneficent disposition of my late commander, though not a regular testament, was carried out in Cuba, and put me in possession of twelve thousand dollars as my share of the enterprise. Yet my restless spirit did not allow me to remain idle. Our successful voyage had secured me scores of friends among the Spanish slavers and I received daily applications for a fresh command.

But the plans of my French friend had so bewitched me with a desire for imitation that I declined subordinate posts and aspired to ownership. Accordingly I proposed to the proprietor of a large American clipper brig that we should fit her on the same system as the *San Pablo*. Yet, wishing to surpass my late captain in commercial success, I suggested the idea of fighting for our cargo, or, in plainer language, of relieving another slaver of her living freight, a project which promptly

found favor with the owner of *La Conchita*. The vessel in question originally cost twelve thousand dollars and I proposed to cover this value by expending an equal sum on her outfit in order to constitute me half owner.

The bargain was struck, and the armament, sails, additional spars, rigging, and provisions went on board with prudential secrecy. Inasmuch as we could not leave port without some show of a cargo, merchandise in bond was taken from the public warehouses, and, after being loaded in our hold during day, was smuggled ashore again at night. As the maneuver was a trick of my accomplice, who privately gained by the operation, I took no notice of what was delivered or taken away.

Finally all was ready. Forty-five men were shipped, and the *Conchita* cleared. Next day at daybreak I was to sail with the land breeze.

A sailor's last night ashore is proverbial, and none of the customary ceremonies were omitted on this occasion. There was a parting supper with plenty of champagne, there was a visit to the café, a farewell call here, another there, and a bumper everywhere. In fact, till two in the morning, I was busy with my adieus. But when I got home at last with my thumping headache, I was met at the door by a note from my partner, stating that our vessel was seized and an order issued for my arrest. He counseled me to keep aloof from the *alguaziles* till he could arrange the matter with the custom house and police.

I will not enlarge this chapter of disasters. Next day my accomplice was lodged in prison for his fraud, the vessel confiscated, her outfit sold, and my purse cropped to the extent of twelve thousand dollars. I had barely time to escape before the officers were in my lodgings; and I finally saved myself from a Cuban prison by taking another name, and playing rancher among the hills for several weeks.

**M**Y finances were at low-water mark when I strolled one fine morning into Matanzas, and, after some delay, again obtained command of a slaver through the secret influence of my old and trusty friends. The new craft was a dashing schooner of one hundred and twenty tons, fresh from the United States, and intended for Whydah on the Slave Coast.

SEA—5

It was calculated that we might bring home at least four hundred and fifty slaves, for whose purchase I was supplied plentifully with rum, powder, English muskets, and rich cottons from Manchester.

In due time we sailed for the Cape Verdes, the usual port of dispatch on such excursions. At Praya, we exchanged our flag for the Portuguese, before we put up our helm for the coast. A British cruiser chased up fruitlessly for two days off Sierra Leone, and enabled me not only to test the sailing qualities, but to get the sailing trim of the *Estrella* in perfection. So confident did I become of the speed and bottom of my gallant clipper, that I ventured, with a leading wind, to chase the first vessel I described on the horizon, and was altogether deceived by the tricolor displayed at her peak. Indeed I could not divine this novel nationality till the speaking trumpet apprised us that the lilies of France had taken triple hues in the hands of Louis Philippe. Accordingly, before I squared away for Whydah, I saluted the royal republican, by lowering my flag thrice.

I consigned the *Estrella* to one of the most remarkable traders that ever expanded the African traffic by his genius.

Señor Da Souza—better known on the coast and in the interior as Cha-cha—was said to be a native mulatto of Rio Janeiro, whence he emigrated to Dahomey after deserting the army of his imperial master. I do not know how he reached Africa, but it is probable the fugitive made part of some slaver's crew, and fled from his vessel as he had previously abandoned the military service in Brazil. His parents were poor, indolent, and careless, so that Cha-cha grew up an illiterate, headstrong youth. Yet when he touched the soil of Africa a new life seemed infused into his veins. For a while his days are said to have been full of misery and trouble, but the Brazilian slave trade happened to receive an extraordinary impetus about that period. So gradually the adventurous refugee managed to profit by his skill in dealing with the natives or by acting as broker among his countrymen. Beginning in the humblest way, he stuck to trade with the utmost tenacity till he ripened into an opulent factor.

The tinge of native blood that dyed his complexion perhaps qualified him peculiarly for this enterprise. He loved the



customs of the people. He spoke their language with the fluency of a native. He won the favor of chief after chief. He strove to be considered a perfect African among Africans, though, among whites, he still affected the graceful address and manners of his country. In this way, little by little, Cha-cha advanced in the regard of all he dealt with, and secured the commissioners of Brazil and Cuba, while he was regarded and protected as a prime favorite by the warlike king of Dahomey. Indeed it is alleged that this noted sovereign formed a sort of devilish compact with the Portuguese factor and supplied him with everything he desired during life in consideration of inheriting his wealth when dead.

But Cha-cha was resolved, while the power of enjoyment was still vouchsafed him, that all the pleasures of human life accessible to money should not be wanting in Whydah. He built a large and commodious dwelling for his residence on a beautiful spot near the site of an abandoned Portuguese fort. He filled his establishment with every luxury and comfort that could please the fancy or gratify the body. Wines, food, delicacies, and raiment were brought from Paris, London, and Havana. The finest women along the coast were lured to his settlement. Billiard tables and gambling halls spread their wiles or afforded distraction for detained navigators. In fine, he surrounded himself with all that could corrupt virtue, gratify passion, tempt avarice, betray weakness, satisfy sensuality, and complete a picture of incarnate slavery in Dahomey.

When he sallied forth his walk was always accompanied by considerable ceremony. An officer preceded him to clear the path, a fool or buffoon hopped beside him, a band of native musicians sounded their discordant instruments, and a couple of singers screamed at the top of their voices the most fulsome adulation of the mulatto.

Numbers of vessels were, of course, required to feed this African nabob with doubloons and merchandise. Sometimes commanders from Cuba or Brazil would be kept months in his perilous nest while their craft cruised along the coast in expectation of human cargoes. At such seasons no expedient was left untried for the entertainment and pillage of wealthy or trusted idlers. If Cha-cha's board and

wines made them drunkards, it was no fault of his. If rouge et noir or monte won their doubloons and freight at his saloon, he regretted, but dared not interfere with the amusements of his guests. If the sirens of his harem betrayed a cargo for their favor over cards, a convenient fire destroyed the frail warehouse after its merchandise was secretly removed.

Cha-cha was exceedingly desirous that I should accept his hospitality. As soon as I read my invoice to him—for he could not do it himself—he became almost irresistible in his emproisement. Yet I declined the invitation with firm politeness and took up my quarters on shore at the residence of a native *manfuca*, or broker. I was warned of his allurements before I left Matanzas, and resolved to keep myself and property so clear of his clutches, that our contract would either be fulfilled or remain within my control. Thus, by avoiding his table and the society of his dissipated sons, I maintained my business relations with the slaver, and secured his personal respect so effectually that, at the end of two months, four hundred and eighty prime Negroes were in the bowels of *La Estrella*.

### CHAPTER XXXIII.

**W**HILE I tarried at Whydah an invitation came from the king of Dahomey, soliciting the presence of Cha-cha and his guests at the yearly "customs," or sacrifice of human beings, whose blood is shed not only to appease an irritated god, but to satiate the appetite of departed kings. I did not accompany the party that was present at this dreadful festival. Cha-cha dispatched several of the captains who were awaiting cargoes under the charge of his own interpreters and the royal *manfucas*, and from one of these eyewitnesses whose curiosity was painfully satiated I received a faithful account of the spectacle.

For three days our travelers passed through a populous region, fed with abundant repasts prepared in the native villages by Cha-cha's cooks, and resting at night in hammocks suspended among the trees. On the fourth day the party reached the great capital of Abomey, to which the king had come for the bloody festival from his residence at Cannah.

My friends were comfortably lodged

for repose and next morning presented to the sovereign. He was a well-built Negro, dressed in the petticoat trousers of a Turk, with yellow morocco boots, while a profusion of silk shawls encircled his shoulders and waist, and a lofty headpiece, with trailing plumes, surmounted his wool. A vast bodyguard of female soldiers or Amazons, armed with lances and muskets, surrounded his majesty.

Presently the *manfucas* and interpreters, crawling on their hands and knees to the royal feet, deposited Cha-cha's tribute and the white men's offering. The first consisted of several pieces of crêpe, silks, and taffeta, with a large pitcher and basin of silver; while the latter was a trifling gift of twenty muskets and one hundred pieces of blue dungaree. The present was gracefully accepted and the donors welcomed to the sacrifice, which was delayed on account of the scarcity of victims, though orders had been given to storm a neighboring tribe to make up three hundred slaves for the festival. In the meanwhile a spacious house, furnished in European style and altogether better than the ordinary dwellings of Africa, was assigned to the strangers. Liberty was also given them to enter wherever they pleased and take what they wished, inasmuch as all his subjects, male and female, were slaves whom he placed at the white men's disposal.

The 6th of May was announced as the beginning of the sacrificial rites, which were to last five days. Early in the morning, two hundred females of the Amazonian guard, naked to the waist, but richly ornamented with beads and rings at every joint of their oiled and glistening limbs, appeared in the area before the king's palace, armed with blunt cutlasses. Very soon the sovereign made his appearance, when the band of warriors began their maneuvers, keeping pace with rude skill to the native drum and flute.

A short distance from the palace, within sight of the square, a fort or inclosure about nine feet high had been built of adobe and surrounded by a pile of tall, prickly briars. Within this barrier, secured to stakes, stood fifty captives who were to be immolated at the opening of the festival. When a drill of the Amazons and the royal review were over, there was, for a considerable time, perfect silence in the ranks and throughout the vast multitude of spectators. Presently, at a signal

from the king, one hundred of the women departed at a run, brandishing their weapons and yelling their war cry, till, heedless of the barricade, they leaped the walls, lacerating their flesh in crossing the thorns. The delay was short. Fifty of these female demons with torn limbs and bleeding faces quickly returned and offered their howling victims to the king.

It was now the duty of this personage to begin the sacrifice with his royal hand. Calling the female whose daring had led her foremost across the thorns, he took a glittering sword from her grasp, and in an instant the head of the first victim fell to the dust. The weapon was then returned to the woman, who, handing it to the white men, desired them to unite in the brutal deed! The strangers, however, not only refused, but, sick at heart, abandoned the scene of butchery. It lasted, they understood, till noon, when the Amazons were dismissed to their barracks, reeking with rum and blood. For five days the strangers were doomed to hear the yells of the storming Amazons as they assailed the fort for fresh victims. On the sixth the sacrifice was over—the divinity was appeased and quiet reigned again in the streets of Abomey.

Before the travelers departed, his majesty proposed to accord them a parting interview. He received the strangers with ceremonious politeness and called their attention to the throne or royal seat upon which he had coiled his limbs. The chair is said to have been an heirloom of at least twenty generations. Each of its legs rests on the skull of some native king or tribal chief.

Such is their respect for the usages of antiquity, that every three years the people of Dahomey are obliged to renew the steadiness of the stool by the fresh skulls of some noted princes!

#### CHAPTER XXXIV.

**I** HAVE always regretted that I left Whydah on my homeward voyage without interpreters to aid in the necessary intercourse with our slaves. There was no one on board who understood a word of their dialect. Many complaints from the Negroes that would have been dismissed or satisfactorily adjusted had we comprehended grievances were passed over in silence or hushed with the lash. Indeed the whip alone was the emblem of *La Es-*

*trella's* discipline, and in the end it taught me the saddest of lessons.

From the beginning there was manifest discontent among the slaves. I endeavored at first to please and accommodate them by a gracious manner, but manner alone is not appreciated by untamed Africans. A few days after our departure a slave leaped overboard in a fit of passion, and another choked himself during the night. These two suicides in twenty-four hours caused much uneasiness among the officers and induced me to make every preparation for a revolt.

We had been at sea about three weeks without further disturbance and there was so much merriment among the gangs that were allowed to come on deck that my apprehensions of danger began gradually to wear away. However, one fair afternoon a squall broke forth from an almost cloudless sky; and as the boatswain's whistle piped all hands to take in sail, a simultaneous rush was made by the confined slaves at all the after gratings. Amid the confusion of the rising gale they knocked down the guard and poured upon deck. The sentry at the fore hatch seized the cook's ax, and, sweeping it round him like a scythe, kept at bay the band that sought to emerge from below him.

Meantime the women in the cabin were not idle. Seconding the males they rose in a body, and the helmsman was forced to stab several with his knife before he could drive them below again. By this time there were about forty stalwart devils on deck, yelling and grinning, armed with staves of broken water casks or billets of wood found in the hold.

The blow that prostrated the first white man was the earliest symptom I detected of the revolt, but in an instant I had the arm chest open on the quarter deck and the mate and steward beside me to protect it. Matters did not stand so well forward. Four of the hands were disabled by clubs, while the rest defended themselves and the wounded as well as they could with handspikes or whatever could suddenly be clutched. I had always charged the cook, on such an emergency, to distribute from his coppers a liberal supply of scalding water upon the belligerents; and, at the first sign of revolt, he endeavored to baptize the heathen with his steaming slush. But dinner had been over for some time, so that the lukewarm liquid only irritated

the savages, one of whom laid the unfortunate "doctor" bleeding in the scuppers.

All this occurred in perhaps less time than I have taken to tell it; yet, rapid as was the transaction, I saw that between the squall with its flying sails and the revolt with its raving blacks, we would soon be in a desperate plight unless I gave the order to shoot. Accordingly, I told my comrades to aim low and fire at once.

Our carbines had been purposely loaded with buckshot to suit such an occasion, so that the first two discharges brought several of the rebels to their knees. Still the unharmed neither fled nor ceased brandishing their weapons. Two more discharges drove them forward amongst the mass of my crew who had retreated toward the bowsprit. But, being reënforced by the boatswain and carpenter, we took command of the hatches so effectually that a dozen additional discharges among their legs drove the refractory to their quarters below.

It was time, for sails, ropes, tacks, sheets, and blocks, were flapping, dashing, and rolling about the masts and decks, threatening us with imminent danger from the squall. In a short time everything was made snug, the vessel put on our course, and attention paid to the mutineers who had begun to fight among themselves in the hold.

I perceived at once by the infuriated sounds proceeding from below that we could not descend through the hatches. Accordingly we discharged the women from their quarters under a guard on deck and sent several resolute and well-armed hands to remove a couple of boards from the bulkhead that separated the cabin from the hold. When this was accomplished a party entered on hands and knees and began to press the mutineers forward toward the bulkhead of the forecabin. The rebels were hot for fight to the last and boldly defended themselves with their staves.

By this time our lamed cook had rekindled his fires, and the water was once more boiling. The hatches were kept open but guarded, and all who did not fight were suffered to come singly on deck where they were tied. As only about sixty remained below engaged in conflict or defying my party of sappers and miners, I ordered a number of auger holes to be bored in the deck as the scoundrels were forced forward near the forecabin. A

few buckets of boiling water rained on them through the fresh apertures brought the majority to submission.

Two of the most savage held out against water as well as fire. I strove as long as possible to save their lives, but their resistance was so prolonged and perilous that we were obliged to disarm them forever by a couple of pistol shots.

So ended the revolt of *La Estrella*, in which two of my men were seriously wounded, while twenty-eight balls and buckshot were extracted from the slaves. One woman and three men perished of blows received in the conflict, but none were deliberately slain except the two men who resisted to death.

I could never account for this mutiny, especially as the blacks from Whydah and its neighborhood are distinguished for their humble manners and docility. There can be no doubt that the entire gang was not united in the original outbreak, else we should have had harder work in subduing them amid the risk and turmoil of a West Indian squall.

**T**HERE was very little comfort on board *La Estrella* after the suppression of this revolt. We lived with a pent-up volcano beneath us, and day and night we were ceaselessly vigilant. Terror reigned supreme and the lash was its scepter.

At last we made land at Porto Rico and were swiftly passing its beautiful shores when the inspector called my attention to the appearance of one of our attendant slaves whom we had drilled as a sort of cabin boy. He was a gentle, intelligent child, and had won the hearts of all the officers.

His pulse was high, quick, and hard, his face and eyes red and swollen. On his neck I detected half a dozen rosy pimples. He was sent immediately to the fore-castle, free from contact with any one else and left there, cut off from the crew till I could guard against pestilence. It was smallpox!

The boy passed a wretched night of fever and pain, developing the malady with all its horrors. It is very likely that I slept as badly as the sufferer, for my mind was busy with his doom. Daylight found me on deck in consultation with our veteran boatswain, whose experience in the trade authorized the highest respect for his

opinion. Hardened as he was, the old man's voice was husky as he whispered the verdict in my ear. I guessed it before he said a word. As we went aft to the quarter deck, all eyes were bent upon us, for every one conjectured the malady and feared the result, yet none dared ask a question.

I ordered a general inspection of the slaves, yet when a favorable report was made I did not rest content, and descended to examine each one personally. It was true, the child was alone infected.

For half an hour I trod the deck to and fro restlessly and caused the crew to subject themselves to inspection. But my sailors were as healthy as the slaves. There was no symptom that indicated approaching danger. I was disappointed again. A single case—a single sign of peril in any quarter—would have spared the poison.

That evening, in the stillness of night, a trembling hand stole forward to the afflicted boy with a potion that knows no waking. In a few hours all was over: life and the pestilence were crushed together.

**I** AM not superstitious, but a voyage attended with such calamities could not end happily. Incessant gales and head winds, unusual in this season and latitude, beset us so obstinately that it became doubtful whether our food and water would last till we reached Matanzas. To add to our risks and misfortunes, a British corvette espied our craft and gave chase off Cape Maysi.

All day long she dogged us slowly, but at night I tacked off shore with the expectation of eluding my pursuer. Day dawn, however, revealed her again on our track, though this time we had unfortunately fallen to leeward. Accordingly I put *La Estrella* directly before the wind and ran till dark with a fresh breeze, when I again dodged the cruiser and made for the Cuban coast. But the Briton seemed to scent my track, for sunrise revealed him once more in chase.

The wind lulled that night to a light breeze, yet the red clouds and haze in the east betokened a gale from that quarter before meridian. A longer pursuit must have given considerable advantage to the enemy, so that my best reliance, I calculated, was in making the small harbor

## CHAPTER XXXV.

near Santiago, now about twenty miles distant, where I had already landed two cargoes. The corvette was then full ten miles astern.

My resolution to save the cargo and lose the vessel was promptly made. Orders were issued to strike from the slaves the irons they had constantly worn since the mutiny, the boats were made ready, and every man prepared his bag for a rapid launch.

On dashed the cruiser, foaming at the bows under the impetus of the rising gale which struck him some time before it reached us. We were not more than seven miles apart when the first increased pressure on our sails was felt, and everything was set and braced to give it the earliest welcome. Then came the tug and race for the beach lying three miles ahead of us.

Under such circumstances it was hardly to be expected that St. George would carry the day. Still, every nerve was strained to effect his purpose. Regardless of the gale, reef after reef was let out. Force pumps moistened his sails, yet nothing was gained. Three miles against seven were too much odds—and, with a slight moye of the helm, and letting all fly as we neared the line of surf, to break her headway, *La Estrella* was fairly and safely beached.

The sudden shock snapped her mainmast like a pipestem, but, as no one was injured, in a twinkling the boats were overboard, crammed with women and children, while a stage was rigged from the bows to the strand, so that the males, the crew, and the luggage were soon in charge of my old planter.

Prompt as we were, we were not sufficiently so for the cruiser. Half our cargo was ashore when she backed her topsails off the mouth of the little bay, lowered her boats, filled them with boarders, and steered toward our craft. The delay of half a mile's row gave us time to cling still longer to the wreck, so that when the boats and corvette began to fire we wished them joy of their bargain over the remnant of our least valuable Negroes. The rescued blacks are now, in all likelihood, citizens of Jamaica.

Under the influence of the gale *La Estrella* made a very picturesque bonfire as we saw it that night from the porch of our landlord's domicile.

**D**ISASTROUS as was this enterprise, both on the sea and in the counting-house, a couple of months found me on board a splendid clipper—born of the famous waters of the Chesapeake—delighting in the name of *Aguila de Oro*, or “Golden Eagle,” and spinning out of the Cape Verdes on a race with a famous West Indian privateer.

The *Montesquieu* was the pride of Jamaica for pluck and sailing when folks of her character were not so unpopular as of late among the British Islands, and many a banter passed between her commander and myself while I was unsuccessfully waiting till the governor resolved his conscientious difficulties about the exchange of flags. At last I offered a bet of five hundred dollars against an equal sum, and next day a bag with the tempting thousand was tied to the end of my main boom, with an invitation for the boaster to follow and take. It was understood that, once clear of the harbor, the *Aguila* should have five minutes' start of the *Montesquieu*, after which we were to crowd sail and begin the race.

The contest was quickly noised throughout the port and the captains smacked their lips over the dinner promised by the boaster out of the five hundred dollars won from the “Yankee nutshell.” Accordingly, when all was ready and the breeze favored, the eastern cliffs of the isle were crowded with spectators to witness the regatta.

As we were first at sea and clear of the harbor, we delayed for our antagonist; and, without claiming the conceded start of five minutes, did not shoot ahead till our rival was within musket shot. But then the tug began with a will; and, as the *Aguila* led, I selected her most favorable trim and kept her two points free. The *Montesquieu* did the same, but, confident of her speed, did not spread all her canvas that would draw. The error was soon apparent. Our Chesapeake clipper crawled off as if her opponent were at anchor, and—in a jiffy everything that could be carried, was sheeted home and braced to a hair. The breeze was steady and strong. Soon the island was cleared entirely, and by keeping away another point I got out of the *Aguila* her utmost capacity as a racer. As she led off, the *Montesquieu* followed—but, glass by glass and

hour by hour, the distance between us increased, till at sunset the boaster's hull was below the horizon and my bag taken in as a lawful prize.

I did not return to Praya after this adventure, but keeping on toward the coast, in four days entered the Rio Salum, an independent river between the French island of Goree and the British possessions on the Gambia. No slaver had haunted this stream for many a year, so that I was obliged to steer my mosquito pilot boat full forty miles into the interior, through mangroves and forests till I struck the trading ground of the king.

After three days' parley I had just concluded my bargain with his breechless majesty when a barker greeted me with the cheerless message that the *Aguila* was surrounded by man-of-war boats. It was true, but the mate refused an inspection of his craft on neutral ground, and the naval folks departed. Nevertheless, a week after, when I had just completed my traffic, I was seized by a gang of the treacherous king's own people, delivered to the second lieutenant of a French corvette—*La Bayonnaise*—and my lovely little eagle caged as her lawful prey!

I have never been able to understand the legal merits of this seizure so far as the act of the French officers was concerned, as no treaty existed between France and Spain for the suppression of slavery. The reader will not be surprised to learn, therefore, that there was a very loud explosion of wrath among my men when they found themselves prisoners. Nor was their fury diminished when our whole band was forced into a dungeon at Goree, which, for size, gloom and closeness, vied with the Black Hole of Calcutta.

For three days were we kept in this filthy receptacle, in a burning climate, without communication with friends or inhabitants and on scanty fare, till it suited the local authorities to transfer us to St. Louis, on the Senegal, in charge of a file of marines on board our own vessel.

St. Louis is the residence of the governor and the seat of the colonial tribunal, and here again we were incarcerated in a military jail, till several merchants who knew me on the Rio Pongo interfered, and had us removed to better quarters in the military hospital. I soon learned that there was trouble among the natives. A war had broken out among some of the Moorish

tribes two hundred miles up the Senegal, and my *Aguila* was a godsend to the Frenchmen, who needed just such a light craft to guard their returning flotilla with merchandise from Gatam. Accordingly the craft was armed, manned, and dispatched on this expedition without waiting the decree of a court as to the lawfulness of her seizure.

Meanwhile, the Sisters of Charity—those angels of devoted mercy who do not shun even the heat and the pestilence of Africa—made our prison life as comfortable as possible and had we not seen gratings at the windows or met a sentinel when we attempted to go out, we might have considered ourselves valetudinarians instead of convicts.

A month oozed slowly away in these headquarters of suffering before a military sergeant informed us that he had been elevated to the dignity of the long robe and appointed our counsel in the approaching trial. No other lawyer was to be had in the colony for love or money, and perhaps our military man might have acquitted himself as well as the best had not his superiors often imposed silence on him during the argument.

By this time the nimble *Aguila* had made two most serviceable trips under the French officers and proved so valuable to the government that no one dreamed of recovering her. The colonial authorities had two alternatives under the circumstances—either to pay for or condemn her—and as they knew I would not be willing to take the craft again after the destruction of my voyage, the formality of a trial was determined to legalize the condemnation. It was necessary, however, even in Africa, to show that I had violated the territory of the French colony by trading in slaves and that the *Aguila* had been caught in the act.

I will not attempt a description of the court scene, in which my military friend was browbeaten by the prosecutor, the prosecutor by the judge, and the judge by myself. After various outrages and absurdities a Moslem slave was allowed to be sworn as a witness against me, whereupon I burst forth with a torrent of argument, defense, abuse and scorn, till a couple of soldiers were called to keep my limbs and tongue in forensic order.

But the deed was done. The foregone conclusion was formally announced. The

*Aguila de Oro* became King Louis Philippe's property, while my men were condemned to two, my officers to five, and Don Theodore himself, to ten years' confinement in the central prisons of France!

My sentence aroused the indignation of many respectable merchants at St. Louis; and, of course, I did not lack kindly visits in the stronghold to which I was reconducted. It was found to be entirely useless to attack the sympathy of the tribunal to procure either a rehearing of the cause or mitigation of the judgment. Presently, a generous friend introduced a saw suitable to discuss the toughness of iron bars, and hinted that on the night when my window gratings were severed a boat might be found waiting to transport me to the opposite shore of the river, whence an independent chief would convey me on camels to Gambia.

I know not how it was that the government got wind of my projected flight, but it certainly did, and we were sent on board a station ship lying in the stream. Still my friends did not abandon me. I was apprised that a party—bound on a shooting frolic down the river on the first foggy morning—would visit the commander of the hulk; and, while the vessel was surrounded by a crowd of boats, I might slip overboard amid the confusion. Under cover of the dense mist that shrouds the surface of an African river at dawn I could easily elude even a ball if sent after me, and when I reached the shore a canoe would be ready to convey me to a friendly ship.

The scheme was peculiarly feasible, as the captain happened to be a good fellow and allowed me unlimited liberty about his vessel. Accordingly, when the note had been duly digested, I called my officers apart and proposed their participation in my escape. The project was fully discussed by the fellows, but the risk of swimming, even in a fog, under the muzzles of muskets was a danger they feared encountering. I perceived at once that it would be best to free myself entirely from the encumbrances of such chicken-hearted lubbers, so I bade them take their own course, but divided three thousand francs in government bills among the gang and presented my gold pocket chronometer to the mate.

Next morning an impervious fog laid low on the bosom of the Senegal, but through its heavy folds I detected the

measured beat of approaching oars till five boats with a sudden rush, dashed alongside us with their noisy and clamorous crews.

Just at this very moment a friendly hand passed through my arm and a gentle tone invited me to a quarter-deck promenade. It was our captain!

There was, of course, no possibility of declining the proffered civility, for during the whole of my detention on board the commander had treated me with the most assiduous politeness.

"My dear Canot," said he, as soon as we got aft, "you seem to take considerable interest in these visitors of ours, and I wish from the bottom of my heart that you could join the sport; but, unfortunately for you, these gentlemen will not effect their purpose."

As I did not entirely comprehend—though I rather guessed—his precise meaning, I made an evasive answer, and arm in arm I was led from the deck to the cabin. When we were perfectly alone he pointed to a seat and frankly declared that I had been betrayed by a Judas to his sergeant of marines.

I was taken perfectly aback as I imagined myself almost free, yet the loss of liberty did not paralyze me as much as the perfidy of my men. Like a stupid booby I stood gazing with a fixed stare at the captain, when the cabin door burst open and with a shout of joyous merriment the hunters greeted their comrade.

My dress that morning was a very elaborate negligee. I had purposely omitted coat, braces, stockings, and shoes, so that my privateer costume of trousers and shirt was not calculated for the reception of strangers. It was natural, therefore, that the first sally of my friendly liberators should be directed against my toilet. I parried it, however, as adroitly as my temper would allow, by reproaching them with their unseasonable visit before I could complete the bath which they saw I was prepared for.

The hint was understood, but the captain thought proper to tell the entire tale. No man, he said, would have been happier than he had I escaped before the treachery. My friends were entreated not to risk further attempts, which might subject me to severe restraints; and my base comrades were forthwith summoned to the cabin, where, in presence of the merchants, they were forced to disgorge the three thousand francs and the chronometer.

"But this," said the captain, "is not to be the end of the comedy," as he led the way to the mess room, where a sumptuous dinner was spread for officers and huntsman and over its fragrant fumes my disappointment was for a while forgotten.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

**F**OR fifteen days more the angry captive bit his thumbs on the taffrail of the guard ship, and gazed either at vacancy or the waters of the Senegal. At the end of that period a gunboat transferred our convict party to the frigate *Flora*, whose first lieutenant, to whom I had been privately recommended, separated me immediately from my men. The scoundrels were kept close prisoners during the whole voyage to France, while my lot was made as light as possible under the severe sentence awarded to me at St. Louis.

The passage was short. At Brest they landed me privately, while my men and officers were paraded through the streets at midday under a file of gendarmes. I am especially grateful to the commander of this frigate, who alleviated my sufferings by his generous demeanor in every respect, and whose representations to the government of France caused my sentence to be subsequently modified to simple imprisonment.

When the polite midshipman with whom I landed bade farewell, it was only to transfer me to the keeper of a prison within the royal arsenal. Here I was soon joined by the crew and officers. For a while, I rejected their penitence, but a man who is suddenly swept from the wild liberty of Africa and doomed for ten years to penitential seclusion becomes wonderfully forgiving when loneliness eats into his heart, and eternal silence makes the sound of his own voice almost insupportable. One, therefore, was restored at least to sociability; so that when I embraced the permission of our keeper to quit my cell and move about the prison bounds, I found myself surrounded by seventy or eighty marines and seamen who were undergoing the penalties of various crimes.

The whole establishment was under the surveillance of a naval commissary, subject to strict regulations. In due time two spacious rooms were assigned for my

gang while the jailer, who turned out to be an amphibious scamp, half sailor, half soldier, assured us, on the honor of an old soldier, that his entire jurisdiction should be our limits so long as we behaved with propriety.

Next day I descended to take exercise in a broad courtyard, over whose lofty walls the fresh blue sky looked temptingly, and was diligently chewing the cud of bitter fancies when a stout elderly man in shabby uniform came to a military halt before me, and, abruptly saluting in regulation style, desired the favor of a word.

"Pardon me, sir," said the intruder, "but I should be charmed if the captain will honor me by the information whether it has been his lot to enjoy the accommodations of a French prison, prior to the unlucky mischance which gives us the delight of his society."

"No," said I, sulkily.

"Then," continued the questioner, "will it be disagreeable if I improve this opportunity by apprising the captain on the part of our companions and comrades, of the regulations of this royal institution?"

"By no means," I returned, somewhat softer.

"Then, sir, the sooner you are initiated into the mysteries of the craft the better, and no one will go through the ceremony more explicitly, briefly, and satisfactorily than myself—Corporal Blon. First of all, sir, and most indispensable, as your good sense will teach you, it is necessary that every newcomer pay his footing among the government boarders; and as you seem to be the honored chief of the squadron, I will make bold to thank you for a louis dor, or a napoleon, to insure your welcome."

The request was complied with.

"Good!" continued the corporal. "Now, I have but one more mystery to impart, and that is a regulation which no clever chap disregards. We are companions in misery, we sleep beneath one roof, we eat out of one kettle—in fact, we are brothers, and the secrets of brothers are sacred within these walls from jailers and turnkeys."

As he said these words he pursed up his mouth, bent his eyes scrutinizingly into mine, and laying his finger on his lip, brought his right hand once more, with a salute, to the oily remnant of a military cap.



I was initiated. I gave the required pledge for my party and in return was assured that in any enterprise undertaken for our escape—which seemed to be the great object and concern of prison life—we should be assisted and protected by our fellow sufferers.

Most of this day was passed in our rooms, and at dark, after being mustered and counted we were locked up for the night. For some time we moped and sulked according to the fashion of all new convicts, but at length we sallied forth in a body to the courtyard, determined to take the world as it went.

I soon fell into a habit of chatting familiarly with old Corporal Blon, who was grand chamberlain or master of ceremonies to our penal household, and turned out to be a good fellow, though a frequent offender against France. Blon drew me to a seat in the sunshine, which I enjoyed after shivering in the cold apartments of the prison; and, stepping off among the prisoners, began to bring them up for introduction to Don Theodore, separately.

First of all I had the honor of receiving Monsieur Laramie, a stout, stanch, well-built marine, who professed to be master-at-arms of our royal boarding house, and tendered his services in teaching me the use of rapier and broadsword, at the rate of a franc per week. Next came a burly, beef-eating bully, half sailor, half lubber, who approached with a swinging gait, and was presented as Brother Zouche, teacher of singlestick, who was willing to make me skillful in my encounters with footpads, for a reasonable salary. Then followed a dancing master, a tailor, a violin teacher, a shoemaker, a letter writer, a barber, a clothes washer, and various other useful and reputable tradespeople or professors, all of whom expressed anxiety to inform my mind, cultivate my taste, expedite my correspondence, delight my ear, and improve my appearance, for weekly stipends.

I did not at first understand precisely the object of all their ceremonious appeals to my purse, but I soon discovered from Corporal Blon—who desired an early discount of his note—that I was looked on as a sort of potentate from Africa who had saved an immense quantity of gold from ancient traffic, all of which I could command in spite of imprisonment.

I thought it best not to undeceive the industrious wretches, and dismissed each of them with a few kind words, promising to

accept their offers when I became a little more familiar with my quarters.

After breakfast I made a tour of the corridors to see whether the representations of my morning courtiers were true, and found the shoemakers and tailors busy over toeless boots and patchwork garments. One alcove contained the violinist and dancing master, giving lessons to several scapgraces; in another was the letter writer, laboriously adorning a sheet with cupids, hearts, flames, and arrows, while a lovelorn booby knelt beside him, dictating a message to his mistress. In a hall I found two pupils of Monsieur Laramie at carte and tierce, in the corridors I came upon a string of tables filled with cigars, snuff, writing paper, ink, pens, wax, wafers, needles and thread; while in the remotest cell I discovered a pawnbroker and gambling table.

**V**ERY soon after my incarceration at Brest I addressed a memorial to the Spanish consul, setting forth the afflictions of twenty-two of his master's subjects, and soliciting the interference of our ambassador at Paris. We were promptly visited by the consul and an eminent lawyer, who asserted his ability to stay proceedings against the ratification of our sentence. But, as the Spanish minister never thought fit to notice our misfortunes, the efforts of the lawyer and the good will of our consul were ineffectual.

Three months glided by. Blon kept me busy discounting his twenty-sou notes, which I afterward always took care to lose to him at cards. Then I patronized the dancing master, took two months' lessons with Laramie and Zouche, caused my shoes to be thoroughly mended, had my clothes repaired and scoured; and finally patronized all the various industries of my comrades to the extent of almost two hundred francs.

Suddenly in the midst of these diversions an order came for our immediate transfer to the civil prison of Brest, a gloomy tower in the walled château.

#### CHAPTER XXXVII.

**I** WAS taken from one prison to the other in a boat and once more spared the mortification of a parade through the streets under a guard of soldiers.

A receipt was given for the whole squad to the keeper who chaperoned us. My men were summarily distributed by the

jailer among the cells already filled with common malefactors. But, as the appearance of the officers indicated the possession of cash, the turnkey offered a special cell for our use, provided we were satisfied with a monthly rent of ten francs. I thought the French government was bound to find suitable accommodations for an involuntary guest and that it was rather hard to imprison me first and make me pay board afterward; but I concluded on reflection to accept the offer, hard as it was. Accordingly, we took possession of a large apartment with two grated windows looking upon a somber courtyard.

We had hardly entered the room when a buxom woman followed with the deepest curtsies and declared herself most happy to have it in her power to supply us with beds and beddings, at ten sous per day. She told us, moreover, that the daily prison fare consisted of two pounds and a half of black bread, with water, but if we wished, she might introduce the cook of the regiment stationed in the château, who would supply our meals twice a day from the mess of the petty officers of the regiment.

My money had not been seriously moth-eaten during our previous confinement, so that I did not hesitate to strike a bargain with Madame Sorret, and to request that the cook might make her appearance as soon as possible. Presently the door opened again and the dame reappeared, accompanied by two Spanish women, wives of musicians in the corps, who had heard that several of their countrymen had that morning been incarcerated, and availed themselves of the earliest chance to visit them.

I at once proceeded to arrange the diet of our future prison life. We were to have two meals a day of three dishes, for each of which we were to pay fifteen sous in advance. The bargain made, we sat down on the floor for a chat.

My brace of Catalan visitors had married in this regiment when the Duke d'Angoulême marched his troops into Spain; and, like faithful girls, followed their husbands in all their meanderings about France since the regiment's return. As two of my officers were Catalonians by birth, a friendship sprang up between us, and from that hour these excellent women not only visited us daily, but ran our errands, attended to our health, watched

us like sisters, and procured all those little comforts which the tender soul of the sex can alone devise.

**C**IVIL prisoners in the provinces of France were treated barbarously. The regular ration, as I said before, consisted exclusively of black bread and water. Nine pounds of straw were allowed weekly to each prisoner for his lair. Neither blankets nor covering were furnished, even in the winter. As the cells are built without stoves or chimneys, the wretched convicts were compelled to huddle together in heaps to keep from perishing. Besides this the government denied all supplies of fresh raiment, so that the wretches who were destitute of friends or means were alive and hideous with vermin in a few days after incarceration. No amusement was allowed in the fresh air save twice a week, when the prisoners were turned out on the flat roof of the tower. Here they might sun themselves for an hour or two under the muzzle of a guard.

I believe that convicts in the central prisons of France, where they were either made or allowed to work, fared better in every respect than in the provincial lock-ups on the coast. There is no doubt, however, that the above description was entirely true, in those days, of all the smaller jurisdictions, whose culprits were simply doomed to confinement without labor.

Often my heart bled for the poor sailors whom I aided to the extent of prudence from my slender means, when I knew not how long it might be my fate to remain an inmate of the château. After these unfortunate men disposed of all their spare garments to obtain now and then a meager soup to moisten their stony loaves they were nearly a year without tasting either meat or broth. Once only—on the anniversary of St. Philippe—the Sisters of Charity gave them a pair of bullock's heads to make a festival in honor of the good king of the French.

**M**Y officers and I fared somewhat better in our hired apartment. Our Spanish girls supplied us with guitars and violins which my comrades touched with some skill. We were thus enabled to give an occasional dance, assisted by the cook, her companions Dolorescita, Concha, Madame Sorret, and an old maid who passed

for her sister. The arrival of a genial counterfeiter enabled us to make up a full cottle without the musicians.

Our dances, enlivened by private contributions and a bottle or two of wine, took place on Thursdays and Sundays. The rest of the week was passed in playing cards, reading romances, writing petitions, flirting with the girls, and cursing our fate and the French government. Fits of wrath against the majesty of Gaul were more frequent in the early morning, when the pleasant sleeper would be suddenly roused from his dreams by the tramp of soldiers and grating bolts, which announced the unceremonious entrance of our inspector to count his cattle and sound our window gratings.

But time wastes one's cash as well as one's patience in prison. The more we grumbled, danced, drank, and ate, the more we spent or lavished, so that my funds looked very like a thin sediment at the bottom of the purse. I began to reflect upon means of replenishing them. I could not beg, I was master of no handicraft, nor was I willing to descend among the vermin of the common chain gang. Shame prevented an application to my relatives in France or Italy, and when I addressed my old partner or former friends in Cuba, I was not even favored with a reply. At last my little trinkets and gold chronometer were sacrificed to pay the lawyer for a final memorial and to liquidate a week's lodging in advance.

"Now, sir," said Madame Sorret, as she took my money—trimming her cap and looking at me with that thrifty interest which a Frenchwoman always knows how to turn to the best account—"this is your last franc and your last week in my apartment, you say—your last week in a room where you and I, and Babette, Dolorescita, and Concha, and *monsieurs*, have had such good times! But why, my dear, why shall it be your last week? Come, let us think a bit. Won't it be a thousand times better, won't it do you a vast deal more good—if instead of cursing Louis Philippe, paying lawyers for memorials that are never read, hoping for letters from the Spanish envoy which never come, and eating your heart up in spite and bitterness—you look the matter plump in the face like a man, and not like a chicken, and turn to account those talents which it has pleased nature to give you?

"Look you, Don Theodore—you speak foreign languages like a native, and it was no longer than yesterday that *Monsieur Randanne*, your advocate, as he came down from the last interview with you, stopped at my bureau, and said, 'Ah, Madame Sorret, what a linguist poor Canot is. How delightfully he speaks English, and how glad I should be if he had any place in which he could teach my sons the noble tongue of the great Skatspeer!'

"Now, my captain," she continued, "what the good *Randanne* said has been growing in my mind ever since, like the salad seed in the box that is sunned in our prison yard. In fact I have fixed the matter perfectly. You shall have my bedroom for a schoolhouse; and, if you will, you may begin to-morrow with my two sons for pupils, at fifteen francs a month."

Madame Sorret's plan was perfectly successful. In less than a week I was installed in her chamber with a class formed of my lady's lads, a son and friend of my lawyer, and a couple of sons of officers in the *château*; the whole producing a monthly income of fifty francs. As I assumed my vocation with the spirit of a needy professor I gained the good will of all the parents by assiduous instruction of their children. Gradually I extended the sphere of my usefulness by adding penmanship to my other branches of tuition, and so well did I please the parents that they volunteered a stipend of eighteen francs more.

In this fashion the months passed without too much pain. My pardon came at last, but this was the sole reparation I received at the hands of Louis Philippe for the unjust seizure of my vessel in the neutral waters of Africa. When Sorret rushed in, followed by his wife, Babette, and the children, to announce the glorious news, the good fellow's emotion was so great that he stood staring at me like a booby and for a long while could not articulate. Then came the cook, Dolores, and my pretty Concha. Next arrived *Mosieur Randanne*, with the rest of my pupils; so that, in an hour, I was overwhelmed with sunshine and tears. I can still feel the grasp of Sorret's hand as he led me beyond the bolts and bars to read the act of royal grace.

Next day an affectionate crowd of

friends and pupils followed the emancipated slaver to a vessel, which, by order of the king, was to bear me a willing exile from France forever.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

**H**AD my seizure and sentence been justly inflicted I might, perhaps, have become penitent for early sins during the long hours of reflection afforded me in the chateau. But with all the fervor of an ardent and thwarted nature, I was much more disposed to rebel and revenge myself when opportunity occurred than to confess my sins with a lowly and obedient heart. Indeed, most of my time in prison had been spent in cursing the court and king, or in reflecting how I should get back to Africa in the speediest manner.

The vessel that bore me into perpetual banishment from France was bound to Lisbon. But delaying in Portugal only long enough to procure a new passport under an assumed name, I spat upon Louis Philippe's eternal exile and took shipping for his loyal port of Marseilles. Here I found two vessels fitting for the coast of Africa, but in consequence of the frightful prevalence of cholera all mercantile adventures were temporarily suspended. In fact, such was the panic that no one dreamed of dispatching the vessel in which I was promised a passage until the pestilence subsided. Till this occurred, as my means were of the scantiest character, I took lodgings in an humble hotel.

The cholera was then apparently at its height. Nearly all the hotels were deserted, for most of the regular inhabitants had fled and the city was unfrequented by strangers except under pressing duty. It is altogether probable that the lodging houses and hotels would have been closed entirely, so slight was their patronage, had not the prefect issued an order depriving of their licenses for the space of two years all who shut their doors on strangers. Accordingly, even when the scourge swept many hundred victims daily to their graves, every hotel, café, grocery, butcher shop, and bakery, was regularly opened in Marseilles so that a dread of famine was not added to the fear of cholera.

Of course the lowly establishment where I dwelt was not thronged at this epoch. Most of its inmates or frequenters had departed for the country before my ar-

rival, and I found the house tenanted only by three boarders and a surly landlord who cursed the authorities. My reception was by no means cordial. I was told that the proclamation had not prevented the cook from departing, and that I must be content with whatever the master of the house could toss up for my fare.

The table was a long oval board, three fourths bare of cloth and guests, while five human faces clustered around its end. I took my seat opposite a trim, dashing brunette, with the brightest eyes and rosiest cheeks imaginable. Her face was so healthily refreshing in the midst of malady and death that I altogether forgot the cholera. Next me sat a comical sort of fellow who did not delay in scraping an acquaintance, and insisted on introducing all the company.

"It's a case of emergency," said the droll; "we have no time to lose or to stand on the ceremony of fashionable etiquette. Here to-day, gone to-morrow is the motto of Marseilles. Well, sirs, shall we not make the most of new acquaintances when they may be so brief?"

I thanked him for his hospitality. I had so little to lose in this world, either of property or friends, that I feared the cholera quite as slightly as any of the company. "A thousand thanks," said I, "monsieur, for your politeness. I'll bury you to-morrow if it is the cholera's pleasure, with ten times more pleasure now that I have had the honor of an introduction. A fashionable man hardly cares to be civil to a stranger even if he happens to be a corpse!"

There was so hearty a cheer at this sally, that, in spite of the shallow soundings of my purse, I called for a fresh bottle and pledged the party in a bumper all round.

"And now," continued my neighbor, "as it may be necessary for some one of us to write your epitaph in a day or two, or at least to send a message of condolence and sympathy to your friends, pray let us know a bit of your history and what the devil brings you to Marseilles when the cholera thermometer is up to one thousand degrees per diem?"

Very few words were necessary to impart such a name and tale as I chose to invent for the company's edification. "Santiago Ximenes," and my tawny skin betokened my nationality and profession,

while my threadbare garments spoke louder than words that I was at suit with fortune.

Presently, after a lull in the chat, a dapper little prig of a dandy who sat on my left volunteered to inform me that he was no less a personage than Dr. Du Jean, a medical practitioner fresh from metropolitan hospitals, who, in a spirit of the loftiest philanthropy, visited this provincial town at his own expense to succor the poor.

"She is a good lady, our friend, is she not?" said he, pointing to our patron saint opposite.

I admitted without argument that she was the most charming woman I ever saw out of Cuba.

"She is my dear friend," he whispered confidentially, strongly emphasizing the word "friend" and nodding very knowingly toward the lady herself. "At the present moment the dear creature is exclusively under my charge and protection, for she is en route to join her husband, a captain in the army at Algiers; but, Heaven be thanked, there's no chance of a transport so long as this cursed pestilence blockades Marseilles.

"Do you know the man on your right? No? That's the celebrated oratorical advocate about whom the papers rang when Louis Philippe began his assault on the press. He, too, is on his way to Algiers, and will be more successful in liberalizing the Arabs than the French.

"That old chap over yonder with the snuffy nose, the snuffy wig, and snuffy coat, is a grand speculator in horses, on his way to the richest cavalry corps of the army. And as for our innkeeper at the head of this segment, poor devil, the pestilence has nearly used him up. He sits half the day in his bureau on the stairs looking for guests who never come, reading the record which adds no name, cursing the cholera, counting a penitential prayer on his rosary, and flying from the despair of silence and desertion to his pans to stew our wretched fare."

**A**T this table I ate till, in the first lull of the pestilence, the French merchantman was dispatched from Marseilles. Twenty-seven days later I had the pleasure to shake hands with the generous friends who, two years before, labored so hard for my escape. However, the colo-

nial government soon got wind of my presence, notwithstanding my disguise, and warned me from Goree.

I reached Sierra Leone in time to witness the arbitrary proceeding of the British government toward Spanish traders and coasters by virtue of the new treaty for the suppression of the slave trade. Not till six months after this compact was signed and ratified in London and Madrid was it made known in Cuba and Porto Rico. Its stipulations were such as to allow very considerable latitude of judgment in captures, and when prizes were once within the grasp of the British lion that amiable animal was neither prompt to release nor anxious to acquit. Accordingly, when I reached Sierra Leone, I beheld at anchor under government guns, some thirty or forty seized vessels—several of which I have reason to believe were captured in the passage from Havana to Spain and were entirely free from the taint or design of slavery.

#### CHAPTER XXXIX.

**I** WAS not so inquisitive or patriotic in regard to treaty rights and violations as to dally from mere curiosity in Sierra Leone. My chief object was employment. At twenty-eight, after trials, hazards, and chances enough to have won half a dozen fortunes, I was utterly penniless. The Mongo of Kambia—the Mohammedan convert of Ahmah-Futa-bellah—the pet of the Ali Mami of Dede Jallon—the leader of slave caravans—the owner of barracoons—the master of clippers that defied the British flag, was reduced to the humble situation of coast pilot and interpreter on board an American brig bound to the celebrated slave mart of Gallinas.

We reached our destination safely, but I doubt exceedingly whether the *Reaper's* captain knows to this day that his brig was guided by an adventurer who knew nothing of the coast or port, save the little he gleaned in half a dozen chats with a Spanish pilot.

In the history of African servitude no theater of Spanish, Portuguese, British, or American action has been the scene of more touching, tragic, and profitable incidents than the one to which fortune had now directed my feet.

Formerly the whole coast from the Gambia to Cape Palmas, without a break save at Sierra Leone, was the haunt of daring

slavers. The first impression on this lawless disposal of full fifteen hundred miles of beach and continent was made by the establishment of Liberia. Little by little the power of this colony has extended, until treaty, purchase, negotiation, and influence has driven the trade from the entire region. At the time of which I am writing the slave trade on the Windward Coast, north and west of Cape Palmas, was mainly confined to Portuguese settlements—at Bissaos, on the Rios Grande, Nunez, and Pongo, at Grand and Little Bassa, New Sestros, and Trade Town—but the heart of the slave marts was the lordly establishment Gallinas. To this Cape Mesurado was only second in importance.

Our concern is now with Gallinas. Nearly one hundred miles northwest of Monrovia a short and sluggish river oozes lazily into the Atlantic; and, carrying down in the rainy season a rich alluvion from the interior, sinks the deposit where the tide meets the Atlantic, forming an innumerable mesh of spongy islands. To one who approaches from the sea they loom up from its surface, covered with reeds and mangroves, like an immense field of fungi. A spot like this possessed, of course, no peculiar advantage for agriculture or commerce, but its dangerous bar, and its extreme desolation, fitted it for the haunt of the outlaw and slaver.

Such, in all likelihood, were the reasons that induced Don Pedro Blanco, a well-educated mariner from Malaga, to select Gallinas as the field of his operations. Don Pedro visited this place originally in command of a slaver, but failing to complete his cargo, sent his vessel back with one hundred Negroes, whose value was barely sufficient to pay the mates and crew. Blanco, however, remained on the coast with a portion of the *Conquistador's* cargo and on its basis began a trade with the natives and slaver captains, till four years after, he remitted his owners the product of their merchandise and began to flourish on his own account. The honest return of an investment long given over as lost, was perhaps the most active stimulant of his success, and for many years he monopolized the traffic of the Vey country, reaping enormous profits from his enterprise.

Gallinas was not in its prime when I came thither, yet enough of its power and

influence remained to show the comprehensive mind of Pedro Blanco. As I entered the river and wound along through the labyrinth of islands I was struck, first of all, with the vigilance that made this Spaniard stud the field with lookout seats protected from sun and rain, erected some seventy-five or hundred feet above the ground, either on poles or on isolated trees, from which the horizon was constantly swept by telescopes to announce the approach of cruisers or slavers. These telegraphic operators were the keenest men on the islands, and were never at fault in discriminating between friend and foe.

About a mile from the river's mouth we found a group of islets, on each of which was erected the factory of some particular slave merchant belonging to the grand confederacy. Blanco's establishments were on several of these marshy flats. On one, near the mouth, he had his place of business or trade with foreign vessels, presided over by his principal clerk, an astute and clever gentleman. On another island, more remote, was his residence, where the only white person was a sister, who for a while shared with Don Pedro his solitary and penitential domain.

Here this man of education and refined address surrounded himself with every luxury that could be purchased in Europe or the Indies, and dwelt in a sort of Oriental but semibarbarous splendor, that suited an African prince rather than a Spanish grandee. Farther inland was another islet, devoted to his seraglio, within whose recesses each of his favorites inhabited her separate establishment.

Independent of all these were other islands, devoted to the barracoons or slave prisons, ten or twelve of which contained from one hundred to five hundred slaves in each. These barracoons were made of rough staves or poles of the hardest trees, four or six inches in diameter, driven five feet in the ground, and clamped together by double rows of iron bars. Their roofs were constructed of similar wood, strongly secured and overlaid with a thick thatch of long and wiry grass, rendering the interior both dry and cool. At the ends watchhouses—built near the entrance—were tenanted by sentinels with loaded muskets. Each barracoon was tended by two or four Spaniards or Portuguese, upon whom fever and drowsy seemed to have emptied their vials.

Such were the surroundings of Don Pedro in 1836 when I first saw his slender figure, swarthy face, and received the graceful welcome which I hardly expected from one who had passed fifteen years without crossing the bar of Gallinas. Three years after this interview he left the coast forever, with a fortune of near a million. For a while he dwelt in Havana, engaged in commerce; but I understood that family difficulties induced him to retire altogether from trade, so that if still alive he is probably a resident of Genoa, whither he went from the tropical island of Cuba.

The power of this man among the natives is well known; it far exceeded that of Cha-cha, of whom I have already spoken. Resolved as he was to be successful in traffic, he left no means untried, with blacks as well as whites, to secure prosperity. I have often been asked what was the character of a mind which could voluntarily isolate itself for near a lifetime amid the pestilential swamps of a burning climate, trafficking in human flesh, exciting wars, bribing and corrupting ignorant Negroes. I have always replied to the question that this African enigma puzzled me as much as it did those orderly and systematic persons who would naturally be more shocked at the tastes and prolonged career of a resident slave factor in the marshes of Gallinas.

I heard many tales on the coast of Blanco's cruelty, but I doubt them quite as much as I do the stories of his pride and arrogance. I have heard it said that he shot a sailor for daring to ask him for permission to light his cigar at the fire of the don. Upon another occasion, it is said that he was traveling on the beach some distance from Gallinas near the island of Sherboro, where he was unknown, when he approached a native hut for rest and refreshment. The owner was squatted at the door, and, on being requested by Don Pedro to hand him fire to light his cigar, deliberately refused. In an instant Blanco drew back, seized a carbine from one of his attendants, and slew the Negro on the spot. It is true that the narrator apologized for Don Pedro, by saying that to deny a Castilian fire for his tobacco was the gravest insult that can be offered him. Yet, from my knowledge of the person in question, I cannot believe that he carried etiquette to so frightful a pitch, even

among a class whose lives are considered of trifling value except in market. On several occasions during our subsequent intimacy, I knew him to chastise with rods, even to the brink of death, servants who ventured to infringe the sacred limits of his seraglio. But, on the other hand, his generosity was proverbial, not only among the natives, whom it was his interest to suborn, but to the whites who were in his employ, or needed his kindly succor.

I have already alluded to his mental culture, which was decidedly high for a Spaniard of his original grade and time. His memory was remarkable. I remember one night when several of his employees were striving unsuccessfully to repeat the Lord's prayer in Latin, upon which they had made a bet, that Don Pedro joined the party; and taking up the wager, went through the petition without faltering. When it was won, the slaver insisted on receiving the slave which was the stake, and immediately bestowed him in charity on a captain, who had fallen into the clutches of a British cruiser.

Such is a rude sketch of the great man merchant of Africa, the Rothschild of slavery, whose bills on England, France, or the United States, were as good as gold in Sierra Leone and Monrovia.

**T**HE day after our arrival within the realm of this great spider—who, thronged in the center of his mesh, was able to catch almost every fly that flew athwart the web—I landed at one of the minor factories, and sold a thousand quarter kegs of powder to Don José Ramon. But next day, when I proceeded in my capacity of interpreter to the establishment of Don Pedro, I found his Castilian plumage ruffled; and, though we were received with formal politeness, he declined to purchase, because we had failed to address him in advance of any other factor on the river.

The folks at Sierra Leone dwelt so tenderly on the generous side of Blanco's character that I was still not without hope that I might induce him to purchase a good deal of our rum and tobacco, which would be drugs on our hands unless he consented to relieve us. I did not think it altogether wrong, therefore, to concoct a little ruse, whereby I hoped to touch the pocket through the breast of the don.

I addressed him a note, in which I truly related my recent mishaps, adventures, and imprisonments. But I concluded the narrative with a hope that he would succor one so destitute and unhappy by allowing him to win an honest commission allowed by the American captain on any sales I could effect. The bait took; a prompt, laconic answer returned; I was bidden to come ashore with the invoice of our cargo; and, for my sake, Don Pedro purchased from the Yankee brig five thousand dollars' worth of rum and tobacco, all of which was paid by drafts on London, of which slaves were, of course, the original basis. My imaginary commissions, however, remained in the purse of the owners.

An accident occurred in landing our merchandise which will serve to illustrate the character of Blanco. While the hogsheads of tobacco were discharging, our second mate, who suffered from strabismus more painfully than almost any cross-eyed man I ever saw, became excessively provoked with one of the native boatmen who had been employed in the service. It is probable that the Negro was insolent, which the mate thought proper to chastise by throwing staves at the Krooman's head. The Negro fled, seeking refuge on the other side of his canoe; but the enraged officer continued the pursuit, and, in his double-sighted blundering, ran against an oar which the persecuted black suddenly lifted in self-defense. I know not whether it was rage or blindness or both combined that prevented the American from seeing the blade, but on he dashed, rushing impetuously against the implement, severing his lip with a frightful gash, and knocking four teeth from his upper jaw.

The luckless Negro instantly fled to the bush. That night, in an agony of delirium caused by fever and the fear of deformity, the mate terminated his existence by laudanum.

The African law condemns the man who draws blood to a severe fine in slaves, proportioned to the harm that may have been inflicted. Accordingly the Krooman, innocent as he was of premeditated evil, now lay heavily loaded with irons in Don Pedro's barracoon, awaiting the sentence which the whites in his service already declared should be death. "He struck a white!" they said, and the wound he in-

flicted was reported to have caused that white man's ruin.

Luckily, before the sentence was executed, I came ashore; and, as the transaction occurred in my presence, I ventured to appeal from the verdict of public opinion to Don Pedro, with the hope that I might exculpate the Krooman. My simple and truthful story was sufficient. An order was instantly given for the black's release, and in spite of native chiefs and grumbling whites, who were savagely greedy for his blood, Don Pedro persisted in his judgment and sent him back on board the *Reaper*.

The character manifested by Blanco on this occasion, and the admirable management of his factory, induced me to seize a favorable moment to offer my services. They were promptly accepted, and in a short time I was employed as principal in one of Don Pedro's branches.

## CHAPTER XL.

**T**HE Vey natives on this river and its neighborhood were not numerous before the establishment of Spanish factories, but since 1813, when several Cuban vessels arrived with rich merchandise the neighboring tribes flocked to the swampy flats; and as there was much similarity in the language and habits of the natives and emigrants, they soon intermarried and mingled in ownership of the soil.

In proportion as these upstarts were educated in the slave trade under the influence of opulent factors, they greedily acquired the habit of hunting their own kind, and abandoned all other occupations but war and kidnaping. As the country was prolific and the trade profitable, the thousands and tens of thousands annually sent abroad from Gallinas soon began to exhaust the neighborhood. But the appetite for plunder was neither satiated nor stopped by distance, when it became necessary for the neighboring natives to extend their forays and hunts far into the interior. In a few years war raged wherever the influence of this river extended. The slave factories supplied the huntsmen with powder, weapons, and enticing merchandise; so that they fearlessly advanced against ignorant multitudes, who, too silly to comprehend the benefit of alliance, fought the aggressors singly and became their prey.



Still the demand increased. Don Pedro and his satellites had struck a vein richer than the gold coast. His flush barracoons became proverbial throughout the Spanish and Portuguese colonies, and his lookouts were ceaseless in their signals of approaching vessels. New factories were established as branches north and south of the parent den. Mana Rock, Sherboro, Sugarei, Capt Mount, Little Cape Mount, and even Digby, at the door of Monrovia, all had depots and barracoons of slaves belonging to the whites of Gallinas.

But this prosperity did not endure. The torch of discord, in a civil war which was designed for revengeful murder rather than slavery, was kindled by a black Paris who had deprived his uncle of Helen. Every bush and hamlet contained its Achilles and Ulysses and every town rose to the dignity of Troy.

The geographical conflagration of the country as I have described it isolated almost every family of note on various branches of the river. So that nearly all were enabled to fortify themselves within their islands or marshy flats. The principal parties in this family feud were the Amarars and Shiakars. Amarar was a native of Shebar, and, through several generations, had Mandingo blood in his veins. Shiakar, born on the river, considered himself a noble of the land, and being aggressor in this conflict, disputed his prize with the wildest ferocity. The whites, who are ever on the watch for native quarrels, wisely refrained from partisanship with either of the combatants, but continued to purchase the prisoners brought to their factories by both parties. Many a vessel bore across the Atlantic two inveterate enemies shackled to the same bolt, while others met on the same deck a long-lost child or brother who had been captured in the civil war.

The conflict was terminated by the death of Amarar. For several months this savage had been blockaded in his stockade by Shiakar's warriors. At length a sortie became indispensable to obtain provisions, but the enemy were too numerous to justify the risk. Upon this, Amarar called his soothsayer and required him to name a propitious moment for the sally.

The oracle retired to his den, and, after suitable incantations, declared that the effort should be made as soon as the hands of Amarar were stained in the blood of

his own son. It is said that the prophet intended the victim to be a youthful son of Amarar who had joined his mother's family and was then distant; but the impatient and superstitious savage, seeing a child of his own, two years old, at hand when the oracle announced the decree, snatched the infant from his mother's arms, threw it into a rice mortar, and, with a pestle, mashed it to death.

The sacrifice over, a sortie was ordered. The infuriated and starving savages, roused by the oracle and inflamed by the bloody scene, rushed forth tumultuously. Amarar, armed with the pestle still warm and reeking with his infant's blood, was foremost in the onset. The besiegers gave way and fled, the town was reprovisioned, the fortifications of the enemy demolished and the soothsayer rewarded with a slave for his prediction.

**T**HE first expedition upon which Don Pedro Blanco dispatched me revealed a new phase of Africa to my eyes. I was sent in a small Portuguese schooner to Liberia for tobacco; and here the comfortable government house, the neat public warehouses, the large immigration home designed for the accommodation of the houseless, the clean and spacious streets, all convinced me that there was, in truth, something more in these ebony frames than an article of commerce and labor. I paid the bill eagerly—considering that a document printed in Africa by Negroes, under North American influence, would be a curiosity among the infidels of Gallinas.

My engagements with Blanco had been made on the basis of familiarity with the slave trade in all its branches, but my independent spirit and impatient temper forbade, from the first, the acceptance of any subordinate position at Gallinas. Accordingly as soon as I returned from the new republic, Don Pedro desired me to prepare for the establishment of a branch factory under my exclusive control at New Sestros, an independent principality in the hands of a Bassa chief.

I lost no time in setting forth on this career of comparative independence, and landed with the trading cargo provided for me at the Kroomen's town, where I thought it best to dwell till a factory could be built.

An African as well as a white man must

be drilled into the traffic. It is one of those things that do not come by nature, yet its mysteries are acquired, like the mysteries of commerce generally, with much more facility by some tribes than others. I found this signally illustrated by the prince and people of New Sestros, and very soon detected their signal inferiority to the Soosos, Mandingos, and Veys.

For a long time their conduct was so silly, arrogant, and trifling, that I closed my chests and broke off communication. Besides this the slaves they offered were of an inferior character and held at exorbitant prices. Still, as I was commanded to purchase rapidly, I managed to collect about seventy-five Negroes of medium grades, all of whom I designed sending to Gallinas in the schooner that was tugging at her anchor off the beach.

At the proper time I sent for the black prince to assist me in shipping the slaves and to receive the head money which was his export duty on my cargo. The answer to my message was an illustration of the character and insolence of the ragamuffins with whom I had to deal: "The prince don't like your sauciness, Don Theodore, and won't come till you beg his pardon by a present!"

It is very true that after my visit to their republic I began to entertain a greater degree of respect for black men. Yet my contempt for the original unmodified race was so great that when the prince's son, a boy of sixteen, delivered this reply on behalf of his father, I did not hesitate to cram it down his throat by a backhanded blow which sent the sprig of royalty bleeding and howling home.

It may be easily imagined what was the condition of the native town when the boy got back to the palace. In less than ten minutes another messenger arrived with an order for my departure from the country before next day at noon—an order which, the envoy declared, would be enforced by the outraged townfolk unless I willingly complied.

Now I had been too long in Africa to tremble before a Negro prince, and though I really hated the region, I determined to disobey in order to teach him civilized manners. Accordingly I made suitable preparations for resistance, and, when my hired servants and barracoons fled in terror at the prince's command I landed

some whites from my schooner to aid in protecting our slaves.

By this time my house had been constructed of the frail bamboos and matting which are exclusively used in the buildings of the Bassa country. I had added a cane veranda or piazza to mine, and protected it from the pilfering natives by a high palisade which effectually excluded all intruders. Within the area of this inclosure was slung my hammock, and here I ate my meals, read, wrote, and received princes as well as the mob.

At nightfall I loaded twenty-five muskets and placed them inside my sofa, which was a long trade chest. I covered the deal table with a blanket, beneath whose pendant folds I concealed a keg of powder with the head out. Hard by, under a broad-brimmed sombrero, lay a pair of double-barreled pistols. With these dispositions I swung myself asleep in the hammock, and leaving the three whites to take turns in watching, never stirred till an hour after sunrise, when I was roused by the war drum and bells from the village.

In a few minutes my small inclosure of palisades was filled with armed and gibbering savages, while his majesty, in the red coat of a British drummer, but without any trousers, strutted pompously into my presence. I assumed an air of humble civility, and leading the potentate to one end of the guarded piazza, where he was completely isolated from his people, I stationed myself between the table and the sombrero. Some of the prince's relations attempted to follow him, but according to established rules they dared not advance beyond an assigned limit.

When the formalities were over, a dead silence prevailed for some minutes. I looked calmly into the prince's eyes and waited for him to speak. Still he was silent. At last, getting tired of dumb show, I asked the Negro if he had come to assist me in shipping my slaves. "The sun is getting rather high," said I, "and we had better begin without delay."

"Did you get my message?" was his reply. "And why haven't you gone?"

"Of course I received your message," I returned, "but as I came to New Sestros at my leisure I intend to go away when it suits me. Besides this, Prince Freeman, I have no fear that you will do me the least harm, especially as I shall be before you in any capers of that sort."

Then, by a sudden jerk, I threw off the blanket that hid the exposed powder, and, with pistols in hand, one aimed at the keg and the other at the king, I dared him to give an order for my expulsion.

It is inconceivable how moving this process proved, not only to Freeman, but to the crowd comprising his bodyguard. The poor blusterer, entirely cut off from his companions, was in a laughable panic. His tawny skin became ashen as he bounded from his seat and rushed to the extremity of the piazza; and, to make a long story short, in a few minutes he was as penitent and humble as a dog.

I was, of course, not unforgiving, when Freeman advanced to the rail, and, warning the blacks that he had changed his mind, ordered the odorous crowd out of my inclosure. Before they departed I made him swear eternal fidelity and friendship in their presence, after which I sealed the compact with a couple of demijohns of New England rum.

Before sunset seventy-five slaves were shipped for me in his canoes, and ever after, Prince Freeman was a monument to the virtues of gunpowder physic.

## CHAPTER XLI.

**T**HIS summary treatment convinced the Kroo and Fishmen of New Sestros that they would find my breakfast parties no child's play. Bold bravado had the best effect on the adjacent island as well as the immediate coast. The free blacks not only treated my person and people with more respect, but began to supply me with better grades of Negroes, so that when Don Pedro found my success increasing, he resolved to establish a permanent factory and enlarged my commission to ten slaves for every hundred I procured.

Thereupon I at once commenced the erection of buildings suitable for my personal comfort and the security of slaves. I selected a pretty site closer to the beach. A commodious two-story house surrounded by double verandas, was topped by a lookout which commanded an ocean view of vast extent, and flanked by houses for all the necessities of a first-rate factory. There were stores, a private kitchen, a rice house, houses for domestic servants, a public workshop, a depot for water, a slave kitchen, huts for single men, and

sheds under which gangs were allowed to recreate from time to time during daylight. The whole was surrounded by a tall hedge fence, thickly planted, and entered by a double gate, on either side of which were long and separate barracoons for males and females. The entrance of each slave pen was commanded by a cannon, while in the center of the square I left a vacant space, whereon I have often seen seven hundred slaves, guarded by half a dozen musketeers, singing, drumming, and dancing after their meals.

It is a pleasant fancy of the natives, who find our surnames rather difficult of pronunciation, while they know very little of the Christian calendar, to baptize a newcomer with some title, for which any chattel or merchandise that strikes their fancy is apt to stand godfather. My exploit with the prince christened me "Powder" on the spot. But when they saw my magnificent establishment, beheld the wealth of my warehouse, and heard the name of "store," I was forthwith whitewashed into "Storee."

And Storee, without occupying a legislative seat in Africa, was destined to effect a rapid change in the motives and prospects of that quarter. In a few months New Sestros was alive. The isolated beach, which before my arrival was dotted with half a dozen Kroo hovels, now counted a couple of flourishing towns, whose inhabitants were supplied with merchandise and labor in my factory. The neighboring princes and chiefs, confident of selling their captives, struggled to the seashore through the trackless forest; and in a very brief period Prince Freeman, who "no likee war" over my powder keg, sent expedition after expedition against adjacent tribes to redress imaginary grievances or to settle old bills with his great-grandfather's debtors. There was no absolute idea of extending the area of freedom or of territorial annexation, but it was wonderful to behold how keen became the sovereign's sensibility to national wrongs, and how patriotically he labored to vindicate his country's rights. It is true, this African metamorphosis was not brought about without some sacrifice of humanity; still I am confident that during my stay, greater strides were made toward modern civilization than during the visit of any other factor.

When I landed among the handful of

savages I found them given up to the basest superstition. All classes of males as well as females were liable to be accused upon any pretext by the jujumen, and the dangerous saucy-wood potion was invariably administered to test their guilt or innocence. It frequently happened that accusations of witchcraft or evil practices were purchased from these wretches in order to get rid of a sick wife, an imbecile parent, or an opulent relative; and, as the poisonous draft was mixed and graduated by the jujuman, it rarely failed to prove fatal when the drinker's death was necessary. Ordeals of this character occurred almost daily in the neighboring country, destroying numbers of innocent victims of cupidity or malice. I very soon observed the frequency of this abominable crime, and when it was next attempted in the little settlement that clustered round my factory, I requested that the accused might be locked up for safety in my barracoon till the fatal liquid was prepared and the hour for its administration arrived.

It will be readily understood that the saucy-wood beverage, like any other, may be prepared in various degrees of strength, so that the operator has entire control of its qualities. If the accused has friends, either to pay or tamper with the medicator, the draft is commonly made weak enough to insure its harmless rejection from the culprit's stomach. But when the victim is friendless, time is allowed for the entire venom to exude, and the drinker dies ere he can drink the second bowl.

Very soon after the offer of my barracoon as a prison for the accused, a Krooman was brought to it, accused of causing his nephew's death by fatal incantations. The juju had been consulted and confirmed the suspicion; whereupon the luckless Negro was seized, ironed, and delivered to my custody.

Next day early the jujuman ground his bark, mixed it with water, and simmered the potion over a slow fire to extract the poison's strength. As I had reason to believe that special enmity was entertained against the imprisoned uncle, I called at the juju's hovel while the medication was proceeding, and, with the bribe of a bottle, requested him to impart triple power to the noxious draft. My own juju, I said, had nullified his by pronouncing the accused innocent, and I was exceedingly

anxious to test the relative truth of our soothsayers.

The rascal promised implicit compliance, and I hastened back to the barracoon to await the fatal hour. Up to the very moment of the draft's administration I remained alone with the culprit, and administering a double dose of tartar emetic just before the gate was opened, I led him forth loaded with irons. The daring Negro, strong in his truth, and confident of the white man's superior witchcraft, swallowed the draft without a wink, and in less than a minute, the rejected venom established his innocence.

This important trial and its results were noised abroad throughout the community. The released Krooman told his companions of the white-man saucy-wood, administered by men in the barracoon; and ever afterward, the accused were brought to my sanctuary, where the conflicting charm of my emetic soon conquered the native poison and saved many a useful life. In a short time the practice was discontinued altogether.

**D**URING the favorable season I had been deprived of three vessels by British cruisers, and for as many months had not shipped a single slave—five hundred of whom were now crowded in my barracoons and demanded our utmost vigilance for safe keeping. In the gang I found a family consisting of a man, his wife, three children, and a sister, all sold under an express obligation. The father was captured by my blackguard friend Prince Freeman in person, and the family had been secured when their village was subsequently stormed.

Barrah was an outlaw and an especial offender in the eyes of an African, though his faults were hardly greater than the deeds that bestowed honor and knight-hood in the days of feudalism. He was the discarded son of a chief in the interior, and had presumed to blockade the public path toward the beach and collect duties from transient passengers or caravans. This interfered with Freeman and his revenues; but, in addition to the pecuniary damage, the robber ventured on several occasions to defeat and plunder the prince's vagabonds, so that in time he became rich and strong enough to build a town and fortify it with a regular stockade, directly on the highway. All these

offenses were so heinous in the sight of my beach prince that no foot was suffered to cool till Barrah was captured. Once within his power Freeman would not have hesitated to kill his implacable enemy as soon as delivered at New Sestros, but the interference of friends and, perhaps, the conviction that a live Negro was worth more than a dead one, induced his highness to sell him under pledge of Cuban banishment.

Barrah made several ineffectual attempts to break my barracoon and elude the watchfulness of my guards, so that they were frequently obliged to restrict his liberty, deprive him of comforts, or add to his shackles. In fact, he was one of the most formidable savages I ever encountered, even among the thousands who passed in terrible procession before me in Africa. One day he set fire to the bamboo matting with which a portion of the barracoon was sheltered from the sun. For this he was severely lashed; but next day, when allowed, under pretense of ague, to crawl with his heavy irons to the kitchen fire, he suddenly dashed a brand into the thatch, and seizing another, sprang toward the powder house, which his heavy shackles did not allow him to reach before he was felled to the earth.

Freeman visited me soon afterward, and, in spite of profit and liquor, insisted on taking him back. But in the meantime the Bassa chief to whom my prince was subordinate, heard of Barrah's attempt on my magazine and demanded the felon to expiate his crime, according to the law of his country, at the stake. No argument could appease the judges, who declared that a cruel death would alone satisfy the people whose lives had been endangered by the robber. Nevertheless I declined delivering the victim for such a fate.

In the end we compromised the sentence by shooting Barrah in the presence of all the slaves and townfolk—the most unconcerned spectators among whom were his wife and sister.

**T**HERE is no river at the New Sestros settlement, though geographers, with their usual accuracy in African outlines, have often projected one on charts and maps. Two miles from the short and perilous beach where I built my barracoons there was a slender stream, which, in consequence of its shallow bed

and narrow, rock-bound entrance, the natives call Poor River. But my factory was at New Sestros proper, and there, as I have said, was no water outlet from the interior; in fact, nothing but an embayed strand of two hundred yards flanked by dangerous cliffs. Such a beach, open to the broad ocean and forever exposed to the full rage of its storms, is more or less dangerous at all times for landing, and even when the air is perfectly calm, the common surf of the sea pours inward with tremendous and breaking waves, which threaten the boats of all who venture among them without experienced skill. Indeed, the landing at New Sestros would be impracticable were it not for the dexterous Kroomen, whose canoes sever and surmount the billows in spite of their terrific power.

Kroomen and Fishmen are different people from the Bushmen. The two former classes inhabit the seashore exclusively, and living apart from other African tribes are governed by their elders under a somewhat democratic system. The Bushmen do not suffer the Kroos and Fishes to trade with the interior; but, in recompense, these expert boatmen maintain despotic sway along the beach in trade with the shipping. As European or Yankee boats cannot live in the surf I have described, the Kroo and Fishmen have an advantage over their brothers of the Bush, as well as over the whites, which they are not backward in using to their profit. In fact, the Bushmen fight, travel, steal, and trade, while the Kroos and Fishes, who for ages have fringed at least seven hundred miles of African coast, constitute the mariners, without whose skill and boldness slaves would be drugs in caravans or barracoons. And this is especially the case since British, French, and American cruisers have driven the traffic from every nook and corner of the west coast that even resembled a harbor, and forced the slavers to wait in open roadsteads for their prey.

The Kroo canoes, wedgelike at both ends, are hollowed from the solid trunk of a tree to the thickness of an inch. They are so light and buoyant that they not only lie like a feather on the surface of the sea, so as to require nothing but freedom from water for their safety, but a canoe capable of containing four people may be borne on the shoulders of one or two to any reasonable distance. Accord-

ingly Kroomen and Fishmen are the pets of all slavers, traders, and men-of-war that frequent the west coast of Africa; while no one dwelling on the shore engaged in commerce is particularly anxious to merit their displeasure.

When I landed at New Sestros I promptly supplied myself with a little fleet of these amphibious natives; and, as the news of my liberality spread north and south along the shore, the number of my retainers increased with rapidity. Indeed, in six months a couple of rival towns—one of Kroos and the other of Fishes—hailed me severally as their commodore and consul. With such auxiliaries constantly at hand I rarely feared the surf when the shipment of slaves was necessary. At Gallinas, under the immediate eye of Don Pedro, the most elaborate care was taken to secure an ample supply of these people and their boats, and I doubt not that the multitude employed in the establishment's prime, could, at a favorable moment, dispatch at least a thousand slaves within the space of four hours. Yet I have heard from Kroomen at Gallinas the most harrowing tales of disaster connected with the shipment of Negroes from that perilous bar. Even in the dry season the mouth of this river is frequently dangerous, and, with all the adroitness they could display, the Kroos could not save boatload after boatload from becoming food for the ravenous sharks.

**I** WAS quite afloat at New Sestros on the tide of success when the cruiser that for a while had annoyed me with a blockade, became short of food, and was obliged to bear away from Sierra Leone. My well-paid spy—a Krooman who had been employed by the cruiser—soon apprised me of the brig's departure and its cause; so that in an hour the beach was in a bustle, dispatching a swift canoe to Gallinas with a message to Don Pedro: "The coast is clear—send me a vessel—relieve my plethora!"

Forty-eight hours were hardly over when the twin masts of a clipper brig were seen scraping along the edge of the horizon with the signal for embarkation. I was undoubtedly prepared to welcome my guest, for Kroos, Fishes, Bushmen, Bassas, and all, had been alert since daybreak, ready to hail the craft and receive their fees. There had been a gen-

eral embargo on all sea-going folks for a day before, so that there was not a Fish to be had for love or money in the settlement. Minute precautions like these are absolutely necessary for all prudent slavers, for it was likely that the cruiser kept a spy in her pay among my people as well as I did among hers!

All, therefore, was exceedingly comfortable so far as ordinary judgment could foresee. But, alas, the moon was full, and the African surf at such periods is fearfully terrific. As I listened from my piazza or gazed from my bellevue, it roared on the strand like the charge of interminable cavalry. My watchful enemy had been several days absent, and I expected her return from hour to hour. The shipment, though extremely perilous, was therefore indispensable; and four short hours of daylight alone remained to complete it. I saw the risk, yet taking counsel with the head Kroo and Fishmen, I persuaded them, under the provocation of triple reward, to attempt the enterprise with the smallest skiffs and stoutest rowers, while a band of lusty youths stood by to plunge in whenever the breakers captured a canoe.

We began with females as the most difficult cargo for embarkation, and seventy reached the brig safely. Then followed the stronger sex; but by this time a sea breeze set in from the southwest like a young gale, and driving the rollers with greater rapidity, upset almost every alternate cockleshell set adrift with its living freight. It was fortunate that our sharks happened that evening to be on a frolic elsewhere, so that Negro after Negro was rescued from the brine; though the sun was rapidly sinking when but two thirds of my slaves were safely shipped.

I ran up and down the beach in a fever of anxiety, shouting, encouraging, coaxing, appealing, and *refreshing* the boatmen and swimmers. But as the gangs came ashore they sank exhausted on the beach, refusing to stir. Rum, which hitherto roused them like electricity, was now powerless. Powder they did not want, nor muskets, nor ordinary trade stuff, for they never engaged in kidnaping or slave wars.

As night approached the wind increased. There was the brig with topsails aback, signaling impatiently for dispatch, but never was luckless factor more at fault. I was on the eve of giving up in despair when

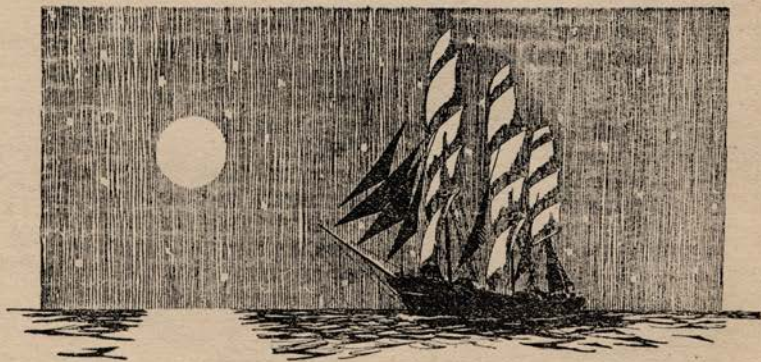
a bright flash brought to recollection a quantity of Venetian beads of mock coral which I had stowed in my chest. They happened at that moment to be the rage among the girls of our beach, and were irresistible keys to the heart of every belle. Now the smile of a lip has the same magical power in Africa as elsewhere; and the offer of a coral bunch for each head embarked brought all the dames and damsels of Sestros to my aid. Such a shower of chatter was never heard out of a canary cage. Mothers, sisters, daughters, wives, sweethearts, took charge of the embarkation by coaxing or commanding their respective gentlemen; and, before the sun's rim dipped below the horizon a few

strands of false coral, or the kiss of a Negro wench, sent one hundred more of the Africans into Spanish slavery in the islands.

But this effort exhausted my people. The charm of beads and beauty was over. Three slaves found a tomb in the sharks, or a grave in the deep, while the brig took flight in the darkness without the remaining one hundred and twenty I had designed for her hold.

Next morning the cruiser loomed once more in the offing, and, in a fit of impetuous benevolence, I hurried a Kroo-man aboard, with the offer of my compliments, and a sincere hope that I could render some service!

**To be concluded in the next issue of SEA STORIES.**



# Hauling the Trawl

By Stan Warburton



Modern fishing on the Banks.

**B**EAM trawling is the least romantic method of fishing." Mr. John Graham, president of the Portland Trawling Company, made the remark to me as he pointed to a steam fishing vessel moored outside his office window. I looked out at the *Sea Gull*, unloading her cargo of fish at the famous Fulton Fish Market in New York. She was a tiny boat for deep-sea work, about the size of a large tug. A few service stripes of rust showed along her storm-battered steel hull. Her black smokestack was half hidden by a white covering of salt, evaporated from ocean spray flung over the ship during a storm which had delayed her last return. But she had arrived safely at last.

Half an hour later I sailed on the little ship. Straight out into the forbidding Atlantic she plowed, far from sight of land, where twenty-one men and myself bounced

about during eight days of blustering, ever-changing March weather. There I saw the fishermen scrape a finny cargo from the very bottom of the sea, three hundred feet below. We encountered a slight storm, three days of treacherous fog, and lived with the ever-present uncertainty of those who dare to rob King Neptune's domain. Our fortunes changed every two hours when the fishermen hauled their net. Perhaps a load of fish would come up from the unseen depths below, but often only a few torn strands of the net which had met disaster, the cause of which we could only guess. During this time we dodged submarine wrecks that would tear away our gear, rocks that would cut it to pieces, and heavy marine growths whose terrific weight would snap the steel cables to which the net was fastened. Until we returned to New York with our hard-earned catch the fishermen



did not know what their reward would be. That depended on an ever-fluctuating fish market—it might be a bare existence or it might be luxury.

While we were steaming out of New York harbor on the unromantic little ship, apologetically creeping between faster and more luxurious boats, I entered the wheelhouse. From curiosity I glanced at the captain's license, framed in accordance with marine law. I received a shock as I read that Herbert Green could safely be intrusted with the duties as master of any ship, regardless of size, on all the seven seas. A magnificent ocean liner was tearing past, to leave us wallowing in its aristocratic wake. I was amused to realize that the brass-buttoned captain of the luxurious ship and the skipper of the fish-smelling *Sea Gull* both possessed the same navigation license.

With respect I looked at our captain. He was a powerful, heavy-set man, dressed in old half-worn work clothing, without tie or hat. His face was heavily lined from the effects of many years of strenuous ocean life and the responsibilities that never leave a ship's master. But, strangely, the lines curved around his mouth in a smile that seldom left his face. He slouched beside an open window, occasionally giving directions to the helmsman whom he called by his first name in democratic friendliness.

"That's a fine license, captain," I remarked. "I know men who'd give their right arm for that."

He waved aside the compliment. "It's nice to have unlimited papers," he admitted. "But I only use them on these fish boats, they pay better than most sea jobs. But if you're interested in seamen, watch the men on this ship. They're all real sailors as well as fishermen."

I learned he was right. They were a rough, hard-working group of men, most of them Newfoundlanders of Irish descent. Their talk was rough, often vulgar and most outspoken, but never vicious enough to be repulsive. They constantly joked among themselves, and no one was safe from their practical jokes; though in their work they helped each other in every way possible. There was not a shirker in the crew—the hardships of a fisherman's life weed out such before they can learn the trade.

When we were out to sea I went into

the forecabin. It was a triangular-shaped room below the forward deck, running back from the peak of the ship a distance of about thirty feet, where it spread out to nearly the same width. Heat was furnished by a coal stove, bolted to the center of the floor. Along the three sides were double bunks. The room was illuminated by three electric lights and ventilated only by the protected companionway leading down from the deck above.

My bunk was on the upper tier at the rear end of the room. In a narrow space about five feet above the deck I had a straw mattress, a similar pillow, and two blankets. Below my bunk was the only free space in the forecabin where the fishermen hung their oilskin clothes. Any time the air was not too overladen with tobacco smoke my nose could tell that I was on a fish boat. There was no wash-basin in the room, nor any place on the ship for that matter; there simply wasn't room for such luxuries.

Twelve fishermen and myself lived in this overcrowded forecabin. The members of the crew welcomed me in a free, easy manner which made me feel at home immediately. Their attitude seemed to be that because I was on the ship I was one of them, a friend without further ceremony.

My first meal on the boat was a pleasant surprise. The mate, a good-natured, boisterous man, led me down a steep companionway into the small galley situated below decks in the rear of the ship. Here I found myself in a small, stuffy room, whose only floor space was occupied by a large ship's range and a good-sized table. I was squeezed in between two fishermen. The table was laden with large pots of corned beef and cabbage, and other plain but nourishing, well-prepared food. At both ends of the table was a big pan, filled with loaves of bread, and beside each a large butcher knife about the size of a pirate's cutlass.

As I was crowded into the table with barely room to move, and the method of serving, as well as eating, was strange, I resolved to copy the mate to be sure I made no fish-boat blunders. At my place was a large soup plate. Following the mate's lead I had a bowl of soup. Afterward we both filled the same plates with meat and potatoes, and started the second course.

Suddenly the mate grabbed a loaf of the bread in one hand, the cutlass in the other, and, holding both high in the air to give himself elbow room dodged his neighbor's ear while he beheaded a large hunk of the bread. I did not eat any bread myself—I was afraid of committing murder in my unaccustomed awkwardness.

Dessert of canned peaches we ate from the same dishes. After the meal I still mimicked the mate, and dropped my versatile soup plate into the dishwasher. But I learned to add another detail to the formula. When I thought my hands needed attention I would wash the tableware myself to dry it—and incidentally my hands—on a towel hanging over the stove.

The cook, or steward as he was called, stopped me as I started to leave the galley. "Come down here any time for a mug up," he invited. "There is always something to eat."

As he said, the table was always set. There were cookies, various left overs, and other food waiting for any one who cared to eat; and on the stove were pots of strong tea and coffee. The only obligation of one who took a mug up was to rinse and dry the dishes afterward. This proved to be another valuable assistance to personal cleanliness.

About forty hours from New York we reached the west end of the famous Georges Banks, over a hundred miles out to sea from Boston. Here we started to fish. The method of beam trawling is unique, in that the fish are caught from the floor of the ocean by actual pursuit. A large net is used, shaped very much like a shallow paper bag. The bottom portion of this is let down till it scrapes along the bottom of the ocean while being towed by the steamer. The top of the net is some distance above and slightly ahead of the lower portion. The theory is: should a fish be frightened by the net dragging over the bottom and swim up to evade it he would already be surrounded by the canopy of net above. The net funneled backward to a strong heavy bag in which the fish were corralled.

Originally the two ends of the net were held apart by a long beam, which gave this type of fishing its name; but an ingenious device called doors, or otter trawls, have replaced the cumbersome beams. These are massive planks, much the shape and size of a door, protected by

steel edges which scrape along the bottom. One is fastened to each end of the net at an angle which keeps them separated by the resistance of the water. With the use of doors the modern beam trawl will spread out to a width of over one hundred feet. The doors used on the *Sea Gull* had been imported from England, where they are made also for the famous North Sea trawlers, who fish by similar methods and from ships of about the same size and design as the American boats.

When we started to fish, a sounding showed that we had about three hundred feet of water beneath us. We dropped the net and towed it for two hours. As it was hauled up I stood on the small bridge near the captain. When the doors and open end of the net were alongside I watched him gaze intently at the waves a short distance from the ship. Suddenly he turned to me with a look of triumph.

"We got a good bag of fish!" he exclaimed. "Look at all those bubbles."

I looked where he pointed. Bubbles of air were coming to the surface. As I watched they increased in number until the effect of their breaking smoothed a small circle on the water. Then a dark-green mass of color appeared below, which grew in size and changed to a lighter green. Suddenly I saw the bag of our net coming to the surface amidst the bubbles. Inside the net was a large quantity of fish. The laden net approached the surface, buoyed up by the air within the fish caught from that great depth. It increased its speed as it ascended until it flashed above the surface, and the top of the bag rose over a foot in the air from the force of its momentum.

It floated on the water while the fishermen pulled it in to the ship. They threw a line about the bag and hauled it over the side with the powerful steam winch, where it hung suspended a few feet over the forward deck. It looked like an inverted balloon of fish about the height of a man.

Two men crawled under the bag to unfasten the lower end which was tied together with a large rope. When they loosened the knot a deluge of fish plunged down on the deck, knocking them from their feet where they swirled about amid the finny cargo. Squirming and kicking the men and fish avalanched down the deck until stopped by a wooden obstruc-

tion. Cheers and laughter from the others rewarded the two luckless fishermen who seemed to enjoy the experience.

"All right, boys, put her out again," the captain instructed. Again the net was dropped and we started another two-hour tow. That first bag contained about eight thousand pounds of fish, an unusually large haul. Most of the catch was haddock, but there were also a few valuable cod. As soon as the net was out the fishermen started dressing the fish, a task that was not completed until time to haul the net again. The fish passed through several hands as they were carefully cleaned, washed, and pitched down a hatch into the hold to be packed on ice brought from shore.

While the fish were being dressed a new member of the crew appeared. It was his duty to collect the livers from the cleaned fish and extract the oil for medicinal purposes. A large steam vat was carried on the top deck for this use.

From then on the fishermen worked constantly. They were divided into two watches; the captain's, and the mate's, each working for six hours followed by rest periods of the same length. As daylight was unnecessary for this type of fishing, the crew worked without a single let-up for almost a week. It was hard, back-breaking work at all times.

Every two hours there was the thrilling expectancy of a hauled net and the excited watch for the telltale bubbles. Our largest bag was about ten thousand pounds of fish, our smallest—and a very frequent occurrence—nothing. Obstructions on the ocean bottom three hundred feet below frequently tore the net to shreds. This required hard, fast work to repair it while an ever-ready spare net was used. One evening we tore up four nets in as many settings, and, as the captain remarked, we did not catch enough fish for chowder during that eight hours.

Twice a day the captain was in communication with New York by radio, which was the only modern navigation equipment on the boat. It proved to be most useful, as it allowed the officers of the Portland Trawling Company, a subsidiary of the Atlantic Coast Fisheries Company, to act as a clearing house of information. They knew how much fish the *Sea Gull* had caught, as well as all other ships in the large fleet, the exact lo-

cation of each, and could advise boats which were not catching their share to move to better locations.

Most of the fish caught were haddock, but in addition we captured quite a number of cod, and two large halibut. The net also brought up a number of freak fish which were not saved. One haul contained nothing but a load of dogfish, a worthless fish, in reality a small harmless shark. Another freak was the skate, a flat fish with wide wings at each side of its body, and a long spinelike tail. We also caught a number of a vicious-looking gray fish which the crew called the catfish. This sometimes grows to over twenty pounds in weight, and has a large, powerful mouth, well supplied with teeth. It has a vicious habit of clamping onto anything within reach, and hanging on like a bulldog until it can be lifted off the deck by its mouth.

**A** FOG descended over the fishing banks on the second day. As we cruised about, hidden in the treacherous mist, we sounded our whistle with distracting regularity. Frequently we could hear the warning blasts of other vessels as they passed by, but they were seldom dangerously close enough to be seen. There was always the uncertainty of a fast ocean liner tearing through the mist to cut our frail craft in two.

Three days later the fog cleared to give us beautiful calm weather, but the barometer slowly dropped as a sign of approaching trouble. A slight storm broke on the following morning.

By noon the waves were mounting and the little *Sea Gull* was beginning to jump and roll. As the wind increased, spray and occasional blue water came over her bow as she stuck her nose into the waves. When the fishermen hauled the net the side of the little boat was turned directly against the waves, contrary to all rules of a ship in a storm. But this position helped the fishermen, as the vessel rolled over so far at each wave that it assisted them in hauling the net. Frequently her weather rail dipped under the waves, allowing quantities of water to swamp over the men as they worked.

Late that afternoon I stood on the small rear deck watching the ship toss through the storm. First I would be on top of the world, looking down on the angry waves

below, then at the very bottom, deep in a canyon of raging water. Though the *Sea Gull* bounced and jumped with erratic motion and rolled till her decks were awash, she proved that she was a good sea boat. No heavy waves came over her bow or stern, and she disposed of what little water did come aboard on the next roll. As the captain had told me, she was able to ride the waves like her namesake, and was perfectly safe in any weather—unless something went wrong.

While I stood with my landlubber's feet braced against the bouncing deck, and with a firm hold on a hand rail, one of the fishermen staggered alongside. I volunteered it was getting a little choppy.

He smiled all over. "If it will only keep blowing," he prayed.

"Why do you want that?" I asked in surprise.

"Keep the smaller boats inside—it'll mean a better price for our fish."

His explanation made me realize that the trawlers are essentially a bad-weather fishing boat. They can fish in almost any storm, or if the weather gets too bad for even them they can lay-to outside waiting for the waves to subside. They endure all kinds of weather; fog, sleet, snow, hail, gales which upset all maritime schedules, to creep into port bringing cargoes of fish with surprising regularity. During the winter months the steam trawlers reap their largest monetary reward, for they are about the only fishing vessel which can venture out to sea at that perilous season.

The wind subsided during the night, so that before morning I could lie in my bunk without hanging on. As we fished that day, the captain told me that he was particular not to trawl over a certain area where a submarine paid a visit during the late war. Three vessels had been sunk there, to remain as a constant menace to any fish net that tried to pass over them. The captain held little resentment for the actual torpedoing of these boats, but he felt that the enemy could have sunk them at least a little distance from the haddock banks.

The chief engineer shut off the electric lights that day so that he could repair the generator engine. While he worked on the forward deck, using a flange of the anchor for an anvil, I talked with him. His life was a hard one. During the

eight or ten days his boat is at sea the engines are in constant use. At the end of each trip he has twenty-four hours in port. During this one day he must do the necessary repair work, besides stealing what time he can for shore pleasure. Yet he must somehow keep the engines turning—lives might depend on that.

While we were talking a fisherman climbed to the very top of the forward mast, where he hung like a steeply jack as he replaced some worn tackle ropes. A cold wind was blowing and the ship was rocking slightly, which made him swing dizzily as on the end of a lever. It seemed to me that he clung to his high perch for an interminable time. When he at last climbed down the engineer shook his head. "These fishermen are darned good sailors," he admitted. "Few ships carry as good men these days."

In need of a stimulating cup of coffee, I went to the galley. I had to cross the main deck, where my rubber boots slid in the fresh slime that is always present where fish are cleaned. It was dark below, for only two candles tried to replace the usual electric lights, but I thought I knew my way about. As I stepped past the cook in the narrow quarters my foot splashed into a pail of water. Something soft and oozy gave under my rubber boot. I jerked it out and apologized to the steward.

"That's all right," he replied. "You didn't hurt anything. I was only peeling potatoes."

*Splash!* Another tuber dropped into the water that had just washed my boot.

With the crew I ate potatoes at the next meal. One can't be too particular on a fish boat.

On the fifth day of our fishing as I was standing in the wheelhouse, the radio operator entered with a message for the captain. We were called into New York. Without hesitation the skipper went to the chart, made a mark to indicate our position, and quickly worked out a course to Sandy Hook. During the five days of our erratic wandering about the fishing banks he had known our exact location at all times. His only source of information, other than that given him by experience, was gained from the depth of water, and the type of bottom as indicated by some butter placed on the base of the sounding lead. He was not compelled to use his sextant once, cer-

tainly clever navigation of a specialized sort. When we were steaming back to New York I asked the captain how this trip would pay the fishermen.

"We can't tell that till we dock," he answered. "It all depends on the fish market. We have a fair catch, one hundred and thirty-five thousand pounds of fish. And the price was good yesterday, according to the wireless reports. But it might be anything by the time we get there."

When we reached port we found that the market was fairly high, so the fishermen were well repaid for their efforts. I had made a trip with them during good weather, when the work of fishing was as light as it was possible to be. But as a landlubber I was willing to concede that they had earned every cent received.

On the morning following our return, habit formed on the *Sea Gull* caused me to

notice the weather. A cold northeast wind was blowing, driving a piercing rain which threatened to turn into snow. I knew that the little *Sea Gull* was bravely plowing out to the open sea once more—for a trawler is a rough-weather boat, she goes when the time comes, storm or no storm. In my mind I pictured the twenty-one men headed for the storm-tossed sea in that tiny shell of steel. I remembered the fisherman who prayed for foul weather because it would increase his financial reward. I wondered how this weather would please him.

I sat down near the protecting comfort of a warm radiator. Perhaps I should write of my experiences on the *Sea Gull*. But how should I begin? Oh, yes, of course—

"Beam trawling is the least romantic method of fishing."





## Romance

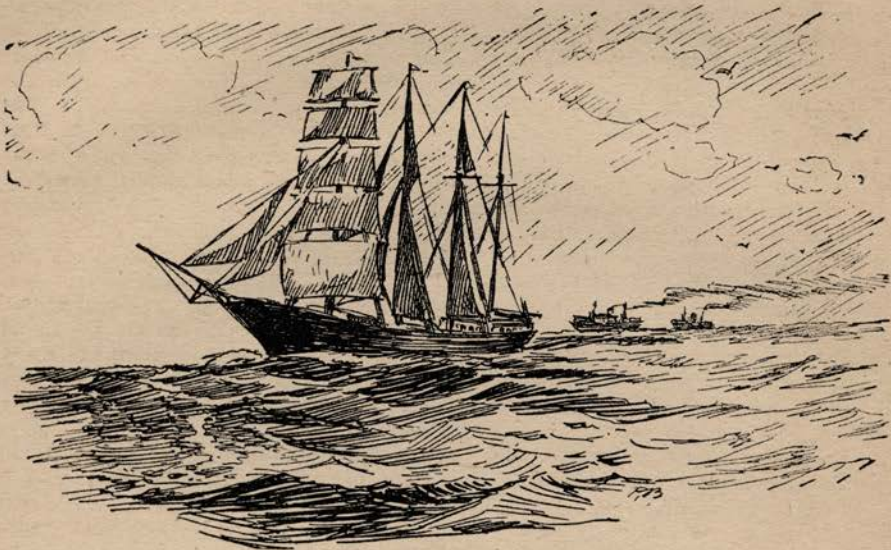
By THOMAS CALDECOT CHUBB.

DEEP-CHESTED seamen roll and swagger where  
Cutlasses clank. Lean fingers itch for dice.  
Gruff salty oaths are mouthed, and once or twice  
I find myself breathing a desperate prayer.  
Outside there should be wind and wave and air  
With a ship's deck yellow beneath the moon.  
And overhead black spars. And swinging there  
Hanged prisoners dancing a rigadoun.

—Old friend of mine who read so desperately  
Under whose pirate ensign did you sail  
To have caught this outlaw spirit of the sea?  
For when I hear you read that slashing tale,  
Twenty unstified buccaneers in me  
Work seaward a lean schooner, crowding the rail.

# Johnson's Navy

By G. F. Southall



## Sealing in the Southern Ocean.

**I**N 1920 I joined the auxiliary barkentine *Sound of Jura*, bound for the Kerguelen Islands via Capetown. She was a four-masted barkentine of nine hundred and thirty tons register, carrying twenty-one hands all told, owned by Irvine & Johnson, of North Shields.

Originally a simon-pure windjammer, she had been converted into an auxiliary by having a small steamer's engines—either a whaler or drifter—fitted aft, and her lower hold was partitioned off into tanks for the carrying of whale oil, et cetera, from South Georgia, in which trade she had been employed for several years.

On this voyage she had a slight variation from her usual run, being chartered to bring home seal oil from the Kerguelen Islands, a dreary spot in the southern ocean, roughly speaking, halfway between the Cape of Good Hope and West Australia, in about fifty degrees south latitude.

We left Birkenhead on the second of July, under the command of Captain F.

Crosby and Chief Mate Rangdale, in charge of a tug that had orders to take us to the Northwest Lightship. Although we had steam up, our own engines were only capable of driving her four to five knots in favorable circumstances, so they did not trust her to her own power in the strong Mersey currents.

When the tug cast off we made all sail to a light fair wind and made our way down Channel at an average speed of seven knots, sail and steam combined.

I said all sail, but she did not spread the amount of canvas she had been sparred for.

All her square sails were all right, also the mainsail; but her mizzen and spanker were merely leg-of-mutton trysails, which, with two very sketchy gaff-topstails, did little toward driving her.

We had a rather uneventful passage of sixty-odd days to Capetown, where we stayed for a month refitting, also waiting for the rest of the fleet which consisted of two ex-gunboats which had had an extra

deck fitted on them and been converted into small tankers—also two drifters. When this imposing fleet was assembled in Table Bay some wag dubbed us "Johnson's navy," and dignified us with the title of flagship.

The two Kil boats and the drifters were sent on to Kerguelen ahead of us, with about a hundred men to start the fishing, while we followed later with coal and stores.

We also had a couple of dozen whalers as passengers in our fore 'tween decks. They were mostly Norwegians, but we had a couple of South Africans among them, who I think were more actuated by the spirit of adventure than desire to participate in the oil industry. Anyhow, they were the liveliest members of the community who were, for the most part, a rather silent and gloomy lot.

These men, though dignified by the title of whalers, were a long way removed from the real thing, especially of the old whale-ship days. They were in reality laborers, engaged for the most part, in very greasy, toilsome and monotonous work ashore.

**T**HE *Sound of Jura* was the luckiest ship I have ever been in. Though slow and clumsy to handle, something always turned up to enable her to achieve her object. When leaving Liverpool, we had fair winds and fine weather till we were well clear of the Channel, so now, on leaving Capetown our luck still held. About a week after leaving the Cape we struck the westerly winds in about forty-two degrees south, and they blew a living gale before which we ran until we sighted the islands.

In fact at times it blew a little too hard, and one night we hove her to, but she behaved very badly—lying in the trough of the sea, and rolling horribly. The mate, indeed, was of the opinion that it would have been better to continue running. I did not agree with him at the time, but on looking back, I now feel sure that he was right. I think that Kerguelen is very magnetic.

I remember that for twenty-four hours before we sighted the island, the compass was badly affected, spinning round and round as if possessed, making it impossible to steer by. So we steered by the wind, keeping it dead aft till we sighted the land.

SEA—7

That day the gale moderated very rapidly. By midday it was a flat calm, enabling us to use the engine and steam up Royal Sound, which we would never have been able to do under sail. There were no pilots and no tugs in that part, so if the weather had not favored us we should probably have blown past it altogether. However, we anchored off the station which was situated at the head of the fiord thirty or forty miles from the entrance. I call it a fiord because it partook of all the characteristics of a Norwegian fiord, having deep clear water all its length, with wild, mountainous scenery.

**T**HE morning after our arrival we moored at a little jetty which had been constructed by some previous expedition and started in discharging coal, an operation with which I was all too familiar, having discharged many cargoes in the old days in the Chilean nitrate ports, but this beat all my going a-fishing.

We had a steam winch, of course; but the weather was bitter cold, making a wash at night a thing to be dreaded. In addition to our other woes the lower holds were divided into tanks, so we had no skin to work on, but had to dig the coal out of the limbers separately.

Well should that place be called the "Isle of Desolation." I never was in a more doleful place, a peculiar and depressing sense of isolation and dreariness gripping you if you happened to wander alone. It is of volcanic origin, with rugged, bleak and mountainous scenery, interspersed with deep fiords or sounds. Scapa Flow was paradise in comparison.

While we discharged coal the station gang was busy with their sealing. The small steamers, namely the Kil boats and the drifters, would cruise around the island landing their crews at any accessible spot where seals were congregated. They would kill and flense as many as possible, load the skins aboard the ship and take them back to the station where they would be hauled up by the shore gang, who took them to the cooking house where the blubber—skin and all—was boiled down into oil.

The seals, which, in reality, were sea elephants, were often of enormous size, some of the old bulls being as weighty as an ordinary bullock, while their teeth or tusks were four to five inches long. The



smaller cows or calves could be clubbed to death, but the larger bulls had to be shot, as their virility, no less than their stupidity, was marvelous. A couple of seals would lie, side by side, basking in the sun, and when you approached them would take no notice, only opening their large, saucerlike eyes to gaze at you for a few seconds, then sleeping again.

Their eyes were very large and perfectly round, of a rich, dark-brown color, but with a peculiar, fishlike glaze in them, and when they opened them the water was continually running, as if they were weeping.

One of our chaps—"Ginger"—thought it would be a good idea to take a sealskin home with him, so he tackled a small seal on his own. He took a pick with him and scientifically hacked its brains out and set about skinning it, which operation took him about two hours. To his horror the unfortunate animal persisted in moaning, even when it had been brained and skinned. Ginger stuck to his gruesome task for two hours, but eventually gave it up, and fled, remorseful. The hearts and livers of these seals were good eating, and I have seen the hearts still beating, hours after being extracted from the animals.

**O**N Sundays we would ramble about, digging rabbits out of their holes. Some rabbits had been imported by a prewar expedition and had spread awfully. A species of small sea bird, about the size of a dove, gray in color, had taken to living with the rabbits in their burrows and when dug out would be pounced upon and eaten by large sea hawks.

The island also sported sheep and dogs, left by previous expeditions. The sheep, which were magnificent black fellows, fat as butter, with wool a yard long, lived and flourished on a species of winter cabbage which grew in some parts.

The heads of the station made several attempts to get a sheep, but failed, and it was left to some of us amateur hunters in the fore-castle to succeed.

They lent us a rifle, and half a dozen of the chaps crossed the sound, and eventually sighted a sheep and ran, or, rather, scrambled him down.

I don't know if it was a sheep or a ram, but its horns were three feet long, from tip to tip, not curly, but nicely curved, and it was so big and clumsy, and the wool so long and matted that it trailed on the ground and made the animal slower

than us. The sailors grabbed him and held him down till the rifleman arrived on the scene, who placed the muzzle of his rifle against his ribs, and with great accuracy blew a hole in his midship section.

So far, so good, but now our troubles arose. The prize was too big and heavy to carry slung to an oar, and it took the boat's crew four hours of heavy dragging up hill and down dale, to get him to the boat. Next day the cook skinned him and he certainly was a beauty. His chest was like a barrel, and it was the finest mutton I have ever tasted, also the darkest in color, and very rich and juicy.

Our success stimulated the nobs to further efforts, but though they made several attempts, they never succeeded in bagging another.

Some dogs of different breeds had been left on the island, and had bred and multiplied. They seemed to be reverting to type, being of a yellowish brown, rather like a collie in appearance, but sturdier and with shorter and shaggy hair. One of our fellows collared a puppy in a rabbit hole, and a wild and plucky little beggar he was. The doctor of the station took a fancy to him and the captor agreed to let him have it, but after we had had him a month, some fathead took him ashore for a run—he ran all right.

**W**E had a pig aboard which became a great favorite. In the cold weather she was bedded down under the fore-castle head on an old tarpaulin and carefully covered. If we neglected to see to her in the evening she would come to the fore-castle door and shove her snout over the step and squeal and whimper until she was attended to. Her soft, grateful runts after she was tucked up for the night, with just the tip of her snout sticking out, were most comical. On the passage home when the skipper finally decided to have her killed the Negro cook flatly refused to do the deed and the mate attended to it.

The cook also made a pet of a penguin which he claimed talked to him, but he was finally persuaded to liberate the bird as it did not thrive.

We also used to collect the penguin's eggs, which we made into omelets, but I never cared for them. Without actually being fishy they did not taste right and probably very few of them were fresh, as when opening them we could only condemn those which were actually bad.

On the whole, our diet was very monotonous, consisting of sea stores—salt beef, et cetera—from the time we left Capetown to when we returned there—a matter of nearly seven months.

We had Christmas Day on the island, a holiday for every one, and sounds of jubilation emanated from the bunk houses ashore, and we had as good a dinner as the ship's stores would provide, but no liquor. The skipper suffered from a mysterious inward malady, which necessitated copious libations of rum—therefore the keg was empty. While at dinner we were startled by a terrific explosion ashore. One of the South Africans, an ex-soldier, in a laudable attempt to show his mates how mines were worked in France, had burgled the ammunition store and succeeded in blowing up a large shed. Luckily, no one was hurt.

In the afternoon we had a football match—ship's crew versus the station—remarkable more for enthusiasm than science. We started with even numbers, but the shore gang, seeing the game go against their side, took to joining in, increasing till we were swamped by sheer weight.

The referee, a Frenchman, stood on the side lines, frantically blowing his whistle and clapping his hands, and after a couple of hours' furious scramble over the rocks we asked for the verdict and got

it—sixteen goals to eight in favor of the station.

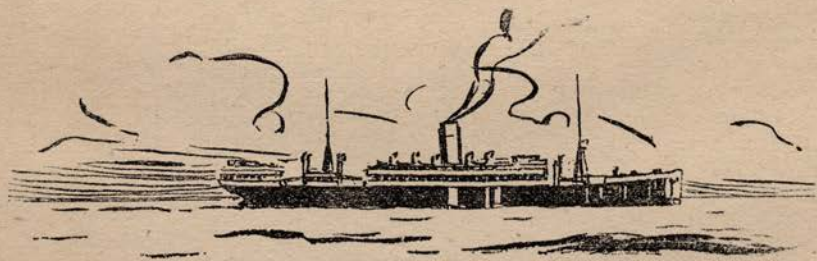
We were about four months at Kerguelen, discharging coal and loading the oil as it was boiled down. A small pipe led from the cooking house to the jetty, from which we ran it into our tanks, the 'tween decks being loaded to capacity with barrels.

Heaven only knows how many seals it took to produce a ton of oil, as only the skins and about a couple of inches of fat adhering to them went into the cookers.

Finally we were loaded—fourteen hundred tons of oil in all. This did not represent the whole of the season's catch, as sealing was carried on after our departure, and the two Kil boats also loaded oil after we left, probably in the neighborhood of a thousand tons between them.

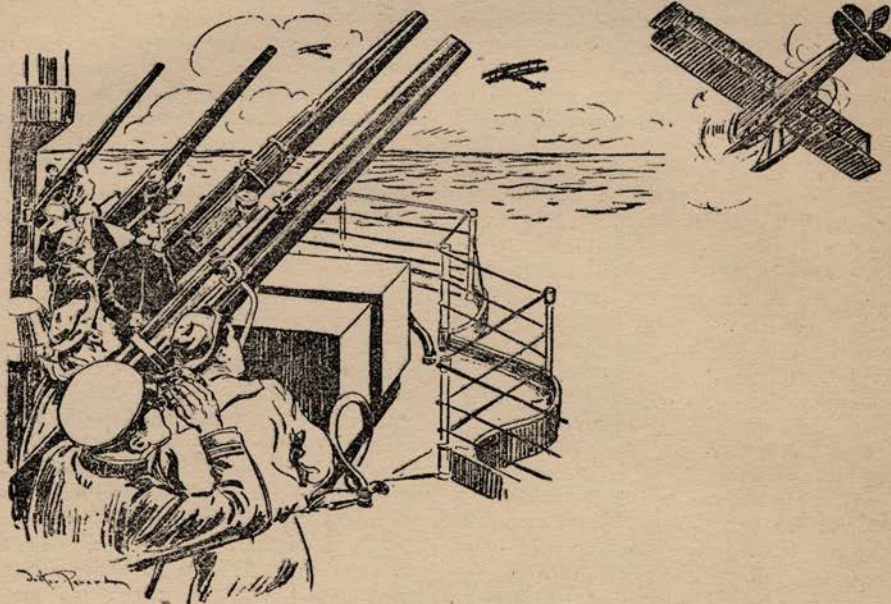
The longed-for day had arrived, and the *Sound of Jura's* luck held good. We had a fine day for our departure, steamed down the sound and got well clear of the land before the westerlies struck us again with full force, and we made good speed on a northerly course into the Indian Ocean and trade winds, and made Capetown on our homeward way without any trouble.

We touched at Capetown for bunkers and provisions, had a fine-weather passage home, and docked in Birkenhead on the 18th of May, 1921, being away ten months and a half.



# A Matter of Stripes

## By Philip Scruggs



North Sea battle tactics.

**I**T'S just a matter of stripes," Morgan told himself as he reluctantly left the window where he had been watching the officers' farewell dance. He looked down at his sleeve where the four red stripes and the crossed guns marked his rating, a first-class gunner's mate. "If they were gold," he continued, "I could walk in there and have some chance with that sap, who can show me up just because his college happened to be the Naval Academy and mine was the university."

Morgan Lund felt that he had every right to grouse about his present predicament. The *Montana* was due to steam out of the harbor for the war zone at dawn, and his girl was in there dancing with Mart Samson, whose gold stripe made him a privileged person. He wouldn't even have a chance to tell Betty good-by, and there was no telling when he would see her again. He turned the collar of his

pea-jacket up and drifted against the wind down toward the dock. No use staying ashore with nothing to do.

As he started undressing, two of his best friends drifted in, also tired of hanging around the town with nothing to do. Like himself, they were college men who had joined the navy, and, far from home, found nothing in the town to interest them. They were just plain gobs, but Lund didn't feel that the dignity of his red stripes made him any better than they were. It was more or less an accident of his technical training that had won them for him, and the fact that he had always been interested in gunnery.

Bob James noticed the glum look on Lund's face, and after a moment's hesitation said, "You look downhearted. What's up? I thought you were all excited about this war-zone assignment."

Lund didn't reply for a moment, but needing an outlet for his feelings, finally

burst forth. "It's that damn Samson. Just because he is an ensign he is in town dancing with Betty, and I don't even get a look-in to tell her good-by. The dirty skunk even had the nerve to ask me before he went ashore if there was any message I would like to give Betty, as he was taking her to a dance. He only did it to get a rise out of me. He knows I hate his gall. But he's a gold-striper," he added bitterly. "He's an officer and a gentleman." The last word was uttered in a tone of contempt. As an afterthought he added to himself, "Gentleman—by act of congress."

"I wouldn't worry about it," Bob said sympathetically. "If she is the kind of girl she looks to be, Mart Samson won't make much time with her, though he's a pretty smooth bird. It is tough, though, Lund, not seeing her your last night."

The two sailors went out, and Lund tumbled into his bunk, prepared for a sleepless night.

He was still awake and tossing restlessly when the faint light of dawn crept through the portholes. The sound of running footsteps on deck, followed by the steady vibration of the cruiser, told him they were ready to leave. He didn't bother to go on deck to watch the land fade away, but sulked below, content to glance out of the porthole at the shipping drifting by in the harbor.

When he finally went on deck he saw a faint, hazy line on the horizon back of them, and that was as near a good-by as he gave his homeland. His thoughts turned to the cruise ahead. There might be action in the North Sea that would give him a chance to change his red stripes for gold ones. The lips tightened in his lean, brown face as he determined to come back an officer if there was any possible way of achieving it. He scowled openly as he saw Samson cross the deck, glance at him, hesitate, and then go on.

At dusk, as they steamed rapidly ahead through a choppy sea, a signalman came up to him and handed him a note. Glancing at it, he saw his name, and beneath it, "Kindness of Ensign Samson." It was from Betty, expressing regret at not seeing him again, and wishing him the best of luck on the cruise.

He felt a warm glow steal over him as he read the intimate little note, and then his pent-up rage against Samson burst

forth afresh. He had deliberately waited all day to give him the note, and was probably standing out of sight and grinning at his discomfiture. "I'll show him up, the dirty cad," he muttered.

Tucking the note in his blouse, he went below.

**T**HE *Montana* was steaming along at half speed through the sullen green waters of the North Sea when commands started snapping from the bridge. "Full speed ahead! Close the bulkheads! Stand by the guns! Raise to two thousand yards! Begin firing!"

The last order had hardly left the captain's mouth when a deafening salvo heeled the *Montana* far over. As the smoke cleared away fresh shells were shoved home, the breechblocks slammed, and before the cruiser ceased trembling a second round thundered from the secondary battery.

Lund was in charge of one of the forward guns, and at the first sharp command had swept the sea and spotted the periscope sinking below the waves. His heart jumped as his roving eyes picked up the foamy trail of a torpedo rushing toward them. But it had been seen in time, and the deadly missile passed astern, missing them by a scant margin. At the command to begin firing, Lund's gun was ready, and the great shells plowed up the water where the periscope had been seen a moment before.

"Cease firing!" The gunners stood by, sweeping the surface with keen eyes, but nothing was visible. The sub had been content to launch her torpedo and seek the safety of deep water. The shells were a moment too late.

For a while they steamed around, cutting back and forth across the area where the sub had submerged, but their trouble was useless, a mere cautious formality, and soon they were back to their half-speed, monotonous patrol.

Lund had just relaxed after seeing that the guns were blown out, and reloaded, when Samson came by. "A bit slow getting into action, Lund," he observed. "We should have gotten that sub. She was an easy target." There was a half sneer on his face as he glanced at Lund and passed on. Lund started to speak, but checked himself, mentally adding one more item to his score against the gold-striper.

The entire personnel of the cruiser was

aware of the enmity between the two men. The crew all sympathized with the gunner, as they had little liking for the ensign who made mountains of the tiny tasks which he assigned them, and which would have been beneath the notice of most men in his position.

The officers, those of them who bothered to consider the matter at all, attributed it to jealousy on the part of Lund. They had little sympathy for the college men who had enlisted for the war, and rather resented their presence on the ship. They knew too much, and were too inclined to demonstrate that but for their lack of Annapolis training they were as good as the officers.

The only officer who paid any attention at all to Lund, and who secretly took his side, was Lieutenant Orcutt, who knew of him through mutual friends, and appreciated the fact that he was a fine chap, and possessed of more intelligence and ability than Samson. He occasionally stopped to chat with Lund, and made it known that any influence he possessed would be exerted in his behalf whenever the occasion for its use arose.

Orcutt came up to Lund as he was striking a match preparatory to lighting his pipe. "What has Samson got against you?" he asked.

"Nothing, sir, except the fact that we are both in love with the same girl, and he suspects that she likes me better than himself. I beat him once in an intercollegiate boxing meet, but he showed no hard feelings about it then. He may think more of it now, and want to get back at me."

"Well, pay no attention to him outside of ship routine. He can do you no harm, and will only hurt himself by being nasty to you."

"I do not notice him, sir, any more than possible," Lund said quietly. "By the way, is there any chance of seeing any action soon outside of this interminable cruising back and forth?"

Orcutt looked at him a moment, and then answered his question. "This is confidential at present, but we are waiting for orders to go after an enemy cruiser that is reported through the mine barrier, and heading for the North Atlantic. The orders have evidently come!" he added as a signalman handed a message from the wireless room to the captain, and almost

immediately the cruiser gathered speed and shifted her course more to the north. Orcutt left and joined the captain on the bridge.

Something was certainly happening as the knots were reeled off, and smoke poured from the stacks to level and spread out behind them. Darkness was shutting them in, rendered more impenetrable by a heavily overcast sky. A sudden tension spread among the crew. Captain Wright paced the bridge nervously. The other officers were gathered in groups, talking excitedly in low voices, unintelligible to the crew.

Lund saw the signalman who had been up on the bridge, and stopped him. "What's up?" he asked.

The signalman grunted. "Some more ghost chasing, I suppose. Wireless just came sending us after a cruiser that's supposed to have slipped out."

"Where is she?" Lund asked eagerly. His face lit up. Maybe they would get into action after all.

"Heading for the North Atlantic around Scotland," said the signalman. "We ought to sight her about daybreak if she holds her course. Then you birds can use your popguns and see if you can hit anything." He grinned derisively and started away.

"Run along and wave your flags, little boy," he sent after the retreating figure. He was almost visibly excited over the news. He forgot all about Samson and turned in to dream of Betty, having a vision of himself standing in front of her with his sleeve literally dripping with gold braid.

**B**EFORE the light of the false dawn had died away, leaving a heavier blackness than before, the crew was standing by, ready for action. Eyes and ears were strained for any sign that might indicate the presence of a ship in that black void that surrounded them. The engines were still turning over at full speed, and she was holding steadily to her north-westerly course.

They were about forty nautical miles off Kinnaird's Head, the tip of that great bulge of Scotland between the Firth of Forth and Moray Firth, when the gray light crept over the sea. If the reports had been accurate, they should intercept the enemy before he got past the head and into the sweep of water beyond.

Lund almost turned and struck out with his fist, which had automatically clenched, when a voice behind him said sarcastically, "Think you can hit this cruiser if we catch her, Lund?"

Samson was standing there with the usual nasty grin on his face. The gunners standing near by half expected Lund to hit him as they saw his expression in the dim light. But Lund controlled himself.

"Yes, sir," he replied. "I think we will knock her into scrap iron—provided"—he hesitated—"provided we get the range in time."

He knew Samson caught the meaning beneath his words as he saw his face flush angrily. Samson was the range officer for his battery, and thinking of the delayed note from Betty, Lund had not been able to resist the thrust.

"You need not worry about that," Samson retorted angrily. "You handle the guns, and—attend to your own business." He turned to pretend an inspection of the guns, knowing that the crew were grinning at the thrust Lund had made, though they didn't know its significance.

A light breeze came out of the east and swept away the mist hovering above the sea. It swirled in little columns, assumed fantastic shapes as keen eyes waited for it to clear. Then it was gone suddenly, showing a heaving, angry sea sweeping away to the horizon, and the call came, high and clear through the damp air. "Ship ahead, to the right!" and close upon it the commands, "Full speed ahead! Find the range! Stand by for action! Hurry up now!"

Lund's crew sprang to their guns. "Elevation sixty! Commence firing!"

The *Montana* reeled as the guns spoke. Smoke swept across the decks. The familiar odor of burning powder filled the air. The gunners worked with precision. Breechblocks swung open, compressed air cleaned the barrels, shells were shoved home, the breechblocks slammed, the ship rocked as the second round sought the enemy. Lund glanced at Samson, who was busy with his instruments, but he caught his eyes as he looked up. His eyes blazed as he shouted:

"Elevation fifty-five," and in a lower voice, "Attend to your guns, damn you, Lund. I'm handling this end." Again the guns roared. Lund repressed a grin as

he gave orders to the gunners, urging them to greater speed.

The enemy cruiser was clearly visible, her funnels belching as she tried to run away. Puffs of smoke sprang from her, and white jets of water flew up ahead of the *Montana*. They were returning the fire.

"Hold your fire!" came the command high above the din. The course changed slightly as the enemy shifted hers, apparently turning away. "Commence firing!" The guns spoke again, and as their smoke cleared away a cloud of black smoke could be seen to the west. The wireless was bringing up a fleet of destroyers.

They were overhauling the fleeing cruiser. She fired round after round, but the range was alternately short or too great, until a sudden explosion seemed to check the *Montana's* speed for a moment, and she heeled over slightly from the shock. A shell had almost overreached them, but not quite, exploding soon enough to twist and bend the plates amidships and rip a section of the deck to splinters. The crew on that side had jumped back, almost going overboard at the explosion, but no one was hurt. Lund glanced up before returning to the guns, Samson was just ahead of him.

With a warning shout, the gunner jumped toward Samson just as a bulkhead, torn loose by the explosion, but held in position by the braces for a moment, started to topple. He reached Samson and shoved him aside with a lunge like a football player breaking through a line.

Samson was safe, but as Lund tried to clear, the bulkhead hit him a glancing blow and sent him sprawling to the deck. He lay there very still, but as the crew started to pick him up his eyes opened and he inhaled deeply, getting slowly to his feet. "I'm all right," he gasped. But his back ached and his right leg was numb with pain. "Get that gun going!" he barked angrily.

Samson was back on the job, looking a little dazed, and every now and then glancing at Lund when the latter wasn't looking. His face was a picture of indecision, but in a moment it set and he started checking the range.

Both ships were zigzagging to baffle the gunners, but the *Montana* was justly famed for her marksmanship. More than

once her shells had reached the enemy, the results being evidenced by her lessened speed. As her guns roared spasmodically they could see that she was in desperate straits and trying to accomplish by rapid firing what she lacked in marksmanship.

When the enemy cruiser slowed down it was like target practice for the *Montana's* gunners. The calibrated batteries started knocking the enemy to pieces as if she were made of wood instead of being a heavily armored, powerful modern cruiser. Her own guns had scored but once on the *Montana*, and Lund had prevented the only near approach to a fatality.

The range became point-blank as the enemy drifted helplessly. Either her engines or her steering mechanism had been put out of commission, and most of her guns were silenced. The remaining ones, however, roared futilely, sending up harmless jets of water where the shells dropped.

As the *Montana* swung around, a final salvo from the starboard guns almost knocked the cruiser out of the water. A cloud of smoke poured from her. Figures could dimly be seen hurling themselves overboard, or being hurled by the force of the explosion, the sound of which came crashing across the water like the concentrated fire of all the guns in the world. Her guns were silent as she was seen to be settling. A man vanished over her side as the stern went down. Her prow came up, she leaned heavily to one side and, leaving a cloud of smoke and steam floating above the water, she disappeared.

They steamed over the spot where the enemy went down, but no sign remained, except a smear of oil over the sea, and bits of gear that had been blown into the water. Officers and crew stared silently at the heaving water as they went by. Not a trace of the figures they had seen going overboard could be found. They snapped-to to clean up ship.

As the tension relaxed, Lund found himself acutely conscious of the pain in his leg and back. He limped forward and reported to the ship's surgeon. A hasty examination revealed strained ligaments, but nothing was broken. He was ordered to bed for a few days' rest, and assured that he would soon be all right.

The *Montana*, with the fleet of destroyers, put about and steamed toward Aberdeen for repairs. The damage caused by the one enemy shell was temporarily

patched up, and they proceeded slowly to port.

Lund looked up in surprise to see Samson standing by his bunk. The officer looked like he had a bad taste in his mouth, but his face was set with determination to get a difficult task quickly over with. "Lund, I came to thank you for what you did. You probably saved me from a nasty smash, and I am sorry that you were hurt on my behalf." The words came slowly, with obvious effort.

"It is what I would have done for any man, Mr. Samson," Lund replied abruptly. "No thanks are necessary." He stressed the "any man" in a way that Samson understood to mean that he would have pulled a dog out of the way in the same manner. He went out with flushed face, furious to be under obligation to the man he had taken every opportunity to make uncomfortable. Why hadn't any other man beside Lund saved him? Now he would at least have to be decent to the beggar when any one was around.

**A** WEEK in Aberdeen put the personnel of the *Montana* in better spirits. They were treated royally by the Scots, and every man of them was sorry to leave as they steamed out to sea again. Lund was up, and though his back still ached a bit, he felt competent to go about his duties.

Day followed day monotonously as they took up the dreary patrol again. A drizzling rain settled over the water to add to the misery. They longed for the wireless room to bring orders for some new assignment, to send them into action again. Their one taste of battle had edged their appetites for action and made the routine patrol additionally colorless.

The red ball of the sun, one morning, found the clouds gone. A rare day of sunshine and bright-blue skies followed. Toward noon smoke was sighted to the east, and shortly after a squadron of British cruisers hove in sight. The *Montana* joined them, and there was much speculation among the crew as a fleet of destroyers and mine sweepers were added toward sundown. Signal flags made fluttering, white specks against the sky, the wireless room was a scene of constant activity, with messages flashing to and from the bridge. At dusk the newly formed fleet steamed slowly toward the east.

As the squadron held steadily on its course speculation became certainty. They were going toward the enemy coast, and perhaps they were at last really going to get into the war.

Lund listened with some amusement at the remarks of the crew. "Don't forget them eggs they got spread around," rumbled one old salt. "They got 'em just as thick off the coast as we've got 'em across the sea. There'll have to be some sweepin' and blowin' up before we get through. And them submarines'll be thicker'n her-rin'."

He voiced the opinions of many of them who were nervous over the prospect of getting through the mine fields, though not worried about the idea of furious battle.

"Well, if that cruiser we sunk got through, I guess we can, with mine sweepers, and destroyers to clear the way," interposed a man in Lund's crew. "That is, if Mr. Samson doesn't have charge of the sweepin'." He glanced at Lund as he made the last remark. He was trying to get a rise out of his chief, and find out how he stood with the ensign since the battle, but Lund ignored the remark.

"You needn't worry about the mines, men," he said with a serious tone. "The real danger will be submarines, or getting led too far in and attacked by superior numbers without a chance to call up the reserve squadron that is supposed to stand by for our call. Ship to ship, we'll run 'em off the sea, but we might get a surprise."

Daylight found them entering the area of danger. The sweepers were combing the sea ahead, followed by destroyers dropping depth bombs, with fuses timed to wreck any mines near the surface. Steaming slowly after came the cruisers.

Standing near his gun, Lund was aroused from contemplation of the destroyers by Lieutenant Orcutt. "We are going to see fighting now, Lund, if the enemy will come out. If they don't, we will have been to just so much trouble for nothing."

"I have been wondering, sir," Lund remarked, "why we are here at all. They are harmless, bottled up there. It looks like taking needless chances, running in here."

"It's for the moral effect," Orcutt replied. "The troops are getting it a bit hard at the front, and the people in Eng-

land and back home are pretty glum about it. The British staff thought a run up here with a short scrap would divert their attention, and also throw a scare into the enemy." They lapsed into silence for a few minutes, watching the sweepers at their dangerous task.

"That was a pretty fine thing you did for Samson," Orcutt presently observed. "The 'Old Man' commented on it. You'll probably hear from it before we get out of these waters. Did Samson have anything to say?"

"He thanked me," said Lund, embarrassed.

"He's a good officer as far as his work is concerned. He just takes himself a bit too seriously." Orcutt was trying to be reassuring.

"Yes. He's a good officer." Lund's voice tended to belie his words. He had certain definite notions of an officer's conduct, and Samson didn't live up to those notions.

Orcutt left and went up on the bridge, where Captain Wright was pacing up and down, keeping a sharp lookout for any developments.

The hours passed and the sun shone down through a burnished haze that spread across the sky. A stiff breeze was beginning to whip the green water into whitecaps, and made the sweepers' work more difficult. A sharp lookout was maintained for submarines, as the fleet proceeded cautiously. Soon the destroyers ran up signal flags and the fleet responded with more speed. Quickly they drew into battle formation, led by the destroyers. Still no sign of the enemy.

A quick fusillade of shots, preceded by puffs of smoke, showed the destroyers going into action. No enemy was visible from the *Montana*, but the shells from the little craft were plowing up the water ahead. Signal flags ran up. A submarine! A torpedo had been seen and a periscope sighted.

The crews jumped to the guns. The destroyers continued firing. Then they stopped suddenly and the crew of the cruiser could see them dropping depth bombs overboard. A shudder ran through the *Montana*, the water ahead heaved slightly, and bubbles rose to the surface, followed by a film of oil that spread slowly over the sea. The first enemy was done with.



The fleet steamed on. An ominous quiet followed the flurry of action and the quick death of the submarine. A call came from the lookout. All eyes strained to the horizon, where smoke clouds had suddenly appeared. Quickly they were followed by the rakish hulls of cruisers.

Fire was withheld, awaiting the commander's orders. Lund was thinking of Betty. Thinking of the note in his pocket, and picturing the cruiser steaming into the harbor on the other side of the Atlantic. He suddenly came out of his momentary reverie, amazed that his mind should have strayed away at such a time.

Puffs of smoke appeared all down the enemy line and shells started throwing up geysers ahead of the destroyers. The gunners itched to get into action, but still the command was withheld. The enemy were sweeping around in a circle, firing battery after battery, and gradually lifting the range until the shells dropped dangerously close.

"Elevation forty-nine! Commence firing!" and the *Montana* went into action. Before her smoke cleared away the British cruisers took it up, and salvo after salvo swept thunderously across the water. Up and down the battle line, one after another the batteries spoke.

The enemy shells were getting close. One of the destroyers turned and limped out of range with her funnels and gear amidships blown away by a shell. A shell crashed into the leading British cruiser and made a shambles of her deck. Another one smashed a turret into silence. But the enemy were getting their share. An explosion was followed by a gap in their battle line. The funnels of a cruiser vanished as if cut away by a giant knife.

A submarine was spotted. Shells sought it, where the periscope rose, fell, rose and fell, started to sink, and vanished as Lund trained a gun on it and the shell tore up the water. Cheers rang out from the crew and were picked up by the Britishers. The gunner had a mixed feeling of horror and elation as he thought of the shattered steel hulk beneath the waves.

A British cruiser went slowly out of line. Her stern looked as if she had backed into something. The gear was shot away, and the armor plate was caved in, bent, and twisted.

The fleet kept up the terrific, unceasing fire. Battery by battery, all down the line,

the puffs of smoke shot out, followed by the roar of guns that seemed far away to the ears of men half deafened by the reports.

A strange humming sound filled the air between the reports of guns. Heads turned uneasily, eyes searching for the source. The humming grew louder and faces turned to the sky to see a silvery, cigar-shaped dirigible coming out of the eastern sky. It was barely visible against the curious haze that had been slowly shutting out the heavens. Around it was an escort of planes, looking like tiny birds in comparison.

Then the unexpected stand of the enemy cruisers became apparent. Somehow they must have had warning of the fleet that was cutting through the mine barrier, and had been sent out to hold them until the dirigible could arrive. The warships below began to spread out, zigzagging, but keeping up their fire at the enemy fleet. Anti-aircraft batteries were uncovered, and the gunners stood by until the ominous new enemy got within range.

Circling swiftly, it swept over the fleet, and the batteries started firing. The puffs of the exploding shells could be seen breaking below the silver monster, but they were short. Something black dropped from beneath the huge airship and a mass of water was blown into the air where it struck. A rush of water, like a small tidal wave, spread in concentric circles, big enough for the cruisers to feel its lift as it passed. The water began to leap up here and there as the planes added their smaller bombs to the attack. They were daring in their swooping dives above the cruisers, and scored hit after hit, though the damage was no more than a bit of shattered gear, or a ripped deck. But they were a serious menace, and were interfering with the fire of the big guns.

"Lund, man the forward air battery! And get that plane if she comes over again." Lieutenant Orcutt's voice was sharp, and demanded results, but Lund knew that he was doing him a favor. He ran swiftly to the short, squat guns that pointed toward the sky. Their fire so far had been wholly futile. The gunners had had little experience with them, and at best they were never very effective.

The big bombing plane with the enemy insignia marked on her wings was circling

back. As Lund set himself to swing the guns, she started her dive. Between the intervals of gunfire he could hear the wind screaming through wires and struts as she came headlong toward the *Montana*. He pressed the automatic release of the gun, and sent five shells soaring upward in the path of the rushing plane. They were short, but as the plane came on the shells screeched into the sky, the rush of air from their explosion rocking the plane violently, almost hurling it over.

Another shell sped skyward, and the sound of the explosion came faintly as the white smoke spread, for a moment hiding the plane. Then a shout came from all the crew who were not manning the guns. The plane had checked its dive, was slipping, turning, with a wing crumpled and almost torn loose. Now it was dropping straight for the water. Flames streamed from the motor, and spread to the wings and fuselage. It crashed into the sea, there was a hiss, followed by a muffled explosion, and the plane was gone.

Hardly had the spontaneous cheer died away when an explosion came that dwarfed the sound of the great guns, nearly split already aching eardrums, and even halted the enemy fire, as a British cruiser holding the center of the formation vanished in a holocaust of flame and smoke. One of the enemy ships had scored a direct hit, and her shells had wiped out the cruiser as if she had never existed. Before the smoke cleared away she had disappeared completely. Bits of wood, and steel, and scraps of something too horrible to describe, rained into the sea and on the decks.

The battle was suspended as abruptly as if the command to cease firing had been given. All eyes stared in horror at the cloud of drifting smoke.

The black smoke thickened from the enemy funnels as they prepared to quit the battle. The British and American guns roared with redoubled fury in a last attempt at revenge for the vanished cruiser. It was clean, load, fire—clean, load, fire—as shells rained after the escaping fleet. They had suffered terribly, but that last blow, for the moment, wiped out everything else. The signal was made to cease firing. An almost oppressive silence descended on the fleet. Men spoke in low voices. Some of them, almost deafened by the noise, shouted to each other, to stop

suddenly in the midst of a sentence, startled at the sound. The expedition was over.

The destroyers deployed to front and rear and on both sides, as the cruisers came about to retrace their path. The sun was sinking rapidly and they were anxious to get away from mines and lurking submarines. Weary, famished men went below for food and coffee. The watch remaining on deck were brought theirs in steaming cans.

Lund was unutterably tired. His nerves were on edge, and he wanted nothing so much as to pile into his bunk and sleep. He had a momentary feeling of satisfaction when he thought of the plane he had sent crashing.

"Lucky shot, Lund. Congratulations." A strained voice came out of the darkness. He recognized it as Samson's.

"Thank you." Lund's voice was sarcastic. "Guess it was lucky, Mr. Samson. No range finder to tell me how to shoot." He didn't care if Samson was an officer. He was too weary and overwrought to have that cad being nasty again. He expected the usual overbearing rebuff, but none came. He went below for the luxury of a cigarette. None were permitted on deck. A light might bring a torpedo out of the black void that surrounded them.

Lund had dozed off, sitting on the edge of his bunk, when he was awakened by sudden activity and low-spoken commands. "Stand by! Quiet! No lights!" Then an officer came around and reported ships off in the darkness, going by on the starboard side.

When Lund reached the deck, some one placed a hand on his arm and said "Listen." He could hear a sound, faint but unmistakable. The throbbing of engines.

The order was passed around to wait until the destroyers which had gone to front and rear should throw their searchlights on the hidden vessels. The minute a ship stood out they were to fire. They would be easy targets picked out of the darkness by the glare of the lights. After the first round the cruisers would throw on their lights.

Great shafts of blinding white light suddenly cut through the darkness. They swept to a converging point, then out and back, quickly lifting. Guttural shouts came across the water, sharp commands. The lights focused on a cruiser, picked up

others. The guns crashed as the enemy picked up speed. Great spurts of flame shot out, with the thunder of the guns seeming to roll the darkness and silence back to the rim of the sea.

Immediately the searchlights of the cruisers shattered the remnants of darkness and the enemy stood pitilessly revealed. The guns crashed again, and the exploding shells could be clearly seen as they threw up fountains of water around the enemy. It was point-blank, deadly firing.

The enemy took up the challenge. Their searchlights gleamed hard and white as the shafts swept blindingly across the fleet. Their guns crashed, battery by battery, sweeping down the line, but almost immediately they could be seen putting about.

Suddenly an enemy cruiser seemed to leap from the water as an explosion lit up the surrounding water for miles with a weird, red glare. A second explosion followed the first one as the cruiser's magazine took fire. She seemed to bend, to break in two, then settled back, and quickly, horribly, was gone. In turning she had hit one of the dreaded mines.

The disaster struck panic into the enemy. They fired wildly, almost at random, as they came about and retraced their course. Shafts of light swept crazily across the water, across the sky, lighting up murky clouds of smoke drifting overhead.

As the baffled enemy steamed away at full speed, Lund thought it looked like a giant spectacle, a war show, staged beneath the brilliant glare of searchlights. Only the blowing up of the cruiser gave it reality, that and the still screeching shells that sped after them. "And," he muttered aloud, "these damn mines that are still drifting around."

Almost as suddenly as it had started the battle was over. It had lasted only a few minutes, but it seemed hours. The engines throbbed again as they went ahead. He noticed a figure standing near by. It was Orcutt. He turned as Lund moved toward him.

"Well, Lund, we have seen a bit of action after all. You handled your gun well. I am sure you were responsible for that cruiser we sent down early in the first scrap. Not a bad record, with the sub and plane that we know you were responsible for."

Lucky there is one officer who notices what the gunners do, thought Lund. He was to find that Orcutt wasn't the only one who noticed.

**T**HE next morning, as they steamed through safe waters, heading for their base, Lund was called to the bridge. Captain Wright grasped his hand and said, "I am glad to say, Mr. Lund, that your record on the *Montana* can be rewarded. Especially since yesterday's fine work. I have received acknowledgment, by wireless, of a recommendation for the promotion that I sent in to the admiral. When we reach our base you will receive a commission as ensign. Until then you will be treated as an officer of that rank."

Lund left the bridge in a daze. An ensign! Recommended by the Old Man, and he didn't think Captain Wright even knew he was on the ship. Betty—gold stripe—Samson. The thoughts whirled through his head. He wondered, now that he had it, whether the gold stripe made any difference. "Gentleman—by act of congress." He laughed as he remembered thinking that about Samson. Well, Samson was the only gold-striper he had known who rated that designation, he thought to himself.

At the base welcome news was being circulated that the war was about to end. There was talk of an armistice to settle the terms. Lund, to his dismay, found himself ordered to report to the flagship to receive his commission. There, with five other men, he stood at attention before an imposing array of gold braid and heard the admiral's voice saying something about "Bravery—efficiency—distinguished service."

The words hazily penetrated his consciousness. His thoughts kept straying across the Atlantic to a familiar room where a golden-haired girl had once told him that she loved him. He received an official-looking document, saluted sharply, and the ordeal was over. He went through the handclapping and congratulations with embarrassed haste, and was glad to get back on the familiar decks of the *Montana*.

Ensign Lund was quickly put at his ease in the officers' quarters. Only Samson held coldly aloof, which did not displease Lund. When they met unavoidably,

which was often, there was a very formal, strained courtesy between them. But this was not for long.

The *Montana* was ordered home following closely upon news of the armistice. The days seemed interminable as they steamed across the Atlantic. The ship routine was doubly irksome, with the duration-of-war men thinking only of home and discharge.

Lund was one of the first to file application for discharge with Captain Wright. The Old Man tried to talk him into staying in the navy, but Lund had his mind on other things. He was thinking of Betty and a job that was waiting for him in an engineering firm.

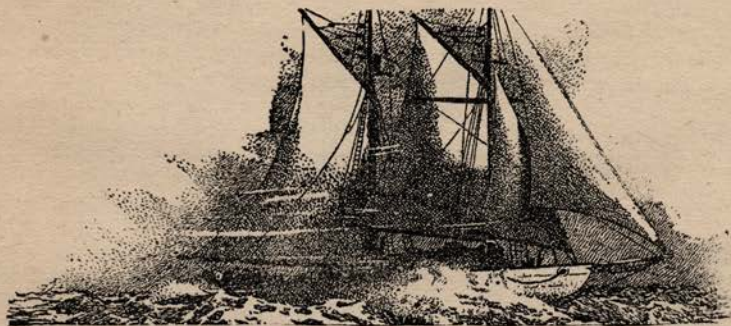
When they tied up at the dock, Lund

hurriedly signed the papers transferring him to ensign in the naval reserves. He looked down at the gold stripe on his sleeve and remembered his feelings months before, when he had looked at the four faded-red ones that had been there.

Betty was obviously glad to see him as she threw her arms around his neck, then stood off and exclaimed at his officer's uniform. "Don't take it seriously," he said. "I received my discharge and will shed this as soon as I can get to a tailor."

"I'm so sorry; I like——" Betty started, but Lund interrupted her.

"What difference does it make now?" he said. "It's only a matter of stripes." What Betty did then convinced him he was right.



# Qualities of Command

By Frank H. Shaw



Peter Murdoch, in trying to outroar Boreas, was having a bad time, until Captain Lumley took hold and showed him a few things about leadership.

**P**ETER MURDOCH opened his eyes widely, and his mouth as well. Gazing at the stranger he seemed too astonished for utterance. "Say it again, mister!" he gasped incredulously.

"I am the new captain—are you the mate I was told would be aboard?" said the slim, grayish man, whose face was more that of a dreamer than a man of action.

"Be hanged to that for a yarn!" roared Murdoch—a big man with the lumbering clumsiness of a bull about his movements and gestures. "Why—why—they as good as told me I was to be captain."

The quiet, dreamy newcomer took a neat wallet from his breast pocket, selected therefrom a paper, unfolded it and tendered it. He was very precise in his

movements, as he was neat in his garb. "My credentials," he mentioned.

Murdoch ran his eye over the letter. It was on the paper of the firm that owned the *Boanerges*. It said that Captain Matthew Lumley was authorized by the owners to take over command of the ship from Mr. Peter Murdoch, and that Mr. Peter Murdoch would grant all facilities to him.

"Well, I'm—blistered!" snorted Murdoch, having digested the astonishing information.

"I hope we shall manage to pull together," said Captain Lumley mildly; but Murdoch's eyes wavered, none the less.

"I'm not so sure that we shall. Fair's fair, the world over. Didn't I bring this packet into port after Captain Mallinson dropped dead on the bridge? Well, I ask

you! For two pins I'd sling my bag over the side and let the blinking company go hang!"

"Then you'd lose a good deal of seniority," observed Lumley, always mildly. "And good berths aren't going begging, I've noticed."

That was true enough. Since the *Boanerges'* arrival in port Murdoch had been asked by no fewer than twenty-five passed masters for a chance to sign on in the forecabin—promising men, too, most of them. Things maritime were in a shocking condition, every one admitted. For a man to throw up a berth as first mate of the *Boanerges'*—and the pay was good in the company—was tantamount to committing professional suicide. Murdoch hadn't put anything by for a rainy day, either. He was the sort of man who blued his pay day as soon as he got his fingers on it.

"See to getting my gear aboard, please," said Captain Lumley, as Murdoch cast about for a suitable reply. "I'll take a look at my cabin."

He mounted to the boat deck as one well accustomed to a ship, familiar with all its intricate geography. He opened the captain's cabin door and entered. Murdoch had established himself there. The place was in disorder. A half-emptied whisky bottle stood on the table, cigar butts littered the floor. The bed had not been made up, and dirty water stood in the washbasin. Captain Lumley sniffed, opened the scuttles to permit of fresh air entering and sat down on the settee, after heaving Murdoch's shore-going clothes into the disheveled bunk.

"Place is like a pigsty!" he criticized, and pressed the bell in the bulkhead. Nothing happened. He went to the door and called: "Steward!" in a remarkably powerful voice for a man of his quiet appearance.

"Listen to him—already!" scoffed Murdoch to the second mate. "New skipper—looks like a parson. Shoved into my job, mark you—*my* job! Well, if I do stick it I'll give him such a hell of a time he won't know pay day from Christmas morning. I've wrapped better men than him round their own necks. Poisonous, I call it!"

"It's a bit thick, right enough," Stormalong, the second mate, agreed; but not too enthusiastically.

"You saw what happened to old Mal-

linson, didn't you? Old 'Dismal Jimmy' didn't get much change out of me, did he? Just about broke his heart, didn't I? Well, this new chap had better not try any funny work with me, or his name's 'Misery,'" bragged the mate of the *Boanerges'*. "Go and tell him the steward's ashore, and stop him shouting the dock down. And give him a hint, if you like, that if he wants to feel comfortable, he might just as well go ashore and stop there, because I've got it in for him properly!"

He looked as good as his threat—a giant of a man, a proper bucko hazer of a man. He'd served his time, as he was fond of boasting, in proper hard-case windjammers, where you backed your orders with boot toe or belaying pin; where you hit a man first, and if he looked ugly, you hit him again. He was hairy to the knuckles, and his broken nose gave him an awe-inspiring appearance; his voice was in keeping with his looks.

"Yes, sir," said the second mate, who, something of a weakling, found it expedient to kotow to Mr. Murdoch; "yes, sir, I'll tell him." He climbed the ladder and walked, hands in pockets, to the captain's cabin.

"Wanting the steward?" he asked. "He's ashore."

"At this time of day?" For some reason or other the second mate's hands came out of his pocket; his shoulders straightened. Yet Captain Lumley had not spoken angrily, merely casually—a bit surprised. The immediate thought that ran through the second's mind was: "Murdoch mightn't have the soft thing he fancies he's going to have!"

"The mate told him he wasn't wanted, sir," said Stormalong. "Can I do anything?"

"I don't expect my officers to do steward's work. When the steward comes aboard send him to me—at once."

"Aye, aye, sir. Shall I ask the chief officer to send a man after the steward, sir?" Stormalong had a view of the disordered cabin and the half-empty bottle, which he had not been asked to share.

"Time enough. You're the second mate, I see. Try a shave before lunch time. That's all, thank you." The second mate went away thoughtfully. He had made no attempt to hint to Captain Lumley that Murdoch was a man to be feared.

"Well?" grunted Murdoch. "Tell him?"

"No, sir—only that the steward was ashore. He seemed—peevish a bit." Stormalmond ran his hand over his scrubby chin. "Think I'll have a shave," he mentioned.

Murdoch also felt his chin, with a two-day stubble on it. "Here's one that isn't going to suck up to a new man," he growled. "If he doesn't like me as I am, he can do the other thing. I aim to break his blinking heart before this trip's over and done with. I've broken others—had 'em eating out of my hand; this chap's easy. You watch and you'll see!" After a moment's swagger: "If he starts in asking for me, tell him I'm lying down, d'you see?"

"Very good, sir."

"Wait a bit, though." Mr. Murdoch swaggered bullishly along to the captain's cabin. He leaned his vast shoulder against the door jamb and breathed a flavor of alcohol into the apartment.

"I left a few of my things here," he gloomed; "thinking I was right for the command."

"The whisky's overboard; if that's what you want," said the new captain.

Mr. Murdoch was on the point of breaking out into open profanity, but he checked himself. The ship was at present in port; articles had not yet been signed, and it was conceivably within the power of this butter-backed, lily-handed interloper to make an unfavorable report on the present personnel of the ship. For the time being, until the *Boanerges* was safely at sea, away from the interference of misguided owners who didn't understand the realities of ships and the men who used them, it might be advisable to walk warily. Afterward, though—ah!

"It wasn't the whisky," Murdoch said. "Shall I clear out my gear?"

"Yes, go ahead," said Captain Lumley, unconcernedly, and went on writing on the pad he had apparently taken from his neat attaché case. "Got my kit aboard yet?"

As it happened, his baggage still stood on the dock side where it had been dumped from his cab.

"I'm just seeing to it—sir," said Murdoch, sheathing his iron fist in the velvet glove of suavity. "Short-handed, though, you see?"

He had not any intention of being apologetic, but somehow he was. Apologetic to

a dandy-fine psalm-singing interloper! Only wait, though! A man didn't get a proper chance of self-expression when his ship was tied to a dock. He blundered into the cabin and collected his clothing, purposely making as much noise and commotion as he could. He was, in many ways, like a big, sulky schoolboy who had been kept in against his will. He felt he would like to break loose and throw things at the indifferent intruder.

"Don't wreck the place," said Captain Lumley mildly, and went on writing. Murdoch felt that he would like to know what the gist of his letter was—probably a sneaking, behind-the-back report to the owners—a spy's report. He passed behind the captain and tried to read the neat script over his shoulder; but Lumley interposed the swell of his body, having no desire to surrender his confidences to his wife to alien eyes.

Murdoch collected his belongings and went out. He found the second mate had got the captain's baggage inboard and was having it brought to the cabin.

"Sucking up to him—already?" he sneered. He went to his own old room that he had thought never to use again; and there he shaved and changed, and afterward went ashore—first bellowing curses at the watchman in that the gangway ladder had been allowed to slip by the tide's action. His was an overpowering voice that echoed along the decks impressively—and he purposely made it even louder than normal, so that the new captain should realize the caliber of the man he had ousted from command. Framed in his own doorway Lumley watched him roll up the wharf—a mighty man. He shook his head thoughtfully before he resumed his writing.

Murdoch, after refreshments which he felt he needed, went to a place he knew of, and asked what prospects there were of a well-recommended man getting a command in a different line.

"Well, I don't know," said his friend. "But between you and me you could walk on the heads of waiting skippers from here to yonder, and not find it difficult. If you have a job, stick to it—any job."

But Murdoch wasn't impressed—he wasn't an ordinary candidate. He made the round of the offices—and found the story to be everywhere the same; no

berths, long waiting lists. Fate was dealing him a wicked hand!

There remained nothing but the *Boa-nerges*, and subordination—of a sort. But, with liquor lees working within him he renewed his vow to give the interloper one devil of a time.

As a consequence he was on the *Boa-nerges'* fore-castle head when that resolute freighter put out to sea; and all the local world knew that Mr. Peter Murdoch was showing it what a proper, case-hardened, rip-snorter of a mate the ship had. His voice, cursing the sluggard crew, volleyed enormously; it threatened to raise blisters on the paint. He was showing off shamelessly—impressing mild-mannered Captain Lumley with the real caliber of the man he'd been appointed to command. He fell upon one bemused deck hand like a tornado and booted him off the fore-castle for some dilatoriness; followed him, chased him along the well deck in advance of showered blows. Then he went up to the bridge vaingloriously, walking on his heels.

"That's the way I sober a crowd up!" he bragged.

"A bit noisy, I thought. When all is said and done, seamen aren't cattle."

"This sort are—gutter sweepings! But I know my job, and I don't want any man to try to teach it to me. Why, I've seen the time——" He vaunted his past recklessnesses—citing that time when a ship in which he served had picked up a half-breed crew in some remote western port—mutineers and cutthroats to a man; but he'd tamed them—oh, yes.

"So that no man dared to lift his voice above a whisper if I was anywhere about," he explained. "I'm mate, as it happens; and I know a mate's job backward—and won't thank any one to interfere with me."

"I believe in leaving my officers to run their own jobs," said Captain Lumley; "so long as they are efficient. You'll attend to the stowing of everything, of course, since we look like running into dirt."

"I'm just going to see to it—and you can rely on it that when I've handled the proposition, it'll be done!" Mr. Murdoch stalked magnificently from the bridge; and meeting the second mate coming from aft, told him that he'd put a proper spoke in the Old Man's wheel. Now that he was clear of the land he was brewing up for the big-

gest sort of big trouble. But he was efficient—even the shrewdest critic might not deny that fact—as a ship's husband he left nothing to be desired. By the time night fell the *Boa-nerges* was stripped and groomed in readiness to face anything the sea might be prepared to send. Murdoch went to the bridge to report this fact, and found the second mate in charge, although there was much inward shipping making up on the tide, and navigation was intricate. Now, Dismal Jimmy had never allowed a subordinate to handle the ship in close waters, being the sort of a man who was reluctant to delegate authority.

"His Nibs in the chart room?" asked Murdoch.

"Down below in his own cabin, sir."

"Oh, is he?" The second mate altered course to pass an approaching schooner.

"He said that as I was a qualified navigator it was my job to navigate." The junior was in a state of nervous excitement, lacking confidence. "And, by gosh, mister, it's keeping me guessing to sheer clear of everything that's coming along! But when I sang out to him a bit since, he asked me what I was up here for! And between ourselves, it's doing me good already."

Murdoch swung him roughly about by his shoulder, bending to stare into his face.

"Remember this," he growled; "before this trip's ended Captain Lumley will be coming to heel like a pup. I'm the man you've got to keep in with if you want to be happy. All right, you can go below to supper; I'll take hold here!" And, pacing the wind-swept bridge, he pondered over adequate plans for the proper disciplining of the usurper, whom he was growing to hate with the utmost cordiality.

It was evilly cold, and the wind was cresting with a ragged sleet. The whine of storm was in the air, occasional wafts of spindrift rattled over the freighter's bridge. The man at the wheel was steering like a gardener, too—taking the whole channel, and keeping the watch officer constantly on the alert. Murdoch's ill humor increased. But for this newcomer he might have been snugged up in the cabin, with a stove going full blast and a glass of hot toddy at his elbow, with nothing else to do but make himself comfortable. Instead of that he had to trudge Mount Misery—cold, disgruntled and dissatisfied.

"I'll properly break his blasted heart for



this!" he threatened. And he was so busy nursing his woes that he failed to notice the near approach of a sleet-blinded steamer until it was almost too late; then he altered helm rapidly and bellowed a torrent of abuse into the swirling gloom. He even rang the engines to stop, so close a call was it—and he was finding fresh profanity when Captain Lumley lightly reached the bridge beside him.

Sensing trouble, the new captain had not waited—he had slid out alertly, without waterproof protection; and Murdoch's first thought was a chuckling one: the Old Man would get a wet skin!

"What's wrong?" asked Lumley, grasping the position at once.

"Fellow blundered right across my hawse, curse him!" thundered Murdoch, and sent another waft of bad language into the darkness.

"He has the right of way, hasn't he? Straighten the ship up—stop that cursing! You admit yourself in the wrong by it!"

Murdoch felt murderous; the man at the wheel whom he just bawled out for a clumsy farmer, must have heard that crisp rebuke. With difficulty he refrained from laying a violent hand on the captain's person. As it was, he shook a fist toward him.

"Now, look you here!" he grated; "when I'm keeping watch here, I don't want any interference from any one—not from any one!"

"Keep your watch properly and you won't be interfered with," said Lumley.

"I've been watch keeping a good while now——"

"Then you ought to know when to give way; and that ship was in the right of it."

Murdoch would have liked to ram that accusation down Lumley's throat; but after a quick glance about the captain retired.

"Not a minute too soon, either!" rasped Murdoch for the benefit of the helmsman. "I'll teach him to come butting in here where he isn't wanted. You mind your helm, you son of a farmer! What's that? Want me to put a head on you, do you?"

"I was on'y saying the ship's got no steerageway, now her engines are stopped," grumbled the man at the wheel; and Murdoch put the matter right with smothered curses.

There are many ways in which the mate can make life unpleasant for a master—and as the time went by Murdoch put them all into practice. Invariably his man-

ner was hectoring and arrogant—he plainly showed that he resented interference. He was prone to boast of how he had carried things after Dismal Jimmy died—with hinted sneers at Captain Lumley's less efficient methods. Before four days were over he flattered himself that he'd put Lumley in his place—the Old Man never lifted his voice above a whisper now. In fact, he seldom showed his nose on deck—contenting himself with his own cabin, or with exercise to leeward of the boat deck. Beyond doing the necessary navigation, he did not interfere. Murdoch wished he would poke his nose into his job sometimes—so that he could snub him more frequently. But how could you bulldoze a man who gave you no single peg to hang an argument on? The new fellow was too easy, he had weakened already. He was a comfort lover, too. For the Atlantic weather was steadily and evilly growing worse, and his snug cabin invited him much more than did the bleak, uneasy bridge. So far as the indications went, the *Boanerges* was in for a proper dusting farther west—passing ships signaled the worst sort of weather. But Lumley gave the matter no heed; he merely asked mildly if the mate had attended to such and such details of safety.

"Course I have. Think I don't know my job?" barked Murdoch. "What's a bit of bad weather to be scared of, I'd like to know?"

"It's probably going to be more than a bit. Take every precaution, please."

That same night, at supper, Captain Lumley complained of indisposition, and Murdoch winked covertly at the steward.

"Touch of Cape Horn fever?" he inquired rudely.

"You're forgetting yourself, aren't you? I occasionally have these bad bouts. It will pass off, I hope, before we run into the proper heavy stuff."

"Well, it's blowing above a bit now—has been all my watch on top," said Murdoch. "You wouldn't know, of course, snugged up below."

"I'm going to turn in; don't disturb me except in case of extreme necessity," the captain said.

Murdoch had a proper grumble for the second when he relieved him on top.

"Lord knows what the line's coming to," he triumphed. "They've shipped us a proper soldier as skipper. He's got a bad

cold—caught it from his feet. He gets the comfort and the extra pay, and we've got to do the work. Well, there isn't anything would please me better than to sew a few firebars up with him and dump him over-side—then all hell's bells couldn't keep me out of the command!"

The second mate went below for his own supper and Mr. Murdoch stalked the exposed bridge like a conqueror. He considered the howling prospect—the white-lipped rage of the storm-lashed Atlantic; the mighty power of the hurtling wind, that had ice in its breath. A little twinge of what might have been loneliness troubled him—he felt himself to be less invincible than he had supposed. It was all wrong of the skipper to back out of the fight just when it promised to be most sensational. Hang it all! What was a skipper for but to accept responsibility? It wasn't right to give a man mate's pay and rank and expect him to run the ship all on his own. Mr. Murdoch stepped into the chart room and studied the barometer, and what he saw lengthened his face. He summoned the boatswain and then bade him chase the crew around the water-logged decks and spread fresh tarpaulins over the hatches. He roared out his orders raucously, finding a queer but not altogether satisfying companionship in the clamor of his own voice—like a boy whistling as he runs down a dark country lane. At eight bells he went to the captain's room.

"It's blowing up nastily," he said.

"Yes, very well. I expected it. I asked not to be disturbed, though."

"Thought I'd better tell you—it's going to blow big to-night."

"Quite so. But tell the second mate not to disturb me—keep an eye open, yourself. You've had command, so you'll know what's wanted."

But Mr. Murdoch had not had command in such weather as now threatened. After Dismal Jimmy died the *Boanerges* had run into calms and variables that caused no trouble.

"Meaning to say you want me to act as skipper?" he demanded. "You lying snugged up here?"

"I don't feel fit to turn out," said Lumley. Murdoch went away growling bitterly. It was a bit too thick—leaving him with the dog to hold! Once again a great loneliness troubled the mate. It troubled

him so much that sleep deserted his eyelids when he turned in. He wondered if the second mate could handle the situation. Hang it! It was the Old Man's affair, anyhow—he was skipper, wasn't he? But the Old Man had quite definitely said that he had temporarily abdicated—there was no getting away from that. Mr. Murdoch relieved the bridge before his time; and Stormalong was gusty in gratitude at the sight of him.

"It's been a devil's delight of a watch," he complained.

"It's going to be worse," said Murdoch. "Seen anything of the Old Man?"

"Not a blink. He's hogging it below; and when I spoke down the tube he said he was feeling too ill to bother."

"Damned shirker!" growled Murdoch, and began to tell Stormalong a tedious story about some big adventure in which he had figured as dashing hero. It was a story the second mate had heard often before; but Murdoch wanted companionship, some one to whom to refer in case of doubt, even the second was better than the stark loneliness of responsibility.

"Well, sir, I'll get below; glad to get out of it!" chattered Stormalong, literally dragging himself free of Murdoch's grasp. Murdoch took his post. The *Boanerges* was battling gamely against increasing forces. The night was infernally black and threatening, the seas were running to the height of the funnel, and the sprays were incessant; whole water tumbled aboard at every scend of the laboring hull.

"She'll wash herself down before daylight!" thought Murdoch. He blew down the speaking tube after a while.

"Getting pretty bad up here, sir," he reported.

There was a long, weary yawn from Captain Lumley. "Very well," he said. "But I'm not well enough——"

The whistle was plugged back into the tube. The *Boanerges* seemed determined to show just what she could do in the way of making a hog of herself. A boarding sea smashed a lifeboat into matchwood against the funnel casing, the smashing sounded as if the entire ship was breaking into its elements. Sea after sea boarded her with pitiless regularity, and occasionally the big water made a clean sweep of the bridge where Murdoch crouched. Something began to weaken within him as he felt the unending drive of the storm.

He wasn't quite sure what he needed—a bit of a drink, he thought, to banish the sense of remote loneliness that troubled him. Or companionship—that was it! Some one to consult with, some one's counsel to add to his own. But that herring-gutted skipper—the dandy-fine wash-out, who'd done him out of his lawful command—you couldn't get any help from him.

He began to curse Lumley viciously and venomously, for a deserter in the face of the enemy; oh, yes, a proper quitter. A man who'd let go his hold of things at a time of crisis like this wasn't in any sense a man!

The wind gathered itself together into one frenzied squall and hurled down on the staggering *Boanerges*. It lifted a wall of water high up to windward of the harassed hull, a wall that grew and towered and swung menacingly. The ship heeled over and over, going sickeningly. The dull thumping of her engines seemed to lessen and cease.

"If anything happens in the engine room we're scuppered!" thought Murdoch. The ship heeled farther, farther still, until half her lee deck seemed to be under solid water. There was a sense of taut strain about her.

"Something's *got to go!*" groaned Murdoch. "She can't stand this!" But she stood it and recovered, and a fresh squall quickened and bore down on her. Blow after blow slogged at the squirming fabric in a pitiless succession of malignant fury. The few deck hands of the watch came staggering up to the bridge, hungry for companionship in this hour of terror. They, recognizing their own helplessness, craved the assurance of a better entity than themselves.

Murdoch, torn off his feet by a falling wave, recovered and dragged himself to the speaking tube again.

"Come on up here and do something!" he stormed.

"You cannot handle her?" came the tired voice from below.

"She's breaking herself up—I can't do a thing. What do you think you're at, hiding down there below?"

"Very well!" As he replaced the plug Murdoch wished he'd hung on a bit longer. Surely he was as big as this shirker down below. Hadn't he been a fool to ask for help? But then, it wasn't an ordinary

gale, this—it was something bigger than he'd ever seen in all his experience—as though the Atlantic was intent on humiliating him. And Captain Lumley did not appear. The hellish hurricane was increasing in violence with every passing minute; but still Lumley cowered in hiding below. He was probably drinking himself into a stupor, Murdoch thought; scared to tackle the increasing problems.

"For two pins I'd go down and yank him out by the scalp!" he gloomed wrathfully.

Time dragged by. Every minute the *Boanerges* seemed on the verge of completed dissolution; but as often she miraculously recovered and slugged on, hitting into the massed waves, recoiling a little, gathering her strength for further attack. But Peter Murdoch had no eyes for the splendor of the struggle—he was quaking to the core of his soul. Raving at the deck hands for a pack of lubberly louts didn't do any real good—though it eased his feelings momentarily. The cold apprehension was back again the instant his great voice died down. A man needed something more than bluff and bounce in a crisis. The whistle in the engine-room speaking tube fizzed and cheeped. When Murdoch got to it it said: "We'll need to ease her down a bit here below," in a Clydeside voice. "Heated bearings—" It was all vague, the words almost inaudible because of the roar of machinery and the hiss of steam.

"You can't!" stormed Murdoch.

"She'll do it herself if we don't."

Murdoch raved incoherencies into the tube, blasting the eyes of all below for a pack of dissolute mechanics who didn't understand their jobs.

"I give ye warning," the words came back. "We're easing her down!"

Something vital appeared to leave the *Boanerges* almost on the word. She became inert and sluggish, and the force of wind and water increased. Half a dozen towering combers swept her clean—the bridge shook and chattered.

"Watch your helm!" blurted Murdoch; "don't let her fall off."

"Helm's hard down, sir!" yelled the helmsman. And then Mr. Peter Murdoch cut loose completely. His hands flung high above his head, he raved up and down the slanted bridge like a maniac, calling on Heaven to witness that he'd

done his uttermost. It wasn't fair—it wasn't fair to saddle a man with all this responsibility, with a blasted loafer that called himself a captain malingering down below.

Charging across the bridge he cannoned into a figure just arriving. "Get down below and tell the captain—ask him to come up here!"

"Anything wrong?" asked Lumley quietly. In hard-weather clothing he was calm and collected, entirely unperturbed. There was a little ring in his voice, though, that seemed to hint at steel somewhere about the neighborhood of his soul.

"Thank Heaven!" gulped Murdoch, clawing at the captain's shoulders. "She's scuppered—"

"Hardly that, is she?" Immediately a great and new confidence possessed Peter Murdoch. It was tinged with a smarting sense of shame. His rioting imagination had conceivably magnified the dangers. He'd been a fool to weaken!

"She's about as bad as she can be," he said, anxious now to make as good a showing as possible in sight of the man he had despised. "Things are busted up below, and this gale's hardening—"

"Well," asked Captain Lumley, stepping to the wheel, thence to the rail, glancing overside, collecting his forces for battle, as it were, "well, what do you propose to do?"

"It's up to you now—sir."

"Ah! But if I'd been dangerously ill? However, we'll do what we can." Captain Lumley grasped the situation quickly, without asking questions. And, as though his mere presence there had imbued the ship with a new fighting spirit, the *Boa-nerges* immediately seemed to grow easier in her horrid plungings.

"You'll stand by to rig a sea anchor, mister, in case of emergency. The derricks off the foremast, eh? Rouse out all hands and the cook. We mayn't need it, but it's as well to be ready."

He got himself to the engine-room tube and busied himself there, his voice crisp and purposeful—that of a commander expecting the impossible. An unwilling admiration for the quiet man began to grow in the heart of Peter Murdoch, he felt as if he loved him. Captain Lumley emanated a quality that inspired a man and quelled his apprehensions. Murdoch felt that, left to it now, he would know pre-

cisely what to do in every detail. It was only the feeling that what he did he was committed to, with no court of appeal, that had unnerved him before.

"I was a thundering fool!" he berated himself, and tried to hate his superior, but failed.

"We may not need that sea anchor; but get the gear ready. The trouble down below is being righted."

"You feeling better, sir? Seems a shame to rouse you out, you not feeling well, too!"

"I'll manage!" The inward glow of self-confidence pleased Peter Murdoch; assured him that he was a better man than he had realized himself to be in the moment of panic. Then common fairness came—he knew that it wasn't his own courage at all, it was the calm assurance of Captain Lumley.

"If you think you'd be better below, sir—"

"I'll stay up here and see her through. Ah! That's the engine room." Murdoch took the message—full power was again available. Yet it somehow didn't seem to matter now, the ship was in safe hands. The situation was infinitely less desperate than it had been. Yet the storm was increasing in roaring squalls, too. The outer rigors were worse than they had been.

"A full-powered ship like this oughtn't to be bothered by a bit of a breeze," said Lumley. "When you have confidence in your ship and yourself, nothing can be bad enough to smash you. If you feel confident to handle her, though, I'll go below now—"

"Yes, sir, you go—take care of yourself," said Peter Murdoch. Captain Lumley took a new view of the position; and then, without issuing a single order, he scrambled below.

"Just let me know if you need me again," he said, with a hint of a laugh in his voice.

"Ship can damn well break her back before I ask for *him* again," said Murdoch, when left alone. But the feeling was present that Lumley was there, in case of desperate need. That reluctant admiration for the little man became more voluntary. Dash it! There was something more in command than mere braggadocio and bluster—something that Peter Murdoch began to feel vague sirring within him. Calmness, self-reliance—and even something else, to which he could give no name.

The power of inspiring those beneath to do their damndest, eh? Something of that sort. Peter Murdoch felt just then as though he would give ten years of his life to earn Captain Lumley's esteem. A little gray runt like that, too—a man he could pick up with one hand and break as easily as a pipestem! Queer! And he would like Stormalong, the second mate, to feel toward him, Peter Murdoch, as he felt toward Captain Lumley.

Watching the *Boanerges* still battling stolidly, Peter Murdoch shook his fist at the raging seas.

"Go on, get at it—do your damndest!" he said. "You won't force me to rouse that poor beggar out again—he deserves his rest."

And clear through the inferno of the night he remained in control, overcoming by gradual degrees the panicky desire to summon Lumley into consultation. Hour by hour Peter Murdoch found himself and the unbeatable spirit within him, so that when the livid dawn broke, to show the real horrors that the merciful darkness had hidden, it found him weary and gaunt, but—defiant. For a moment he left Stormalong in charge and slipped down to Lumley's cabin.

Lumley, fully clad, was sitting on his settee; and for one moment Murdoch

glimpsed a tense something in his face that astounded him. Captain Lumley was afraid—scared to the core of his soul! But the expression of fear gave place to a smile as he looked at the figure of his mate.

"Hope you're feeling better, sir," said Murdoch. "Ship's doing all right. If you feel you'd like to turn in, I fancy I can handle her." Captain Lumley held out his hand.

"Good, man," he said. "There's nothing the matter with me—though it's not been easy to stick it here, and—well, give you your chance, shall we say? I'm glad you didn't send for me, though, Murdoch—dashed glad. You've got qualities. The owners sent me aboard to size you up, try you out. I'm not here as a permanency at all—just for this passage. I'll leave at St. John's—and I'll advice the owners to let you have the ship now. It's not all beer and skittles, in command, eh? But the biggest thing about it, so far as I can see, is never to let those under you know you are scared, no matter how scared you might be. That's command—and I think you've got it now. Turn in—I'll take hold."

"If you don't mind, sir," said Peter Murdoch, humbly, "I'll stick it out a bit longer."



# Land Tactics

By W. A. Shore



## A warlike liberty in Manila.

**T**HE big slab feet of "Squirt" McDuff, first-class quartermaster, protruded far into the passage-way leading to the forecastle. He was having a lovely afternoon digesting one of Uncle Sam's navy meals and enjoying an after-dinner siesta at the same time. Not many men would have selected such an exposed spot on account of liability to disturbance, but Squirt's prestige assured safety from interference. Alongside the newspaper on which he slept was his ever-present spit kid, for Squirt had come by his pseudonym from the enormous quantities of chewing tobacco he consumed.

"Some day that guy's goin' to get his slats caved in if he don't get some other place to cork off," growled Wilson, captain of that part of the ship. His audience, seated or sprawling about the spotless deck, agreed to a man; but who there would take issue with the husky quartermaster?

Micky Hill, junior coxswain from the third division, was seated on the beading alongside a newcomer, an ordinary seaman

just out by last army transport from the States. Micky was explaining to young Grace the intricacies of ship routine on the Asiatic station when Wilson came grumbling by.

"Well, why don't you tell him about it?" Micky asked of Wilson. "You're captain of this part of the ship, ain'tcha?"

"Why don't you?" retorted Wilson sarcastically.

"Because this ain't my part of the ship. Bet he wouldn't get away with that kind o' stuff back in the third division. He's got all you stiffs up here buffaloed, that's what's the matter. You're scared of him. Why don't you take him back to the officer of the deck if he gets mouthy? You don't have to take any guff from that guy at all."

Just then, Waddings, the ship's jester, came along and paused a moment to observe the inert form of Squirt before stepping over him. Waddings was the ship's bugler, and it is said on board men-of-war that in order to pass an examination for the rating of bugler one must be half

baked or have been struck on the head while at a tender age.

Waddings gazed around like a good general, closely observing the field before making his attack. In three quick jumps it would be possible to reach the ladder leading below, and Waddings held no doubts as to his jumping ability. Taking from his pocket a clip of cigarette papers he carefully folded one down the middle and inserted it between the snoring quartermaster's right great toe and its neighbor. The great red toe, its nail discolored from paint or lye, wiggled slightly, but the paper remained where Wad had put it. There was an appreciative though fearful group of spectators. Wilson started forward to restrain the crazy bugler, but, fearing that Squirt might awaken and think him the perpetrator, held back, open-mouthed.

Micky and Grace, seated on the head-*ing*, watched proceedings with the sharpest interest. Micky knew what was coming, but his companion, new to fore-castles, could only wait and observe. Squirt's full, round paunch rose and fell in blissful contentment. On his face, unaccustomed as it was to smiles, one might have thought a half grin lingered. Waddings struck a match cautiously and made ready to spring. The match sputtered and gave a tiny flame, which was touched to the paper. Instantly Waddings decamped. In the first instant of genial heat Squirt's toes expanded appreciatively, but for an instant only. In a flash the flame shot along the rim of paper and up between the toes. With a wild whoop the sleeper sprang into the air, his feet executing half a dozen complete revolutions before striking the deck. In his half sleep he kicked out strenuously as if he would remove the terrible burning, but succeeded only in wreaking damage to a starboard heavy ventilator. It rang from the impact of Squirt's foot, but refused to budge an inch.

It would have been most interesting could the feelings of the onlookers, as portrayed on their faces, have been preserved at that moment. On some was written horror, on others, suppressed amusement, and on a few amusement unsuppressed. One of the last was Grace, the momentary companion of Micky.

"You dirty bunch of yellow curs," shouted Squirt. "I can whip any four of you. The man who did that is a dirty sneak and a coward. I can lick him with

one hand tied behind my back. Here's twenty pesos to anybody who'll tell me who did that. I'll find out some way, and, believe me, when I do I'll murder somebody."

Squirt rolled up his paper, stuck it under his arm and was reaching for his spit kid when he observed the open smile on the face of the new ordinary seaman, Grace.

"Finding it pretty funny, ain't you, kid?" Squirt dropped his implements and came over in front of the two. "You better wipe that grin off your mush or I will. Maybe you can tell me who pulled the stunt? Supposin' you do. Come on up here. Stand up."

Squirt reached down and, grasping Grace by the collar, jerked the boy to his feet. It would have been extremely difficult to find two types so exactly opposite. The quartermaster, with heavy arms and thick wrists, a puffed and angered face, whose stocky shoulders would have made two men such as Grace, loomed heavy and threatening like a battleship. The ordinary seaman, on the other hand, was not exactly slight of build, but well-balanced. His smooth, boyish face, rather small, was animated by the clearest of blue eyes. His arms and shoulders suggested the litheness of the panther. With apparently the least exertion Grace twisted one arm and cleared himself of Squirt's grip, then reseated himself alongside Micky.

"Hey, you, did ya get me? You tell me who flashed that cigarette paper or I'll smack you down. You can't smirk at me like a grinning ape and get away with it. Just tell me who the guy was and I'll let you alone. But if you don't—" Squirt looked at his closed fist suggestively.

"It amused me all right to see you do the war dance," remarked Grace quietly. "Or was it the Highland fling? But as for telling who did it, I couldn't if I would as I'm a new man on the ship and they all look alike to me, but furthermore I wouldn't tell you if I could."

One could almost hear the gasps along the listening fore-castle. Not that there were not a great many men there who wouldn't have fought Squirt upon provocation, but fighting when one has to and seeking a fight are vastly different.

"Well, since you won't get up and fight, take it from me, the first time I catch you on the beach I'm going to flop you and flop you hard. You better go ashore with

some good shipmate every time, so he can carry you back, for I'm going to grind you in the mud. What's your name?"

"Your threats don't worry me in the least, old man, so run along now, get next to yourself. I haven't looked for any trouble with you, nor do I want any; but if it is your wish you may find me on the beach any time my name is on the liberty list. And just why you should want to know my name is a puzzle to me, but I don't mind telling it. My name is Grace."

"Grace?" repeated Squirt with a sneer that was greeted by numerous titters from the sailors. "Grace what?"

"Arthur Grace, at your service, sir," mocked the newcomer.

At that moment the officer of the deck on one of his hourly inspections strolled easily along the forecastle, threading his way among the groups of men.

"Remember, kid," threatened Squirt, making ready to leave, "on the beach."

Grace by this time was in earnest conversation with Micky and did not deign to give Squirt a single glance. His contemptuous manner was more than the latter could put up with, and he took a step toward the two; but, observing the officer of the deck, he turned and hastily made his way to the flying bridge where he could resume his nap.

Instantly Grace was the center of an admiring group, for not a man but enjoyed his taking Squirt down the line, and they were eager to show their homage.

"You shouldn't have butted into it, kid," advised Micky. "That's a mean guy and a dirty fighter. He'll mop up on you some time or other. You better put in for a transfer to some other ship."

"You bet I wouldn't want that guy on my trail," admonished one of the group. "Remember how he sent young Rolfe to the hospital? He won't pick a fight with anybody he can't lick."

"And he fights with elbows and thumbs, and you better watch him—he'll knee you," advised a third.

"I don't say as how he can't be licked," remarked another, "but the guy's got to be good. I sure do hope you can beat up on him, young fellow. Don't fight him unless some of the other boys are around, for he's strong as a bull, and if he gets his hands on you it will be the deep six for you. Just see there are some other guys

around and they'll make him fight fair. But you got a hard man to whip if you intend to fight. I sure would hate to have him tackle me. But I think he's yellow as a cur once he finds a man can stand up against him. Boy, I'd give twenty plunks to see you hammer hell out o' him."

"Oh, I suppose he'll whip me all right. He'll weigh forty pounds more than I will, but while he's getting a full meal I'll be getting a sandwich. And weight doesn't mean everything. It isn't always the size of a ship that makes you seasick. I'm not much of a scrapper, but a darn sight better at that than I am at running, so if he forces me into it I'll give him everything I got in the shop. He's sure got a powerful grip in that right. Nearly shut off my wind there for a minute."

Almost instantly Arthur Grace leaped into popularity, and he was pointed out from stem to stern as the man Squirt was going to get. But he moved among his shipmates wholly unconcerned at the furor he had created. His work and Squirt's being so different, they seldom met, but when they did there was no quailing on the part of the smaller man. Once when Grace was returning from liberty, Squirt was the quartermaster on watch and had to check Grace in the liberty book.

"Good thing I didn't know you went over last night," the quartermaster growled, his head bent low over the book so the officer of the deck couldn't hear what was being said.

"Did you expect me to come around and report to you that I was going?" as insolently retorted Art.

**O**NE Sunday morning the Chinese wardroom boy came forward looking for Grace. Mr. Sheldon wanted to see him in his room. Mr. Sheldon was the ship's athletic officer.

"Good morning," the officer greeted Grace as he closed the door behind his visitor. "What's this I hear about you and McDuff, the quartermaster?"

"Why, nothing, sir," replied Grace, warily.

"They tell me he intends to meet you on the beach and have it out with you. Now, if that is so I thought I might possibly be of some assistance to you. I know you've got grit or you wouldn't have talked up to him, and you could be trained so as to be able to take care of yourself



if you had to. He would probably whip you, but with training he wouldn't be able to do so good a job of it, and since I've had considerable experience in boxing—I used to be junior instructor at the academy—I thought I might be able to help you. We could go down in the after store-room every day for a little while and I might be able to teach you some tricks."

"I thank you very much, lieutenant, but I believe I'll tackle him with what I've got. Somehow, if you'll excuse me, sir, it wouldn't seem quite fair for me to train under cover and then fight him. I do want you to know how much I appreciate your offer, however."

"Oh, that's all right, Grace. You know this fellow McDuff's got the name of being a hard guy, and I thought I'd give you a hand if I could. McDuff's quite a bully and has had a number of fights on board ship. He usually picks smaller men than himself, so everybody wants to see him get trounced. If you can do it, more power to you."

**J**UST as the one o'clock liberty boat was about to shove off the following Wednesday afternoon Grace came running down the gangway and boarded the small craft with an envelope in his hand and a duty belt on. He took his place in the stern and for a moment did not notice that directly opposite him sat the leering Squirt. But when he did, however, he returned that gentleman's steady gaze with a direct stare fully as insolent as any Squirt was able to manufacture. The tiny craft bobbed up and down alongside the gangway waiting for the order to shove off. Finally there sounded the *glang-glang* of the ship's bell and the officer of the deck, leaning over the rail, called:

"Shove off, coxswain. Make your regular trip to the Magallanes landing. Wait there for the executive officer's messenger, then return to the ship. Shove off."

On the way to the beach Squirt tried to glare Grace down, but the latter paid not the slightest attention to him. At the dock, Squirt was ashore among the first and stood waiting until Grace stepped out of the boat.

"For ten cents I'd tear that belt off you and give you a couple of others that would do you more good," taunted Squirt, keeping up with Art, who hurried along the

wall leading up from the landing. "Believe me, I can hardly wait for the time until I can sock you a couple. I'll get you some time, kiddo, don't you worry. You can't always come ashore under a belt."

He grasped one of Grace's shoulders and gave it a heavy twist that made the seaman involuntarily wince, a movement not entirely lost on some of the men following the pair. Chief Boatswain's Mate Gunthorpe, an old-timer in the service, came running up and stepped in front of Squirt.

"You yellow cur, you leave that boy alone or I'll split your nose for you," he thundered.

"What you got to say about it? I ain't said nothing to you. You looking for trouble? Just take that coat off. You know I can't bust a chief."

Gunthorpe's action was quicker than expected.

"Lay there, coat," he commanded. "Now come on, you four-flusher, you dirty kid fighter. You've been bothering this boy ever since he came to the ship. If you want to fight you don't have to look any farther. Come on, don't be backward."

"You travel on and mind your own business," whined Squirt. "Nobody said anything to you—you're butting in. I got no reason to fight you."

"Well, I'll give you one," snapped Gunthorpe as he swung a heavy crash to the quartermaster's left eye.

"All right, chief. You got the advantage of me. I don't want to fight you. I know I'd get the worst of it, even if I licked you. You're a pretty wise chief, all right."

By this time other liberty boats were arriving with officers and their wives, and the combat party had to break up.

"Any time you want any more, look me up," announced the chief petty officer as he dusted off his white coat, then put it on.

"You stick in your class and I'll stick to mine," replied Squirt. "I ain't goin' to get in no jack pot if I know anything about it. If I slammed you one, some officer would see it and down I'd go for a shot—then general court. No, sir, I'm not that easy."

"You're in your class all right when you pick trouble with a kid, ain't ya? Well, if you want satisfaction, I'll meet you any

place you say, any time, any condition—boxing gloves, bare fists or anything you want. All's the matter with you is you're yellow, and you know it. You're a brave Indian when it comes to smacking kids, but now you got the chance to buckle into a man. Let's go over to Louie's back room where we can have this thing out."

During all this argument they continued walking up the wall and had come now to the old bridge of Spain over the Pasig.

"Where are you goin', boy?" Gunthorpe asked.

"To deliver a message to General Allen at the club."

"If you think this fellow'll bother you, I'll go along."

"No need of that," sneered Squirt. "He's got a belt on and you got a chief petty officer's coat."

"You want to fight awful bad, don't you, you miserable skunk? Didn't I tell you I'll take off my coat and everything else if you'll only fight?"

Seeing the uselessness of further argument, Gunthorpe strolled away when Grace boarded a carromata on his way to the club. Looking back, the chief observed Squirt rubbing his left eye, which had gradually been taking on a purple hue.

Bad news travels fast. When Grace returned to the ship he reported to Lieutenant Sheldon he had delivered the message.

"I understand you had some interference on the way over?" questioned the officer.

"No, sir, I don't think so."

"It has been reported to me that McDuff accosted you and delayed you just after you reached the landing."

"Why, he did walk alongside and we talked, but he didn't interfere, sir."

"All right, that's all."

**N**EXT morning, when the liberty party returned, there was a message for Chief Boatswain's Mate Gunthorpe to report to Lieutenant Sheldon.

"Chief, tell me what happened at the landing yesterday afternoon between you, McDuff and Grace."

"There was nothing much, sir. McDuff has been threatening the boy for some time, and he was arguing with Grace going up the sea wall until I got tired of it and told McDuff if he wanted to fight he could accommodate me. He said he

couldn't fight me because I was a chief, so I threw off my coat and poked him one in the eye, but he wouldn't fight."

"If I thought he had interfered with Grace I'd court-martial him, but Grace denies it—though I think he's just protecting McDuff. Do you think it would help matters any if I ordered him to leave Grace alone?"

"No, sir, I don't. The boy's able to care for himself, and there are a bunch on board who won't see any harm come to him. He isn't a bit afraid of McDuff, sir, so there's no intimidation."

The next two weeks the armored cruiser spent on the target range out in the middle of Manila Bay, and as the expanse of water is approximately twenty miles long and thirty wide it is obvious that there could be no liberty boats while the ship was engaged in that duty. However, there were many diversified forms of entertainment such as moving pictures, wrestling, boxing and various other feats of skill or strength.

During one evening's performance Squirt donned the gloves and gave a terrific beating to a second-division man who steadfastly refused to leave the ring until finally ordered to do so by the athletic officer. Squirt, when the ring was cleared, invited any other man on board to take him on for another bout, but no one accepted the challenge. From the depths of the crowd sundry and various catcalls and *bla-ahs* resembling guttural voicing of old bellwethers greeted Squirt's bombast. Wad's bugle added to the occasion most fitly. When silence came it found Squirt not one whit disturbed.

"Any you *blah-blahs* out there want to step up? I don't bar any of you. I'd particularly like to take on that fresh guy just out from the States. Are you in the crowd, Mister Grace?"

General pandemonium followed. There was much jovialty from among the audience: "Why don't you bar high and take only grammar-school kids?" "Bar everything over a hundred and twenty, don't ya?" "Go get 'em, old cradle snatcher."

Then things began to fly. First it was a glove that was thrown. Balls of wadded paper followed, but before Squirt got out of the ring missiles had grown to deck scrubbers, while from the spud lockers descended a regular barrage of potatoes and onions. Squirt was the hit of the evening.

Almost every one registered once, and some of those nearer the ring more than once. He was, however, defiant and defying when he entered the washroom, daring any and all to accept his challenge.

"What do you think of Squirt now?" Micky inquired of Grace next morning as they drank their early coffee before turning to. "Some bruiser, eh?"

"Oh, yes, he was too much for the man they put in against him. He carries a powerful right if one choses to take a ride on it, but you can see it before he starts it just as if he tied a starboard light on his right hand and yelled, 'Look out for the cars!'"

"Well, if he corners you just be careful it isn't a sleeping car for you."

"Don't you worry about me so much, Mick," cautioned Grace cheerily. "Honestly, you'd think I was actually in need of protection the way some of you fellows talk. It doesn't worry me. What if we do get together? Either he licks me or gets licked, and what does it matter either way? It will probably be a good fight. I'm not losing any sleep, and I'm not running in either direction."

**A**FTER the *Harvii* returned from the target range, pay day had intervened and the sailors were clamorous with money aching to be put in circulation, Grace and Squirt among the lot.

It was a matter of coincidence that during the months since the affair on the forecandle neither of the principals had met on the beach. Certainly Grace had gone on liberty whenever he had the money. He did not avoid meeting his burly menace, but chance had kept them apart. Then, like a lone lamb coming to slaughter, the morning after their first liberty following target practice, Grace strolled easily down the broad street leading to the dock. A few sailors were grouped at the landing waiting for the liberty boat. The hawk eyes of Squirt sighted Grace far up the broad thoroughfare, and all the pent-up anger of months blazed in his small greenish-gray eyes. Abruptly he turned on his heel and strode in the direction of his approaching victim. They met opposite an open space ordinarily used for parking buffalo carts.

"Well, kid, I guess I've caught up with you at last. It's you and me for the 'round-come-round.' Strip off your

jumper and be quick about it if you don't want me to slug you just as you are."

"Oh, very well," Grace acquiesced, without the slightest display of concern.

By this time the liberty party had come on the run, for all knew of the brewing strife. No less than a hundred men gathered around the two in the center. Squirt's emotions, long pent up, now agitated his heavy frame like jolts of electricity. His hands trembled so violently it was with considerable difficulty that he slipped his white jumper over his head. His eyes dwelt gloatingly on the lithe form of his antagonist. He viewed with scorn the slender, almost girllike figure. The skin, too, was clear and of a delicate pink, contrasting markedly with the hairy, roughened, coarse-splotched hide of the older man.

Chief Petty Officer Gunthorpe worked his way around to a spot behind Grace and whispered, "You don't have to fight that gorilla unless you want to, kid. I'll stand by you."

"Thanks, chief, but I'll have to sooner or later. Just as well now."

For a short time it appeared as if Grace might emerge the victor. He successfully evaded the heavy blows of his slower-moving opponent and was able to jab and short punch Squirt at will. Every telling blow brought clamorous voices of approval from the spectators. Cries of "Kill the big mutt, little fellow," "Now look out for that haymaker right!" "Follow it up, kid, follow it up!" and other messages of encouragement came from the crowd. But Squirt, stung into vehement rage by the success of the hit-and-run method, wildly rushed Grace backward until he was jammed against the ring of on-lookers. Then Squirt swung wild rights and lefts until one, a vicious right uppercut, broke aside the light guard and fairly lifted Grace off his feet and into oblivion. He slumped into a heap among those most eager to assist. A handkerchief dipped in water finally brought him back to earth. Several men held Gunthorpe in restraint, for he was determined to "clean up on the skunk." Rough jeering accompanied Squirt on his way back to the dock. At his moment of victory he was easily the most unpopular man in the fleet.

"Say, chief," Grace smiled rather sheepishly, "I never knew there was so many stars nor so many different kinds. I

saw flat and square ones, big and little, black and blue."

"That's all right, sonny, take your time. The gig just came in and said our liberty boat was broken down out there in the harbor and probably wouldn't be in for an hour. How do you feel?"

"Fine."

A small crowd accompanied them back to the landing where sailors were sitting in small groups awaiting their boat. Squirt sat alone, but he had a small standing audience. He was, as usual, spouting about how he always got the man he went after, be he either big or small. "These little birds," he spoke loudly as Grace's bunch came abreast the spot where he sat, "always take advantage of their size; but I take a crack at a man according to the size of his mouth. If he talks big, he's big enough for a big man."

With due deliberation Grace walked easily over to where Squirt sat, and, with a full-open hand, brought a resounding slap across the puffed lips of the blatant quartermaster.

"Why, you dirty little cur, I'll kill you!" he growled through gritted teeth as he sprang to his feet.

Again it was as before. A big, heavy man rushing wildly against a quick, sharp smaller man, whose wicked jabs tore through the shaggy defense of the larger man. Gunthorpe, remembering the occurrence that caused Grace's defeat before, made all the men draw back until the two fought in an open space at least fifty feet between lines. At times Grace stopped a heavy blow, but for the most he was aside, below, or too far away for the dynamite carriers shot in his direction. The smaller man's chief method was to feint an attack, then drop aside and slam several blows to his opponent's head as he made a wild-bull rush which carried him far beyond his antagonist.

Those watching noted the slackening speed of the logy quartermaster at an early stage of the second battle. Two fights in one day was about one too many for Squirt. Those lightninglike blows kept pecking away at eyes and mouth until the latter was a swollen mass of blood and froth. Gradually the eyes began to close, exhibiting at the same time well-pronounced rings of discoloration. The reali-

zation that he must end the battle quickly came to Squirt, but his rushes of desperation but added to the surety of Grace's blows. There came the time when Squirt, like a blinded beast, struck wildly in every direction; but try as he did, Grace found it impossible to knock his man out. The side lines were calling for victory. "Get a hammer, little fellow. No use to use your fist on a block like that." "Take off your shoe and hit him with that." "There he is, Squirt, right in front of you. Why don't you sock him?" derisively advised one.

"Say when you've got enough," Grace offered.

A filthy oath was the reply.

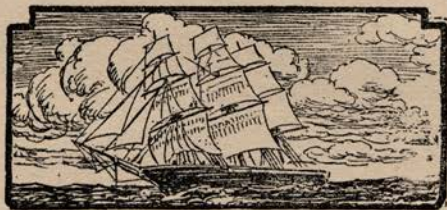
Two stinging jabs, one on the swollen, picklelike nose and another to the now-closed left eye needled Squirt into maddened action. He flung himself forward, wildly swinging his arms as if he were fighting yellow jackets. Grace coolly watched the oncoming rush, then stepped aside, and, as Squirt passed, caught him a heavy blow just below his right ear. Grace had put his every ounce of strength into the jolt, and Squirt went on a long, long voyage. Five minutes later he came out of the maze, accompanied by heavy shots of Pasig River water administered by means of a fire bucket. Assailing his ears was a wild, raucous cheering. Lifting his head weakly, he saw a long string of joyous gobs playing ring around a rosy about his late combatant. Evidently Grace had seen Squirt move, for he came over and, stooping, offered his hand.

"Shake, old man," he spoke cheerily. "Twasn't a bad scrap."

McDuff twisted his swollen, roaring head a fraction of an inch sidewise so that he could peer up at Grace out of a tiny crack in his face which almost concealed an eye.

"'Twould 'a' been different if I hadn't been sick," he whined. "I don't know whatsamatter you don't like me. I never did look for trouble with you. But I ain't gonna shake hands. What else you want? You licked me. Ain't that enough? I don't want no more. I wish you'd shove off and leave me alone, 'cause I'm mighty dog-gone sick."

He dropped his head back to earth again and closed the eye.



## Against the Time

By E. LESLIE SPAULDING

I HAVE laid up some dreams against the time  
When winds shall blow no more upon my face,  
Some salvaged beauty and some bits of rhyme  
To ponder when these feet have quit the race;  
For me seas murmur yet, and great ships go  
From blast of tropic heat to northern fog,  
And no one but myself will ever know  
The secret entries in my journey's log.

A world of spirit-haunted beauty there,  
Starlight and spindrift, sails, the flight of gulls,  
And sunrise breaking like a wonder stare  
Upon the flanks of dirty iron hulls;  
In all her moods the sea is still sublime,  
I have laid up some dreams against the time!

# Rough-pile

By Edgar Eugene Piper



Deck loads on the northwest coast.

**W**HEN a ship goes to sea with lumber there is abundant occasion for the master's genius to shine forth. The amount of pay load below decks depends largely on the skill with which he can stow this elusive cargo; while above decks, at least on west coast steam schooners, the principal factor is nerve. That both of these requisites were fundamental in the character of "Rough-pile" Jensen could be judged from the size of the cargoes he took to sea. Steam schooners and lumber he knew better than a monkey does coconuts; yet the best evidence of his real genius, perhaps, lay in the fact that Hjalmar Petersen was his mate.

They had brought the bluff-bowed *Skamokawa* to the big Wilson mill in the mouth of Tide Creek and were tossing boards into her bottom as fast as jitneys could gallop them out to the stringpiece. Standing beside the winch drivers Petersen rapidly sized up parcels coming aboard, and, bawling out directions to the sweating

gang below, was placing them so deftly that scarcely enough broken stowage remained to house a cricket.

The hatches were battened and the deck load was coming aboard helter-skelter. Two thirds of the cargo would be carried above deck; and speedy loading was more important than orderly arrangement. Chains were clapped onto sling loads as they dropped from the jitneys. Falls were jerked with the utmost energy of the throbbing winches, and lumber came tossing aboard like giant handfuls of jackstraws. Every stick that could be jammed onto the vessel would thus somehow find its resting place, and not until the scuppers amidships were awash would they call a halt to the loading. Then, after sailing, the vessel's crew would be occupied the first day or two at sea with the task of straightening and lashing this rough-piled deck load against the assaults of heavy weather.

Hjalmar Petersen, mate of the *Skamokawa*, had been much more intimate with

lumber during his seagoing career than with the niceties of social discourse or the rules of etiquette. A man of simple and direct address, his dealings with crew and stevedores were based on a vigorous flow of highly descriptive steam-schooner profanity, backed by a pair of fists greatly resembling an alert pair of well-smoked No. 3 hams. Thus amply equipped, he conducted lumber operations with such smooth dispatch that no altercation among his gang ever lasted long enough to delay the delivery of a sling load from the vessel's falls. Not even Rough-pile Jensen ever worked more swiftly and efficaciously in straightening and lashing the mountainous deck loads with which the *Skamokawa* usually staggered out to sea past Clatsop Spit.

But the smooth completion of their task on this occasion had been somewhat impaired by a quarrel smoldering between master and mate. During the arduous labor of the few days preceding, both men were brought close to the breaking point, mainly from overstrained nerves. The stevedores knocked off for supper at five, and the mate had signified his intention of going ashore. Rough-pile scanned his features with a look of suspicion.

"Can't you stay and have your supper on board?" he asked sharply. "Have to have a few drinks, I suppose?"

The mate scowled. "How you expect a faller work like hell all de time? All day, all night?"

"Yes, I know. But nobody can do it unless he stays sober, which is more than you have been doing. When you came aboard last night you were drunk! And in absolute violation of the rules of the ship!"

Mounting anger was showing in the crimson flush of the mate's cheeks. "By damn! Ve load von hundred t'ousand before midnight! You call him drunk dis kind loading? You better haf same t'ing two-t'ree time!" Without waiting for further discussion, he strode to the companionway, climbed to the boat deck, and stepped ashore.

When the mate returned to the vessel an hour or so later, Rough-pile was waiting on deck. "Well, fit to work a little bit, I hope!" he rasped out. "I just sent two of the stevedore gang ashore for reporting under the influence of liquor. What's that you brought with you? You

know very well you can't have a bottle on board of this ship. Hand it over!"

Scowling darkly, Petersen dragged forth the bottle which had been protruding from his pocket. Slowly he reached it out to Rough-pile, who snatched it with a quick gesture, then crashed it sharply against a stringer of the wharf. The skipper thereupon turned on his heel and went into the cabin.

**L**IGHTS gleamed brightly along the wharf as loading continued. As the vessel settled into the water the mounting stacks of lumber had so increased in height that scarcely could one discern the ship beneath them. Rough-pile was again on the boat deck. He walked along with hands clasped behind him, then went to the rail to note the vessel's water line. As he did so something caught his eye. Bobbing here and there in the water beneath the wharf were the necks of empty bottles, most likely some that had been tossed from his own ship.

Turning as though by a sudden resolve, he flung open a door and descended the companionway. Bursting into the crew's quarters, he strode to the nearest berth, jerked off the bedclothes, and fumbled behind the mattress. He brought forth a bottle half filled with reddish-brown fluid. In the next bunk he found another. He picked them up and took them to his cabin; then, a moment later, he was out on the deck fixing a quizzical eye on Petersen.

Stowage of the California fitches was giving more trouble than usual. A chain sling had failed to disengage when withdrawn by the winch, and scattered a sling load of lumber over the entire width of the vessel. Sharply Petersen cursed the winch driver. As he looked up he caught Jensen's questioning eye and turned in sullen silence to regard the confusion about him. Another sling load was to be shoved forward, and hung poised while one of his men inserted a dolly underneath. The load came down before the dolly was placed, then some one raised a peavey and knocked loose the hook. The dolly rolled a foot or two, and turned over awkwardly, spilling its entire load. More confusion.

Again Petersen turned on the winch driver, but the master's cold glare arrested his words. He raised his shoulders in a shrug and bent to catch up a peavey from

the deck. Another sling load was coming aboard, and he saw that the chain had been attached too far from the center. Despite his yell of protest the winches hoisted rapidly, and swung the load over the deck with one end hanging straight down. Peterson signaled his crew to steady the load as it reeled about uncertainly, but several pieces slid through the chain and dropped. The men jumped from below. The winch driver lowered away suddenly when he saw his load loosening, and crashed it heavily over a handrail along the deck house. One of the pieces shot out and caught Petersen across the leg.

In an outburst of anger the huge mate grabbed up the board and flung it violently toward his awkward gang, then, with unrestrained profanity, he spoke his mind to the winch driver. Jensen's cold regard but added to the heat with which he expressed himself. One of the men in the gang gave a sneering laugh. Toward this man Petersen now sprang, and with outstretched hand dealt him a resounding blow. The man went reeling against the timbers. "Anybody else get funny, now?" asked the mate, as he glowered for an instant. He then turned and climbed to the boat deck, disappearing with Jensen into the little cabin.

"I ban haf enough dese here monkey beesness," the mate began, his face flushed and wet with perspiration. He pulled the heavy gloves from his hands and threw them down, wiped his dripping brow on the sleeve of his undershirt, and gave way to deep-felt, ardent protest. "You haf fine peeg-head idea on dese ship—fine for Sunday school, hah!" He gave a snort of disgust. "But yackass need whack on back some time. You try teekle heem wid feather, hah? You want I should talk lady talk to dese faller all time, hah? All right; but by yingo, not to dese kind hard faller like ban on dese schooner."

Jensen regarded him calmly for a moment, then pointed to the bottles which he had placed on his table. "See here, now, Petersen, I've told you how to run this ship, and I want it run that way. It's time this trade got a little civilized. You all live and act like a lot of swine! That's why I have to regulate everything for you down to the smallest details. Now I want you to slap on the rest of that lumber in a hurry, and you don't need to use any unnecessary profanity about it, either.

**SEA—9**

There's no job about a steam schooner that can't be filled by a gentleman."

It was this last word which carried the mate's frazzled temper beyond the danger point. His eyes became two narrow red slits. "Yantleman, hell!" he roared. "What kind of faller you t'ink coom on dese boat? Dance-hall Yonny? By Yoe, I get me off dese boat planty quick, and you find out somet'ing! You want yantleman, hah? Not on same boat wid Petersen, by yee! I go over see Yimmy Wilson and get me yob damn quick!" He shook his fist in rage.

Rough-pile regarded him with a grave countenance. "Don't get to thinking we can't get along without you. There was never a mate alive so important as that. When you begin to think I've got to have you, then it's time for you to leave. If you want to go right now, here's your chance."

"I don't wait for chance! So long you want yantleman on dese boat, I get off and stay off, by damn! I ban get planty, dese monkey circus! Yantleman, hah!" His countenance still flaming with anger as he gave this final snort of disgust, the mate strode to the door, jerked it open, banged it violently behind him and went out on deck.

**L**OADING continued with Eric Skjalund pressed into service as mate, but Rough-pile was finding it necessary to give personal attention to every plank that came aboard. October gales would be blowing outside after they left the river, and if their deck load was to hold fast, timbers must be distributed judiciously through the mass for stiffening. Stays should be interlaced along the sides and braced tightly against the stanchions. Careful blocking must be worked in between unmatched tiers to prevent their working loose.

Shortly before loading had been completed the Watson tug *Celeste* pulled down the creek, escorting the barge *Washougal*, which had for some time been receiving lumber from an adjoining wharf. The craft was a converted four master which had been purchased from one of the Alaska fisheries fleets and adapted to the coast-wise lumber trade. The owners were boasting to the steam-schooner world of the wonders they planned to accomplish in the way of lowered transportation costs



for lumber. Their experiment was being watched by most onlookers with a large measure of skepticism.

Rough-pile, in particular, had regarded the barge venture with no little disapproval. Even more unenthusiastic still was his opinion of Matt Raker, who had command of the tug. "One close shave and you're through," he had told Watson; "unless you put a man aboard your tug. Get a man, not a rabbit."

The tug and her convoy were passing the dock where the *Skamokawa* remained tied. "You've got the whole channel there," Matt Raker was blustering out to Rough-pile in a loud voice. "You better haul ship a little till we get past."

"If you can't get past here, the Columbia ain't wide enough for you," Rough-pile retorted unsympathetically.

The barge was dragged along down the creek, and Rough-pile stood watching its slow progress. It nearly grazed his own vessel, and, as the stern came even with his position, he was startled to see that the helmsman in charge was Hjalmar Petersen. Without speaking, the two men stood and glowered at each other as the barge slowly moved out toward the channel of the Columbia.

**W**HEN the *Skamokawa* finally backed out into the river and headed downstream, it had the appearance of a huge load of lumber with a ship fastened somewhere beneath. Heavy rain was falling, and the dark firs along the banks had begun to wave their branches sighingly in the fresh southwest breeze. Within a couple of hours the vessel had passed Astoria and continued seaward. Before they reached the river mouth complete darkness had overtaken them, and a heavy wind was rolling up huge watery crests into which their bow dipped with deep rhythmical plunges.

During the trip down river, Rough-pile had been urging his men to their utmost endeavors, for the deck load would need much adjusting and lashing in preparation for sea. It was not until they reached the lightship that Rough-pile realized the force of the blow that had sprung up. Glinting lights reflected from the beacon above were moving swiftly along the great silent walls of water which swept in from seaward. The clumsy iron hull of the lightship came wallowing over the top of a

crest with its tight-stretched anchor chain clanking in the hawsepipe. In its eccentric careenings, Rough-pile sensed the savage thrust which a whipping breeze and resentful seas were launching against everything afloat. They hurried by the lightship less than a ship's length distant. With the rain stinging his face, Rough-pile stared reflectively from his boat deck. The beacon so illuminated the moving ocean floor near by that huge drifting patches of white foam alternated strangely with areas of impenetrable blackness.

As their vessel headed southward, Rough-pile was on deck watching for the first glimpse of Tillamook Light. Their blunt bow was shouldering heavily into oncoming seas, and occasionally remained buried long enough for a crest to buck heavily against their load of lumber. Despite their compact, massive weight, vessel and cargo would occasionally meet swift-moving, broken crests with a rending shock that threatened to loosen the chains imprisoning the deck load. Anxiously Rough-pile climbed along the length of the vessel with flash light in hand, examining stanchions and lashings. He then called Skjallund.

"Take a couple of men and lash those starboard stanchions to keep 'em upright. The cargo's working away from them, and they'll be coming loose. Send some one out to take up those turnbuckles. If one on those lashings lets go we're in a smear."

Returning to the pilot house, Rough-pile remained near the helmsman, watching anxiously as the flash of Tillamook Light drew gradually abeam. He then went forward again to note the condition of his load. Some of the impetuous combers which drenched over their quarter seemed to shake the vessel as sharply as though some gigantic sea monster had pounced upon them. Rough-pile saw that the cargo must be stiffened without delay.

"Put on the deck lights and call up the crew," he roared out to Skjallund. "We'll have to restow most of this lumber."

Grasping a peavey, he went forward atop the load and clung to the winch platform while he directed operations.

"Begin aft and work forward," he told Skjallund. "Tear the corners off the load and pile it higher amidships. Take off one lashing at a time and pass everything aft that you can pull out. Wedge the bottom tiers in tighter."

Beginning their work as ordered, the weary crew labored at the stacks of lumber, loosening a few boards at a time. They worked these into a more compact mass around the engine-room casing, building a tighter pile, which they gradually extended forward. As the bow sunk sluggishly into mounting watery hillocks, an occasional assaulting crest would leap the fore-castle head and sweep down the deck load, boiling into crevices, and seething into the pits around the winches. Each time a sea came aboard Rough-pile would gaze anxiously to detect signs of movement among the top-layer timbers, then turn to see if the struggling crew had all clung safely to their handholds. He called the mate.

"This load's liable to break across forward of the mast. You left too many sling loads with the ends abreast. We got to build up from the lee side and make the pieces interlock. Get these loads out of the way first. Busy, now, and put some snap into it, before something washes off!"

"But I tell you, sir, the men have worked cargo since early this morning, and don't feel very lively."

Rough-pile fixed his mate with a look of disgust; and, as the vessel lurched heavily, jabbed his peavey into a timber and motioned for his men to take hold. "Grab on, all of you, and slide her aft. No, not that one, you fish head!" he bawled. "Now another. All together! A few more feet. Now roll these pieces over to starboard."

Gradually the men pulled apart the still compact sling loads and drew the ends forward and aft into crevices wherever they could find space to fill. Working deeper into the load, they wedged braces into opened gaps to prevent further movement. Tearing down the top tiers with his peavey, Rough-pile tumbled pieces down to the men working below him, hurriedly pointing directions for shifting their positions.

Vainly he strove to accelerate the job, but the impetus of his crew was only maintained when he could personally direct the handling of each stick. Skjallund was fumbling ineffectually among a group of men that transferred pieces first in one direction, then in another. More and more frequently seas thundered over their quarter, while the men clung in almost continual helplessness to their handholds. Suddenly a gigantic black crest swelled up around their bow and seemed to envelop the en-

tire vessel and cargo. The mass of water flashed suddenly white along the deck load and charged at the loosened timbers on which the men were working.

As the ship trembled beneath the impact, Rough-pile turned quickly and saw the danger to the men below him. He promptly threw his weight onto his peavey and wedged the outermost timber against the chain lashings, but under the smashing force of water the pile shook loose somewhere below. Several tiers crumpled, and a mass of loosened timbers was sluiced like so much froth down over the men.

When the water had cleared away, several men were left struggling beneath the overturned timbers. With a shout Rough-pile leaped down and applied his heavy shoulder to release them, straining thick, knotted muscles to raise the heavy, tangled mass. His back arched up slowly beneath the crushing weight, while the men clinging to handholds above groped into the darkness and dragged the victims forth.

Rough-pile had them removed to the tiny saloon aft, where he worked over their injuries. "H'm, three broken ribs," he muttered to himself as he examined the first case. Bending over another man, he discovered a broken arm and a dislocated shoulder. He called Skjallund. "Break out the medicine chest and get some bandages and dressings. The chief'll help you. Get everything ready for me to splint up this fracture when I get back. Send everybody else forward. I'll be on the deck load."

Throughout the night Rough-pile continued his struggle to pin down the load of timbers. No sooner had his gang finished shifting and wedging and lashing in one place than signs of loosening would develop somewhere else. Skjallund doubted his ultimate success. "Hadh't we better knock the shackles loose and let 'er go?" he inquired finally. Rough-pile stared at him incredulous. His patience was at the breaking point.

"When the deck load goes, the ship'll go with it," he thundered. "I've never cut loose a deck load yet, and I'll hang on this time till the fish start chewing my ears! Get up forward there, now, and see what you can do to stop those timbers from banging against the forepeak."

After a final inspection of his cargo, Rough-pile went to his cabin for an hour's rest. Despite his fatigue, sleep seemed an

impossibility. For some time he listened to the wind tugging at the canvas lifeboat covers just outside his door, occasionally causing them to flap violently with a noise like pistol shots. As an occasional giant crest met the bow with a dull impact, he would find himself listening nervously for the heavy splash of water that always came drenching aboard a second after.

He had begun to wonder about the *Washougal*. Petersen must have cooled off by this time and begun to regret his change of berth. It was not a pleasant time to be at sea on a barge. Petersen must have been well aware that Matt Raker was no man to depend upon in a blow. After one such trip he would undoubtedly be glad to come back to his proper place on a respectable steam schooner. Rough-pile resolved that when he reached San Francisco Bay he would immediately hunt up Petersen and have a talk with him. They would soon reach an understanding.

**W**HILE he was engaged in these reflections the A. B. on watch came to his door and rapped insistently. He entered the room and, as Rough-pile raised himself on one elbow, the man began excitedly: "Distress signals on the port bow, sir. Can't make out the kind of vessel, but she's over there by the beach."

Snatching an oilskin, Rough-pile followed to the bridge and stared into the darkness. In a few minutes they caught the flash of a rocket outlined against the gloom of a distant rocky cliff. More than three miles of tumbling sea intervened. Rough-pile turned and burst through the door of the little pilot house. "Give me that wheel," he said tensely to the steersman.

There seemed no chance for doubt: the *Washougal* had broken from the tug during the night. Raker, of course, must have put to sea for his own safety. Rough-pile turned his vessel sharply toward the shore, straining his eyes for the first glimpse of the distressed vessel.

Dawn began to break faintly as they drew in toward the first series of rocky ledges lining the shore. Farther in they discerned outlines of a craft which they could recognize as the *Washougal*. "Out with the sounding lead!" ordered Rough-pile curtly. "We're going in after them."

When the *Skamokawa* approached, they saw the barge had a sea anchor to keep it

headed into the storm, but under the impulse of surging rollers that periodically raked its length, it was drifting rapidly shoreward. It had already advanced far into danger, and only the promptest assistance with a towline could save it from catastrophe.

Skjallund came in to receive instructions. "No use for lifeboats in here," Rough-pile boomed out. "Bottom's too close. These combers'll be breaking over any minute now. You'll need the men to hold the deck load down, anyway. Get a heaving line ready."

In the growing light they discerned the black masses of frowning cliff toward which the *Washougal* was drifting, and shuddered to realize how close they were at hand. Huge breakers, driven by the fury of wind and sea, were crashing headlong at the foot of the rocky pinnacles and springing suddenly upward with a ghostly show of whiteness in the gloom. The roaring surf echoed from the shore line with a dull, ominous moan which they could hear only faintly against the wind.

As they crept closer to the barge they could see the heavy bow rise slowly in the smashing crests, a broken length of anchor chain dangling uselessly from the hawse pipe. Some one stood near the bow of the barge watching their approach. They came closer. Rough-pile swung the lead of the heaving line and let it fly. The line described a long arc in the driving gale and dropped over the side of the barge, now only fifty yards distant. He watched as one of the barge's crew sprang forward, but before he could grasp the line the huge figure of Petersen had suddenly leaped at him, picked it up, and thrown it overboard. It dropped into the water with a splash.

"You're crazy, man!" bawled Rough-pile at the top of his lungs. Again the line was flung out across the water, and again Petersen violently beset the man who tried to seize it. He then went to the rail and shouted angrily at Rough-pile, his menacing gestures stating plainly that he wanted no assistance.

For reply Rough-pile shook his fist and gave forth a hoarse yell of defiance. If the barge was to be rescued from its plight, some one would have to act in the greatest haste. "Gimme that line," Rough-pile called to the man nearest him. Before any one could read his intentions, he was

at the rail with a slender length of hemp tied about his waist. "I'll be aboard of that hulk in two minutes! Make ready to pay out your hawser when I signal."

Rough-pile flung himself from the rail onto the next turbulent crest that passed them, disappeared for an instant, then bobbed to the surface. He struck out, swimming for the barge with a powerful overhand crawl. The men paying out the line watched breathlessly as successive crests closed over the skipper's head, but the quick, rhythmical strokes kept on unvaried each time he reappeared. Swinging wide of the bow, he progressed steadily until he came amidships of the barge, and as a wave surged high alongside, clasped both arms about a stanchion of the flyrail. Here he clung for a moment to catch his breath.

Some instinct of sportsmanship prevented Petersen from offering opposition to the struggling swimmer, although he seemed undecided about assisting him on board. As the big mate stared toward the rail, Rough-pile had clambered aboard the wallowing hulk and started toward the bow with his line. Petersen intercepted him. "You go to the devil!" he shouted, his eyes narrowing. "Get that line off haar! You get no salvage from dese haar boat!"

"You cursed fool!" bellowed out Rough-pile. "What do I care for salvage? You got to take a line! It's the only chance you got in this world! You'll be piled up any minute now!"

"No line from you, by yingo! I take no line from you! I t'row it oferboard!"

He reached out to seize the line which Rough-pile had brought with him. As he did so, Rough-pile stepped forward and drove straight at him with a heavy fist. Petersen caught the blow glancingly, then, sounding a yell of rage, came at the skipper with a savage thrust of his own formidable left, which he aimed at the jaw. Rough-pile coolly side-stepped, and retaliated with two successive smashing jabs into the ribs which caused Petersen to catch his breath.

They both squared off for a moment, then attacked simultaneously. Petersen charged with lowered head, whereupon Rough-pile swung a swift uppercut against his chin. Again Petersen rushed in with arms extended. The vessel lurched as they came together, and they fell in a clinch,

rolling to the scuppers. Rough-pile had pinned the other man's arms and was astride him for a moment, when another heavy roll of the vessel carried them both sprawling to the other side of the deck. As they fetched up against a heavy iron cleat, the top of Petersen's head struck with a violent impact, and his muscles went suddenly limp. Rough-pile caught hold of the rail, and, raising himself on one knee, surveyed the huge recumbent form beneath him with a quick, anxious look. He then jumped to his feet, ran quickly to the rail, and signaled the steamer with a wave of his arm.

With furious speed, Rough-pile began hauling in on the slender line he had dragged through the water, motioning the two sailors on the barge to assist him. A messenger line had come onto the barge, and as the trio in her bow began reeling in with frantic haste, they saw a heavy, new length of manila hawser being fed out through a chock on the *Skamokawa*. Desperately they tugged away to speed its long snaky course through the intervening stretch of lashing seas.

Bending their backs against its weight, they slowly lifted the hawser from the water at the *Washougal's* bow. With a final concerted heave they dragged the end aboard and looped the eye over the nearest cleave. Knotted to the eye was another length of lighter line by which a second hawser could be hauled aboard from the steamer.

The hawser fast, Rough-pile sent one of the seamen to the barge's helm while he waved his vessel to take them in tow. Less than a ship's length away a receding crest laid bare one of the huge, sharp-pointed boulders which fringed the shore line, while ominous whitening of the waves disclosed here and there jutting points of the treacherous reef through which they must thread their course. As the *Skamokawa* worked off to seaward the big yellow line slowly merged from the ocean and stretched tight, wringing out sea water as the coils drew together. A huge comber came swelling around the clumsy prow of the barge, and they heard the line groan in the chocks as it tautened like a fiddle-string. Rough-pile waited breathlessly to see it part, but his crew at the steamer's capstan let out slack just in time to ease the strain.

The barge began to move slowly sea-

ward. Rough-pile then went and knelt over where Petersen still lay in the scuppers. Examining his head, he found a long scalp wound with heavy blood clots forming through the matted hair. He called the seaman nearest him. "Got any surgical needles?" he asked. The man shook his head. Rough-pile pondered. Petersen began to stir and was feeling with his hand at the cut. He partly raised himself and stared blankly at Rough-pile, then glanced over and saw that his barge was in tow. Uttering a deep growl, he lurched awkwardly to his feet.

Without allowing Petersen opportunity to clear his head or to act, Rough-pile sprang at him with the sudden impetus of a panther. A fist whipped out from his shoulder and went straight to the point of Petersen's chin, dropping him to the deck like a bag of shot. The seaman stared at him blankly, and Rough-pile motioned him closer.

"He'd chop the line loose if we let him. Besides, this cut has got to be sewed up," he said, pointing to the top of the mate's head, "and I'm taking him back to the steamer. I've got to get started while he's still out. Help get him to the rail and bring me that small line attached to the towrope."

The barge had been pulled away from imminent danger as the *Skamokawa* worked out toward sea. Rough-pile studied the waves a moment, then motioned for his vessel to maneuver back in toward them. Taking the end of the light line which had come with the hawser, he knotted it about Petersen's chest, and with the help of the sailor, rolled his heavy bulk to the top of the rail opposite the steamer. When the gap between the two vessels had closed appreciably, he waited for a crest to spring upward, then shoved out from the side of the barge with Petersen in his arms. The steamer's crew saw the two forms splash heavily into the ocean, and busily hauling away at the line, dragged them in toward their lee rail.

As the steamer wallowed in giant seas, several of her crew had clambered along the deck load to pull the skipper aboard. Eager hands fastened into Petersen's clothing and steadied him in his groggy

climb from the reach of the buffeting waves. He was still dazed as Rough-pile helped him aft and through the door into the cabin.

**H**IS head stitched and bandaged, Petersen lay in his snug berth aboard the *Skamokawa* and gazed about him dreamily. For a time he considered the form bending over him. Several times his eyes returned to the face above him before recognition began to dawn. He was drifting toward the conclusion that it was merely Rough-pile Jensen, his skipper. This meant that everything was going well enough, of course. But no—something had happened! He raised himself in the berth.

"Vat am I doing haar?" he burst forth suddenly. "Who is mate on dese vessel?" He had begun to feel strangely uneasy.

Rough-pile regarded him calmly. "You're mate on this vessel; you're the only man who ever will be mate on this vessel as long's I'm aboard of her. How you feel?"

Petersen frowned. "Not bad. I ban get up. Vere's my clothes?"

"Up in the fiddley, getting dried out. They'll be ready for you by now."

Petersen pondered a minute. He watched the bulkhead swing sharply toward him, then twist over dizzily as the vessel smashed through a mountainous sea. "She blow purty hard to-day," he commented. "How is dack load?"

Rough-pile eyed him a moment, then shook his head doubtfully. "It'll hang on if we have the right kind of mate to hold it down. Look here, Petersen, I want to tell you something. We've got that barge of yours in tow. We'll take it down to San Francisco Bay and get rid of it. If any one mentions salvage awards, I'll tell 'em to go to the devil! I'm not after salvage. You know that well enough. All the salvage I'll ever take I've got already—the best mate that ever went to sea with lumber! I've got you back, and I'm going to keep you! Now, soon's you feel like it, you better get out forward and see that everything's fastened. Long's I don't lose my mate I don't ever expect to lose a deck load!"





# The Ocean Mystery

By J. Victor

**I**N the course of many years spent at sea several adventures have come my way, but the one I am about to relate impressed me more than any other, for it brought home to all of us on the ship how mysterious and merciful are the ways of Providence.

The *Illovo* was an old steamer, slow, out of date, and small. The twenty-odd passengers were berthed aft, the saloon running right into the stern and the cabins opening on either side. Above the long dining table was a big skylight which opened on the after deck. In fine weather she was like a yacht, but in bad weather, fully loaded, she was as uncomfortable as a water-logged derelict.

In 1909—I forget the date—we were down to our marks alongside Durban Wharf, ready to sail for London via Capetown. Most of the passengers came by train from upcountry and they were anything but pleased to find such a small craft. You will understand how tiny she looked when I say that the captain on the bridge could lean over and shake hands with a person on the quay. Several passengers thought she was a tender, merely to convey them to the ocean-going steamer! There were loud expressions of disapproval and many people blamed themselves for not booking by the *Waratah*. The latter was indeed a splendid vessel and had been well advertised in the

newspapers. She was a big, powerful ship, less than a year old, trading between Australia and England, calling at Durban and the Cape for passengers, and was listed to sail from Durban a day after the *Illovo*.

That evening we steamed out from the shadow of the bluff on the three-day run to Table Bay. The wind was fresh on the port beam, with a moderate sea, and the little laden ship made good progress. A strong current runs down the Natal coast and our captain kept well away from the land to get full advantage of it.

During the night the wind shifted to the port bow, and the next morning—I remember the day was Sunday—a gale was blowing. Later it developed to almost hurricane force, and by sunset the *Illovo* could barely make steerage way.

That Sunday night our little craft, handled skillfully by the grim Scot who was in command, fought the fury of the almighty sea. She rose up to the towering, seething hills, and slithered down into the valleys between, trembling and vibrating as if with fear. Cataracts of pure, undiluted ocean poured over the bows, leaving no vestige of one hundred tons of coal, which had been placed on the fore deck in Durban. The men, driven from the fo'c's'les, sought what little shelter there was in the midship alleyways.

In the cabin aft, which was **battered**

down, the terror-stricken passengers groaned as the sound of the dull thud of heavy water penetrated into the cheerless, sodden saloon. Seasickness added to their misery. Several poor souls seemed to find relief by reiterating statements of their stupidity in not going ashore immediately they had embarked and waiting for the *Waratah*. So passed the night of howling gale.

The day was no better. Certainly light made visible the surrounding miles of desolation, but if anything, they only intensified the minuteness and fragility of the cockleshell which stood between us and eternity.

Another night came. The massed attacks of the leaping seas continued. They came onward with the impetus of a swing which began over a thousand miles away somewhere in the chill antarctic. And all the time the grim, brine-blistered Scot patiently stood upon the shaking bridge, nursing the plunging, rearing, bucking vessel.

In those days few ships were fitted with wireless telegraphy. Once you were beyond signaling distance of the shore, no help could be summoned unless, by chance, another ship hove in sight. In this in-

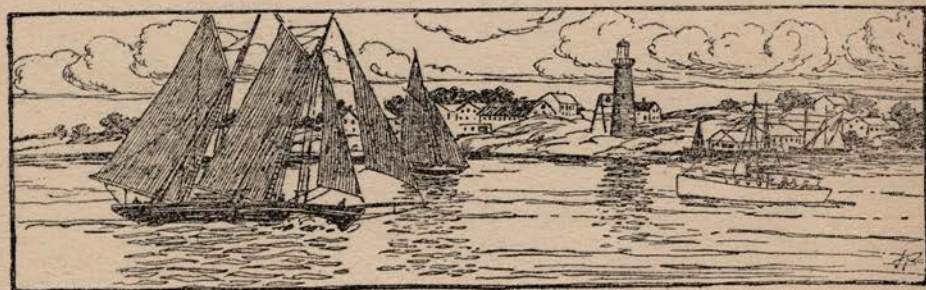
stance no help was necessary, thanks to the builders of the *Illovo* and the skill of her captain. The next day the weather moderated and eventually we got into Capetown after a passage of five days instead of three.

Most of the passengers went ashore, declaring their intention of going to the agents and demanding their money back, preferring to wait for the *Waratah*.

What happened, I do not know. Doubtless the agent pointed out the tonnage of the ship was correctly stated on the company's advertisements and, after their recent experiences, even the most timid passengers could have no fear as to the ship's seaworthiness. Anyhow, they all returned on board and, so far as I know, had a pleasant voyage.

What I do know is, passengers and crew experienced a feeling of awe and thankfulness when we dropped anchor in Las Palmas a fortnight later. For the *Waratah*, which had left Durban on schedule, had vanished with all hands from the face of the waters.

It seems inexplicable that such a fine big steamer should disappear on so short a trip, and her fate remains to this day an unsolved mystery of the sea.





# The Log Book

This department is a meeting place for all readers of this magazine. It is free to all for the purpose of open discussion on topics concerning the sea.

**H**ERE is yet another example of the popularity and scope of this department. The first letter which appears in these pages for this issue is sent us by the mate of Commander Byrd's vessel, the *Eleanor Boling*. This officer, Charles J. McGuinness, sent his communication from Dunedin, New Zealand, which is the mail address for the expedition. We sincerely hope that there are some of Mr. McGuinness' old shipmates among our readers.

You will note that Mr. McGuinness speaks of having served in the American four-masted bark *Annie M. Reid*. This is the vessel that we spoke of in the September, 1928, issue as the *Howard D. Troop*. She was a Nova Scotian under that name and had made a truly remarkable passage from the Tail of the Bank to New York of fourteen days. This fine bark has always maintained her reputation for smartness under both her registries.

The *Daylight*, mentioned by our correspondent, was one of the big case-oil ships operated by the Standard Oil Company from this country to the Orient. This trade, if it is still in existence, is now carried out by steamers. If we remember correctly, the last sailing ship owned by the Standard Oil and operated in this trade was the four-masted bark *Drumeltan*. She ran under British registry up until about

the end of the war and was a regular trader from New York to Hongkong.

Shortly after the war she was sold to the French and called the *Margaret Overman*. This ship was a sight to delight the eye of any sailor, as her deck structures were entirely of teak. This included the deck houses on the main deck, as well as the chart house on the poop and the skylights. These were always kept well cleaned and varnished. We said that she "was a sight to delight the eye of any sailor." But on second thought we will change that statement. She was a sight to delight the eye of any critical mate or captain. Your foremast hand, when he sees such great areas of bright work, is filled with disgust at the thought of keeping it all looking well. He is the only one who really appreciates the amount of work that it means.

We have lost all trace of this vessel, but she has either been broken up or is being used as a hulk somewhere.

Having been a reader of your magazine for some years, and always an interested peruser of the *Log Book*, I want you to say hello for me to any of your deep-water friends who are interested in a deep-water sailor once more afloat.

After a few years ashore, the desire to return to sea in sail became pretty strong, so you can imagine how glad I was to be appointed chief officer in Commander Byrd's expedition ship, the bark *City of New York*. I had the



interesting job of rigging her out for the polar trip, changing her rig from a barkentine to a bark. I also put a new jib boom, mizzen-topmast, and fore yard in her, to replace those spars which we found none too secure for a rough passage.

I have sailed most of my seafaring life in square-rigged vessels, under many flags, holding on to the old system even after the time when they were getting scarce.

My recent voyages were in the British four-masted bark *Medway*, of London—Durban to Iquique, Capetown to Colombo and Ceylon—lasting thirteen months. In the latter port I had the job of dismantling her after we paid the crew off, and then I went back to Europe. The next ship was the bark *Daylight*, belonging to the Standard Oil Company, Frisco to Kobe and Manila and back to Frisco in eleven months. That was her last voyage. Then the bark *Annie M. Reid*, Frisco to Ipswich. I afterward commanded auxiliary schooners and barkentines.

We are now laid up for the winter in Dunedin, and I am at present in the *Eleanor Boling*. So if any of your readers would care to drop me a line, it will surely be appreciated. And if any of the younger crowd want information pertaining to ships or the sea, I will find time to answer them. I have tried to preserve all the wrinkles I have learned since I was a boy, for we must soon face the idea of a sea without sails.

CHARLES J. MCGUINNESS.

**O**UR next letter is a complaint of a mild sort. Shipmate Armbrust wants to see more stories from the black gang. His reasons for wanting them are very good, and we are constantly striving to meet his requirements. But we would like to assure our shipmate that youth and inexperience are no bar to being heard in the Log Book. This is one ship in which each man is as good as the next. There are no officers to call a youngster for speaking out of turn, and the old hands are impressed with the fact that new men have as much right to speak right out in meeting as they have.

But, as far as experience is concerned, we would like to go on record that we have now got two writers, at least, writing for us who have had experience in the engine room. These are Robert L. Allen and E. G. Martin. And just as fast as we can we are getting engine-room stories and experiences. Another newcomer to our pages who has had the severest kind of experience around engines and boilers is P. Renz.

Being rather young and inexperienced, it is rather rude to ask to be a shipmate. But, having served a short time—four months—as coal passer aboard the U. S. S. *Annapolis*, I would like to become a member.

I fully agree with a shipmate's expression—I have forgotten his name—who said that what we need is more stories about the engine and firerooms. I think that these stories equal the topside stories. You know, in the days of steam and sail, instead of the days of sail and steam, you must talk of steam also.

I would like to hear the opinion of other seamen, who have been in the hot, filthy Mediterranean ports, how they compare with our own.

I would be glad to offer advisory assistance to any one of inexperience and would be glad to do so if asked.

Also, I wonder if you could give me any information as to the life of the three-masted fore-and-aft schooner *George E. Vernon*, of which Captain Peter N. Armbrust was master from about 1895 to 1898.

Make some one clean out bilge tanks until they can write about engine rooms and firerooms if possible. This seems to be the only possible way to get experience of that sort.

E. P. ARMBRUST.

**S**HIPMATE JOHNSTON, of Melbourne, Australia, sends us the following entertaining letter and tabulated list of the Aberdeen White Star Line ships. Mr. Johnston makes these remarks in the nature of a correction of a misstatement made in a recent Log Book letter. The letter which our shipmate writes is one of the most complete substantiations of a writer's remarks that we have ever seen, and our correspondent is to be congratulated on the completeness of his information about this line of once-famous sailing ships. This is especially true in these days when sailing ships are disappearing so rapidly and changing hands and registry as frequently as they have done in the last few decades.

I am coming aft once more to make a couple of corrections. In the Log Book of the April issue Shipmate Foster mentions the Aberdeen White Star liner *Patrician*. There has never been an Aberdeen clipper of this name. The *Phœnician*, a wooden bark of five hundred and twenty-six tons, was an Aberdeen clipper, and she was the first true clipper to come to Australia.

She was built in 1846 by Hood, of Aberdeen. Then there was the *Patriarch*, the Aberdeen line's first iron ship. She was built in 1869 by Hood, of Aberdeen. Her tonnage was one thousand three hundred and thirty-nine register. She cost twenty-four thousand pounds to build, and on her maiden voyage she went to Sydney in sixty-seven days and came home to London in sixty-nine days.

Her best day's run was three hundred and sixty-six miles. This was wonderful work for an iron ship. Her end is correctly described by Shipmate Foster, who no doubt has meant her for the *Patriarch*. I just mention this, as

I know that the shipmates like to keep their records as straight a possible.

Shipmate Duval asked about the *Norge*. I have sent particulars to him privately, but no doubt the other readers may be interested. The *Norge* was an iron ship, built in 1874 by Richardson, Duck & Company, of Stockton, for the Merchant Shipping Company as the *Peterborough*. She was originally intended for a troopship, but was put into the Sydney and Melbourne passenger trade, where she put up some very good passages. Toward the end of the '90s she was sold to the Norwegians and renamed the *Norge*. I am afraid the foregoing will take up too much space, so I will close, first attaching a list of the Aberdeen White Star clippers in the hope that it might interest some of the readers.

*Patriarch*, wrecked south of the River Plate on February 23, 1912.

*Miltiades*, sold to the Italians in 1902. She was dismantled in March of 1905 and condemned to be broken up.

*Samuel Plimsoll* was dismantled in 1902 when bound from London to Port Chalmers. She was towed to Freemantle, W. A., where she is now a coal hulk.

*Salamis* was sold to the Norwegians in 1899, who renamed her *Victor* and converted her into a bark. She was wrecked on Malden Island in the South Pacific on May 20, 1905.

*Aristides* was posted as missing in 1903 when bound from Caleta Buena to San Francisco with nitrate of soda.

*Smyrna* collided with *S. S. Moto* on April 28, 1888, during a thick fog. The ship sank with the captain and eleven seamen.

*Sophocles* was sold to the Italians and converted into a bark. She was finally sold to the shipbreakers in 1923.

*Orontes* was run into and sunk on October 23, 1903, by the *S. S. Oceana*, bound from Calao to Ostend.

*Christiania Thompson* was sold to the Norwegians and renamed *Beatrice Lines*. She was wrecked on the Norwegian coast in October, 1899.

*Damascus* was sold to the Norwegians and wrecked at Bersimis in 1893.

*Ethiopian* was sold to the Norwegians and was abandoned near the Azores in October, 1894. She was picked up later and taken into St. Michael's and condemned.

*Harlaw* was wrecked at Hongkong in 1878.

*Jerusalem* was sold to the Norwegians and foundered with all hands in the North Atlantic in 1893.

*Pericles* was sold to the Norwegians in 1904 for the timber trade to Melbourne. She was later renamed the *Sjuroo* and broken up in 1923.

*Strathdon*, the first, was sold to Peru and broken up in 1888.

*Strathdon*, the second, was formerly the *Queen's Island*. She was sold to the Norwegians in 1900 and later sold to the French and renamed *Gers*. She was still afloat in 1926.

*Thermopyla* was sold to the Canadians in 1895, resold to the Portuguese government, and converted into a training ship until 1907, when she was towed to sea and sunk by gunfire.

*Thyatira* was sold and wrecked off Brazil in 1894.

*Transatlantic* was sold foreign and foundered in the Atlantic in 1899.

GEORGE H. JOHNSTON.

IT is seldom in these days that we read of a sailing-ship race or have the opportunity of indulging in one. As a result of this, we think that the following clipping from the *Glasgow Weekly Herald* will be of interest to many of you. This article was sent us by William McInverry, of Toledo, Ohio. We regret that it is so short, but those of us who are in the know can read between the lines and see the constant drive that obtained on a deep-water passage when two ships of the caliber of the *Thermopyla* and *Cutty Sark* were racing each other on a course that took them half around the world.

I have been an appreciative reader of SEA STORIES since it was launched, and I have always been interested in the Log Book and its contents from month to month. So I have great pleasure in inclosing a clipping from the *Glasgow Weekly Herald*, dated April 6th, hoping it may be of interest to you or some of your readers, or it may help to complete your records regarding one of the ships mentioned:

The announcement that the famous old Clyde-built tea clipper *Cutty Sark* has now been refitted at Falmouth Harbor as a training ship is of interest to the few remaining members of her crew who sailed in her during her record-breaking voyages. One of these is Captain Alexander Moodie, son of the famous Captain Moodie who commanded the *Cutty Sark* for some years. He lives in Dumfries and can tell many stirring tales of the wild races home from China with the valuable cargoes of tea the old clipper generally carried. One of the most exciting of these occurred when Captain Moodie was an apprentice under his father in 1871—the epic race between the *Cutty Sark* and her great rival, the *Thermopyla*. The two vessels drew out of Shanghai harbor the same day, and a grim struggle to reach Gravesend first began.

For a while the rival vessels kept about abreast. Then the *Cutty Sark* drew away ahead. Bad weather then set in, however, and luck turned against Captain Moodie. Twenty-four days out a heavy sea tore away the *Cutty Sark's* rudder. The owner's brother, who was on board for his health, begged the captain to make for the nearest port; but the Old Man was adamant, and, with the help of his son—the present Captain Moodie—rigged up a jury rudder, an almost unique feat in the annals of sailing ships. Fighting against terrible odds, the *Cutty Sark* battled on. But it was hopeless, and the captain had the mortification of seeing his rival draw ahead, despite the strenuous efforts of his entire crew to keep the ship at full speed. Nevertheless, the *Cutty Sark* arrived at Gravesend only a few days behind the *Thermopyla*, and Captain Moodie earned more praise and

fame for his wonderful performance in bringing home his disabled ship than his rival did in winning the race.

WILLIAM McINVERRY.

**T**O judge by the letters we have been receiving about it, Shipmate Weaver's account of his passage in the *Bengairn* was very well received by all hands—particularly those who have been to the southward in sailing ships. Captain Jones, of Newport News, sent us a letter about it which we published in the last issue, and we have two more letters to go in this number of the Log Book.

The first letter is from an ex-spainier now in New York. You will remember that Mr. Weaver mentioned in his letter that the *Bengairn's* main-topgallant mast was sent aloft in an unorthodox manner while she was refitting in Sydney after having been partially dismantled in a blow off Newcastle, New South Wales.

Seamen have an accepted method of doing all work connected with masting a ship. These methods have been handed down by generations of sailors and are supposed to be perfect. But steel and iron spars and rigging brought about changes in these processes. However, sailors, while they are almost slaves to tradition, are not as absolutely bound up in it as some people imagine. In proof of this there are the mottoes—"different ships, different long splices," and "different ships, different places for the flying-jib halyards." These mean that, while there is a standard way of doing everything about a ship, there is also some other way of doing it in most cases.

Hence the interest of our correspondent, Henry P. Kirk, and his sailor friends when they read of the *Bengairn's* main-topgallant mast going aloft heel first. So if Mr. Weaver sees this, we would appreciate it if he got in touch with Shipmate Kirk and explained in greater detail just how that spar was sent aloft and stepped after it was gotten there.

In the Log Book of your splendid SEA STORIES of May and June we read Mr. Neil Weaver's long and interesting letter about his spell-o in the *Bengairn*.

I am an old-timer myself, being one of those cast up on the beach during the hurricane that wrecked the American and German fleets in Samoa in March, 1889. There are several old shellbacks bunked here with me, and we have had a few arguments about how Captain Lear-

mont stepped that main-topgallant mast. Each of us has sent that mast aloft heel first and uprighted it, and each of us insists that his way is the only way that this can be done.

Perhaps Mr. Weaver would be kind enough to tell us just how that mast was stepped, you know—finish the job. My respects to Mr. Weaver and his captain and good luck to SEA STORIES.

HENRY P. KIRK.

**C**OLONEL WALTER M. HOTZ, of the Los Angeles sheriff's office, raises a point in connection with the *Pass of Balmaha* which Mr. Weaver mentioned in his letter. Those of you who saw the letter may recall that we discussed the identity of this vessel rather completely at the time, and our remarks were substantiated by several of the other readers, Captain Jones being one of them.

Our own memory of the case of this ship was rather sure, as we were going to sea at the time when the *Pass of Balmaha*, *Belmont*, and *Vincent* were bought from British owners by a Boston firm. It is our impression that they were bought for the purpose of carrying lumber to South American ports on the Atlantic range. At any rate, they were used in this trade for a while. But when ocean freights went skyrocketing after the outbreak of the war in 1914 and tonnage became scarce they were put on the Archangel run, carrying cotton to Russia.

But this ship was no clipper—a term which is very loosely and erroneously used. Properly speaking, in the strictest sense of the word, the clipper era in the country ended before the Civil War broke out. At its best it was a very loose term, and had nothing whatsoever to do with rig. A clipper ship was merely a deep-water sailing vessel built with finer lines than the average cargo box. But as ships were built to certain economic requirements, this style of naval architecture did not enjoy a very protracted life.

They were brought into existence by the California and Australia gold rush and the tea trade. Both these conditions had disappeared before the Civil War, and at that time steamers were breaking into the tea trade. As a result the fine-lined sailing vessel was no longer built in this country. However, the British continued to build them for the later days of the tea trade and the Australian wool traffic.

To the best of our knowledge there is not one single example of the true American clipper in existence to-day. There is

at least one British clipper, but she is lying at permanent moorings in Dover and no longer goes to sea. However, there may still be several of the later British wool clippers knocking around the high seas under alien flags and names.

In the dictionary a clipper is simply described as a "kind of fast-sailing vessel with a sharp bow." If we could put the best of the old clippers alongside a present-day windjammer, it is doubtful if one out of one hundred laymen could tell which was which. And that would include a large number of seafaring men, too.

You will see by my title that I am not a sea dog, but one who has read every issue of SEA STORIES with great interest, especially the Log Book.

It is in the May edition that I note on page 137 that Shipmate Neil Weaver, in reciting some of his experiences, states that in 1906 he signed on the four-masted *Bengairn*, whose original name was the *Pass of Branda*, belonging to Rea & Sons, of Liverpool, which ship was a sister to the *Pass of Balmaha*.

I am seeking this information—does he infer that the *Pass of Balmaha* was a four-masted bark and that she was of British origin? If so, I beg to inform your readers that I am a personal friend of Count von Luckner, who commanded her during the World War under the name of *Seeadler*, and that in his biography, entitled "Count Luckner, the Sea Devil," one of the first copies of which he presented to me, he shows a copy of a photograph of the American clipper ship *Pass of Balmaha*. She was sailing under the flag of the United States, then a neutral country, when she was first captured by the British, and later from the British by the crew of a German submarine, who took her to Hamburg.

On page 129 of this book he makes the statement that they hit a sand bank, but pushed across without damage—further proof that Americans still know how to turn out a sturdy clipper ship.

All this goes to show that this ship, which was a three-masted ship, square-rigged on all three masts, was an American-built ship, as far as the count knew, and I am quite sure he told me personally that she was built in Seattle, Washington, for the lumber trade. So was the four-masted schooner *Vaterland*, in which he toured the world, or at least half of it, for the schooner is now in Long Beach harbor, California.

I would like very much to have some official record of the *Pass of Balmaha* if she is not of American build.

COLONEL WALTER M. HOTZ.

**G**OING a little further into the matter of the *Pass of Balmaha*, we can positively say that she was not built in Seattle. In fact, there has never been an iron or steel full-rigged ship built in that town. And as to Count Luckner's im-

pression that the vessel was built in this country, we think it rather strange. Every iron or steel sailing ship carries a brass plate under the break of the poop and in a prominent position on the cabin bulkhead. On this plate are inscribed the builder's name and date of launching of the ship. The same thing also applies to the ship's bell. This always is engraved with the vessel's original name and builder and the date of her launching. We have been aboard old ships so thick with rust and dirt that the bell was absolutely black, but after scratching away the dirt that covered the bell you could always find her original name.

And such was not the case with the *Pass of Balmaha*; she was always a smart ship, whatever her changes of ownership and registry. There was seldom any green mold on her bell.

In this issue of the magazine we are running the fifth installment of our serial, "Adventures of an African Slaver." The serial rights for this story were obtained from Albert & Charles Boni, who own all other rights to it. It is a first-hand account of the slave trade, written by Captain Canot, a young Italian who made his mark in that enterprise after serving as an apprentice in American ships of the time.

**M**R. JOHN MASEFIELD, of Hill Crest, Boars Hill, Oxford, England, would like to get some information about the four-masted Liverpool bark *Wanderer*, as he is writing a history of this vessel. By information Mr. Masefield does not mean tonnage, dimensions, or lists of owners—these are easily obtainable from a number of different sources. What he does want is photographs of crew groups, such as the deep-water sailor loved to have taken in foreign ports, pictures of officers and any details of their service in her that may occur to such of our readers as may know them; also, details of her voyages, if we have any readers who sailed in her, smart passages she made, and any little incident that would make interesting reading in a book of this kind.

One of our authors, G. H. Southall, who wrote "Johnson's Navy," an inter-

esting little yarn about seal catching on the Kerguelens, has sent us the following poem for use in the Log Book. Mr. Southall has another story coming out in an early issue of the magazine. This poem is a parody on an older one of the same name.

## LITTLE JIM.

A barkentine from Canada, swinging through  
the trade winds,  
Bound for Pernambuco with a cargo of dried  
fish.

The skipper was a Bluenose, the mate a Scan-  
dinavian,

And the crew, for their numbers, as mixed as  
you could wish.

Cooky was a Frenchman from St. Pierre,  
Miquelon;

The bos'n, a Newfoundlander who hailed  
from Harbor Rim.

Four A. B.'s we had—a Negro, a Dutchman,  
and an Irishman,

A San Blas Indian—and the boy was little  
Jim.

The trades slackened and died away, so we lay  
gently rolling;

The moon had sulked and hid her face be-  
hind a heavy cloud,

When the peace and calm were shattered by  
an eldrich wailing

Which rose up all around us—yowlings long  
and loud.

The souls of all the damned with shrieks the  
air were piercing,

Unto all hands aboard that ship striking ter-  
ror and afright.

Pat was on the lookout and mixed his prayers  
with cursing;

The Indian jumped and swam for it, the  
Negro turned white.

Dutch said, "Cot for dommy, de vorlt he is  
a-finishing";

The bos'n slapped his hairy chest the while  
his whiskers quivered.

"Well, I neber de debbil eber seen such a wun-  
nerful perishing.

Beats ahl my going a-fishing; our sins be  
ahl diskivered!"

And up spoke Ole Oleson, and rum was his  
religion,

"If I was only boozed now, how happy I  
could die!"

With his Bible 'neath his arm the skipper came  
a-rushing,

Crying, "I'm a Christian man bound for man-  
sions in the sky!"

And amidst all the uproar where was little Jim?  
He was perched upon the bobstay with the cat  
along o' him,

Her head and body in a bag, but her tail  
a-sticking out,

Which Jimmy pulled and twisted and made  
poor pussy shout!

**I**N one of our recent issues we pub-  
lished a letter from Shipmate Ed-  
wards in which he criticized Mr.  
Fenger's serial, "Chocolate Cove." At  
the time we did not feel that the criticism  
was justified, and went on record to that  
effect. Now Shipmate Stephen A. Smith  
comes aft with a letter in which he sub-  
stantiates our remarks about Mr. Fenger's  
serial. Which goes to show that you can't  
please everybody. Mr. Smith's letter has  
some kicks in it, so you can see that he is  
not a professional "yes" man.

As to Mr. Smith's other remarks and  
criticisms, we can only say that we are  
doing the best we can.

Your section seems to be pretty busy lately,  
from the looks of the letters in the Log Book.  
But I thought that I might find room to get a  
word in. I noticed that you have been getting  
a few knocks lately on your material, and  
that some of the stories that I had specially  
enjoyed were coming in for their share. So it  
is that which is to blame for my unwarranted  
trip aft.

I hope that the shipmate who said that  
George Allan England's "Captain Tripp" sto-  
ries were trash did not discourage you from  
printing more of the same. I have been wait-  
ing eagerly, but in vain, for more like "Rhino,  
Elephant, and Gold." These stories fairly swim  
with real humor of the Mark Twain brand,  
and no one can deny that he is a real humor-  
ist. And, besides, Mr. England seems to know  
his subject of ancient Maya civilization, any  
way, and he must know something of ships to  
put them over the way he does.

Another knock that I resented was that made  
by Shipmate Edwards. Mr. Fenger's serial,  
"Chocolate Cove," was the one that he did not  
like. But it was another of those that I espe-  
cially enjoyed, and which I have read at least  
three times, each reading being more enjoyable  
than the first. As a whole, I think your maga-  
zine is good and wish to go on record as say-  
ing so.

Seeing a brief history of the British bark  
*Hougomont* in one of the Log Books recalls the  
time when she was on Fire Island Beach, in 1915.  
My father worked on her, discharging the chalk  
she carried, to lighten ship when she was pulled  
off. I have a piece of this chalk and a good  
photograph of her while she was on the beach.

She came up so far that one was able to  
board her dry shod over the pile of discharged  
chalk at her side. This incident recalls a lot  
of other ships which ran ashore on this strip  
of land, which is not far from my home, being  
just across Great South Bay from this village.  
A list of the ships would fill this letter. Al-  
though not a famous coast, it has its own his-  
tory, which is augmented by disasters and  
drownings from time to time, and even the  
shallow bay behind it has some incidents which  
might make interesting reading.

I am sorry to hear of the death of Captain  
Kay, as I surely did like his style as expressed

in "Blacklock's Wood Nymphs." May he rest well, for he was a good shipmate.

One thing I would like to mention is that the illustrators of some of the black-gang stories seem to have tried to confuse rather than illustrate the engine and boiler-room views which they portray. Most of the pipes and valves don't seem to have any practical use, merely representing a tangled mass of machinery which looks more like wreckage. I wonder if you have noticed this, captain? You must have made some trips below, and would know an engine-room interior when you saw one. But I must say I never saw anything like some of those illustrations.

Well, that is about enough for this trip, so I'll wish you a fair wind, and please don't register the knock about the illustrations as a serious kick. I'm merely asking your opinion. So here goes for fair winds, good cargoes, and fast passages for our good ship SEA STORIES, for she's a real home.

STEPHEN A. SMITH.

**S**EVERAL months ago we published a letter from Captain Morehouse, who described sailing days on the Great Lakes. One of our other shipmates saw the letter and wrote to Captain Morehouse. As we do not know the captain's address—we wrote to him ourself, but the letter was returned—we are putting Mr. Weber's letter in these pages in the hope that Captain Morehouse will see it.

While reading through the Log Book of SEA STORIES, I noticed your item concerning the schooners *M. O. Goodman* and *Minnie Slawson*. Also that you've been master on all the lakes except Superior. Now, what I would like to know is how I can get a berth in a Lake freighter, schooner, or anything, so long as it's a fair seagoing vessel, without being made to wait at the Lake Carrier's Hall?

I've sat in there so long that I got discouraged and went over to the naval recruiting station, but I couldn't make the grade there. Just as I came out of the station a leatherneck walked up to me and asked me if I wouldn't sign up in the marines. And after I'd told him about my left eye he told me that I ought to join the army for a while and get my eyesight strengthened. But I want to go to sea or on the Lakes and not in the army.

Every time I go over in town the army recruiting officer is after me to join. Well, I got more and more discouraged, and I wrote to the shipping board, and I have my application papers for deck boy. But I want to ship on the Lakes this season, and then I could send in my application this coming fall for a job at sea. So if you could help me out in getting a berth here on the Lakes this season I'll be mighty thankful to you, Captain Morehouse. I am white, nineteen years of age, six feet tall, weigh one hundred and eighty-five pounds, and am American born. I am not a college student, but I want to make a life at sea my career and work my way up in the profession.

I am not afraid to work, either. I've had

some pretty tough jobs already. Some of them were carrying a hod, working lumber, coal, and in tile factories. I also fired a boiler when I was fourteen. So you see, sir, I've experienced plenty of tough work already, and I am not afraid of more. And I realize that going to sea is not a bed of roses. WILBUR WEBER.

**I**N the case of some of our discussions in the Log Book we get a large number of letters on the same subject. Sometimes we get so many letters about the same thing that it is impossible to publish anything like all of them. The recent case of the discussion on Pitcairn Island is a good example of what we mean by this. There were a great many letters received in this office, all dealing with the same thing—the history of Pitcairn. The topsail-schooner discussion was another example. Our reason for mentioning this is that we do not want you to feel discouraged or offended if you send us a letter and it is not printed.

Our reason for making the foregoing remarks is that the following letter is an echo of the topsail-schooner argument. Shipmate Anderson, as you will note, sent us a letter at that time which was not published. So we are making these remarks to reassure him and others whose letters did not appear in these pages.

Some years ago a controversy raged in your Log Book regarding the topsail-schooner rig. Some gentleman claimed the rig was a phantom one, fostered by the imagination of some sea writer. You yourself wisely kept neutral; undoubtedly you had your reasons for doing so.

I wrote a letter to the Log Book at the time, explaining a topsail-schooner rig, which, however, you ignored. Allow me to state that I have sailed in the rig in question, both as able-bodied seaman and mate, so I really think I was qualified to express an opinion on it.

At the present time a Spanish navy training ship is in port here. She is docked at pier No. 7, on the East River. Perhaps you have visited her; if not, you will profit by doing so, as she is a typical topsail-schooner rig.

May I say further that I have but recently arrived from a voyage to the three Scandinavian countries, and I noticed any amount of three-masted topsail schooners there. I also learned there in April of the anxiety regarding the five-masted bark *Kobnhavn*. HENRY ANDERSON.

**I**N reply to a recent letter requesting information about the *Benjamin F. Packard*, we submit the following communication from Winford P. Smith. Here again you will note the popular misconception about the clipper ship, although Mr. Smith is excused by the fact that he

admits to no seafaring experience. There has been some agitation in the press recently about riggering this ship and sending her to sea, but we seriously doubt if it comes to anything.

I noticed that Shipmate Brown desires information about the *Benjamin F. Packard*. I have never been to sea, but I am a lover of ships and I have some meager information about the *Packard*.

To the best of my knowledge she was built

in 1873 and was originally clipper-rigged. I believe she is about two hundred and twenty-five feet over all. She used to carry case oil around the Horn and was once toting lumber for a Seattle firm.

She is now owned by the Sands Point Casino Club, and I see her every day. Her top-hamper is all gone and the paint is peeling off her. However, the hull is sound all the way through, and will probably last for many years. Twice I have seen her lift with the tide and try to get out to the Sound by herself.

WINFORD P. SMITH.

## THE NEXT VOYAGE



IN



# Sea Stories

FOR SEPTEMBER

## THE ROUGH LOG

By Henry W. Stock

John Anderson wanted to fake the abstract log, but in the end he was glad he had not done so.

## PING, THE SAMARITAN

By Warrack Wallace

The East exerts a peculiar influence on all human nature, but Ping had a better knowledge of its influence on white men than they did themselves.

## FROZEN FUR

By J. Allan Dunn

The great powers have tried to regulate pelagic sealing, but sometimes men take the law in their own hands, as did "Red" Thurston on the South Georgias.

ALSO—

Short stories by your favorite authors, the conclusion of our serial, poems, and the Log Book.



## Outdoors adored...indoors ignored

**O**UTDOORS they adored this gay Philadelphia girl. She was continually surrounded with admirers. But indoors it was another story. She was hopelessly out of things.

The truth is that her trouble which went unnoticed in the open, became instantly apparent in the drawing room.

No intelligent person dares to assume complete freedom from halitosis (unpleasant breath).

Surveys show one person out of three is an occasional or habitual offender. This is due to the fact that odor-producing conditions (often caused by germs) arise constantly in even normal mouths.

The one way of keeping your breath always beyond suspicion is to rinse the mouth with full strength Listerine every morning and night and before meeting others.

Being a germicide capable of killing even the *Staphylococcus Aureus* (pus) germ in 15 seconds, full strength Listerine first strikes at the cause of odors, and then, being a powerful deodorant, destroys the odors themselves. Yet it is entirely safe to use. Lambert Pharmacal Company, St. Louis, Mo., U. S. A.

THE SAFE ANTISEPTIC  
**L I S T E R I N E**



*It's all the same to  
me—just so I get a*

# CAMEL



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**25 Cents**