SEA stories

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MR. MIDSHIPMAN
HORNBLOWER
BY C. S. FORESTER

NOVEMBER 1953 35c
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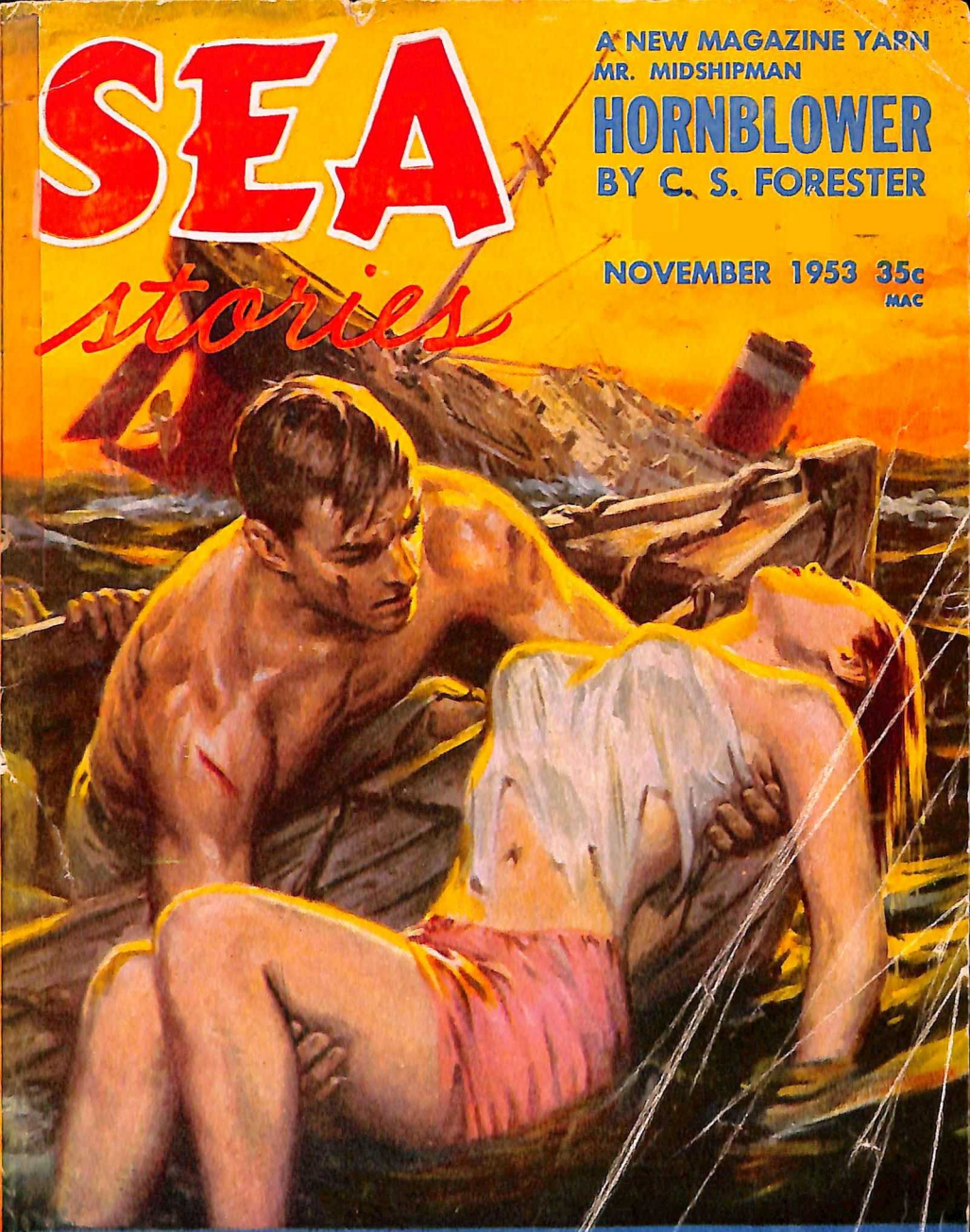

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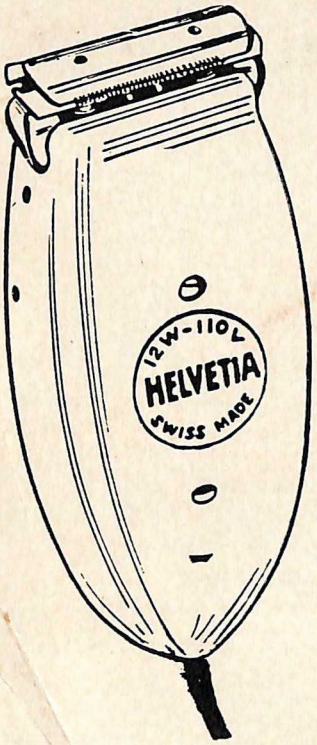

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Volume 1 **NOVEMBER, 1953** **Number 1**

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CLASSIC OF THE SEA

ARTICLES

DEPARTMENTS

COVER BY CLARENCE DOORE

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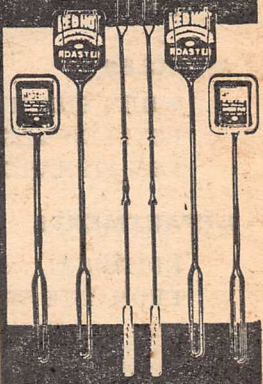

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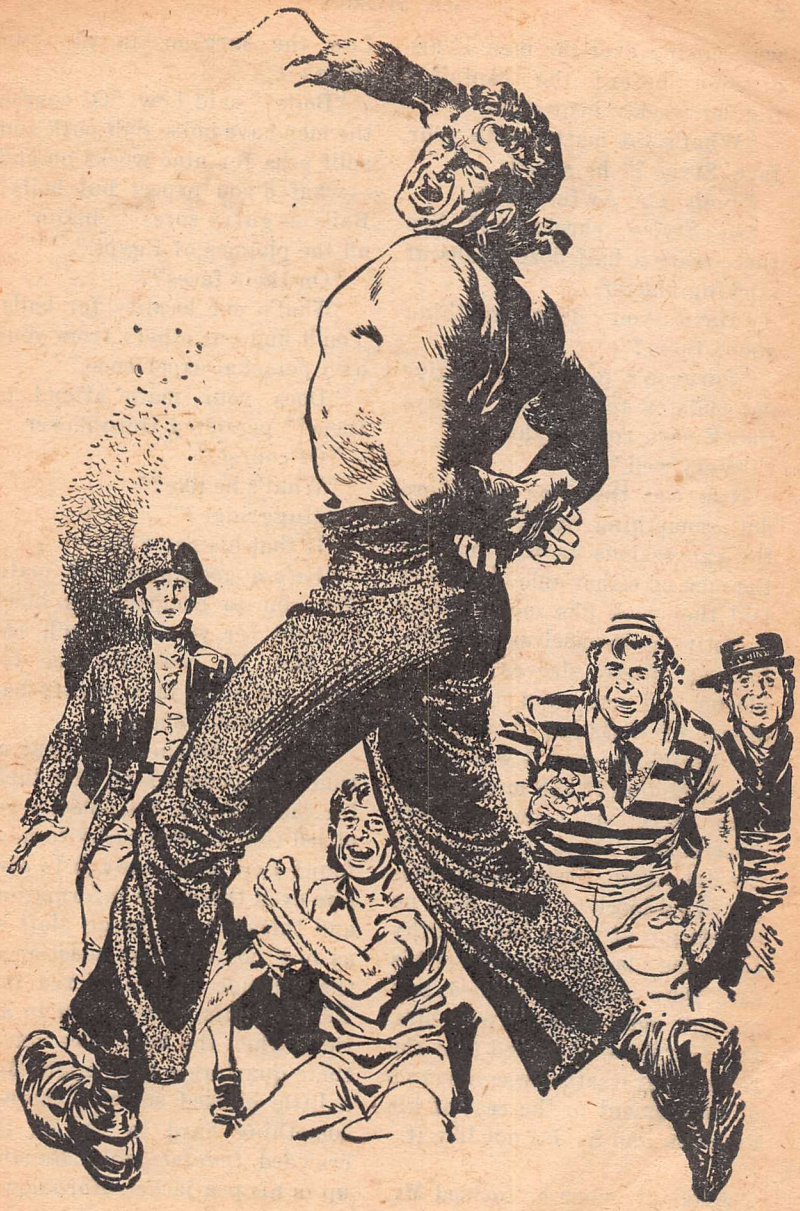
MR. MIDSHIPMAN HORNBLOWER

BY C. S. FORESTER

Hornblower was young—but youth is no excuse for failure. The future Captain and Commodore of the Royal Navy fights one of the most critical battles of his career.

Winter had come to the Bay of Biscay. With the passing of the Equinox the gales began to increase in violence, adding infinitely to the labors and dangers of the British navy watching over the coast of France; easterly gales, bitter cold, which the storm-tossed ships had to endure as best they could, when the spray froze on the rigging and the laboring hulls leaked like baskets; westerly gales, when the ships had to claw their way to safety from a lee shore, and make a risky compromise between gaining sufficient sea-room and maintaining a position from which they could pounce on any French vessel venturing out of harbor. We speak about the storm-tossed ships. But those ships were full of storm-tossed men, who week by week and month by month had to endure the continued cold and the continual wet, the salt provisions, the endless toil, the boredom and misery of life in the blockading fleets. Even in the frigates, the eyes and claws of the blockaders, boredom had to be endured, the boredom of long periods with the hatches battened down, with the deck seams above dripping water on the men below, long nights and short days, broken sleep and yet not enough to do.

Even in the *Indefatigable* there was a feeling of restlessness in the air, and even a mere midshipman like Hornblower could be aware of it as he



was looking over the men of his division before the captain's regular weekly inspection.

"What's the matter with your face, Styles?" he asked.

"Boils, sir. Awful bad."

On Styles' cheeks and lips there were a half dozen dabs of sticking plaster.

"Have you done anything about them?"

"Surgeon's mate, sir, 'e give me plaister for 'em an' 'e says they'll soon come right, sir."

"Very well."

Now was there, or was there not, something strained about the expressions on the faces of the men on either side of Styles? Did they look like men smiling secretly to themselves? Laughing up their sleeves? Hornblower did not want to be an object of derision; it was bad for discipline—and it was worse for discipline if the men shared some secret unknown to their officers. He glanced sharply along the line again. Styles was standing like a block of wood, with no expression at all on his swarthy face; the black ringlets over his ears were properly combed, and no fault could be found with him. But Hornblower sensed that the recent conversation was a source of amusement to the rest of his division, and he did not like it.

After divisions he tackled Mr. Low the surgeon, in the gun room.

"Boils?" said Low. "Of course the men have boils. Salt pork and split peas for nine weeks on end —what d'you expect but boils? Boils — gurry sores — blains — all the plagues of Egypt."

"On their faces?"

"That's one locality for boils. You'll find out others from your own personal experience."

"Does your mate attend to them?" persisted Hornblower.

"Of course."

"What's he like?"

"Muggridge?"

"Is that his name?"

"He's a good surgeon's mate. Get him to compound a black draught for you and you'll see. In fact, I'd prescribe one for you—you seem in a mighty bad temper, young man."

Mr. Low finished his glass of rum and pounded on the table for the steward. Hornblower realized that he was lucky to have found Low sober enough to give him even this much information, and turned away to go aloft so as to brood over the question in the solitude of the mizzen top. This was his new station in action; when the men were not at their quarters a man might find a little blessed solitude there—something hard to find in the crowded *Indefatigable*. Bundled up in his pea-jacket, Hornblower

sat in the mizzen top; over his head the mizzen topmast drew erratic circles against the grey sky; beside him the topmast shrouds sang their high-pitched note in the blustering gale, and below him the life of the ship went on as she rolled and pitched, standing to the northward under close reefed topsails. At eight bells she would wear to the southward again on her incessant patrol. Until that time Hornblower was free to meditate on the boils on Styles' face and the covert grins on the faces of the other men of the division.

Two hands appeared on the stout wooden barricade surrounding the top, and as Hornblower looked up with annoyance at having his meditations interrupted a head appeared above them. It was Finch, another man in Hornblower's division, who also had his station in action here in the mizzen top. He was a frail little man with wispy hair and pale blue eyes and a foolish smile, which lit up his face when, after betraying some disappointment at finding the mizzen top already occupied, he recognized Hornblower.

"Beg pardon, sir," he said. "I didn't know as how you was up here."

Finch was hanging on uncomfortably, back downwards, in the act of transferring himself from the futtock shrouds to the top, and each roll threatened to shake him loose.

"Oh, come here if you want to," said Hornblower, cursing himself for his softheartedness. A taut officer, he felt, would have told Finch to go back whence he came and not bother him.

"Thank 'ee, sir. Thank 'ee," said Finch, bringing his legs over the barricade and allowing the ship's roll to drop him into the top.

He crouched down to peer under the foot of the mizzen topsail forward to the mainmast head, and then turned back to smile disarmingly at Hornblower like a child caught in moderate mischief. Hornblower knew that Finch was a little weak in the head—the all-embracing press swept up idiots and landsmen to help man the fleet—although he was a trained seaman who could hand, reef, and steer. That smile betrayed him.

"It's better up here than down below, sir," said Finch, apologetically.

"You're right," said Hornblower with a disinterested intonation which would discourage conversation.

He turned away to ignore Finch, settled his back again comfortably, and allowed the steady swing of the top mesmer-

ize him into dreamy thought that might deal with his problem. Yet is was not easy, for Finch was as restless almost as a squirrel in a cage, peering forward, changing his position, and so continually breaking in on Hornblower's train of thought, wasting the minutes of his precious half hour of freedom.

"What the devil's the matter with you, Finch?" he rasped at last, patience quite exhausted.

"The Devil, sir?" said Finch. "It isn't the Devil. He's not up here, begging your pardon, sir."

That weak mysterious grin again, like a mischievous child. A great depth of secrets lay in those strange blue eyes. Finch peered under the topsail again; it was a gesture like a baby's playing peep-bo.

"There!" said Finch. "I saw him that time, sir. God's come back to the maintop, sir."

"God?"

"Aye indeed, sir. Sometimes He's in the maintop. More often than not, sir. I saw Him that time, with His beard all a-blowing in the wind. 'Tis only from here that you can see Him, sir."

What could be said to a man with that sort of delusion?. Hornblower racked his brains for an answer, and found none. Finch seemed to have forgotten his presence, and was playing peep-bo again under the foot of the mizzen topsail.

"There He is!" said Finch to himself. "There He is again! God's in the maintop, and the Devil's in the cable tier."

"Very appropriate," said Hornblower cynically, but to himself. He had no thought of laughing at Finch's delusions.

"The Devil's in the cable tier during the dogwatches," said Finch again to no one at all. "God stays in the maintop forever."

"A curious timetable," was Hornblower's *sotto voce* comment.

From down on the deck below came the first stroke of eight bells, and at the same moment the pipes of the bosun's mates began to twitter, and the bellow of Waldron the bos'un made itself heard.

"Turn out the watch below! All hands wear ship! All hands! All hands! You, master-at-arms, take the name of the last man up the hatchway. All hands!"

The interval of peace, short as it was, and broken by Finch's disturbing presence, was at an end. Hornblower dived over the barricade and gripped the futtock shrouds; not for him was the easy descent through the lubber's hole, not when the first lieutenant might see him and reprimand him for unseamanlike behavior. Finch waited for him

to quit the top, but even with this length start Hornblower was easily outpaced in the descent to the deck, for Finch, like the skilled seaman he was, ran down the shrouds as lightly as a monkey. Then the thought of Finch's curious illusions was temporarily submerged in the business of laying the ship on her new course.

But later in the day Hornblower's mind reverted inevitably to the odd things Finch had been saying. There could be no doubt that Finch firmly believed he saw what he said he saw. Both his words and his expression made that certain. He had spoken about God's beard—it was a pity that he had not spared a few words to describe the Devil in the cable tier. Horns, cloven hoof, and pitchfork? Hornblower wondered. And why was the Devil only loose in the cable tier during the dogwatches? Strange that he should keep to a timetable. Hornblower caught his breath as the sudden haps there might be some worldly explanation. The Devil thought came to him that permight well be loose in the cable tier in a metaphorical fashion during the dogwatches. Devil's work might be going on there. Hornblower had to decide on what was his duty; and he had to decide further on what was expedient. He could report his suspicions to Eccles, the first lieutenant; but after a year of service Hornblower was under no illusions about what might happen to a junior midshipman who worried a first lieutenant with unfounded suspicions. It would be better to see for himself first, as far as that went. But he did not know what he would find—if he should find anything at all—and he did not know how he should deal with it if he found anything. Much worse than that, he did not know if he would be able to deal with it in officerlike fashion. He could make a fool of himself. He might mishandle whatever situation he found, and bring down obloquy and derision upon his head, and he might imperil the discipline of the ship—weaken the slender thread of allegiance that bound officers and men together, the discipline which kept three hundred men at the bidding of their captain suffering untold hardship without demur; which made them ready to face death at the word of command. When eight bells told the end of the afternoon watch and the beginning of the first dogwatch it was with trepidation that Hornblower went below to put a candle in a lantern and make his way forward to the cable tier.

It was dark down here, stuffy,

odorous, and as the ship heaved and rolled he found himself stumbling over the various obstacles that impeded his progress. Yet forward there was a faint light, a murmer of voices. Hornblower chocked down his fear that perhaps mutiny was being planned. He put his hand over the horn window of the lantern, so as to obscure its light, and crept forward. Two lanterns swung from the low deck beams, and crouching under them were a score or more of men—more than that, even—and the buzz of their talk came loudly but indistinguishably to Hornblower's ears. Then the buzz increased to a roar, and someone in the center of the circle rose suddenly to as near his full height as the deck beams allowed. He was shaking himself violently from side to side for no apparent reason; his face was away from Hornblower, who saw with a gasp that his hands were tied behind him. The men roared again, like spectators at a prizefight, and the man with his hands tied swung round so that Hornblower could see his face. It was Styles, the man who suffered from boils; Hornblower knew him at once. But that was not what made the most impression on Hornblower. Clinging to the man's face, weird in the shifting meagre light, was a gray writhing shape, and it was to shake this off that Styles was flinging himself about so violently. It was a rat; Hornblower's stomach turned over with horror.

With a wild jerk of his head Styles broke the grip of the rat's teeth and flung the creature down, and then instantly plunged down on his knees, with his hands still bound behind him, to pursue it with his own teeth.

"Time!" roared a voice at that moment—the voice of Partridge, bosun's mate. Hornblower had been roused by it often enough to recognize it at once.

"Five dead," said another voice. "Pay all bets of evens or better."

Hornblower plunged forward. Part of the cable had been coiled down to make a rat pit ten feet across in which knelt Styles with dead and living rats about his knees. Partridge squatted beside the ring with a sandglass—used for timing the casting of the log—in front of him.

"Six dead," protested someone. "That un's dead."

"No, he ain't."

"'Is back's broken. 'E's a dead'un."

"'E ain't a dead'un," said Partridge.

The man who had protested looked up at that moment, and caught sight of Hornblower, and his words died away unspoken;

at his silence the other followed his glance and stiffened into rigidity, and Hornblower stepped forward. He was still wondering what he should do; he was still fighting down the nausea excited by the horrible things he had seen.

Desperately, he mastered his horror, and, thinking fast, took his stand on discipline.

"Who's in charge here," he demanded.

He ran his eye round the circle. Petty officers and second class warrant officers, mainly; bosun's mates, carpenter's mates. Muggridge, the surgeon's mate—his presence explained much. But his own position was not easy. A midshipman of scant service depended for his authority on board largely on the force of his own personality. He was only a warrant officer himself; when all was said and done a midshipman was much less important to the ship's economy—and was far more easily replaced—than, say, Washburn the cooper's mate over there, who knew all about the making and storage of the ship's water barrels.

"Who's in charge here?" he demanded again, and once more received no direct reply.

"We ain't on watch," said a voice in the background.

Hornblower by now mastered his horror; his indignation still flared within him but he could appear outwardly calm.

"No, you're not on watch," he said coldly. "You're gambling."

Muggridge took up the defence at that.

"Gambling, Mr. Hornblower?" he said. "That's a very serious charge. Just a gentlemanly competition. You'll find it hard to sub—substantiate any charges of gambling."

Muggridge had been drinking, quite obviously, following perhaps the example of the head of his department. There was brandy to be got in the medical stores. A surge of wrath made Hornblower tremble; the effort necessary to keep himself standing stock still was almost too much for him. But the rise in internal pressure brought him inspiration.

"Mr. Muggridge," he said icily, "I advise you not to say too much. There are other charges possible, Mr. Muggridge. A member of His Majesty's forces can be charged with rendering himself unfit for service, Mr. Muggridge. And similarly there might be charges of aiding and abetting which might include *you*. I should consult the Articles of War if I were you, Mr. Muggridge. The punishment for such an offence is flogging round the fleet, I believe."

Hornblower pointed to Styles,

with the blood streaming from his bitten face, and gave more force to his argument by the gesture. He had met the men's arguments with a more effective one along the same lines; they had taken up a legalistic defence and he had legalistically beaten it down. He had the upper hand now and could give vent to his moral indignations.

"I could bring charges against every one of you," he roared. "You could be court-martialled— disrated — flogged — every man Jack of you. By God, one more look like that from you, Partridge, and I'll do it. You'd all be in irons five minutes after I spoke to Mr. Eccles. I'll have no more of these filthy games. Let those rats loose, there, you, Oldroyd, and you, Lewis. Styles, get your face plastered up again. You, Partridge, take these men and coil this cable down properly again before Mr. Waldron sees it. I'll keep my eye on all of you in the future. The next hint I have of misbehavior and you'll all be at the gratings. I've said it and by God I mean it!"

Hornblower was surprised both at his own volubility and at his self-possession. He had not known himself capable of carrying off matters with such a high hand. He sought about in his mind for a final salvo with which to make his retirement dignified, and it came to him as he turned away so that he turned back to deliver it.

"After this I want to see you in the dogwatches skylarking on deck, not skulking in the cable tiers like a lot of Frenchmen."

That was the sort of speech to be expected of a pompous old captain, not a junior midshipman, but it served to give dignity to his retirement. There was a feverish buzz of voices as he left the group. Hornblower went up on deck, under the cheerless gray sky dark with premature night, to walk the deck to keep himself warm while the *Indefatigable* slashed her way to windward in the teeth of a roaring westerly, the spray flying in sheets over her bows, the straining seams leaking and her fabric groaning; the end of a day like all the preceding ones and the predecessor probably of innumerable more.

Yet the days passed, and with them came at last a break in the monotony. In the sombre dawn a hoarse bellow from the lookout turned every eye to windward, to where a dull blotch on the horizon marked the presence of a ship. The watch came running to the braces as the *Indefatigable* was laid as close to the wind as she would lie. Captain Pellew came on deck with a pea-jacket over his nightshirt, his wigless

head comical in a pink nightcap; he trained his glass on the strange sail—a dozen glasses were pointing in that direction. Hornblower, looking through the glass reserved for the junior officer of the watch, saw the gray rectangle split into three, saw the three grow narrow, and then broaden again to coalesce into a single rectangle again.

"She's gone about," said Pellew. "Hands 'bout ship!"

Round came the *Indefatigable* on the other tack; the watch raced aloft to shake out a reef from the topsails while from the deck the officers looked up at the straining canvas to calculate the chances of the gale which howled round their ears splitting the sails or carrying away a spar. The *Indefatigable* lay over until it was hard to keep one's footing on the streaming deck; everyone without immediate duties clung to the weather rail and peered at the other ship.

"Fore and main topmasts exactly equal," said Lieutenant Bolton to Hornblower, his telescope to his eye. "Topsails white as milady's fingers. She's a Frenchie all right."

The sails of British ships were darkened with long service in all weathers; when a French ship escaped from harbor to run the blockade her spotless unweathered canvas disclosed her nationality without real need to take into consideration less obvious technical characteristics.

"We're weathering on her," said Hornblower; his eye was aching with staring through the glass, and his arms even were weary with holding the telescope to his eye, but in the excitement of the chase he could not relax.

"Not as much as I'd like," growled Bolton.

"Hands to the mainbrace!" roared Pellew at that moment.

It was a matter of the most vital concern to trim the sails so as to lie as close as possible to the wind; a hundred yards gained to windward would count as much as a mile gained in a stern chase. Pellew was looking up at the sails, back at the fleeting wake, across at the French ship, gauging the strength of the wind, estimating the strain on the rigging, doing everything that a lifetime of experience could suggest to close the gap between the two ships. Pellew's next order sent all hands to run out the guns on the weather side; that would in part counteract the heel and give the *Indefatigable* more grip upon the water.

"Now we're walking up to her," said Bolton with grudging optimism.

"Beat to quarters!" shouted Pellew.

The ship had been expecting that order. The roar of the marine bandsmen's drums echoed through the ship; the pipes twittered as the bosun's mates repeated the order, and the men ran in disciplined fashion to their duties. Hornblower, jumping for the weather mizzen shrouds, saw the eager grins on half a dozen faces—battle and the imminent possibility of death were a welcome change from the eternal monotony of the blockade. Up in the mizzen top he looked over his men. They were uncovering the locks of their muskets and looking to the priming; satisfied with their readiness for action Hornblower turned his attention to the swivel gun. He took the tarpaulin from the breech and the tompion from the muzzle, cast off the lashings which secured it, and saw that the swivel moved freely in the socket and the trunnions freely in the crotch. A jerk of the lanyard showed him that the lock was sparking well and there was no need for a new flint. Finch came climbing into the top with the canvas belt over his shoulder containing the charges for the gun; the bags of musket balls lay handy in a garland fixed to the barricade. Finch rammed home a cartridge down the short muzzle; Hornblower had ready a bag of balls to ram down onto it. Then he took a priming-quill and forced it down the touch-hole, feeling sensitively to make sure the sharp point pierced the thin serge bag of the cartridge. Priming-quill and flintlock were necessary up here in the top, where no slow match or port-fire could be used with the danger of uncontrollable fire so great in the sails and the rigging. Yet musketry and swivel-gun fire from the tops were an important tactical consideration. With the ships laid yard-arm Hornblower's men could clear the hostile quarterdeck where centered the brains and control of the enemy.

"Stop that, Finch!" said Hornblower irritably; turning, he had caught sight of him peering up at the maintop and at this moment of tension Finch's delusions annoyed him.

"Beg your pardon, sir," said Finch, resuming his duties.

But a moment later Hornblower heard Finch whispering to himself.

"Mr. Bracegirdle's there," whispered Finch. "An' Oldroyd's there, an' all those others. But *He's* there too, so He is."

"Hands wear ship!" came the shouted order from the deck below.

The old *Indefatigable* was spinning round on her heel, the yards groaning as the braces

swung them round. The French ship had made a bold attempt to rake her enemy as she clawed up to her, but Pellew's prompt handling defeated the plan. Now the ships were broadside to broadside, running free before the wind at long cannon shot.

"Just look at 'im!" roared Douglas, one of the musket men in the top. "Twenty guns a side. Looks brave enough, doesn't he?"

Standing near Douglas, Hornblower could look down on the Frenchman's deck, her guns run out with the guns' crews clustering round them, officers in white breeches and blue coats walking up and down, the spray flying from her bows as she drove headlong before the wind.

"She'll look braver still when we take her into Plymouth Sound," said the seaman on the far side of Hornblower.

The *Indefatigable* was slightly the faster ship; an occasional touch of starboard helm was working her in closer to the enemy, into decisive range, without allowing the Frenchman to headreach upon her. Hornblower was impressed by the silence on both sides; he had always understood that the French were likely to open fire at long range and to squander ineffectively the first carefully loaded broadside.

"When's he goin' to fire?" asked Douglas, echoing Hornblower's thoughts.

"In his own good time," piped Finch.

The gap of tossing water between the two ships was growing narrower. Hornblower swung the swivel gun round and looked along the sights. He could aim well enough at the Frenchman's quarterdeck, but it was much too long a range for a bag of musket balls—in any case he dared not open fire until Pellew gave permission.

"Them's the men for us!" said Douglas, pointing to the Frenchman's mizzen top.

It looked as if there were soldiers up there, judging by the blue uniforms and the crossbelts; the French often eked out their scanty crews of trained seamen by shipping soldiers; in the British navy the marines were never employed aloft. The French soldiers saw the gesture and shook their fists, and a young officer among them drew his sword and brandished it over his head. With the ships parallel to each other like this the French mizzen top would be Hornblower's particular objective should he decide on trying to silence the firing there instead of sweeping the quarterdeck. He gazed curiously at the men it was his duty to kill. So interested was he that the bang of a cannon took

him by surprise; before he could look down the rest of the Frenchman's broadside had gone off in straggling fashion, and a moment later the *Indefatigable* lurched as all her guns went off together. The wind blew the smoke forward, so that in the mizzen top they were not troubled by it at all. Hornblower's glance showed him dead men flung about on the *Indefatigable's* deck, dead men falling on the Frenchman's deck. Still the range was too great—very long musket shot, his eye told him.

"They're shootin' at us, sir," said Herbert.

"Let 'em," said Hornblower.

No musket fired from a heaving masthead at that range could possibly score a hit; that was obvious—so obvious that even Hornblower, madly excited as he was, could not help but be aware of it, and his certainty was apparent in his tone. It was interesting to see how the two calm words steadied the men. Down below the guns were roaring away continuously, and the ships were nearing each other fast.

"Open fire now, men!" said Hornblower. "Finch!"

He stared down the short length of the swivel gun. In the coarse V of the notch on the muzzle he could see the Frenchman's wheel, the two quartermasters standing behind it, the two officers beside it. He jerked the lanyard. A tenth of a second's delay, and then the gun roared out. He was conscious, before the smoke whirled round him, of the firing-quill, blown from the touchhole, flying past his temple; Finch was already sponging out the gun. The musket balls must have spread badly; only one of the helmsmen was down and someone else was already running to take his place. At that moment the whole top lurched frightfully; Hornblower felt it but he could not explain it. There was too much happening at once. The solid timbers under his feet jarred him as he stood—perhaps a shot had hit the mizzen mast. Finch was ramming in the cartridge; something struck the breech of the gun a heavy blow and left a bright splash of metal there—a musket bullet from the Frenchman's mizzen top. Hornblower tried to keep his head; he took out another sharpened quill and coaxed it down into the touchhole. It had to be done purposefully and yet gently; a quill broken off in the touchhole was likely to be a maddening nuisance. He felt the point of the quill pierce the cartridge; Finch rammed home the wad on top of the musket balls. A bullet struck the barricade beside him as

Hornblower trained the gun down, but he gave it no thought. Surely the top was swaying more even than the heavy sea justified? No matter. He had a clear shot at the enemy's quarterdeck. He tugged at the lanyard. He saw men fall. He actually saw the spokes of the wheel spin round as it was left untended. Then the two ships came together with a shattering crash and his world dissolved into a chaos compared with which what had gone before was orderly.

The mast was falling. The top swung round in a dizzy arc so that only his fortunate grip on the swivel saved him from being flung out like a stone from a sling. It wheeled round. With the shrouds on one side shot away and two cannon balls in its heart the mast tottered and rolled. Then the tug of the mizzen stays inclined it forward, the tug of the other shrouds inclined it to starboard, and the wind in the mizzen topsail took charge when the back stays parted. The mast crashed forward; the topmast caught against the mainyard and the whole structure hung there before it could dissolve into its constituent parts. The severed butt-end of the mast must be resting on the deck for the moment; mast and topmast were still united at the cap and the trestle-trees into one continuous length, although why the topmast had not snapped at the cap was hard to say. With the lower end of the mast resting precariously on the deck, and the topmast resting against the mainyard Hornblower and Finch still had a chance of life, but the ship's motion, another shot from the Frenchman, or the parting of the over-strained material could all end that chance. The mast could slip outwards, the topmast could break, the butt-end of the mast could slip along the deck—they had to save themselves if they could before any one of these imminent events occurred. The main topmast and everything above it was involved in the general ruin. It too had fallen and was dangling, sails spars and ropes in one frightful tangle. The mizzen topsail had torn itself free. Hornblower's eyes met Finch's; Finch and he were clinging to the swivel gun, and there was no one else in the steeply inclined top.

The starboard side mizzen topmast shrouds still survived; they, as well as the topmast, were resting across the main yard, strained taut as fiddle strings, the mainyard tightening them just as the bridge tightens the strings of a fiddle. But along those shrouds lay the only way to safety—a sloping path from

the peril of the top to the comparative safety of the mainyard.

The mast began to slip, to roll, out towards the end of the yard. Even if the mainyard held, the mizzen mast would soon fall into the sea alongside. All about them were thunderous noises—spars smashing, ropes parting; the guns were still bellowing and everyone below seemed to be yelling and screaming.

The top lurched again, frightfully. Two of the shrouds parted with the strain, with a noise clearly audible through the other din, and as they parted the mast twisted with a jerk, swinging round further the mizzen top, the swivel gun, and the two wretched beings who clung to it. Finch's staring blue eyes rolled with the movement of the top. Later Hornblower knew that the whole period of the fall of the mast was no longer than a few seconds, but at this time it seemed as if he had at least long minutes in which to think. Like Finch's, his eyes stared round him, saw the chance of safety.

"The mainyard!" he screamed.

Finch's face bore its foolish smile. Although instinct or training kept him gripping the swivel gun he seemingly had no fear, no desire to gain the safety of the mainyard.

"Finch, you fool!" yelled Hornblower.

He locked a desperate knee round the swivel so as to free a hand with which to gesticulate, but still Finch made no move.

"Jump, damn you!" raved Hornblower. "The shrouds—the yard. Jump!"

Finch only smiled.

"Jump and get to the maintop! Oh, Christ—!" Inspiration came in that frightful moment. "The maintop! God's there, Finch! Go along to God, quick!"

Those words penetrated into Finch's addled brain. He nodded with sublime unworldliness. Then he let go of the swivel and seemed to launch himself into the air like a frog. His body fell across the mizzen topmast shrouds and he began to scramble along them. The mast rolled again, so that when Hornblower launched himself at the shrouds it was a longer jump. Only his shoulders reached the outermost shroud. He swung off, clung, nearly lost his grip, but regained it as a counterlurch of the leaning mast came to his assistance. Then he was scrambling along the shrouds, mad with panic. Here was the precious mainyard, and he threw himself across it, grappling its welcome solidity with his body, his feet feeling for the footrope. He was safe and steady on the yard just as the outward roll of

the *Indefatigable* gave the balancing spars their final impetus, and the mizzen topmast parted company from the broken mizzen mast and the whole wreck fell down into the sea alongside. Hornblower shuffled along the yard, whither Finch had preceded him, to be received with rapture in the maintop by Midshipman Bracegirdle. Bracegirdle was not God, but as Hornblower leaned across the breastwork of the maintop he thought to himself that if he had not spoken about God being in the maintop Finch would never have made that leap.

"Thought we'd lost you," said Bracegirdle, helping him in and thumping him on the back. "Midshipman Hornblower, our flying angel."

Finch was in the top, too, smiling his fool's smile and surrounded by the crew of the top. Everything seemed mad and exhilarating. It was a shock to remember that they were in the midst of a battle, and yet the firing had ceased, and even the yelling had almost died away. He staggered to the side of the top —strange how difficult it was to walk—and looked over. Bracegirdle came with him. Foreshortened by the height he could make out a crowd of figures on the Frenchman's deck. Those check shirts must surely be worn by British sailors. Surely that was Eccles, the *Indefatigable's* first lieutenant, on the quarterdeck with a speaking trumpet.

"What has happened?" he asked Bracegirdle, bewildered.

"What has happened?" Bracegirdle stared for a moment before he understood. "We carried her by boarding. Eccles and the boarders were over the ship's side the moment we touched. Why, man, didn't you see?"

"No, I didn't see it," said Hornblower. He forced himself to joke. "Other matters demanded my attention at that moment."

He remembered how the mizzen top had lurched and swung, and he felt suddenly sick. But he did not want Bracegirdle to see it.

"I must go on deck and report," he said.

The descent of the main shrouds was a slow, ticklish business, for neither his hands nor his feet seemed to wish to go where he tried to place them. Even when he reached the deck he still felt insecure. Bolton was on the quarterdeck supervising the clearing away of the wreck of the mizzen mast. He gave a start of surprise as Hornblower approached.

"I thought you were overside with Davy Jones," he said. He glanced aloft. "You reached the

mainyard in just about time?"

"Yes, sir."

"Excellent. I think you're born to be hanged, Hornblower." Bolton turned away to bellow at the men.

" 'Vast heaving, there! Clynes, get down into the chains with that tackle! Steady, now, or you'll lose it."

He watched the labors of the men for some moments before he turned back to Hornblower.

"No more trouble with the men for a couple of months," he said. "We'll work 'em 'till they drop, refitting. Prize crew will leave us shorthanded, to say nothing of our butcher's bill. It'll be a long time before they want something new. It'll be a long time for you, too, I fancy, Hornblower."

"Yes, sir," said Hornblower.

SEA MOVIE OF THE MONTH

The book that topped the best-seller lists for years, THE CRUEL SEA by Nicholas Monsarrat, has been made into an outstanding movie by Michael Balcon.

It is not the story of one man or many men, although the characters are all sailors on the same ship. It is rather the tale of the ship herself, *H. M. S. Compass Rose*. She is a stubby, unlovely craft that we follow from her birth in the shipyard to her death in the cold North Atlantic, one of the many vessels that served in the defense of the convoys in World War II.

The reason for the title soon becomes apparent. In spite of the U-Boats and bombers the sailors' enemy is still the cruel sea. The shipboard scenes are some of the most realistic ever filmed, giving the movie goer a chance to join in the battle against submarines and the sea.

The cast includes many fine players, although the majority of them are unknown to American audiences. Jack Hawkins, who plays Lieutenant Commander Ericson, is an exception. A stage actor for over twenty-one years, he has also acted in such movies as *State Secret* and *The Fallen Idol*.

For a taste of real nautical adventure don't miss *The Cruel Sea*.

from the whaler's log

No. 1

BY CAP'N ZEBULON PIKE

I'm loafing along the wharves t'other day, reaming m' clay pipe and looking cross the sun-tipped ripple o' the harbor out o' which 329 whaleships was setting hard bone in teeth during New Bedford's "Golden Age"—making up the biggest private fleet in the world. This pretty young wife of a draggerman passes me by on the way t' seeing her man basket out his snag o'yellowtail at one o' the boats.

Maybe m'sailor's eye is a bit dimmer these days, but I did notice something else about her what made me look t' the second wharf over. The scent o'the lass's perfume once more made me see the *Athlete*, the *Adelia Chace*, *Sea Fox*, *Falcon*, *Morning Star* and so many other barks, brigs and schooners tying up there with the gladsomest cry what's ever been heard in this old barnacled port.

"Ambergris! We're rich!"

Now y' know why a-sea, once the cutting-in was done and the stinking blubber was being shoved and pulled cross-deck, nary a skipper dumped the massive waste carcass before undertaking a final and very careful jab into any whale's guts he could find. Ambergris . . . often worth more 'n its weight in gold. It's used as a base for the most expensive perfumes. A fair-size chunk could make y' richer'n three years o' dawn-to-moon blubber hunting and boiling.

No surprise that one story went around saying the worst thing a brig's master hated t' see was a healthy mammal. Fact is, the best whale was the sickest one, even so far as being dead when y' pounced on him. Y' see, a whale's got t'have belly trouble so's the natural working o' his guts starts fighting off the bad food, shells, rotted plants and all else what's hurting him. Chemicals what does this fighting become solid. That's amber-

gris, the longer it keeps growing, the closer some lucky whaleman's getting t' beating the record catches set t' date.

But just try t' beat the all-time record catch made by Cap'n J. A. M. Earle out o' Mattapoisett. He's humpbacking lazy-like off the Chatham Islands near New Zealand in October of '83, when one o' the rings high above the *Splendid's* deck sing a throaty, "Ah-h-h blows—buh-lows!"

Boatmen swing from the davits, splashing down t' knife toward the mountainous spouter. The fight's a ticklish one, giving the second mate's boat a half-hour sleigh ride before he chops line. Two other boats take t' sticking the monster, playing him t' dusk before he showers his own blood and is hauled t' the *Splendid.*

But dusk ain't dimming Cap'n Earle's hungry eye. What's that floating aside the whale? As two men scoops up the greyish flakes, Earle's heart is beating like a mad sperm's flukes. And not for naught. Sure as blubber's greasy, the stuff turns out t' be ambergris.

"The whale must be packed with 90 tons of it!" a hand yips.

Not that much, o' course. But these whalemen take t' slicing up that creature like cutters never spaded before—and lo! one o' the spades suddenly chugs into something what feels like hard rubber. That's what throws every hand t' the same spot, trimming away intestine. Halfway through the job, discouragement darks their faces: the chunk's too big—it can't be ambergris because none's ever been seen this size.

They labor just the same, and it takes the whole bunch o' hands t' drag out the great mass. Sweating, breathing hard, a circle o' faces now watches Cap'n Earle make the test under the flicker o' whale-oil lanterns. He heats a knife blade red, plunges it into the chunk. Everybody's tense. Slowly, scared-like, Earle begin t' pull it out. An oily substance oozes with the hot blade.

"*Ambergris!*" They whoop joy all over deck. "Real gold!"

So it was, too . . . a whopping 973 pounds of it, a haul what still stands unmatched. It brung a right smack $125,000.

The schooner *Watchman* out o' Nantucket came mighty close t' making as much with its 800-pound lump in 1858. After that there ain't a haul what amounts t' more'n 215 pounds. Take the *Morning Star.* She was right lucky again and again but never got more'n 20 pounds, and she also holds the record for catching the smallest bit what any bark's ever brung t' New Bedford . . . a skimpy 3 pounds.

When y' figure that only 47 masters brung in lumps in 80 years, y' can see why everybody in the port thought the *Antarctic* was blessed with some kind o' special fortune. Three straight years she comes in with big blobs, the third time with a 214-pounder. None's done this before. Her hands started saying they knew a special secret part o' the ocean, promising that the next time in they'd dump a ton o' the precious stuff ashore.

So the *Antarctic* gets a big celebrating sendoff. She's gone over a year, with curious folks waiting all fluttered up t' see what's going t' happen this time. Another year's gone. Then somebody recognizes her from a widow walk. The word settles on everybody like fog, and they scurry t' the wharves in greeting the *Antarctic*.

What does she dump? Not only no ambergris but the stingiest mess o' whale oil what makes the total trip a miserable flub. Y' can bet a pound o' salt beef that her lying hands had red faces for a long time, too.

Now, o' course, there's been stories about folks finding ambergris on beaches and getting rich overnight. Well, don't y' believe most o' those yarns. They're mostly scuttlebutt without a leg t' stand on. There was old Dave "Ambergris" Stull who died only a few years ago after knowing more about the stuff than maybe any living international dealer in it. It's him what said that you'd only be wasting y' time t' spend y' next beach vacation hunting the matted sands for a piece. According t' Dave, y' got more fingers on y' hands than there's been folks what's ever stumbled a toe on that precious sea-gold.

SCIENCE VS. ROLLING SHIPS

Most current tests in science's new search for methods of insuring a ship's even keel in pitching seas are being undertaken at Stanford University. In the wake of the now familiar "balancing fins," the California experimenters are trying "automatic water stabilization" on a lab-scale vessel: built-in tanks joined by pipes instantly rush water into whichever side of the ship rises. The Stanfordites say they've learned how to regain keel in their model "U. S. S. Minorsky" within a matter of seconds.

ILLUSTRATED BY EBEL

HELLBOAT

BY R. H. REMINGTON

The fury of the sea reached out for the broken ship and pulled it beneath the waves and few escaped. In the barren lifeboat they were at the mercy of sun and thirst that turned men — and women — into insane beasts.

Just before the typhoon struck, just before the Oiler's death, Second Assistant Engineer Stan Michaels was thinking about women. His right hand was never far from the throttle, for the typhoon warning had come down from the Bridge, and his feet were firmly braced against the first ominous heavings of the ship. But his mind played with the image of a certain red-haired passenger.

Mrs. Leona Macauley, she called herself. Widow. Bound from Macassar to Samoa, and then by plane to the States. He'd show her.

Stan took a deep breath and gazed, half-unseeing and unhearing, around the grimy, dimly-lit, noisy engineroom of the *S.S. Loren Murdock*. He cursed. *One more of those lazy, come-hither smiles, and I'll kick her door down and take my chances getting shot by the skipper.*

That was when the Oiler screeched the news of his death. A single scream of terror.

Stan moved fast. He was at the crankpit of the Low Pressure piston before O'Malley's agonized squeals bubbled into silence. There was nothing anyone could do. O'Malley was an unholy mash of blood, rags, bones and oil at the bottom of the crankpit. Even as Stan stared, sickened, the ponderous oval of the crank completed another turn and swept down crunchingly through the shattered body.

"He—he's smashed—" croaked a voice behind the Engineer. Stan turned.

Hudek, the Fireman, gazed at him out of glassy eyes, then threw up on the floorplates.

"Clean that mess up!" Stan snapped. "No—forget about it! Get back to your fires, you fool. The typhoon's caught up with us!"

He shoved Hudek in the direction of the blazing boilers and grabbed for the engineroom intercom. Beneath his feet, the slick floorplates heaved and shuddered, reflecting the motion of the ship itself.

"Chief!" he yelled hoarsely, ringing the Chief Engineer's number. *Why doesn't the drunk-*

en fool answer? Can't he tell the ship's in trouble?

That was the biggest thing wrong with the tramp steamer, *Murdock* — too many besotted men and officers. Though where they got their liquor after four days at sea, Stan couldn't figure. O'Malley had died out of sheer drunken clumsiness, Stan was certain. Feeling the heat of a bearing was tricky business, sure, and in rough weather leaning out over a crankpit with only an oily railing to protect you could be dangerous. But O'Malley had been an old, experienced hand, and only drink—

The Chief's querulous voice cut into Stan's thoughts.

"What is it, number two? What's wrong?"

The old fool's scared, as usual! Stan thought savagely. *Well, for once there's good reason!* "Get down here, fast, Chief!" he shouted over the throbbing of the engines. "The typhoon's struck. I don't know how long these broken-down steam lines will hold out!"

He started to hang up the phone, then yelled into it again. "Oh! Chief, O'Malley fell in the crankpit. Bring a Wiper with you to clean up the mess! Bring Gonzales—not that psalm-singing maniac, Bible Joe!" He clicked off and rang up the Bridge. As soon as he heard the sound of the phone being picked up at the other end, he said, "Engine-room. At one-oh-four, Oiler O'Malley slipped and fell into the crankpit. Killed immediately."

The Captain's husky voice answered, and Stan glanced at the phone, surprised. It must be worse up there than he'd thought.

"Captain Cerbachio, speaking. One-oh-four. Okay, it's in the log. What's the matter, Michaels —can't you handle your damned engineroom?"

Stan gulped back an angry retort. "Yessir. Listen, can I have permission to stop the engines long enough to scrape O'Malley out of—"

"Forget about O'Malley!" The phone leaped in Stan's hand from the violence of the voice it was transmitting. "You greasy ape, keep that engine turning—it's the only thing holding us on top of the water! Once we start wallowing in this storm —we're through!" The phone slammed down at the other end, and Stan replaced his own instrument in its bracket, cursing under his breath.

The Skipper was right, probably, but he didn't have to be so damned callous about it. O'Malley was pulp already; a few more revolutions of the crank shaft bearing and there

wouldn't be anything to even give a decent burial.

Resolutely, he kept his eyes from the blood-drenched Low Pressure crank. He started for the fireroom to check on Hudek and the fires, then stopped as he heard the sound of feet climbing down the metal network of ladders and gratings. He waited, for only a clumsy idiot like his superior, the Chief Engineer, could make enough noise to be heard above the steady pounding of the reciprocating engines.

The Chief stumbled down the last steps and came to a halt before his Second Assistant. Wiping his pudgy hands nervously on his dirty coveralls, he peered up out of watery blue eyes at the six-foot-two Engineer.

"Hot down here," the Chief said meaninglessly.

Stan repressed the desire to ask if the Chief had ever been down before to find that out. Instead, he said, "We're in trouble, Chief. I can handle the throttle, but I'll need someone to back me up, now that O'Malley's dead. Hudek has all he can handle in the fireroom. You'll have to give me a hand, and the wiper—" he jerked his finger at the old man painfully descending the last ladder—"will help Hudek after he's cleaned as much of—"

Stan broke off, his mouth hanging open in surprise. A casual upward glance had caught a glimpse through the gratings of two shapely feminine legs twinkling down the steps to the engineroom.

The Chief raised his eyes, and gasped his own astonishment. Gonzales, the elderly Wiper, seemed interested only in clutching a railing and keeping a precarious balance against the insane bucking of the ship.

It wasn't the widow, Leona Macauley, as Stan had half expected. This girl was a lush brunette, not a redhead. After a second, Stan placed her. She was one of the two dancers who'd also gotten aboard at Macassar. The two girls kept to their cabin, except at mealtimes, and Stan barely knew them. Joanne and Julia—that was their professional billing. This would be Joanne.

Stan stepped forward and caught her as she tripped on the last step. The ship quivered and leaped beneath his feet, and he had to grab at a stanchion for support.

"What the hell are you doing down here?" he yelled at the girl cradled in his left arm. Then he realized she was shaking with fear.

"The storm . . ." she moaned. "It—it's horrible up there. I had to come anywhere—out of it.

Down, out of the storm . . ." She began to sob uncontrollably and buried her face in Stan's sweatshirt, wrapping her arms tightly around his waist.

The hull plates were groaning their strain all about him, and the floorplates trembled like live creatures, but even at that moment Stan was violently aware of her firm body crushing against him, and the female odor of her cut through the oil stink in his nostrils.

Roughly, he pulled her away from him, and slapped her face, twice—hard.

Joanne sucked in her breath sharply between half-parted lips. The color mounted in her cheeks and her wide brown eyes shot sparks. "Who the hell do you think you are?" she demanded shrilly. "I've got a good mind to—"

"Can it, sister," Stan told her. "There was nothing personal in the slap. You were hysterical."

"What's this woman doing in the engineroom, Second?" the Chief's voice wanted to know.

"Who is she?"

Stan turned his head toward the Chief. "I don't know. I sure as hell didn't invite her down." Then, as he realized his superior was leaning negligently against the intercom desk, he added, "Look, Chief, get over to that throttle—fast! Can't you feel the storm? You want the steam lines to burst?"

The Chief skidded across a greasy, rocking floorplate, and fetched up against the throttle. "My own assistant, tellin' me what to do. I'll fix you, mister, once this storm is over!" He scowled at the girl. "And get her out of the engineroom!"

Stan turned back to Joanne, and discovered he still had his arm around her. Discomfited, he let his arm drop, but as soon as he did, the girl pressed close to him. So great was her terror he could feel her heart beating against his side, through the thin fabric of her bright print dress.

"The Chief's right, miss," he told her, trying to force gentleness into his tone. "An engineroom's no place for a lady. You'd better go back topside."

"Oh, I can't! Don't make me!" she moaned, tears starting up in her eyes. "Look up there—I'll never be able to climb that!"

Stan stared upward, and had to admit to himself she was right. The *Murdock's* heavings were growing more pronounced, now, and the ship rolled forward and back, and from side to side, almost simultaneously. Each time she rolled to the side, she listed almost twenty degrees before the sudden snap back. Even an experienced member of

the Black Gang would have trouble navigating the web of ladders and gratings which led upward from the engineroom. Joanne was stuck down here until the typhoon abated.

"Okay," Stan told her, grim-lipped, as he braced both himself and the girl against the next twisting roll of the ship. "Then stay down here, but—"

His words were drowned out by a hissing, ear-shattering roar from the direction of the main steamline.

It's blown! The thought pounded through his mind. *That last roll did it. That live steam will cook us in five seconds. . . .*

The next half-second seemed to stretch into a nightmarish hour. Even in the dull yellow light of the engineroom, for that half-second of suspended time, every detail of the cluttered surroundings stood out sharply and engraved itself on Stan's mind.

The red bilge pumps, far on the port side; near them, the shining firepumps which fed water to the boilers; the two squat boilers, themselves, with their waterdrums looming over the narrow fireroom; Hudek's white face peering out from between his fires; the great three-legged engine, treading out the power that turned the shaft that turned the screw; the shocked face of the Chief Engineer, staring up from the throttle at the split steam line, with the wizened wiper crouched behind him; the intestine-like windings of asbestos-covered pipes, the barrels of kerosene, the intercom—

The Chief's high-pitched voice started time moving again. "Live steam!" he howled. "We'll be fried alive! Up the ladder—quick!"

He leaped for the ladder, with the Wiper at his heels.

Stan raised a hand. "No! Shaft alley—" He choked back the words. There was no time to save anyone else. Joanne was in front of him, and he carried her with him, as he raced for the shaft alley at the far end of the engineroom.

His senses were abnormally sharp, and even at the speed he was going, he was aware of things about him. He noted O'Malley's blood on the Low Pressure crank bearing as he passed it, and somehow his mind took in the sight of the Chief Engineer and the Wiper, two gratings above him. Gonzales had inexplicably taken the lead, but both were caught in the rising rush of blazing hot steam. They were broiled a lobster red even before he shoved Joanne into the shaft alley and stumbled in after her.

Quickly, he whirled and slam-

med the watertight door to the alley shut, and began to twist the wheel that tightened the door's dogs. He bit his lip, for he was almost certain he'd seen Hudek's white face out there as he closed the door, but it was too late to do anything about it, now. Wisps of white steam curled warmly around the edges of the door even as Stan tightened the dogs. Even if Hudek had been out there he was dead now, Stan forced the thought out of his mind. It would mean certain death for him to re-open the watertight door.

He turned away from it, shaken, and discovered Joanne had fallen to the floor. She was sobbing noisily, paying no attention to the grease from the floorplates which was staining her dress, or the fact that her thin dress had hiked well up on her thighs.

Stan hauled her to her feet and shook her.

"We got no time for that, now!" he told her, pushing her ahead of him up the shaft alley. "With the steam line gone, the ship is finished. We've got to climb the escape hatch, fast—before the *Murdock* goes down and takes us with her!"

Joanne ran ahead of him, up the long, narrow passageway flanking the straight shaft, doing her best to keep far in front of his clumping feet.

The naked yellow bulbs overhead began to dim slightly, and Stan swallowed the bile in his throat. *The generator's beginning to go,* he told himself. *here in the dark. . . .*

We're liable to be caught down

To free his mind from that thought, he concentrated his eyes on the pulsing curves of Joanne's back. They excited him even in this moment of stark terror.

Joanne seemed to sense his eyes on her. Her neck colored, and she said, "Why—why didn't we go up the ladder like the Chief did? We wouldn't be caught down here, now—"

"No—we'd be dead now," Stan interrupted bruskly. "Steam rises, as that dumb Chief should have known—if he had a mind to think with. . . . Keep moving! Don't stop. . . . The steam came roaring out of the line under hundreds of pounds of pressure, and it filled the whole engine-room almost instantly, but it came down to the lowest level last of all That's what gave us time to make it to the shaft alley.

"Even so," he finished, "we must have done it in less than three seconds from the time the steam line blew, or we wouldn't have made it at that."

Without the power of the engines, the ship was wallowing helplessly in the storm, just as Cerbachio had predicted. Joanne was having trouble staying on her feet, as the ship pitched sickeningly, and even Stan had to grab occasionally at the railing which lined the passageway.

The lights overhead were a flickering yellow now, Stan speeded up and pushed the girl on before him. "There!" he yelled, pointing over her shoulder. "The escape ladder—up ahead! Make for it!" The generator is going!"

Joanne crumpled against the metal ladder, wheezing for breath. Stan hoisted her up brutally. "Grab a rung and start climbing!" he ordered. "And try to save your strength—it's a long climb!"

She clutched at the ladder and swung up out of his arms. "I'm in better shape than you are—I'm a dancer!" she snapped, with a pitiful attempt at bravado.

Stan grinned up at her in the fast-dimming light. Clambering onto the ladder beneath her, he said, "Best shape I've seen in years." He reached up and slapped her. "Okay, baby, up you go!"

He had time to see the print dress swirl around her firmly muscled bare legs as she began to climb, and then the lights went out.

"Can't you do anything besides slap a girl?" The slight catch in her voice indicated her fear.

Stan forced the iron rungs down past him with his hands and feet. He had no idea of how many he'd climbed, or how much farther they still had to go. Around him, the walls of the escape tunnel pressed in on him in the darkness, and the wild pitching of the ship made it difficult to hang onto the ladder.

Above him, Stan could hear the silken rustle of Joanne's clothes as she climbed, and the female musk was strong in his nostrils. The sound of her breathing came sharply to him, for in the vertical escape tunnel, the noise of the storm raging overhead was strangely muted. He knew the same thought was in her mind as raged through his: *If the ship goes down now, we'll be drowned like kittens in a burlap bag. . . .*

"Baby!" he called out, his voice, in the darkness, sounding disembodied even to him. "You just wait till we get on dry land! Slapping'll be only the beginning! I can do things to dames you never even dreamed of!"

"The hell I haven't!" Joanne yelled down at him.

This girl had guts, he told himself. And a lot more, besides. Enough to make a guy forget a certain red-haired temptress named Leona Macauley, maybe. . . .

Joanne squealed suddenly, and Stan's head rammed into her soft thighs. "What's up, now?" he asked, spitting out a mouthful of print dress.

"My head," she told him. "I've bumped into something."

Wild hope shot through him. "That's the hatch cover. Push it open—quick!"

"I—I can't . . . it's stuck—"

Stan cursed the mates, who were too drunk to check minor things like hatch covers and make sure they worked.

"Here," he muttered, edging upward. "Let me get by you. I'll try. . . ."

Joanne flattened herself against the ladder, and painfully Stan worked himself up alongside her. His whole body sweated at the feel of her warm thighs and body pressed tight against him, but he had no time for that now. The ship was tossing more crazily than ever, they might lose their grip on the ladder at any moment.

He bent his head and forced his right shoulder up against the hatch cover. Sweat streamed down from his forehead, and he paused to shake some of it off. Then he brought both feet up another rung—and heaved upward with all his strength!

The hatch cover groaned, quivered, and snapped free. Wind and freezing rain and . . . *noise* . . . poured down on them with almost enough force to drive them from their precarious position on the ladder.

Instinctively, Stan's arm tightened around the girl's body. Swiftly, but carefully, they inched their way up out of the narrow escape hatch, up into the bellowing storm.

When his feet were finally planted solidly on the soaking deck, Stan was surprised at the rubbery lack of feeling as the last dregs of energy were swept from his body. Joanne was experiencing it too, for she sank to the deck and wrapped her arms about his knees.

"What's your name?" she asked in a whisper.

"Stan—Stan Michaels," he told her abstractedly, his eyes trying desperately to cut through the gloom and rain up ahead for a sign that there was still someone else on board the doomed freighter.

"Thanks, Stan," she murmured. "I guess you saved my life."

He looked down at her, surprised. "Forget it. You do the same for me, sometime."

The ship rocked madly, and a wave lashed over the side.

"Anyway," he told her, hauling her up and trying to keep them both from slipping on the glistening wet deck, "It's not completely saved, yet. The *Murdock's* liable to go down any second, now. . . ."

The escape hatch from the engineroom opened out on the fantail, behind the stern cabin of the ship. The lifeboats—if any were still usable—were on the boat deck, amidships. From the fantail to the superstructure was a barely navigable wasteland of slick deckplates, smashed cargo-hatchcovers, and swamps of swirling water, ever replenished from the broiling sea around them and the flooded sky above. With his arm tight around Joanne's waist, Stan began the tricky, danger-filled journey.

The roaring wind lashed at them as soon as they'd moved away from the comparative shelter of the caved-in stern cabin. Crushing waves reached over the sides each time the ship

completed a lurching roll, and sought for the two drenched human figures, hungrily. Stan pressed on, dragging the girl with him.

The sky crackled and thundered and poured buckets of water upon them as they reached a cargo hatch. Stan grabbed the edge of the wet tarpaulin and hung on as the *Murdock* did her best to somersault around them. Joanne fell to the deck.

"I can't do it. . . ." Joanne moaned, her fingernails digging into Stan's arm.

Stan tightened his grip on her waist. "Hang on!" he screamed, over the roar of the wind.

A few feet from them, along the edge of the hatch, the tarpaulin quivered suddenly, and was flung back. A head appeared under it, crowned by a wild thatch of gray, streaming-wet hair. The man was laughing insanely as he crawled up out of the hatch, and it took a second for Stan to recognize him.

"Bible Joe!" Stan burst out. "What the hell—"

The seaman called Bible Joe heaved himself out on the deck and rolled around helplessly for a moment before he was able to get his feet under him and climb erect. He stood spraddle-legged on the heaving surface, with his back to the raging sea, and waved an open prayerbook above his head.

The ship rocked, and Bible Joe staggered backward, still waving the prayerbook, just as a monstrous sheet of water shot over the side. Stan hung onto the tarpaulin with one hand and onto Joanne with the other, as the wave crashed over them.

There was choking, soaking blindness . . . and then the water disappeared. Bible Joe was gone.

For one second, the ship was suspended in darkness and sudden quiet. Then came an ear-splitting crash of thunder and lightning, and the ship was illumined as if in broad daylight.

Joanne gasped, and pointed forward. The boat deck was clearly visible for that second, and the struggling, tiny figures were as clear as actors in the last moments of a tragedy.

The two starboard lifeboats had received the main force of the typhoon, and were lying smashed and ignored in their davits. A dozen people were clustered around the boats on the port side, desperately trying to free them from entangling lines.

Up in the bow of the crowded forward lifeboat, the Captain was sitting, two revolvers clenched in his fists, obviously preventing more of the doomed seamen and passengers from

climbing in. As Stan and Joanne watched, a girl tried to throw herself into the boat. The Captain's left gun belched smoke, and the girl stiffened and fell back on the deck.

"Th—that's Julia—my partner!" Joanne screeched in horror, and clutched Stan's arm convulsively.

Then, just as the last bolt of lightning flickered out, a seaman leaped forward and slashed at the rope holding the lifeboat to the davit, and the boat upended, vomiting out its human contents, and disappeared after them into the waves.

Darkness, and the howling wind descended again on the shivering pair huddled by the cargo hatch. The rain beat down with added fury.

Stan crawled to his knees, and then, painfully, to his feet, dragging Joanne after him. The girl sobbed, as he tried desperately to steady them both, "Julia . . . he shot her! They're like animals up there!"

"Yeah," Stan snapped, the wind ripping the word out of his mouth. "We wouldn't stand a chance either!"

He took a deep breath, and stared down into her fear-filled eyes. "Listen, baby. We don't have much of a chance, no matter what we do. So—we're going over the side—now!"

Joanne sucked in her breath. "But—I can't swim!"

Stan kicked off his shoes. "I know . . . but I can—enough for both of us. It's the only thing we can do. This rustbucket will be going down any second, now, and if we stay on it much longer, we'll get caught in the suction."

He hauled her over to the side, ignoring her terrified screams. For an instant he stared down at the boiling, gray-green water. Then, taking a deep breath, he swept Joanne into his arms, and leaped into the foaming hell beneath him.

Stan couldn't remember too clearly, after that. There was the stomach-wrenching fall, mixed up somehow with Joanne's screams. There was the shock of hitting the water, of having it close over their heads as they sank into it. Then there was the fighting back to the surface again; the kicking, the flailing, the desperate trying to draw something besides water into tortured, starved lungs.

Through the nightmarish eternity, Stan clung to Joanne's limp form, not knowing why any more; only knowing that this thing in his arms was somehow important; that for some unknown reason, he had to keep this strange head above the water as well as his own. And there

was one recurrent thought hammering at his brain: *Keep moving! Get away from the ship before it goes down!*

In all the soft swirling wetness, there was nothing in the universe but himself and his burden—and then his flailing arm struck against something hard!

Stan tried to focus his eyes, and failed—and then made it out. *A lifeboat!*

Sobbing hysterically, he grasped at a line trailing from it, and pulled himself back against the boat's side. He flung an arm up, and missed, and then gripped. Exerting the last, draining remnants of his strength, he pulled, and he and Joanne rose up out of the water.

White arms appeared, and clutched at his neck. He heard a woman wailing, and knew it wasn't Joanne. "Take—the girl —first—" he choked, and the hands disappeared from his neck. A second later, Joanne's form ascended from his left arm. Stan heaved from below, his right hand still holding tight to the lifeboat's gunwhale.

Then the hands were back on his neck, and he too was ascending the side of the boat. Half inside, half out, his strength evaporated, and Stan found himself completely unable to move further. The hands around his neck moved down to his belt, and heaved. Stan tumbled inside, and lay across a thwart, breathing harshly, agonizedly.

Slowly, strength returned to his limbs, and the world stopped careening crazily around his head. Stan became aware of the dangerous rolling of the lifeboat, and of the water fast-collecting below him.

He raised his head, painfully. Joanne was lying near him, dripping wet and unconscious, but the rise and fall of her breasts beneath the plastered print dress indicated that she was still alive. He turned his eyes to the sound of the wailing. A female figure was huddled in the bow of the lifeboat, head buried in her arms, crying noisily. The rain and the wind tore at her, but she was oblivious.

"Who . . .?" Stan asked weakly. The girl lowered her arms and revealed a cosmetic-smeared face, surrounded by long copper hair. The widow—Leona Macauley!

Though every muscle in his body screeched its protest, Stan clambered to his feet.

"All alone . . ." the redhead moaned. "Nothing but wind and rain—and me. . . ." Her head began to rock from side to side. She giggled. "But now you're here, aren't you? I'm not alone,

now. . . . Make the storm stop, now, huh? *Make it stop!*"

Wearily, Stan reached out and slapped her face. *I'm breaking the record tonight for slapping dames*, he told himself.

She fell back at the slap, and covered her face with both hands. Stan stared down at her. "That's what you get," he muttered, a half-smile crinkling the corner of his mouth, "for saving me. Next time—"

He broke off, his mouth hanging open, as the two beefy, splayed hands came up out of the water and closed onto the gunwhale.

Stan flung himself forward and tugged at the hands. They closed around his wrists and hung on, like manacles, as he pulled backward. With a sucking sound, the sea gave up its victim, and the man came sprawling into the lifeboat, bowling Stan over.

The young engineer lay still until the lifeboat stopped rocking again, then stood up and turned the man over on his back. He sat down on a thwart, limp in sudden surprise. The man he'd hauled in out of the water was Captain Cerbachio!

He was gazing down at the unconscious figure, when a hand fell on his shoulder. Stan looked up. Leona was standing behind him, a wild look in her eyes.

"Why did you take him on? Throw him back! Quick—there isn't enough fresh water to go around! We may be stranded in this damn lifeboat for days . . . throw him back! It's *my* lifeboat—I was here first! Do as I say!"

Disgust welled up in Stan, but the sight of Joanne stirring made him forget Leona. Swiftly, he crawled to her side, and cradled her head in his arms. "How you feeling, baby?" he whispered.

Joanne stared wild-eyed up at him. "Don't jump!" she croaked. "I can't swim. . . ." Then her eyes closed, and she rolled over, asleep.

"I'm the Master here!" bellowed a familiar voice behind Stan, and he whirled.

Captain Cerbachio was sitting up, waving his arms, while Leona tried to push him toward the side of the lifeboat.

"What I say goes!" screamed the Captain. "Nobody climbs into this lifeboat unless I say so! I'll shoot the first filthy mother's son who—"

His head cracked against the thwart behind him, and he fell back, unconscious again.

Leona was still trying to shove him overboard when Stan reached her and knocked her aside. "That's murder!" he roared. "Don't ever try that again,

or I'll toss *you* over, instead!"

The redhead began crying again, her head buried once more in her hands. Stan shrugged and turned away. He became aware, once more of the typhoon raging around them, and of the precarious rolling of the small craft.

Feeling around below the gunwhales, he located a bailing can and tossed it to Leona.

"Start bailing!" he ordered. "I'll rig up a sea anchor to the stern. I think the worst of the storm's over, but this boat could still founder!"

Without looking at the girl, he busied himself with the funnel-shaped canvas of the sea anchor. After a moment, he heard the sound of her splashing water over the side. . . .

Leona had been right. There was not enough water to go round. It was noon of the day following the typhoon. The sea was quiet, now, stretching flatly to the circling horizon like a pane of translucent green glass. Two or three fluffy white clouds scudded along in a tropic sky that was as blue as a Scandinavian's eyes. Below them, right in the center of the otherwise empty green pancake of water, drifted the battered white lifeboat, with its four thirsty human occupants.

Stan had assumed command. Properly speaking, the Captain was the ruler of the boat, but ever since that terrible moment at dawn, he had done nothing but huddle in the bow and stare down at the water.

The typhoon's force had abated about an hour after Stan and Joanne had come aboard the lifeboat, as suddenly as it had begun. Stan and Leona, with Joanne helping them a little later, had bailed most of the excess water out of the boat. They'd set up the sea anchor to keep the bow heading right into the waves, a floundering boat in a storm can be hit broadside and capsized. Together, they'd lashed securely the few remaining stores and equipment the lifeboat held.

And then, in the brittle morning light, a moan from the Captain had called them from their work to watch the last agonies of the *Loren Murdock*.

Huddled together, the four of them gazed at the ruined steamer, lying on its side like a mortally injured leviathan. It sank lower and lower into the water until it seemed certain to slide peacefully under the surface. Then, at the last moment, the ship shuddered and heaved. In a final, despairing gesture, the *Murdock* flung its stern up at the merciless, slate-gray morn-

ing sky and went down like a lead plummet.

Joanne and Leona wept, and Stan cursed softly. But Captain Cerbachio rose to his feet with a wild scream of anguish. "Stop it!" he roared, his squat face turning black with rage. "Stop it, I say! They can't do this to me. Twenty years I slaved for a ship of my own—I'll never get another! It's mutiny, that's what it is! I'll shoot the lot of ye! Filthy dogs—it's my ship . . . I'll show you who's skipper here—"

He leaped, snarling, on Leona's terrified form. Stan threw himself forward and wrenched the Captain away from the girl. With an insane bellow, Captain Cerbachio fastened his hands around Stan's throat. Stan buried his right fist in the Captain's thick belly, and brought his left smashing up against the man's chin. The Captain's head snapped back, and he slumped down, unconscious.

"He's off his rocker," Stan told the two weeping girls, as he stood over his prostrate skipper, rubbing his fist. "He'll be all right when he wakes up."

But he hadn't been. Captain Cerbachio had awakened, after awhile, and dragged himself into the bow. From that moment on, he completely ignored the others. Not even when Stan cursed him for not having checked the lifeboat's store of water, did he look up. Eventually, the other three forgot about him.

They had troubles enough. Most of the watercans were fouled or smashed. In all, they had perhaps two pints of drinkable water. Not even all the dried food was edible; most of it was rotten or spoiled by seawater. Fishing lines and flare pistols were completely absent. They'd either been stolen while the lifeboat was resting in its davits on the *Murdock*, or they'd been washed away by the storm. Conceivably, the lifeboat had never been properly equipped.

Stan wondered whether this was the lifeboat he and Joanne had seen capsize, or whether it was the other one, somehow released and safely afloat. Leona couldn't tell. She had no memory of how or when she had gotten on it, she grew noisily tearful when Stan pressed her with questions. Finally, he gave up.

It didn't much matter, anyway. What was much more important was how they were all going to survive until—and if—they were rescued.

"We've got a chance of rescue, I think," he explained to Joanne and Leona as the three of them huddled under one of

the lifeboat's two threadbare blankets to escape the merciless noon sun. "As far as I can figure, we were sailing one of the regular shipping lanes. The odds are we'll run into another ship in a day or so."

"But—if we don't," Joanne whispered, leaning forward "what'll we drink?"

Stan shrugged grimly. "I don't know," he said simply. "Maybe it'll rain and we can catch some water in a blanket."

He tried to ignore the feelings the presence of two luscious, desirable women so close to him were creating in him, but it wasn't easy. Joanne's dress was ripped in a dozen places until it barely covered her body. Leona had lost her dress during the storm, and was clad in a thin, almost transparent slip.

Stan gulped, and turned his face away from the two of them, then stiffened as Leona pressed close to him.

"I'm thirsty, Stan," she murmured in a throaty purr. "Let's have a drink now, huh?"

Stan shook his head. "We've had our drinks for today. I told you before that we'll have to ration water carefully!"

"Please, Stan. . . ." she whimpered, and bent her head against his chest.

With a low, muffled growl, Stan threw his end of the blanket aside and crawled away from her. The hot sun beat down on his unsheltered face, and he licked dry lips. He stared down at the partially filled watercan he had elected himself to protect, and then over at Leona's bare glistening legs where they protruded from under the blanket.

He gulped again. It wasn't going to be easy.

The second day. The broiling sun glared down at them, and even the few small clouds had disappeared.

It was early afternoon, and thirst was becoming a torturous problem. Stan sat in the stern of the lifeboat, listlessly dangling a fishing line made from unraveled blanket threads. The bent pin at the end of it trailed a strip of Joanne's print dress.

Captain Cerbachio sat stolidly in his accustomed position at the bow, staring at the water, ignoring everybody. He was even uninterested in the tiny ration of water Stan had handed him just before noon. He'd sipped it slowly, barely aware of its existence.

Leona had gulped her share down greedily and begged for more. Stan and Joanne had drunk theirs carefully, savoring every drop as they rolled it around their parched mouths. Then the almost empty water-

can had gone back to its position of safety between Stan's feet.

Joanne . . . Stan grimaced as he noticed she had fallen asleep under the amidship thwarts. She was jealous of Leona, he thought, but that wasn't enough reason for her to scream he was giving water to the other girl secretly, for her to slap his face and call him all the filthy names she'd learned in her years in the islands.

A tramp, he told himself bitterly. *Just like the other one....* He caught himself staring at her long, slender legs. One of her knees was raised slightly as she slept, revealing an expanse of gleaming white thigh under the lifted dress. Stan felt a rush of heat through him, and turned his eyes back to the improvised fishing line.

His dry lips wrinkled disgustedly as he examined it. Even if a fish took the bait, what chance did the line have of holding? And even if—

He stiffened. A cool hand was pressing against his neck. He turned his head. Leona was crouched near him, an agony of thirst in her wide gray eyes. Her firm breasts heaved against the thin fabric of the slip.

"Stan. . . ." she moaned. "Gotta have a drink. Please! I'll do anything—"

He shook his head and turned away.

"Stan," came the throaty whisper from behind him. "I—I said—*anything!* Turn around, Stan. . . ."

He looked at her again, and his eyes widened with surprise.

She had removed the slip and now, as he gazed, Leona fell on her side at his feet. Her eyes were glued to his, and a slight smile played about her full lips. Slowly, her hands reached behind her and unhooked her brassiere. It fluttered away.

Hot desire rushed through him. The red-haired girl at his feet, clad only in diaphanous panties, writhed back, thrusting her body upward. "Water, Stan. . . ." she whispered, and wriggled langourously out of her panties.

Stan climbed to his feet, desire and anger warring within him. "You tramp!" he shrieked. "I told you there's not enough to go around! Don't make me—"

Sinuously, Leona rose. She wrapped her warm arms around his neck and tightened her body against his. He could feel the thrust of it against him, the pressure of her strong thighs against his own. His mind was a raging sea of redness as he struggled with her taut arms.

"Stop it!" he screamed, and shoved her away. Leona fell, and

snapped upright again, and Stan saw a flash of metal in her upraised hand.

"I'll show you!" She howled, and the knife dived at him. Stan twisted desperately, but the blade swerved under his raised arm and ripped into his side.

Pain seared through him, and he fell. Leona stood over him, her white legs apart, her breasts heaving wildly, and raised the dripping knife again. "This time I'll kill you, you—"

As she fell forward upon him, two beefy hands closed around her waist, and lifted the madly threshing body into the air. Leona screeched in terror and dropped the knife.

Captain Cerbachio held her high over his head, bawling, "There'll be no mutiny on my ship, d'ye hear? I'm Master here, ye blasted lubbers!"

The muscles of his arms strained upward, and Leona went hurtling, screaming, out into the water. There was one last despairing wail, and the green water closed over the luxuriant red hair.

Captain Cerbachio waved his fist after her, madness in his eyes. "Mutiny!" he bellowed. "Throw 'em overboard—all of 'em!"

He reached down and clutched at Stan's shoulders. Weakly, Stan tried to fight back as he was lifted up, but the pain in his side was too great. He was going over the side.

Then there was a *thwacking* sound, and the Captain's hands loosened and let Stan drop. The beefy Captain took two short steps to one side, and toppled backward—into the sea!

Stan stared at Joanne's disheveled figure, at the broken oar in her hands. Then he saw one of the Captain's splayed hands rise up out of the sea and clutch the gunwhale. "Mutiny . . ." came the thick voice of the skipper. "Kill 'em all!"

Joanne brought the oar down on the clutching hand, again and again, until the fingers were turned to red pulp.

Once more, and the hand disappeared downward into the heaving water.

There was a moment of silence. Stan stared up at the girl with the blazing eyes and the broken oar. Now there was no one to stop *her*. . . .

With a low cry, Joanne hurled the oar out into the sea, and fell to her knees in front of Stan. She grabbed for the watercan . . . and held it to his parched lips.

"Are you all right, darling? Oh, Stan—are you all right?"

Weakly, Stan pushed the watercan from his lips. There were only a few drops left.

"Drink it," he said. "Don't want any more, myself. . . ."

Joanne ignored the water. She ripped off a length of her dress and began to bandage his bleeding side.

She wept as she worked, with words bubbling to her lips. "It's not a bad wound, Stan. Oh, thank God! You'll be all right. . . ."

Stan reached up for her. He felt strength returning, suddenly. Urgent, demanding strength. With a low moan of happiness, Joanne sank into his arms, her own hands as urgent as his. . . .

At sunset, they were lying in each other's arms, gazing peacefully up at the brilliantly colored sky.

"I don't mind dying, Stan," Joanne murmured, nestling close to him. "I feel as if I've lived a lifetime already, in the past hours."

"We'll live," Stan told her, his hands twined gently in her black hair. "We'll live to have a thousand lifetimes—"

He broke off, pointing excitedly. Joanne turned. A smokestack could be seen on the darkening horizon.

NEW "BRAINS" FOR UNDERSEA NAVIGATORS

The University of Cincinnati has handed the Navy the six-years' result of applied research—a "log system" mechanism that promises to increase the accuracy and safety of submarine travel. Subs now use dead-reckoning analyzers, these navigational units closely resembling car speedometers except that they also yield readings of latitude and longitude. The navigator's pencil completes the job of scoring in the "fish's" position. But the so-called new brain, soon to go into manufacture, automatically feeds readings to computers, thus promising to eliminate human errors as well as "play a vital part in the offensive power of a submarine," says the Navy.

ILLUSTRATED BY BACHE

WHEN SUB MEETS SUB

BY L. JEROME STANTON

The Jap submarines were taking their toll of our shipping until the American sub commander Jake Fyfe, found a new weapon to use against these undersea raiders—another sub!

"Contact! Looks like a submarine!" The radar operator's voice was calm, but there was an undertone of controlled excitement. This was what they were looking for! Unknown to the officers and crew of the U. S. submarine *Batfish*, it also meant the end of weeks of frustration and disappointment, although not without still another maddeningly perverse roll of Fate's deadly dice.

Commander J. K. Fyfe, veteran skipper of the *Batfish*, gave the order that brought the crew to battle stations even as the radar man filled in details of the contact.

"Picked up radar transmissions with the search receiver. It's the right frequency and type of transmission for the radars used on their subs. I don't think he's seen us because he's still sweeping around instead of pointing at us."

"Good. Take a quick look with our radar and get his course and speed."

"Aye, aye."

The radar operator bent eagerly to his task, while Commander Fyfe thought rapidly. This might be a break at last! It was a pitch-black, moonless night, with a low overcast. That meant visual contact much beyond 1,000 yards was highly unlikely. Once they had the target course and speed, they could dive and make a submerged approach.


BACHE

One look at the silhouette when they came back up to periscope depth, and they'd have positive identification . . . and be ready to fire! Over the intercom, the quiet voice of the radar operator began again.

"Target bearing 034, course 015, speed 14 knots, range 11,000 yards."

Commander Fyfe smiled grimly to himself in the darkness, and gave the necessary orders. As silently as her namesake, *Batfish* slid under the dark-shrouded surface rollers and began her deadly stalk.

Things had not gone too well for *Batfish* since Jake Fyfe had taken over command on her fourth patrol in 1944, and all hands had a feeling they were jinxed. Take the fourth patrol itself. True, there were good reasons why their bag of enemy shipping had been light. Their assigned patrol area had been the waters around the Palau island group, a few hundred miles east of Mindanao, in the Philippines. And unfortunately for *Batfish*, heavy strikes in that area by carrier based U. S. planes shortly before their patrol began had practically swept the seas bare of Japanese shipping. Only by taking great navigational risks in shallow, poorly chartered waters near Velasco and Ngaruangi Reefs had Commander Fyfe and his determined crew been able to bag even two small Jap destroyers. These were referred to disgustedly by Skee, the gunner's mate, as penny ante stuff, hardly worth a torpedo.

But a Jap sub, now, that would be *something!* Japanese submarines were hard to find, harder to approach, and still harder to hit, if they got any hint of the attack before the torpedoes struck home. Up to the time their fourth patrol began, in August, 1944, only 16 enemy subs had been bagged by the entire U. S. Submarine Service. Needless to say, Commander Fyfe and the crew of *Batfish* were eager to add to the total. In fact, much experience in submarines had convinced Fyfe that the best weapon for attacking a submarine was another submarine. But their luck in trying to prove this point had been phenomenally bad.

Take the episode of their sixth day out on that fourth patrol. The lookout had visually spotted the silhouette of a surfaced Jap sub at dawn. They'd gotten down quickly and begun a careful approach, only to have the target pop under and disappear before they could get to firing range. That had been bad

enough, but when the same thing happened again six days later, there was a chorus of general disappointment. Skee, the gunner's mate, shook a large forefinger disapprovingly at the curvaceous pin-up pasted on the bulkhead, under which someone had added the slogan, "So round, so firm, so fully packed."

"You wanna stay with us, baby, you better get on the ball and bring us some luck."

Search as they would, no more chances at the elusive Jap undersea boats presented themselves on their fourth patrol, and finally *Batfish* had stood South to Fremantle, Australia, to rest and refit, still without bagging a submarine. By October 8th, they'd been at sea again on the fifth patrol, enroute to a newly assigned hunting ground in the Sulu and South China Seas. They'd bagged one small freighter, and shortly after another. And then, the old jinx seemed to strike again. In the last hours of the night, they'd spotted still another Jap sub silhouetted on the surface. Again they'd begun a careful, stealthy approach, only to have the basking quarry suddenly pull the plug, head for the bottom, and vanish in the murky depths. At the end of their fifth patrol they'd squared away for Pearl Harbor for another rest and refit, thoroughly disgusted with their luck. In two entire patrols, they'd spotted three surfaced enemy submarines, and had not so much as a single shot at any of them! No wonder as they had stood to sea past the entrance buoys for this, *Batfish's* sixth patrol, Skee's large forefinger had again waggled at their mascot pin-up.

"It's gotta be this time, baby, or it's you for Deep Six. There's other babes around," the gunner's mate hinted darkly.

So now they had yet another chance to prove that they could do a job on enemy submarines, if only that jinx would let up! The next hour of *Batfish's* sixth patrol can be best described by a practically verbatim transcription from her log.

9 February 1945

2230 Patrolling on surface. Night dark, with moderate overcast. Slight sea, increasing. Visibility about 1,000 yards.

2250 Radar reports enemy type radar transmissions picked up in search receiver. Ordered radar scan to determine course and speed of target. Frequency and type of enemy transmission indicates Jap submarine.

2251 Target bearing 034, course 015, speed 14, range

11,000. Diving for submerged approach to firing position. All hands at battle stations.

2300 Running submerged on intercepting course. Forward tubes ready. Fingers crossed.

2310 Still on submerged approach. Ship very quiet.

2320 Coming to periscope depth for sneak peek.

2321 Up periscope. Visibility about 1,000. Still only radar contact on target, range 2,600, closing rapidly. Radar frequency and pulse definitely Jap.

2322 Range 2,000, closing fast. STAND BY.

2323 FIRE. Four-fish spread on its way, range 1,850. Reversing course now, keeping periscope depth. Counting seconds.

2325 NOTHING! Jinx working again. Hauling off to recheck firing data and make another run. Target course and speed as before.

The bitter disappointment behind the terse entry in *Batfish's* log can well be imagined. A *fourth* chance at an enemy sub, and a clean miss with four torpedoes! Surely the gods of Chance were adding insult to injury. But Fyfe and the crew of *Batfish* were not the kind that surrenders easily to misfortune, as the following log entries show.

2340 Coming about for second firing run. Target shows no sign of alarm. Will close to visual range at periscope depth.

2350 Closing range on firing course. Target now 7,000 yards bearing 016, speed 14.

2355 Closing steadily, visibility declining, sea making up.

2359 STAND BY.

0000 10 February 1945. Radar range closing rapidly. Sharp lookout for visual contact.

0001 Visual contact, range 1,100, ready, FIRE. Three-fish spread off at 900 yards. Reversing course at periscope depth. Fingers and toes crossed.

0002 Got him! Running time indicates second torpedo hit. Target sinking rapidly.

0004 Target vanished. Will stand by vicinity to look for survivors and debris for Intelligence at sunrise. All hands agree jinx sunk with target.

So died the Japanese submarine I-41, as revealed by Japanese Naval records after the war, and with her died a num-

ber of men important to the war plans of Imperial Japan, who had been evacuating from the hard-pressed Jap forces in the Philippines to the home islands. But with the breaking of the jinx, Commander Fyfe and the *Batfish* had only begun their demonstration of submarine-hunting. With dawn, they tried to pick up survivors and debris but the oil slick and floating wreckage proved as attractive to American warplanes as watermelon to small boys. Every time *Batfish* attempted to surface for a look, she was met by a TNT greeting card from her own allies in the air, who mistook her for a Jap sister of the defunct I-41. Discretion seemed the wisest course, so *Batfish* slipped down to a safe depth and waited for darkness and possible fresh game.

By the end of that day, all hands in *Batfish* were convinced that their luck had really turned. The listening gear had picked up many sounds of shipping activity in their newly assigned area, and prospect for a productive night's activity was good. Of course, you couldn't expect to bag an enemy sub every night, but . . . For understandable reasons, the day seemed to take longer to pass than usual, but pass it finally did. Perhaps the events of that night can best be recorded by another paraphrased extract from *Batfish's* log.

1930 Surface visibility now low enough for a look around. Coming to periscope and radar depth. Sea moderate, making up slightly.

1940 Visibility very low, about 900 yards. Heavy overcast, cloud base at about 2,000 feet. Can hear occasional aircraft overhead. Light variable wind.

1950—Radar stand by.

1951 Radar reports Jap type radar transmissions intercepted on search receiver. Will close with own radar for target data.

1953—Enemy radar transmissions identified as submarine type. Range 6,200, course 010, speed 12. Am closing on firing course on surface. Will fire on visual contact.

1959 Range 1,800, closing fast. 1,500, 1,300, still no visual contact. 1,200. Target submerged.

After the mounting tension of the daring approach, this was a sickening disappointment, leaving everyone on *Batfish's* bridge looking at each other in consternation. Now *they* were suddenly in the vulnerable position!

Had the enemy finally spotted them in his inefficient radar? Or was the maneuver merely routine? Fyfe did not waste time in puzzling over this point before taking action to evade a possible attack. Under his orders, *Batfish* spun around, submerged, and hauled away out of range, while her commanding officer mentally flayed himself for waiting too long for the perfect shot. Probably, he thought, the Jap lookout had spotted *Batfish*, even though her silhouette during the practically head-on approach was small. But again the terse entries of a warship's log convey the drama of the ensuing hour better than routine prose.

2020 Running submerged, paralleling last known target course. No positive indication we are spotted yet. Ship very quiet. Jinx again?
2030 Sonar says stand by.
2031 Sonar reports sound like sub blowing tanks from direction of estimated target position. They have not spotted us! Turning to approach on firing course.
2035 Target on surface. Will approach submerged, coming to radar and periscope depth to fire. Suspect enemy took alarm from weak radar indication. Will give him smaller radar target this run.
2040 Target range 12,000, course 012, speed 14. Closing with caution. Course to firing position prevents rapid approach.

For another hour, the log had nothing to report but the slowing closing range. Running at periscope depth, *Batfish* could not reach firing position as readily, but Fyfe had decided to sacrifice speed for certainty. At 2155 *Batfish* was again within firing range, and the log itself reveals the drama of the next few moments.

2155 Closing steadily. Will fire at visual contact by periscope.
2159 Visual contact at 900 yards. FIRE. One torpedo off at 880 yards. Three more following in combing spread.
2200 First torpedo hit. Two more explosions immediately after. Believe second and third torpedoes detonated on debris in water.
2200 Two more explosions. Believe enemy warheads exploded.

And as *Batfish* hauled around

and away for further patrol, Fyfe nodded to himself in satisfaction. Skee merely eyed the pin-up and gave her a slow, knowing wink of approval.

Now the jinx was really broken. Crew and skipper were of one mind in the matter. This was the right way to kill enemy subs, and no mistake about it. All hands settled down to routine patrol alertness as *Batfish* resumed her stealthy stalk in the Luzon Strait. And at 0155 February 13th, it came again.

Radar contact! Again the log reveals that Jap radar emanations picked up in *Batfish's* search receiver identified the enemy at such a range that the Jap radar operator apparently could not get a positive indication on the small exposed structure housing *Batfish's* radar antenna and periscope. This seemed entirely too lucky, but every man aboard was willing to take good Fortune without protest, after their long drouth. Again a cautious approach was begun, but this time the enemy took alarm when *Batfish* was a long 7,000 yards off, and headed for the bottom in a quick dive. Fyfe and his crew heaved a unified sigh of disappointment. Oh well, you could hardly expect such luck to keep up indefinitely. Still, there was no harm in snooping along the enemy's course awhile, just in case. . . . Fyfe swung around and pulled away to a safe distance before paralleling the target's last-known course. Scarcely another hour elapsed when radar again reported the elusive enemy on the surface!

Lady Luck wasn't through with them yet! Quietly, carefully they closed the range, taking short, sneak looks by radar. And then, as they neared firing position, radar abruptly lost contact. This time there seemed little doubt that the enemy had definitely taken alarm, and for forty painfilled minutes *Batfish* sweated out the suspicion that *she* was now the target in the deadly game of tag. But there it came again, radar contact! Perhaps the enemy had had the same difficulty keeping them spotted during the rapid maneuvering in the black waste of tumbling waters. At any rate, *Batfish* was again in the driver's seat, and riding hard.

Again the quiet approach to firing range, then a quick end around to bring the stern tubes to bear. All the forward torpedoes had been expended. Steady. . . . Skee grinned confidently at the pin-up babe. With this kind of luck going for them they couldn't miss. Fire! The ship shuddered to the thrust of the discharged torpedo tubes.

Slowly the electric seconds ticked by, and then . . .BARR-ROOOM! A huge yellow ball of flame leaped into the sky from the spot in the sea where the target had been a moment before, and *Batfish* knew another undersea servant of the Emperor had gone to join honorable ancestors.

In the morning, *Batfish* surfaced and recovered a wooden box from the debris that contained navigational equipment and books of tables identifying the sub as the Ro-113. From the plotted positions, it was apparent the Ro-113 had sailed from Nagoya to Formosa to her rendezvous with *Batfish* and Destiny, and her ultimate berth on the bottom of the Southwestern Pacific. Commander Fyfe had made good his point about killing enemy subs, as other U.S. submarines were to corroborate in the ensuing weeks and months. Indeed, the *Archerfish*, another U. S. submarine operating in the same three-ship pack with *Batfish*, sent a fourth Japanese undersea boat plunging to the bottom in shattered fragments the night following the last of *Batfish's* three kills. But no other ship was to equal the phenomenal record set by *Batfish* in blasting out of existence three enemy submarines inside a total span of 76 hours, during those fateful nights in February, 1945.

The exploits of the *Batfish* during this, her last patrol with Commander Jake Fyfe as her skipper, were certainly spectacular enough in themselves. But apparently the impact of Fyfe's successful demonstration of his faith in the submarine as a subhunter has borne other long-lived fruit. Today the United States finds itself faced with a potential enemy who is believed to have somewhere near a thousand submarines in existence or under construction. And these submarines are known to embody the latest ideas and devices that captured German submarine experts have been able to invent. This fact—and the history of *Batfish* and her sisters—probably has a lot to do with development of a new, specialized class of U.S. submarine, atom-powered for unlimited range and greater speed. It's main purpose? Killing enemy submarines.

PERMANENT CORRECTION

BY GEORGE WHITLEY

A scratch of the pen and a symbol is changed on a chart. A small act—but think what happens when a ship blindly follows that changed symbol . . .

Death is a Permanent Correction.

It expunges from the charts upon which are laid off the life lines of the many, or the few, a familiar landmark—perhaps a beacon by which they have steered or, it may be, a danger that they have been careful to avoid.

But it is permanent.

The pen of the great chart corrector has scratched out a symbol, a line or so of miniscule print. And on new editions of the chart that symbol, together with any explanatory matter, will be absent. And the life lines will be laid off accordingly . . .

And that is how, at times, old Marple would talk.

It wasn't often that he would go to such pains to expound his private philosophy of living—and dying—it was only aboard ships where he knew the Officer in Charge, where he was sure that the officer would listen with, at worst, an amused tolerance. And then, if allowed, he would carry on for hours in this strain. From Permanent Corrections he would drift to Temporary and Preliminary Corrections—non fatal, or not immediately fatal, sicknesses and accidents.

His work in itself was important—the bringing of the many charts in their many folios up to date, correct to the latest Admiralty Notice to Mariners. But he always professed to see in it a symbolism, the shadow

of an immeasurably greater importance.

And why not?

Every man makes God in his own image.

The Great Mathematician, the Grand Architect of the Universe, are familiar enough concepts.

Why not the Supreme Hydrographer?

And at this stage the Officer in Charge would usually start to exhibit signs of boredom, and the little old chart corrector would take the hint and go back to the chartroom—there to busy himself with parallel rulers, dividers, copies of Notices to Mariners, his pen and his violet ink. And right through the night he would work—changing names, shifting buoys, altering the periods and characteristics of lights, inserting new soundings. The tired old eyes would read, in the prosaic prose of the Notices, about strange, glamorous places—Bermuda, the Maldive Islands, Gaspar Strait, Balik Papan Approaches—places that he had never seen and never would see.

Once, during the war, he had seen them through his daughter's eyes. She had been a Wren, had volunteered for overseas service. He had hated to see her go. She was his only daughter and her mother had been dead these many years. Yet a part of him had been eager for her to go. He had never seen the places with which he was so familiar. She would see them. He had enjoyed reading her letters—and though, of necessity, they had contained nothing to arouse the scissor-wielding ire of the Censor, he had been able, with his strange, two dimensional knowledge of the world, to follow her movements with considerable accuracy.

At first her letters had been full of the delight of travel, of strange places. Then they had changed. It was a subtle change—but, to the anxious father, an unmistakable, troubled undertone was all too evident. But even this nagging worry was driven from his mind by the joy with which he heard that she was on her way home.

But she never got home.

One night—moonless, dark, the unlit bulk of the transport slipping fast through the troubled sea—she had vanished. There was nobody to see her go, to raise an alarm. Her absence was not noticed until morning Roll Call.

And that, save for the entries into official books, on to official forms, was all.

All, that is, until the strange young woman rang the bell of old Marple's flat.

He let her in. She said that she had been a friend of his daughter, so he made her a pot of tea and brought out his hoarded biscuits. He did this grudgingly. He didn't like this young woman. Her severe uniform of black and white and navy blue served only to accentuate her heavy coarseness, the florid good looks that he found distasteful.

The visitor did not lose long in coming to the point.

"About Ida . . ." she said brusquely. "I suppose you know why she went over the wall?"

"Over the wall?" repeated the old man stupidly. He dropped his cup with a clatter.

"Yes. You don't suppose that it was an accident, do you?"

And the visitor had gone on talking, had told a tale commonplace enough, trite and hackneyed. But all tales from real life are trite and hackneyed. Life itself makes greater use of cheap melodrama, of far-fetched coincidence, than would be dared by the most conscienceless literary hack.

It was the old story—betrayed innocence or ignorance, call it what you will. And it had the same old ending—a desperate girl going to the last extreme to avoid her "shame." Perhaps these things don't happen to clever, enlightened people. Perhaps when we are all clever and enlightened they won't happen. But until this distant, happy day the world will remain a stage upon which will strut and posture ham actors despised of all the more intelligent critics, playing their parts in a piece written by the sorriest hack ever to put pen to paper.

There was a man in the story. There had to be a man in a story of this kind. It was plain, as the tale unfolded, that the teller still admired this man, was telling her story, perhaps, out of jealousy.

She told the name of the man. Captain Rupert Hughes. He had been Master of a supply ship making frequent calls to the Base in which Ida, and her friend, had been stationed. He was a devil with the women, this Hughes. Marple already knew this. The company under whose houseflag Hughes sailed was one of those for which he corrected charts. He had known Hughes when he was Second Officer.

And he had heard many tales about him, and about his amatorial prowess, from other officers. And he had laughed then, had shared in the half censorious, half admiring laughter.

But it had been different then. . . .

And when his guest at last left he hardly noticed it.

He paid no attention to her question—"Well, what are you going to do about it? What are *you* going to do about it?"

He did not hear her muttered remarks, as she opened the door to go—"If it was me . . . If I was a man, if I was Ida's father, I'd make that Rupert sit up and take notice!"

He just sat there, staring at the wreckage of his cup and saucer. It may be that his faith in the Great Hydrographer was wearing thin. It was so pointless, so unnecessary, the expunging of this young life, these two lives, from the chart of his own existence. It was as pointless as the chances of war that scattered the little wreck symbols along the charted coastlines of almost every country of the world.

But ones does not question the authority of the Admiralty Notices when they promulgate any correction, either temporary, preliminary or permanent.

One cannot question the authority of the Great Hydrographer.

His permanent corrections are never erroneous, can never be amended.

Marple was tired and wet and hungry when he climbed up the gangway of the *Salford Town.* She was berthed on the West Wall, right against the river, and to reach her entailed a long trudge across the whole breadth of the docks through the thin, penetrating drizzle.

The Chart corrector did not need to disturb the night watchman in his perusal of the evening paper. He had been servicing the charts of the Town Line ships for more years than he cared to remember. As he climbed the ladders to the officers' accommodation he hoped that the Officer in charge would be someone whom he knew, somebody who would share the pot of tea that was usually enjoyed by the officer keeping the night aboard at about this time.

The Officer in Charge was a stranger. He looked up from the novel that was propped against the crested silver tea pot on the well-laden tray on his table. "Yes?" he barked, in answer to the other's timid knock on his open door.

"I'm Marple, sir, the Chart corrector. The firm told me that you were wanting your charts done P.D.Q. . . ."

"Pretty damn' quick is right! We're sailing this weekend. Here!" He rummaged in his top drawer for a typewritten sheet. "These are the folios we've got. And these are the ones that I want *well* corrected—the ones

marked with an 'x.' England—Gib., Mediterranean, Red Sea, Indian Ocean, Bay of Bengal, Malacca Straits. . . . Here're the chartroom keys."

The officer turned his back on the Chart corrector. He poured himself a fresh cup of tea, helped himself liberally to milk and sugar. He took a sandwich from the plate, nibbled it—then threw the greater, uneaten portion into the wastepaper basket.

Marple stood in the open doorway. He looked longingly at the tray. He thought of the long rail journey that he had just finished, of the two dry unappetizing meat rolls that were all that he had been able to obtain at the station. He must have made some slight noise or movement, for the officer swung round suddenly in his chair.

"What? Are you still here?" he demanded rudely. "Do you want anything?"

A cup of tea. . . . Marple could have replied. Could have replied, that is, if he had been other then he was. But he had never —perhaps, because, he had never been to sea—lost his respect for gold-braided, brass-bound authority. He had always prided himself—cause for pride though it may not be—on knowing his place. Had he been literally dying of thirst he might have asked this most unpleasant Second Officer for charity from the big, silver pot with the crest of the Company on its shining sides.

But . . .

He had his pride.

He asked, diffidently: "Where are you going, sir?"

"Don't see how it concerns you. If I do tell you—you'll only skimp the charts and put in the corrections that *you* think should go in. . . ." He unbent a little. "Well, if you must know, to Pulo Berak with stores and such. Then two or three hundred or so assorted troops home."

"If I can make so bold, sir, who are the officers here?"

The Officer in Charge gave him a look that said: *What the hell has it got to do with you?* But he condescended to rattle off, in an uninterested voice, a list of names. "Hughes, Master. Kennedy, Chief. Myself, Roberts, Second. Symons, Third. Thorpe, Fourth." And his look said: Now *are you satisfied?* Now *are you going to leave me in peace and get on with your bloody job?*

Marple heard only the Master's name. Hughes. Captain Rupert Hughes. He turned and stumbled from the Second Officer's doorway, walked with unsteady steps along the alleyway to the chartroom. With shaking fingers he unlocked the door, switched on

the lights. He lifted his little attaché case on to the chart table, opened it. He took out his dividers, his fountain pen, his small bottle of violet ink. The two dry rolls tumbled unheeded to the deck. The old man opened the top drawer under the table, lifted out the first folio. And all the time he was muttering, "Hughes. Rupert Hughes. . . ."

He realized that he was still wearing his wet raincoat, the saturated sleeve of which would be sure to smudge his meticulously neat corrections. He took it off, hung it on a hook on the door. He was cold without it. He switched on the heater, but it refused to function. It was raining hard outside, the pattering of the drops sounding loud on the deck above the chartroom. A leaking seam above the table started to drip, steadily and monotonously. Marple shifted the folio upon which he was going to work out of its way, found a pair of semaphore flags and spread them on the table to catch and absorb the rain water. He took out and opened the first chart, saw that it had been months since it had last been corrected. The knowledge that the Second Officer with whom he had just been speaking wasn't too enthusiastic in the performance of his duties, was one of those who leave everything to the Chart corrector, gave him a slight, but comforting, sense of superiority. It didn't last long. There, under the chart title, was the hated name again —". . . *from a survey made in* 1882 *by Commander Hughes R.N. and Officers of H.M. Survey Ship Elkhound.* . . ."

Hughes . . .

Marple remembered the first time that he had met Hughes. It had been before the war when Hughes had been Second Officer of the old *Kentish Town*. . . . He had liked Hughes, then. . . . It had been such a night as this. And Hughes had given him a large tot of really good whiskey—not like this uncivil officer of his who would begrudge a cup of tea. . . .

But that was before the war. The war has changed a lot of things. Even in the realm of chart correcting it has brought changes. Once corrections were made in bold, red ink—then the advent of orange chartroom lighting — non-dazzling — brought in violet ink so that the corrections should still be visible in the ruddy glow. *Yes,* thought Marple. *The war has brought a lot of changes.* . . . And he remembered Hughes as a pleasantly harum-scarum young officer, Ida as an unspoiled school-girl—and in his tried, resentful old mind the change

from red to violet in the color of ink bulked almost as big as the sins of Hughes and the tragedy of his daughter. . .

Coughing a little, shivering with the cold, he went steadily through his night's work. Chart after chart was refolded, stamped with his little rubber stamp—EXAMINED & CORRECTED, the date of the correction. Folio after folio was closed and, its tapes retied, put back into its proper drawer.

It was only the Permanent Corrections with which Marple concerned himself. The others—Temporary and Preliminary—would be attended to by the Second Officer, the navigator. He would put them on the charts in pencil, would rub them off again as they were cancelled. He would find them in the Notices to Mariners, would receive them, broadcast as Naveams, Hydrolants or Hydropacs, as picked up by the ship's wireless office. But, Marple would be willing to bet, he would not trouble to check the Permanent Corrections. The old Chart corrector had a name, a good one. Once or twice he had overheard whilst he had been discussed by officers. *"You can always trust old Marple. Even on the small scale charts he puts everything in. He'll never let you down!"*

At last he came to the last folio, the last charts.

The last charts—and names on those charts that seemed to give the heavy, stiff paper the fragrance of all the bright, hot lands east of Suez, the redolence of spice-laden off-shore breezes blowing warm and moist across narrow, turquoise straits. Pulo Sindar—the Arapalo Sea—the Straits of Berak. . . .

The Straits of Berak, with Pulo Berak and the island port, Mendang, on the southern side. The Straits of Berak, with the approaches to Mendang from the westward deep, with steep-to shores, never less than twenty fathoms, and no rocks or shoals. The Straits of Berak, with the eastern approaches to the port little more than a tortuous, six fathom channel with badly buoyed banks on either side.

Marple looked at the chart. He looked at the open page of the Weekly Edition of the Notices. He looked at the chart again. He grinned, baring his badly fitting dentures. There was no mirth in the grimace. He picked up his violet-ink-filled fountain pen. He thought that surely no prudent Master would approach Mendang from the eastward—especially when his ship was bound in from the west. . . . The pen hovered over the clean surface of the hitherto unused

chart. But it did nothing to mar or change the clear, two dimensional picture of the Straits. The pen top was screwed into place decisively. The pen was put into the attaché case, followed by the ink bottle and the dividers.

The old man was still tired, still cold and damp. But he felt better. As he put the last folio back into its drawer, as he slammed that drawer shut, he was humming a little, tuneless melody.

Making a pillow of his case and his raincoat, he stretched himself out on the chartroom settee. He was asleep almost at once. He slept like a child.

But children, even though they sometimes smile in their sleep, rarely achieve a beatitude such as that which stole over the face of the old Chart corrector.

He could not sleep. For several days and nights he had been unable to sleep, save in fitful, tormented snatches. Like a refrain, running always through his tired and fuddled mind, were the words, repeated over and over, *Eight thousand miles at fifteen knots—twenty two days . . . eight thousand miles at fifteen knots—twenty two days . . . eight thousand miles at . . .*

Twenty two days. . . .

It was that since *Salford Town* had sailed.

Twenty two days. . . .

And *Salford Town,* with Hughes—a man's jovial and likeable when his misdeeds did not concern your own family—must be near the Straits. . . .

Twenty two days. . . .

And *Salford Town,* with Roberts, her churlish, ill-mannered navigator, must be near the Straits. . . .

TWENTY TWO DAYS. . . .

And what about all the other members of *Salford Town's* crew? What about the other officers, the engineers, the ratings? What had *they* done to deserve the rending explosions, the inrush of water into their floating home, the swim—for such as survived—in shark infested waters?

What had *they* done?

And what had Hughes done?

Nothing that hasn't been done by men ever since the simple sex act was hedged about by ritual and taboo.

And what had Roberts done?

He had been ill-mannered—but, in this day and age, men aren't killed or, alternatively, professionally ruined, for being lacking in courtesy. . . .

And what had he, Marple, done?

Or left undone?

The old man writhed on the untidy, ill-made bed upon which

he had been trying to snatch a few hours of afternoon sleep.

From the flat below drifted the sound of the six pips of the B.B.C. Time Signal. And there drifted up the muffled voice of the announcer, the half heard words and phrases of the six o'clock news.

". . . transport *Salford Town*. . . . Pulo Berak . . . many casualties. . . ."

The old man got up from his rumpled bed. Walking slowly, unsteadily, he padded through into his little bathroom on stockinged feet.

And in the flat below the fat woman was saying to her husband—"Ain't it a crying shame? I was so set on having our Bert home for Christmas. . . . An' there he is, stuck on that there Pulo Berak, an' the ship wot should of brought him is sent cartin' troops from Singapore to Muribaya or whatever they calls the place. . . ."

"Cheer up, Flo," replied her husband. "She 'ad ter do it. Didn't the man say as 'ow they'd 'ad rioting an' many casualties? We oughta be glad they 'aven't sent Bert an' 'is mob. . . ."

But Marple could not hear them.

Even had the floor between the two flats suddenly become a perfect sound conductor he wouldn't have heard them. All that there was room for in his mind was the memory of the Permanent Correction that he should have made in violet ink—the minefield in the eastern approaches to Mendang. And when he cut his fingers badly with the double-edged razor blade he hardly felt the pain.

Not that it mattered.

And in the flat below his the fat woman cried: "Wot's that dripping? Has that old fool on top overflowed his bath again?"

She screamed it loudly. The shrill protest was intended to carry to the floor above.

But Marple didn't hear her.

He couldn't hear her.

He had made his last Permanent Correction. . . .

In red.

PARADISE ISLE

BY LLOYD FITZMAURICE

A beautiful girl and the luxury of an island paradise made Ward forget all about the war. But the war came to him and paradise turned into a hell of screaming death.

Hot oil and smoke boiled into the cockpit. Ward Cummings tore at the coaming release with one hand while snapping free the safety belt with the other. He was just pushing free of the plane when the first wave of flame swept back from the engine. The stricken ship, followed by a trail of black smoke, disappeared into the clouds below.

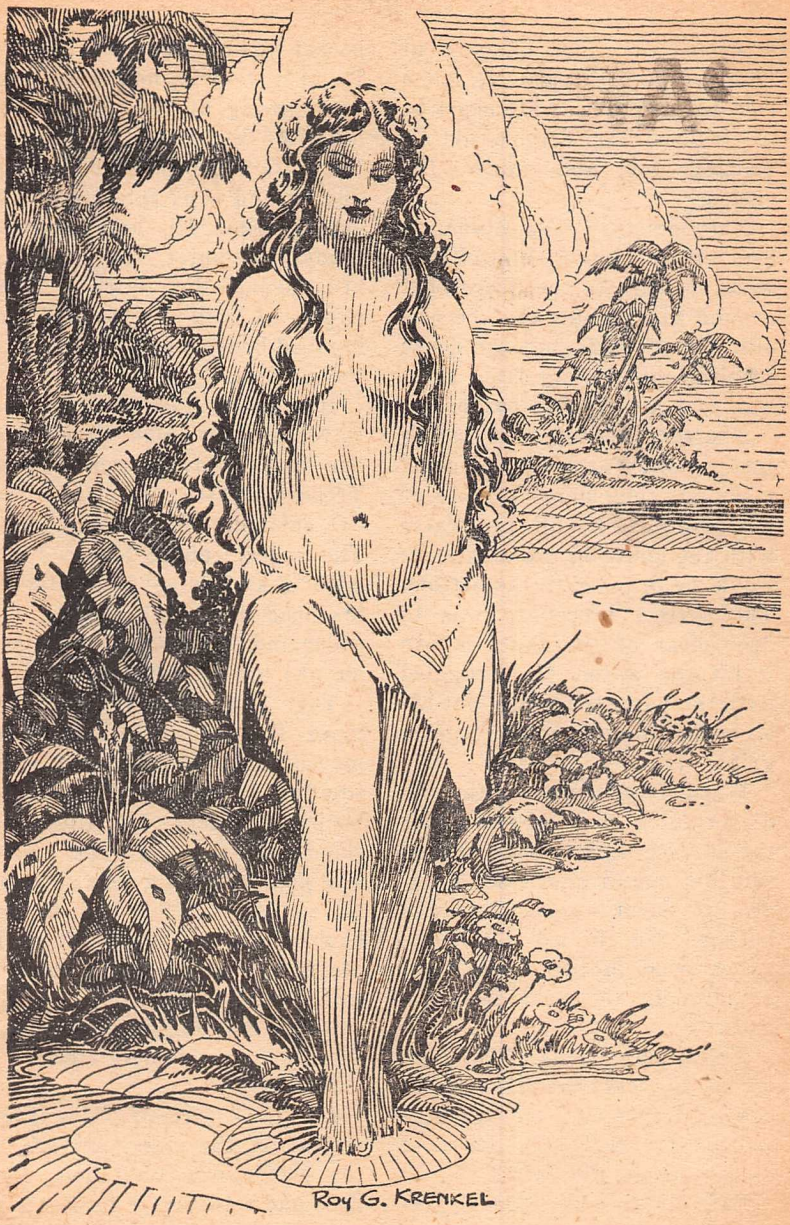
The chute cracked open and the straps gave a cruel jerk against his thighs. He hung there in the risers, the floor of clouds below and the clear blue of the Pacific sky above him. It was a peaceful scene—with one exception. Out of the corner of his eye he spotted a glint of metal. A moment later he could hear the growl of the engine as the Zero curved back to finish the job.

The Yankee plane was dead—but the pilot must die too.

The plane made two passes, each time the guns crackled out their leaden death. Ward hung there inert as the bullets screeched around him. He could feel them rip through the chute, one slug tore through the fabric of his flying suit leaving a hot brand along his side.

He didn't struggle or try and swing out of the way. You can't dodge a bullet. Twice his luck held out. Twice the little white plane with the blood red circle on its side had tried to kill him and failed. Ward knew that his luck couldn't hold out forever. The plane was just starting its third run when it vanished from sight.

It took him an instant to realize that he entered the cloud bank. The thin, moist vapor


ROY G. KRENKEL

streamed by him, offering at least temporary cover. He felt a cold hand clutch at his heart as he realized the Zero would be waiting for him under the clouds.

The moisture was becoming even more dense, his clothes were soaked. As the drops beat around him he saw that he was out of the clouds, but the dense tropical rain falling from them was just as effective cover.

The sodden chute was falling faster now. Far below he could make out the choppy surface of the ocean. If he hit the water with the chute on top of him he would be dragged to the bottom. The correct procedure was to drop clear of the chute before it hit the water. He struggled with the harness release, but his oil soaked fingers couldn't get a grip.

Ward's feet struck with pile-driver force, then he was under the surface. Salty water rushed into his mouth and nose; dragged him down towards the ocean bottom. He forced back the panic, what he had to do must be done in the next few seconds.

Think man, think. I can't go up to the surface—that damn chute is right over me. Harness release is stuck—the knife—I almost forgot the knife!

Safe in its own little zipper-pocket was the emergency knife. In an instant he had it out and was sawing at the tough webbing. As the last strand broke the knife dropped from his limp fingers and sank into the green depths below. His lungs seemed ready to burst, he had to breathe—or die. With a final effort of will he forced his numbed body to angle upward to the surface.

His head broke through the waves and the clean air washed life back into his numb flesh. Treading water, he released the CO_2 cartridge on his Mae West. The yellow rubber plumped out with a satisfying hiss. He let his head drop back against the collar and, for the first time, examined his surroundings.

The local rainstorm, little more than a cloudburst, had moved on. He could see the gray smudge it made against the horizon. Except for this one cloudbank the sky was clear. The gently heaving seas stretched, empty, from his eyes to the horizon. He paddled a bit with his hand and his body rotated easily in the water.

As he turned, his gaze swept the sea in a complete circle.

Nothing.

Lt. (J.G.) Ward Cummings was alone, the glassy surface of the swells was unbroken. The Zero had returned to its lair and

the sky was as empty of movement above as the sea below.

There were two flasks of water in his emergency vest, and some emergency rations in water proof wrappers. At sunset of the second day the crumpled tinfoil from the last ration twinkled down through the clear water beneath his feet. Just before it disappeared from sight a rainbow-hued fish darted up and swallowed it. He wondered how he might catch the fish, and if he did, whether he would be able to eat it. But the fish vanished again and he forgot about it.

In the heat of the afternoon of the fourth day he upended the water flask and it was dry. It dropped from his hand and he watched it float away, a little amber colored plastic ship. He had been in the water for more than ninety-six hours now, when he looked at the flask he thought it was a ship. The sun had done its merciless work on his uncovered head. His skin was cracked and peeling from salt and exposure. He tried to call to the ship but could force no words through his lips which were blackened and sealed with lried blood.

If he had been aware, during the fifth night, he would have heard the muted rumble of breakers on a distant beach. The sun had taken its toll, however, and his mind was wandering in a land of feverish nightmares. He didn't stir, even when the coral reef caught at his dragging toes.

The swells turned into breaking waves, lifting him like a piece of unwanted flotsam to be cast up on the shore. Only when the breakers battered at his head did he stir. Then, only half-conscious, he dragged his body out of the clutching water and collapsed once more beyond its reach.

The morning sun woke him to red blaze of agony. His skin, white and dead from days of immersion was drying out. The sun burned at it and the sand clawed through it. The pain seemed to centralize in his left leg. With an effort of will he moved his head and looked down the length of his body.

A giant sand crab was eating his flesh. This scavenger of the beach lived on what was tossed ashore by the ocean. It had many times eaten fish before they died, as it was now eating a larger fish. The blood stained claws bit once again into the tend flesh.

Ward tried to scream, but he had no voice. His limbs would not obey him. He could neither strike away the crab, nor move out of its reach. He must now

lie there and watch himself eaten alive by this scavenger—and the others of its kind who were rattling toward him.

A shadow fell across his back. Something reached down and, tore the crab away, hurling it into the ocean. He blinked his eyes and tried to make them focus. Two pieces of wood rose from the sand next to him. No . . . they were legs, slim smoothly muscled legs. His eyes rose painfully up their length, past a small kirtle of dark fiber, and reached the face.

A girl, lovely, frightened eyes that stared at him, long luxuriant hair that drifted gently in the sea breeze. Her bare breasts, rose and fell with her rapid breathing.

Afraid of me the hysterical thought ran through Ward's mind. *Afraid of the monster cast up by the sea.* He tried to laugh and reassure her, but the sound that came through his cracked lips was a hideous, grating gurgle.

He didn't see her run swiftly back to the little village of leaf-thatched huts hidden among the palm trees. Nor did he see the stately, bronze man who returned with her. They wove their spears with lianas and made a stretcher to carry him back.

For a full week he was either senseless with fever or raging with pain. Healing unguents were rubbed on his tortured body and cool water forced between his ragged lips.

He awoke in the hushed quiet of the tropic evening. He was sane now and his flesh was healing. He had no memory of the horror of the beach, and wondered how he had gotten from the ocean to this place.

Then Losa stepped into the flickering lamp light. He had no memory of seeing her before, but he knew she was lovely beyond speaking.

The simple twist of bark cloth about her hips concealed none of her beauty. She was bare breasted, as were all of her people. Yet she stood erect in her nudity with a lack of false modesty that defied all convention. Her moist lips parted in a flashing smile when she saw he was awake.

Kneeling at his side, she adjusted the dressing on the bullet scar across his ribs. The black luxury of her long hair swept across his face and her bare body rested for a moment on his arm. The feel of the firm, warm flesh kindled a fire within him. She seemed to sense this because she turned from her work and smiled, the same deep, happy smile. Their eyes met and she leaned forward. Their lips touched, hers warm and moist

against the rough stiffness of his. She did not mind the scars, the tip of her tongue caressed them lightly.

He reached his arm up to pull her to him, but she evaded his slow grasp with a sinuous graceful movement. The manner with which she withdrew and the look in her eyes seemed to say *yes, but not now*. She sat at the head of his cot and cooled his forehead with a damp rag. The way she touched him and the closeness of her body held promise for the future.

Within a week Ward was well enough to be carried outside during the day. They hung a mat to protect him from the sun. In this cool and quiet spot he watched the varied life of the village around him. He studied them and absorbed their way of life.

Even before he learned their language he could tell much about them. They were an isolated people, they rarely if ever visited the neighboring islands that lay over the horizon. Everything they owned, with one exception, was a product of the island or the surrounding waters. The one manufactured article was an incredibly ancient and corroded brass telescope. With deft gestures and pictures in the sand they explained how a ship with white wings had stopped outside the reef. They had received this cheap telescope in exchange for a tremendous quantity of fish, fruits and fresh water. That both sides of the deal felt they had driven a hard bargain was obvious. Ward, scratching away the corrosion, found the almost illegible inscription—*Boston . . . 1830.*

Over a hundred years since these people have seen an outsider. They're unchanged and changeless. While a great war rages all around them they continue in their happy, peaceful way. He looked at the faces as the people passed, busy in their everyday tasks. *They always have time for a smile. How many of those grim, ugly faces back in the states are really happy?*

The cool breath of the trade wind blew over him and his torn body was healing. Though he did not know it his mind was mending as well. Those fearful days in the open sea had exacted their price. He studied the people and learned their language.

But there was one thing wrong. Losa.

That was her name. It was the first word he had learned. Riki, the chief or head-man of the island was her brother. It was Riki's house he was living in. Ward knew she was staying somewhere close by in the house, for she had always been there

when he had screamed in his nightmares at night.

He knew she liked him, he was positive that she felt the same overwhelming desires that he did. Many times he had put him arm around her and felt her melt towards him with the same fire he felt in his own veins. But each time she had checked herself and, fighting hard against her own desires, pulled herself away. Ward could not understand, it worried him, more than any woman had ever worried him before.

He was well now, but still weak from the ordeal. One evening, while sitting alone with Riki, he allowed his mind to wander over his life on the island. And each time his thoughts returned to Losa. His feelings must have shown on his face, because Riki noticed his changed expression.

"You seem bothered, my friend. Is there anything I can do to help."

Ward was surprised and groped for words to cover his feelings. Even on a remote Pacific island you couldn't tell a man you were bothered because his sister wouldn't come to you. But even as he said the words to himself he realized it was more than that. Love, perhaps, if you wanted a word for it. It was hard to put a label on his feelings for Losa. Just the mere thought of her made him incapable of coherent thought.

"There is nothing you can do, Riki. It is what you would call . . . a personal matter."

Riki smiled with his familiar boyish grin, so incongruous on his noble features. "It is about Losa, is it not? You want her very much."

This statement took all of the wind out of Ward's sails. The most he could muster up was a rather weak, "Yes."

"My brother, what bothers you is that you do not know the ways of my people. Losa has not told me these things, but I can understand her looks as easily as I can yours. She also wants you—" Ward half-opened his mouth, but Riki gently waved him to silence. "She wants you, but she wants you proudly so that all may know. When a girl is young and shy she will meet a boy in the woods and they will make love in secret. That is fine for children, for that is the way they learn about life and about each other. But Losa is a woman now. When she takes a man for her own she wants us to all know and be happy with her."

He leaned forward and laid his hand on Ward's shoulder. "I do not know how your people . . . get married . . . is that the word? But my people have a

simple way of choosing each other. Let me explain. . . ."

That night was a feast. Ward's pulse beat in time with the big log drums. His own body swayed in rhythm with the dancers who circled in the fire-lit clearing.

And then came the moment that Riki had told him about. The drum beats changed to a slower, earthier rhythm. The dancers chattering happily, had resumed their places with the others. Ward took a last drink of coconut milk, his mouth seemed terribly dry, and he pulled himself to his feet.

He wore the same outfit as the others, a simple skirt (he thought of it as a kilt) of woven bark cloth. His now long hair had been smoothed down with palm oil and his tough beard painfully scraped off with the rusty little pen-knife that had been caught in one of his pockets. With his well tanned skin he was hard to tell from the natives. And around his neck he wore the same wreath of flowers as the rest.

They were watching him, he could feel it. Yet their manners were perfect. Each person seemed absorbed in his own activities. In spite of the busy eating, drinking and talking they were aware of him.

He walked between the rows of islanders with as much calm as he could muster. Slowly he approached Losa, who was sitting and talking with a teen-age girl who sat next to her. They were a study in female charm; the young girl with straight limbs unhindered by her skirt, her budding young body still fragile and firm. Besides her was Losa, her limbs more rounded, her flesh full and luxuriant. As he approached, their talk stopped and they could only sit with half averted eyes.

Hesitatingly, Ward took the chain of white blossoms from around his neck and laid it on the ground at her feet. He stepped back and folded his arms. He held his breath for a long instant as Losa sat, unmoving. Then she was bending forward, picking up the wreath. Placing it carefully around her neck, she rose and stood beside Ward.

Now they were walking towards the hut, their fingers locked in a tight grip. Around them the people cheered and laughed and were happy for them. Yet they scarcely heard. They had eyes only for each other. In a moment they were at the door of the hut and then they were inside. With a sound like a sob she pressed her body tightly against his, pressing its curves against his flesh. He heard her skirt

drop to the floor and then there was only the feel of her warm skin under his hands and the scent of her hair, and they were falling . . . falling . . .

Months passed during which Ward fell into the easy flow of island life. His strength restored, he fished with the men during the day. They laughed at his mistakes, but it was a kind laughter, they were always ready afterwards to show him the correct way. When the little outrigger boats returned in the afternoon he would go straight to his home. That was always the way he thought of it now, home. For Losa would be there, always smiling, always eager for his love.

They would go to a little cove away from the village. Leaving their clothes on the shore they would dive into the green waters beyond. Tired by the swim, they would lie on the warm sand. He would look at the smooth length of her body, tinted red by the setting sun, and passion would flare up anew inside of him. The warm sand, the hot sun, the flame of her body would swallow him up.

The days merged into weeks and, unheeded, the weeks turned into months. Losa was now round with child and they could no longer run with their old abandon, yet they didn't need to, for there was a closeness now that would always be with them.

Before the work became too much for her, Losa sent for her cousin, Moana. They were the same age, and enjoyed each other's company during the day. But after the evening meal Moana would retire to her own room.

Moana was a lovely girl, and had it not been for Losa's presence she would have been very distracting to Ward. She had a ripe female beauty which could attract any man. The lovliness of her torso was unshielded by any garment.

It was set off by a tiny waist that blossomed into the rounded and curved lengths of her thighs.

She was well aware of her charms, and Ward was sure she knew the effect they had on him. When she brushed by him she kept her body against his for an instant too long. He was attracted, but his mind forced his body away from the attraction.

In the end Moana decided for him. He went swimming alone now, and one day as he lay upon the sand she stepped out from under the trees. She dropped her skirt to the ground as she walked towards him. For an endless moment his eyes wandered over the warm curves of her beauty, then she knelt and stretched her-

self at his side. When the bare flesh of their bodies touched no power on earth could have torn them apart.

They never said a word. Strangely, after the event had happened it never troubled Ward again. The complete naturalness removed whatever feelings of remorse he might of had. He still loved Losa, and Moana seemed incapable of jealousy. The island life continued in its own tempo.

When he thought of the war and the other life he had left, it was always with a remote feeling. They seemed so far away. Occasionally, a plane would slice through the sky above and be gone, this was his only reminder of the life that was behind him.

The day he had left on his last flight the radio had crackled out the news of the fall of Berlin. Japan would be next, he knew it was only a matter of time. He had done his part in the war, he did not feel guilty about leaving it. Over four years of combat flying, the last nine months voluntarily because they wanted to send him home.

He couldn't take himself back to the war, so he didn't worry. But the war could come back to him.

Death came riding back on a little boat. Ward didn't recognize the sound at first—a sharp put-put-put. Then it penetrated. With a start he leaped to his feet and looked out across the little lagoon. A PT boat coming in through a channel in the coral reef. The villagers were running towards the beach now, waving and shouting.

The boat knifed across the glassy waters of the lagoon and swung in towards the shore. As it did so, a puff of breeze caught the limp penant on the stern and stretched it out. As Ward looked at the red sun with streaming rays a cold lump formed in his stomach.

He stared for only a second, and then he was pounding down the slope after the running figures, shouting for them to come back. They didn't hear his voice, but they did hear the chattering snarl of the machine guns from the boat. Steel jacketed slugs tore through their bodies and death had come to the island.

Twisted forms lay on the beach while the survivors fled back to the safety of the trees. Ward turned, and bending low, ran up the hill path, away from the ocean.

Losa and Moana had left soon after the noon meal.

They hadn't said where they were going, but since they carried the clay pot they must have

gone to the stream for water. He must stop them before they returned.

Moana was alone at the water's edge, she glanced up in alarm at his approach.

"Moana, quick — where is Losa!"

"Did you not see her? She has gone back on this same path to the house. What is wrong?"

He shouted over his shoulder as he raced back. "Death is here, Moana. Hide in the woods beyond the spring until I return!"

Creepers caught at his feet and leaves slashed across his face, but he was oblivious to pain. He must reach home before the enemy. As he came out of the jungle he saw that he was too late.

A limp hand hung over the doorsill, blood dripping from the fingertips. It was Riki. He had come here from his own place of safety and died defending his sister. As Ward stepped through the doorway he saw that Riki had died in vain.

She was heavy with child and had screamed and scratched so much that the soldier had killed her. Because of the scratch marks on his face he bayoneted her in such a manner that she had welcomed death.

All this Ward saw in the first instant that he came through the door. The soldier still standing over her twisted body. The man turned and tried to raise his gun, but he never had the chance. A sound, more animal than human, came from Ward's throat. He clutched at the man— threw him to the floor. With the strength of fury his thumbs sank into the other man's throat. The tongue protruded and the eyes were glazed with death long before Ward released his grip.

Picking up the service rifle he walked out into the clearing. Two men in dirty khaki uniforms came out from Laki's hut. Ward pressed the scarred stock to his cheek and shot the first one through the forehead. When he pulled the trigger a second time he realized it had no automatic feed. Lowering the gun, he operated the bolt to lever a shell into the chamber and raised it once again. He was completely unaware that the other soldier was firing all the while, the slugs cutting the air around him.

The man was rattled by Ward's indifference. He turned and tried to run. The bullet caught him in the back of the skull and blew his brains out through the front of his face.

A wounded islander told Ward that six men had landed from the boat. He reloaded his gun and began a slow search of the area.

Within an hour the other three were dead.

Only then did the red haze lift from in front of his eyes. He dropped against the bole of a palm tree, and realized for the first time that he was bleeding. A flesh wound in his shoulder, painful but not serious. An ugly 6 inch splinter of wood protruded from the calf of his right leg. With a quick jerk he pulled it free. When the wave of pain subsided he staunched the blood with a piece of rag.

He did not think of Losa—nor of Riki and all his other friends who had died that day. He did not dare give into remorse, he had one more job to do first.

He tied the rifle to a thick tree at the eastern end of the lagoon. It was lashed tightly in place, pointing at the anchored PT boat. He showed Luma, one of the lesser chiefs, how to pull the trigger and operate the gun. The man, shakingly, agreed. After cautioning him to keep well behind the tree, Ward slipped into the brush.

He waited at the opposite end of the lagoon until he heard the sharp crack of the rifle. An instant later the guns on the boat returned the fire, chopping up the brush around the hidden rifle. At the same time Ward leaped out of the trees and dived into the water. He had a Japanese bayonet gripped tightly in his mouth.

With the fast, underwater strokes he had learned on the island he glided towards the little boat. It loomed above him and he surfaced under the bow. Clutching at the anchor cable, he pulled himself on deck.

There were two men aboard. The officer, his binoculars trained on the shore, never saw the blade that tore his throat out. Ward quietly lowered the body to the planks and stepped over the widening pool of gore.

The gunner, who was changing ammunition belts, shouted a terse remark over his shoulder. Receiving no answer, he turned just in time to ward off the blow of the descending bayonet. At that instant Ward knew he had met his match.

The man was a master of judo. Barehanded he warded off the blade and with a return motion chopped the rock-hard edge of his hand against Ward's forearm. The numbed hand opened and the bayonet shot across the deck and vanished in the water.

The soldier grinned, exposing his broken teeth. Crouched over, his arms bent in arcs, he stepped forward. Ward was already overtired. He knew he would stand no chance against the man.

Suddenly the gunner's expres-

sion changed. The smile vanished and he leaped back to his guns. Flashing a quick glance over his shoulder Ward saw the dark shapes rising out of the ocean and crawling onto the deck.

The islanders had come for vengeance.

The sailor swiveled his guns, but before he could trip the triggers he vanished. Strong arms reached over the gunwale behind him and jerked him, screaming, into the water. Ward never found out what happened under the peaceful surface of the lagoon, but after awhile the men swam ashore.

Ward checked below to see if there was anyone hiding there, then joined the men on the beach. There was nothing to say, they shared a mutual grief. They parted, each to his own way. As Ward climbed the slope he heard the first wails from the village.

He brought Moana back from the jungle and together they buried the brother and sister. As the last dirt fell on Losa's grave Ward turned and entered his empty home.

No one came to interrupt his solitude.

In the morning he knew that he must take the PT boat and leave. The pleasures of his island had turned to dust. The war was still going on, he knew that now he would enjoy killing.

Just before dawn he woke up, puzzled. Then he realized why. The interior of the room was red, illuminated by a flickering light. He turned and saw the pillar of flame mounting up from the lagoon. He raced to the water.

When he reached the water's edge the boat was afire from bow to stern.

"Who did it? Why?" he shouted insanely to the heavens, and shook his fist with impotent rage. When he turned he saw Moana standing in the path among the palms.

"You did it!" he shouted as he stumbled forward. "You condemned me to remain forever on this island of the dead." He clutched her by the shoulder and raised his clenched fist to strike her. She looked fearlessly up into his eyes.

"This island is dead now, but you will bring it life. Riki is dead and you will be the new chief."

At that instant he realized that she was nude. The light from the burning boat shone on the golden perfection of her skin.

"I will be your woman," she said.

He clutched her shoulder until she winced with pain, then his arms slid around her back and were lost in her soft hair. Their bodies met and the world began anew.

CARNAGE IN CALOSSA

BY BRUCE ELLIOTT

A hophead, a girl and a human brute—they all spelt trouble for Tommy Winters. He should have been safe at sea instead of being on the beach in the worst pest hole in the South Pacific.

Sun.

White heat pounding on a tin roof.

Tin-roofed native shack jam-packed with the limp stink of decaying copra.

A man.

Dried filth crusted on his torn mouth, the man moves uneasily. Torn T-shirt soaked with blood, his chest moves hesitantly as the man struggles for air.

Blue dungarees bleached almost white, grubby with dirt ground deep into the fibres of the cloth. Pockets torn and gaping, the dungarees stir as the all-pervading heat makes the man moan.

Unconsciously grinding the egg-shaped protrusion on the side of his skull into the debris on the dirt floor, the man forces more dirt into the gaping split in the colored lump that disfigures his head.

Tears of pain have gummed his eyelids closed and it is this discomfort of which he is first dimly aware as consciousness returns.

Grinding his knuckles into his eyes, and gasping for breath he slowly lifts his head. More pain. Retching, grinding pain that begins in his head and shoots outwards and down, ending in the pit of his belly.

Waves of heat pound down at him from the under side of the broiling tin roof.

Fetid stench makes his nostrils flare as he tries to manufacture saliva in the sandpaper rough lining of his mouth and tongue.

And then, and then, reality returns.

Muddled, nightmarish, but now he knows that he is a man, someone named Tommy Winters.

And he knows that he has no

right to be where he is.

Staggering to the aperture, that serves as a door, he sees across the almost blue whiteness of the sandy beach that faces the hut, far out on the horizon, a tramp steamer.

His ship.

Gone, left without him.

He's on the beach in Calossa, worst hell hole he had ever seen in all the tiny islands that dot the Pacific like leprous sores.

Hesitantly he puts his hands to his pockets. Feeling the torn cloth he knows that his money is gone, but worse, much worse, is the realization that his papers are gone too. His seaman's papers and his seaman's passport.

Retching he empties his stomach, and then he stands there framed in the doorway of the stinking native hut and he remembers . . .

There was a girl.

Lean and lithe with a waist that was almost small enough for him to put his hands around, the full bosom and outcurved hips that undulated like all the lonely dreams he had ever dreamt on shipboard, with long straight legs and covering and revealing, revealing more by what it clothed than what it showed above and below, a strip of cloth, her only clothing, was like wet satin.

Animal face with slanting eyes, that were as heavy lidded as ancient sin, and hair like a tortured ebony midnight, she was brown as good coffee with just the right amount of cream in it, brown with the color that white women try futilely to achieve by endless hours of sun bathing, brown like velvet, brown that made the tips of his fingers ache to caress it.

And he had.

But first there had been liquor, lots of it, and singing, and talk, good talk with his shipmates, who, after twenty-two days on shipboard, were like new men at the feel of solid earth under their feet, and it had been fun.

But then, he pressed his bruised hands to the aching lump that puzzled him but then, what?

The hut.

And then nothing.

No remembrance came. No knowledge of the hand that had struck him down, no memory of how he had passed out, no idea as to who had beached him.

None at all.

Even then, even with pain racking him with a hurt he had never had to endure before, the sight of her walking across the too white sand, walking towards him, smiling as she came, was enough to lift his spirits momentarily.

She said, "Tommee, what has happened to your poor head?" Her speech was slurred and no one would ever confuse her English with that of a Vassar graduate, but she was able to speak as well as most of the people on the island, white or brown.

"I don't know, honey, I was kind of hoping you'd be able to tell me." Winters was concerned with the way he looked. The water down at the beach's edge, that was the thing for him. Keeping a distance away from her so that she would not be offended by the state he was in, he stripped off his torn singlet and his ripped dungarees. Slipping into the water, he floated for awhile trying to draw strength from the bath tub of hot sea water.

She stood knee deep in the soft rollers that broke on the shore and rinsed out his clothes.

Twenty feet out, Winters called, "Was I all right when you left me?"

"A little drunk, but not too," she said, busy with her chore. "You were very funnee, you said you would marree me."

Oh, brother, Winters thought, whatever else had happened to him last night, one thing was sure, he had been loaded. The salt water stung the wound on his head, but that was all to the good. The pain did not lessen but at least some of the dirt would be washed out. He called, "What did your husband think of that?"

"He was not there when you say that." Head bowed, he could not see what the expression on her face was.

Paddling in to the shore, he flopped in a heap just beyond the reach of the water and let the sun bake out his shorts. He could almost see the moisture disappear as the heat hit them. He said, "Acquila, was I very drunk? Sick, or anything?"

"Noooo . . ." She drew out the monosyllable. "When I left, you were sound asleep with a sweet smile on your face."

"Oh great!" Winters made a sour face, and said, "I must have been a real live doll."

"You were cute." Now the smile that had been hovering at the corners of her full lips broke out in full, and her white, white, teeth flashed, and sick as he felt, he managed to fling out an arm and encircle her waist and pull her to him. Her soft lips were as exciting as he remembered them being.

Near them, his pants and shirt were almost completely dry when they rose and he forced himself into his clothes.

He asked, "What the hell am I going to do, honey?"

"You mean for monee?"

A nod brought the forgotten pain back in a full burst that made him almost double up in agony. Her face showed concern as she said, "First you had better go to the doctor, no?"

"Doctors like money, no?" He answered. "Money is what I ain't got none of."

And papers, his passport, without them he was a man alone in an alien world.

She said, "Maybe my husband would have you work in his place."

That would really do it, he thought dully. Put the horns on the guy and then go around and beg for a hand out.

He ran his hand around her firm hips and said, "What if he knows about the games we been playing?"

"Bah," the monosyllable sound on her lips, "He not know. And if he know, he not care."

It was hard to believe, Winters thought, looking down at her, awful hard to believe that any man, no matter how long he'd gone native, would ever get over wanting to possess her.

They were walking towards what passed for the main drag in Calossa. Three hundred feet long, the dirt of the road was rutted like corduroy; garbage and filth almost covered the area, and on both sides of the "street" were houses, stores, and what might in some other place be called bar rooms. Here they were open fronted wooden frames, tin roofed places with tables and chairs.

"Madigan's" was the name scrawled on the place her husband ran.

The equatorial noon day sun beating down made ink black shadows inside the bar.

Staggering, Winters held onto the side of the frame structure as he passed from the whiteness to the blackness. It was only after awhile that he could make his eyes see into the bar. A length of what might have been mahogany stretched back to the rear of the place. A cash register, rusted and incompetent looking was between Winters and the man who owned both the bar and the girl who stood next to Winters.

She called, "Mr. Madigan." That had struck Winters as odd the night before, even in his drunkenness, that she had called her husband mister. But it was none of his business then and it was none of his business now.

The over-sized chair that contained Madigan's bulk creaked as the man leaned forward a little. Winters thought "your mother's may have been named Madigan, buster, but your father's name was something like Sen-Kai," for the man was

monolothically fat. Perhaps two inches shorter than Winters' six feet, the man called Madigan seemed to be made up of rolls of hard fat. Winters remembered an old automobile tire ad that he had seen many years before; in it a cartoon man was formed of rubber tires. That was the effect that Madigan gave. But the fat was not soft, it was like the pads that cover Japanese wrestlers, those eugenically bred mountains of men who are agile for all their size.

Madigan's padded eyes opened a trifle, and he said, "Ah, Mr. Winters, you have not found it possible to pull yourself away from our so salubrious climate?" The esses were definitely hissed.

"Somebody took care of that for me." Winters said and wondered what a drink would do to his head.

Even in the quasi-darkness of the bar room, Winters could see the oily sweat that cascaded down from the mountainous man's forehead in a never ending stream.

Madigan asked, "Will you join me in a drink? Or are you one of those cowardly drinkers who insists on waiting till the sun is over the yardarm?"

Acquila might have been invisible for all the notice that the monstrously fat man took of her. In fact, Winters noticed, she was sidling around behind the man, slowly, as if to try and get out of his sight.

"Sure, I'll have a drink." He couldn't feel much worse, that was for sure.

No wheat had ever gone into the composition of the drink that passed in these parts for rye. Downing it at a gulp, Winters was sure that fermenting rice had been the base of the almost pure alcohol that filled the American brand name bottle that sat next to Madigan on the bar.

Now that his eyes were more accustomed to the lack of light Winters became aware of what seemed at first glance to be a bundle of dirty clothes under a nearby table. It took a second look to show him that the clothes were on a man.

Getting out from under the table took the man a long time. When he was finally standing spraddle-legged, wavering back and forth slowly, he whined to Madigan, as he wiped some cigarette butts off himself, "How about a shot, Madigan?"

"I thought I told you, Gilroy," the fat man said slowly and distinctly, as though talking to a child, or an idiot, "that you were not to speak to me unless I asked you to?" The voice was gentle, but Winters had to restrain himself from interfering

when Madigan threw a shot glass of the raw liquor straight into the derelict's eyes.

No sense, Winters thought, in getting involved in this.

Gilroy's pigeon breast rose and fell fast, as he seemed to debate with himself whether to do anything about the action or not. Finally his narrow head fell forward on his chest and he whimpered, "But you promised."

Madigan's big foot shot out and caught Gilroy in the groin. The man fell writhing to the littered floor, and Madigan said conversationally, "Acquila, get him out of here before I kill him."

The girl re-appeared from wherever she had been lurking and taking hold of the famine thin man by the ankles she dragged him across the floor and out of sight to some back room.

Madigan turned his heavy face to Winters, his sagging double chins dancing as he said, more quickly than was his wont, "What can I do for you?"

"Is there any way I can make coffee and cake money till the next ship docks here?"

"Depends, much depends on how much cake you need with your coffee." Madigan's padded eyes were focussed on the middle distance as though he could see right through Winters, out into the street, such as it was.

"There's no American consul on the island?"

"None for eight hundred miles."

"Then the first amount of cake I'll need will be enough to wire the consul about my passport being missing."

"That is possible. It can be taken care of."

"Some money for clothes, food and a bed, that's about all I need."

Some money to move around on, to try and find out just what the hell had happened to him, Winters thought, that was what he needed. Nobody had ever pushed him around like this before, and as the liquor bit in and began to do some good, he thought, and no one's going to start now.

"Ten dollars a week." Madigan said.

It was a far cry from his union scale as a seaman first class, but it would have to do.

"What do I have to do?"

Madigan waggled a fat thumb at a mop in the back of the bar. "Swamp."

A swamper. The clamhead who cleans a joint. Washes out the spitoons, mops up the floor, you couldn't get much lower than that. Beggars can't be choosers, Winters thought sourly, and picked up the mop. "Can you advance me some dough?"

The big head swivelled in the rolls of fat. "No, I fear not. Too many men have found it easier to live on the beach off some native girl. I must have an example of your industry before I can feel that it is an act of wisdom to give you your salary."

Swearing under his breath, head aching, stomach heaving with what Winters realized was the beginning of hunger, he got to work. When you got right down to it, he found out, it wasn't much different from washing down a deck. A lot dirtier that was about all.

It was a rough week.

Dossing down in the back of the bar took care of Winters' sleeping arrangements, and Madigan had Winters share his meals with him. Acquila was always there, always in the background, waiting on Madigan, obeying his every command. That was what made it rough, not the work. Having her under his nose all the time, brushing by her in the semi-darkness, smelling the fragrance of her hair, touching her lithe body . . .

But it paid off, for when it got late, when the last few drunks had finally quitted the bar and staggered off into the soft tropical night, then Winters was able to ease away from the omnipresent bulk of Madigan, and go down to the beach. It never took more than ten or fifteen minutes for Acquila to join him. . . .

By the time the lump on Winters' head had begun to subside the week had ended.

"Mr. Winters," Madigan called.

"Coming."

"Your salary, sir." The dirty dollar bills were a welcome sight.

Madigan counted them out slowly and reluctantly. Ten of them. But then as Winters hurriedly reached out to scoop them up, Madigan's big hand came down over the thin stack. "A moment, please."

Winters felt his hands curling into hard balls. Instinctively, his thumbs retracted below his fingertips. He'd learned that early in the game. It was the only way to keep them from being broken if you landed a solid punch.

Madigan said, "I am not charging you for sleeping here."

"That's pretty big of you." Winters could feel fury beginning to build up inside him.

"However, I do feel forced to charge you for the food you have consumed." Madigan withdrew three of the limp, soiled old dollars from the slim pile.

Winters allowed his fists to

unclench. That still left seven bucks.

But Madigan was spreading the bills on the grimy bar. The seven of them were now lined in a row. Madigan said, "Tuesday," and pulled a dollar bill away from the row. "Wednesday," another bill was withdrawn. "Thursday . . ." still another bill. . . .

Puzzled, Winters watched as the grotesquely fat man chanted out the days of the week, and at the name of each day, took back a dollar.

When there were no bills left, Winters said, "Just what the hell do you think you're doing?"

Crossing his arms on his tremendous belly, Madigan stared at Winters, "I believe that a man deserves to be paid for what he does. Therefore, I have paid you the salary I agreed to give you. But I also feel that in all fairness, a husband should benefit from what his wife does." The bland face, the man's statue-like immobility, was unbroken as Madigan said, "You do not dispute my arithmetic?"

Suddenly and surprisingly, Gilroy, the pale wraith of a man who was always lurking somewhere in the background, began to giggle.

His high pitched voice cackled, "Looka his face, Madigan! He's shocked!"

Backing away from Madigan, his hands clenching and unclenching at his sides, trying not to let the black rage that was welling up inside him come to the surface, and make him do something he would regret, Winters stumbled down the single wooden step outside the bar, and walked quickly away.

A week wasted. Seven days shot. And here he was, just as bad off as he had been when he woke up broke and without his papers. Worse off; for now even if he could contact the consul on the distant island that government employee would certainly want to know why Winters had so long delayed reporting the theft of the passport. Seven days. Two more days and his ship would be docking and paying off in San Francisco. A great town when you had a pocket full of money, and he'd been at sea long enough to build up quite a bank roll.

Winters wondered if he could prevail on the one lone radio operator on Calossa to take a chance and call his ship. Maybe that's what he should have done in the first place if he had not been befuddled by Acquila, bemused by her nearness, intoxicated by her body.

So the lady was a tramp.

No wonder Madigan had had

no husbandly jealous pangs. No wonder at all.

That was the first night that did not find Winters reclining on the beach.

Instead he paced angrily through the night, past the few houses where the decent law abiding citizens of this back wash of civilization were sound asleep behind drawn blinds.

But the trouble with the island was that there were no long winding roads where a man could walk the fury out of his veins. Winters found himself getting, if anything, angrier than he had been as his feet brought him back towards Madigan's bar.

Once around the island barely tired him. Five miles had not consumed enough time, or energy to ease the rage that he was tending carefully as a householder banks a fire for a long winter night.

The single yellow light from Madigan's was the only man made illumination on the rutted road. The moon was high in the sky, but Winters was blind to that.

Wondering if taking a punch out of Madigan would help anything, Winters walked towards the bar. From inside it, he heard some voices. Madigan's, Gilroy's . . . and a third man's. . . . Whose was it?

Suddenly cautious, Winters crouched down, and made his way nearer the voices.

The unknown's voice was saying, "When do we slough Winters?"

"Patience, patience is a virtue, my quick tempered friend." That was Madigan.

Winters was on his haunches now, peering into the room. He knew the third man, but only as a hanger-on at the bar, one of the few on the whole island whom Madigan allowed to sign chits at the bar.

Almost as gaunt as Gilroy, the man's flaring red hair, and broad shouldered body was tense as he snarled at Madigan. "Patience!"

Behind Madigan and the red headed man, Gilroy was holding a battered kitchen spoon over a match. Smoke coated the bottom of the spoon. Whatever he was heating in the bowl of the spoon was evidently ready, for while Madigan and the red head talked, seriously, Gilroy placed the tip of a medicine dropper into the liquid in the spoon.

Madigan said, "Everything is all set. The ship lands here tomorrow. Follow my suggestions as you have in the past, Smathers, and I see no reason why our business should not progress as admirably as usual."

"Words." The red head,

Smathers, made a gesture with his hand. "Words." He made it sound like a swear word. "Let's get it over with."

"You have replaced his picture with one of you?" Madigan asked.

Behind Madigan the single light made eery shadows on the wall as Gilroy unbuttoned his work pants and dropped them. Picking up a rusty pocket knife, he hacked a gash in the inside of his thin thigh.

Smathers reached into a pocket and flipped out a passport. He showed it to Madigan. "There'll be no trouble about this."

His passport, Winters realized. The red head had substituted a photograph of himself for the one of Winters.

The oppressive silence of the tropical night was lightly broken. Bare feet. Winters got down on all fours and eased himself to one side, out of the way.

Acquila stormed into the bar. "He did not come!"

Madigan snorted.

Gilroy shoved the tip of the dirty medicine dropper into the gash he had cut in his leg. Then he pressed the rubber bulb and paid no attention to the drops of blood that welled up from the cut in his scrawny thigh. The blood dripped down on the other suppurating sores that defaced his skin.

Smathers said, and he was mimicking Madigan's heavy, almost pompous tones, "Oh, no, don't worry about Winters, he's safe. He's with Acquila." Then his voice his own, he snarled, "I said we oughta clobber the slob, but oh no, not you! Let's put it off till the last minute!"

Through a rip in the battered wood that served as a wall for the bar room Winters could see Gilroy pull up his pants. He could see Acquila's face and she was frightened and angry and . . . somehow a little excited.

Gilroy threw back his thin shoulders and said to Madigan, "You want me to take him? I'll rip him apart with my bare hands! I'll chew his throat out . . . I'll . . ."

"You'll shut up, while I think," Madigan said, and as maniacally hyped up as the hophead was, he drew aways from the cold anger in the fat man's voice.

Throwing back her head, made Acquila's hair flare out like a wild horse's mane. She said, "Talk, always talk, think, always think, will you never act, fat man?"

Using the side of his hand, Madigan cuffed her across the jaw, as you might an impetuous puppy. "Shut up."

"Where would Winters be?"

Madigan asked aloud. "Angry at my charming wife, what would he do? Where could he go?"

Still immobile, he looked about him. Winters hunkered down for it was almost as if the fat man's flat eyes could see through the wooden wall.

Behind him, Gilroy reached out, put his hand on Acquila's waist, caressed her. The woman was standing as though frozen, her hand still on her jaw. Smathers had taken a .38 out of his back pocket and was looking at it.

Madigan said, "Put that away. It would sound like an atom bomb in the silence of this island."

"Shiv?" Smathers asked.

"Of course. And then dump him in the inlet." Madigan's eyes were still the only part of him that moved. "I would not be too surprised to find that we have an eavesdropper, gentlemen."

Acquila was the first one to move. Making a fork of her forefinger and middle finger, she darted the tips of her fingers into Gilroy's eyes. As the man screamed in pain, she said, "I told you not to touch me."

Palms of his hands pressing into his assaulted eyes, Gilroy fell to his knees.

The red head left the gun on the table between him and Madigan. This time when he took his hand out of his pocket it held a snap knife. Pressing the button, he waited till the spring whipped a razor sharp blade into sight. Then like all knife fighters, he put his forefinger under the back of the blade and holding his hand in front of him, he asked, "You figure Winters came back here and is getting an ear full?"

"It would seem like a sensible course of action," the fat man said.

It was not too surprising, Winters found, to discover that here were the people who had broken his skull and robbed him. Then too, their reason now seemed obvious. But all that was washed away in a wave of berserk rage that threatened to break its bounds before Winters could make the best use of it.

Straightening up from his crouching position, he flattened his body against the warped boards of the bar's wall and waited, his hands aching to come to grips with the men who had assaulted him.

The sick yellow beams that came through the cracks were the only light. In that pale illumination, Winters could see the crouched form of Smathers. Like an animal with a single fang, the man came closer, the hand that held the knife projecting out in front of him.

From inside the bar, Madi-

gan called out, "Any sign of him? After all, my hypothesis may not be correct."

"So far I don't see . . ." Smathers answered, and then his voice broke off as Winters, who was behind him, whipped his arm around the man's throat and pulled tight.

That left Smathers' arms free and his knife hand came up and back jabbing at Winters' face. Twisting his head from side to side, avoiding the darting jabs as best he could, Winters continued to apply pressure on the man's throat. In another minute he might have had control of the situation, but for the fact that Smathers did the only thing that could rid him of the strangling arm. He fell forward to his knees, and as he fell, he pulled his head into his chest. Winters was catapulted over Smathers' body and landed on his back, the breath knocked out of him.

At the same time, the light inside the bar was turned out.

The waning moon cutting through some palm trees was now the only aid to vision and it was so weak that Winters had to squint his eyes in order to make out the blurred form of the man who was now stalking him on all fours.

"Don't forget," Madigan's flat, completely unemotional voice broke the silence, "that there's a hundred grand involved. Get him!"

A hundred thousand dollars was a hell of a spur, Winters found as Smathers leaped from his animal like position in a flat dive that caught Winters in the groin. The pain was enough to make a groan force its way out of Winters' throat, but knowing that there was no time to waste in anything but fighting to the death, he gritted his teeth, and his head swimming with nausea, he chopped down with the side of his hand on Smathers' neck. The blow made the man go limp. The spring knife shot out of his hand and landed four or five feet away.

Not waiting to see if Smathers was playing possum, Winters gambled everything on reaching the knife first. His hand was closing on it, when from behind him, from the doorway of the bar, Madigan said, "Drop it, Winters."

Duly aware that Madigan now held the gun that Smathers had left on the table, Winters stood irresolutely, the knife laying across his palm. Madigan said, "It's a big gamble, Winters, unless you are a fine knife thrower, I wouldn't try it."

One hand pressed into his groin, trying to assuage the pain that was sending fiery jets through him, his other hand oc-

cupied with the knife, Winters considered the odds.

Madigan said, "Given that you can throw that knife well enough to get me, it is highly improbable that I will die immediately. And unless I do, I shall certainly shoot you to death."

Winters turned his hand over and allowed the knife to drop to the ground. Gilroy popped into view behind Madigan and lurching to the knife, he scooped it up, and then stood crooning to the deadly blade.

"Inside," Madigan said, and turning his head slightly, he called, "Turn on the light, Acquila."

The hophead dragged Smathers into the bar room by the heels disregarding the way the man's head bounced and jolted from side to side. Releasing Smathers' legs, he again took out the knife and ran his thumb gently across the shining blade.

"Very little," Madigan said relaxing again into the over-size chair that Winters was used to seeing him occupy, "had been accomplished by your little feat of derring do, Mr. Winters . . Very little indeed."

"I had very little to lose," Winters said. The nose of the gun in the fat man's hand was pointed directly at Winters' navel. He did not like to think of what it would feel like to get shot in the gut. The pain in his groin was letting up, and he found that he could again think fairly coherently. He was due to die, unless he could somehow turn the tables on the fat man and the hophead. Considering his own fate, his eyes drifted over Acquila's body. At that moment, he was only dimly aware of her charms. The puzzle that concerned him was what her position in this deadly game consisted of, would she throw in with any winner, or did she have any loyalty to the fat man? She stepped directly behind the chair that held her husband's gross body. All Gilroy's attention was on the knife.

Madigan was speaking, but Winters was not concerned with that, for he could see Acquila reaching out and picking up the ever present liquor bottle that always sat near Madigan. Her tapering fingers closing around the neck of the bottle.

Her savage face was completely impassive. It signalled no message to Winters at all.

The bottle was over Madigan's head now.

"It is obvious of course," Madigan was saying, "That you have had the bad luck to be selected for the role of pigeon in the highly remunerative drug smuggling ring that I have the pleasure of heading.

"Unfortunately for you, I need a passport for Mr. Smathers, so that he can take the latest packet of heroin to the states. The risks are high, I suppose you might point out, but I can only say that so are the rewards."

His mouth was forming still another word, when the bottle crashed down on his head. Winters was thinking that Calossa was merely the way station, that the heroin was probably being manufactured in China or Japan, and then transported here, for the final arrangements before being smuggled into America, when the sight of Gilroy, his face contorted with a mixture of drugged delirium and insane rage, catapulted towards Acquila who was dropping the neck of the bottle, all that remained after the bottle had shattered on her husband's head. The knife in Gilroy's hand cut at Acquila's midriff.

Her agile body twisted to one side as the hophead, a scream of fury on his lips, chopped at her and then he mumbled, "You can't do that to Madigan . . . without him where'll I get the horse?" The knife cut deep.

Enveloped in a feeling of continuing nightmare, Winters managed to get a grip on the man's fragile wrist and tear the hophead away from the woman.

A right jab made the drug addict collapse on the floor.

And the carnage was almost complete.

The blow that had knocked out Madigan had not forced his body to do more than relax. He sat, as though asleep, the rivulets of blood running down his face, and the shards of broken glass making a glittering collar around his thick neck. Gilroy was slumped like a broken toy next to the unconscious body of Smathers.

But Winters was blind to all that.

All he could see was the anguish on Acquila's face, and the way her fingers pressed deep into her slashed stomach as though they could weave back the ripped flesh.

"Your ship," she said through lips that were perilously close to going slack in the last relaxation that precedes death, "Man . . . with . . . passport . . . of . . ." the words were getting more and more widely separated in time, "dead man . . . in . . . inlet . . ." So this was not the first time the gang had used an innocent seaman's papers, Winters thought disconnectedly, as the dying girl said, "name . . . of . . . Black."

Pillowing her head in his lap, disregarding the horror that was now her stomach, Winters kissed her gently and said, "Thanks a

the PRIDE OF BALTIMORE

BY FLETCHER PRATT

The year was1814 and the giant British fleet had America blockaded. One courageous Yankee captain flew in the teeth of these mighty ships of the line and issued the most audacious statement of all time —his one ship was going to blockade all of England.

"Anchors catted."

"Mr. Dieter, let flow the jib sheet, haul out mainsail and set the fore."

It is probable that Lieutenant John Dieter's eyes widened slightly over these orders, for it was distinctly blowing weather, that sent whitecaps tumbling wildly under a scud of cloud, even here inside Sandy Hook, and the huge square foresail was a cloth for light airs. But if Mr. Dieter had any doubts he had already learned better than to express them in the hearing of Captain Tom Boyle and aboard this ship, the finest that ever came from Thomas Kemp's yard. He double-manned his sheets, they came home with a yo-heave-ho, and the privateer *Chasseur*, bucking to the thrust of her canvas, began to walk toward the southeastern horizon, where just visible in the fading light were the topsails of the British blockading squadron.

It was 1814 and near the close of July, with the War of 1812 at its dark center. In the north a great British army was on the march toward Lake Champlain to split America down the line of the Hudson, a fleet ready to support it and very little to stop them; in the west another British army was barely being held on even terms along the Niagara frontier; in the center a huge British fleet was already entering the Chesapeake and the troops it carried would

million, baby, for the help you gave me . . ."

He was still sitting that way with the dead woman in his arms when the single human being in whom the authority for the preservation of peace and the upholding of law and order in Calossa, entered the bar.

The peace officer said, "C'mon, spit it out, mister."

Standing over Smathers, ready at any moment to kick the man's brains out if he showed any sign of fighting, Winters said, "It's pretty obvious. This is a gang that was smuggling heroin into the States. And that reminds me. There's a guy named Black who was killed and thrown into the inlet, and what's more, someone else is traveling on his passport, on my ship.

"The radio man," Winters said, snapping the words out, "better get him to contact my ship and have the man carrying Black's passport arrested. He must have a bundle of heroin on him, ready to take off the ship in Frisco. It'll dock there tomorrow, so we better get busy."

There was a lot more to do, but at last it was done, and Winters had found the cache of heroin in the bar, underneath the battered cash register, and what was equally damning, he found bank books in Madigan's name on a San Francisco bank and the amount that Madigan had banked was stunning.

The hut that served as a jail on Calossa was jammed when Carrell finished putting Madigan, Gilroy and Smathers behind bars.

And then it was over, and Winters had his own passport back and he had ripped out the picture of Smathers, and there was nothing left to do but wait for the next ship to his Calossa and that was hard, for everywhere that Winters looked, he seemed to see Acquila.

One time he would see her as she had looked without the bit of cloth wrapped around her and her eyes dancing with excitement and her breasts heaving with pleasure and she was made for love.

And then he'd see her as Madigan's wife and that wasn't so good.

But worst of all was when he saw her with her belly ripped out and he was helpless to do anything for her. That was the picture that stayed with him longest and he knew that even when Calossa had sunk down beneath the horizon and the carnage had vanished from his memory, he'd still be burdened with the picture of her as she lay dying . . .

presently throw the defense forces into disorderly rout and go on to burn Washington; while along the coast over two hundred British warships had driven practically all the American navy into harbor and were holding it under strict blockade.

Yet the very fact that H. M. Admiralty found two hundred blockaders necessary against a nation whose whole navy did not number twenty ships at the beginning of the war indicates that this was not the whole story. And the part of the story it was not, the part that was driving the British wild and had already cost them near eight hundred ships, was furnished by men like Tom Boyle and ships like the privateer *Chasseur*. Not that there were many quite like either.

He was out of Marblehead, a medium-sized man now 39, with singularly brilliant blue eyes, side whiskers which had established relations under his chin and a sense of humor that kept everyone in the room with him laughing—yet with a temper in the background. Came to Baltimore on a ship at 19, found a girl whose cut of jib pleased him, married her and settled down as a man who gave much attention to squeezing the last knot of speed out of the rather dangerous Baltimore clipper design—long and narrow, with fine running lines and a terrifying press of canvas.

It was natural as anything could be that when war broke out a syndicate of Baltimore merchants should employ this captain famous for his speedy runs; they gave him a fast schooner fitted as a privateer. She was *Comet* of 179 tons, ten 12-pound carronades and a pair of long 9s; Boyle had her at sea within less than a month after war was declared, and with her ranged from Bermuda to the Brazils on two of the most adventurous cruises a privateersman ever made. He took 11 ships on the first run, the more part merely relieving of their cargoes and burning, though there were some that he sent in. On the second cruise, a long one in which he provisioned himself from his prizes, he took 24 ships more and himself reported: "On the 19th (of March, 1814) arrived at this port after a cruise of five months. I was chased during that time by 34 frigates and brigs-of-war and always outsailed them with ease. The Admiral on the Leeward Island station offered considerable reward for the *Comet* as being the greatest plague to him of any vessel in those seas, but directed his smaller class of gun vessels to run from her."

This was not all; off Pernambuco Boyle found three armed British ships with a Portuguese navy brig in company, whose captain told the American the British were under his protection. Boyle replied that while Portugal might be an ally of Britain against Napoleon, she most certainly had no business interfering with a United States vessel, and he was going to attack those ships. He ranged alongside and did so. The Portuguese warship moved in and opened fire; with one broadside Boyle hacked the Britishers about so badly that they surrendered, while with the other he beat off the Portuguese, which demonstrates that the latter's gunnery was not so very much, as Boyle had suspected.

Oh, he was a captain, Boyle; but a privateer and not a highwayman. When he found that the skipper of one of his prizes had a valuable new sextant, Boyle took it—but paid for it above the London market price.

Now he is pacing the quarterdeck of *Chasseur* as she goes pitching through a northwest gale and falling light toward the squadron blockading New York; at least one battleship and three frigates with perhaps others waiting out there. The reason Boyle approached this test with calm confidence was because of this ship and the crew he had coaxed aboard her. She had been launched out in December 1812, especially for the privateering trade. Boyle himself had a hand in suggesting some of her features, as a man who knew the business. She was the largest and certainly the fastest privateer yet launched—369 tons, 115 feet long on the deck, a full topsail schooner. As she lay fitting out at Thomas Kemp's yard, old salts who had seen many ships clucked appreciatively and at once named her "The Pride of Baltimore" for her beauty and fine lines; but the syndicate who owned her chose the wrong captain, and *Chasseur's* first voyage was a failure, since her crew mutinied before she could reach sea and she put back to Annapolis.

This was in 1813; it was November before the mutiny could be cleared up and another captain found for the Pride of Baltimore in the person of William Wade, who had been Boyle's lieutenant during *Comet's* first cruise, and who therefore came well recommended. He slipped through the Chesapeake blockade in a winter snowstorm, crossed the Atlantic, took 11 prizes off the coast of France, and reached New York the following June.

Enter Boyle again. He had brought *Comet* back from her

second cruise with enough money in her hold to make him a rich man; he also brought back certain novel theories about the business of privateering which he wanted to test in practice. One of them was that in spite of her speed *Comet* was too light for the business as it stood in mid-1814, with those 200 warships off the coast and all the valuable targets travelling in heavily-guarded convoys. A vessel like *Chasseur* would give him a real chance; he formed his own syndicate, the ship was bought, and Boyle hurried to New York.

There it began to develop what the rest of his theories were. He opened a recruiting rendezvous at an inn, with a banner saying "Free Trade and Sailors' Rights" over the door and a fifer with a *Chasseur* hatband to play "Hail, Columbia" when likely-looking seamen came along. Preference was given to ex-navy men, and Boyle's own reputation brought them to him. The bos'un was an old shipmate of James Lawrence in *Hornet*, the master gunner had been with Decatur in the *United States* frigate when she took *Macedonian*, of the able seamen nearly every man had pulled a rope under the navy flag.

As for *Chasseur* herself, Boyle took out her armament of carronades and replaced it with sixteen long 12s with sights on them, a thing unknown in privateering, and among navy ships practised only by the Americans. It was a sloop-of-war's armament, and one that would let Boyle fight at long range, for though a privateer's business is not fighting, Captain Tom Boyle conceived he might have to do some of it, given his plan of campaign.

For he had detected the fallacy in the British system of closely blockading the American coast and convoying elsewhere. There is one point at which a convoy must cease to be a convoy, and that is where it breaks up close to the home ports to let the ships seek their separate destinations. That is, Boyle intended to sit on the very doorstep of British sea-power, in the English Channel and Irish Sea. He was going to try applying a close blockade to England herself. If that meant trouble with British warships, so much the worse for them. So in addition to getting a navy-trained crew, Boyle put them under naval discipline, with regular exercises, and a cask thrown suddenly overside and the crew of number 5 gun ordered to take it under fire.

This was the ship, the crew and captain who put to sea on a stormy evening in July of 1814.

They were well clear of the coast before being sighted; a British frigate bore in chase for the better part of an hour before discovering that she could by no means foot it with the Baltimore racer and gave up. Boyle swung into the great circle route which carried sailing ships from the sugar islands on favoring winds up the Gulf Stream and so eastward to England, and on August 16 made his first prize, a brig from Buenos Aires with a quantity of money in her hold. Then came a beautiful new copper-bottomed brig, so fine that Boyle took a chance on sending her in through the blockade; she reached port safely.

Half way across the Atlantic *Chasseur* walked up on and took two more brigs valuable enough to send in. One was *Antelope,* with eight 18-pound carronades and a Long Tom, an armament that would hardly have taken her far against *Chasseur's* powerful battery and navy-trained crew, but the point was that she carried a commission as an auxiliary cruiser and surrendered without firing a shot. This gave Boyle a chance for a typical piece of business; he wrote a solemn official report to the British Admiralty denouncing *Antelope's* captain as a cowardly poltroon and demanding he be deprived of his license, then sent it to London by his next prize, a small sloop into which he crowded the prisoners from his other captures. What happened to the cowardly captain is not known; what happened to *Antelope* is—the British re-took her trying to make New York.

It was now near the end of August and Boyle had reached his chosen cruising ground. On the 25th he sighted a convoy of 10 sail. It had a frigate and a heavy brig as escort; they both gave chase, but *Chasseur* hauled right into the eye of the wind and was so weatherly she soon left them hull down. Off Cape Clear, where Boyle went because mariners like to use it as a point of departure, he took three ships. Two were searched for valuables and burned; the third Boyle used for the enormous practical joke which has always been associated with his name. He prepared a formal proclamation placing all the coasts of Great Britain and Ireland "in a state of strict and rigorous blockade," had it engrossed in a fine chancery hand, and sent it in by his latest prize to be posted at Lloyd's of London.

This done, he turned up into the Irish Sea to make his blockade good. On August 28 two armed vessels, a ship and a brig,

sailing in company from South America for mutual protection, were overhauled. They formed line, but liked the look of *Chasseur's* even row of black teeth so little that their flags came down without a struggle. Boyle manned both with prize crews for America, but before they got altogether clear a heavy frigate came bouncing over the horizon. This indicated the loss of the prizes, but Boyle found a bold remedy; he headed straight for the frigate, rapped out a broadside, spun round on a dime into the wind and rapped out another. The frigate's return fire was sharp; *Chasseur* took a heavy shot in her foremast and another dismounted a gun and wounded three men. But the trick had the desired result, the prize ships made good their escape. The frigate bore in chase, banging away from her bow-chasers, and *Chasseur* soon left her behind.

It turned into September; Boyle ranged up into the Irish Sea and into trouble. On the 4th it was two man-of-war brigs, trying to pretend they were merchantmen. Boyle, not an easy man to fool, gave one of them a shot and performed his favorite maneuver of eating out to windward where he "outsailed both of them with ease." But two days later he found himself at the center of a triangle formed by two more brigs and a frigate. The weather was almost flat calm, a critical situation from which *Chasseur* only escaped an inch at a time by her own magnificent sailing qualities and the skill of her captain; with every man on deck to handle ropes instantly, the ship's boys wetting sails to make them draw, and Lieutenant Dieter in the forepeak with spyglass and speaking trumpet to watch the enemy. This was the backbreaking part of the privateering trade, day and night for hours, men taking food where they stood and the prospect of one of those horrible British prisons always in the offing. The *Chasseurs* stood up to it well, but next day they had it all to do over again, when four more men-of-war were sighted; though this time it was somewhat easier, since the wind was blowing free enough to let the privateer put up her kites and walk away to windward.

Then came a few days of easy cruising and the recapture of a brig from Lisbon to Boston which had been taken by the British. From her Boyle received 18 boxes of opium as salvage, also the explanation of the sudden concentration of warships that had been bothering him. The lords in Admiralty had re-

plied to his blockade proclamation and subsequent depredations by ordering out five brig-sloops and four frigates from Plymouth especially to hunt him down. More were coming, including a couple of captured American privateers rebuilt into warships in the hope of using their speed and weartherliness against their former nationals.

It was a nice compliment, but one bound to make future operations difficult. Moreover *Chasseur* now had $100,000 in her hold, with much value in goods, and her original 150-man crew had been brought down to 60 by detachments for sending in prizes. Boyle swung southward again to the Channel approaches, on his way home, pausing only to take three more ships, one of which he burned and another made into a cartel for prisoners after taking out of her everything of value. The return voyage was uneventful; he slid through the Narrows into New York harbor in November after taking one more straggler from a convoy in mid-Atlantic.

They cheered him in the streets for having made one of the most successful cruises of the war, but Boyle was not quite satisfied. For one thing his cruiser's rig was so distinctive that it made her altogether too recognizable; merchant shipping would start running and pursuers clap on sail from any direction as soon as the tips of those tall, steep-raking masts came above the horizon. So while having his damaged foremast repaired, Boyle re-rigged his ship to the more common form of a brigantine, at the same time having spare spars and sails placed aboard, so that he could change her to either a brig or a schooner at short notice. For another point, although *Chasseur* was exceptionally handy Boyle believed she could make faster time in coming about in such emergencies as that when he had saved the two prizes by pretending to attack the frigate. Both in port and as soon as he got to sea, he began training his men in the dangerous but rapid maneuver of going about by jibing.

He was out again on the day before Christmas, this time heading south toward the Caribbean, for although the pickings in the Channel were as good as ever and *Surprise* of Baltimore was even at this moment there, once a week causing a bell to ring and a man to make a doleful announcement at Lloyd's, Boyle did not relish the prospect of bucking North Atlantic gales in his delicate ship. The blockade gave him no trouble; but unknown to him,

Chasseur had been seen and recognized as she ran out. The British Admiral off New York sent a fast vedette to warn that the famous and deadly privateer was heading south, and urge that some of the vessels specially equipped for privateer-hunting be sent to the islands.

Boyle made a fast run down, although a storm strained several spars and he lost a man overboard. Early in January *Chasseur* was off Barbados, then an important port and a place where commerce gathered because of the protection of the King's ships. This led to the most audacious of all Boyle's exploits. As he passed the entrance to Bridgetown harbor he saw a frigate just outside, while inside were several more warships, including a battleship with an admiral's flag. The frigate made for *Chasseur;* Boyle coolly tacked, fired a gun, and tacked again. The frigate yawed and fired a broadside. Some of the shot went over, but most were so badly off line that Boyle remarked to his lieutenant: "That fellow will give us no trouble," tacked once more and fired his own broadside as though he intended to fight.

Now a brig-sloop appeared down to leeward to join the chase and a little later, in response to frantic signals from the admiral, another frigate came out to join the pursuit of the privateer, which danced away to windward, tantalizingly beyond gunshot. At this point Boyle saw what he had been waiting for; a schooner ahead of him trying to make the port. In spite of the warships just behind him, he brought her alongside under his guns, took her in tow while parties searched her for valuables, then set her afire and cast her adrift. What the British admiral said when his three captains got home is not recorded.

The next stop was St. Vincent, where there was a battery covering two ships that had run in at Boyle's approach. He sent his boats in after the ships, while *Chasseur* amused the battery with a few gunshots. Both ships were captured, looted and burned, and then the privateer was off for what might almost have been a pleasure cruise down the islands—almost, for every afternoon at eight bells there was exercise with great guns and small before the men had their supper and a mug of grog. A stop was made at Martinique to ship a new main boom in place of one badly sprung by Boyle's persistent habit of going about by jibing. An English resident sent out word of the famous privateer's presence and two cruisers

chased her as she left. They got nothing but the sight of her mainsail going over the horizon; but on January 30, at three o'clock in the morning it was different.

At that day and hour a ship too big to be a merchant was sighted from masthead. Boyle went on a tack and stood to the north, but as dawn came in with heavy seas and violent squalls of almost hurricane force the stranger was nearer and gaining —within gunshot—opening fire from her bow-chasers with a shot that whistled overhead. Aboard the privateer they could make out her figurehead in the growing light; by this and the rather odd hang of her spanker they knew her for H.M.S. *Barrosa,* 36, one of the fastest frigates of the British navy, assigned to this station to run down privateers. Even she would have stood no good chance against the Pride of Baltimore in a normal race, but with such a sea running and the squally gale, *Chasseur* was forced to go straight away before it, could not eat even a degree to windward, while the frigate, being a square-rigger, was on her best point of sailing with conditions exactly to her taste.

Her gunnery was poor, as witness the shots that went over or splashed in the breaking swells alongside, but if she brought *Chasseur* under her broadside the would be up. It is probable that Captain Tom Boyle never spent more worried hours in his life than during that chase; but it is certain that he never acted more promptly and efficiently. The first problem was to keep *Barrosa* from gaining any more ground; with regret but speed, Boyle had ten of his privateer's guns hove overside and started some of his water. Now *Chasseur* rode lighter, the race was more even as it drew toward noon in the pounding seas, but shots from the frigate's bow-chasers were still coming and any moment one of them might carry away a vital spar.

Boyle had two strings to his bow; while the crew were busy heaving out guns the carpenter was sawing away the taffrail at the stern and tackles were being rigged. Now the whole crew bent on lines to drag around a pair of 12-pounders to fire sharp over the stern, and a heavy and dangerous task it was, with the ship rolling and pitching so violently and one of those guns heavy enough to crush a man if it struck him.

The master gunner laid the pieces himself, the man who had been in *United States,* a famous ship for gunnery, aiming for the rigging. Maybe the third or

fourth shot carried away the frigate's sheet pendant and her jib began to flap wildly, which brought a word of encouragement from Captain Boyle and a small cheer from *Chasseur's* deck. The damage was not too serious on that bearing, but it was a prevue of what came presently, when a nicely aimed shot cracked the frigate's fore topsail yard at the sling. The sail split down its center, the broken spar thrashed wildly, involving other rigging, and now the British tars had enough to do, while *Chasseur* began slowly but perceptibly to gain.

At about the same time Boyle's careful eye noted that the wind had dropped a trifle and was no longer coming in such tempestuous gusts. He edged a point or two to windward, and when that worked without disaster, although the ship plunged and strained alarmingly, a point or two more. The gain in the chase was confirmed, and with the frigate's people unable to get a new yard up in such blowing weather, the gap became wide enough to make the shots on both sides fall short. *Barrosa* held right on, her skipper doubtless hoping *Chasseur* would carry something away; but toward late afternoon, Boyle had edged far enough to windward to have both ships on a broad reach, and no square-rigger ever built could hold speed with the brigantine on that bearing, so the privateer began to walk away hand over fist.

By seven the frigate was out of sight and Boyle could take stock. The loss of the taffrail did no more than make *Chasseur* a little wet aft, but the loss of the cannon had turned her into a four-gun ship, and this represented real danger, since most merchant vessels carried more. Also the chase had driven him wide up the Atlantic to somewhere the latitude of Georgia. On the other hand, he had sent in no prizes, so still had his full 150-man crew. Therefore, he decided not to break off the cruise, but to chance running in on any ship he met and carry her by boarding, something the speed and handiness of his cruiser should allow him to accomplish.

This was exactly what happened with his next encounter, a large ship named *Corunna,* which fired a few shots and was overwhelmed as the privateersmen swarmed across her bulwarks. She carried eight 9-pound carronades, light guns but a welcome addition to *Chasseur's* now-exiguous armament; but the task of slinging them across while the ships lay beside each other on the swell was hard and

tedious, and sights had to be hand-forged for the new pieces.

Early the next day a fleet of no less than 110 sail hove over the horizon. Boyle closed in; a frigate came out of the pack and chased, but as soon as she turned back, *Chasseur* followed, keeping exactly the same distance. The frigate turned around again and chased him clear over the horizon from the convoy; he spent all night working back and at dawn was rewarded by picking up a straggler with a valuable cargo and the news that this was the great London convoy to the West Indies. Boyle sent the prize in and hung on the fleet's track, dodging back and forth and catching the inevitable stragglers, some of them of great value.

Finally the coast of Cuba drew in sight southward, with Havana and its refuge for the harassed merchantment ahead. That day Boyle sighted a big topsail schooner with yellow sides, running before the wind with everything set. *Chasseur* bore down and it soon became evident she had the legs of the stranger, which bore up to windward to try to escape on a beat. She handled the turn badly and her foretopmast carried away in the process, but she hoisted a British flag and pointed still higher into the wind. It was now closing one o'clock, Boyle told his lieutenants that this was probably a fast running vessel, probably carrying valuables and mails to the Indies, then cracked on more sail to come up with her fast. Only three gun-ports were visible along her sides and very few men on deck; Captain Tom determined to take her by boarding, assembled his men with pistol, cutlass and musket and had the guns manned, but did not clear for action.

Chasseur pulled up fast; Boyle edged in, and as his prow came past the stern of the schooner, they came side by side, ten yards apart and—

Ten gunports flew open and there was a wild yell from the privateer as she was deluged with a terrible broadside, while lines of marines who had been concealed behind the bulwarks of the schooner rose up and fired a volley.

Chasseur was trapped. This was no running vessel, but a warship, one of those specially equipped for dealing with the Pride of Baltimore, dropped back from the convoy to decoy the privateer in exactly the fashion she had done; H. M. S. *St. Lawrence,* Lieutenant J. C. Gordon commanding. She had 15 guns and 93 pounds weight of metal in the broadside, against

Chasseur's scratch armament of 60 pounds weight.

There could be only one end to such a contest, but Tom Boyle and his navy-trained crew were not going to let it end that way without trying. The ports came open and without orders the guns delivered a broadside, an irregular, badly timed broadside, but a broadside, every gun aimed low and straight. *Chasseur's* marines, waiting to board, fired muskets and pistols at the heads that rose over the enemy's rail and tried to pick off her gunners through the ports. A splinter gashed Boyle's arm; he never noticed. The American guns were faster served; they had time to get in maybe three shots before *Chasseur's* greater speed caused her to fore-reach.

The British captain was no fool; this was his chance, he put his helm up to wear under the privateer's stern for a killing rake. But Boyle was no fool either; he detected the maneuver as soon as it began, and bellowed: "Jibe!" Now practice told; heads ducked as the big main boom swished across the deck, the privateer came around like a ballet dancer, bringing her opposite broadside to bear. Now practice told again, for the *Chasseur* had the guns on that side loaded and run out; they fired before *St. Lawrence* could get her ports open and fired again before the Britisher could get off a shot. There were hits, too; the flying splinters told it, and a dismounted gun could be seen through one port, while one of the Britisher's masts began to weave and her ropes to fly in Irish pendants. She was beginning to go; Boyle shouted: "Starboard your helm!" and as the ships rocked into contact: "Boarders away!"

With the bugle screaming at them the privateersmen gave a shout and leaped for the enemy's deck, Mr. Christie the prizemaster in the lead, but before any of them reached it, her flag came down and Boyle had performed the incredible feat of capturing a regular warship 50 per cent stronger than his own vessel. In a crew of 89, *St. Lawrence* had 6 killed and 17 wounded, including all her officers; but the real story was the damage to the ship. She had not a piece of standing rigging left, her bulwarks were smashed in a line with her ports, and it took the labor of both crews to make her fit to sail.

Boyle put a prizemaster into her, but the British had so many badly wounded that he ordered her to Havana on Lieutenant Gordon's promise he should have the ship back; then sat down to write a report to the

owners' syndicate about the fourteen-minute battle, ending with:

"I hope you will not be displeased with what I have done. I should not willingly perhaps have sought a contest with a King's vessel knowing it was not our object, but my expectations were at first a valuable vessel and a valuable cargo. When I found myself deceived, the honor of the flag left with me was not to be disgraced by flight."

It was his last exploit; the next ship he met was a brig from Boston with news of the peace, and *Chasseur* went home to Baltimore. When she saluted the flag that was still there over Fort McHenry all the soldiers lined the walls to cheer her in, and a courier carried the news of her arrival up to town so that when she reached dock one of the largest crowds the city had seen came down to meet her.

The end of the *St. Lawrence* story found everyone behaving at their best. Lieutenant Gordon had written a testimonial about Boyle's kindness and when the schooner was stopped off Havana by a British frigate, he said he had pledged his word to return the ship after unloading his wounded. The frigate's captain let the wounded be taken off, but insisted the ship go before the Admiralty court at Bermuda, but there also Gordon gave his evidence, and the end of it was that she was sent to Baltimore as lawful prize.

With the profits from his other captures this made Boyle something more than a millionaire in the terms of those days, and he lived a long time as one of the most respected shipping merchants of the Chesapeake city. As for *Chasseur*, she also turned to peaceful pursuits after the war, going into the China trade. She set a speed record that endured for many years for the run from Cape Henry to Java head, and kept on until bigger ships were needed.

The name of Thomas Boyle has long been known and remembered for the classic practical joke. On the following page is a copy of the proclamation that Boyle had posted in London.

PROCLAMATION

issued by Thomas Boyle, esq.,
Commander of the Chasseur, *&c.*

Whereas, it has been customary with the admiral of Great Britain commanding small forces on the coast of the United States, particularly with Sir John Borlaise Warren and Sir Alexander Cochrane to declare the coast of the said United States in a state of strict and rigorous blockade, without possessing the power to justify such a declaration, or stationing an adequate force to command such a blockade,

I do, therefore, by virtue of the power and authority in me vested (possessing sufficient force) declare all the ports harbors, bays, creeks, rivers, inlets, outlets, islands, and sea coasts of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in a state of strict and rigorous blockade, and I do further declare that I consider the forces under my command adequate to maintain strictly, rigorously and effectively, the said blockade.

And, I do hereby require the respective officers, whether captains or commanding officers, under my command, employed or to be employed on this coast of England, Ireland and Scotland, to pay strict attention to this my proclamation.

And, I hereby caution and forbid the ships and vessels of all and every nation, in amity and peace with the United States, from entering or attempting to enter or from coming or attempting to come out of any of the said ports, harbors, bays, creeks, rivers, inlets, outlets, islands, or sea coasts, on or under any pretence whatsoever; and that no person may plead ignorance of this my proclamation, I have ordered the same to be made public in England.

Given under my hand on board the Chasseur,
Thomas Boyle
By Command of the Commanding Officer
J. B. Stansbury, Secretary

ILLUSTRATED BY HARRISON

the ENGRAVED OARBLADE

BY JACK LONDON

He was a strong man with faith in himself and faith in the power of his arm. He matched this faith against the sea in the mightiest battle of all time. While lesser men died he fought on, bare-handed, against the all-consuming fury of raging wind and water.

From THE STAR ROVER, by Jack London, Reprinted by permission of Charmian K. London


HARRISON

I was awakened, in my bunk in the forecastle, by a terrific crash. In fact, as was true of the other six sleeping men of the watch below, awakening and leaping from bunk to floor were simultaneous. We knew what had happened. The others waited for nothing, rushing only partly clad upon deck. But I knew what to expect, and I did wait. I knew that if we escaped at all, it would be by the longboat. No man could swim in so freezing a sea. And no man, thinly clad, could live in the open boat. Also, I knew just about how long it would take to launch the boat.

So, by the light of the wildly swinging slush lamp, to the tumult on deck, and to cries of "She's sinking!" I proceeded to ransack my sea chest for suitable garments. Also, since they would never use them again, I ransacked the sea chests of my shipmates. Working quickly but collectedly, I took nothing but the warmest and stoutest of clothes. I put on the four best woolen shirts the forecastle boasted, three pairs of pants, and three pairs of thick woolen socks. So large were my feet thus incased that I could not put on my own good boots. Instead, I thrust on Nicholas Wilton's new boots, which were larger and even stouter than mine. Also, I put on Jeremy Nalor's pea jacket over my own, and, outside of both, put on Seth Richards' thick canvas coat, which I remembered he had fresh-oiled only a short while previous.

Two pairs of heavy mittens, John Roberts' muffler which his mother had knitted for him, and Joseph Dawes' beaver cap atop my own, both bearing ear and neck flaps, completed my outfitting. The shouts that the brig was sinking redoubled, but I took a minute longer to fill my pockets with all the plug tobacco I could lay hands on. Then I climbed out on deck, and not a moment too soon.

The moon, bursting through a crack of cloud, showed a bleak and savage picture. Everywhere was wrecked gear, and everywhere was ice. The sails, ropes, and spars of the mainmast, which was still standing, were fringed with icicles; and there came over me a feeling almost of relief in that never again should I have to pull and haul on the stiff tackles and hammer ice so that the frozen ropes could run through the frozen shivs. The wind, blowing half a gale, cut with the sharpness that is a sign of the proximity of icebergs; and the big seas were bitter cold to look upon in the moonlight.

The longboat was lowering away to larboard, and I saw men,

struggling on the ice-sheeted deck with barrels of provisions, abandon the food in their haste to get away. In vain Captain Nicholl strove with them. A sea, breaching across from windward, settled the matter and sent them leaping over the rail in heaps. I gained the captain's shoulder, and, holding onto him, I shouted in his ear that if he would board the boat and prevent the men from casting off, I would attend to the provisioning.

Little time was given me, however. Scarcely had I managed, helped by the second mate, Aaron Northrup, to lower away half a dozen barrels and kegs, when all cried from the boat that they were casting off. Good reason they had. Down upon us from windward was drifting a towering ice mountain, while to leeward, close aboard, was another ice mountain upon which we were driving.

Quicker in his leap was Aaron Northrup. I delayed a moment, even as the boat was shoving away, in order to select a spot amidships where the men were thickest, so that their bodies might break my fall. I was not minded to embark with a broken member on so hazardous a voyage in the longboat. That the men might have room at the oars, I worked my way quickly aft into the stern sheets. Certainly, I had other and sufficient reasons. It would be more comfortable in the stern sheets than in the narrow bow. And further, it would be well to be near the afterguard in whatever troubles that were sure to arise under such circumstances in the days to come.

In the stern sheets were the mate, Walter Drake; the surgeon Arnold Bentham; Aaron Northrup, and Captain Nicholl who was steering. The surgeon was bending over Northrup, who lay in the bottom groaning. Not so fortunate had he been in his ill-considered leap, for he had broken his right leg at the hip joint.

There was little time for him then, however, for we were laboring in a heavy sea directly between the two ice islands that were rushing together. Nicholas Wilton, at the stroke oar, was cramped for room; so I better stowed the barrels, and, kneeling and facing him, was able to add my weight to the oar. For'ard, I could see John Roberts straining at the bow oars. Pulling on his shoulders from behind, Arthur Haskins and the boy, Benny Hardwater, added their weight to his. In fact, so eager were all hands to help that more than one was thus in the way and cluttered the move-

ments of the rowers.

It was close work, but we went clear by a matter of a hundred yards, so that I was able to turn my head and see the untimely end of the *Negociator*. She was caught squarely in the pinch and she was squeezed between the ice as a sugarplum might be squeezed between thumb and forefinger of a boy. In the shouting of the wind and the roar of water we heard nothing, although the crack of the brig's stout ribs and deck beams must have been enough to waken a hamlet on a peaceful night.

Silently, easily, the brig's sides squeezed together, the deck bulged up, and the crushed remnant dropped down and was gone, while where she had been was occupied by the grinding conflict of the ice islands. I felt regret at the destruction of this haven against the elements, but at the same time was well pleased at thought of my snugness inside my four shirts and three coats.

Yet it proved a bitter night, even for me. I was the warmest clad in the boat. What the others must have suffered I did not care to dwell upon overmuch. For fear that we might meet up with more ice in the darkness, we nailed and held the boat, bow on, to the seas. And continually, now with one mitten, now with the other, I rubbed my nose that it might not freeze. Also, with memories lively in me of the home circle in Elkton, I prayed to God.

In the morning we took stock. To commence with, all but two or three had suffered frostbite. Aaron Northrup, unable to move because of his broken hip, was very bad. It was the surgeon's opinion that both of Northrup's feet were hopelessly frozen.

The longboat was deep and heavy in the water, for it was burdened by the entire ship's company of twenty-one. Two of these were boys. Benny Hardwater was a bare thirteen, and Lish Dickery, whose family was near neighbor to mine in Elkton, was just turned sixteen. Our provisions consisted of three hundredweight of beef and two hundredweight of pork. The half dozen loaves of brine-pulped bread, which the cook had brought did not count. Then there were three small barrels of water and one small keg of beer. This was the total supplies for twenty-one men.

Captain Nicholl frankly admitted that in this uncharted ocean he had no knowledge of any near land. The one thing to do was to run for more clement climate, which we accordingly did, setting our small sail and

steering quartering before the fresh wind to the northeast.

The food problem was simple arithmetic. We did not count Aaron Northrup, for we knew he would soon be gone. At a pound per day, our five hundred pounds would last us twenty-five days; at half a pound, it would last fifty. So half a pound had it. I divided and issued the meat under the captain's eyes, and managed it fairly enough, God knows, although some of the men grumbled from the first. Also, from time to time I made fair division among the men of the plug tobacco I had stowed in my many pockets—a thing which I could not but regret, especially when I knew it was being wasted on this man who I was certain could not live a day more, or, at best, two days or three.

For we began to die soon in the open boat. Not to starvation but to the killing cold and exposure were those earlier deaths due. It was a matter of the survival of the toughest and the luckiest. I was tough by constitution, and lucky inasmuch as I was warmly clad and had not broken my leg like Aaron Northrup. Even so, so strong was he that, despite being the first to be severely frozen, he was days in passing. Vance Hathaway was the first. We found him in the gray of dawn, crouched doubled in the bow and frozen stiff. The boy, Lish Dickery, was the second to go. The other boy, Benny Hardwater, lasted ten or a dozen days.

So bitter was it in the boat that our water and beer froze solid, and it was a difficult task justly to apportion the pieces I broke off with Northrup's clasp knife. These pieces we put in our mouths and sucked till they melted. Also, during snow-squalls, we had all the snow we desired. All of which was not good for us, causing a fever of inflammation to attack our mouths so that the membranes were continually dry and burning. And there was no allaying a thirst so generated. To suck more ice or snow was merely to aggravate the inflammation. More than anything else, I think it was this that caused the death of Lish Dickery. He was out of his head and raving for twenty-four hours before he died. He died babbling for water, and yet he did not die for need of water. I resisted as much as possible the temptation to suck ice, contenting myself with a shred of tobacco in my cheek, and made out with fair comfort.

We stripped all clothing from our dead. Stark they came into the world and stark they passed out over the side of the longboat and down into the dark freezing

ocean. Lots were cast for the clothes. This was by Captain Nicholl's command, in order to prevent quarreling.

It was no time for the follies of sentiment. There was not one of us who did not know secret satisfaction at the occurrence of each death. Luckiest of all was Israel Stickney in casting lots, so that in the end, when he passed, he was a veritable treasure-trove of clothing. It gave a new lease of life to the survivors.

We continued to run to the northeast before the fresh westerlies, but our quest for warmer weather seemed vain. Ever the spray froze in the bottom of the boat, and I still chipped beer and drinking water with Northrup's knife. My own knife I reserved. It was of good steel, with a keen edge and stoutly fashioned, and I did not care to peril it in such manner. By the time half our company was overboard, the boat had a reasonably high freeboard and was less ticklish to handle in the gusts. Likewise there was more room for a man to stretch out comfortably.

A source of continual grumbling was the food. The captain, the mate, the surgeon, and myself, talking it over, resolved not to increase the daily whack of half a pound of meat. The six sailors, for whom Tobias Snow made himself spokesman, contended that the death of half of us was equivalent to a doubling of our provisioning and that therefore the ration should be increased to a pound. In reply, we of the afterguard pointed out that it was our chance for life that was doubled did we but bear with the half-pound ration.

It is true that eight ounces of salt meat did not go far in enabling us to live and to resist the severe cold. We were quite weak, and, because of our weakness, we frosted easily. Noses and cheeks were all black with frostbite. It was impossible to be warm, although we now had double the garments we had started with.

Five weeks after the loss of the *Negociator* the trouble over the food came to a head. I was asleep at the time—it was night—when Captain Nicholl caught Jud Hetchkins stealing from the pork barrel. That he was abetted by the other five men was proved by their action. Immediately Jud Hetchkins was discovered, the whole six threw themselves upon us with their knives. It was close, sharp work in the dim light of the stars, and it was a mercy the boat was not overturned. I had reason to be thankful for my many shirts and coats, which served me as an armor. The

knife-thrusts scarcely more than drew blood through the so-great thickness of cloth, although I was scratched to bleeding in a round dozen of places.

The others were similarly protected, and the fight would have ended in no more than amauling all around, had not the mate, Walter Drake, a very powerful man, hit upon the idea of ending the matter by tossing the mutineers overboard. This was joined in by Captain Nicholl, the surgeon and myself, and in a trice five of the six were in the water and clinging to the gunwale. Captain Nicholl and the surgeon were busy amidships with the sixth, Jeremy Nalor, and were in the act of throwing him overboard, while the mate was occupied with rapping the fingers along the gunwale with a boat stretcher. For the moment I had nothing to do, and so was able to observe the tragic end of the mate. As he lifted the stretcher to rap Seth Richards' fingers, the latter, sinking down low in the water and then jerking himself up by both hands, sprang half into the boat, locked his arms about the mate, and, falling backward and overboard, dragged the mate with him. Doubtlessly he never relaxed his grip, and both drowned together.

Thus, left alive of the entire ship's company were three of us: Captain Nicholl, Arnold Bentham, the surgeon, and myself. Seven had gone in the twinkling of an eye, as a consequence of Jud Hetchkins' attempt to steal provisions. And to me it seemed a pity that so much good warm clothing had been wasted there in the sea. There was not one of us who could not have managed gratefully with more.

Captain Nicholl and the surgeon were good men and honest. Often enough, when two of us slept, the one awake and steering could have stolen from the meat. But this never happened. We trusted one another fully, and we would have died rather than betray that trust.

We continued to content ourselves with half a pound of meat each per day, and we took advantage of every favoring breeze to work to the north. Not until January fourteenth, seven weeks since the wreck, did we come up with a warmer latitude. Even then it was not really warm. It was merely not so bitterly cold.

Here the fresh westerlies forsook us and we bobbed and blobbed about in doldrummy weather for many days. Mostly it was calm, or light contrary winds, though sometimes a burst of breeze, as like as not from dead ahead, would last for a few hours. In our weakened condition, with so large a boat, it was

out of the question to row. We could merely hoard our food and wait for God to show a more kindly face. The three of us were faithful Christians, and we made a practice of prayer each day before the apportionment of food. Yes, and each of us prayed privately often and long.

By the end of January our food was near its end. The pork was entirely gone, and we used the barrel for catching and storing rainwater. Not many pounds of beef remained. And in all the nine weeks in the open boat we had raised no sail and glimpsed no land. Captain Nicholl frankly admitted that after sixty-three days of dead reckoning he did not know where we were.

The twentieth of February saw the last morsel of food eaten. I prefer to skip the details of much that happened in the next eight days. I shall touch only on the incidents that serve to show what manner of men were my companions. We had starved so long that we had no reserves of strength on which to draw when the food utterly ceased, and we grew weaker with great rapidity.

On February twenty-fourth we calmly talked the situation over. We were three stout-spirited men, full of life and toughness, and we did not want to die. No one of us would volunteer to sacrifice himself for the other two. But we agreed on three things: we must have food; we must decide the matter by casting lots; and we would cast the lots next morning if there were no wind.

Next morning there was wind, not much of it, but fair, so that we were able to log a sluggish two knots on our northerly course. The mornings of the twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh found us with a similar breeze. We were fearfully weak, but we abided by our decision and continued to sail.

But with the morning of the twenty-eighth we knew the time was come. The longboat rolled drearily on an empty, windless sea, and the stagnant, overcast sky gave no promise of any breeze. I cut three pieces of cloth, all of a size, from my jacket. In the ravel of one of these pieces was a bit of brown thread. Whoever drew this lost. I then put the three lots into my hat, covering it with Captain Nicholl's hat.

All was ready, but we delayed for a time while each prayed silently and long, for we knew that we were leaving the decision to God. I was not unaware of my own honesty and worth; but I was equally aware of the honesty and worth of my companions, so that it perplexed me

to do? The thing was fair and proper and had been decided by God.

But when Arnold Bentham had completed his last arrangements and made ready to do the act, I could contain myself no longer, and cried out:

"Wait! We who have endured so much surely can endure a little more. It is now midmorning. Let us wait until twilight. Then, if no event has appeared to change our dreadful destiny, do you, Arnold Bentham, do as we have agreed."

He looked to Captain Nicholl for confirmation of my suggestion, and Captain Nicholl could only nod. He could utter no word, but in his moist and frosty blue eyes was a wealth of acknowledgment I could not misread.

I did not, I could not, deem it a crime, having so determined by fair drawing of lots, that Captain Nicholl and myself should profit by the death of Arnold Bentham. I could not believe that the love of life that actuated us had been implanted in our breasts by aught other than God. It was God's will, and we, His poor creatures, could only obey and fulfill His will. And yet, God was kind. In His all-kindness He saved us from so terrible, though so righteous, an act.

Scarce had a quarter of an hour passed, when a fan of air from the west, with a hint of frost and damp in it, crisped on our cheeks. In another five minutes we had steerage from the filled sail, and Arnold Bentham was weakly holding the steering sweep.

"Save what little strength you have," he said. "Let me consume the little strength left in me in order that it may increase your chance to survive."

And so he steered to a freshening breeze, while Captain Nicholl and I lay sprawled in the boat's bottom and in our weakness dreamed dreams and glimpsed visions of the dear things of life far across the world from us.

It was an ever-freshening breeze of wind that soon began to puff and gust. The cloud stuff flying across the sky foretold us of a gale. By midday Arnold Bentham fainted at the steering, and, ere the boat could broach in the tidy sea already running Captain Nicholl and I were at the steering sweep with all four of our weak hands upon it. We came to an agreement, and, just as Captain Nicholl had drawn the first lot by virtue of his office, so now he took the first spell at steering. Thereafter the three of us spelled one another every fifteen minutes. We were

how God could decide so fine-balanced and delicate a matter.

The Captain, as was his right and due, drew first. After his hand was in the hat he delayed for some time with closed eyes, his lips moving a last prayer. And he drew a blank. This was right—a true decision I could not but admit to myself; for Captain Nicholl's life was largely known to me and I knew him to be honest, upright, and God fearing.

Remained the surgeon and me. It was one or the other, and, according to ship's rating, it was his due to draw next. Again we prayed. As I prayed I strove to quest back in my life and cast a hurried tally sheet of my own worth and unworth.

I held the hat on my knees with Captain Nicholl's hat over it. The surgeon thrust in his hand and fumbled about for some time, while I wondered whether the feel of that one brown thread could be detected from the rest of the ravel.

At last he withdrew his hand. The brown thread was in his piece of cloth. I was instanly very humble and very grateful for God's blessing thus extended to me; and I resolved to keep more faithfully than ever all of His commandments. The next moment I could not help but feel that the surgeon and the captain were pledged to each other by closer ties of position and intercourse than with me, and that they were in a measure disappointed with the outcome. And close with that thought ran the conviction that they were such true men that the outcome would not interfere with the plan arranged.

I was right. The surgeon bared his arm and with a knife prepared to open a great vein. First, however, he spoke a few words.

"I am a native of Norfolk, in the Virginias," he said, "where I expect I have now a wife and three children living. The only favor that I have to request of you is that, should it please God to deliver either of you from your perilous situation, and should you be so fortunate as to reach once more your native country, that you would acquaint my unfortunate family with my wretched fate."

Next he requested courteously of us a few minutes in which to arrange his affairs with God. Neither Captain Nicholl nor I could utter a word, but with streaming eyes we nodded our consent.

Without doubt Arnold Bentham was the best collected of the three of us. My own anguish was prodigious, and I am confident that Captain Nicholl suffered equally. But what was one

very weak, and we could not spell longer at a time.

By mid-afternoon a dangerous sea was running. We should have rounded the boat to, had our situation not been so desperate, and let her drift, bow on, to a sea anchor extemporized of our mast and sail. Had we broached in those great, overtopping seas, the boat would have been rolled over and over.

Time and again, that afternoon, Arnold Bentham, for our sakes, begged that we come to a sea anchor. He knew that we continued to run only in the hope that the decree of the lots might not have to be carried out. He was a noble man. So was Captain Nicholl noble, whose frosty eyes had wizened to points of steel. And in such noble company how could I be less noble? I thanked God repeatedly, through that long afternoon of peril, for the privilege of having known two such men. God and the right dwelt in them, and no matter what my poor fate might be, I could but feel well recompensed by such companionship. Like them, I did not want to die, yet was unafraid to die. The quick, early doubt I had had of these two men was long since dissipated. Hard the school, and hard the men, but they were noble men, God's own men.

I saw it first. Arnold Bentham, his own death accepted, and Captain Nicholl, well nigh accepting death, lay rolling like loose-bodied dead men in the boat's bottom, and I was steering when I saw it. The boat, foaming and surging with the swiftness of wind in its sail, was uplifted on a crest, when, close before me, I saw the sea battered islet of rock. It was not half a mile off. I cried out, so that the other two, kneeling and reeling and clutching for support, were soon peering and staring at what I saw.

"Straight for it, Daniel," Captain Nicholl mumbled command. "There may be a cove. There may be a cove. It is our only chance."

Once again he spoke, when we were atop that dreadful lee shore with no cove existent.

"Straight for it, Daniel. If we go clear we are too weak ever to win back against sea and wind."

He was right. I obeyed. He drew his watch and looked, and I asked the time. It was five o'clock. He stretched out his hand to Arnold Bentham, who met and shook it weakly; and both gazed at me, in their eyes extending that same handclasp. It was farewell, I knew; for what chance had creatures so feeble as we to win out alive

over those surf-battered rocks to the higher rocks beyond?

Twenty feet from shore the boat was snatched out of my control. In a trice it was overturned and I was strangling in the salt. I never saw my companions again. By good fortune I was buoyed by the steering oar I still grasped, and by great good fortune a fling of sea, at the right instant, at the right spot, threw me far up the gentle slope of the one shelving rock on all that terrible shore. I was not hurt. I was not bruised. And with brain reeling from weakness I was able to crawl and scramble farther up, beyond the clutching backwash of the sea.

I stood upright, knowing myself saved, and thanking God, and staggering as I stood. Already the boat was pounded to a thousand fragments. And though I saw them not, I could guess how grievously had been pounded the bodies of Captain Nicoll and Arnold Bentham. Then I fell to my knees, knowing myself fainting. And yet, ere I fainted, with a sailor's instinct I dragged my body on and up among the cruel hurting rocks to faint finally beyond the reach of the sea.

I was almost a dead man myself, that night, mostly in stupor, only dimly aware at times of the extremity of cold and wet that I endured. Morning brought me astonishment and terror. No plant, not a blade of grass, grew on that wretched projection of rock from the ocean's bottom. A quarter of a mile in width and a half mile in length, it was no more than a heap of rocks. Naught could I discover to gratify the cravings of exhausted Nature. I was consumed with thirst, yet there was no fresh water. In vain I tasted to my mouth's undoing every cavity and depression in the rocks. The spray of the gale so completely had enveloped every portion of the island that every depression was filled with water salt as the sea.

Of the boat remained nothing —not even a splinter to show that a boat had been. I stood possessed of my garments, a stout knife, and the one oar I had saved. The gale had abated, and all that day, staggering and falling, crawling till hands and knees bled, I vainly sought water.

That night, nearer death than ever, I sheltered myself behind a rock from the wind. A heavy shower of rain made me miserable. I removed my various coats and spread them to soak up the rain, but when I came to wring the moisture from them into my mouth, I was disappointed, because the cloth had

been thoroughly impregnated with the salt of the ocean in which I had been immersed. I lay on my back, my mouth open to catch the few rain drops that fell directly into it. It was tantalizing, but it kept my membranes moist and me from madness.

The second day I was a very sick man. I, who had not eaten for so long, began to swell to a monstrous fatness—my legs, my arms, my whole body. With the slightest of pressures my fingers would sink a full inch into my skin, and the depressions so made were long in going away. Yet did I labor sore in order to fulfill God's will that I should live. Carefully, with my hands, I cleaned out the salt water from every slight hole, in the hope that succeeding showers of rain might fill them with water that I could drink.

My sad lot and the memories of the loved ones at Elkton threw me into a melancholy, so that I often lost my recollection for hours at a time. This was a mercy, for it veiled me from my sufferings that else would have killed me.

In the night I was roused by the beat of rain, and I crawled from hole to hole, lapping up the rain or licking it from the rocks. Brackish it was, but drinkable. It was what saved me, for, toward morning, I awoke to find myself in a profuse perspiration and quite free of all delirium.

Then came the sun, the first time since my stay on the island, and I spread most of my garments to dry. Of water I drank my careful fill, and I calculated there was ten days' supply if carefully husbanded. It was amazing how rich I felt with this vast wealth of brackish water. And no great merchant, with all his ships returned from prosperous voyages, his warehouses filled to the rafters, his strongboxes overflowing, could have felt as wealthy as did I when I discovered, cast up on the rocks, the body of a seal that had been dead for many days. Nor did I fail, first, to thank God on my knees for this manifestation of His ever-unfailing kindness. The thing was clear to me: God had not intended I should die. From the very first He had not so intended.

I knew the debilitated state of my stomach, and I ate sparingly in the knowledge that my natural voracity would surely kill me did I yield myself to it. Never had sweeter morsels passed my lips, and I make free to confess that I shed tears of joy, again and again, at contemplation of that putrefied carcass.

My heart of hope beat strong

in me once more. Carefully I preserved the portions of the carcass remaining. Carefully I covered my rock cisterns with flat stones so that the sun's rays might not evaporate the precious fluid, and in precaution against some upspringing of wind in the night and the sudden flying of spray. Also I gathered me tiny fragments of seaweed and dried them in the sun for an easement between my poor body and the rough rocks whereon I made my lodging. And my garments were dry—the first time in days, so that I slept the heavy sleep of exhaustion and of returning health.

When I awoke to a new day I was another man. The absence of sun did not depress me, and I was swiftly to learn that God, not forgetting me while I slumbered, had prepared other and wonderful blessings for me. I would have fain rubbed my eyes and looked again, for, as far as I could see, the rocks bordering upon the ocean were covered with seals. There were thousands of them, and in the water other thousands disported themselves, while the sound that went up from all their throats was prodigious and deafening. I knew it when I saw it—meat lay there for the taking, meat sufficient for a score of ships' companies.

I directly seized my oar—there was no other stick of wood on the island—and cautiously advanced upon all that immensity of provender. It was quickly guessed by me that these creatures of the sea were unacquainted with man. They betrayed no signals of timidity at my approach, and I found it a boy's task to rap them on the head with the oar.

And when I had so killed my third and my fourth, I went immediately and strangely mad. Indeed, quite bereft was I of all judgment as I slew and slew and continued to slay. For the space of two hours I toiled unceasingly with the oar till I was ready to drop. What excess of slaughter I might have been guilty of I know not, for, at the end of that time, as if by a signal, all the seals that still lived threw themselves into the water and swiftly disappeared.

I found the number of slain seals to exceed two hundred, and I was shocked and frightened because of the madness of slaughter that had possessed me. I had sinned by wanton wastefulness, and, after I had duly refreshed myself with this good wholesome food, I set about as well as I could to make amends. But first, ere the great task began, I returned thanks to that Being through whose mercy

I had been so miraculously preserved. Thereupon I labored until dark, and after dark, skinning the seals, cutting the meat into strips and placing it upon the tops of rocks to dry in the sun. Also, I found small deposits of salt in the nooks and crannies of the rocks on the weather side of the island. This I rubbed into the meat as a preservative.

Four days I so toiled, and in the end was foolishly proud before God in that no scrap of all that supply of meat had been wasted. The unremitting labor was good for my body, which built up rapidly from this wholesome diet in which I did not stint myself. Another evidence of God's mercy: Never, in the eight years I spent on that barren islet, was there so long a spell of clear weather and steady sunshine as in the period immediately following the slaughter of the seals.

Months were to pass ere ever the seals revisited my island. But in the meantime I was anything but idle. I built me a hut of stone, and, adjoining it, a storehouse for my cured meat. The hut I roofed with many sealskins, so that it was fairly waterproof. But I could never cease to marvel, when the rain beat on that roof, that no less than a king's ransom in the London fur market protected a castaway sailor from the elements.

I was quickly aware of the importance of keeping some kind of reckoning of time, without which I was sensible that I should soon lose all knowledge of the day of the week, and be unable to distinguish one from the other, and not know which was the Lord's day.

I remembered back carefully to the reckoning of time kept in the longboat by Captain Nicholl; and carefully, again and again, to make sure beyond any shadow of uncertainty, I went over the tale of the days and nights I had spent on the island. Then, by seven stones outside my hut, I kept my weekly calendar. In one place on the oar I cut a small notch for each week, and in another place on the oar I notched the months, being duly careful, indeed, to reckon in the additional days to each month over and beyond the four weeks.

Thus I was enabled to pay due regard to the Sabbath. As the only mode of worship I could adopt, I carved a short hymn, appropriate to my situation, on the oar, which I never failed to chant on the Sabbath. God, in His all-mercy, had not forgotten me; nor did I, in those eight years, fail at all proper times to remember God.

It was astonishing, consider-

ing the work required under such circumstances, to supply one's simple needs of food and shelter. Indeed, I was rarely idle that first year. The hut itself, a mere lair of rocks, nevertheless took six weeks of my time. The tardy curing and the endless scraping of the sealskins, so as to make them soft and pliable for garments, occupied my spare moments for months and months.

Then there was the matter of my water supply. After any heavy gale, the flying spray salted my saved rain water, so that at times I was grievously put to live through till fresh rains fell unaccompanied by high winds. Aware that a continual dropping will wear away a stone, I selected a large stone, fine and tight of texture, and, by means of smaller stones, I proceeded to pound it hollow. In five weeks of most arduous toil I managed thus to make a jar, which I estimated to hold a gallon and a half. Later, I similarly made a four-gallon jar. It took me nine weeks. Other small ones I also made from time to time. One, that would have contained eight gallons, developed a flaw when I had worked seven weeks on it.

But it was not until my fourth year on the island, when I had become reconciled to the possibility that I might continue to live there for the term of my natural life, that I created my masterpiece. It took me eight months, but, it was tight, and it held upward of thirty gallons. These stone vessels were a great gratification to me—so much so, that times I forgot my humility and was unduly vain of them. Truly, they were more elegant to me than was ever the costliest piece of furniture to any queen. Also, I made me a small rock vessel, containing no more than a quart, with which to convey water from the catching places to my large receptacles. When I say that this one-quart vessel weighed all of two stones,[1] the reader will realize that the mere gathering of the rain water was no light task.

Thus, I rendered my lonely situation as comfortable as could be expected. I had completed me a snug and secure shelter; and, as to provision, I had always on hand a six months' supply, preserved by salting and drying. For these things, so essential to preserve life and which one could scarcely have expected to obtain upon a desert island, I was sensible that I could not be too thankful.

Although denied the privilege of enjoying the society of any

[1] Twenty-eight pounds.

human creature, not even of a dog or a cat, I was far more reconciled to my lot than thousands probably would have been. Upon the desolate spot, where Fate had placed me, I conceived myself far more happy than many, who, for ignominious crimes, were doomed to drag out their lives in solitary confinement with conscience ever biting like a corrosive canker.

However dreary my prospects, I was not without hope that that Providence, which, at the very moment when hunger threatened me with dissolution, and when I might easily have been engulfed in the maw of the sea, had cast me upon those barren rocks, would finally direct someone to my relief.

If deprived of the society of my fellow creatures, and of the conveniences of life, I could not but reflect that my forlorn situation was yet attended with some advantages. Of the whole island, though small, I had peaceable possession. No one, it was probable, would ever appear to dispute my claim, unless it were the amphibious animals of the ocean. Since the island was almost inaccessible, at night my repose was not disturbed by continual apprehension of the approach of cannibals or of beasts of prey. Again and again I thanked God on my knees for these various and many benefactions.

Yet is man ever a strange and unaccountable creature. I, who had asked of God's mercy no more than putrid meat to eat and a sufficiency of water not too brackish, was no sooner blessed with an abundance of cured meat and sweet water than I began to know discontent with my lot. I began to want fire, and the savor of cooked meat in my mouth. And continually I would discover myself longing for certain delicacies of the palate such as were part of the common daily fare on the home table at Elkton. Strive as I would, ever my fancy eluded my will and wantoned in daydreaming of the good things I had eaten and of the good things I would eat if ever I were rescued from my lonely situation.

It was the old Adam in me, I suppose—the taint of that first father who was the first rebel against God's commandments. Most strange is man, ever insatiable, ever unsatisfied, never at peace with God or himself, his days filled with restlessness and useless endeavor, his nights a glut of vain dreams of desires willful and wrong. Yes, and also I was much annoyed by my craving for tobacco. My sleep was often a torment to me, for it was then that my desires took

license to rove, so that a thousand times I dreamed myself possessed of hogsheads of tobacco—aye, and of warehouses of tobacco, and of shiploads and of entire plantations of tobacco.

But I revenged myself upon myself. I prayed to God unceasingly for a humble heart, and chastised my flesh with unremitting toil. Unable to improve my mind, I determined to improve my barren island. I labored four months at constructing a stone wall thirty feet long, including its wings, and a dozen feet high. This was as a protection to the hut in the periods of the great gales when all the island was as a tiny petrel in the maw of the hurricane. Nor did I conceive the time misspent. Thereafter I lay snug in the heart of calm while all the air for a hundred feet above my head was one stream of gust-driven water.

In the third year I began me a pillar of rock. Rather was it a pyramid, foursquare, broad at the base, sloping upward not steeply to the apex. In this fashion I was compelled to build, for gear and timber there was none in all the island for the construction of scaffolding. Not until the close of the fifth year was my pyramid complete. It stood on the summit of the island. Now, when I state that the summit was but forty feet above the sea, and that the peak of my pyramid was forty feet above the summit, it will be conceived that I, without tools, had doubled the stature of the island. It might be urged by some unthinking ones that I interfered with God's plan in the creation of the world. Not so, I hold. For was not I equally a part of God's plan, along with this heap of rocks upjutting in the solitude of ocean? My arms with which to work, my back with which to bend and lift, my hands cunning to clutch and hold—were not these parts, too, in God's plan? Much I pondered the matter. I know that I was right.

In the sixth year I increased the base of my pyramid, so that in eighteen months thereafter the height of my monument was fifty feet above the height of the island. This was no tower of Babel. It served two right purposes. It gave me a lookout from which to scan the ocean for ships and increased the likelihood of my island being sighted by the careless roving eye of any seaman. And it kept my body and mind in health. With hands never idle, there was small opportunity for Satan on that island. Only in my dreams did he torment me, principally with visions of varied foods and with imagined indulgences in the foul weed called tobacco.

On the eighteenth day of the month of June, in the sixth year of my sojourn on the island, I descried a sail. But it passed far to leeward at too great a distance to discover me. Rather than suffering disappointment, the very appearance of this sail afforded me the liveliest satisfaction. It convinced me of a fact that I had before in a degree doubted, to wit: that these seas were sometimes visited by navigators.

Among other things, where the seals hauled up out of the sea, I built wide-spreading wings of low rock walls that narrowed to a cul-de-sac, where I might conveniently kill such seals as entered without exciting their fellows outside and without permitting any wounded or frightened seal to escape and spread a contagion of alarm. Seven months were devoted to this structure alone.

As the time passed, I grew more contented with my lot, and the Devil came less and less in my sleep to torment the old Adam in me with lawless visions of tobacco and savory foods. And I continued to eat my seal meat and call it good, and to drink the sweet rain water of which always I had plenty, and to be grateful to God. And God heard me, I know, for during all my term on that island I knew never a moment of sickness, save two, both of which were due to my gluttony, as I shall later relate.

In the fifth year, ere I had convinced myself that the keels of ships did on occasion plow these seas, I began carving on my oar minutes of the more remarkable incidents that had attended me since I quitted the peaceful shores of America. This I rendered as intelligible and permanent as possible, the letters being of the smallest size. Six—and even five—letters were often a day's work for me, so painstaking was I.

And, lest it should prove my hard fortune never to meet with the long-wished opportunity to return to my friends and to my family at Elkton, I engraved, or nitched, on the broad end of the oar, this legend of my ill fate:

This is to acquaint the person into whose hands this Oar may fall, that DANIEL FOSS, a native of Elkton, in Maryland, one of the United States of America, and who sailed from the port of Philadelphia, in 1809, on board the brig Negociator, *bound to the Friendly Islands, was cast upon this desolate island the February following, where he erected a hut and lived a number of years, subsisting on seals*

—he being the last who survived of the crew of said brig, which ran afoul on an island of ice, and foundered on the 25th Nov. 1809.

This oar, which had proved so serviceable to me in my destitute situation, and which now contained a record of my own fate and of that of my shipmates, I spared no pains to preserve. No longer did I risk it in knocking seals on the head. Instead, I equipped myself with a stone club, some three feet in length and of suitable diameter, which occupied an even month in the fashioning. Also, to secure the oar from the weather (for I used it in mild breezes as a flagstaff on top of my pyramid from which to fly a flag I made me from one of my precious shirts) I contrived for it a covering of well-cured sealskins.

In the month of March of the sixth year of my confinement, I experienced one of the most tremendous storms that was perhaps ever witnessed by man. It commenced at about nine in the evening, with the approach of black clouds and a freshening wind from the southwest, which, by eleven, had become a hurricane, attended with incessant peals of thunder and the sharpest lightning I had ever witnessed.

I was not without apprehension for the safety of the island. Over every part, the seas made a clean breach, except of the summit of my pyramid. There, the life was nigh beaten and suffocated out of my body by the drive of the wind and spray. I could not but be sensible that my existence was spared solely because of my diligence in erecting the pyramid and so doubling the stature of the island.

Yet, in the morning, I had great reason for thankfulness. All my saved rain water was turned brackish, save that in my largest vessel which was sheltered in the lee of the pyramid. By careful economy I knew I had drink sufficient until the next rain, no matter how delayed, should fall. My hut was quite washed out by the seas, and of my great store of seal meat only a wretched, pulpy modicum remained. Nevertheless I was agreeably surprised to find the rocks plentifully distributed with a sort of fish more nearly like the mullet than any I had ever observed. Of these I picked up no less than twelve hundred and nineteen, which I split and cured in the sun after the manner of cod. This welcome change of diet was not without its consequence. I was guilty of gluttony, and for all of the succeeding night I was near to death's door.

In the seventh year of my stay on the island, in the very same month of March, there occurred a similar storm of great violence. Following upon it, to my astonishment, I found an enormous dead whale, quite fresh, which had been cast up high and dry by the waves. Conceive my gratification when in the bowels of the great fish I found deeply imbedded a harpoon of the common sort with a few fathoms of new line attached thereto.

Thus were my hopes again revived that I should finally meet with an opportunity to quit the desolate island. Beyond doubt these seas were frequented by whalemen, and, so long as I kept up a stout heart, sooner or later I should be saved. For seven years I had lived on seal meat, so that at sight of the enormous plentitude of different and succulent food I fell a victim to my weakness and ate of such quantities that once again I was well nigh to dying. And yet, after all, this, and the affair of the small fish, were mere indispositions due to the foreignness of the food to my stomach, which had learned to prosper on seal meat and on nothing but seal meat.

Of that one whale I preserved a full year's supply of provision. Also, under the sun's rays, in the rock hollows, I tried out much of the oil, which, with the addition of salt, was a welcome thing in which to dip my strips of seal meat whilst dining. Out of my precious rags of shirts I could even have contrived a wick so that, with the harpoon for steel and rock for flint, I might have had a light at night. But it was a vain thing, and I speedily forewent the thought of it. I had no need for light when God's darkness descended, for I had schooled myself to sleep from sundown to sunrise, winter and summer.

At the end of my eighth year on the island, in the month of September, when I had just sketched most ambitious plans to raise my pyramid to sixty feet above the summit of the island, I awoke one morning to stare out upon a ship with topsails aback and nearly within hail. That I might be discovered, I swung my oar in the air, jumped from rock to rock, and was guilty of all manner of liveliness of action, until I could see the officers on the quarter-deck looking at me through their spyglasses. They answered by pointing to the extreme westerly end of the island, whither I hastened and discovered their boat manned by half a dozen men. It seems, as I was to learn afterward, the ship had been attracted by my pyramid

and had altered its course to make closer examination of so strange a structure that was greater of height than the wild island on which it stood.

But the surf proved to be too great to permit the boat to land on my inhospitable shore. After divers unsuccessful attempts they signaled me that they must return to the ship. Conceive my despair at thus being unable to quit the desolate island. I seized my oar (which I had long since determined to present to the Philadelphia Museum if ever I were preserved) and with it plunged headlong into the foaming surf. Such was my good fortune, and my strength and agility, that I gained the boat.

I cannot refrain from telling here of a curious incident. The ship had by this time drifted so far away that we were all of an hour in getting aboard. During this time I yielded to my propensities that had been baffled for eight long years, and begged of the second mate, who steered, a piece of tobacco to chew. This granted, the second mate also proffered me his pipe, filled with prime Virginia leaf. Scarce had ten minutes passed when I was taken violently sick. The reason for this was clear. My system was entirely purged of tobacco, and what I now suffered was tobacco poisoning such as afflicts any boy at the time of his first smoke. Again I had reason to be grateful to God, and from that day to the day of my death, I neither used nor desired the foul weed.

ANOTHER PANAMA CANAL?

Dr. William H. Hobbs, geologist of Michigan University, has a master plan to supplement the advantages of the Panama Canal—with an atom-bombproof feature, too. Not discouraged by Mexico's rejection of his idea to slice a canal through the Tehuantepec Isthmus, Dr. Hobbs proposes now that "double shafts at sea level" be shoveled out beneath the mountains of Honduras. These 146-mile tunnels, separated by 150 feet, would be furnished with electric locomotives to pull vessels through. And the thickness of earth above the twin shafts would, he claims, easily resist the shock of atomic explosions.

BOTTLED MESSAGES FROM THE SEA

BY J. EUGENE CHRISMAN

Don't ignore that bottle you see washed up on the beach, you may be stepping over a fortune! Money, wills and heart-rending notes have all been found in these letter drops of the deep.

One evening a restaurant employee named Jack J. Wurm was strolling aimlessly along the beach near Palo Alto, California. He stopped as he caught sight of a bottle which had evidently been but recently cast up from the sea. His curiosity was aroused for Wurm had often read of love letters and appeals for help had often been found in such bottles. Picking it up he opened it and to his amazement he found inside it a note which read in part, "To avoid confusion I leave my entire estate to the lucky person who finds this bottle and to my attorney, Barry Cohen, share and share alike."

Wurm hesitated. The note might be genuine and mean a fortune to him but it might be some kind of hoax. Then at last he decided to take a chance and have an investigation made. Inquiry revealed that a woman named Daisy Alexander, the name which had been signed to the note, had died in London in September, 1939. She had been a daughter of Isaac Singer the enormously wealthy sewing machine manufacturer and had left an estate valued at more than $12,000,000. The note, dated June 20, 1937, had been written more than two years before her death.

Some of her friends recalled her having told them that she had a habit of throwing bottles containing messages into the sea, just to see where they would end up. The English courts are still considering the case as this article is written but it was es-

tablished that there is an attorney in London named Barry Cohen and that he was Mrs. Alexander's lawyer. If the case is decided in his favor Jack J. Wurm will receive $6,000,000.

There is hardly anyone who has not read of these bottled messages from the sea or who has not dreamed of some day having the same thing happen to them that happened to Wurm. There is no other case on record where one of these messages from the briny deep was worth a potential six million dollars to its finder but bottles cast up by the sea have been found to contain many strange and unusual notes—some humorous, some pathetic, some tragic. Some have also been the result of somebody's prankish nature.

It was somewhere around 300 B.C. that a Greek philosopher named Theophrastus proved by the drift of seaweed and bottles that the water of the Mediterranean flows in from the Atlantic Ocean through the Straits of Gibraltar. The Prince of Monaco, whose hobby was maritime research, induced the captains of a number of ships to place bottles containing pertinent data into the sea at certain specified latitudes and longitudes. Two thousand years after Theophrastus he confirmed the Greek philosopher's findings. During the period between 1885 and 1888 the Prince had some 1,700 such bottles put overboard in various widely separated parts of the world. During the ten years which followed 227 of these bottles were recovered and reported. Their discovery led the way toward the solution of many problems connected with Atlantic currents.

Today the bottled message game is being played by most of the nations of the world who have extensive coastlines and similar investigations and experiments are being carried on by a great many private scientific organizations. There also exists a much larger number of people, well scattered throughout the world, who set bottles containing messages or data adrift as a hobby. They have organized themselves into an association called the International Bottle Club. This organization receives and coordinates information received from the finders of the bottles its members have consigned to the sea. Much extremely valuable data concerning ocean currents has been received in this manner since members of the organization set thousands of bottles adrift every year and a certain percentage of them are found.

One such bottle completed a

trans-Atlantic crossing in just eight days and the average speed for drifting bottles has been estimated at about eight miles every twenty four hours. One bottle, cast overside from a North Sea trawler more than a quarter of a century ago has been recovered and cast back into the sea so many times that it has several times traveled entirely around the world and is still going strong.

A number of sea mysteries have been solved by the finding of such bottled messages from the sea. Notable among these was the case of a ship which vanished with all hands in November, 1933 while enroute from Newfoundland to Port Talbot. For more than two years her loss remained a mystery. No message, no indication of her fate or of the fate of the 29 members of her crew came to light until a cocoa tin was found on the seashore near the little Welsh village of Aberavon. Inside it was a note which read, "*S.S. Saxilby* sinking somewhere off the Irish coast. Love to sister, brothers and Dinah — Joe Okane."

The late Robert Ripley would have savored the fact that Joe Okane's home town was Aberavon, the message was addressed to his family which lived in Aberavon and the bottle was found within a mile of his family home.

One summer day two small boys were playing among the dunes along the coast of Maine when they came upon a beer bottle that had drifted up onto the beach. The one who picked the bottle up was about to discard it when the other saw that it contained a paper. The paper proved to be a note hastily scribbled on a page torn from a common notebook. "Our ship sinking. The SOS won't help. I guess this is it. Good-bye now—maybe this will reach the good old USA." Added to it was the name and address of a loved one of the writer.

It was only a few weeks later that another bottle was found on the same stretch of coast. It had come ashore as part of the flotsam from a ship. U.S. Naval Intelligence ascertained that the flotsam had come from the destroyer Beatty which had sunk in the Mediterranean in November 1943. Four years had been required for that tragic farewell note to travel some 3,000 miles along with the debris of the ship upon which the writer had gone down.

There was even a bottle message from the sea involved in the tragic sinking of the *Lusitania* which went down after being struck by a German torpedo

in the early part of World War Number One. In it was a brief note describing the pitiful last moments on board the doomed ship. "I am still on deck with a few people. One of them is a child. The last of the boats have left. We are sinking fast. The orchestra is still playing bravely. Some men near me are praying with a priest. The end is very near. Maybe this note will ....."

And there the note ended. Why it had been broken off in the middle of a sentence or what the writer intended to add to it will forever be another of the sea's unsolved mysteries.

But all bottle messages from the sea are not pitiful or tragic. A bottle picked up by a British ship as it drew close to the Australian coast contained a photograph of a good-looking young seaman and this note; "I am a mate on a freighter bound for the South Seas. I am a lonesome fellow and hope that fate will bring me a wife. Perhaps somewhere in the Commonwealth there is a girl not over 30 years of age who wants to write to me." The writer's name and address were added and the ship's captain placed the bottle and the note in a place where a pretty stewardess chanced to see it. She wrote the lonesome sailor and they were later married.

A free-spending American business man once slipped a check for a considerable amount into a bottle which he flung overside from the ship *President Roosevelt*. The French woman who later found it was at first skeptical but later when she presented it for payment she found that it was good! It had drifted ashore at Saffi, Morocco. The only message the bottle contained was "Hurrah for Lindbergh" which leads to the suspicion that the American business man had been over-imbibing.

Ever since Theophrastus tried the first experiment in 3,000 B.C. men have sought to advance their knowledge by using drifting receptacles which they have consigned to the seas of the world. From the practice much has been learned of ocean currents, tides, wind and wave, weather, climate, geology and even the mystery behind the migration of races. Perhaps the most famous of all the bottled messages from the sea was not contained in a bottle but in a wooden cask which was set adrift from a ship off the West Indies in 1493. The note the cask contained described a hurricane in which the ship was at that moment involved and the fears of the officers and crew. The note was signed by none other than Christopher Columbus.

ILLUSTRATED BY SMITH

renegade!

BY M. E. CHABER

When the chips are down you can find the best in the worst of us. The captain of *The Dearjohn* found that out, he learned it from his renegade crew and the mysterious girl named Elaine.

Kito Yoshida came waddling along the rickety wharf. I could have sworn the eyes in his fat face were closed, but he avoided the rotten planks in the wharf as though radar was imbedded in his folds of fat. Yoshida was part of colorful Kagoshima in Japan. I don't know what he'd done before the war, but during the occupation he'd gotten rich in the black market and furnishing girls for the GIs. Now he had a warehouse, handling everything, but mostly rice wine and cheap Japanese whiskey. My boat was loaded with it. In addition to some food and a lot of knives and bolos. All for trade with the islands.

He was looking for me. He stopped in front of my boat, but didn't turn his face toward me. In all the time I'd known him, I'd never caught Yoshida looking directly at me.

"So solly, prease," he said. "Catchum missy alongside chop-chop. You wait?" Yoshida could talk English as well as I could, but it pleased him to use his own brand of pidgin every once in a while. I had a hunch that it was his idea of a joke over the fact that most Americans expected him to talk that way.

"Can the double-talk," I said. "It wasn't funny the first time and that was five years ago."

"I keep forgetting that you speak English," he said blandly. It was hard to tell if he smiled briefly or if it was just a shifting in the fold of fat on his face. "I've got a passenger for you."

"Passenger?" I said. "You know damn well I don't carry passengers."

"For a hundred dollars?" he asked slyly. "American dollars?"

That stopped me. I'd started running a boat with the idea I was going to get rich. I couldn't have been more wrong. The only thing I was rolling in was the smell of fish and copra.

"Well, maybe, this once," I said. "Where does he want to go?"

"She wants to go to Naha."

"She? Now, wait a minute, Yoshida. I'm not going to help some geisha girl run away from the guy who bought her—even for a hundred bucks."

"Not a geisha girl," he said smoothly. "This is a white girl. Catchum missy alongside chop-chop. You wait?" This time I was sure I heard him chuckling as he walked off without waiting for me to answer.

White girl or not, I still wasn't sure I wanted her on board. But before I could think about it, my crew showed up. As usual all five of them were drunk, but not so much but what we could sail. I didn't blame them too much. It was a stinking job any way you looked at it. We'd sail down to Naha and start delivering the supplies and picking up a return cargo. We'd stop at Naze, Yaku and Tanega and put back in at Kagoshima. Then we'd do the whole thing over again.

The crew filed on board. Some crew. There was one German. He'd given his name as Hans Schmidt, a Teutonic version of John Smith, when I hired him. My personal opinion was that he was a Nazi who'd been caught in Japan. His name was probably anything but Hans Schmidt. Then there was Li Kwang. He was Chinese. He'd gotten out when the Reds took over and he never mentioned why he hadn't gone on to Formosa with the others. There were two islanders. I'd never known their real names. We called them Little Joe and Big Joe and that's the way they signed their pay chits. The fifth one was Portuguese. His name was Vasco Carvalho. When he was drunk he liked to play with a knife and I had the idea he'd used it once for keeps. There had to be some reason he was in the islands; no one stayed without a reason.

It was Carvalho who stopped beside me before stepping on the boat. "We sail soon, Senhor?" he said.

"Yeah," I said. There was no point mentioning the girl until I knew whether I was taking her or not.

"We heard rumors in the city," he said. There was something like fear in his eyes. It

was the first time I'd ever seen anything like it.

"What?"

"The villagers are saying, Senhor, that there is a band of renegade Jap soldiers still somewhere in the islands. It is said that two nights ago they raided Yaku."

"Sure," I said sourly. There were always rumors of renegade Jap soldiers who refused to admit the war was over. "As long as we don't run into any runaway Confederate soldiers . . ."

He shrugged. "Perhaps it is true, Senhor," he said. His right hand had crept inside his coat and I knew he was playing with the knife again. "*No se sabe nunca.* One never knows." He gave me a twisted grin and disappeared aboard the schooner.

I'd stopped paying any attention to rumors. The Pacific was full of them. As far as I was concerned, the rumors couldn't be any worse than reality. I'd reached the point where just staying on the boat was the worst that could happen.

I'd been doing it too long. Since about a week after I'd taken my discharge in Japan instead of going back to the States. I'd island-hopped all through the Pacific in the war and ended up in Japan just in time for the occupation — digging in with Dugout Doug, we'd called it. I'd been counting the days until I could get out and then I got one of those Dear-John letters from my girl. She'd discovered civilians again as soon as the war was over.

When I got my discharge, I cashed in the bonds I'd saved and bought a 60-foot schooner. I'd painted *The Dearjohn* on the bow, hired a crew, and I was in business. I'd had some idea of ending up as one of those wealthy island traders, complete with half-caste mistress — the kind you see in the movies. The nearest I'd come to it was splitting a bottle of *saki* with a geisha girl who claimed that one of her ancestors had been with Perry.

So I could use a hundred bucks. But I didn't like the idea of a passenger. Especially a white woman. Not that I wouldn't like to see one. It had been two years since I'd seen a white woman. But there are women and women, if you know what I mean. In this part of the Pacific you usually saw only two kinds of white women. One was the tramp, who wouldn't be apt to have a hundred dollars. The other was the missionary. She wouldn't be apt to have a hundred bucks either and she'd probably look worse. When a guy's been away from the States as long as I had, he needs a dif-

ferent kind of missionary. And not a flat-chested one.

I started thinking about the kind of passenger I'd like to have. I was so busy rounding out the picture I didn't hear the footsteps on the wharf.

"Are you Captain Jason Blake?" she asked.

I looked up. For a minute I thought I'd finally had it and was seeing things. She had dark red hair, clipped close to her head. Dark green eyes. Peaches and cream skin. She must have been in her early twenties. She was wearing combat boots, O.D. slacks, a GI shirt, and an Eisenhower jacket. On Eisenhower it had never looked so good. This girl was stacked and even the art of a GI tailor couldn't disguise it.

"I'm Jason Blake," I said finally.

"I'm Elaine Stone," she said. "Kito Yoshida said that you would take me to Naha."

"I guess so," I said. I'd about made up my mind not to take the passenger, but the sight of her was changing my mind. "Yoshida said you'd pay a hundred dollars."

"That's right," she said crisply. She reached into her pocket and brought out some crumpled bills. She thrust them at me.

Her fingers touched mine as I took the money. It was enough to make me suddenly conscious of not having shaved in two days. I fumbled with the bills. There were five twenties. They looked like good American money.

There was an amused expression on her face when I glanced up. Maybe she guessed what I felt when I looked at her. It annoyed me. "Okay," I said, sticking the money in my pocket. "Where's your luggage?"

"This is it," she said, indicating the shoulder-strap bag she was wearing. It wasn't big enough to hold much.

That surprised me, too. About the only clothing she could get for herself on Naha was a skimpy sarong. I decided I'd like to see her in one. She had just what a sarong needed.

"How come you're going to Naha?" I asked.

"That is my business, Captain," she said coolly.

"Sure," I agreed. When you work in the islands you get used to people having secretive business. "It's just that we don't often see girls like you out here. I thought maybe—"

"I know exactly what you're thinking," she interrupted. From her tone she probably did. "Will you please show me to my cabin, Captain?"

I laughed. "We've got two cabins below. One is for the

crew and the other is for me. I guess I'll have to move my things in with the crew."

"I gues you will," she said.

She didn't say any more, so I turned and led the way on board. The crew was up in the bow. Schmidt had trapped Big Joe and Little Joe into another crap game. Vasco and Kwang were watching. They knew all about Schmidt's loaded dice, but the two islanders always came back for more.

The dice bounced across the deck and stopped with their familiar seven up. But Schmidt didn't reach for the money as quickly as he usually did. My gaze lifted from the dice and I saw the reason why. All five of them were staring at her.

"Miss Stone is booking passage with us to Naha," I said. "Come on, Miss Stone."

She followed me below. There was no sound from the crew behind us. I didn't have to look around to know what they were doing—I could almost hear their eyes popping out of their sockets.

"A nice bunch of boys," she said as we went below. There was no mistaking the irony in her voice.

"They're all right," I said defensively. "They're just not used to seeing anything but native women. You can't blame them for staring. But they won't bother you." I wasn't as sure of that as I sounded. I wanted to bother her myself, so I knew damn well how the crew was feeling.

I threw open the door to my cabin and stood aside for her. I followed her inside and waited while she looked around. As a matter of fact, I was pretty proud of my cabin. I told myself that it was proof that I hadn't gone native. It was reasonably clean. I had about a dozen well-thumbed books. Good books. There was only one pin-up on the wall and that was the Monroe calendar. My old regiment patch and campaign ribbons were on the wall beside it.

"Well, it's not the Waldorf, but I guess it'll do," she said. "Does the door lock?"

"No."

She looked at me and patted the bag that hung from her shoulder. "I have a key of my own. Thirty-eight caliber. You might tell the boy."

"I guess I'd better get my things," I said. I moved around the cabin, gathering up some clothes and my shaving things, while she watched me. Finally, I had them all. "Is there anything you'd like, Miss Stone?" I asked.

"Nothing."

I looked at her and wanted to go over and put my arms around

her. I knew it was partly because I hadn't seen a white woman in years. But only partly. Anywhere I'd seen her I would have wanted to do the same thing. The whole situation made me angry.

"You're sure there's nothing you want?" I asked. I looked her up and down in as insulting a fashion as I could.

"Quite sure, Captain," she said coldly. "And if there was, I'm sure I could do better than any of the prospects on this boat."

"So could we—on any island," I snapped. It wasn't true, but it made me feel better to say it. I slammed the door as I went out.

I went up and told the crew to get under way. I went back down to the other cabin, shaved and put on a pair of clean ducks. Then I went back on deck.

We were already heading out to sea with a full sail of wind. The two islanders and Kwang were working the schooner. Hans Schmidt and Vasco Carvalho were sitting up forward. Vasco was cleaning his nails with the point of the seven-inch blade he carried.

They both looked up as I approached.

"Look at the skipper," Schmidt said. He spoke English as well as I did. Only a trace of heaviness marked his origins. "Maybe we have to start dressing for dinner."

"Perhaps," said Vasco. His thumb tested the blade of his knife. "Then, again, the Senhor Capitao may wish to remind us of his exalted position. Perhaps he wishes to suggest that the commander of a ship has the right to be first in all things."

"Maybe we'd better mutiny," the German suggested.

"An excellent suggestion, Senhor," Vasco said gravely. "Should we appoint a mutiny committee?"

They were riding me, there was nothing unusual about that. But it was only half kidding, this time there was a barely-concealed threat beneath the levity.

"Stow it," I said. "She doesn't want any part of any of us. Leave it like that." I turned and walked away. I could feel their gaze, like a physical force, in the middle of my back.

I stayed away from the crew the rest of the day. That night I waited on deck until it was time to turn in. Kwang had taken the first night watch. The others had gone below. I went down. There was no sound except the distant creaking of sails and the slap of water against the schooner. That was unusual, too. The crew didn't usually go to sleep so early. I had an idea that

all four of them were lying in the darkness, listening and waiting.

I stopped in front of my cabin. I hesitated a minute, then knocked lightly on the door.

The door opened a couple of inches. "Yes?" she asked.

"It's Captain Blake," I said. The door opened wider. The only light was from the moon, coming in through the porthole of the cabin and glinting on her hair. "I don't like the way things are shaping up. The men have got you on their minds. All five of them. There's liable to be trouble."

"I can take care of myself," she said.

I hadn't intended any more than warning her, but it got out of hand. I was standing too close. Her scent suddenly reached out and curled around my senses. Without stopping to think, I grabbed her and pulled her to me. She came without any struggle. I felt her body against mine, neither resisting nor giving. My arms locked tightly, my hands pressed against her.

I found her lips, then just as quickly lost interest. There were two inches of gun barrel in my belly and it was trying to shrink back to my spine. Maybe it's true that cold showers will make you lose your interest in a woman, but the nose of a gun will do it quicker and better. I let go of her and stepped back.

"Now that you've learned at first hand that I can take care of myself," she said coldly, "maybe you'll pass the word along. Good night, Captain Blake." She closed the door.

To hell with her, I thought. She deserved whatever happened to her. I started for the other cabin, then changed my mind. I didn't want any trouble on board—and I realized I didn't want anybody else bothering her. I stretched out in front of her door and slept there. It wasn't as comfortable as my bed, but that wasn't what kept me awake.

The situation got worse during the next three days. The girl stayed in the cabin and we never saw her, but there was no doubt we were all thinking of her. Vasco and Hans stopped being friendly and even the crap games between Hans and the islanders stopped. It was the first time I'd ever seen the German lose his interest in gambling.

The third night out someone tried to slip past me and get into her cabin. It was too dark to see anything, but I landed one good blow. Then he rushed me. His shoulder caught me in the ribs and knocked me bouncing off the wall. When I got up he was gone.

The next day I noticed there was a bruise on Hans' face, but neither of us said anything about it.

By the fifth day you could have cut the atmosphere with a knife. None of the crew was speaking to any other and they didn't answer when I gave them orders. I was expecting a blow-up any minute. It came—but not from the direction I expected.

We were passing one of the smaller islands near Yaku. It was completely jungle-covered and uninhabited as far as I knew, although I'd heard rumors there were head-hunters on it. We'd never put in there, I couldn't see any way of making a fast buck out of a jungle.

A sixty-foot schooner is a pretty small place when you've got six men trying to stay away from each other. Big Joe was at the wheel. Little Joe was curled up on a pile of rope sleeping. Li Kwang was down below, taking his turn in the galley, while Vasco Carvalho was tossing his knife at the mast. Hans Schmidt was sitting up fore, staring out at nothing. I was walking around trying to keep an eye on all of them without seeming to.

We were all thinking about the red-head in the cabin below. If we hadn't been, we might have been paying a little attention to the water around us. But nobody saw anything. The only warning we had was when we felt something ram us in the side. By then it was too late to do us any good.

I started across the deck, but Vasco was ahead of me. I saw him lean over and I heard the beginning of a yell. Then he staggered back and blood was streaking down his face. The next minute they came over the side like a dirty flood. Twelve or fifteen men. All of them Japs. Most of them were wearing a weird assortment of clothes, looking as if it had been looted from a dozen different spots. But two of them wore crudely patched Japanese uniforms. Even as the action started, the Kagoshima rumor flashed into my mind. Carvalho had brought back the story that somewhere in the islands there was a band of Jap soldiers who refused to admit the war was over. It looked like we'd found them.

Only one had a gun. The others were waving swords and knives. I saw that much before things started happening too fast for me to see anything. I saw the guy with the gun level it and squeeze the trigger. I heard a grunt of pain from Big Joe and saw him go down. The next minute Vasco's knife was quivering in the Jap's throat, the

blood spurted out over the handle.

After that, there was no time to see anything that wasn't right in front of me.

I came up fast on a Jap who was taking an overhand slice at the back of Little Joe's neck. I got one arm under his chin and grabbed his sword arm with my other hand. A quick pivot and I jerked with all my strength. His neck snapped like a dry stick and I inherited his sword. I went to work with that.

I was half conscious that some of them had slipped past us. Then I heard two fast gunshots, followed by a scream. It sounded like the red-head was having her trouble too.

But I didn't have any time to worry about her. I collected myself one more Jap, pinned him on the blade as neatly as if he were a butterfly. I was beginning to get the hang of the sword.

Feeling a little more confident, I swung around looking for another quarry. I was just in time to see the edge of a sword slashing at my eyes. I ducked it with maybe a sixteenth of an inch to spare. I came up and started to lunge for his belly. But the Jap fooled me. He stopped his swing and brought the sword back along the same course with hardly a pause. I got the idea all right, but I got it too late. The back of the sword thwacked me over the temple and I heard all the bells ring. I was back-pedaling like a six-day bike rider in reverse, to keep from falling, when I felt something strike the back of my legs. I flipped over once and spread out in the air. Then there was a splash, but it must have been a full minute before I realized that it was me doing the splashing. I was overboard.

I knew I was in the water, but it didn't seem to make much difference at first. My head was hurting so badly I couldn't feel anything else. It wasn't until I started to take a deep breath and got my nose full of salt water that I realized where I was.

I kicked and clawed my way to the surface. I gagged up a lot of salt water and traded it for some fresh air. That helped some, but not too much. I floated on my back, waiting for some of the fire to leave my lungs. It seemed like only a couple of minutes, but it might have been longer.

Finally, I rolled over and looked for the schooner. It was three or four hundred yards away. I started to swim toward it and then just as suddenly stopped. There was no more noise aboard and from the way she was swinging about I could

tell there was someone at the wheel. I knew that Big Joe had been killed as the Japs boarded us. With me overboard, it didn't seem likely that four men and a girl had managed to win that quickly. I dog-paddled and waited.

Even as I watched, I saw three bodies tossed overboard. The schooner was still close enough so that I could see the tossers were Japs.

The schooner came about in a wide graceful turn and headed for the island. I saw a man step to the side and start to look around. I went under the water and stayed as long as I could hold my breath.

When I finally came up for air, the schooner was a hundred yards farther away, heading directly for the island. I could see several figures moving on the deck, but nobody was looking around.

I started swimming for the spot where I'd seen the bodies thrown overboard. It took me several minutes to reach the first one. He was floating face downward. It was a tough job to roll him over. It was Big Joe. He was dead. The other two weren't far away. Little Joe and Li Kwang. Both were dead.

This probably meant that Hans, Vasco, and the girl were still alive. I turned to look after the schooner. It had almost reached the island and seemed to be maneuvering into a small natural bay.

I glanced at the sky. The sun was low in the West, but it was about two hours before darkness. My best chance was to wait until it was dark, then try to sneak aboard the schooner and get to the radio. But I didn't want to float out in the middle of the ocean for the next two hours.

I rode the crest of the next wave and looked around. I spotted what I was looking for a couple hundred yards away. One of the dugout canoes the Japs had used in boarding us. I swam over and put it between me and the island. Then I started paddling slowly. The tide was going in and from the island it would look like the empty boat was merely drifting to shore. I hoped.

It was getting dark by the time I paddled into the natural harbor. I let the boat drift, always keeping it between me and the shore, until it was dark enough to hide my movements. Then I pushed it away and struck out for the schooner, its masts looming darkly against the sky. There was no light on board and I was beginning to hope they had left her unguarded.

I swam around to the anchor

chain and as quietly as I could went up it hand over hand. I dropped on the deck and waited there, listening. After more than two hours in the water, I didn't feel like rushing into any hero act. My clothes were waterlogged. It was a warm night, but the exposure was making me shiver.

When I was sure I was the only one aboard, I went below. I didn't want to risk a light, but than I didn't need one. I knew that schooner like the back of my hand. I gropped my way into my cabin. The scent of the redheaded girl was still in it, reminding me to hurry. Those Japs were probably even more woman-hungry than we'd been.

The radio was in the corner. I went to it and my fingers were first to know that hope was gone. They hadn't taken any chances. They'd smashed the radio. That left it strictly up to me.

I didn't expect any luck, but I went over and felt through my sea chest. My gun was gone. I turned and went to the other cabin. I found some dry clothes. I wasn't sure they were mine, but it didn't make any difference. Then I found my way to Vasco's bunk and felt around in it. I knew that he always had an extra knife and I seemed to remember that he usually kept it in his bed. This time I was luckier. I found it by jabbing my thumb against the point. I was so glad to get it, I didn't even mind.

Up on deck, I tied the dry clothes on top of my head and climbed down the anchor chain. Then I struck out for shore. A few minutes later I climbed out on the sandy beach. I stripped off my wet clothes and put on the dry ones. It made me feel better at once. Leaving the wet clothes on the beach, I headed into the jungle.

They weren't too hard to find. I could hear them almost from the beginning and I could see the reflection of their fire.

It was about a mile back in the jungle. The ground dipped sharply down, creating a tiny valley almost a perfect circle in shape. They had partially cleared it and there were a number of crude thatch huts around the edge. They had a fire built in the center of the clearing and had apparently just finished gorging themselves on supplies taken from my schooner.

There must have been thirty or forty Japs around the fire. It looked like that was all, except for whatever sentries they had posted. I'd crawled the last hundred yards through the jungle without seeing a guard,

but I was sure they had some.

I caught sight of Hans Schmidt and Vasco Carvalho at once. They were near the edge of the clearing, sitting back to back against a palm tree. Both of them were tightly tied, but they seemed to be alive and conscious. I looked for the girl. She wasn't hard to locate.

She was standing up against a tree which had been left in the center, with the Japs in a circle around her and the fire. Her hands were drawn back around the tree and tied there. Except for the rope around her wrists, there was no other binding on her. The Japs had already stripped off her clothes.

For a minute I was lost in the vision before me—forgetting the Japs, the danger to her, even my own danger. I think I even stopped breathing. Back when I'd first seen her, I had tried to imagine what she looked like beneath the bulky GI clothes—but no imagination could have coped with the reality of her body.

The light from the fire threw a reddish tint over her until her hair looked as though it were a part of the blaze. And her body was like sculptured bronze in the firelight. Below the breasts, her body was like taut copper, her legs tapered gracefully down to disappear in the darkness around the base of the tree.

I think it was the most beautiful sight I'd ever seen. But it was more than beauty—there was some sensuous quality about her body which even fear could not extinguish. It was the very essence of femaleness and even lying there in the jungle I could feel a response stirring within me.

I don't know how long the spell would have lasted if someone hadn't moved. One of the Japs walked across to her. He called out something to his companions that made them laugh. Then he put his hands on her and she screamed. It was sheer, naked cry of fear and anger that snapped me out of it. I tore my eyes away from her and started circling around the clearing.

I found the sentry after a few yards. His gaze was glued to the girl and he never heard me coming. He was still staring when I passed my knife across his throat and if the spurting blood seemed hot it had good reason to be. At least, he died happy. I eased the body to the ground without a sound.

I took his gun and moved on as fast as I could. It was easy to slide down the embankment to the tree where my two men were tied. Vasco caught sight of me first and a smile twisted across

his blood-streaked face. He muttered something to Hans.

It took only seconds to cut them loose. I handed them the gun and told them to give me a two-minute diversion, then to head for the bay. I slipped away from there as fast as I could. I went about a hundred yards, then turned to face the center.

The one guy was still busy with his hands. He seemed to be enjoying himself. She must have sensed that screaming only pleased him the more for she was quiet now. Her head was thrown back and I could see the taut cords of the muscles in her neck. I felt my own muscles tensing in response.

When the first shots came, I leaped forward. There were only fifty feet to cover and I made it in record time. The other Japs had scattered, but junior was standing there looking around, one of his hands still clutching at her body. I reached him and braced myself. I plunged the knife in below his belt buckle and pulled it up as far as I could. He tried to say something, then shut up and grabbed for his spilling guts.

I whipped around and cut the rope on her wrists. She was trying to say something, but the words wouldn't come out yet.

"Shut up," I told her savagely. "Save it until the curtain falls."

There wasn't any time for chivalry, but I yanked off my shirt and gave it to her. Then while she was still putting it around herself, I picked her up and ran. We were almost out of the clearing before a shout told me that someone had spotted us.

I hadn't been able to look around, but I knew that the two boys were putting up a good fight. I could tell by the sounds.

As we entered the jungle, I glanced back. I was just in time to see Hans get it. One minute he was grinning and firing his gun and the next there was just a dark mask where his face had been. Vasco had already broken loose and was running after me. He'd collected a sword from somewhere and I could see he'd been using it. He was wobbling as he ran, so he must have been hit at least once. I didn't think he'd make it, but there wasn't anything I could do about it.

Then we were in the jungle and I was trying to peer around her shoulder to see where I was going. There was no point in putting her down. Even if she could run after what she'd been through, a jungle is no place to try it without anything covering your feet and legs. Carrying her would be simpler in the long run. We had no spare time, I knew. The Japs would be right after us.

Also, I had to admit to myself that I liked the idea of carrying her. Even there in the jungle, running for our lives, I was conscious of her warm flesh. Maybe even more conscious because it seemed so likely that this was the nearest I'd ever get to it.

That was the longest mile I ever covered in my life. But finally I staggered out on the beach. I put her down. I was panting so hard I couldn't hear anything else, so I held by breath while I listened. The Japs were somewhere back in the jungle. They didn't sound as far away as I would have liked.

"Can you swim?' I asked.

"Yes," she said.

"Let's go then," I told her. I headed into the bay at a full run. I heard her splashing along behind me.

She was still with me when I reached the schooner. I boosted her up onto the anchor chain and then went up after her. We scrambled onto the deck.

The moon was just beginning to gleam over the jungle. I glanced at her and took a century-long second to appreciate her. She was wearing my shirt which just came down to her thighs. It was plastered tightly to her skin and it made a pretty picture. But the same moonlight showed me something else and that wasn't so pretty. The first few Japs were racing out of the jungle.

"We can just about make it," I told her. "Help me get this thing floating."

"Just a minute," she said. Before I could do anything to stop she'd turned and raced below deck.

I started cursing women generally and Elaine Stone specifically. It was a hell of a moment to go powder her nose or whatever she was doing. But I didn't have any time for the luxury of cursing. I ran aft and labored to get the anchor up. I finally made it and rushed back to try to get the sails up. It's a little too much for one man, but it could be done. Only it needed more time than I had.

They must have had some grappling irons or short ropes. I heard the first iron hit and I started over to meet the invasion. But they were coming in from all sides. I was slugging it out with the first Jap over on my side when another one came up behind me. Something cracked me over the top of my head, a howitzer went off inside, and that was it. Everything blacked out so fast, I didn't even feel the deck come up to hit me.

When I came back to the land of the living, we were once more in the jungle in front of that fire. Only this time things were

a little different. Elaine was tied to the tree again. She was still wearing my wet shirt and she was also wearing a pair of slacks. She must have found time to slip into them when she went below. I cursed her again under my breath.

I was tied to another tree. I'd been sort of hanging against the rope around my wrist and it was the pain of that which brought me around. I leaned back against the tree and tried to get the whole picture. When I got it, I didn't like it.

This time I was the one who was naked. I couldn't figure out why anybody would want to strip me when there was a girl around to undress—at least, I couldn't figure it out until I got a good look at the big Jap who was standing in front of me. He was handling a knife that looked large enough to hack down trees. He kept running his thumb along the edge and grinning. He was making a speech in Japanese and he kept gesturing at Elaine and me.

I couldn't understand Japanese, but after a while I began to get a horrible suspicion I knew what he was talking about. His gestures were pretty suggestive. So was the knife. He had apparently gotten the idea that it might be very amusing to do a little operating on me while Elaine watched. From the way the other guys yelled, it seemed they thought it was pretty funny, too.

I wasn't amused at all. In fact, as soon as I got the idea, I could feel the front of my body trying to retreat to the spot where my back was. And the more I looked at that knife the bigger it got.

I don't know how long it went on. The big guy kept making experimental passes at me with that knife, just cutting the skin, and the other Japs kept yelling. They were really working themselves up to having a hell of a party. I'd about reached the point where I wished they'd go ahead and get it over with.

It was a little easier, I'd learned, if I didn't watch the boy with the knife. I was keeping my gaze on the jungle over their heads when suddenly I saw a tree move. At least, that's what I though I saw. Then I decided maybe it was hallucinations, for I saw several trees move.

A minute later I knew it was men. A lot of men. At least fifty or sixty of them. They moved in closer and I saw how they were dressed. I never thought I'd live to see the day I'd be glad to see a bunch of uniforms again, but I could have yelled with joy when I recognized the U.S. Marines.

After that, it wasn't long. A few bursts and the Japs saw what they were up against. They soon lost their interest in fighting. Hands went up all over the place and they started squealing something in Japanese. One of those who squealed the loudest was the big sadist still standing in front of me.

A couple of the Marines came racing through to us. One of them, an officer, headed for Elaine. The other, a sergeant, came to me. He slashed my ropes.

"You all right, sir?" he asked.

"Yeah," I said. "Only if you'd been a little later, I wouldn't have been anchored."

He wasn't sure what I meant, but he grinned in a friendly fashion. It was nice to see somebody being friendly.

I rubbed my wrists until they felt normal again. Then I stepped over and tapped the big Jap on the shoulder. When he turned around, I kicked him where it would do the most good. He bent over with pain and I smashed his nose with an uppercut. Sure, I shouldn't have done it, but it made me feel better. When he recovered, the sergeant made him give me his pants and shirt. Then I walked over to join Elaine and the officer.

He was a young lieutenant, looking like he'd just gotten out of high school. It made me feel old; I was a war ahead of him. She was saying something and just as I arrived he snapped to attention and saluted her.

"What's this?" I asked. "A new leatherneck custom?"

He looked embarrassed. "Regulations may not call for it under the circumstances," he said, "but I was merely saluting a superior officer. Is this the man you mentioned in your call, Captain Stone?"

Elaine nodded.

"*Captain* Stone?" I asked.

"Yes, Jason," she said. "I'm sorry I couldn't tell you before. But it was my assignment to find these Japs. We've been looking for them for more than a year. It was finally decided I should start riding trading boats up and down this sector until I hit a boat that was raided. I hit it the first time out." She flushed. "Only they caught me by surprise and I didn't get a message out the first time."

In the excitement of the moment, I almost missed the fact that she had called me Jason. "How did the Boy Wonders get here then?" I asked.

"I had a transmitter built into my shoulder bag," she explained. "I hid it in my cabin just before they grabbed me. So when we got back to the schooner, I went down and sent a message . . . That's why I couldn't stop

to help you, Jason. Believe me."

I nodded. "Marines?" I asked her.

She shook her head. "Army. Attached to the Central Intelligence Agency."

No wonder she'd stuck a gun in my belly when I tried to kiss her. I never had been able to get anywhere with Army Brass. I grinned to myself. At least, this was the first captain I'd ever wanted to kiss.

I looked at the spots where my wet shirt clung the tightest to her "Well," I said, "the Army is certainly looking better than when I was in it."

The Marine lieutenant got huffy at this, stopped any further chit-chat by suggesting that there was still some mopping up to do. So we moved around and watched them line up their prisoners. We learned that this band of Japs had been holding out ever since the end of the war and had been a major headache. Everyone—except the Japs—was pretty pleased about getting them.

We found the bodies of Hans Schmidt and Vasco Carvalho and buried them. We left the dead Japs where they were. The lieutenant looked like he was anxious to start marching back through the jungles. I saw no reason why I should be the one to linger in the door.

"Well, it's been fun, Captain," I said, looking at the red-head. "I'll see you around next draft time."

"Wait a minute, Jason," she said. "I'm going back with you."

I must have looked my surprise for she laughed.

"I have to report back in Kagoshima," she said, "and you'll need someone to help you sail the schooner back. So I'm signing on for the return voyage—if you think the ship stores can yield me some clothes, Captain."

"I think it can be arranged, Captain," I answered gravely.

We said good-bye to the lieutenant and his Marines. Then we started back through the jungle. We didn't say anything until we reached the beach.

"Jason," she said, "I'm sorry that I fooled you and that I was so hard to get along with—but it was partly the job I was on."

"I know how it is," I said. "Those two bars get real heavy on your shoulders. Can you still swim?"

"Well enough to beat you to the schooner," she said.

She damn near did, too. The first thing we did was dig up dry clothes. I found some clean things that had belonged to Little Joe which would just about fit her. She took them and went into my cabin.

I was back on deck when she came up. We started to pull up anchor when we realized that we were both bone tired and there just wasn't any reason now why we had to get out of the bay before morning. We said to hell with it, let the anchor splash back into the ocean, and went below. We said good night and she went into the one cabin and I went into the other one.

It's a funny thing. For five days I hadn't been able to think of anything except how she'd look without clothes. During that time, I was on the verge of knocking her over the head and grabbing her. Then I'd seen her without her clothes. I'd even carried her, wearing nothing but an old shirt, through a mile of jungle. Then I'd said good night to her, feeling the way I did when I was fifteen and out with my first girl. I hadn't even tried to kiss her.

I was lying in one of the bunks in the cabin thinking about this. The moonlight came in through the porthole, cutting a bright swath through the cabin. I was tired, but I couldn't go to sleep.

Then for a minute I thought I had fallen to sleep and was dreaming. The door opened quietly and she came in. When I'd seen her in the light of the fire she'd looked like burnished copper. Now she stood for a minute in the moonlight and it turned her flesh to soft silver. She stood there almost shyly—then swiftly crossed the cabin and was beside me. Her body was like a living flame as it touched mine.

It was no dream.

Later, while we were having cigarettes and watching the smoke drift up through the moonlight, I told her how I'd always felt about captains before I met her. We were still laughing about it when we fell asleep.

THE BISMARCK MEETS HER FATE

BY BRUCE VENABLE

One of the most dramatic sea engagements that occurred in World War II was the dramatic chase of the German mystery battleship the *Bismarck*. Only a few facts were released at the time, but now the entire story can be told.

"The *Bismarck* is loose in the North Sea!"

When those words were flashed to the British Admiralty Service in May, 1941, they caused immediate grave concern and more than a little apprehension among the men responsible for England's safety. The *Bismarck* had been built in secrecy and was still somewhat of a mystery-ship but it was known that her main batteries consisted of eight 15-inch guns—guns with far more destructive power and with greater range than any then mounted on any of England's battleships. She was known to be fast, perhaps faster than any English war vessel and to be practically unsinkable because of her unique construction. Another smaller enemy ship, the *Prinz Eugen* had been seen in company with the *Bismarck* but it was the largest, the most powerful and most formidable of Hitler's battleships which sent England into a flurry of preparations.

The sudden appearance of the mighty ship so near to England's shores called for immediate and drastic action. First it must be ascertained, as closely as possible, what the *Bismarck's* purpose and destination was. Second it must be decided how to eliminate the threat she and her smaller consort posed to Britain's peace of mind and her security. Already, in that fateful year of 1941, when England stood virtually alone in her fight against the Axis powers, Nazi submarines and bombers were successfully disputing her proud and ancient boast that Britania

ruled the waves. Torpedoes and bombs had sent thousands of tons of shipping and vital materials to the bottom and England had great need to keep the sea lanes between her shores and those of the United States open so that supplies could continue their flow and permit her to fight on. If it was the intention of the *Bismarck* and the *Prinz Eugen* to break through into the Atlantic and add their might to the submarine and bomber menace, then England's position at sea was precarious indeed—unless they could be thwarted.

The Admiralty decided that such a move was the only logical one for the two raiders to make and that steps must immediately be taken to seal off the Faroes passage, the easiest way for them to reach the Atlantic Ocean. The home fleet, the only force available for such a mission, then consisted of the *Hood*, the *Prince of Wales*, the *King George V*, the *Repulse* and the aircraft carrier, *Victorious*. They were formidable ships but the *Hood* was twenty-five years old; the *Repulse* twenty and the *Prince of Wales*, paradoxically enough, was too young. Her turrets had been but recently installed and her crew lacked the training and experience which would have welded them into a compact and efficient fighting unit. The *Victorious'* planes were manned by young reservists who too lacked those things. None of the ships available could meet the fire-power or the speed of the *Bismarck* nor were they as nearly unsinkable. Still Admiral Sir John Tovey, commander of the Home Fleet, felt them sufficient to put an end to the audacious raider's depredations.

The Admiral was then called upon to make a decision upon which the immediate fate of the Empire might well hang. Did the British ships put to sea too soon it was almost certain that their supplies of fuel would be vastly diminished if not entirely exhausted before they could locate the enemy and join action. On the other hand, if they left too late, the Nazi ships would break through to leave death and destruction on the Atlantic sea lanes.

To learn all that could be learned of the two enemy ship's intentions an aerial reconnaissance squadron was immediately sent out. At 1:15 A.M., May 21, a Spitfire pilot reported having found the *Bismarck* and the *Prinz Eugen* anchored in a remote fiord near the Norwegian city of Bergen. Admiral Tovey at once ordered the *Hood* and the *Prince of Wales* to sea with orders to find and engage the enemy if possible.

England could only wait with taut nerves and anxious hearts as the two British ships sped on through the night toward where the enemy lay. The question in every mind was could these two ships, if they joined action with the powerful Nazi vessels, win? This was a question that only time could answer.

Then the first of the many disappointments which were to come to the British, before the enemy ships were finally destroyed, came. Planes searched the entire area. Another pilot reported the fiord empty—the prey having fled. Admiral Tovey at once put to sea with the *King George V,* the *Repulse* and the *Victorious.* The two cruisers, the *Norfolk* and the *Suffolk,* on patrol in the Denmark Strait, were ordered to join Admiral Tovey's force. A search net was spread, ships and planes both searching for the elusive enemy. Long and agonizing hours of dread uncertainty followed. Then, at 7:00 P.M., on the evening of May 22, word came that the enemy had been sighted by Captain R. M. Ellis of the *Suffolk.* The *Norfolk* made contact soon afterward. She was fired upon by the *Bismarck* but escaped into the fog. The two ships then took up a position in the rear of the Nazi ships which would enable them to maintain radar contact.

All through the long night hours the deadly game of hide-and-seek went on. The fog, the rain and the weird half-light of the Arctic night gave the raiders an advantage but the two British ships clung grimly on. In the meanwhile the *Hood* and the *Prince of Wales* were speeding toward them. At 5:45 A.M. on May 24, the Nazi ships came in sight of the *Hood* and the *Prince of Wales* lookouts. Admiral Holland, in command, immediately ordered a change of course which would let his ships intercept those of the enemy. Swiftly the British ships cleared for action and swiftly the massive turrets turned to swing their guns in the direction of the enemy. The crews of both ships stood ready and eager to come to grips with the foe as the two opposing forces rapidly lessened the distance between them.

Then came action, swift and deadly as the *Hood* and the *Prince of Wales* opened fire from a range of 25,000 yards. In an instant the guns of the Nazi ships replied and it seemed that the air and the sea were filled with the frightful roar of battle as salvo after salvo arched between the ships. Then the men on the *Prince of Wales* noticed that both German ships were di-

recting their fire at the more powerful *Hood*. It was their evident intention to put her quickly out of action, leaving them only the less formidable *Prince of Wales* to dispose of.

Before the action was a minute old, shells from the *Prinz Eugen* began to strike the *Hood* with telling effect. Then the guns of the *Bismarck* joined in and shells from that ship also began to wreck havoc on board the English battleship. The men on the *Prince of Wales* saw flames break out amidship on the *Hood* and begin to spread rapidly. Then they saw and heard a great explosion—flames and smoke leaping higher than the *Hood's* mainmast—the great ship's bow and stern lifted high as the vessel broke in two and then the pride of England's navy sank slowly beneath the waves. The British sailors watched the death of their sister ship and turned back to their guns with grim determination.

The *Bismarck* and the *Prinz Eugen* then began to concentrate their fire on the *Prince of Wales*. Great splashes of water rose near her as German shells fell over or short. Tons of water crashed down on the English ship's reeling deck as her own eight-inch guns replied without noticeable effect. Then a number of enemy shells struck—fire broke out forward and a moment later a direct hit demolished the bridge. Every man on it but Captain Leach and the chief yoeman of signals died instantly. This sent the inadequately trained and inexperienced crew into panic. As more and still more enemy shells began to strike home, Captain Leach broke off the action and sent his ship into the comparative safety of a fog bank. Before the *Bismarck* was lost to sight a huge column of smoke could be seen pouring up from her amidships. It was evident that she had not come off unscathed.

The loss of the mighty *Hood* during the first minute of the engagement was a terrible blow to England's pride and prestige for the *Hood* had been considered, up to that time, more than the equal of any battleship afloat. But she had gone down and only three of her crew had survived. With characteristic British courage and stubbornness the crews of the other English warships determined that the enemy ships which had caused the loss should not escape the wrath of England's naval might.

When the *Bismarck* was again later sighted she was seen to be leaving a wide track of oil in her wake. She seemed unhurt, however, for she and the *Prinz*

Eugen were sailing at full speed, full speed southward and toward the Atlantic. English naval authorities acted decisively. The battle cruiser, *Renown*, the aircraft carrier, *Ark Royal*, the cruiser *Sheffield* and six destroyers which were stationed at Gibralter were ordered to sea to help track down and destroy the raiders. The battleship *Ramillies* on convoy in the Atlantic and the battleship *Rodney*, on convoy in the Irish Sea, were ordered to join the force. So did the forces of British retribution begin to close in upon these audacious enemy ships which had dared to question England's naval power.

Even though the *Hood* had been lost, the *Suffolk* and the *Norfolk* continued to maintain radar contact with the enemy. The *Prince of Wales* and the *King George V* were nearby as efforts to bring the enemy to bay were doubled. The weather cleared so that once, when the *Suffolk* ventured too close to the enemy, she was fired upon but escaped unhit. The sound of the German guns brought the *Prince of Wales* speeding toward the scene to be joined by the *Repulse* and the *Victorious*. Sighting them the enemy ships turned and fled. Then the *Prinz Eugen* was seen to leave the larger vessel and vanish over the horizon. It was assumed that she had been forced to leave to refuel but no effort was made to intercept her.

Maintaining contact with the *Bismarck* had been comparatively easy during the hours of daylight but Admiral Tovey feared that she might use her superior speed to escape during the night. In an effort to cripple her, reduce her speed and foil such an escape the Admiral decided to try something new in naval warfare—a torpedo-bomber attack from a carrier on an enemy ship. Nine planes took off from the *Victorious* that late evening and sped toward the *Bismarck* which lay at maximum distance for the planes, about 100 miles away. She was located and the torpedoes launched but only one was seen to take effect. It did not, however, in the least diminish the great ship's speed.

The next day was one of bitter disappointment and frustration for the British force. The destroyers were forced to leave for Iceland to refuel and the *Renown* was desperately short of fuel. Then came the most bitter blow of all—contact with the *Bismarck* was lost. This contact was lost at 3:00 P.M. on May 25 and again there was apprehension and deep concern in England. Then, at 10:30 A.M., May 26, she was sighted again, still steaming southward at full

speed. Instantly the British ships raced to intercept her but in order to do this they were forced to draw heavily on their rapidly dwindling fuel supplies. This was an expenditure they could not afford so Admiral Tovey decided to try still another torpedo-plane attack. This time fifteen planes took off from the *Victorious*. The *Bismarck* was only 40 miles distant but again only one torpedo took effect. But this time a vital part of the Nazi ship had been hit, for the *Bismarck* was later reported to have changed course, sailed for awhile in circles and then come to a dead stop. It seemed evident to Admiral Tovey that the lone torpedo had somehow damaged her rudder or steering gear.

Instantly the entire British force began to close in for the kill. On the morning of May 27 the *Norfolk* sighted the enemy ship and at once got off a message of her find to the *King George V* and the *Rodney*. At 8:47 A.M. the guns of the *Rodney* opened up and a moment later the main batteries of the *King George V* joined in. The *Bismarck's* gun replied but the guns of the *Rodney* scored first. Then the *Norfolk* joined the action and even her eight-inch guns began to do damage at a range of 20,000 yards. The *Rodney* and the *King George V* shortened their range and opened up with their secondary batteries. At 9:04 the *Dorchester* joined the battle and as her shells too began to strike, the *Bismarck's* guns' accuracy began to diminish rapidly.

Soon a great fire could be seen raging amidships on the German ship which was, by that time, almost completely helpless. Many of her guns had been silenced and the others were firing only spasmodically. Then came a great explosion just abaft the *Bismarck's* two forward turrets. A direct hit then destroyed her 15-inch aloft detector.

The Nazi ship's speed had, by this time, become only a feeble crawl and by 10 o'clock the ship had been reduced to little more than a battered and helpless hulk. Clouds of dense black smoke were billowing upward from her amidships, her funnel had been knocked overside, her interior was a mass of flaming red hell. Members of her crew could be seen running aimlessly about as others leaped into the sea to escape the searing flames and the steady hail of English shells. Still her flag flew defiantly, a tribute to the foolish but fanatical courage of her commander and crew. Shells from every British gun that could be brought to bear were wreaking destruction aboard her as tor-

pedo after torpedo crashed into her steel hull. No other battleship in history had even taken such terrible and such prolonged punishment and remained afloat.

Then, when it could be easily seen that the *Bismarck* must sink soon, Admiral Tovey ordered the action broken off. He knew that vast wolf-packs were then speeding toward the scene of the disaster to seek revenge and he had no wish to expose either his men or his ships to their torpedoes. Each British ship fired a last salvo into the burning hulk before they withdrew. Hitler's mightiest and most formidable battleship shuddered convulsively, slowly heeled over on her port side and slowly sank.

England had won one of her most decisive and most important naval victories—a victory which eliminated the threat to her sea lanes, enabled vital supplies to continue to come so that she could fight on until her allies could join her in the final defeat of the Axis powers. Britania once more ruled the waves.

ANTI-COLLISION TELEVISION

A simple development of Raytheon technologists, a "reflection plotter screen" that looks like TV, has already gone into use as an almost sure guarantee against ocean collisions. The navigator must still rely on ship's radar to pick up oncoming craft and other hazardous obstacles. Eliminated is the lost motion and time waste of transcribing radar data and having to visit the chartroom for position plotting. Slipping the new plastic screen over the radar scope, the navigator can now use a "grease pencil" to trace every degree of alteration in distance between his vessel and any outlying ship or object. The trace pattern is all there is on the screen from start to finish.

THE CAPTAIN'S SHELF

Reviews of the latest books about the sea . . .

If you liked the story *Mr. Midshipman Hornblower* in this issue you will also enjoy HORNBLOWER AND THE *ATROPOS* by C. S. Forester (Little, Brown and Company). This is the latest book to be published in the famous Hornblower series, a monumental series of novels that follow young Horatio from his arrival at Spithead as young landlubber to his last adventure as LORD HORNBLOWER.

HORNBLOWER AND THE *ATROPOS* returns to the earlier days of Hornblower's captaincy and fills in the three missing years between LIEUTENANT HORNBLOWER and CAPTAIN HORATIO HORNBLOWER. In his usual intrepid manner he supervises Lord Nelson's funeral, searches for sunken treasure in Turkish waters and joins in battle with a Spanish frigate.

Forester has gained world reknown for his realistic and exciting stories of wooden ships and iron men. Always authentic yet never dull, any one of the books in this series can stand alone as a fine work of fiction. Yet taken all together they form one long, connected story that covers the entirety of Horatio Hornblower's life.

A book that follows the old Conrad tradition is RIDE OUT THE STORM by Roger Vercel. (Putnam—$4.00) • The time is the turn of the century, that tragic era when sailing craft were fighting their losing battle against steam. Sailors were hard to get and most of the recruits were shanghaied aboard by brothel keepers. Rolland first goes to sea in this manner, but he stays to make his mark. Blow by blow he fights his way up from the subhuman ranks of Common Seaman to that pinnacle of sailormen's ambition, Captain.

The author, Roger Vercel, is a sea story writer of long standing. Readers will be familiar with his earlier works TROUBLED WATERS and THE TIDES OF MONT ST.-MICHEL.

Closer to the present day is Warren Eyster's FAR FROM THE CUSTOMARY SKIES. (Random House—$3.75) • A Navy veteran himself, Mr. Eyster writes a gripping first novel about the island-hopping campaign in the Pacific as seen by the crew of the destroyer *Dreher*.

From early training the story proceeds through the later battles in the Marianas and the Solomons. The hard fought victories and defeats are recorded with an eye for accuracy and detail. Men who served in the Pacific area during World War II will recognize a clear picture of their troubles and times.

NAUTICAL NOTES

BY HENRY S. GALUS

COLOR-STYLING FOR LIFERAFTS. Because medical men have discovered that even sailors with perfect vision are color-blind to blue and yellow under certain weather conditions, lifeboats, rafts, preservers and other sea-rescue equipment may be painted in the future with bright scarlet, technically Munsel 7.5 Red. It's the "most efficient and practical (color) for far-distance visibility," declares the Naval Medical Research Laboratory at New London, Conn.

NEXT: TURBO PROPS. A recent cross-Atlantic trip by the *Auris*, a 12,250-ton British tanker, may have signaled the coming end of diesel engines for oceanic merchants. The *Auris* made the voyage strictly under gas-turbine power, though it held standard engines in reserve. Use of dense boiler oil stresses the fact that turbo-propulsion can burn several different liquid fuels. Turbines are also more compact while delivering greater punch. And skippers are happily recalling that these engines need no water.

IRRESISTIBLE FISH NETS. Dr. Konrad O. Kreutzer, a German scientist, had an idea. At sea in a converted mine sweeper, he lowered a big sheet of steel, then slung another from buoys 60 feet away. Running insulated wire from a shipboard battery series, he connected both sheets to create respectively negative and positive magnetic poles. Dr. Kreutzer dumped over tons of live herring and turned on the current. The fish swam directly for the positive pole. Again and again he worked the switch. Same result. Though finally he let the herring go, in reward, he had incontrovertable proof, he says, that "electro-fishing" will not only be practical but can economically revolutionize the commercial fisheries of the world. Just drop net around your magnets, he suggests, and wait for the fish to come to you.

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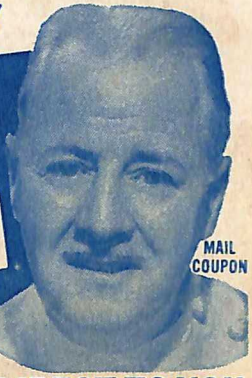

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