TEA FROM CHINA

FREDERICK WILLIAM WALLACE

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TEA FROM CHINA

AND OTHER YARNS OF THE SEA

BY

FREDERICK WILLIAM WALLACE

Author of "Wooden Ships and Iron Men", "Blue Water", "The Viking Blood", "The Shack Locker", "Salt Seas and Sailormen", "Captain Salvation".

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Written at various times between 1910 and 1922 and culled from the magazines in which they originally appeared, these fighting yarns of Canadian seafarers form the third collection of the author's short sea tales.

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Tea from China

A WONDERFUL old lady was my grandmother Ruth Abigail Ellis. Ten years of her married life were spent travelling around the world on the seas thereof and she knew Honolulu and St. Helena, Singapore and San Francisco, London and Rio almost as well as the paths of the pretty St. John River valley where she was born. Her Loyalist soul thrilled at the memories of the regal air and royal splendour of Queen Victoria and Empress Eugénie whom she had seen in their respective capitals, but her loyalty did not prevent her from holding decided opinions as to the right of the Mother Country to adjudicate colonial affairs with other nations. The Maine boundary, I can recall, was a subject which roused her ire whenever it was mentioned. She was very much a New Brunswicker.

I was her favourite grand-child, albeit I worried her greatly in my young days with my desire for knowledge on all subjects. My recollections are that she was very old and very wise—a little, rosy-cheeked, blue-eyed lady, who wore voluminous black silk dresses and covered her thin, silvery hair with white lace caps. She was very religious and read the scriptures a great deal and I know we youngsters used to be rather bored by the Psalms and chapters which she made us learn for Sunday recital, but this was offset by the stories of her voyages which she would read from the many diaries which she kept while voyaging. And they were wonderful diaries—little volumes stuffed with inspiring romance and tingling adventure which kept us mouse-quiet and thrilled during a reading therefrom.

Her records of thoughts, events and happenings read like a book and after such a recital I would lie in bed of a night and dream of being a sailor and clipper ship captain like my Grandpa Ellis. I would brave typhoons in the Gulf of Martaban and drive my ship around the Horn to 'Frisco in ninety-four days as he had done. I would dine with Eastern sultans and see the wonders of strange lands. . . . Alas, I read law instead and have seen nothing of blue ocean but what can be viewed from the shore and the crowded decks of an Army Transport, but the sea fever runs in my Bluenose blood and had our great fleet of wooden sailing ships survived the steel and steam of my day, who knows but what I would have become a sailor too?

The characteristic which made of me a legal man, and, if I may be permitted to boast, somewhat of an adept at searching out discrepancies and flaws, was inherent at an early age. I can recall making the discovery of a considerable gap in the sequence of Grandma's diaries. This was immediately after she had married Warren Ellis, and made her first voyage with him to San Francisco in fifty-five. There was no diary, to my knowledge, of the homeward voyage in the ship *Sea Wind* and the only information I was able to ferret out for a long time was that the vessel went from California to China and from China to England.

"Tell you something about the China voyage, dear?" she would repeat in a very soft, low voice with an odd note in it. "No, no, child, I can't. I did not like China. Your grandfather was ill there."

"What made him ill, Grandma?" came my insidious questioning.

The knitting needles would seem to work incredibly fast in her fingers when I asked this and she would begin to count the stitches as if she hadn't heard me. Then, if I persisted, she would drop the knitting into the lap of her silk dress and say, "Hand me the Good Book, child, and leave me. Grandma wishes to read." I would do as she asked and go away for I knew that the subject was closed as far as she was concerned.

Memory vividly recalls the time when, as a callow youth of eighteen, full of masculine conceit and the sophistry of the college freshman, I was back in my New Brunswick home and lording it over the family during my first vacation. It was a Saturday afternoon and I was tired of the quiet and lack of excitement around our rural domicile, and for want of something better to do, I engaged in somewhat lofty argument with my eldest sister upon the subject of women suffrage. Sis was excited and I was sneeringly contemptful while Grandma Ellis sat in her accustomed corner by the window engaged in her interminable knitting.

"You women want to have all the privileges of men," I said in the superior manner of eighteen, "but you are not able to do man's work. You want to vote, to become members of parliament, to make laws and poke your nose into a whole lot of things that don't concern you, yet you aren't able to fight for your country in time of war. You can't build railroads or bridges or join the Mounted Police or go to sea and sail ships. You cannot. . . ." Here I went into a whole string of occupations in which women did not feature, at that time, and it was all very foolish and irresponsible talk which did little but make my sister furious at my bigoted stupidity.

Grandma Ellis suddenly laid her knitting down and looked across at us over her spectacles. She was smiling and we both ceased wrangling for it was evident that she had something to say. We had such a tremendous respect for the old lady and her knowledge of things, that Sis and I instinctively felt that she would deliver an opinion which would settle the matter as far as we two were concerned. Conceited and all as I was, I admitted Grandma's wide knowledge of the world overshadowed my own.

With a quizzical expression on her rosy face, she wagged a reproving finger at me and said, "I've heard you two children arguing and I want to tell you, John, not to be so sure that women can't play men's parts if they have to. Milly here is almost a woman now, and you, John, will soon be a man. I think it may do you both good if I do something I have never done before. John may learn a lesson from it. I will get my diary and read you the story of my China voyage."

Wondering, for I had forgotten my childhood desire to hear of this hidden chapter in my grandmother's life, and a trifle expectant of something strange, I brought in the oddly carved camphorwood chest from her bedroom and assisted the old lady in opening it and searching for the diary. Carefully and reverently, she handed out little things of memory and sentiment which she had collected and stored away—carved teak-wood boxes from Burma, Chinese silks and fans, inlay work and such-like, besides daguerreotypes of people she had known, skippers and their wives and shore friends. We knew the name of every person photographed and all about them. They were our friends also.

At the very bottom of the chest, she lifted out a package tied up in ribbon. Putting this to one side she carefully placed back the contents of the chest, and closed and locked the ornate cover. Then, while Sis and I hung over her chair, Grandma Ellis slowly opened the package and disclosed a cloth-covered diary wrapped inside of two large maps such as seamen use for navigating purposes. These portrayed the waters of the South China Sea and the Eastern Hemisphere and upon their soiled and yellow surfaces were traced irregular lines of pencil and ink. A caption in Grandma's writing upon the blank spaces of the charts made their significance plain—"Track of the St. John ship *Sea Wind* from Foo-Chow, China, towards London, Eng., June 10th—September 28th, 1856."

It is a good many years now since that Saturday afternoon when Grandma Ellis, with the diary in her lap and the sea-stained charts spread out on the carpet, related to us the story of her China voyage. I am attempting to give here the story as she told it, but I cannot adequately portray for you the

picture of this dear old lady repeating vocally what she had set down in writing nigh fifty years before. Our present surroundings seemed to fade and I felt as if I could smell salt winds and tar and the clinging odor of spices and rattan matting—and Grandma Ellis, the bowed and silver-haired, was the lithe and pretty little New Brunswick school-teacher of twenty-four that had but recently wedded big and dashing Warren Ellis from across the Bay in Nova Scotia, sailorman *par excellence* and master of clipper ships. She was very much of a Puritan, my grandmother, when measured by present-day standards, but her courage, skill and devotion might well serve as an inspiration to the women of these times.

II.

Now, I am going to take the liberty of relating, in my own way, something of a summary of events that Grandma Ellis recorded prior to the actual happenings of the China voyage. The *Sea Wind* was a clipper, a St. John-built ship launched around the time when the New Brunswick shipyards were turning out some smart packets for the Australian trade. Captain Warren Ellis took command of her soon after launching, and, with my grandmother as a bride, he drove the ship from St. John to San Francisco in ninety-four days. In her diary, my grandmother says: "Warren's fast passage from St. John has brought him much favour from the brokers and shipping people in San Francisco and to-night he is to be the guest of honour at a banquet in the Niantic Hotel. It is restricted to gentlemen only and I am disappointed somewhat, as I would have so much liked to see my dear husband honoured for his skill and courage as a British North American sea captain. However, I must console myself by hearing the account from Warren's own lips—an account which, I am sure, will be very meagre."

Like a good many young brides, Ruth Ellis fancied that her darling husband had always trod the straight and narrow path of rectitude, but from accounts Grandpa Warren was "one of the boys" when he got fraternizing with his kind. His return from the banquet is recorded by Grandma as follows: "I am so upset that I scarce feel like writing, though it is possible that I am unduly alarmed. Warren came aboard long after midnight and I was grievously shocked to hear him using profane and blasphemous language to someone on deck. He burst into our cabin with his face flushed and the oddness of his manner convinced me that he was under the influence of liquor, and when I rushed up to him enquiring what was the matter, he replied, in a tone and words I had never known him to use in my presence before, that the watchman had forgotten to place a lighted lamp at the gangway and that he had almost fallen into the water when coming aboard. His words horrified me into dumbness and he must have noticed the look on my face for he said roughly, 'Well, what's to do, you little goose? Why are you staring at me like that?' "

His rude manner of speaking and his intoxication gave my grandmother a terrible shock and after she had got her husband to bed she laid down on a

sofa, fully dressed, and remained awake all night, “crying like a silly girl and much disturbed in mind.”

California in the ’fifties was a somewhat hectic place and Captain Warren Ellis found the allurements of the shore stronger than the company of his young wife. The convivial society of brother shipmasters and merchants, the roistering drinking parties, gambling games and sporting events, drew him away from his four months’ bride early in the day and he returned to her nightly somewhat the worse for his potations. After two or three weeks of this sort of thing, Grandma Ellis was in despair. In her diary she wrote: “I feel that I have been deceived in Warren. I hate a drunkard and am horrified at the thought that I have given my love to a husband who prefers the company of his wine-bibbing friends to that of his wife. To God I commend him that He might show him the error of his ways.”

III.

Under date of March 1, 1856, appears the following entry in her diary:—At breakfast this morning Warren told me that we would sail in ballast for China to pick up a cargo of tea for New York or London. I was glad to see an end to our California sojourn, and, when we had finished the meal and had retired to our private cabin, I took heart and stepped up to Warren and looked into his eyes.

"Don't you love me any more?" I asked him quietly.

His face flushed and a flash of resentment appeared in his expression.

"Why do you ask me that?" he said, sullenly, I thought.

"Your conduct of late has been such as to raise the doubt in my mind, Warren," I answered, calmly.

He looked away from me and murmured, "Of course I love you, but—" He paused as if afraid to give utterance to what was in his mind.

"But what?" I urged.

"I want to be my own master just as I am master of my ship!" The words came from him in a tone of brusque defiance.

"I have never reproached you, Warren," I said.

"No," he answered sullenly, "but I wish you had and then we could have settled things. I could read your thoughts; I could see unspoken reproach in your attitude and I could fathom what was passing in your Puritanical little mind. I knew you would resent my little fling ashore and I drank so you'd raise a row and have done with it. But you haven't."

"Did you really want me to raise a row—as you term it?"

"Yes, I did," he answered boldly. "Then I could let you know that you could not claim me altogether. I want a certain amount of freedom over my tastes and actions. I do not want to be tied to a woman's apron-strings and have men say, 'Ellis runs his ship but the wife runs Ellis'. I've always been master."

I nodded. "Yes, Warren," I replied, "I suppose you have, and you want to command my love, body and soul, without giving up anything of your tastes

and desires in return. That's hardly fair, Warren."

"It's my particular brand of philosophy," he said brazenly. "Man is top dog in my reckoning. Women was created for his comfort and she has no right to interfe re with his actions unless they affect her in certain matters which we all recognize. I am not philandering with other women. I have no woman but you and I love you in my particular way. I will clothe, shelter, feed and protect you and give you as much of my company as I desire, but I won't be dictated to. If I hanker for the fellowship of my kind after months at sea, I am going to indulge in that hankering without let or hindrance. You have my companionship almost every hour for months on end. You should be content."

"Yours is a very wicked and selfish philosophy," I replied without heat, "and not according to the marriage vows you made in God's Holy Name."

IV.

He laughed harshly. “You’re like all women,” he said. “You imagine when you marry a man that he is your dog for life and that he must run and cringe at your whistle. I’m no woman’s dog, Ruth, and I can’t be whistled up. When you can do the things that I can do, then you can make me your slave. Shove this hooker south-about in ninety-four days and I’ll go second in command. Now you have it all, Ruth, my dear, and there’s no hard feelings.”

He stood and regarded me challengingly and, angry, mortified and heart-sick as I was, I could not but admire the capable masculinity of his stalwart body and strong handsome face. I made no answer but turned away and try as I might I could not restrain the tears from flowing.

Then I felt his arms around me and his cheek against mine. “I’m sorry, my little hundredweight of sweetness,” he said softly. “Let’s forget all this. I’ll knock under this time to my little Puritan and I won’t drink or gamble or be absent from you of a night from now until we up-hook for China.”

“I *think* I have won him back,” was the diary entry here. “My Warren is one of those headstrong men who can be led but not driven. With God’s help I will lead him away from the path of error into which he is treading.”

Grandma and her husband were reconciled and the *Sea Wind* duly sailed for China—arriving in Foo-Chow after a fine passage across the Pacific. I will now bow myself off the stage and permit Grandma Ellis to relate the story of her China voyage in her own way.

“It was an entrancing scene, my children, when we came to anchor among the tea clippers off Pagoda Rock. Around us were the beautiful tea ships and plying up and down the river were countless sampans and lorcha-boats and clumsy junks with eyes painted upon their bows, ‘to see with,’ as John Chinaman believes. The banks of the swift-running Min rise steeply in verdure-clad hills terraced with gardens and cultivated plots to their very summits. So sheer are these hills that I used to wonder how the gardens could be managed.”

V.

"When we first arrived off the mouth of the river, a Chinese pilot came aboard and produced papers from Consuls and shipmasters stating that he could be trusted. 'I'll trust you until you hit something,' said Warren grimly to the smiling Celestial, and he ostentatiously produced a loaded pistol and added, 'Take her in safe, John, and you'll get your pay; pile her up and you'll get a bullet in your skull the moment she scrapes.' John Chinaman never altered his bland expression when my husband made this awful threat, and he, and the other Chinese pilot that followed him, saw us safely to our anchorage at Pagoda Rock—a few miles below the city of Foo-Chow.

"For the first week, I had a wonderful time in China. Warren was most attentive and we visited the captains of the British and American ships—many of whom had their wives with them—and we had many happy little tea parties and luncheons on the ships. I also visited the shore and went through the *hongs* or warehouses of the European merchants and dined with them at their clubs. The captain of the British ship *Min Ho* was a Scotsman and a good Christian gentleman and he used to hold services on his ship on Sundays at which I used to attend with Warren at first.

"I say 'at first,' my children, because about ten days after our arrival in China, Warren asserted his independence again and I endured a repetition of the California experience. My third Sunday there found me going off in the gig alone to attend the service on the *Min Ho* with my husband excusing himself by some remark that he 'didn't hold with Bible-thumping Britishers.' I was chagrined at this and felt worse when I returned to the *Sea Wind* to find the cabin full of male visitors drinking, smoking and playing cards on God's Sabbath. To this outbreak he offered neither excuse nor comment and, until we sailed, I saw but little of my husband.

"A few days after this Sunday orgy, he came aboard one night slightly tipsy and I overheard him telling the mate that he had 'blanketed the Johnny Bulls' and had secured an extra two pounds sterling per ton freight on the new season's teas and a quick despatch for London. 'I got it,' he said, 'by making a bet of a thousand dollars each with the shippers and skippers of the *Min Ho* and *Roderick Dhu* that I'd be the first ship to dock in London River, and they've taken me up.' Then followed some orders to Mr. Palmer about

the making of extra sails and spars. ‘I’m planning to crack on or drive her to hell!’ he added, while I shuddered at his boast.”

VI.

"I became singularly distraught and heart-sick at Warren's conduct as I felt that he had permitted his drinking to overcome his good sense. The British ships were very fast and their captains had long experience in the China trade and understood the intricacies of the China Seas. Warren had never commanded a ship on this particular passage and if he lost his wagers, he would be rated as a drunken braggart of a Bluenose and the money would have to be paid from our own little funds.

"Then came a day when Warren went ashore early in the morning and returned late in the afternoon with an ill-favoured Portuguese—a Mr. Da Runha—who was some kind of a merchant ashore. Warren had been drinking and when he entered the cabin he introduced this man to me with a curt, 'My wife, Mr. Da Runha.' And to me he said, 'You might be good enough to leave us, Ruth. Mr. Da Runha and I have some business to talk over.'

"I went into our private cabin and sat there endeavouring to sew, while Warren called the steward to bring glasses and biscuits. The foreigner seemed to be making some proposition to Warren and there was much conversation in a low tone. I did not try to hear what was being said, as I think eavesdropping is a sin to be deplored, but it ended with them both leaving the cabin and I heard Warren calling for the gig's crew to lay aft. To my dismay, he went ashore in company with that foreigner who I was sure was *not* a good man.

"Well, my children, during the early June days, junk and lorcha-boats were coming down the river and we were over-run by Chinese stevedores loading the matted chests of new teas, which they brought down, into our holds. The boxes were stowed into place by the use of mallets and the work went on day and night. How odd the junks did look with their mat sails, square bows ornamented with dragons and huge eyes, their clumsy rudders and wooden anchors! Compared with our beautiful New Brunswick clipper, they served to illustrate the backwardness of that heathen country.

"Then, just before we finished loading, the Nova Scotia ship *Spray Bell* arrived up from Hong Kong in charge of the mate. Her captain died at sea on the passage and our mate, Mr. Palmer—a most trustworthy and upright gentleman—was appointed to command her. Warren was sorry to lose him

but would not stand in the way of his promotion. In his place, however, my husband shipped a dissolute-looking fellow—an Englishman who claimed to have been master of British vessels and who boasted that he knew every fathom of the China Seas. George, our coloured steward, told me that he was a 'beachcomber' and no good. To me, this Mr. Montague was studiously polite. He had all the manners of a gentleman, but I did not like him. Warren asked me what I thought of the new officer and I told him frankly that I didn't like the man. 'Oh well,' said Warren, 'you don't have to cultivate his society and I'll see that he doesn't eat with us until you can abide his company. If he does his duty, he'll suit me and that's the main thing.' And with this I was forced to be content."

VII.

"During our last days in Foo-Chow, your grandfather seemed to have adopted a sneering manner, which hurt me dreadfully. For example, he asked my opinion of the Europeans in China and I replied, and truthfully too, that they drank and gambled too much and their morality was not of the best as many had Chinese women living with them. To this he answered sneeringly, 'And, of course, as they fail to measure up to the yardstick of the holy-joes and devil-dodgers you were raised among back home, you consider them grievous sinners and destined for Eternal Damnation. I wonder, Ruth, when your outlook will expand beyond the limitations of Holy Writ? You are next door to a Quaker, my dear, and thee art consequently short of sight.' And, with an unkind laugh, he left me abruptly and went ashore.

"My love for Warren underwent a severe test. I thought at the time that he was possessed of a devil. I put it down to the drink, as, when he was away from its influence, he was not the same man. When he was drinking, he acted as though he merely tolerated me and said the most cruel and biting things.

"The day before sailing, he gave a dinner aboard the ship to several captains and merchants at which there was much drinking. I retired early as the fumes of wine and cigar smoke sickened me and some of the talk was a trifle rough and rude for a lady to listen to. Warren went ashore with his guests and spent the night at a club, gambling. He came off to the ship the following noon and I noticed that his face was flushed and his eyes feverishly bright. I, too, was feeling wretched, having failed to sleep all night and almost crying my eyes out. Even God's Word had failed to comfort me in my misery and I felt friendless and deserted and far, far from home.

"My husband made no excuses for his conduct and neglect of me but acted as though nothing had happened. My love for him was such that I could readily have forgiven him, had he confessed and admitted his unnatural treatment of me, but he seemed to think he had nothing to be sorry for. I began to think that he did not honestly love me to act as he did while in foreign ports and his wicked philosophy was not compatible with the true affection that should exist between husband and wife. I was so deeply wounded, my children, that I made up my mind, should he repeat his

obnoxious behaviour in London, I would leave him and go home even though it would break my heart to do so.”

VIII.

"So little did I know of my husband that it was only in China I came to discover that he was irreligious and a scoffer at matters divine. We had numerous opportunities to attend divine service in California and China together but he seldom would accompany me. At the dinner he gave on the ship prior to sailing from Foo-Chow, I heard him boasting that his passage out to San Francisco had opened the eyes of ' 'Frisco and the Merchant's Exchange,' but his passage home from China would 'open the eyes of God Himself.' Such blasphemy made me shudder at the brazen wickedness of it, and, unfortunately, I could not attribute his irreligious attitude to the irresponsible talk of strong drink as I knew that he said such things in sober speech.

"Warren did not go ashore again but I noticed him passing his hands over his eyes several times while he was in our cabin, and I asked him if he were not feeling well. 'Oh, I've a bit of a head-ache, Ruth,' he answered. 'Too much wine last night and not enough sleep. I lost five hundred dollars at cards this morning. A terrible husband you've got . . . drinking and gambling. But, never mind,' he added with a laugh. 'I'll take two thousand dollars away from those Johnny Bull Lime-juicers and I'll make a few dollars on some other little deals.' While he was speaking I saw Mr. Montague's bilious face at the skylight and I was sure he was eavesdropping.

"When I looked up at the man he quickly withdrew.

"On June 10, 1856, we hove up our anchor early in the morning and proceeded down the River Min with flags flying and bell-ringing from the other ships at the Pagoda Anchorage. The *Min Ho* had sailed on June 8, and had a full two days' start on us. The *Roderick Dhu* would sail the day after us. Both these vessels were lovely, yacht-like tea clippers, commanded by daring and skilful Scotsmen and with well-trained crews. My husband, however, seemed quite confident that our big New Brunswick ship would outsail the Britishers.

"Of course I was intensely interested in the race and forgot my wrongs while poring over the Sailing Directions and charts of the China Seas, with Warren. Having acquired the science of navigation during nine months' seafaring with my husband, which science to an intelligent person presents

no great complexities, I was able to appreciate the difficulties of the passage down the reef and island studded waters in the teeth of the Southwest Monsoon which was then the prevailing wind. Your grandfather was a stranger to China waters but he was relying on the pilot knowledge of Mr. Montague for all the short cuts.

"It rained while we were towing out to sea—weather which suited the mood I was in—and I remained below trying to acquire cheerfulness by admiring the lovely silks, Chinese porcelains, ivory and ebony carvings and such-like, that had been presented to me by the Foo-Chow merchants. Engrossed thus, I whiled away the time until we passed Sharp Rock and the Min River pilot left us. I then went on deck and remained there until noon when we came up with the Outer Knoll and the paddle-wheeled steamer cast off the hawser and our crew began to set sail. Warren walked up and down, silent, and though the weather was warm he wore a heavy deck-coat as though it was cold. I could see that he wasn't well but in his silent pacings he was watching Mr. Montague like a hawk. The new mate had a sleek and wily look and I didn't like him but he seemed to know his work and made a smart job of spreading our snowy canvas.

"Now, my children, I have started on my voyage home from China and I can do no better than read you the story from my diary as I wrote it up from time to time during the passage. I was very young then, children, and very unhappy, and in my diary I recorded my thoughts and feelings as a species of solace to my state of mind."

IX.

"*June 11th.* Warren remained on deck all night, and early this morning I heard the men at the mainbraces hauling the yards aback. This caused me to look through my window and I viewed a large junk alongside and burning a red flare. A boat came from the junk to our ship and men carried something into the cabin. I heard Warren telling them to set it down carefully. Of course, woman-like, I had to have a peep and saw a large square-shaped chest, bound in matting and hide thongs, resting on the floor. I am wondering if this has anything to do with Warren's business with that sly-looking Mr. Da Runha.

"It has been dull and wet all day and I have remained below sewing and reading. Warren's head-ache still continues and he has been moody and silent, lying down and dozing and keeping the deck at short intervals.

"*June 12th.* I am worried about Warren. He is not a well man and has spells of fever and chills and a severe head-ache. His face shows that he is sick; his eyes are fevered-looking, he eats nothing, but drinks copiously of tea and coffee. He laughs at my importunities for him to rest. 'This is no place to lay up,' he protests. 'I have a tough passage ahead of me and two slippery lime-juicers to beat—a task which will call for all the skill I possess.'

" 'Why not let your mate take charge a bit more?' I suggested. 'He seems a smart sailor and knows these waters well.'

" 'Aye,' returned Warren, significantly. 'Too well, maybe.'

"A little later I slyly motioned towards the mat-bound chest. 'Where in the world did that come from, Warren,' I said, 'and what is it?'

"He strode over to it and adjusted a lashing. 'This,' he said—patting the case, 'is my sheet anchor to wind'ard if those Britishers trim me, Two thousand dollars will be paid me on delivering this box to certain people in London—which same money may save our little fortune.'

" 'Two thousand dollars was a lot to wager,' I ventured.

" 'Yes,' he said half-humourously, 'but it behooves a Bluenose shipmaster to hold his end up. I got extra freight money through it.'

“I have a great secret to tell Warren some day. If he were not such a great simpleton, he would notice that my sewing is not altogether confined to our clothing. But he never sees anything but ship matters. If it were a small roving missing from the head-rope of the main-sky sail he would note it quick enough.

“The S. W. Monsoon is very light and has flickered away into a calm to-night. It is very dark and quiet and the ship is in the vicinity of the Lamock Islands. Numerous junks were around at sunset and Warren eyed them anxiously. He told Mr. Starbuck, the second mate, to see that our two brass cannons were ready for use and that cutlasses and muskets were handy. ‘There’s more fishermen-pirates around here than I care to be in company with,’ he remarked, ‘and they wouldn’t think twice of rushing us if they got the chance.’ All the cabin windows were screened and all lights are hidden. It is quite thrilling.”

X.

"*June 15th.* It is three days since my last entry and since then I have been hurled by Fate into the most momentous period of my young life. I am terribly afraid that I won't be equal to the task. Warren is very ill and I have him in his bed burning with fever and delirious. The mate, Montague, is confined in the sailroom, a prisoner in irons, and with a bullet wound in his leg, and I am in command of the ship with young Mr. Starbuck, the second mate, as my assistant.

"At midnight on the thirteenth, Warren came below when Montague relieved the starboard watch. My husband was feeling very sick and he lay down on the sofa after I gave him some medicine and soothed his aching head with cooling cloths. At one o'clock I stole up our private companionway on the poop to get a breath of fresh air when I saw someone waving a lantern over the quarter-rail. Knowing that the ship was becalmed and with junks in close proximity, I was mystified, and, turning to the man at the wheel—a trusted English sailor—I asked, 'Who is that, and what is he doing?'

"The sailor appeared to be as puzzled as I was. 'It's the mate, ma'am,' he answered, 'and he's been showing that glim, off and on, for a while now.'

"I slipped quietly below wondering what I should do and Warren saw the expression on my face and asked, 'What's up, Ruth?' I told him briefly what I had seen, but before I could finish, he was off the sofa and on his feet with a terrible oath. 'The bloody traitor,' he cried as he rushed up the companion. 'I'll settle the beachcombing dog!'

"Knowing Warren's condition and auguring that Montague would fight desperately, I snatched a loaded pistol from off a shelf and, following my husband, I reached the deck in time to see the treacherous mate hurl the lamp at him. It caught Warren on the chest, and smashing, bespattered him with flaming oil, which burned his neck and hands severely and arrested his advance on the mutinous officer. At this juncture, I raised my pistol and fired at the fellow. My bullet went through the fleshy part of his thigh and caused him to drop to the deck and when Mr. Starbuck and the watch came running up, I ordered them to place Montague in irons and confine him.

“Warren was standing by the cabin-trunk in a dazed condition and holding his burnt hands. I don’t think he realized what had happened and he suffered me to lead him below like a frightened child. I got him to his bed with the help of the coloured steward, undressed him, and bandaged his burnt hands and neck with lint saturated in Carron oil. I could see that his fever was raging violently and that he was bereft of his senses thereby. I became terribly afraid that he had contracted some Asiatic plague which I am unable to combat.

“I had just left my husband in charge of George, to check the ship’s position on the chart—for I am the only navigator on the ship—when Mr. Starbuck ran below.

“ ‘I think these junks are closing in on us, ma’am,’ he said. ‘I can hear the splashing of their sweeps. What d’ye think we’d better do?’

“ ‘I don’t know,’ I replied in consternation. ‘What do you suggest?’

“ ‘If you leave it to me, ma’am,’ he said in his calm Downeast drawl, ‘why, I’d jest plank a couple of shots in ’em to let ’em sheer off.’ Womanlike I demurred at the horrid thought of taking human life.

“ ‘Fire two shots in their direction,’ I suggested, ‘but do not aim to destroy unless they attack us.’ ”

XI.

"A minute or two after he left me the ship trembled to the discharge of cannon, and following the explosion came an outburst of fiendish yelling and other discordances across the calm water which made me shudder. I ran up on deck and saw several junks on both sides of us with torches, coloured flares and paper lanterns aglow and much yelling, and sounds of horns, rattles, bells and drums, coming from the people aboard of them. Sighting Mr. Starbuck coming aft I asked, 'Did you fire into them?'

" 'No,' he answered calmly, 'but I reckon we'd better. They're getting ready to attack. That's their method of scaring us—that hullaballoo.'

" 'I'll put you in charge to repel these pirates,' I said, 'and I will stand by here and tend to the ship.'

"Knowing how to steer, I relieved the man at the idle wheel and told him to report to the second mate for orders. Mr. Starbuck had all hands armed; the cook had his kettles filled with boiling water and stood ready to ladle it over any pirates attempting to board, while two rifle-men were posted in the fore and mizzen tops for the purpose of bringing down the Chinese commanders or helmsmen. The sky was inky black and there wasn't a breath of wind.

"As the junks approached us under oars, our two cannons, loaded with nails, bolts and scraps of iron, were fired into the leading craft. As long as I live, I shall never forget the screaming and shrieking that ensued. It made me sick and faint and I had to clutch hard on the wheel-spokes to keep from falling. The junks wavered in their attack and pulled out of range.

" 'They'll come at us with a rush next time,' said Mr. Starbuck, who seemed to be in his element. 'More junks and boats are showing up. There must be twenty or thirty craft around us by now.'

"It began to rain at this juncture, and the falling barometer, the brooding skies and the sultry atmosphere brought to mind the distich which Warren often quoted—

When the rain's before the wind,
Topsail sheets and halliards mind!

Wind was all that could save us now and I prayed fervently to God that it might come and prevent the slaughter which was about to take place.

"At three in the morning the junks closed in again and a rush towards us was made by a number of smaller boats crowded with men. Our cannons were discharged many times, but soon the boats were alongside and flaming balls of bitumen and pots containing fluids which gave off a vile stench, began to fall on our decks. Our men fired their muskets and pistols and hove ballast rocks down on the Chinamen swarming up the ship's sides, but a number of pirates gained our fore-rigging and thrust at our sailors with pikes and swords."

XII.

"In the smoke and horrid reek befogging the decks, I could not tell what was happening, and in a state of terrible excitement I stood at the wheel endeavouring to remain calm and collected and praying to God meanwhile. Then watching the sluggish swinging of the compass needle, a cold draught fanned my loosened hair over my face and I heard the sails slatting aloft. Frenziedly rolling the wheel over to put the ship before it, I screamed as loud as I could to be heard above the din of fighting. 'Square the cross-jack yard! Square the cross-jack yard!'

"Mr. Starbuck came racing up with a pistol in one hand and a cutlass in the other, and he must have thought by my excited screaming that I was being attacked.

" 'Square the yards!' I screeched at him. 'The wind's come.' He whirled around and soon his powerful voice was booming in the canvas. 'Square the cross-jack yard! Port watch to the mizzen braces! Starboard watch to the main! Round 'em in, my sons!'

"The wind came in a heavy squall which burst the main-royal as if it had been made of cotton sheeting and the *Sea Wind* rapidly gathered headway. The junks and boats to port and starboard slipped astern in the gloom as we raced off before the squall and the air was full of rain, while the hissing of the wind along the water muffled the shouts of the pirates as we drove past. A great craft ahead of us was struck by our projecting anchors and I saw her mast and sails crash down. Then came a staggering shock; the *Sea Wind* seemed to hesitate in her stride, and then she stormed on into the night while shrieks sounded in the blackness and mingled with the whine of the wind in our rigging. Starbuck ran aft and peered over the taffrail. 'We've run over one of them boats and stove 'em down,' he shouted. 'I can see the beggars coming up under her counter.' I shuddered and was glad when a sailor relieved me at the wheel.

"So here I am now with my husband dreadfully ill and this big clipper in my charge. Starbuck is no navigator, but he is an experienced seaman and can handle the ship insofar as the sails are concerned and I have made up my mind to navigate her to London. There is too much at stake to do anything else. We must keep on if only for the honour of the ship. I am placing my faith and trust in God.

"We made the Paracels at noon to-day and I held to the westward of them that we might keep the Cochin China coast close aboard and work south in the land breezes which come off them after sundown. The Monsoon is very fickle but we are making the best of it.

"*June 16th.* Warren's temperature rose again this morning and he became violently delirious and attempted to get out of his bed. It took the combined strength of George and me to prevent him, and when the fit passed, Warren collapsed. I am trying to diagnose his case but a study of the Shipmaster's Medical Guide fails to enlighten me very much. I do not know what is wrong with him, but I am doing the best I know how. After the attack of delirium, I prayed to God on my knees beside Warren's bed, and the poor steward remarked, 'Dat's right, Mis' Cap'en. I reckon yo's done wise to ax de Good Lawd fo' help an' guidance. I reckon He'll do a pow'ful lot fo' a good missy like yo' an' I reckon I'll jest go in mah pantry an' make a li'l prayer maself.' Even the humble and despised son of Ham recognizes the power of supplication to the Almighty, yet strong self-willed men like my dear husband scoff at these things in the pride of their health and strength. Alas! my heart aches for him now.

"The man Montague asked to see me this afternoon and accompanied by Mr. Starbuck I went to where he was confined. He told me that he regretted his actions and would not deny that he was signalling to the junks. I asked him why he did so. Surely, he, a white man, was not in league with Chinese pirates to loot a British Colonial ship?

"He replied that he wasn't, but, while we were loading in Foo-Chow, a Chinese merchant, with whom he was acquainted, interviewed him and enlisted his aid to recover a number of valuable and ancient manuscripts and silks which had been stolen from a temple up-country and which were being smuggled off to London in the *Sea Wind*. The ship was to be tracked by junks and mandarin-boats and he was to do what he could to prevent the relics from getting out of China. The fellow confessed brazenly that he had tried to put the ship ashore on certain uncharted rocks when coming out of the Min River, but Captain Ellis was too watchful.

" 'And you would permit this ship to be looted and all of us murdered for the reward you might secure? You—a white man?' I exclaimed indignantly.

"He smiled cynically. 'As to being murdered—I do not think *you* would have run that danger,' he replied coolly. 'Looting the ship, however, would have been but a *quid pro quo* for the manner in which Europeans have been

looting and thieving the sacred relics and histories from the temples of these people since the Chinese opened their country to foreign intercourse. I know the Chinese and they have my sympathy.'

"I confess the man had me puzzled for there was reason and truth in what he said. 'What do you want now?' I asked—somewhat meekly, for I felt that Warren had been engaged in a nefarious contract with that Da Runha fellow.

"I can't do anything about that box of stuff now,' he said, 'so we'll permit it to go. However, you'll need my services to pilot the ship down the South China Sea so why not release me and forget it?'

"Young Mr. Starbuck forgot himself at this cool suggestion and vowed he would see Montague hanging from the gallows for a villainous pirate. 'I believe you p'izened the Old Man, you hound,' accused the second mate. 'What did you do to him?'

"The suggestion struck me all of a heap for I hadn't thought of this possibility. I scanned Montague's face for a sign of guilt but it was as impassive as a Chinaman's and a sardonic smile flickered in mouth and eyes. Starbuck became angry and turned to me. 'If you'll leave this joker in my hands, ma'am, I'll get the truth out of him. He'll be ready to talk after a spell of being triced up by the thumbs to a shear-pole in the weather-rigging. . . .'

" 'No,' I said firmly, 'but if Captain Ellis dies, this man will die also.' I meant every word that I spoke though I had no notion of how I would carry out such an appalling act of revenge. It was most un-Christian, but then, I love my husband.

"The man lounged on the sails in the locker and grinned at my threat. 'If you don't enlist my aid, ma'am,' he said significantly, 'this ship will never pass through Sunda Straits.'

"My determination was aroused. 'She'll pass through,' I said grimly, 'and without your help.' And I left him lolling in his manacles.

"The wind is very light and baffling. Raised the Annam Coast this afternoon and stood in to pick up the land draught after sundown. There seems to be a strong current running which sets the ship to the eastward. I am confident of my navigational abilities but I'm very shaky on calculating the set and rate of tides and currents. The Sailing Directions give one but little information on this point and I do not know what to allow when setting

a course to be steered. I notice the ship is not making her courses good. It must be this unknown current.

"Warren seems easier to-night and his temperature has gone down a little. I have been considering running in to Canton or Singapore and securing medical aid, but to-night Warren is sleeping more restfully and my determination to keep on is encouraged. I wonder if Montague really poisoned him?

"*June 22nd.* I find it difficult to keep up a daily entry in my diary. I have so much to do now that I have but little time to myself. Warren must be attended to, day and night. I must wind the chronometers. Observations of the sun for longitude and latitude must be taken daily and the ship's position calculated thereby, and sometimes I take a star sight for latitude in the early morning. Bearings of rocks and islands must be secured and plotted on the chart when sighted. I have a lead's-man always in the channels ready to take a cast whenever necessary. The log-book must be written up daily and all courses have to be corrected from the various errors which affect the compass. This last task is something which worries me considerably. The ship does not make her courses good and I am considerably exercised thereby. To be beating about against head winds in a badly-charted sea sprinkled over with horrid reefs and islands in thousands, with unknown currents twisting the ship from her course, is a very trying experience.

"I give Mr. Starbuck or Mr. McKinnon—the carpenter whom I have appointed as second mate—a course to steer which I know, if the wind holds, will require possibly six or eight hours to run. I go below, attend to Warren, and then lay me down for some sorely needed sleep. For an hour or two, maybe, I am in deep slumber when I am aroused by either of the officers with the word that the wind has gone ahead and the ship is two or three points off the course I set. I rub the sleep out of my eyes and stagger to the chart to find that a wretched cluster of reefs will await our coming if we hold on our present direction.

"So I go to work and lay off a new course to suit the direction of the wind blowing. Scarce am I composed in sleep and I am once more called. 'The wind is veering aft, ma'am. What's the course, ma'am?'

"I have had this kind of thing continuously for the past seven days and I am fearful that my health will break down. I shall be thankful to see Java Head astern and an end to this anxious navigation, but I would sooner endure than accept the services of the treacherous fellow confined in the sailroom.

“Starbuck and McKinnon are driving the ship in excellent fashion. Their vigilance and zeal could not be excelled and they never lose an opportunity to pile on canvas.”

XIII.

"*June 27th.* I have been too fatigued and excited to write up my diary for the past five days and it is only now that I feel calm enough to record coherently some of the nerve-racking happenings of this week. The Sailing Directions have defined some of the currents in this region with positive accuracy and have assured navigators that they can be depended upon to act as recorded by survey. I have made compass corrections according to this information and would lay a course to pass a reef or island at, say, five miles off. Invariably, I would find the ship too close or too far off when the place was reached—in spite of the most careful steering and the strictest attention to leeway, tidal and current set. This strange behaviour made me nervous and I could see that Mr. Starbuck and the seamen were becoming dubious as to my ability to navigate.

"The climax came last night when Starbuck reported breakers dead ahead. It was black dark, the wind was blowing fresh and the ship was sailing close-hauled on the port tack. I jumped up in alarm, hastily scanned the chart and surmised that we were running down on the Lemay Reefs which the ship should have been well clear of had she made her course as given by me.

"Starbuck was in the companionway awaiting orders and I could see he was considerably exercised. 'What'll I do, ma'am?' he was shouting while I was poring over the chart. 'I'm a-goin' to swing her off! I'm a-goin' to swing her off!'

" 'No! no!' I almost shrieked. 'There's reefs to leeward——'

" 'Well, we can't weather them prongs ahead—'

" 'Then bring her up and let go the anchors,' I shouted, 'Stop her! Do something! We're ringed with reefs.'

"Sick, frightened and dismayed I ran to Warren's bed and knelt beside him with his limp hands in mine and waiting for the shock which I felt was coming. I was too confident. I wasn't competent for the task and my skill was not good enough. I clutched my husband's hand and breathed a prayer to Him who stilled Galilee and while I prayed, Starbuck was roaring great oaths and thunderous commands and the ship was coming up into the wind with her canvas flogging from the lowered yards. Then I heard the rumble of

the anchor chains through the hawse-pipes and the jerking on the windlass-barrels and I realized that my place was on deck.

"In the darkness of the sea around I could discern the white flashes of breaking foam stretching around the ship in a semi-circle. We had just fetched up in time!

"The crew stripped the canvas off the ship and Mr. Starbuck came to me. 'What are we going to do now?' he said—almost sullenly, I thought, for I think he had doubts of my ability.

" 'Let her remain here until daylight,' I said. The anchors were holding and the wind was flickering light. For the time being we were secure.

"I went below and studied the chart and my courses but could find nothing to account for our error except that it was due to an unknown current setting the ship off to the eastward.

"About an hour later Mr. Starbuck burst unceremoniously into my cabin and his face was glowing with the joy of discovery. 'Begging your pardon, ma'am,' he ejaculated, 'but I've found out why the old hooker won't steer a good course. And here's the reason.' He laid an iron bolt before me on the table.

"Puzzled, I picked it up and looked at him dazedly. 'I've just been in to have a yarn with that pirate Montygoo,' he said grimly and blowing significantly on skinned knuckles, 'an' after I rolled him around some, askin' for an explanation of why a perfectly good compass sh'd act so crazy in these here parts, he tells me to overhaul our compass. I does, ma'am, and this here is what I finds in the binnacle.'

"I was astounded at the man's villainy, but in the joyful relief of knowing that my navigation was not at fault, I firmly rejected Mr. Starbuck's awful suggestions that he be permitted to hang Montague at the mainyard-arm or cast him overboard. No wonder he could prophesy the ship would never pass the Sunda Straits!

"We worked out from our position this morning and my confidence is restored though my nerves are considerably upset. Warren's fever has abated but he lies in a sort of coma. He recognizes no one but sleeps and dozes all the time without movement. I spoon-feed him with light and strengthening liquids which I have to prepare myself."

XIV.

"*June 30th.* We are south of the Natunas and standing off and on the Borneo coast amidst a terrific maze of reefs and islands. I have endured seventeen days of constant strain and am wondering if I will ever get the ship out of this labyrinth. Our compass is all right now and the ship steers her courses as she should. Warren's condition is unchanged.

"*July 5th.* The continual strain of navigating this ship and attending to Warren is wearing me out. I am losing weight and my face is a fright with pale cheeks and sunken eyes. I have had but little sleep and have not undressed save to take a bath and change my clothing. I am running up and down the companion until my limbs ache. The sea hereabouts is a maze of islands and rock-strewn channels with a host of reefs marked 'position doubtful.' The weather is a daily succession of calms under scorching suns with violent squalls and drenching rains careering down from all points of the compass, and there are all manner of currents fighting me which are not defined in the sailing directions. I know that God must be aiding this poor inexperienced woman, for without His aid I could not carry on.

"Warren's condition is unchanged. I wish I knew what to do for him. My determination weakens every now and again and I think of putting into port, but the thought of our contest with the Britishers impels me to keep going.

"*July 10th.* It is with heartfelt thanks to God and feelings of intense relief that I begin this entry in my journal. I should be a very proud woman to have accomplished what I have done so far, but, somehow or other, my jaded brain and body respond to no sense of elation. I brought the *Sea Wind* down the Borneo coast and through the myriad channels successfully—sparing neither myself or the lead's-men. We threaded Gaspar and Sunda Straits without mishap and finally arrived off Anjer Point this morning at 10 o'clock after a run of thirty days from Foo-Chow against the Monsoon—which is, as Mr. Starbuck tells me, not at all bad.

"Warren shows some improvement. He has no fever, his pulse and heart-beats are regular, but he lies strangely silent and immobile. The improvement, if such it can be called, impels me to keep going. At Anjer some native boats came out to barter fruit, chickens and eggs. I purchased a number of scraggy-looking fowls to make broths for Warren, also a considerable quantity of eggs which I will have to risk for freshness. When

through with our trading, I commanded Mr. Starbuck to bring the man Montague out and ordered him into the boat alongside. I gave the fellow ten dollars that he might not be destitute and bade him depart. He went overside without a word, but when we filled away on our course again, he shouted: 'Your husband's got *sudi* poisoning. Time and good nursing will cure him. It'll have to work out of his system. Don't worry, madam—you're a little Bluenose brick, by Jove, but take a tip from this waster and drop that box overboard!' He favored me with a most elaborate bow and slumped to the bottom of the sampan as a well-aimed belaying-pin, hurled by the quick tempered Mr. Starbuck, smashed him in the face. I was annoyed at my officer for this display of brutal temper, but said nothing in the tremendous relief I felt at knowing the cause of Warren's illness."

XV.

"I knew nothing of the poison which Montague mentioned, but McKinnon, who is a remarkably well-read person, stated that it was a somewhat common Eastern drug which had the effect of causing an intermittent and violent fever. The poison pervaded the system and if given in large doses often rendered its victim either blind or mindless. 'The Chinese call it the poison that kills the brain,' he concluded.

" 'Good Heavens!' I cried in horror. 'Will my husband be affected that way for life?'

"McKinnon shook his head dubiously. 'Ah don't ken, ma'am,' he said in his slow Scots manner, 'but ye heard what yon fella said—"Time an' nursin' will cure him." Ah've nae doot but what he spoke truth fur he'll ken a' aboot *sudi*. Ah've nae doot he ga'ed it tae the Captun.'

"If careful attention will save him, Warren shall have it. As for throwing the box overboard, I was about to do so, but after giving the subject careful thought, I determined that Warren should carry out his bargain. After all, the perusal of these heathen writings may be a means of redemption to the Chinese and may aid our missionaries to refute the idolatrous beliefs of these people and lead them to respect and accept the only true Gospel.

"They told us at Anjer that the *Min Ho* had passed out five days previous which gives her a good lead on us but not as much as I expected. The *Roderick Dhu* has not passed out so far though it is possible she may take the Eastern Passage.

"Mr. Starbuck has got the ship's gear in fine shape for a tremendous drive across the Indian Ocean to the Cape of Good Hope and we are now booming away with the Trade Winds strong and the high land of Java astern.

"*July 14th.* Warren is lamentably weak and wasted, and worst of all, his whole body seems paralyzed. He lies in bed without speaking and his eyes are dull and devoid of intelligence. He does not recognize me and I have to feed and attend to him as if he were a baby. It is most pitiful to see him—my big, strong sailor-lover—now a feeble, helpless frame of a man, lacking even the fires of intelligence. It is terrible to know this and I cannot refrain from crying when I permit myself to think about his condition. I am also distraught about the wisdom of continuing the voyage as I have. Possibly, I

should have put in to some port and got Warren ashore to hospital. I don't know . . . but the interest of the owners must be thought of. Warren has undertaken certain conditions on their behalf. He has undertaken to land his cargo in London in a certain time and secured the confidence of the shippers. He has made staggering personal wagers . . . and there is the honour of our ship to be reckoned. I do not want to see Warren Ellis characterized as a 'Bluenose blow-hard' and I know that his illness will not be taken as an excuse for failure. 'Drinking too much,' will be the verdict and it makes me resolute and determined to win.

"The ship is emerging from a tussel with a series of violent S.E. squalls. Split main-topgallantsail and blew main-spencer out of the bolt-ropes. Ship logged 300 miles this 24 hours."

XVI.

"*July 17th.* Strong winds and fine weather. Ship is racing along like a grey-hound and made the best run of the passage at noon to-day—logging 340 miles. Mr. McKinnon is combining the duties of second mate and carpenter as we have broken so many studding-sail booms and yards of late that it is necessary for him to make more out of the rough pine poles we secured at Foo-Chow. Warren's condition is unchanged. He has not shown the least symptom of returning intelligence. I wonder if his brain has been 'killed' beyond possibility of recovery? I am fearful.

"*July 20th.* Crossed the Meridian of Mauritius to-day—ten days from Anjer—which pleases us. I am wondering what the *Min Ho* and *Roderick Dhu* are doing. I can't help fretting over poor Warren's rash wagers. If we lose, it means that his reputation and two thousand dollars of our little nest egg will be gone, and I feel that we can ill afford to pay it in view of my husband's condition, and, incidentally, that of my own. The *Sea Wind* must reach England before the thirtieth day of September *at the latest*.

"I know the British ships are fast in moderate weather but I think we will gain on them in strong winds as we have greater beam and length and greater power to carry sail in heavy weather. We are not sparing the ship and she has been reeling off some splendid day's runs. It is a delight to calculate her position each day.

"Warren is much the same. I am beginning to wonder if the change for the better will ever come? In a short time we will be into the stormy latitudes of the Cape of Good Hope and I fear the motion of the ship will be extremely hard upon his weak body.

"*July 23rd.* I have invented a species of hammock-bedstead for Warren. This is in the shape of a swinging cot suspended at the corners from hooks in the beams above. I am having McKinnon rig it up in the large after cabin where there is more room, and to prevent it from swinging too violently with the ship's rolling, I am having him attach springs to ease the motion. The after cabin is very airy having a skylight and window and I think the change will be beneficial.

"*July 27th.* My swinging bed has been prepared and we carried Warren into it. George remarked, almost tearfully, 'dat de poor Cap'en was no

heavier dan one dem Anjer chickens.' My darling is fearfully emaciated and a terrible change from the big powerful fellow who tipped the balance at one hundred and eighty pounds. His eyes scarce showed a sign of interest at the change in beds and it would seem that he had lost all power of feeling. Neither hunger, thirst, nor pain seem to affect his state of coma and he has to be fed and cared for just as if he were an inanimate creature bereft of reason. In feeding him, we have to force his mouth open and pour the food down his throat. He scarce knows how to swallow and all muscle movement seems suspended. He lies like a log with everything dead but his breathing and heart-beats.

"My heart aches when I see him thus and my only consolation is communion with God in prayer and reading of the Holy Word. The fourteenth chapter of John, with its comforting message, cheers me and helps to combat the feeling of melancholy and dread of the future which obsesses me at times.

"The ship is galloping West like a blooded horse—her lofty spaces of canvas full with wind which pulls her through the blue rollers of the Indian Ocean with much groaning of timbers and a great wake of foaming water astern. She is sailing most grandly and cannot help but be gaining upon our rivals."

XVII.

"*August 3rd.* I have not been able to write in my diary for several days as we have been experiencing some fearful weather while in the vicinity of the Cape of Good Hope. On the afternoon of August 1, the wind, which had been blowing fresh Northwesterly, suddenly shifted to the South in violent squalls. The ship was caught aback and the foretopgallant-mast snapped off at the cap and came crashing down, while the big foresail split and soon thrashed itself into ribbons of canvas. Mr. Starbuck wore ship and got her off before the wind but the lack of canvas on the foremast failed to keep her ahead of the seas and a great billow tumbled down on the poop—bursting the doors, windows and skylights of the cabin house, smashing the pilot-house door on the starboard side, and breaking the beams of the quarterboat skids and heaving the boat itself down on the main-deck where it was dashed to pieces.

"I was lying down at the time, resting, and I was rudely awakened by the noise and the water pouring down in to the cabin. My first thought was for Warren and I jumped up in the gloom into water which reached my waist when the ship rolled. Fearful for my husband, I struggled to his swinging bed, to find that the Chinese chest had broken loose, and, with pieces of plank from the smashed doors, it was charging down on him in the wash of the invading sea and buffeting his prone body.

"Terrified, I threw myself between him and the menacing box and it came at me in the lurches and dealt me several severe blows. The thing seemed to be imbued with life and it circled around in the swirling water as if trying to evade me and drive at poor Warren, lying helpless on his sodden mattress. The devilish power which appeared to animate the chest, frightened me so that I screamed as I fended its rushes. George and McKinnon came to my rescue and secured the box and they hoisted Warren's cot clear of the water and helped me to change his wet clothing and bedding. During all this terrible time, he lay like a log, inanimate, and I was afraid the shock, and the blows he had received, would kill him.

"As soon as he was made comfortable, I drew a heavy deck-coat over my wet clothes and went up to find it blowing tremendously hard, with a fearful rough sea running and the ship plunging and rolling in it, with much water flooding her decks. While the men were repairing the damage, Mr.

Starbuck suggested heaving-to as without the foresail we were in constant danger of being pooped by seas breaking over the stern. But I saw that the direction in which the wind was now blowing would give us a splendid opportunity to get past the Cape of Good Hope and I therefore asked Mr. Starbuck if it would be possible to bend another foresail immediately and keep the ship going to the westward. He gave a wry smile as if ashamed of making his former suggestion and said, 'ma'am, if you want that fores'l bent now, it *shall* be bent.' "

XVIII.

“He had scarce spoken before there was a sharp crack above our heads and we looked up to see the mizzen topsail split. In less than a minute the whole sail was flogging out of the bolt-ropes and threads of canvas were festooning the stays and ropes.

“ ‘It’s blowing ma’am,’ remarked Mr. Starbuck calmly.

“ ‘But in the right direction,’ I added, with a smile. I don’t know what the man thought of me but I felt no fear, and the rushing wind, the gloomy skies, and the wild and angry sea did not dismay me. I crooned my old Sunday School hymn—‘I shall not fear the battle, when Thou art by my side’—and I knew that Almighty God was as near to me in the turbulent wastes of the Agulhas as in our little church at home.

“That it was blowing hard, may be adjudged by the fact that it took thirty-two men about four hours to fasten a new, double-clothed foresail to the yard, and during this period the ship wallowed in the confused seas and took heavy water over both rails which did much damage.

“When the sail was set, the ship leaped to its impulse and fled before the gale ‘like a scared dog,’ and Mr. Starbuck came to me. ‘The hands are pretty well done up, ma‘am,’ he said awkwardly. ‘I don’t know how you feel about it, ma’am, but—er—ah—I think a little somethin’ ’ud brace ’em up for heavy weather, ma’am.’

“I knew what he was hinting at, and while I have decided ideas upon the uses of strong drink, yet I realized that it had certain stimulating properties which were invaluable at certain times. I told him to tell George to serve all hands with a glass of rum.

“I would have been wiser to have superintended this matter myself but I trusted my officers. These two, however, saw to it that the men had a harmless ration, but they themselves took an undue allowance. I found this out on coming up to the pilot-house shortly before midnight. Mr. Starbuck, whose watch it was, I came upon lying down on the settee in a state of intoxication and the ship taking care of herself. I was horror-struck and dismayed that my chief aide should have succumbed to temptation at a time when I needed his skill and seamanship.”

XIX.

“Blowing my whistle, I sent a seaman to call McKinnon and the man came back with the intelligence that he could not rouse him. Both officers drunk! The ship racing before a gale of wind, in the most treacherous seas in the world and no one but me to guide her wild plungings forward.

“I dragged myself to the poop-break and stood there, clutching the rail with both hands to maintain myself on my feet in that fury of wind and the violent lurching of the vessel. I was exceedingly bitter at the two officers. Whatever Warren’s failings were in the matter of drink, he never touched spirits at sea. I am losing all faith in man and developing a pardonable conceit in the ability of woman. With all my worries and frailties, I hadn’t succumbed thus far.

“Hour after hour passed with the ship storming tremendously into the night and I stood at the rail, or by the weather mizzen backstays, or in the lee doorway of the pilot-house, watching the straining topsails aloft, and the sky, and compass. Two sailors strained at the lee and weather spokes of the wheel, while the seas crashed over the main-deck bulwarks with thunderous foamings and rendered the deck a whirling maelstrom of water.

“The tricky habits of the winds in these parts called for incessant vigilance and kept me at my post throughout the bitter hours of storm, until one or other of the officers could be trusted to take charge. In a daze of weariness and cold, I became sensible of a slatting in the port leaches of the topsails and grew instantly alert. I blew my whistle and when the watch came aloft along the flooded main-deck, I ordered them to the starboard braces. And just in time! They had no sooner belayed the braces when the wind chopped ahead and began blowing in savage squalls from the S.W. Had I not perceived the coming shift of wind and trimmed sail, the ship would have been caught aback and dismasted.

“I remained on deck until the grey dawn revealed the tumbling waste of foam-crested ocean and our sea-drenched, sodden fabric of ship. I was chilled, fatigued and utterly exhausted and could stand it no longer. I dropped to the wet planks and a quarter-master picked me up and carried me into the pilot-house, where I laid on the settee opposite from Starbuck and remained there in the stupor of weariness until poor George came to me with a cup of hot coffee. ‘Oh, Missy,’ he was saying plaintively, ‘don’t yo’ go an’

give out. Dis yere niggah suah jump ovah de side ef yo' done give up an' die.' "

XX.

"The mate had sobered up meanwhile and was out on deck. After feeling revived by the coffee, I told the steward to send him to see me. I shall never forget Starbuck's face when he came to the chart-room. It was so abject and pitiful—just like a dog about to be whipped—that I almost lost my resolution to reprimand him.

" 'Mr. Starbuck,' I said severely, 'you have been guilty of the greatest crime on shipboard in being drunk and incapable while in charge of the ship. You failed me at a time when I needed you most; you endangered the ship and the lives of every person aboard of her. I can enter this fact in the log-book and such an entry will mean an end to your career as an officer in any British North American ship.' I paused and awaited his answer.

"Hanging his head, he said tremblingly, 'Madam, I deserve it. I have failed you and should be punished. I ask for no mercy. You can log me, but that will not prevent me from doing my duty to the best of my ability until the ship is safe in port. I am a mean hound, and I know it.' His words were so sincere and he seemed so sorry that my heart was softened.

" 'The matter of making an entry against you in the log will stand over for the present,' I answered, 'and will depend entirely on your future conduct. Let this be a lesson to you.'

"This great hulking seaman, who seemed devoid of tender emotions, was so affected that he dropped to his knees, grasping my hand in his great fists, he kissed it. Then rising hastily to his feet he went out into the storm. A minute later I heard his thunderous voice bawling to the watch with a snap that augured well for the future. I am sure I will have no more faithful officer than Mr. Starbuck after this. To McKinnon, I said nothing. He is a carpenter—not an officer.

"*August 6th.* We have rounded the Cape of Good Hope and we are now forging along in the glorious South East Trade Winds with all the canvas spread and studding-sails and all possible wind-catchers set. The *Sea Wind* is a veritable moving cloud of sail.

"We had a very rough passage of the Cape and the ship received a furious battering in the cross seas of the Agulhas current. Much destruction was done to her sails and fittings and McKinnon is practically a carpenter

once more, in repairing the damage. Mr. Starbuck is inhabiting the pilot-house—sleeping in snatches during the day and keeping the deck at night in response to my desire to lose no opportunity to urge the ship ahead.

"I am very proud of my swinging bed and I know that it saved Warren much discomfort in the bad weather down South. The violent rolling of the ship would have hurled him out of his standing bed-place in his present helpless state. He seems slightly improved in health. George says he is coming around wonderfully, but, alas, I do not note much improvement.

"The ship is making splendid progress and I should be heartened thereby. But I feel very low-spirited at times and am often seized with sickness and head-aches. These, however, do not last long—for which I am thankful."

XXI.

"*August 10th.* Warren *is* improving in health. A glimmer of intelligence is beginning to show in his eyes and he can now swallow the liquid foods I am giving him. He can also move his legs and arms slightly. I made a vow that I would not write in my diary until he showed *real* improvement. I am so happy.

"*August 17th.* Sighted Ascension Island this morning—distant ten miles. I had a notion of running in to procure fresh vegetables and things for Warren but am fearful of losing time. A new incentive, above all others, decrees that I must not waste an hour. The ship must be got to port before the end of September. The S. E. Trades are flickering out and we are not making much progress in the light airs.

"*August 22nd.* We crossed the Equator last night and I feel oddly happy to be in North latitude once more and nearing home. Passed several ships of late. We can outsail them all. I wonder where our rivals are! Warren is improving daily, but while I am not so concerned about him now I am more concerned for myself.

"*August 25th.* We carried Warren up on deck to-day and placed him on a bamboo deck-chair under an awning. He made an attempt to speak to-night, but could barely articulate. He held my hand and, by the look in his eyes, I feel that he knows me.

"*August 26th.* I seem to have but little desire to write up my diary. I feel horribly depressed and tired, even though I have every reason to be happy. Warren is beginning to take solid foods and can move his limbs a little. The glimmer of reason is returning into his eyes and he makes attempts to speak. The ship is moving along in the faint airs, but there are many hours of stagnant calm. I am praying for gale-winds to speed this tardily swimming fabric and also endeavouring to find them by exhaustively studying the wind and current theories of Mr. Maury—whose new sailing directions are now being recognized by shipmasters as being trustworthy and valuable.

"*August 27th.* The Chinese chest is gone! I am still shaking with the fright and Warren underwent a terrible experience to-day.

"Shortly after noon the cabin was untenanted as I was on deck taking latitude sights and George was forward in the galley. When working up the

reckoning, I bethought me that I'd left the Nautical Almanac in the after cabin. On going down the companion to get it, I was surprised to see the room full of smoke and flames and the bottom of Warren's swinging bed afire!

"Screaming for help, I rushed to his bed and tore the burning sheet from his body and dragged him off the mattress and on to the floor. Mr. Starbuck leaped down into the cabin with a bucket of water and threw it on to the blaze, and when the smoke and steam subsided, we found that the Chinese chest, which was lashed to the floor at the foot of the swinging cot, was burnt through and the contents—papers, sheep-skins and embroidered silks —were smouldering. 'The fire started in that there box,' said Mr. Starbuck."

XXII.

"Recalling that the sinister Chinese chest was responsible for Warren's illness and that it almost killed him off the Cape, I shouted unthinkingly 'Get it out of here!' And while I was attending to my husband, I heard a splash overside and knew that Starbuck had thrown it overboard. I did not intend that he should do that and I ran up on deck and said to him hurriedly, 'Don't throw it away! Get it again!' I ran to the rail in time to see the whitish bulk of the thing slowly sinking down into the blue depths. Mr. Starbuck, with a boathook in his hand, looked dismayed and somewhat astonished. 'I'm sorry I was so hasty, ma'am,' he said humbly, 'but I never cal'lated the blame' thing 'ud sink like that after floating around the cabin off the Cape.'

"It was odd, to say the least, but everything about that box was queer. What made it go on fire? Spontaneous combustion? It may be. I'm wondering if Montague was forewarned of such happenings when he advised me to cast it overside! I did not chide the mate for his hastiness, for, after all, I'm not sorry the heathenish thing is gone.

"Warren was slightly burnt about the feet, but had I not come upon him when I did, he might have died. As it is, I am fearful that the experience of lying helpless amidst the smoke and flame may affect him. I pray God it won't.

"*August 28th.* I received a joyful surprise this morning when coming down to attend to Warren. He called me by name—'Ruth' and when I rushed to him, overjoyed, he made a feeble grasp at my hand. I bent down and kissed him, with such fervent thankfulness and immediately bethought myself that thanks were due to the Master of all. Beside Warren's bed, I dropped on my knees and acknowledged God's mercy to us both.

"We picked up the first breath of the North East Trades this morning and Mr. Starbuck has the ship dressed in all the canvas possible. I think my study of Mr. Maury's theories have been of some account, though I know that Warren never made use of them. Mr. Starbuck says I have made a quick drift over the doldrums. I am so anxious to get to port that I'm willing to try any possible expedient for hastening the progress of the ship.

"*August 29th.* The N. E. Trades are fitful and Mr. Starbuck must think I am a terrible nuisance. I am on deck, off and on, day and night, and

questioning the why and wherefore of the canvas spread or not spread.

“Warren is coming around splendidly. The color is showing in his wan cheeks and he is filling out a little, He can mutter a few words now, but there are blanks in his mind which show that the poison is still in control.

“I am feeling a little better but am obsessed by a desire to get to London. I pray God to send us strong Trade Winds that we might speed on our way.”

XXIII.

"*September 6th.* The Trades have been blowing grandly and I have spent much time on deck watching the ship race through the water to their impulse. Many studding-sail booms have carried away, but luckily we have plenty of spare ones—though, at the rate we are breaking them, there soon won't be any left. I have imbued the officers and men with my desire for speed and nothing can exceed their zeal. There is no growling from our large crew, at the continual round of trimming yards, sweating on halliards and sheets, and shifting studding-sails over—work which keeps them busy night and day—and often in their watches below. There are some rough characters among the men—fellows whose nature it is to rebel at authority—but I find these to be my best seamen and the most willing.

"Warren is regaining command of all his faculties very slowly. He does not speak but while I sit with him, he reaches for my hand, and strokes it feebly. I asked him to-day if he would like me to read to him. He nodded, and when I brought him up a selection of books to choose from, he waved them away and traced the word 'Bible' on the blanket covering him.

"I brought the Good Book on deck and read aloud the twenty-third Psalm and other heartening chapters and when I looked up I saw the tears running down his cheeks. And I must needs cry with him with a heart at once happy and anxious. Happy in the thought that my dear husband is recovering and showing evidences of a new disposition, and anxious for my own condition. I pray that our brave winds will hold.

"*September 26th.* I have not written in my diary for weeks as I have been too unsettled in mind to do so. We have been carrying sail to the limit and urging the ship on like a spurred horse. And I must admit she has responded nobly for we are now up in the stormy North Atlantic and standing in for the British Channel. A cast of the lead an hour ago gave me seventy fathoms with sand and shell bottom and the Lizard Light should be in sight some time to-night.

"My navigational anxieties are returning with the coming of the ship into narrow waters and I must keep the deck a great deal. Warren's eyes express his anxiety when I visit him, and I know he fully realizes what I am doing. He understands all things perfectly now, but he seems unable to recover his powers of speech. He often writes his thoughts and desires on paper and

when I told him of our position in Channel, he wrote: ‘Get ship into Falmouth and take a pilot. You can’t stand it.’ I have a notion to do as he suggests as I hardly feel equal to the task of taking the ship up Channel.”

XXIV.

"*September 27th.* It came away thick and rainy and we did not sight the Lizard, but a fisherman, at eight this morning, gave us the position of the Lizard Light as bearing W.N.W. distant fourteen miles. It is blowing fresh from the S.W. and the *Sea Wind* is plunging and roaring through the wetness and the short Channel seas, with royal studding-sails set and everything swelling. The log has given us hourly speeds of sixteen knots at times. I have decided to hold on to Dungeness and not to bother about Falmouth.

"Much traffic in Channel and I am amused at some of the ships we are passing being snugged down to topsails, while we are carrying almost everything. Of course, we carry away gear and canvas quite often but we have a big enough crew to repair damages quickly and this helps in carrying sail. The anchors are over the bows and the towing hawsers are ready. Sighted the lights on the Isle of Wight to-night and fixed our position nicely by four point and cross bearings. Must get ashore to-morrow at all costs and I have told Mr. Starbuck to drive the ship for all she is worth. The lookouts are doubled and all hands are ordered to stand by. I think Starbuck understands, for nothing can exceed his zeal. He is on deck day and night. I will make no entry in the log against him. He is young and will have learnt his lesson. I wonder if the *Min Ho* and *Roderick Dhu* are ahead of us? I am too excited and nervous to think about them. I wish poor Warren hadn't made that foolish wager. I can't write more as I cannot think coherently.

"*September 28th.* We passed ahead of a ship at three this morning which was reducing sail to pick up the Dungeness pilot. Starbuck says it was the *Min Ho* and he called me from the chart-house to look at her. Our men were aloft preparing to haul the studding-sails down, that we might be able to pick up the pilot. 'Keep the sail on her, Mr. Starbuck,' I said, in a fever of excitement. 'We must get the pilot first. Can you do that?'

"He nodded grimly. 'Leave it to me, ma'am,' he said. 'I'll get the pilot aboard with all the kites flying.'

"Burning blue lights and firing rockets, we rushed towards the little Pilot Cutter which was answering our signals and bore down on her like a pillar of cloud swooping out of the dawn. Then, by some marvellous manoeuvering, Mr. Starbuck took the way off the ship and the pilot came over the rail to the accompaniment of flogging and slatting sails and sheer

pandemonium aloft. He stood by the rail amazed and fully expecting to see the masts crashing down, but Mr. Starbuck soon produced order out of chaos and the light of the dawn revealed our seamen straining at the braces and sheets and mast-heading the royal and topgallant-yards to rousing shouts and chanteys. Studding-sails were trailing over the stays and thundering in the fresh breeze—some flogging into rags—but men soon scampered aloft to clear them and replace the broken yards and booms with the last of our spare spars. In fact, for studding-sail yards, we had to use long boat oars. In a few minutes we were booming up Channel again with the braces strung and the gear coiled down."

XXV.

"The pilot—a stout, rubicund Englishman—stepped up to Mr. Starbuck and expressed his astonishment and admiration, with a blasphemous oath. 'By——, Cap'en, that's Bluenose fashion all right. Ain't one man in a thousand could do that and get her underway again, without having his three t'gellent-m'sts about his ears. Smart work, I calls it. Where you from?'

" 'Foo-Chow, Mister, and we're in a hurry,' answered Starbuck. 'Any tea ships in from China yet?'

"I hovered towards the pilot and my heart was in my mouth awaiting his reply. Had I made a good passage? I listened with bated breath. The man chewed irritatingly on a quid of tobacco and he seemed still dazed with astonishment. At last he spoke. 'You're the fust, so far, Cap'en. No China tea ships passed in yet.'

"Oh, joy! I could have thrown my arms around that homely old fellow's neck and kissed him. The first ship from China! We had beaten the fleet and the wager would be ours! I was almost carried away in the ecstasy of victory.

"The pilot took charge of the *Sea Wind* then and kept her away for the Downs, and he was talking to Mr. Starbuck when I approached.

" 'Your wife, Cap'en?' he asked the mate, at the same time lifting his cap and bowing to me.

" 'No, sir,' replied Starbuck. 'This is Mrs. Ellis, the captain's wife, and the *real* master of the ship. I am the acting mate; the captain is ill, and Mrs. Ellis has navigated the ship from China to here.'

"The Englishman smothered an oath of surprise. 'Well, by—beggin' your pardon, ma'am, but that's astonishin'—most astonishin'! Sailed her from China and licked the fleet—*Min Ho*, *Tea Taster*, *Roderick Dhu* and the rest of the crack packets? Well, I be—beg your pardon, ma'am, but that's most astonishin'! I'm thinkin' if the ladies take to sailin' the Bluenose clippers, us Englishmen'll be nowheres!'

"I smiled an acknowledgment of his compliment and glanced anxiously to the westward, where the *Min Ho* was coming along. 'There's one of our

rivals, Pilot,' I said. 'There's a hundred dollars for you if you get us docked ahead of her. What about signalling for a tug?'

"The promise of a reward got the pilot all excited. He looked over the side and aloft at the sails and said, 'By the way this clipper moves through the water, steam ain't going to help us any. She'll run down any tug around here.'

"However we hoisted a signal and a paddle-wheel tug came splashing towards us. I told the pilot to engage him and ordered the steamer to follow us until we were ready to be towed. For a long time she was just able to keep pace with us—so fast did we slip along.

"When the North Foreland showed up ahead, we could see ships becalmed and we knew the wind was dropping. The *Min Ho*, about two miles astern, was in tow of a large and powerful steamer and her crew were quickly stripping the sail off her. This made me fearfully anxious, as the Britisher was a small, light vessel and would tow very easily, whereas our big ship would make poor headway, in charge of the small steamer we had engaged. 'Signal another tug for us,' I told the pilot."

XXVI.

"He nodded. 'Yes, ma'am, I been thinkin' that we'll need it and I'm going to trust to pickin' up the *Titan* to the west'ard a bit. She's a big new steamer—most powerful tug in the Thames—and she gen'ly lies west of the Foreland. If we get her, she'll whip this big clipper up to Lunnon in no time, ma'am.'

"As we trudged in the wake of the little paddle-boat, the *Min Ho* gradually diminished the distance between us and there was no sign of the pilot's tug, or any other tug for that matter. I was on pins and needles and could hardly stand still with excitement.

"Soon the *Min Ho* crept up until she was a cable's length astern of us. Then she loomed up on our starboard quarter, and ten minutes after she pulled past us, so close that we could discern the faces of her officers and crew and hear their cries and shouts of derision. I was so mortified and so suspicious of the motives of our pilot—who I fancied was purposely favouring his countrymen—that I dared not trust myself to remain on deck any longer lest I break down and cry, so I ran down to Warren.

"My chagrin was instantly overcome when his voice was heard calling my name. I flew to him in excessive pleasure and joy. 'How is everything going, dear?' he asked—the first time he had spoken since we left the China Seas, so very, very long ago. I sat down beside him and my pleasure showed in my face, while the tears streamed out of my eyes. I was very, very happy, and forgetful of our defeat, and oh, so tired and weary besides. The reaction was coming and I laid my head on Warren's breast and cried and sobbed, while he patted my hands and kissed my wet face and soothed me with loving words, just as if I were a child.

"The trial I had endured faded away and I seemed to be conscious of nothing but the fact that I was in my husband's arms and that he was himself again and loving me with gentle caresses and soft words. For how long I remained thus, I cannot tell, but I came back to realities again with Mr. Starbuck's voice booming down the cabin companion. 'The *Titan's* got our hawser, ma'am, and we're coming up on the *Min Ho* hand over fist. . . .'

"Then came the pilot's voice: 'We'll be in the Blackwall Dock before long, ma'am, and I'll be pleased to win that little somethin' you mentioned,

ma'am. The *Min Ho* is out of it now, ma'am.'

"At this intelligence, both Warren and I laughed, and I think we both laughed tearfully, and I know we were kissing and talking silly nothings to one another, when Mr. Starbuck again came to the companion bawling in his bull voice: 'The *Min Ho's* well astern, ma'am, and we're the clipper of the China fleet. I'm a-goin' to h'ist the big ensign an' dress her in flags from truck to scupper with your permission, ma'am!' "

XXVII.

"When he went away, Warren smoothed my hair and murmured softly: 'Dear, wonderful little woman! Your husband can only atone by serving you for the rest of his life. You're too wonderful for words, and you've excelled anything I have ever done. I can only humble myself before you and ask your forgiveness.'

"For answer I kissed him happily and stroked his thin, bearded face—colored now with the flush of returning health.

" 'You've gone through a terrible ordeal, sweetheart—a terrible ordeal . . .' he continued.

"It was nothing, dear,' I said quietly, 'but my real ordeal—but a happy one—is now to come. I must leave you as soon as the ship docks. . . .'

"He stared at me in blank amaze and gradually an expression of fear and pain showed in his face. 'Are you going to abandon me, Ruth?' he asked tremblingly.

"I smiled my reassurance and patted his hair. 'For a little while, darling, and then. . . .'

" 'And then?' Puzzled and half-fearful, he seemed to await my answer. —'There will be two of us to take care of you,' I murmured and buried my head on his shoulder.

"For a full minute he did not utter a word or make a motion and then I felt his arms slipping around me in a feeble embrace and his voice murmuring, 'My darling!' "

Grandma raised her eyes from the old record and gazed pensively out of the window. For some time none of us spoke or even moved. My sister's eyes were misty and I felt that I was going to blubber like a baby. I felt very mean and small. Then the old lady adjusted her glasses and glanced at the final entry in her diary ere closing the book. "We docked at eight that evening, after a passage of one hundred and ten days from Foo-Chow, and at four next morning, your father, Warren Babcock Ellis, was born at the Bromley Private Hospital, London."

The Timber Stower

Shanandoar! I love yer daughter,
Away! My rolling river!
'Til the day I die, I'll love you ever,
Aha! We're bound away!
'Crost the Western Ocean!

—Old Sailor Chantey.

Captain Ezekiel Munro, Nova Scotian shipmaster, swore that managing Daughter Dorothy was more of a task than putting a hard-bitten crowd of sailor-johns through their paces. And that was saying a lot. When Dot went to sea with him, impressionable second mates lost needful sleep in their watches below, and young sprigs of foremast hands washed their faces and became abstracted at times when such was a serious shipboard crime.

Old Man Munro had no sentiment in his makeup, not for sailors at any rate, and he acquired considerable skill in correcting youthful perspectives and in quenching the matrimonial ambitions of penurious junior officers. And a Nova Scotian shipmaster of the square-rig days could do this to the King's taste. Daughter Dorothy was blissfully ignorant of the havoc she wrought with sailor hearts and Bluenose discipline, from which it is to be inferred that she possessed feminine attributes and charms considerably above the average.

The full-rigged ship *Wanderer* of Anchorville, N. S., with Ezekiel Munro in command and Dorothy aboard, was towing up to Quebec for a cargo of square timber. In the grip of a tug, the ship was stemming the ebb tide running strong through the Traverses of the River St. Lawrence and making slow progress. It was black dark and raining, and there was a chill spite in the squally September wind, which hounded the sea-bound flood of the mighty waterway, and added to the labour of the old *Hercule* hauling away at the big ballast-laden Bluenose trailing at the end of her tow-rope. Until slack water and the turn of the tide, progress would be slow.

Peering into the blustery darkness, Dorothy Munro stood half inside the chart-house doorway cheerfully crooning a little song to herself. Rain glistened on the sou'wester she wore and on the neat oilskin coat that clothed her, and the scanty glimmer of the oil lamp revealed a twenty-year-old sea-nymph with a lithe and graceful contour of form that heavy weather clothing failed to conceal. The tang of the river wind heightened the soft glow of cheeks and the healthy complexion nourished from childhood by the cosmetics of Fundy fogs and the sea breeze through the spruce.

"She said, 'You lime-juice shell-back,
Now see me home you may.'
And when I reached her cottage door,
She unto me did say:—

'Away, you Santee! My dear Annie!
Oh, you New York girls, can't you dance the polka?' "

II.

Softly singing the sailor chantey to herself, and with her blue eyes misty in the nip of the wind and some vagrant locks of brown hair blowing across her rain-drenched face, she braved the weather with a feeling of exhilaration. The tug had the tow-rope and the end of the voyage was in sight, with Quebec, the ancient, the picturesque, storied and romantic, as the ship's resting place for a while. Forty days of passage from Liverpool seemed overlong—nothing to a sailor, to be sure, when the more days meant the more dollars to lift on pay day, but to a vivacious young woman of twenty, alone with her father and twenty-two men, forty days of shipboard and blank ocean was an eternity.

It was a dirty night on the river, a night when the devil might well be abroad looking for sailors' souls, and the squally breeze was thrumming in the gear of the *Wanderer's* tall masts, sounding eerie notes. Overside, the tidal current was swirling around the ship's hull and the noises of wind and water were accentuated by the dull roaring of the steam from the *Hercule's* exhaust. Occasionally, the whiff of burning coal came down the wind—an offence to the senses—but Dot sniffed at it appreciatively. "Pull away, old horsie, and get the ship and me alongside the good dry land once more!" She uttered the encouraging words aloud and laughed.

As the trill of her happiness was wafted to leeward, a bulky figure in dripping oil-clothes swung away from the rail and stepped toward the chart-house. Other persons tenanted the poop—Captain Munro, the pilot, and the wheel's-man—but they were far aft and invisible in the murk. "Quebec to-morrow, Dot, if all goes well. You won't be sorry?" It was Victor Crosby, mate of the ship, who spoke. His tone was low and guarded. "Sorry? No, indeed, Vic. Forty days of these northern seas is long enough—cold, rain, grey skies and head winds. Ugh!" She made an impatient gesture. "I'll be mighty glad to see another woman again after being cooped up with a crowd of men." She paused. "Isn't it a wretched night?"

III.

The other showed a gleam of white teeth in the darkness. “Fall weather,” he murmured, “but it’ll be fine to-morrow and you will have a town to run around in.” He spoke with a decided English accent and in a voice that was mellow and pleasing.

“I wouldn’t care if it were only a collection of shacks on a sand bar—” observed the girl.

“And no shops?” the officer queried.

“Well, at least give me one real shop with a box of ribbons and laces and some dress material in it. M-m-m!” She sniffed at the rain-laden air, “But it’s good to smell the land and to know that it is all around us. I feel like singing, shouting! To know that Quebec is but fifty miles ahead is like ‘rest after toil, port after stormy seas.’ You know the saying.”

The man reached inside his oil-coat and drew out a pipe. Rubbing the bowl slowly, he spoke somewhat wistfully: “Are you so eager, Dot, to have the passage come to an end? Port for me means work from morning until night and but little chance to see you.”

“Don’t let us worry about that,” said the girl hastily. A slashing squall of wind and rain caused her to retreat within the shelter of the chart-house, and the officer, with a covert glance to the formless group aft by the wheel followed her inside. Divesting himself of his hat, he swung the water off it and turned towards the shaded lamp. In the tempered glow, his rain-wet face showed strikingly handsome—unusually so. A man in the thirties, with the lineaments of Greek statuary, his was a face that would startle observers calling for the mate of a hard-driving Nova Scotiaman. Together, in the chart-room, the woman and the man appeared in form and features as sea deities, in modern garb, from out the legends of Aegean mythology. The immortals were cold and expressionless, however; these two were radiant with life.

IV.

As Crosby lit his pipe and blew out the tobacco smoke from his lips, Dot's eyes seemed alight with a glow of reverent admiration as she gazed at him. The damp air enhanced the waviness of the crisp black hair growing back from the high white forehead, and the large dark-brown eyes, half-closed with the weariness of long hours of watching, gave his face the aspect of a dreamer. But beneath the heavily lashed lids, the eyes were alive and bright, unfathomable, quick-changing in the light and expression of the owner's moods. He was clean-shaven, square-chinned and determined—a man of purpose—and his Byronic beauty, his strapping body and evident virility made him one of the finest specimens of manhood that ever stepped a ship's deck. Soft-voiced, calm, and capable—a sailor to turn maid's hearts, forsooth—such was Victor Crosby, English-born, by his own account, and mate of the ship *Wanderer* these four months.

A wilder blast of wind drove the rain rattling on the chart-house windows. The river gods were fretful to-night and the phantom paddlemen of Indian legend were convoying the big ship, dipping their ghostly blades into the black water and howling their war cries into the teeth of the gale. So it seemed to Dorothy's romantic soul, inspired by thoughts of old St. Lawrence history, wherein bold St. Malo mariners braved the unknown and might well have harboured such fancies o'nights when the Traverse tides were rushing and growling in the dark. "Hush!" she cautioned. A hail sounded in the gloom outside. "That's father shouting."

The mate clamped his sou'wester over his head and leaned toward her. "I'll have to go now, Dorothy, and the voyage is coming to an end. I may not see you alone for weeks." His arm slipped around her shoulders and there was sudden passion in the low tones of his voice. "A kiss, dear one—I'm hungry for the sweet taste of your lips."

"Mister Crosby!" The stentorian bawl of Captain Munro sounded strident above the swish of the rain and the drumming of the wind in the ship's rigging.

"A kiss . . . sweetheart." The girl seemed fascinated and unresistingly allowed herself to be drawn into Crosby's embrace, her face turned upwards to his, her blue eyes wide with a hint of fright in them.

“Crosby! Damn the man! Where has he got to?” The irritable hail came louder. Captain Munro was coming forward. Smothering an expletive, the handsome mate hastily drew his arm away from Dot’s shoulders and swung outside with a respectful, “Yes, sir, coming, sir.”

“Stand by and see what that fellow wants, There’s a boat hooked on alongside and they’re hailing for a ladder. If it’s a Quebec runner after the men, don’t let him aboard. He’ll have liquor with him and they’d all be drunk afore morning.”

“A boat alongside on such a night?” Her curiosity aroused, Dot buttoned her coat around her throat and ventured to the rail. Peering forward over the ship’s side, she could discern a small open boat plunging and rolling in the wash of the ship’s passage and the rough water of the Traverse current. The boat’s crew had hooked a grapnel into the *Wanderer’s* fore-rigging and the little craft was towing with the ship—a deluge of spray flying over its occupants every now and again.

“Dat’ll be Larry O’Brien for sure,” observed the French-Canadian pilot. “He’s de onlee crazee man dat come for pick up a sheep ’way down in de Traverse on night lak’ dees. Some tam’ he’ll drown sure t’ing—”

“What’s he after,” growled the skipper.

“He’s a timber stower,” answered the pilot. “He’s come down here for catch de job of stowing your cargo.”

“Oh!” The captain strode to the poop break and hailed the mate who was forward.

“If that’s a stevedore, let him aboard.”

Dorothy was interested in the occupants of the small craft alongside. There was something heroic in the sudden coming of these visitors from off the dark and stormy river and she was eager to vision what men they were who came drumming for business in an open boat in such a night.

V.

In a few minutes one of the strangers strode aft preceded by Crosby. As he came up the ladder, the newcomer gave Dot a quick glance and passed on towards her father. “Dirty weather, Cap’en but I’m thinking it’ll clear before morning.” The Man-of-the-Boat spoke with a strong flavour of the Irish in his speech. “Me name’s O’Brien. I have a timber stowin’ and stevedorin’ outfit in Quebec.” Captain Munro grasped the other’s outstretched hand. “Dirty weather, sure enough, Mister, but we’ve got to take what comes,” he remarked.

“You’re a durn long way from Quebec, Mister.”

“Yes! Quite a pull—nigh fifty miles from the city. We’ve been in the boat since five this morning.”

“Come below and have a cup of tea and warm-up,” invited the shipmaster. Both men left the deck.

Dorothy had come close to the stranger while he was talking and she was curious to see him. He was young, she knew instinctively, and he was of burly build and pleasant speech—an Irish Canadian. The darkness veiled all else. To satisfy her curiosity and possibly to set eyes on a new face after forty days of the familiar ones of shipboard she slipped down the after companion and entered the cabin.

The Quebecker was seated in front of the stove. He had divested himself of a steaming oilskin coat but his clothing was sodden with water and wet splotches appeared on the carpet below where he sat.

“Sure and there’s a touch of the Fall in the wind to-night Cap’en,” he was saying as he warmed his hands at the stove, “and I wasn’t sorry to see you comin’ along.”

VI.

The girl entered the apartment and the man looked up at her. Her glance took in the broad-shouldered fellow of between thirty and thirty-five, of medium height, reddish hair and a ruddy, sun-bronzed skin. He was clean-shaven, and twinkling blue eyes set in a strong and pleasant face seemed to open wider in astonishment or admiration as she entered, while the large, but not unhandsome, mouth gave expression to a smile. He rose to his feet and looked from the father to the daughter.

"My girl, Mister." The captain gave a jerk of his head in Dot's direction.

"O'Brien is my name, Miss," said the other quickly, he looked boldly into Dot's eyes. "Lawrence O'Brien, Miss, and at your service!" He made a courtly bow and favoured her once more with his clear stare.

Dot acknowledged the introduction simply. She was used to meeting men—at least on shipboard—and neither simpered nor blushed, but the searching and admiring quality of the other's gaze, however, somewhat disconcerted her. He retired from his chair by the stove and proffered it to her. "You'll be seated, Miss, and warm yourself," he invited. The man spoke with ease and there was nothing awkward in his deportment.

"Thank you, but I'll shed this wet coat first," she answered smiling, for she liked the Irishman's face and manner, "You may keep your seat."

O'Brien reached inside of his jacket and produced a folded newspaper. "Yesterday's *Chronicle*," he said as he presented it to her. "You might like to look it over."

She took the paper eagerly, murmuring her thanks, and passed on towards her room. The young man's eyes followed her retreating figure.

"Naow, about this job of timber stowing—" Captain Munro spoke a trifle sharply and O'Brien came back to the business in hand.

VII.

The Nova Scotian was a hard driver in more ways than one and hadn't acquired a modest competence without the exercise of those qualities inherent in the Scotch. He knew all the tricks of bargaining with stevedores and prepared for a tough session, but, in this case, he was surprised to find his terms accepted without a murmur. Meantime the steward had set out the tea cups, some biscuits and cold salt beef, the bargain had been struck and the Irishman was given the contract to discharge the *Wanderer's* ballast lading of coarse salt in bulk, and stow her cargo of square timber and deals. Feeling extremely pleased with himself, the shipmaster invited the stevedore to make himself at home and to turn in to a spare cabin bunk whenever he felt like it. Then gulping his hot tea, he pulled on his oilskins and returned to the deck.

"Godfrey, now, but that's a fine little colleen aboard here," said O'Brien to himself when the skipper had gone. "And like a fool, Larry, me boy, we've allowed this Bluenose to skin ye to the ballast because the soft heart of ye has been smitten by the skipper's daughter. A pretty girl gives ye a smile and ye immediately lose all the profit of a good payin' job. Wirra! but it's the strong back of ye that'll pay for yer foolishness if the O'Brien outfit's to keep to wind'ard of the sheriff. But she's a dandy fine—."

At this juncture of his musings, Dorothy emerged from her room with the newspaper in her hand. Womanlike, she had done over her hair and had discarded her woollen jersey for a blouse. She did not know why she should have bothered to do this, or why she should evince any sign of interest in this Quebec stevedore, but there was some quality in him that attracted her —perhaps it was the man's hardihood and daring in venturing out in an open boat in such weather to seek business, or it may be that she was satisfying the natural longings of sea-voyagers to renew their links with the land. She returned the newspaper with a word or two of thanks, and slipped into the chair vacated by her father. "You are a Quebecker, I presume, Mr. O'Brien?" "Born and bred there, Miss," answered the stevedore.

She held out her hands towards the stove. "I am looking forward to seeing Quebec and visiting the historical places," she continued. "Before my mother died and I commenced keeping father company at sea, I was a

school-teacher. The early settlement of Quebec and its conquest always fascinated me."

VIII.

The Irishman's face became animated. "Ah," he said, and there was a suppressed eagerness in his voice, "and it's the great pleasure I would take in showing you around, Miss, for I know every stick and stone in the town and the history thereof from the time Jacques Cartier and Champlain dropped anchor off Cape Diamond."

The girl gave no sign that she had comprehended the invitation in O'Brien's words. The latter with his gaze upon her face, went on: "There's the Cove, now, where Wolfe's soldiers landed when they attacked the French —we'll be loading the ship close by there. And on the high land just above is where the battle was fought between Wolfe and Montcalm. . . ." The man spoke interestingly and it was evident that he had an intimate knowledge of the events which made Quebec famous. With the Irishman's gift of rhetoric, his descriptions were vivid, fascinating and couched in language which bespoke some measure of education not usually associated with the trade of stevedore. Dorothy's reserve broke down as she listened with almost rapt attention.

"Sure, but I'm the awful talker, Miss," he concluded, "and me tongue clacks like a wind-mill pump, but, if your father will allow, as soon as I get me gang started on the salt ballast, I'll count it a great pleasure and honour to spend a day showing you the places I've been speaking of."

Eight bells struck and someone clattered down the cabin companion. There was the clump of heavily-booted feet on the deck above as the wheel-relief went aft. Then Victor Crosby, divested of his oil-clothes, came into the cabin where they sat.

In the bright glow from the cabin he stood respectfully hesitant—a splendid figure of a man. The Irishman glanced up at him quickly and seemed to catch his breath for an instant. An odd light came into his eyes, the large mouth compressed slightly, and a faint bulge showed in the muscles of his jaw as he rose to his feet. Dorothy swung around in her chair. "Have you met Mr. O'Brien, Mr. Crosby? Mr. Crosby is the chief officer." The mate inclined his head slightly and acknowledged the introduction in his soft voice. He did not proffer his hand, nor did O'Brien, who merely grunted. The girl glanced at the cabin clock and rose to her feet. "Time I was in bed—midnight is late aboard ship for an 'idler.' I'll bid you both good

night.” Her gaze rested on the mate for a moment and there was a hint of admiration in their blue depths which O’Brien was quick to notice. She proceeded to her room and as the stevedore made way for her, she said, “I’ll probably accept your kind offer to act as my guide around Quebec, sir. I hope you’ll be able to rest up after your long and strenuous day, in an open boat, on the river.”

IX.

The Irishman smiled. “Sure, Miss, and I’m rested already.” Both men watched her go, and when her door clicked shut, each wheeled and faced the other. There was aggressiveness in the stevedore’s attitude, his heavy jaw was thrust out, the corners of his mouth were turned down in a resentful sneer, and his hands were clenched. Crosby stood erect, his six feet of splendid manhood, a contemptuous smile on his clean-cut features and the half-closed eyes, dreamy yet alert, surveyed the other in much the same manner as one would gaze at a dog worrying a bone. For a space they stood thus and then the Irishman spoke.

“Where the divil did you spring from?” he growled.

Crosby bared his fine teeth in a smile. “I don’t suppose you are glad to see me, O’Brien,” he said in his soft tones, then significantly: “I wonder if you recall the name of the ship you and I were together on?”

The other’s eyes dropped, he seemed to waver. Nervously, his hands relaxed and groped aimlessly for the back of a chair. “The *Rienzi*?” he spoke huskily.

Crosby still smiling, answered calmly, “Aye, the *Rienzi*.” He paused and gazed steadily at the stevedore. “And say,” he continued in soft-voiced menace, “you take my tip and keep away from Miss Munro. She doesn’t want to know your kind. Mind that!”

And slowly turning, he went to his berth, leaving O’Brien standing dazed, as though stunned by an evil memory of the past.

X.

The *Wanderer* lay at the Salt Sheds discharging her ballast lading of coarse salt. Tubs, slung to yard-arm tackles, swung between dock and hold, and down inside the ship's cavernous interior, Irish and French-Canadian ship-labourers shovelled vigourously—pausing only to draw breath when the hail of "Heave up!" gave them a momentary respite ere another tub came plunging down.

O'Brien, in his working clothes, stood at the combings of the main hatch passing the signals to his winch-man. Crosby, keeping tally of the tubs of salt, loafed below the poop-break whistling quietly to himself and wondering how he would get a chance to see Dorothy. She lived aboard breakfast. During the day, she was ashore with her father, and her evenings were spent in the after cabin with her parent. The mate, desperately in love, mentally cursed the skipper's desire for his daughter's company and wished that he would drink or find some longshore attraction to release her for an hour or two.

The shore whistles blew for twelve o'clock and labour ceased for the noon meal. Crosby closed his tally book, jammed it into his pocket, and made to enter the cabin when a hail from the stevedore arrested him.

"Yes?"

The Irishman stepped unhurriedly towards him and there was a pugnacious glint in his clear blue eyes and a hard set to mouth and jaw. "Say, Crosby!" He spoke slowly, fixing the other with a hostile gaze. "I just want to tell you that I'm after takin' Miss Munro around town to-morrow, so —you—be—damned!" He tittered the last words with emphatic pauses, favoured the mate with a sneering stare, then turned on his heel and strode away.

The officer watched him leap up on the rail and descend the gangway to the dock. "The Irish swine!" he muttered angrily, the colour slowly mounting into his handsome face. "I should have banged the face off him." For a moment, the muscles of his splendid body tensed with rage and his hands clenched, then reason asserted itself and he became suddenly cool and calm. "A mighty bold man you are, my bucko, to heave your threats at me,"

he muttered. “You’re setting for Dot, no matter what happens, eh? Then I’ll spike your guns, my bully!” And he entered the cabin for dinner.

XI.

The two men worked on deck during the afternoon but neither spoke to the other. Six o'clock came and O'Brien donned his coat and went ashore. Crosby watched him with calm, calculating eyes. "Why should I bother myself about that fellow," he muttered. "She's mine, heart and soul, and this joker could never take her from me. She'd never think of him being anything better than what he is—a rough and tough Irish gaffer of a stevedore's gang. Tcha, Victor Crosby—you're a fool!" He chided himself for permitting the thing to annoy him, and spying the skipper and Dorothy coming aboard, he went to the gangway to meet them.

Captain Munro talked briefly with the mate on ship matters and then went into the cabin. Dorothy, pretty as a picture in her go-ashore clothes, gave a furtive glance after her father and turned to Crosby. She had not spoken to him alone since the night in the chart-house. "When shall I have a chance to have you to myself for a while?" he questioned eagerly. "Suppose I get a day off to-morrow, will you allow me to take you around Quebec to some of the places?"

The young woman looked perplexed. "Not to-morrow, Victor. Mr. O'Brien has invited me to go with him to-morrow. Why not another day?"

"To-morrow would suit me better, Dot," replied the other. "The second mate will relieve me and work is well in hand. I've made preparations for a day off."

"Did you speak to father?"

"No, but I'll ask his permission to-night."

Dorothy grew sober faced. "You'd have to get his permission to let me accompany you, and I'm afraid he'll refuse you. He is the kindest and best father in the world but he has some strict ideas regarding myself. Then there's Mr. O'Brien. I have accepted his invitation for to-morrow and father has given me permission to go. I can't get out of that. It would be extremely discourteous."

XII.

The mate fixed his dark eyes on hers. There was a magnetism in his gaze that seemed to dominate her. He smiled, showing his fine teeth. “I’ll fix it all up with your father and O’Brien,” he said confidently. “Leave it entirely in my hands.”

“You seem very sure of yourself, Victor,” remarked Dorothy, breaking away from his compelling gaze. “I—I’m afraid—”

He came nearer to her and caught at her gloved hands. “Tell me, Dorothy, do you love me?” He spoke in low tones, almost a whisper. “I—I *like* you, Victor,” the answer came hesitatingly.

“Would you marry me when the time comes?”

She turned towards him, smiling. “*That* is something I haven’t considered yet. You mustn’t be so pressing.”

He seemed a trifle nonplused and his face clouded. “I can hope, Dorothy?” he asked quietly.

“Hope springs eternal,” she quoted, laughing. “Possibly, when you are in command of your own ship and when my father favours you as a son-in-law, then you may ask me.” She drew her hands out of his grasp. “I must run along now,” she added, “or father will be calling for me. Good-bye for the present, and,” she paused, “good luck.”

XIII.

The mate watched her enter the cabin and then he turned and began pacing the deck, hands in pockets, and whistling softly to himself. “The little devil has me knocked galley-west,” he murmured, after a spell of promenading. “She’s as artless as they make ’em, pretty as a picture, and a rare sheet anchor for some lucky man. And Victor Crosby, if you can’t land her—?” He left the thought unfinished and leaned over the rail, staring up at the Citadel.

After supper, Crosby sought the Captain. The shipmaster was walking the poop in his carpet slippers and smoking a long clay pipe. He was a short, stocky man of fifty-five—a Cape Breton Scotchman who had built ships and sailed them and amassed a few worth-while dollars in his ventures. Almost bald and clean-shaven save for a short goatee beard, he might be taken for a prosperous farmer at first glance, but the keen steel-gray eyes framed by bushy brows were hard in expression and held the glint of command. Every line of his leathery, high-cheeked visage repulsed familiarity.

“Captain, sir!” began the mate without any hesitation. “I’d like a day ashore to-morrow to look over Quebec. The second mate’ll relieve me and the ship’s all right. Have I your permission to go?”

The skipper shot him a quick glance through narrowed lids. Without taking the pipe out of his mouth, he spoke in a rasping voice.

“Aye, Mister, you want to go ashore to-morrow? Well, ye kin go, and ye kin go for good. I’m discharging you.”

“What!” The other staggered as though shot. Consternation spread over his handsome countenance and he almost gasped the ejaculation. “Did I hear you right, sir?”

“Ye did!” laconically grunted the shipmaster, puffing away.

“In God’s name, what am I being sacked for?” questioned Crosby, his wits still floundering. “Doesn’t my work suit you?”

“I’ve had worse mates,” replied the other brusquely, resuming his three steps and a turn, “and I’ll give you a good reference if you want one.”

“But—but, sir, you must have a good reason for sending me off. What is it, sir?”

Captain Munro fixed the handsome officer with a hard stare, “I’m letting you go, Mister, because you’re paying too damned much attention to that girl of mine.”

With the information, the other seemed to recover his poise. “How do you make that out, sir? I’ve been civil and obliging only—”

“Even to the extent of making love to her,” interrupted the skipper. “My eyesight and my hearing is still good, Mister, and I’ve seen you and her lally-gagging around the decks of a night. I’m not paying mates to entertain my daughter.”

A flush spread over the officer’s features and he retorted with some heat. “Is it a crime for a man to love a woman, sir? What are your objections to me?”

XIV.

The Nova Scotian stopped in his pacing. “Who the devil are you anyhow? You’ve only been with me four months. Where d’ye hail from? Who’s yer folks? Have ye any money?”

“I’m an Englishman, sir. My father was a lieutenant in the British Navy and of good family. My mother died when I was a child and I went into the Navy as a boy. My father is now dead, but Sir Vernon Crosby, of Crosby Hall, Yorkshire, is my uncle. I have no money, but I have expectations.” He stood erect, respectful and dignified, speaking calmly. The shipmaster eyed him keenly through squinting lids.

“Uh-huh!” He was puffing at his pipe again and his words came harsh and biting. “That may be so, I won’t deny, but you’re too dern sprucey-looking to be virtuous enough for my girl. And, furthermore, with your high family connections and your British Navy service, how is it you come aboard me in Antwerp in a slop-chest rig-out and a Belgian trollop seeing you to the gangway?”

“I’m a good-living man, sir!” said Crosby indignantly.

“Well, we’ll let it go at that,” said the captain. “It don’t signify anything, anyway. The fact is I don’t want you for a son-in-law and I won’t have you for mate. You’ll clear your gear out in the morning and I’ll pay you off with a good discharge. That’ll be all, Mister.” And he waved his pipe-stem in a gesture of dismissal.

The mate was about to say something more, but he knew enough of Munro to realize that further pleading was useless. He walked to the fore end of the poop and leaned over the rail. Searching for his pipe, he found it and stuck it between his teeth unlighted. He saw the captain go below and heard Dot playing on her mandolin. The whole fabric of his hopes and desires had been swept away but he kept admirable control of himself. He must see Dorothy.

After a while, he went below to his berth. Miss Munro was in her father’s room playing and singing, and as he listened to her song, his blood seemed afire. The skipper’s harsh words repeated themselves over and over in his brain and excited him so that he quivered with suppressed anger. The blood mounted into his clear-skinned face, his fists clenched and his teeth

crunched on the pipe-stem so that it broke off and clattered to the floor. For a minute or so, he stood erect in the centre of his room, his face working convulsively, and his muscles tensed in silent fury. Then he relaxed, laughed quietly to himself, sought out a new pipe and threw himself on to his bunk, to think.

XV.

With ears intent on the snatches of conversation emanating from the captain's quarters, he smoked and devised plans for the future. Once clear of the *Wanderer* it would be difficult to see the woman he loved. He would have to get another berth soon, as his month's pay of fifty dollars wouldn't last long ashore. The outlook seemed pretty black. Captain Munro, in suddenly dismissing him, had effectually put an end to his hopes.

Then his thoughts turned to O'Brien and an idea flashed into his brain. After a moment's pondering he jumped up, brushed his dishevelled hair and put on his hat and coat. Outside of his room door, he paused and listened. Dot and her father were playing cribbage—a nightly amusement which Crosby detested. There was no chance of him seeing or communicating with her that night. Captain Munro would see to that.

From the watchman on the dock he secured the stevedore's address. It was in the lower town and not far away. Within fifteen minutes he reached the house and was knocking on the door. He noticed that the place was of a substantial character—a two-storey wooden house painted yellow and with green latticed shutters. The street was narrow and steep but it was a quiet one. Evidently O'Brien was a man of substance and, perhaps, respectability.

XVI.

A pleasant-faced elderly lady answered his knock and the mate doffed his hat politely. “I would like to speak with Mr. O’Brien, ma’am,” he said.

“Will ye step inside, Mister?”

Crosby hesitated. “No, I think not,” he replied. “Just want a word with him here.”

“Sure and it’s much the pleasanter to talk in the house than on the door-step, Mister—” the old lady began when O’Brien’s voice sounded from the hall.

“That’s all right, mother, I’ll spake to that man outside.” And the stevedore in his shirt-sleeves and with slippers on his feet came out to the front and drew the door shut as his mother retired.

“Well?” The question came harshly and the expression on the Irishman’s face was hostile and defiant.

Crosby smiled pleasantly. “Don’t be angry, Captain,” he said, in quiet tones. “I’ve come to see if you’ll do me a small service.”

“Aye?” The other’s eyebrows went up but the hostile look still remained.

“You and I were old shipmates, Captain,” continued the other ingratiatingly, “and I’m coming to you to help me out. Briefly, old man Munro is letting me go and I’ll be out of the ship in the morning. No, I’m not going to ask you to get me a job or anything of that nature, but, to come to the point, I want you to help me in seeing Miss Munro.”

O’Brien’s brows contracted in perplexity and he regarded the other with an odd look in his eyes. “Help ye to see Miss Munro?” he questioned. “And for why?”

“I’m in love with her, O’Brien,” returned Crosby frankly, “and she loves me. Her old man fired me because of that, and my chances of seeing her again are mighty small if I don’t get your assistance.”

The Irishman’s face was a study in fleeting expressions. “Uh-huh,” he said, “and how d’ye think I can help ye?”

Crosby began tapping the iron railing of the steps with his fingers and his gaze wandered down the street. With his eyes averted, he answered briefly: “Invite her ashore and give me a chance to meet her alone. You’re taking her around to-morrow. Let me take your place. She’s nothing to you, but everything to me.” His voice was tense with feeling.

The other nodded. “Uh-huh! . . . and supposin’ I don’t fall in with your scheme, what happens then?”

The mate smiled oddly and fixed O’Brien with his dark eyes. “Oh, you’ll help me, Captain,” he said confidently.

“Don’t you call me ‘Captain’,” broke in the other menacingly.

Crosby gave a short laugh. “All right, I won’t. I don’t imagine you like to be reminded of that. But, you help me, and I’ll maybe do you a favour in return.”

There was a harsh twist to the stevedore’s features at this and his words came softly as if between shut teeth. “By kaping quiet about the *Rienzi* affair, I suppose?”

“It was a nasty business, that,” returned the other significantly. “I don’t see how you could remain here if that story got around.”

O’Brien folded his arms across his chest and regarded Crosby with an expression at once defiant, determined and suggestively menacing. “Let me tell you, Crosby,” he said stridently, “that I’ll remain around here as long as I have a mind to, even though ivery man, woman and child in Quebec knew the *Rienzi* story. And, furthermore, ye’ll get no manner of help from me in meeting Miss Munro, and that’s *that*!”

The Englishman revealed his white teeth in a smile, though somewhat abashed. “Come, come, O’Brien, you’re no fool. The girl is nothing to you but a chance acquaintance. Take her around as much as possible, but give me a chance to speak with her. You’ll do that, I’m sure, for me, your old mate—of the *Rienzi*.” There was a subtle meaning in the last words which, softly spoken, veiled a threat.

“I will not!” came the decisive answer, “and there’s an end to it.” O’Brien turned and grasped the handle of the door and, before entering his home, addressed the other finally: “And now, get a skinful of bug-juice aboard of yez and spill yer *Rienzi* story all over the waterfront. It’ll make a pleasant yarn for the lumpers and sunfish to chew over. And when ye’ve done that, take me tip and clear out of Quebec, for ye’ll not draw many breaths if I get hold of ye.” And so concluding, he slammed the door shut.

Crosby stood staring at the wooden panels of the barrier for a moment. He evinced no anger at the rebuff but seemed to take it with remarkable coolness. Then his lips curled in an odd smile and he gave a jerk of the head. "Huh! I see how the land lays now. He's in love with Dot himself. . . . I'll have to play another game."

Dorothy received the news of Crosby's dismissal with a storm of tears and protestations. She had spent the day with O'Brien driving around Quebec in a *caleche* and knew nothing of what had happened. The trip around the Ancient Capital had been enjoyable, the day was ideal, and the stevedore was an attractive companion—well-informed, courteous and interesting. She liked the man very much, but the handsome Crosby dominated her thoughts and her heart fluttered and beat the faster whenever she thought of him.

Then when O'Brien had left her on the ship that evening, she noticed the absence of the mate. Her father read her thoughts and with all the sympathy and kindliness he was capable of, broke the news. "I'm sorry, Dot, my dear," he said, "but I had to do it."

"Why? why?" she stormed tearfully. "Are you demanding that I devote my life entirely to you—on these wretched monotonous voyages—divorced from my sex and all that a woman desires? And when a fine clean, upright man pays me attention and brings some pleasure into my humdrum existence, you brutally drive him away."

"But, my dear child," remonstrated the father, "I have only your best interests at heart. That fellow was not the kind of man I'd want to see you marry. You know nothing about him—"

"I know that he was kind, brave and a gentleman," interrupted Dorothy unconvinced, the tears streaming from her blue eyes. "He told me all about his family and his past life and I believe in him."

"Some queer birds fly to sea," observed the skipper sagely. "I didn't like his looks. He was too good-looking and his manners were too nice and high-falutin'."

XVII.

Dorothy sniffed disdainfully. “Commend me to a Nova Scotian sea captain for odd notions and suspicions,” she exclaimed. “They never seem to get out of their village ways and country outlook—no matter how much of the world they’ve seen. Because Mr. Crosby was handsome and polite and unlike the uncouth, homely and whiskery images you usually have as officers you immediately think there’s something wrong with him. Oh, I wish I were a man. . . . I could assert myself then.”

The father eyed her quizzically. “By Godfrey, Dot, I sometimes wish you were,” he said significantly. “I’d be better able to handle you then, but, you’re a girl, and my girl, and I wouldn’t change you.” He leaned forward and clasped her hands in his brown fists. “My dear,” he continued, looking up into her tearful eyes, his hard features softened. “I hate to hurt you, girlie, but tell me honest—did you really love that man? Honest now?”

“Ye-e-s!” The answer came half-hesitant.

“And were you prepared to marry him—go away and live with him—and leave your old father alone? Were you, Dorothy?”

She looked confused. “We-e-ll . . . I hadn’t given that matter much thought.”

“I don’t think you did, Dot,” said the father calmly. “I think you were just swept off your feet by Crosby and you didn’t think of the future. I saw what was happening and I sent him away before it went too far.”

“You’ve done that with every man that’s paid any sort of attention to me,” returned Dorothy, stubbornly. “There was poor Tom Morris at home. You dragged me down to Buenos Ayres to get me away from him. There was Jack Ainslie—that fine second mate who never breathed a word of love to me—you turned him adrift just as you dismissed Mr. Crosby. A convent life couldn’t be stricter than mine. I shall write to Aunt Etta to-night and go and stay with her.”

XVIII.

The captain patted her hands soothingly. “Don’t do anything like that, Dorothy,” he said. “Maybe I’ve seemed a mite severe, but I’ve had to be both father and mother to you. I love you better than anything else in this wide, wide world, Dorothy dear, and when you marry, your husband will have to be a real man worthy of your respect and mine—for I won’t let you go else.”

“And what would Mr. Crosby have to do to gain your approval?” She asked the question hopefully.

Captain Munro thought for a space, then his answer came crisp and decisive. “When he has commanded a ship for two years and can show me a couple of thousand dollars of his own money and introduce me to his relatives, then, by gorry, he can come and talk turkey. But not before, and that’s flat.”

In the course of time, the *Wanderer* discharged her salt ballast and was then towed over to the timber coves. Here, under the shadow of the Canadian Gibraltar, the rafts of square timber were floated alongside the ship and stowed into her holds through bow and stern ports. It was hard and laborious work, calling for skill and strength on the part of the timber stowers, and O’Brien, though boss of the outfit, toiled with his gang.

The stevedore worked “double tides.” He was on the water poling timbers before day-break and long before his men reported for work; at other times he was on the fo’-c’s’le-head at the timber tackles and Dot would hear his bull-like voice bawling: “Top up, starboard! Easy, port!” or some such command. And when a hand was required below decks, he would be down in the semi-darkness of the hold, wrestling with the great slimy timbers—prying and cant-hooking them into their appointed places. It was dangerous work, as Dorothy well knew, for she had seen one man hoisted up with both legs smashed between colliding butt-ends of ponderous timbers and the sight sickened her so that she evinced real concern for her Irish friend when he went below. And down there she had watched him toiling—a red-shirted troglodyte in the gloom of the hold, red-faced and perspiring, hairy chest and arms exposed and the great muscles bulging under his skin as he swung, turned over, and securely stowed a huge length of twenty-inch timber charging violently in through the ports.

Thus the man laboured until mid-afternoon when he would don his coat and seek her with—"It's a fine day for a little drive around, Miss, and if you don't mind, I'll be after hitching up the horse and calling for you."

There were times when the thoughts of Crosby were uppermost that she would have preferred to be alone, but the Irishman's engaging manner, his school-boyish boldness and his eagerness to proffer hospitality, caused her to accept the invitations and to submerge her feelings for the time being. Though she felt that her dream of love with the mate was over, yet nightly she prayed that she might see him again and that Fate would pave the way to grant her desires. But since he left the *Wanderer*, Crosby had never communicated with her in any manner.

Oddly enough, to her excursions with the stevedore, Captain Munro raised no objections. "A fine upstanding man," her father replied to her quizzing one day. "You'll come to no harm with him. An able man, by gorry!"

Dorothy sniffed. "Yes, indeed, a fine man, and in your good graces because he's loading the ship cheaper than any other stevedore in Quebec. A fine fool would be more fitting."

The skipper's eyes seemed to snap. "By the Great Hook Block, Dorothy, the poor devil that gets you will mate up with a rough tongue. I'm doing a great service to my fellowmen when I chase them away from you."

The ship had been loading at Wolfe's Cove for almost two weeks when Dorothy suddenly ran into Crosby. She had gone ashore unescorted to mail a letter to a girl friend and, in turning a corner, she came upon him.

"Dorothy!" He was the first to speak. "I thought my chance would come," he said, his dark eyes expressing the pleasure he felt. "I've waited around here many times hoping Fate would bring your steps this way." He clasped her hands. "This is a happy meeting, Dot."

For a moment or two she seemed bereft of speech, then regaining some measure of control, she stammered: "I—I was wondering what had become of you." She eyed him keenly—allowing her gaze to wander over his handsome features. He had new clothes on and appeared prosperous.

XIX.

They walked to the post-box together, he talking volubly, she oddly silent. “Tell me, Dorothy,” he said, “is O’Brien still paying attention to you?”

“He has been taking me around the city a few times,” she replied.

He paused and seemed to hesitate before speaking again. Then halting his steps, he turned towards her and said: “I dislike interfering with your affairs, Dorothy, but I wish you wouldn’t go around with that man.”

“Why, Victor?” Her eyes were wide in surprise.

“He’s a waster, Dot, a dissolute brute, a man of low character and morals and unworthy of your society.”

“How can you say that? What do you know about him?” There was a hint of resentment mingled with anxiety in her tone.

“I know a lot about him, Dot.”

She drew her hands away from his and repeated the question with insistence. “What do you know about him?”

He stared out over the river as if in an effort to recall the past and when he spoke his words were measured and solemn.

“It was five years ago, Dorothy, and we were together in a small barque called the *Rienzi*. He was skipper and I was mate and we were standing watch and watch together. It was my first voyage with him and my first as mate. I knew nothing about the man when I joined the ship, but I wasn’t long aboard before I found out that he drank heavily. We put out to sea and I never put in such a tough time in all my life. When he wasn’t below drinking, he was on deck abusing the crew and carrying sail if it were blowing. It was a winter passage and blowing most of the time. She was a little vessel and deeply loaded—too deep for a winter passage, and I had a session, standing his watch when he was drunk and incapable, and expecting him to capsize her or rip the spars out when he came on deck.”

XX.

"To make a long story short, Dorothy, we made the entrance to the Baltic in thick weather. O'Brien came up on deck that night, mad drunk, and began cracking on sail. During his watch, the *Rienzi* ran down a Danish fishing boat. He got panicky at this and instead of standing by and saving the poor fellows, he ordered the man at the wheel to stand on, and that in spite of the cries for help which came from the sinking craft. Four men were drowned." He paused. Dorothy shuddered and there was horror reflected in her eyes.

"When we made port," continued Crosby, "he altered the log-book and did not report the affair. He also tried to buy the silence of myself and the man at the wheel. He even threatened to kill me if I said anything. But I did, and O'Brien skipped out. Had he not done so, the Danes would have killed him. The British Consul recommended the cancellation of O'Brien's certificate as master and he branded him publicly as a coward and a disgrace to the Merchant Service and its honourable traditions. That's the story of O'Brien—the man who has been entertaining you around Quebec."

The matter-of-fact rendition seemed to paralyze Dot for a full minute and she was incapable of utterance. The fresh colour died in her cheeks and the expression on her face showed plainly that she had visioned and realized the enormity of the Irishman's crime against seafaring chivalry. "He stood on—and four were drowned!" She repeated the words in a whisper. Crosby nodded. The narration seemed to have affected him, for his handsome features were grave and his dark eyes seemed misty.

"I must get back to the ship," said Dorothy suddenly. "I must get back. I've been gone overlong."

He grasped her hands and held her. "Just a moment, Dot. I've something to tell you—

"I've been lucky. I've got command of a handsome little barque and I sail to-morrow—"

Her eyes lighted up with pleasure. "For England?" she interrupted, eagerly. "We go to Liverpool, you know."

"Well, no," he replied with some hesitation. "I'm for the Mediterranean, unfortunately."

XXI.

Dismay was revealed in her face at the answer "The Mediterranean?" she echoed. "Then we shall not see each other again, until, perhaps—" She paused.

"Perhaps what?" His eyes searched hers expectantly.

"Until you have been in command two years, and can show savings of two thousand dollars, and make father acquainted with your family."

He flashed her an odd glance. "Who said that?" he questioned sharply.

"My father."

He seemed relieved and a smile crossed his features. Then he became serious again. "I can easily do that, Dorothy, but two years is an age." He drew her suddenly towards him. "Why wait, darling?" he said quickly and in a voice vibrant with emotion. "Why wait a long and weary two years? I'm in command of a ship now."

She stared at him curiously. "What do you mean?"

"Why not sail with me now, loved one? Run away with me to-night. We can be married, perhaps, before we sail, or at the first opportunity. What do you say?"

"And leave my father, unknowing?" she exclaimed in pained surprise. "No, no, no! I wouldn't think of it!" she added decisively.

"We can go back to him, Dorothy, darling, after we are married," he said appealingly. "Don't cast my plan aside without a thought, dear. It is the only —I can't exist without you—"

"No, no, no!" She shook her head. "I wouldn't do it. You must wait and work and then ask my father."

"That's hopeless," the man cried despairingly—the keenness of a great disappointment showing in his features. Then he seemed overcome with a gust of passion. Grasping her arms with fingers that made her wince, he ground out passionately: "God's truth! I'll make you come! You can't play with me that way. You throw a hitch around me with those eyes of yours and the ways of you and make me your slave and then turn me adrift with a

vague promise . . . two years . . . because you won't leave your father. To hell with your father!"

XXII.

The girl broke from his grasp and drew back—astonishment and fear pictured on her white face. Crosby caught her again and the passion died out in his eyes and he was calm. “I’m sorry, Dorothy mine,” he said tenderly, “but I love you so. I’ve been almost mad since I left you . . . walking the streets . . . lying awake nights . . . with the vision of you branded on my soul, your voice ringing in my ears, and thinking, thinking, thinking . . . and all to no end, nothing but the dark and eternity ahead. A poor, homeless devil of a wandering sailor . . . Forgive me, darling!” His fine features were pallid under the tanned skin and his eyes reflected the agony in his heart. Her woman’s sympathy went out to him and she laid a caressing hand on his arm. “Poor Victor . . . poor Victor,” she murmured, choking. “It breaks my heart, but I cannot do otherwise. After all, two years will soon pass.”

In the dusk, he caught her to his breast and held her tightly for a full minute. Then he released her. “Good-bye, dear one . . . good-bye.”

“Good-bye, Victor! Good luck and God go with you!” Not daring to remain longer, she turned and made down the street with hurried steps, her heart throbbing, her eyes misty, while the man stood and watched her until she turned the corner.

In a daze, she picked her way out on the narrow plank walk connecting the shore with the crib-work at which the ship was lying, and entering the cabin, immediately rushed to her room. Locking the door, she threw herself down on the settee and gave full rein to grief.

XXIII.

Next morning early, the Irishman sought her at the poop-break and not seeing her there, he came down into the cabin. “Ask Miss Munro if she’ll be kind enough to see me for a minnit?” he said to the steward. The man knocked at her door and repeated the message.

“Tell that man that I have no desire to see him again!” came the answer in a tone that was distinct and decisive. The stevedore heard, and when the steward came back and was about to convey her reply, the blood was in his face and neck; he interrupted bluntly: “All right, steward, ye don’t need to say any more.” And almost blindly, he stumbled out of the cabin, muttering: “The *Rienzi*, the *Rienzi*—she’s h’ard the story!”

From the minute O’Brien first set eyes on Dorothy Munro in the *Wanderer’s* cabin, he told himself that here was a woman he desired for his own. In his passions, he was a true Celt and ready to die for an ideal. He would not realize that many obstacles were likely to bar his path, nor would he take the trouble to find out if the girl of his heart was fancy free. He had fallen in love with Dorothy at first sight, and with all of an Irishman’s impetuosity, he set both mind and body to the task of winning her. A set-back to such a man was sufficient to fan his passion into a hot flame.

Leaving the ship, he made for home. Sitting by his bed-room window, he smoked successive pipe-fulls of tobacco until the ardour of his puffing burned his tongue and he threw the pipe away. Refusing his meals, he remained in seclusion, thinking, and instead of regaining complacency as the hours passed, he worked himself into a hot fury. “Crosby told her—the swab!” he muttered fiercely. “She’d never have spoke thataways for anything else.”

XXIV.

By nightfall, all-day communion with his chaotic thoughts stirred up the devil in his Irish temperament and with a biting curse, he jumped to his feet, grabbed his hat and coat, and started for the street. “I’ll find the scum,” he growled savagely, “and whin I do, I’ll break the pretty face of him, by Judas!”

His mother met him in the hall and his anger cooled momentarily at the sight of her. “Where are ye going, Larry dear?” she asked anxiously.

“Down to the booms, mother mine. ’Tis blowing hard on the river and I want to make sure the timber don’t get adrift.” He spoke calmly, but the mother knew he lied. She placed her arms around him and looked up into his face. “Larry dear, what is the matter? Time there was when ye’d be after tellin’ me all your troubles, but since your father died and ye came home from the seafarin’, ye’ve been a strange lad.”

He laughed oddly. “Ye’ve got quare notions, machree,” he said. “Sure, an’ we don’t all kape young.”

“But you’re ragin’ at something, Larry, and you ate no meal to-day. You’re vexed in mind.” She paused, holding him. “Is it the little Nova Scotia lass what’s been vexin’ ye?” she asked softly.

He shook his head, smiling the while. “Nothing like that, mother. Timber stowin’ has lots of worries to kape a man from his food and out o’ nights. Ye’ll have to let me on my way, mother.” He bent down and kissed her and swung out into the street.

Quebec in the seventies possessed a roaring Sailor Town. The great fleets of timber ships, hundreds of them, crowded the coves and booms and disgorged a great cosmopolitan crowd of seamen—water-farers, hard men in a hard trade, denizens of worn-out ships most of them, making their bitter northern passages with the wind-mill pump and their timber cargoes keeping the ships afloat. When timber-droghers hit the beach, they were obsessed with but three desires—board and lodging, drink, and women. Quebec was amply provided with all forms of entertainment.

XXV.

O'Brien turned his steps into the sailor hangouts of Lower Town. He made first for the Triton Inn—a favourite rendezvous for mates—in the hope that he might run across the trail of the man he sought. "Whin I get him, by the curse of Crummel, I'll twist the neck off him, so I will! I'll tache him to keep a hitch around his loose tongue." And grinding his teeth in hate and fury, he strode fiercely down the narrow streets, elbowing passers-by out of his way until they turned and stared at him with curiosity and curseful resentment.

But his visit to the Triton Inn drew a blank—no one there had seen or heard of Crosby. To Paddy Malone's and Ted Healy's places he went, but their boarding-houses had never provided the *Wanderer's* ex-mate with food and shelter. Then a French-Canadian timber swinger furnished a clue. "I think I see dat feller with Louis Lachapelle de oder day. Big, dam' fine feller, *Anglais*, wit' fine face—" O'Brien waited to hear no more but set out for Lachapelle's office. This man was a ship-chandler and the Irishman found him poring over his accounts by the light of an old ship's cabin lamp in the low beamed store that he owned near Champlain Street.

"*Bon soir, m'sieur*," O'Brien greeted him and started in. "I'm looking for an English mate by the name of Crosby—Victor Crosby. He used to be mate on the Nova Scotiaman I'm loading—the *Wanderer*."

Lachapelle pushed his spectacles upon his forehead and methodically laid his pen down on the desk ere replying. "*Oui, m'sieur*, I know de man. What you want heem for, hah?"

"I want to give him something, Mister," answered the other, hopeful that lie would finally locate his man.

"Hah!" The Frenchman grunted. "I geeve heem command of a sheep de oder day—a Greek sheep. De skeeper took seeck. Meester Crosbee spik de Greek language and was well recommended to me so I put heem in charge for take de sheep to Europe—"

"The name of the vessel, Mister?" interrupted O'Brien hoarsely. "Quick the name of the vessel."

“She ees a barque—a leetle barque,” replied the other, “and her name ees —” He broke off and began deliberately searching through a file of papers. O’Brien writhed with impatience.

With painful exactitude, Lachapelle turned over a heap of store bills, reading out the master’s names affixed to them, while the Irishman leaned over his shoulder. The keen eyes of the stevedore was the first to sight the signature “Victor Crosby, Master” on a sheet the other thumbed into view. “That’s it,” almost bawled O’Brien, triumphantly. “Let me see it, Mister!” Without waiting for it to be handed to him, he whisked it out from the pile on the desk and eagerly scanned the paper for the ship’s name.

“Barque *Antonio Pereides* of Syra,” he read. Handing it back to the ship-chandler, he enquired hastily, anxiously, “Where’s she lyin’, Mister?”

XXVI.

Lachapelle cocked his head to one side and pondered. “I ti’nk dat vessel’s gone, *m’sieur*. De Captain Crosby signed hees papers yesterday and was all ready to sail. Wit’ dees hard sou’west win’ she’s gone for sure—a fine chance for get away down de reever.” “Where was she lyin’, Mister?” O’Brien was trembling now with excess of feelings in which rage and apprehension mixed.

“She load over at Duncan’s boom at Levis—.” Without waiting to hear more, O’Brien rushed out into the street again. “*Antonio Pereides*—a little barque—and Crosby’s skipper. . . . By Godfrey! I’ll hunt the river for him! Levis, he said . . . and whin I git me hands on him, I’ll kill him, s’help me!”

For a moment, he debated his course of action. “My boat! I’ll git me boat an’ shoot over to Levis an’ sarch the fleet. Maybe he ain’t gone. Godfrey’s curse! I pray he ain’t gone, the bloody. . . .” And he broke off with a string of deep-water oaths as he set out at a run to the place where his boat was tied.

It was moored inside of the boom where he was loading the *Wanderer* and after ten minutes running he reached the river bank and paused to regain his breath ere picking his way out among the logs. It was dark and blowing hard from the sou’west, and the wind had the *Wanderer* listed towards the crib and was whining in tremendous minstrelsy through the naked spars and rigging of the ship. A glimmer of light showed through the vessel’s cabin ports and the stevedore stood staring at it and wondering what Dorothy was doing then.

XXVII.

His mad anger had settled down into a sullen determination to scour the river for Crosby. Two persons dominated his brain—Crosby and Dorothy—the one a mad hate, the other a fiery love. He hated the Englishman because he had blackened him in the eyes of the girl—blackened him by poisoning her mind against him by revealing an episode in his past life. "Well, he's nipping out and he thinks he's spiked my chances, but I'll have a look for him, by the powers, and we'll see who's the better man."

He picked his way cautiously in the dark, butting into the rain and wind, towards the ship. His boat was tied almost under the *Wanderer's* stern. "A hell of a night," he growled, brushing the wet hair from over his eyes, "but the *Antonio Pereides* . . . Crosby . . . Levis." He stumbled on a little further—the ship was close at hand by now. "It's soaked to the skin ye are already," he muttered to himself, "but a swing at the oars'll warm ye up—"

He brought up suddenly at the sound of shouting from the cabin of the Nova Scotia ship. Then came a muffled report. "Now, what the dickens was that?" He listened, ears straining, nerves alert and eyes attempting to penetrate the blackness. Then came a series of shrieks—the screaming of a woman—readily distinguishable above the chattering of the water amongst the floating timber and the dull rushing sound of the wind in the *Wanderer's* lofty spars. "*Mille tonerre!*" The Irishman was leaping over the obstructions on the crib-work and racing for the ship. In the space of seconds, he gained the cap-log of the rough wharf and made a wild spring for the *Wanderer's* poop. Grasping the stanchions, he hurled himself over the rail and landed with both knees on the deck. Oblivious of the pain of his heavy fall, he jumped to his feet and ran to the after companionway.

XXVIII.

Crashing down the steps, he ran along the passage into the main cabin and in the dim glow from the turned-down lamp saw the prone body of Captain Munro, face down, on the floor. “The divil!” ejaculated the Irishman at the sight. “What’s the game here?”

He wasted no time in getting to the Captain. Turning him over, a hasty examination revealed the fact that he was knocked senseless by a blow on the head. A derringer pistol was clutched in his hand. “Now, and what the divil does this mane? Is Crosby in this—?” He had scarce given birth to the thought when a man staggered into the cabin. It was the steward, dazed, blinking in the lamp-light and with his scalp split and bleeding. “ ’E ’it me a perishin’ crack!” he whined.

“Who did? What’s happened? Where’s Miss Munro?” snapped the stevedore.

“That mate what was wiv us—Crosby. Come aboard wiv a couple of men an’ took Miss Munro off wiv them. ’It me an’ the Old Man a per—”

“Hell’s Delight!” O’Brien lifted the shipmaster in his arms and carried him over to a settee where he laid him tenderly down. “Crosby, ye say? And kidnapped the skipper’s daughter?” He rapidly scrutinized the captain’s face and the blow on his head. “He’ll come to in a few minutes.” A second examination of the heavily breathing shipmaster and O’Brien’s hazy quest of Crosby now became a definite resolve, a hunt with a real purpose, but just such a hunt as a wild, hate-maddened Irishman would be expected to try under the circumstances. . . . “Here, you!” he bawled to the steward. “Look after the skipper. Bathe his head . . . cold water . . . a slug of rum . . . hump yerself!”

XXIX.

Oblivious of the pain in his knees, he jumped from the ship's rail down on to the crib and ran for his boat. Casting the painter off, he fell into the little craft, clattering and splashing in the rain water which half-filled it, and seizing an oar, he sculled out between the floating logs and gained the open water of the river.

The chill wind and the cold rain on his face served to lower the fever of his temper and he began to think calmly. Throwing the oar inboard, he cleared the tiny boat-sail, and stepping the mast, spread the small leg-o'-mutton to the wind. Snatching at the sheet and swinging the oar into the sculling chock again, he steered the boat over towards the Levis shore. Hounded by the stiff breeze and in the grip of the out-running tide, the little craft, careening dangerously at times, leaped and plunged across the river and was coming up on the vessels anchored there almost before O'Brien realized it.

"Now what's to do?" he asked himself. "Blacker'n the Earl o' Hell's riding boots and a hunder' vessels on the Levis shore—'tis like pickin' out needles in a straw stack. An' six hunder' tons looks as big as a thousand in this here rain and dark." He started the sheet a trifle and swung off down the shore.

A big full-rigged ship loomed up ahead and his keen eyes picked out the breaking water over a raft alongside of her. With a quick jerk at the steer oar and a slackening of the sheet, he swung the racing boat away from the danger with but a foot or two to spare. "Aha! Might have stove up on that," he muttered with a glance at the almost submerged timber. "Must kape me wits about me. River's full of this stuff and with this wind and tide there's liable to be a lot of timber loose and adrift. Heaven grant that I meet up with none of it this night."

XXX.

Heedless of the cold and his sodden clothing, he drove the boat through the dark with the water in her half-way up to the thwarts and washing over his ankles. “Now,” he said aloud, “this Crosby must be underway and slidin’ for the Gulf. He ain’t goin’ to hang around with the chances of being nabbed by a tug or a police boat. With this fair wind and ebb tide, he’ll be slippin’ for sea as fast as his hooker will go—that’s certain, so don’t waste any more time huntin’ him among these packets to an anchor.”

He continued on for a space and then gave vent to an ejaculation. “Shure, now, but I’m the great fool,” muttered O’Brien. “How’re they goin’ to find out what hooker this Crosby is aboard of? Didn’t I just find it mesilf by a lucky fluke? And how’s Old Man Munro a-goin’ to set the police on the trail whin he don’t know? And, you, Larry O’Brien, ye didn’t have sinse enough to tell that steward to have the *Antonio Pereides* stopped at the mouth of the Gulf by a gun-boat.” He snorted. “Ah, well, maybe ye’ll niver catch him. Ye’ll thin have time to do your telegraphin’ for warships.”

The lights of Levis vanished in the gloom and he headed for the Isle of Orleans and the South Channel. It was rougher as the river opened out and the weather called for a cool head and a steady hand on the steering oar. Several times the boat escaped destruction by the stevedore’s eyesight and hair-breadth shaving of drifting timber. To any but an expert riverman, the trip in the dark would have been a nightmarish journey—a perilous adventure.

XXXI.

As time passed, O'Brien began to feel the chill of the wet clothing on his body and his knees pained him severely. Physical discomfort began to excite reason and he wondered where he was driving to and what he was going to do if his quest was successful.

"You're a fool," said Reason, "a crazy, impetuous fool chasing a shadow. If you catch up with Crosby's vessel, what will you do?"

"Keep on, Larry me lad, keep on," advised the Celtic impulse which knows rhyme but not reason, "you may catch him, and if you do, let things shape themselves according to opportunity."

"Who are you after?" questioned Reason, puzzled.

"I'm after Crosby—no, Dorothy—no, Crosby. Hell! I'm after both, but I'm out to bring the girl back—"

"Perhaps she went voluntarily," suggested Reason.

"I heard her scream," asserted Impulse, "and, by gorry, whether she went free-will or not I'm for seeing her again and finding out who's her fancy man."

"If it should be Crosby—?" hinted Reason.

"Thin I'll kill him!" declared Impulse.

"Yis, be dad, if she choses him, I'll kill the swine, for he ain't fit to have her. He's rotten somewhere. But I h'ard her scream and that's enough for me," he cried aloud. "I'll chase the son ov a dog to hell an' gone!" A creature of Impulse, truly, with a mad hate and a mad love urging him on, supplying the fire of determination, and ready to risk all for a hazy purpose.

The lights of Grosse Isle were abeam when O'Brien looked at his watch. It was half-past two in the morning and he had been sailing for hours. He was chilled to the marrow and his knees were swollen and painful. Then Grosse Isle lights vanished in a squall of rain and he was forced to belay the sheet and bail the water out of the boat. This task kept him employed for about ten minutes. On resuming his lookout again, he saw the glimmer of a light close ahead. A burst of wind shot him up under the counter of a white-hulled vessel with a round stern. She was under canvas and bound out, and

in the gloom, the Irishman's straining eyes read the black-lettered name and hailing port—*Antonio Pereides*—Syra.

" 'Tis him, by the powers o' Blazes!" he ejaculated gleefully. The tide was on the turn and the deeper vessel was beginning to feel the resistance of the flood. The stevedore, in his light boat, drove upon the weather beam of the barque, and came alongside.

XXXII.

Without any plan of action, he unshipped the mast and clewed up the sail, grabbed the boat-painter and leaped into the barque's main channels. Grasping a lanyard, he tumbled over the rail on to a deck-load of spruce deals and ran aft. Strangely enough, not a soul seemed to notice his coming aboard.

Up on the short poop he strode boldly and made for the cabin entrance. There was a man steering at the wheel and someone, not Crosby by the build of him, was lounging over the lee rail on the other side of the house. In the dark, O'Brien's presence was unnoticed. "No pilot, and a fine lookout they're kapin'," he murmured. Slipping quietly down the cabin ladder, he found himself in a dark alleyway aft of the main apartment. There was a light in the cabin and he could hear voices.

". . . must go on deck, now, Dorothy, but I've done this because I couldn't exist without you." The Irishman recognized Crosby's voice. "Th' ruddy sweep," he muttered viciously.

"You had no right to do this." It was Dorothy speaking. "I hate you! You —you beast!" She was sobbing.

"Don't speak like that, sweetheart," said the other appealingly.

"Don't talk to me! Go away! I hate you! I could kill you!" And she burst into a frenzy of hysterical weeping.

"Now, by th' powers," muttered O'Brien, "I feel me timper risin'. I'm for wringin' that Crosby's neck right this very minnit." He gave his belt a hitch and buttoned his coat. Clenching his fists, he stepped out into the cabin.

XXXIII.

The Irishman's soul was possessed by a wild fury and the blood was in his head when he entered the apartment. His roving glance centered on the two occupants to the exclusion of all else. He saw Dorothy crouched on a settee, her hair down over her shoulders, red-eyed and weeping, and but partially dressed, while Crosby was standing up facing him, consternation and amazement on his fine features.

"Hah! I've got ye now, Crosby!" Roaring the words, the stevedore advanced with a rush, arms outspread and fingers ready to grip the other's throat. Fear flashed into the Englishman's face for an instant as O'Brien leaped towards him, but he kept his wits and dodged to the other side of the cabin table as the Quebecker crashed against it in his mad drive. Lugging out a pistol from his pocket, Crosby cocked it and started shouting frantically in a foreign tongue. Heedless of the levelled weapon, O'Brien was preparing for a leap across the table when there came a scream from Dorothy. He hesitated for a moment and turned his eyes towards her, then something crashed down on his head and he remembered no more.

A short, thick-set, black-whiskered man appeared at Crosby's frantic shouting and swinging a heavy leather sea-boot had dropped the stevedore like a stunned ox. For almost a minute, both men stood still regarding the fallen Irishman, silent save for their excited breathing and Dorothy's frightened whimpering. Then Crosby laid the pistol down on the table and came around to where his adversary lay prone on the cabin floor.

"You came in time, Peter," he muttered, stooping down to examine the unconscious O'Brien. "The beggar would have had me in a few seconds if you hadn't laid him out—" He broke off at a grunt from the black-whiskered man and looked up at him. Then he rose quickly erect and wheeled towards the girl.

"Just—just you—you st-stand still!" she was stammering. While the two men were looking the stevedore over, she had slipped across and picked up the pistol from the table and was pointing the muzzle, somewhat waveringly, in their direction.

XXXIV.

The Englishman smilingly stepped towards her, cool and unafraid. “Let me take that, Dot,” he said calmly.

“I’ll shoot—I’ll shoot!” almost screamed the other. The man stepped before the menacing muzzle, there was a click as Dorothy pulled the trigger, and Crosby’s hand darted out and closed over hers. “There’s nothing in it, Dorothy,” he said with a short laugh. “Let me take it . . . and you would have shot me,” he added, in hurt surprise, gently disengaging the weapon from her fingers.

She glared at him. “Yes, I would have shot you! I’m—I’m sorry it wasn’t loaded.” She drew away from him, defiant.

“What will I do with this feller?” the other man broke in, pushing the body of the Irishman with his foot. “Better drop him over the side—”

“You dare do that!” the girl advanced and thrust herself between the two men, her eyes blazing. “Murderers!” she continued scornfully. “You’d kill him, would you?”

“We wouldn’t kill him, Dot,” said Crosby soothingly. “If my mate hadn’t knocked him out, he’d probably have killed me. What else could we do? Be reasonable, dear.”

The girl dropped down on her knees beside O’Brien and parted the hair away from an ugly bleeding wound on the head. “Bring me some water and clean rag,” she commanded of Crosby. Almost humbly, he went and fetched them.

When she had dressed the wound and swathed the Irishman’s head in a bandage, Crosby spoke, “I’ll look after him now, Dot. I’ll place him in a bunk and make him comfortable. You’d better go to the room I’ve prepared for you, and you may lock the door. The key is inside.” He smiled oddly as she favoured him with a glance of withering contempt. “Good night, sweetheart,” he added as she proceeded to leave his presence. “Pleasant dreams!” And he bowed low.

XXXV.

When the click of a turning key betokened that she had entered the berth, Crosby stepped over to the lee alleyway and opened the door of the mate's room. The man was sitting inside waiting. "Get me a pair of bracelets and leg-irons," he said. "We can't have this joker loose when he comes to. We'll place him in a bunk in the second mate's room—"

"Why don't you heave him over the side?" growled the other. "Plenty trouble he'll make for us." The fellow spoke with a strong foreign accent. "Say," he added as an afterthought. "Why don't you make away with him? Some of these days that *Rienzi* business—"

"Shut up about the *Rienzi*," interrupted the Englishman brusquely. "I won't do away with him. He's a friend of the young lady and I don't wish to cause her any more pain. Rout out these irons—first thing we know he'll come to and raise a rumpus."

The mate grumbled and proceeded to hunt out the irons from amongst a miscellaneous collection of junk in a locker. "You're courting trouble," he growled surlily.

Crosby laughed. "We've not only courted it, Peter, but we've got it coming after us hot-foot."

"I mean that we're in for it. All Quebec knows about this kidnapping business by now. When I saw that man come into the cabin, I knew that the gaff was blown—"

"And what's likely to happen?" enquired the mate apprehensively.

"Anything's likely to happen. We're still in the river and a tug full of police could overhaul us. They can use the telegraph and have the barque stopped by a man-o-war in the Gulf." He paused. "I think you killed that steward when you hit him," he added, significantly.

"I didn't hit him hard enough for that," retorted the other indignantly.

"He wasn't breathing when I last saw him," said Crosby. "He must have had a paper skull. Some men have."

Peter desisted from his rummage in the locker and his face turned fearful. "You're making the joke now—?"

“I was never more serious in my life,” said Crosby calmly. “You hit him pretty hard. He dropped like a log.”

The mate was visibly concerned. “Do you think that he might have died?” he asked the question stutteringly.

Crosby made a doubtful gesture. “Can’t say for sure, but when I left the cabin I gave him a squint and he looked a goner to me. But get these irons out first. We’ll talk this other business over afterwards.”

XXXVI.

The manacles were fetched out and snapped on O'Brien's wrists and ankles and the two men carried him and placed him into a lower bunk in the second mate's room. "He's safe for now," said Crosby briefly. He closed the door and locked it from the outside.

"Now, Peter, there's work to do to-night," he continued. "Turn the hands out and give her all the sail she's got. Then get some paint and blot out the ship's name. You'd better give her topsides a coat of black paint—"

"But it's wet and dark," protested the other.

"You'll find it both wet and dark when you come to the River Styx after your neck has been stretched in a Quebec jail-yard," observed Crosby grimly. "Get sail and paint on her, Peter. Soon as daylight comes there'll be a thousand eyes looking for a white-painted barque by the name of *Antonio Pereides*—the mate of which is wanted for the murder of a ship's steward in Quebec."

O'Brien came to his senses shortly after he was placed in the bunk. He felt wretchedly ill; every bone and muscle in his body seemed to be aching; his head throbbed with pain, and the least movement of his knees became an excruciating agony. He was a long time regaining his comprehension of affairs but when he felt the irons on his wrists and ankles he knew that Crosby had won the first move in the game. "Wonder he didn't heave me overboard," he muttered. "Well . . . s'long's I'm living, the worse for him. But, in future, I won't let me timper overcome me good sinse. I've been a fool—a blunderin' blind fool jammin' me head into the lion's jaws."

XXXVII.

In an hour or so, his brain cleared and he began to think coherently. He wondered how Dorothy Munro was faring and the thought seemed to catch him at the throat. One thing he was certain of and that was that she had not run away voluntarily. He recalled her words to the handsome Englishman —"I hate you! I could kill you!" and the recollection gave him an odd sensation of pleasure. "A pair of wild-cats ye have aboard, Crosby, me lad," he murmured, "and though I'm coopered up and have me claws drawn, yet me brains aren't dead by any manner o' means. I'll be afther settin' thim to do more work than they did whin I was chasin' afther ye."

Six bells struck and Crosby paid him a visit. He gave O'Brien a keen scrutiny. "I'm glad to see that you're all right," he said with a pleasant smile, "but you're a very foolish man."

The other gave a contemptuous snort. "There are bigger fools aboard this hooker," he replied sullenly. "You've got yourself into a fine mess, Crosby."

"Indeed?" Crosby sat down on a camp stool and nonchalantly blew a cloud of smoke from his pipe.

"Yis, indeed," continued the other. "Ye can't get clear of anny divil's trick like this, Mister Man. Clubbing Old Man Munro and forcibly abducting his daughter is a serious crime, and 'twas unfortunit for you that me and the waterfront policeman should have been down by the wharf at the time ye staged yer little show."

"Ah," Crosby's face became perceptibly graver but he smoked calmly on.

"Ye should have thought a bit afore you tried this play, Crosby," continued the Irishman. "The Gulf of St. Lawrence ain't the open ocean. There's only three holes for yez to get out—the Straits of Belle Isle, the Cabot Straits and the Gut of Canso. Ye won't try Canso, that's sure; Belle Isle will have the cruiser *Hyacinth* a-watchin' for yez, and the gun-boat *Tulip* will pick yez up in Cabot Straits. You're jammed in a clinch, Mister Man, and your capture is only a matter of days. For killing Cap'en Munro—you'll hang." To himself, O'Brien thought—"That's something to kape ye worrying over."

Crosby started, “Killing Captain Munro?” he repeated in surprise. “What d’ye mean? I only gave him a light tap with a belaying-pin—”

“A hefty tap, Mister,” returned O’Brien, watching the other keenly. “You stove the back of his skull in. He passed away in my arms—”

“That’s a damned lie, O’Brien!” ejaculated Crosby, rising to his feet. “I’ll—”

“All right, all right, don’t fly into a timper, me bold bucko,” said the stevedore irritatingly. “Ye don’t have to believe me, but ye can’t help believin’ that there’s telegraphs and warships and that ye’re not out of the Gulf yet. I give yez not more than two days liberty.”

The big Englishman favoured him with a sneering smile. “You must think I’m simple—”

“I do,” interjected the Irishman with a snigger. “Good looks and good sinse don’t travel in company wid a man.”

XXXVIII.

The other affected not to notice the interruption. "—to swallow a yarn like that. Huh!" He gave a short laugh. "I'll send your breakfast in, Irish. Breakfast in bed, eh? How's that for hospitality? Sorry I can't take the ornaments off your wrists." He made no further remark but abruptly left the room.

The stevedore followed him with his eyes and then grinned silently. "You're trying to pass it off wid a bold face," he said to himself, "but I'll bet you're scared stiff. May I be forgiven for tellin' lies, but I'll have ye lookin' forty ways for Sunday, me bucko, afore I'm through wid you."

When Crosby went on deck, he immediately altered the barque's course and hauled her away from the south shore and more to the northward where traffic and habitation were scarce. The wind was blowing fresh and dead aft, and the little vessel, with yards square and all sail that could be set was storming down the wide and noble river at a ten knot clip. The mate, spurred by fear of what might have happened, had, by dint of bullying and physical persuasion, successfully turned the hands to work at painting the barque's topsides, and Crosby was busily engaged in lettering strips of canvas with the simple name "Lion". Two of the strips were nailed on both bows when completed, while another, with the hailing port "London" was tacked across the counter. To a casual observer the white-hulled *Antonio Pereides* of Syra, Greece, was masked in the black sided *Lion* of London, Britisher.

As painting operations in the dark had been patchy and too obvious, Crosby kept his crew busy during the morning obliterating the "holidays" or blank spots, while the mates worked overside also brushing in a wide yellow band along the sheer strake. The disguise would be very effective.

XXXIX.

While all hands were thus engaged Miss Munro stole quietly out of her room and over to that in which O'Brien was confined. She tried the door and finding it locked, tapped discreetly on the panels. "It's me—Miss Munro," she said softly. "Are you there, Mr. O'Brien?"

"I'm here, sure enough, Miss," came the answer. "And how be you this bright and summery morning?"

"Did you see my father?" came Dot's anxious query.

"I did, and he's alive and kicking, Miss, though for purposes of me own I'm making out that fri'nd Crosby killed him."

She seemed relieved. "What can we do, Mr. O'Brien?"

A muffled chuckle came from the interior of the room. "A whole lot, Miss," came the answer. "I'm trussed up and pretty useless physically, but I have a smooth tongue and some imagination. I'll have him cock-eyed wid me blarney afore many moons—see if I don't—and I'll have this ship in a torment fore and aft afore she's out of the Gulf."

"But what can I do?" the girl asked hurriedly.

"Jest kape fri'ndly with him—" The steward was coming down the cabin companion. With a warning "Sh!" Dorothy stepped swiftly away from the door and entered her own berth.

"Ta-ra-ra! ta-ra-ra!" hummed the Irishman cheerfully when she had gone. But Dorothy was anything but cheerful, though, oddly enough, she entertained no great fear of Crosby. The man was madly in love with her, she knew, and the knowledge seemed to inspire her with confidence in her ability to handle him. She had hopes of inducing the Englishman to land her somewhere or place her on board some inbound ship. O'Brien too would have to be released—she would demand that. In her own mind she pictured Crosby as being pliant enough to accede to her wishes if she insisted—she could not, and would not, give him credit for being so ruthless and determined as to carry out his mad scheme. Victor Crosby was a gentleman.

In the course of the morning, the second mate, a Frenchman, unlocked the door and came into the room and prepared to turn into the upper bunk

above where O’Brien lay. He favoured the captive with a friendly grin. “De skipper he’s catch his girl all right, *m’sieu*. You no have de luck—”

XL.

The Irishman glanced at him through narrowed lids. “Yes, he’s got the young lady all right,” he answered in French, “but to kill the papa—ah, Mon Dieu, but that’s the *mauvaise affaire*!”

The other’s eyes opened wide in astonishment. “Kill the papa?” he ejaculated in his native tongue. “Who did?”

“Why, your *capitaine*. Killed the papa and stole the daughter—a bad business, *mon ami*.” The Irishman looked grave.

“*Sapristi!* I did not know that. And you, *m’sieu*, are you not the young woman’s fiance who came in pursuit? Our captaine said she was being forced to marry you—”

O’Brien’s eyebrows went up. Crosby was evidently an adept in prevarication also. “*Non, non, mon ami*,” he replied positively. “Your *capitaine* is a liar. The young lady is nothing to me. I am a police officer. I came to arrest your *capitaine* for murder.”

The Frenchman paused in the act of disrobing and stood regarding the manacled Irishman in open mouthed surprise. The latter continued, speaking French. “Your *capitaine* is a criminal—a bad man. He is wanted for many crimes.” He stopped and asked suddenly. “Were you with the *capitaine* when he killed the young lady’s papa?”

The other shook his head violently. “*Non, non!* The mate and two men, Greeks, went with him. I stand by the ship and get the anchor up ready to sail.”

“I’m glad of that for your sake, *m’sieu*,” said O’Brien, “for you look like an honest man. You won’t be jailed when the war ships catch this barque at the Straits. I’ll remember you.”

“Warships?” The simple Frenchman seemed bewildered.

“But yes,” explained the Irishman. “We telegraphed for the warships to stop this vessel down in the Gulf. That’s why your *capitaine* is painting the ship.”

XLI.

As the second mate divested himself of his clothing preparatory to turning into his bunk, the stevedore's glib tongue and fertile imagination fashioned a rare story. So impressed was the officer that he sat on the settee listening and asking questions until O'Brien felt that inspiration was flagging and that it was time to call a halt ere he over-reached himself. "Go and sleep now," he said, "and treat me as an enemy when your *capitaine* is around. But, when the warships overhaul you, I will look after you. In Quebec, you know, *mon ami*, the laws are severe, and they hang those who assist murderers to escape."

Slowly, the dull witted Frenchman clambered into his berth and for a long time afterwards O'Brien could hear him tossing and turning. The stevedore lay on his back laughing silently.

An hour later, Crosby came down and looked in upon him. "Sorry to have to keep you ironed, O'Brien," he said loudly, "but you're too dangerous to have loose aboard here. But, I'll put you ashore somewhere—"

The Quebecer gave an irritating snigger. "Your confidence is amazing, me man," he observed, "but ye'll never get clear of the Gulf no matter how much ye paint and disguise the hooker. There's gunboats waiting for yez down the Gulf and every steamboat out of Quebec and Montreal will be kapin' an eye skinned for yez. Crackin' her old man's skull is what cooked your goose, old cock. Ye misjudge yer own stringth—"

The handsome Englishman looked anxious and a shadow seemed to cross his face. "Oh, that be damned for a yarn, Irish," he growled. "You can't stuff or scare me with that story—"

"He died in me arms," declared the other seriously and fixing Crosby with a clear, unflinching gaze.

"Look here, you blackguard," snapped Crosby with a show of temper, "if I hear any more of that from you, so help me, I'll heave you over the side. Now, that'll do!"

"Why don't ye cast me loose?" jibed the stevedore, but Crosby slammed the door shut and went on deck.

XLII.

Scarce had he gone when O'Brien had another visitor in the person of the mate, Peter. "Shure and the great DuBarry is afther holding a bed-room audience," observed the Irishman when the man came in. Something familiar in the black-whiskered visage seemed to awaken a cell in the stevedore's memory, but it was a fleeting thought and it passed unretained. "And what can I do for you, me fri'nd?"

"Tell me, Mister," the other enquired somewhat anxiously. "Was the steward dead when you left the Bluenose ship?"

"The steward?" O'Brien did sonic quick thinking. "Who told you that? Why do you ask?"

The black-whiskered man hesitated before replying. "The *capitaine* say the steward dead?"

The stevedore had his line of action figured out. "Ah, the captain told you that to frighten you," he replied. "The steward is all right, Mister, but your captain is the murderer. He killed the young lady's father. The warships are going to stop this barque at the mouth of the Gulf. Your captain will hang."

Peter made a queer grimace at the information but seemed relieved.

The other continued. "I suppose you know that you can be hung too for assisting a murderer to escape?"

"No, I not believe that," came the half-doubtful answer.

The captive assumed a grave expression. "Let me tell you about the skipper of the *Good Hope*. He shot a man in a saloon in Quebec last year and skipped away aboard his ship. A gun-boat overhauled him off Gaspe and brought him and his crew back. The captain and his two mates—they knew about their skipper's crime—were all tried and hung. The crew each got twelve months' imprisonment." He paused to watch the effect of the cold-blooded lie and added: "The British North American laws are very severe, and the Gulf is full of gunboats."

XLIII.

The mate curled his huge mustaches. “I think you tell one big dam’ lie, Mister,” he said calmly.

O’Brien’s face took on a pained expression; for a moment the elusive thought of a minute before plucked at the gates of recollection. “This black-mugged dago sticks in me mind somewhere,” he mused. “Where have I seen him before?” Failing to cajole the time and place from the mists of memory, he gave the man a cold stare and said brusquely: “Go away. I don’t want to talk to you any more.”

“Yes, Mister, one big dam’ lie!” The mate gave vent to a short laugh and went out.

“You’re a tough nut,” muttered the Irishman when he had gone, “but I’ll bet I’ve got you thinking. What a fine thing it is that most of the men that use the sea are half-witted . . . and mainly spineless,” he added.

The steward, a young Greek, brought him his dinner—placing it on a camp-stool alongside the bunk. The barque, running with square yards, was as steady as a house and O’Brien contrived to eat without much trouble in spite of his manacled wrists. As he consumed the meal, he could hear voices in the cabin. Miss Munro and Crosby were dining together and conversing amicably. Dorothy was carrying out orders. When the Greek came to take away O’Brien’s tray, the stevedore engaged him in conversation. The man could speak and understand English. “Do you know that your captain killed the young lady’s father last night? I’m a police officer . . .” Within ten minutes, the young Greek went back to his pantry with his head buzzing and full of portentous information. “That’ll fix things up for’ard,” mused the Irishman. “That steward’ll bust if he don’t get for’ard and spill his yarn to the hands, and it won’t lose anything in the telling. Crosby is more of a fool than I thought he was. He should have gagged me.” He grinned and turned over on his side. “I’ll have a bit snooze now while me lies sink in.”

XLIV.

The Irishman awoke to find Victor Crosby standing in the room. “You here again?” growled the stevedore. “Shure I thought I had the nightmare.”

“Look here, O’Brien,” said the other pleasantly. “I don’t like to have you all ironed up and a prisoner. If you’ll give me your word of honour to behave and not attempt to interfere with me and my plans, I’ll release you and have you placed aboard another vessel or landed ashore. What d’ye say?”

The stevedore sniggered in a manner which aroused the Englishman’s ire. “I say no!” he answered decisively. “I don’t want to be released. I want to be discovered like this when the blue-jackets board the ship. If I can get loose, I’ll be afther killing yez for what ye’ve done and what ye’ve said about me around Quebec. And that’s that.” The door of the berth was open and O’Brien had an intuition that Miss Munro was within earshot.

Crosby appeared nonplused by the other’s answer and when he spoke again his tones were petulant. “What did you want to horn in to my affairs for?” he questioned. “You know I love Miss Munro. All I have done was because of my love for her.” His speech was louder than was necessary and the quick-witted Celt noted the fact.

“I don’t care to treat with murderers,” almost bawled the captive. “I’m goin’ to see yez hung if I don’t kill yez mesilf. You killed her daddy and you expect her to love yez—”

The other man’s eyes blazed. “I didn’t kill him, you lying swine!” he shouted in indignant temper. “Say that again, you hoosier, and I’ll choke you where you sprawl—”

“All right, all right, don’t lose yer timper!” said O’Brien coolly. “But it’s a bad business all the same—a bad business. And to think that that nice girl should ever have taken up with the likes of you.”

“That sounds well coming from the former master of the *Rienzi*,” maliciously observed the other. “A man of your reputation is well fitted to judge—”

“Yis,” said the Irishman deliberately, and he favoured the *Antonio’s* captain with a contemptuous stare. “I can judge men. You’ve got a fine

appearance, Mister, and fine ways with yez, but there's a snarl in yer brain and you're rotten inside somewheres. There's a dirty streak in ye. Ye're not a whole man."

"You—you—" Crosby stuttered and raised his great fist.

"That's right! Hit me and show yer dirty streak!" shouted O'Brien, glaring defiantly at him. "Go on! Give me a hammerin' while I'm tied hand and foot! Beat the devil out of me! I dare ye—"

XLV.

Crosby gritted his teeth in an effort to restrain his temper and the other continued taunting him in a voice that resounded all over the ship. “You’re afraid, you waster! Hit me—”

“Stow your jaw, you bawling brute!”

“You murdered Cap’en Munro and ran off wid his daughter!” roared O’Brien, “and the warships and police are hunting ye. Ye’ll be afther getting yer poor sailors in trouble for helping ye escape the law. Murderer—” Smack! The Englishman’s fist caught O’Brien on the mouth. The stevedore’s eyes blazed and he writhed and struggled at his irons. With the blood streaming from his lips, he continued his taunting shouts: “Murderer! Hit me again! I can’t strike back! Go on, hit me again! Why don’t you kill me like ye killed Old Man Munro—”

There was a patter of feet outside and Dorothy stood in the doorway, her face white with fear and anger. “What are you doing to that poor man?” she almost screamed. “You coward—you brute! Striking him while he is defenceless—”

Crosby, red-faced and panting with rage, his fine nostrils dilating and his dark eyes alight with fury, regained control of himself by an effort. “I’ll put you ashore on Anticosti, O’Brien.” Turning to Dorothy, he commanded: “Go to your room, please!”

“I won’t!” She stamped her foot determinedly.

“Go to your room, I said!” He advanced towards her.

“Do as he says, Miss Munro,” interposed the Irishman, “or he’ll be afther murdering you like he did yer poor daddy.” And behind Crosby’s back, he gave an expressive wink. The girl caught the signal, paused irresolute, and with a well-simulated look of horror, shrunk from the angry Englishman and ran to her room.

“I’ll chuck you on the beach at Anticosti to-morrow, Mister,” said Crosby to his captive. And he too retired.

O’Brien rubbed his swollen mouth with his manacled hands. “Thank the Lord I’ve got good teeth,” he muttered. “Gorry, but I got him stirred up that

time. All hands heard me roarin'. Fine! Fine!"

XLVI.

For the rest of the afternoon he was undisturbed. The steward brought him some supper and as he placed it upon the camp-stool, he whispered: “Is it true dat de warships look for us in de Gulf?”

“Sure thing, me lad,” answered the captive. “You’ll be in irons wid a blue-jacket standin’ over yez wid a bayonet inside forty-eight hours. All hands is in trouble for helpin’ yer skipper escape the law.” The steward looked grave but said no more, as Crosby and the mate came into the room at this juncture.

“I’m going to place you in a safer spot, Irish,” said the former. “You’ll go down in the lazarette where you can shout and roar all you have a mind to. Out with him, Peter!”

The stevedore protested strenuously at the move. Seizing the bunk boards in his strong fingers, he clung tenaciously, bawling his taunts and threats, while the two men tugged and hauled him out of the berth.

“And you’ll swing too, Mister Mate,” he cried, “for helping this murderer escape the law. Don’t forget the warships at Cabot Straits and Belle Isle! You’re bottled up like rats in a trap! Ha, ha,—rats in a trap!” And yelling and struggling, he was dragged out through the cabin and unceremoniously tumbled down through the lazarette hatch on to a pile of old sails. Ere the hatch slammed on him, Crosby spoke, “I’m really sorry, O’Brien, to do this, but for safety’s sake, it must be done.”

In the black darkness of the store-room the stevedore grinned to himself. “I’m thinkin’, me bold lad, that you’re afther lockin’ the stable door whin the horse is gone. Gorry, now, but I wish I had a smoke.” He curled himself comfortably on the canvas and went to sleep as calmly as though he hadn’t a care in the world.

XLVII.

The second night on board the *Antonio Pereides* found Dorothy Munro in a chaotic state of mind. Here were two men seeking her favour—both evidently ready to risk anything for her sake. She still retained a deep regard for Victor Crosby and while she resented his high-handed tactics, yet in her woman's heart she thrilled somewhat at his boldness in abducting her. There was something medieval in it—an echo of knightly times—and as she pondered over all that had transpired since she had been carried off, there was nothing in the Englishman's actions that she could characterize as being despicable. He had behaved towards her with courtesy and consideration, and she had to admit that she was attracted to him. But to fall in with his plans and marry him. . . .? She hesitated to extend the thought, for there was O'Brien—an Irish dare-devil, impetuous, nimble-witted, courageous, and she knew, as madly infatuated with her as was the Englishman. She liked O'Brien, more so since his mad adventure in pursuing Crosby, and she appreciated all that he was enduring on her behalf, but her regard for him seemed to chill when the ugly story of the *Rienzi* came to mind. It was the bucket of water that quenched the flame—the ugly shadow that obscured the light.

The two men were rivals, but the Irishman had exhibited the more bitterness. The Englishman had treated him roughly, she admitted, but what else could he do? It was a difficult situation for Crosby to meet, yet putting herself in his place, Dorothy believed he was justified in keeping O'Brien confined until he was able to place him ashore. But when the stevedore was landed, Dorothy would insist on being landed also. Crosby had not yet captured her heart.

A respectful tap came on her door and she answered with a questioning "Yes?"

"It is I, Dorothy, I want to speak to you."

She opened the door and Crosby stood in the entrance. "Will you be kind enough to step outside a minute?"

She entered the cabin and he pointed to a chair. "Please be seated, Dot," he said courteously. Without any preliminaries, he began. "You've heard O'Brien accusing me of killing your father. That is not so. When I—er—

took you away that night your father shot at me with a pistol and I threw a wooden belaying-pin at him. He was only stunned. O'Brien is lying when he says I killed him. He is trying to frighten me, but it won't work." He paused and searched her face with his eyes. It was impassive, but its calmness assured him that the girl was not inclined to believe the stevedore's accusation of murder. "Now, as to O'Brien," he continued. "I don't want to treat him roughly, but I wouldn't dare have him loose on the ship. I offered to release him—"

"You're afraid of him," interrupted Dorothy with a slight sneer. Crosby met her scornful glance with a steady clear-eyed gaze. "I *am* afraid of him, Dot," he admitted without hesitation. "The man has a murderous hatred for me and would kill me at the first opportunity. I *could* handle him, but it would be brutal and you would condemn me for it. I want to gain your love and respect—not lose it."

XLVIII.

Her lips curled. “Do you think your behaviour so far is likely to win my regard?”

“When a man is in love, he will stick at nothing,” replied the other. “I would risk anything to have you for my own.” He stopped for a moment and then burst forth in impassioned appeal: “Why act this way, Dorothy? You know I love you madly. We can fix this business up all right and straighten matters out with your father. At Gibraltar, we can get married, if you’ll agree. I’ll send back a letter to your father by the first inbound ship advising him and asking for his forgiveness—”

Dorothy parried the question. “What do you propose to do with Mr. O’Brien?” Crosby looked annoyed. “I’ll land him on Anticosti by the light-house on West Point. He can easily get back to Quebec from there.”

“Will you land me there too?” The girl watched his face keenly.

“No, Dot, I won’t!” he answered decisively. “Should I do that, you’d be out of my life for ever. With the two of us wandering across the oceans of earth there is small chance of my seeing you again. I have you here now and I’m going to keep you until you consent to marry me. On the *Wanderer* you liked me—”

“I hate you now,” she snapped, her eyes flashing, “and I’ll never marry you!”

Crosby’s handsome face reflected his admiration of her as she appeared then—a tempestuous little beauty. When in a contrary and rebellious mood, she seemed ten times more desirable to his mind. “I will try and bring the old affection back,” he said simply. “As for O’Brien, I will put him ashore.” He rose to his feet, reached for her hand and drew it to his lips. But ere he could accomplish the caress, she hastily withdrew it and flounced back into her berth—slamming and locking the door.

XLIX.

In spite of her declarations, Dorothy knew now that her heart contradicted her tongue. Crosby was winning the game. “I—I guess I’ll go to Gibraltar,” she mentally decided, and with the faltering decision came a strange feeling of elation as though a great light had succeeded in dispelling the clouds of doubt. “Yes, I’ll go to Gibraltar!”

Dorothy Munro rose from the bed, arranged her hair, and threw a shawl over her shoulders. It was stuffy below decks and she decided to go out for a breath of fresh air. Quietly unlocking her door, she entered the dim-lit cabin and was about to go up the after companion to the poop. “No!” she decided. “I’m likely to meet him up there.” Womanlike, she was in no hurry to announce capitulation. Instead, she turned and walked along the alley to the entrance leading out on the main deck. It was open, though partially blocked by the deck-load of spruce deals. In fine weather, the steward brought the food from the galley through this entrance—saving a round-about climb over the poop.

Leaning over the resinous spruce planks, she looked up at the black sails swinging across the starry sky. It was a fine night and the wind was blowing from astern—a whole sail breeze which sped the barque along as steady as a church. She heard the pacings of two men on the poop above her head. Forward, the watch were gossiping around the fore-hatch and the cook was yarning in the galley with the steward.

L.

Absorbed in her thought, she suddenly became aware of voices overhead. It was Captain Crosby and the mate, Peter, leaning over the rail, talking. She drew back under the poop-break and listened. “Stow that lingo, Peter, I can hardly understand it now. Speak in English.” It was Crosby who spoke.

“All right, Vittorio,” came the mate’s growling tones. “Now what do I get for this business?”

“Wait until I marry the girl, you greedy swab,” answered the other. “How can I make promises at this stage of the game?”

“How much do you think her father is worth?”

“Oh, he’s got the rhino,” came Crosby’s reply. “Owns that big hooker, the *Wanderer*, and has a pile salted away. But what’s the use of jawing about what you’ll get? Wait until I’ve got her hitched.”

“You think de old man will open up his hold?”

“She’s the only child he’s got,” answered the other.

“If she won’t marry you, what then?”

“There are other ways. You know how it’s done in Crete . . . in Sicily . . . in Tunis.”

“Ransom?”

Dorothy felt the perspiration breaking out on her face and her heart almost ceased to beat. For a space she seemed to lose consciousness and when the sensation passed she found herself leaning against the cabin bulkhead and trembling violently. With an effort she regained control of her stunned faculties.

“I’ll dump that gaffer overboard when we get Anticosti abeam. He would swear a vendetta. The Irish are worse than the Corsicans when they hate. I fear that man.” Crosby’s voice carried concern.

“How about the warships?” The mate asked the question apprehensively.

“What have they got around these waters?” The reply came sneeringly. “A couple of fish patrols. I’ll run along the north shore of Anticosti and

anchor off there for a week or two. By the time I'm ready for the run through Cabot Straits, they'll have knocked off watching."

There was silence for a minute, then Peter spoke. "I want a bottle of whiskey, Vittorio."

"You can't have it."

"I must! I'm crazee for a drink. You'll have to give it to me."

"You're not going to get one, Peter, so there's an end to it," said Crosby decisively. "Think I want to run the risk of you getting tight and babbling all you know? Not likely!"

LI.

There was a surly growl from the mate. “What am I getting out of this, anyway?” he snarled. “I get you the job as captain of this vessel when the old captain get sick. I help you steal the woman. I knock that Irishman on the head and save your life. I help you out in that *Rienzi*—”

“Don’t be foolish, Peter,” came Crosby’s placating tones. “You know how you talk when you’re drunk. You nearly blew the whole Rienzi story in Antwerp that time when you got on a batter.”

“That’s all right,” growled the other tenaciously, “but I must have a drink . . . I’m sick. You scare me with that dam’ yarn about killing the steward. The Irishman says the steward was all right. Why you tell me that?”

The Englishman laughed. “I thought it would make you more anxious to help me. You have to be bribed before you’ll do anything. It took my mother to handle you.”

“*Cospetto!* Yes! She was a devil! The hellcat of Gozo—the Ingleze sailors call her—a good name for a Maltee cat.” He chuckled and began talking in a strange tongue, appealing and threatening by the tone. In the same dialect, Crosby replied, and then eight bells was struck by the wheelsman and both men moved away.

Dorothy raced back into her room and feverishly locked the door. For a space she sat on the settee, white-faced, her heart beating furiously, her thoughts a mad confusion. Her few minutes of eavesdropping seemed to have unshipped her equilibrium. Everything was reversed and Crosby became a figure, dark, sinister and hateful. She was terribly frightened.

With an effort she assumed a state of more composure and endeavoured to marshal her panicky thoughts. With returning calm and order came a realization of her position. In one sudden sweep, her affection and regard for Crosby was completely blotted out. He was a liar, a cold-blooded villain, a despicable scoundrel. She recalled her father’s warning and O’Brien’s taunts: “There’s a snarl in yer brain and ye’re rotten inside somewheres.” The Irishman was right. It took men to judge men.

LII.

Her mind then focused on O'Brien and he appeared in her fancy now as a heroic figure, a sure shield in time of peril, but reflection blew these assurances to nothingness. O'Brien was manacled hand and foot and a prisoner in the lazarette. What could he do? She thought of his odd behaviour since a captive, his confidence, his taunting of Crosby, his loudly proclaimed statements of murder and warships. . . . Was the man's declaration of a search by warships as fanciful as his tale of her father's death? Then into her recollection came Crosby's threat; "I'll dump that gaffer overboard when we get Anticosti abeam. . . ." and she became panicky again. It seemed incomprehensible that Victor Crosby, the upstanding, handsome, courteous English sailor could be possessed of a dual personality. She wondered if it wasn't a figment of imagination, an odd dream.

"I'll dump . . . overboard . . . Anticosti abeam." The words kept repeating themselves in her consciousness until all else seemed insignificant. It was like a mental spur to action. The Irishman, her friend and would-be rescuer, was in deadly danger and she must do something. Panic passed and she became calm and collected again.

"I can't get the keys to release him, but I might get a file," she thought. Files, on shipboard, she knew, were usually kept in the carpenter's shop or the boatswain's locker. The *Antonio* carried no carpenter but Dorothy had an idea that tools and ship's gear were kept in a store-room in the after end of the forecastle. She had seen the men carrying their scrapers and painting equipment there. "If I can sneak out and rummage in that place some time to-night, I'll get a file and toss it down to Mr. O'Brien." It seemed the only way. Any notion of appealing to the sailors to aid her was not worth consideration. They were dominated by their officers and would not dare to make a move.

LIII.

The hours passed slowly and it seemed an interminable space of time between the half-hourly tolling of the bells. Dorothy had decided that the early morning—some time towards the tag-end of the middle watch—would best serve as the period for action. Men were sleepy then, vitality was at a low ebb and the soporific influence was strongest. The watch on deck would probably be curled up and snatching a nap on the deals and the officer on duty, the Frenchman, would in all probability be propping up his eyelids and endeavouring to keep awake. The man at the wheel could scarcely see the deck and the foresail would hide the lookout. The only one she feared was Crosby. He might well be vigilant.

The Englishman was on deck. Above her head, Dorothy could hear his quick pacing of the weather alley of the poop. She knew his step of old and had often felt a strange thrill in the sound of it when she was snuggling in her bunk aboard the *Wanderer* and he was keeping watch. Now, it seemed as though his foot-falls were pounding in her brain; drumming in her ears like the sinister padding of some predatory creature waiting, waiting, waiting. A few minutes of overheard conversation had reversed her feelings.

Three bells struck and by the ship's motion, the creaking of timbers, and outside noises, it was plain that wind and sea were rising. She looked out through the port and saw that the stars had faded and that it was very dark. She sat up on the settee afraid to recline for fear of sleep overcoming her; then came four bells and the drone of a fog-horn. "Three blasts . . . fog!" she muttered, and with the evidence came the pleasing thought that the mist would aid her plans wonderfully. Her chances of slipping forward unobserved would be much easier.

"Lee fore brace!" Crosby's voice overhead sounded clear above the sea noises and fetched her up with a start. Familiarity with the manoeuvering of sailing ships told Dot that the wind was shifting ahead and that the men were ordered to brace the yards. They would brace the foreyards first and then the sailors would come up on the poop to man the mainbraces. "A good time to slip forward," she murmured, and excitedly she rose, buttoned her jacket up around her throat and deftly tied a colored cotton handkerchief about her head. Cautiously opening the door of her room, she stepped out into the dim-lit cabin and tip-toed softly to the main-deck exit.

LIV.

The door was still open and with her heart beating wildly, she looked out. The fog was dense and veiled everything from sight in a grey pall, wet and steamy. The watch were "hey-ho-ing!" at the lee fore-braces while the second mate slacked off to windward. She crouched inside the door, straining eyes and ears, waiting.

"Dat'll do de t'gallant brace," boomed the officer's voice. "Make fast! Main braces, now!"

Men came staggering out of the murk over the deck-load of spruce deals and she drew inside the shadow of the door as they clattered up the poop ladder. The French second mate came along the weather side and as soon as he mounted the poop, Dorothy clambered lightly up on top of the deck-load, and, stooping low, picked her way over the planks. In a few seconds she gained the forecastle deck-house and groped along its dripping walls for the store-room door.

From aft out of the fog came the muffled cries of the sailors. "Haul away de main-brace!" came the officer's command. Dot knew she had but a few minutes to accomplish her object ere the men would be coming down off the poop. Her searching fingers struck the panels of a door—a sliding one—and she knew she had located the one she sought. Feverishly, she felt for the handle and her heart seemed to leap when a rope becket came within her grasp. With all her strength, she heaved upon it.

"Well de main-brace! Turn dat! Main-tops'l braces now!" came the officer's commands. Time was flying. "If I can't get back just now," thought the girl, "I can remain inside until a chance to slip aft presents itself. Heavens! but this door is hard to move!" She gave a series of frantic pulls on the handle. The door slid back an inch or two and remained fast.

LV.

Perspiring with her efforts and with her heart pounding wildly, she desisted and began feeling for the obstruction. Her fingers struck a small chain. In an instant she realized the trouble. “Padlocked!” she gasped. For a space she stood dumbly fingering the hasp and the padlock, the blood drumming in her temples, her mouth quivering and her limbs trembling with nervousness and her exertions.

“Well de lower tops’l! Now de upper tops’l!” came the Frenchman’s voice.

Racing against time, she shook the door, pulled at the padlock, kicked at the stout panels with her stockinged feet. But a door built to stand the pounding of solid seas, and a padlock and hasp designed to discourage the efforts of pilferers, was not going to yield to the feeble strainings and kickings of a girl. She realized the hopelessness of the task and desisted.

“All right de tops’ls! To’gallant braces now!” A minute or two remained for her to get back before the men came down. Almost crying with vexation, she turned, climbed up on the spruce deals and stumbled aft. A chain lashing tripped her and she fell full length. Slivers of wood drove into the tender skin of her hands and arms, her toes were bruised by contact with the chain. In her fall she struck something with her elbow which clinked against the deck-load fastenings. Rising hastily to her feet, she made a step forward, hesitated for a moment and then stooped and groped around on the lumber. With a little cry she picked up what she sought and hastily examined it by sense of touch. It was a scraper made from an old rasp—left on the deck-load by some careless seaman. Hugging it to her breast, she continued her passage towards the cabin.

LVI.

Unobserved, as she thought, she clambered down off the deals and stepped over the washboard of the cabin door. “To think that I should have found it,” she murmured audibly, pleasurably thrilled by her good fortune! “An old rasp—” Her sentence ended in a startled shriek as strong fingers grasped her arms and dragged her into the dim-lit cabin. “What were you doing forward, Dorothy?” It was Victor Crosby and his grip of her relaxed when he spoke. He turned up the light in the cabin lamp and gave her a keen scrutiny. Suddenly his hand shot out and he jerked the heavy scraper from her buttoned-up coat. For a moment, he seemed perplexed.

“What’s this for, Dot? A weapon?” His voice, soft-toned as ever, held a note of wonderment. “Surely you don’t feel like that towards me, girl?” She stood before him, dumb, a light of defiance and hatred in her eyes. He turned the scraper over in his hands, hefted it, and noting the look on her face, his lips compressed and his expression hardened. “Was this to be used against me, Dorothy?” The question came strident. The soft speech was gone.

“You can think what you like!” She snapped the words out, bitterly, almost viciously.

The man’s eyes narrowed, and he kept turning the iron over in his hand. “Would you really have tried to brain me with this?”

“Yes, I would!” she ejaculated, and as she spoke, she made a quick snatch for the scraper. Crosby was quicker, however, and knocked her hand aside. With an odd laugh, he threw the iron down on the cabin table and grasped Dorothy by the wrist. There was nothing gentle about his manner. “You’re lying, girl,” he said bluntly. “You hunted that thing up to release O’Brien.” The grip of his fingers on her wrist tightened. “Isn’t that so, Dorothy dear?” She began to struggle—wrenching at his gripping fingers with her free hand.

“Let me go, you—you beast!”

“To release Mister O’Brien,” he reiterated, his eyes smiling and his grip slowly increasing in intensity.

Dorothy cried out with pain and kicked him. He pushed out his arm and held her off, smiling cruelly as he increased the pressure. “Dear Mister O’Brien down in the lazarette.” Crosby seemed to be enjoying himself.

The girl felt that her wrist bones were about to crack and she became filled with a mad rage. “Let me go, you brute, you bully, you—*you hellcat of Gozo*!” It slipped from her lips—the only expression she could think of at the moment—and its effect upon the man was startling.

“What!” He gripped her suddenly around the shoulders and drew her to him in an embrace of mixed fury and astonishment. She struggled like a wild-cat and he was forced to shift his grip to hold her. Her hair fell from out the handkerchief that bound it.

LVII.

Seizing both her wrists, he held her impotent, while he regarded her with his dark eyes appraisingly, admiringly, yet the expression in them was a strange mixture of menace and admiration. “You heard, did you?” he said slowly. “Then the game is over. The mask is off, but I’ve got you.” He released a hand and made a snatch at her coat. In his strong fingers the fabric ripped from its stitches and fell away. “I’ll have you for my slave, Miss,” he said tauntingly. “No more fawning and crawling to you. I’ll break you to my will, and when I’m done with you I’ll sell you in the slave market in Algiers.” He made another grasp and tore away her undervest, revealing her white rounded shoulders and breast. “You’ll sell for a pretty sum, Dorothy, dear . . . a pretty face and pretty figure . . . and a temper, my, what a temper!” Her face was the color of chalk and she seemed stricken dumb and incapable of moving a limb. “Yes, Dorothy, your face and figure’ll bring me a few *piastres*. I’ll break you in and sell you . . . and your dear friend O’Brien will go over the side before daylight——”

“*And will ye listen to the humour of that, now!*” Crosby released Dorothy in a flash and turned at the voice. Lounging easily in the after cabin door, with the sundered manacles on his wrists and ankles and a pistol in his right hand, was O’Brien. The girl drew some shreds of cloth over her naked shoulders and began to laugh hysterically.

The Englishman seemed spellbound for a space and then he began to bawl for the mate. “Peter! Peter! Help! Help!”

O’Brien, lazily leaning against the bulkhead, laughed serenely. “Och, don’t be afther botherin’ Peter,” he said. “Shure and he’s taken me place down in the lazarette and he’d have to chew up a few faddom of rope afore he’d get loose to help yez——”

LVIII.

Thud! With a sudden movement, Crosby had seized the scraper from the cabin table and had hurled it at the stevedore. Dorothy screamed as the Irishman ducked and the missile crashed into the panelling above his head. The smile faded from his face and the pistol was levelled as he barked out: "Another move, you scum, and I'll drill yez! Miss Munro, get into yer room. There's goin't to be some rowdy doin's here in a minute."

Dorothy slipped away and stood apprehensively within the doorway of her berth. "Inside and lock yer door, Miss!" came the Irishman's command. Reluctantly she obeyed but remained with her hands on key and door handle, listening.

"Now, Mister Man," jeered O'Brien, "I've got you dead to loo'ard this time. Ye don't need to look up at Frenchy through the skylight nor yell for the stoo'ard. Them gents are fr'inds of mine. Not a dam' soul aboard will bear a hand to help yez, for they're all me bosom pals. You and me are goin' to have it out—"

Crosby seemed to recover his composure. "If it's a fair stand-up fight you want," he said calmly, "then I'm your man."

"A fair stand-up fight it'll be," returned the other. He threw the pistol into the passageway back of him, and ere it ceased clattering along the deck, Crosby was upon him, his fists driving for the Irishman's head and body.

The stevedore was ready and ducked the assault. Crosby's fist struck the bulkhead and split a board from top to bottom. He took a terrible body blow from the Irishman's right which jarred him and sent him back gasping and with his handsome features screwed up in pain. O'Brien sniggered. "Ye fight like a kid," he jeered. "It's only fair to tell yez I useter be a boxer wan time." He deftly parried a vicious drive from the other's left and ducked his head to a round-arm swing which would have felled an ox had it landed. "Up around Quebec, at the fire stations, they useter match me wid the other kids." He stopped a series of short jabs as he spoke. "And I c'd lick 'em all afore I went to sea." He received a hard smack on his jaw and another on his shoulder, but they seemed to have no effect. "Yis . . . I licked 'em all. Fightin' or talkin', I c'd lick anny wan that stood up to me." Desisting from

the defensive, he drove a hard fist into Crosby's chest and the man staggered over against the table.

"Ye showed a lack of brains, Mister Crosby, whin ye failed to gag me," came the Irishman's running comment. "None of the bright lads aboard here is hankerin' for a Quebec jail. And that stoo'ard is a bright boy. He knows a thing or two, he does. . . ."

Through the skylight overhead the second mate was peering; the steward was nervously watching through his half-opened door, and in the forward entrance to the cabin, the crew of both watches were craning their necks to see and not daring to set foot within through the restraint imposed by seafaring custom. From these polyglot sailormen came growls and chuckles of approval when the Irishman led or feinted, and silence when their skipper landed a telling blow. Inside her room, Dorothy was crouching on her knees by the door, her hands clasped around the handle of the lock, her head against the panels and ears straining to interpret the meaning in each sound of conflict.

LIX.

In the cabin there was but little room to move about. The table and four chairs occupied most of the space and these were securely bolted to the deck. The two men stood at the after end of the apartment pounding away at one another under the uncertain light from the oil lamp suspended over the table. The decks were sloping as the barque heeled to the breeze and the Irishman stood to windward—thus equalling his adversary's advantage in height and length of reach.

LX.

Crosby knew something of the fistic art. He fought silently with lips compressed, brows lowered over flashing dark eyes. He was getting in a few hard blows and holding his own. He carried the battle to his enemy, raining swift jabs, leaping in and leaping out. The Irishman, with a supercilious grin on his face feinted, ducked and guarded. He seldom led off in a blow, but when he did, it told. "Och, but I'm playin' wid yez," he jibed, relapsing into the brogue. "Phwat are yez tryin' to do? Fannin' de flies away from me face? Sure, an' I thought yez was a foightin' man."

Crosby's dark eyes narrowed and became suddenly shifty. His mind had become momentarily detached from the business in hand, and like a keen pugilist, the stevedore noted it. He shot out his right fist and caught Crosby a sudden smash on the jaw which sent him reeling and sliding with a crash against the bulkhead to leeward.

As quick as light, Crosby's right hand dived into his leather sea-boot and when he rushed down on the Quebecker with a weather roll of the barque, the watchers yelled: "Look out! He has a knife!"

In the glow from the lamp it glinted; the Irishman twisted his body away in a swift movement, and when the sharp steel descended, the point missed its mark but ripped down O'Brien's left ribs and slashed through the flesh of his hip.

A throaty growl coincided with the impact of the stevedore's fist on the other's mouth and Crosby was hurled down to leeward again. "Ye dhirty son av a dog!" A torrent of waterfront oaths streamed from O'Brien's lips as he threw himself on his opponent. "You're no bloody Englishman, by cripes!" he roared. "A stinkin', knifin' dago, by Judas Priest!" He drove his boot into Crosby's stomach and in the excruciating agony of the blow, the knife fell from his fingers and clattered on the floor.

"Cut me, will yez? It's dhirty foightin' yez want?" O'Brien was as a man mad, a terrifying figure. "I'm th' lad, fair or dhirty! Damme! I'll give yez the Mobile style. Here goes yer beauty, me bucko!"

Crosby had been pounded to the deck and was reaching for the knife when the stevedore's heavy boot crashed into his face—breaking cartilages,

teeth, ripping flesh—making of his god-like beauty a streaming ruin horrible to behold.

LXI.

The onlookers stood appalled, stricken dumb by the horror of the combat and too frightened to interfere. The Irishman had the devil in him now and had become a reincarnation of barbaric Celtic forbears. Blood dripped from his cuts and sprinkled the white planks and the nip of the wounds fanned his fury. He hurled himself on his struggling and kicking adversary and his fingers groped across the broken face. “Mobile fashion,” he panted. “I’ll have yer eyes out, by cripes! Cut me, will yez? I’ll gouge you, by Godfrey!” Crosby struggled and screamed as a thumb drove into an eye socket. Then, as though through a mad red mist in which flames and crimson stars were reeling, the Irishman felt a tugging on his arms and a girl’s appealing voice: “Don’t, oh don’t for God’s sake! Larry! Larry! Stop! Stop!”

He rose to his feet dazedly and wiped the hair and sweat out of his eyes. Dorothy’s arms were around his, clasping them to his sides, and her face, pallid and tear stained, looked up into his appealingly. “I forgot mesilf,” he croaked hoarsely. “But—but he cut me, so he did . . . cut me . . . he’s not a man—not a man.” He stood panting, his manacled wrists by his side, the shirt torn off one shoulder.

While he stood thus with the girl’s arms around his body, there came loud shouts from the deck and Dorothy drew suddenly away. A look of terror flashed into her eyes and she turned and shook O’Brien who panting heavily, swaying with the roll of the ship, was staring apathetically at a dark figure crawling into the darkness of the alleyway. “Do you hear, Larry?” she shrieked. “A steamer! A steamer! Bearing down in the fog!”

LXII.

The instincts of the seaman at the dread hail revived in the man and he comprehended instantly. He kept his feet in a wild lurch of the ship which sent Dorothy flying to leeward against the cabin walls, and ran for the after companion. But ere he reached the steps, the barque heeled to a staggering blow, there came the sound of rending and smashing timber, wild shouting, the wash and roar of water and the tremendous thuds of falling spars. “Sufferin’ cats, she’s bin run down!” he bawled as he rose to his feet and up the ladder he leaped with the speed of fear.

A quick glance around in the gloom revealed chaos. The barque wallowed drunkenly, head to swell, her fore and main topmasts gone, the lower shrouds and stays an inextricable tangle of yards, rope and flogging canvas. The soggy roll of her and the forward slope of the decks told that she was settling by the head. The fog still hung thick around and out of the mist came the excited shouts of men struggling with a life-boat. A siren was blowing raucously somewhere astern.

“Stand by, there, men!” roared O’Brien. “She can’t sink.” Then in a flash, he remembered Dorothy and his late adversary and he jumped down the cabin ladder, again shouting their names.

In the dark passageway, he blundered into something human. “Is this you, Miss?” he called, feeling for her body in the dark. There came a sound as of the rapid intake of a breath and ere his searching fingers could clasp anything, the blackness seemed suddenly bright with red flame and he slumped to the deck.

LXIII.

He regained consciousness again in a few minutes, gasping and choking with his mouth full of salt water and the chill of it on his skin. At first he thought he was overboard, but as his brain emerged from the numbness caused by a blow on the head, he realized that he was lying on the lee of the cabin alley in a few inches of water which was swashing around with the sluggish roll of the vessel.

"The divil . . . the dhirty divil!" he groaned, rising painfully to his feet. Clutching the handrail, he swayed, hazily endeavouring to reconstruct the events of the night. "Ah, yis . . . she was run down . . . and I was seekin' her when some wan slugged me . . . Crosby, belike. Ah, yis!" In the dark, he started trudging towards the dim light of the open companion and then, amidst the buzzing and drumming in his ears, he realized that voices were calling.

"Larry! Larry! Oh Larry!"

He paused on hearing the cry and a slow smile broke over his battered features. "I'm here, Miss . . . Dorothy!" he croaked. She had called him "Larry" he remembered and the thought pleased him. Then to his ears came other sounds—muffled shouts, high pitched, frantic, and seemingly below his feet.

"The dago mate, b'gorry! I clane forgot the poor swab!" He took a grip on himself and lurched towards the companion. "All right, all right!" he cried out reassuringly. Looking up towards the deck he made out Dot's form against the sky. She was bending over the washboard, peering below. "Oh, Larry, but I thought you were gone," she almost wailed.

"Sure, and I'm all right, Miss . . . Dorothy," he replied. "A little groggy, maybe. Where's the others?"

"All gone. I thought I was alone on the ship." She began to cry.

"Wheesht! Don't take on so, acushla. Shure and we're all right. The old hooker won't sink, and I'll be with you in a minute afther I haul the dago out of the lazareet. He'll be goin' crazy if he remains below much longer." He turned and made his way in the dark to the lazarette hatch aft of the companion steps. Pulling it up, he was confronted by the face of Peter, pallid

in the gloom, and just clear of the water which almost filled the compartment. A strong pull and the mate was hauled out, dripping like a fish, whining and jabbering in excess of fear.

"Och, shure, and I niver meant to lave ye below, old son," said O'Brien reassuringly, "but when I was coming to let yez out, your chum Crosby hit me a clip with something and knocked me dead-oh."

"Yes, yes, yes," jabbered the other, his eyeballs rolling and his teeth chattering with the chill of the water and the fright he had endured. "Dam' Crosby . . . pig. Make plenty trouble for me. What happened?"

The Irishman briefly outlined the incidents of the night and groping for the knot of the lashing which bound the man, he cast it adrift, helped him to his feet and half-dragged, half-carried him to the companion and thence on deck. Peter's experience in the lazarette had soaked all the vindictiveness out of him.

LXIV.

It was still dark and fog veiled everything. He sat the numbed mate down against the cabin trunk and turned to the forlorn figure huddled against the lee side of the wheel-box. She was shivering with the cold and crying. His arm slipped over her shoulders as he dropped beside her on the deck. "Arrah, now, honey, don't take on so. Shure, she'll float 'till Kingdom Come and daylight will see us picked up." He bent his swollen lips until they touched her wet hair and felt a rare thrill in the contact. He drew her towards him and she made no resistance. "Are ye chilled, Dorothy Begorry, if it's sufferin' from the cold you are, I'll rip the duds off the dago there. . . ." She shook her head with a wan smile. "I'm not cold now—only miserable and silly and childish."

"Never mind, acushla, the sun'll be along soon and the fog'll lift and we'll have a day as clear as a bell," he murmured hopefully. "I can see the glint of dawn, now, and the mist is breakin' away. With the sea smoothing out and the wind to the west, shure, it's no sailor's daughter that's going to worry about a small matter like this. It's rescued we'll be afore another night comes." He forgot the pain of his cuts and bruises with her leaning on his breast with her cheek against his and her sodden tresses blowing across his eyes. And he was patting and caressing her and murmuring soft phrases to calm her fears.

LXV.

He held her in his arms throughout the hour of dawn and the growing light revealed the wreck upon which they floated. A few feet forward of the foremast, the bows had been shorn clean off and the barque had slowly settled until her decks were awash. The grey light seemed to accentuate the tangled and splintered spars and torn canvas. But in keeping with the vessel's shape was the plight of O'Brien himself. His reddish hair was plastered over his face with water and congealed blood, his face was cut and swollen and his lips were puffed and bleeding. Every once in a while, he winced to the smart of wounds.

Dorothy, with woman's intuition, guessed that he was suffering, and she drew out from his embrace and regarded him keenly in the half-light. "Did he stab you?" she questioned anxiously.

O'Brien's hand wandered stiffly to his left side. She followed the involuntary movement and noticed the ripped shirt and the dark stains of blood. "I reckon he fetched me a slash across the ribs and a prod in the hip, belike, but what's that to a grown man?" He grinned painfully.

The girl's eyes grew wide with concern and she seemed to recover her poise. "Take up your shirt and let me see!" she said.

The man hesitated. "No, don't be afther botherin' your head with me moskitty bites. 'Tis nawthin' at all at all—"

"Up with it!" she commanded. "I've dressed the broken ribs of sailors before now, so don't be shy." Blushing, he obeyed, and revealed a long red slash athwart his side—a terrible looking wound. Truly, the man had the endurance and stamina of a tiger.

Turning her back, Dorothy made some deft movements and produced a white linen petticoat. O'Brien's battered visage turned a deeper red when she began ripping it up. But as the dawn stole over the quiet sea, the washing and bandaging went on and the Irishman stood erect to her ministering, with his teeth clenched and a smile in his eyes. And Peter the mate sat on the house, apathetic and staring into the fog, never saying a word.

O’Brien had rummaged some food and drink from out the half-submerged pantry and after they had feasted on it, Peter spoke. “Mister O’Brien,” he began hesitatingly. “Ah—you don’t remember me?”

LXVI.

The other, sucking away at a damp pipe, favoured him with a keen glance. “Can’t say as I do!” He paused, his eyes narrowing as the fleeting memory of something familiar in the man’s face came to him. “Now, by the powers, let me see. Your looks—”

“Yes, I grow whisker. I grow fat, maybe,” the mate interrupted. “But you know me. I was the man at the wheel on the *Rienzi*!”

The Irishman drew up as though shot; his swollen jaws bulged and his fists clenched and drew up towards his waist. Stealing a furtive glance at Dorothy, he licked his lips and fixed his eyes on the other man with an apprehensive and somewhat belligerent glint in them.

“By the old Judas! so ye are,” he exclaimed huskily. He stared at the man as though expecting a blow, then his expression suddenly changed and became menacing.

“Another yap from you about the *Rienzi* and I’ll heave yez into the drink.”

The man waved a protesting hand. “No, no, Mister—”

“Another yap from—” began O’Brien, and he stopped suddenly.

Who-o-oo! Who-o-oo! Who-o-oo! A siren whistle seemed to rend the mist with a tremendous crescendo of sound and the three on the wreck jumped and faced the direction from whence it came. “Ahoy! ahoy! ahoy!” bawled the Irishman in echo to the blast. He turned and smacked the mate on the shoulder. “Come on, you tarrier, yell yer head off! They’re close aboard!”

Who-o-oop! came a short blast. The cries of the men sounded in the lightening fog and there came the rattle and squeal of blocks and the splash of a boat into the water. Voices cut through the mist: “Ship your oars, men, give way! To the nor’ad, sir . . . yes, sir . . . I ’ears them, sir.” Came the regular dip and swish of oars pulling in trained stroke, then through the pall appeared a white boat manned by uniformed men. “Blue-jackets!” ejaculated O’Brien. “A British man-o-war.”

Peter’s face paled under its tan and he plucked at the stevedore’s sleeve.

“Captain O’Brien! *Madonna mia!*” he dropped into broken English in his terror. “Don’ you letta me go to jail. I tella you something. I tella you all . . . mucha good for you. I tella ’bout de *Rienzi*—”

The Irishman glared at him. “You open yer trap about that aboard that vessel,” he snarled viciously, “and I’ll hunt yez down to the deepest hell an’ cut the heart out yez. Remember!”

LXVII.

The boat swung dexterously alongside and the bow-man hooked on while a uniformed officer clambered over the low rail of the water-logged barque. He extended his hand to the Quebecker. “Well, sir, glad to have picked you up at last . . . a long search. And the young lady—” He bowed curtly towards Dorothy. “Miss Munro, I believe . . . and everybody’s all right.” He looked around. “Where’s the skipper of this packet—the man Crosby?”

Mystified at the officer’s glib knowledge of names and events, O’Brien answered. “He’s gone. I don’t know where. Maybe drowned, or he may have escaped in the boats with the men—”

The other shook his head. “No, he wasn’t with them. We picked the crew up this morning early—ten men. No chance of him being below decks somewhere, is there?” He turned to the boat alongside. “Jones! Anderson! Come aboard and have a look below and see if you can locate another man. Cabin’s half full of water but his body may be there. Smartly, now!”

While the blue-jackets were making a search, the lieutenant escorted Dorothy to the boat and handed her down into the stern-sheets. She looked pale and exhausted and her appearance brought a kindly, “We’ll only be a minute or so, Miss,” from the officer.

Peter had remained apprehensively quiet during the proceedings, but while the sailors were opening skylights and companion doors and peering below, he touched O’Brien’s arm timidly and pointed to some ring-bolts and cut lashings of rope on top of the cabin-trunk. “We had a small Norwegian punt there, Captain,” he observed, “I think maybe dat Crosby get away in dat.”

The other examined the ropes critically. “Gorry, but I believe you’re right. He c’d easily swing a painting punt over. That’s what he’s done, sure enough.”

“A queer business,” remarked the lieutenant when his attention had been called to the missing boat. “The men we picked up had a deucedly odd yarn to tell . . . kidnapping and the murder of a merchant skipper in Quebec . . . and your entry into the little drama. We must get our hands on this Crosby fellow. Murder and kidnapping . . . quite serious, y’know.”

LXVIII.

The Irishman laughed. “Och, Mister, but there was no murder in it,” he explained softly that the mate might not hear. “That was my little bluff. I harped on that so’s to throw a scare into this hooker’s crew and make them come to me rescue. And it worked, by Godfrey, for they got so frightened with me yarn of a murdered skipper and me tale of warships hunting this packet that they made the steward fetch me a file and I released mesilf.” He held out his ironed wrists. “It was while I was havin’ a rannykaboo with this man Crosby that some steamboat ran us down—”

“I regret to say that we were the vessel that hit you,” cut in the other. “You were showing no lights and sounding no horn and it was thicker than mud. We’ve been steaming around here since the collision looking for survivors.”

“Nothin’ as we can find below, sir,” reported one of the searching seamen. “I’ll go into the water if yo say so, sir, and have a good look-see below with a lantern.”

The lieutenant hesitated for a moment. “No, never mind. The man got away in that punt, I believe. We’ll get aboard.”

On H.M.S. *Hyacinth*, sloop-of-war, the dapper young naval surgeon had two patients who required his attention. Rest in a comfortable berth, warm clothing and a sedative for unstrung nerves, brought Dorothy around to a normal condition before nightfall, for a healthy young woman can recover quickly. But O’Brien, in the sick bay, was a more serious case. There was some surgical stitching to a damaged scalp, much bruise rubbing and cut plastering, and something more than petticoat bandaging on a knife slash across the ribs and a two inch stab in the hip.

“By Jove,” remarked the doctor cheerfully, as he worked over the Quebecker, “but the Lord certainly used good stuff when he made you. I wonder you didn’t collapse from loss of blood. And how did you manage to move with those knees of yours?”

LXIX.

But O'Brien recked little of these things. His most serious wounds were of the heart and mind and as he lay, plastered and bandaged, he thought of Dorothy Munro and the future. Could he hope? His memory dwelt on the early morning hours in the fog when she lay with her head on his breast. . . . Would she recall that? Or would it be passed over as a period of hysterical emotion induced by stress and dismissed as a momentary weakness?

Then into the perplexed, but not necessarily despairful, fancy of his desires, the sinister shadow of his disgrace would intrude itself—the affair of the *Rienzi*. He began to wonder if the man Peter would talk and the thought caused him to cringe and break out in a clammy sweat. "If he does. . .!"

Lying in his berth, he cast his memory back to the events leading up to the incident which blasted his seafaring life. He could recall most of the occurrences in his existence with clarity, but this matter always seemed hazy. The *Rienzi* was a new vessel, built at Quebec as a speculation and sold to an owner in Sicily. The agent who made the sale asked him to deliver the ship at a port in the Baltic. Crosby represented the owner in some manner, but Crosby held no certificate permitting him to take command. O'Brien, a master mariner, made a business of delivering Quebec-built ships to foreign owners. He contracted to deliver the *Rienzi* with considerable reluctance. He was suffering from fever and cold when he sailed from Quebec and his sickness hung to him all the passage across the Atlantic. The weather was stormy and necessitated his constant vigilance and he kept himself on his feet by dosing with quinine and whiskey. His recollections of the voyage were fragmentary. He could remember certain events only with distinctness. There were entries in the ship's log-book that he did not remember making though he could not deny his own handwriting. "Maybe, being sick and scarcely knowing what I was about, I might have drunk too much liquor—that could easily happen. But, I don't believe I ever did, for there were only three bottles aboard and we were thirty days out when the business happened. Yet Crosby and that man Peter and the steward swore I was blind drunk . . . and the hell of it is that I couldn't say whether I was or not."

He shuddered at the memory of his arrival in Copenhagen, his flight into Holland, and the published censure of the British Consul—"conduct . . .

despicable . . . a coward . . . disgrace to the British Merchant Service." The words were burned indelibly into his memory. He had read a copy of the letter. A friendly official in Quebec had hushed the matter up, but never a night had passed since then but what the affair had tortured his thoughts. But for the love he bore his widowed mother, he would have stolen away and dropped off a dock and ended it all.

LXX.

The evening came, and after the surgeon had made his examination, he opened the door of the hospital and admitted Dorothy. “A visitor,” he announced with a smile, “and I’ll break the regulations for half an hour anyway.”

She stood silent, her eyes taking in his bandaged head, the pallor of his bruised face, and her imagination pictured the raw knife gash across the white skin of his body. The man had suffered thus for her sake. There was a sickening smell of iodoform.

“God bless my soul, acushla,” O’Brien was the first to speak, “but ye’re crying. I hope ’tis not me that would be coaxing the tears from the purty eyes of you—”

She came over to the cot and nervously grasped his hands. “Oh, Larry, but I hope you’ll soon be better. It was for me—”

“Och, shure now, but I’d take tin times the hammering for the likes of yourself, if ’twas but your smile I would have for payment. They can’t hurt me—I’m an injy-rubber man.”

They talked for a few minutes when a tap came on the door and the lieutenant—he of the boat—entered. He gave the man and the girl a quizzical glance and drawled in courteous English, “I’m sure you will pardon this intrusion, but we’ve unearthed some deucedly odd information from that—er—foreigner whom we took off along with you—”

“Peter?” queried O’Brien quickly, and with a sinking sensation around his heart, “God’s truth!” he prayed mentally, “but I hope the beggar hasn’t been telling.”

The officer nodded. He was young and boyish in appearance and the Irishman scanned his face anxiously—almost anticipating the scornful curl of the lip and the cold stare of one who had heard the ugly story. But the officer’s face expressed no such feeling and O’Brien hoped for the best.

“This Johnny came to our Number One and began chinning about some funny business aboard a ship called the *Rienzi*.” The stevedore’s heart seemed to turn over inside his breast; his lip tightened and the blood seemed

to leave his face. Dorothy, her eyes riveted on the Lieutenant, slipped her hand across the sheet and caught the Irishman's nerveless fingers.

"From his yarn," continued the officer, "we gathered that you were master of this *Rienzi* packet; our kidnapping friend Crosby was mate, and this Johnny dago was before the mast. Is that right?" The other nodded dumbly.

"According to the man's story, your ship ran down a fishing boat in the Baltic and no attempt was made to stand by and pick up survivors. Some men were drowned. You were supposed to be on deck at the time, and—er—it was stated that you were drunk and you refused to come about and save the fellows in the water. For this, the Admiralty Court snaffled your ticket, and—er—gave you a sort of a jolly rotten discharge. Am I correct?" A hoarse croak from O'Brien was the only answer.

LXXI.

A smile appeared on the navy man's boyish features. "Our foreign friend now tells us that the whole bally business was a put-up job on you—"

"What?" Both Larry and Dot gave voice to the ejaculation.

"—And that you were not on deck at the time the collision occurred. This Crosby chap was officer of the watch and was having a snooze on the poop when your ship hit the fisherman. This dago Johnny was at the wheel and he received his orders to keep off from Crosby, who, I imagine, realized he was in a jolly mess and wasn't man enough to stand the gaff."

"I was a sick man at the time," observed O'Brien huskily, "and I haven't any recollection of what happened."

"Yes, so I understand," said the other. "You apparently came on deck a few minutes after the mishap, but you were delirious with fever or something and began shouting a lot of meaningless commands. Your mate, Crosby, was astute enough to take advantage of your condition and to concoct a story placing the blame on you."

"But, Peter, the man at the wheel—why did he go on the stand and swear by Crosby's yarn?"

"That's the odd part ot it," answered the officer. "This dago Johnny happens to be Crosby's step-father. That relationship, some threats or a bribe . . . not hard to get a man to perjure himself."

"Crosby's step-father?" O'Brien looked dazed. Dorothy, recalling the conversation she had overheard, saw a light and broke in excitedly: "Why, that explains something. Crosby's mother . . . belonged to Gozo or some such place."

"Yes," asserted the other. "Gozo is correct. Our commander was able to identify this Crosby fellow. He was a one-time ship's boy aboard H.M.S. *Vernon* at Malta. His father was a naval officer of good family but disreputable character, who got—er—mixed up with a Maltese woman. This Crosby was picked up out of the Valetta gutters, as it were, by someone who wished to give the beggar a fair chance and he was given a good education in the naval school and afterwards placed on the *Vernon*. He deserted the *Vernon* after scoffing a lot of the ward-room silver and the money in the

purser's safe. Turned out a regular bad egg—running around with Arab traders in the Med. and such-like. Our skipper remembers the chap, as he was on the *Vernon* at the time." He paused, smiling pleasurably at being the harbinger of glad tidings. "Briefly, this is the yarn your shipmate has been spinning the skipper," he added, "and, no doubt, you're jolly glad to hear it. My congratulations."

LXXII.

He departed hastily, for he had an inkling that something momentous would follow his recital. For a young man, he was wise in his day and generation.

And two weeks later, the Anchorville ship *Wanderer* was loaded according to contract by the O'Brien Stevedoring Company. In the ship's cabin, Captain Ezekiel Munro paid over the money to Larry and expressed his opinion that he, O'Brien, had made a good thing out of it. "You've not only got the price for the job," he remarked, "but you've scoffed the girl as well. Now, I've a little something to say to you, m'lad, for I don't intend to be left adrift on a lee shore. If you're going to marry my girl, you'll knuckle down to my terms."

"And that is, sir?"

"You'll take command of my ship and you'll carry your wife to sea with you. Old Man Munro will go along as a passenger and enjoy life. You ain't a Bluenose, son, but from what I see and know of you, I reckon you'll hold your end up with any spruce-gum hell-bender that ever skippered a Nova Scotiaman!"

A Skin Game at Decepcion Island

It all happened with the coming of Red-Headed McDonald to Anchorville. A schooner had spewed him ashore in Halifax with money to burn, and, seamanlike, McDonald held high carnival for a delirious fortnight. "When his money was gone he sobered up with the resolution of doing the prodigal son act before the old folks somewhere up th' Bay o' Fundy". A friendly skipper of a packet schooner carried the prodigal as far as Anchorville and with a drink and a blessing left him to work his own traverse to the table and the fatted calf.

Ashore in the little Nova Scotia port and disgustingly sober, the prospect of going home "broke" began to appeal with decreasing insistence to the erring one.

Give him a stanch vessel, a good crew, and he knew where a fortune was waiting for the adventurous ones. It was a long distance away—down at the foot of the world. Wild winds, wild seas and pitiless cold would have to be fought by the men who dared to take the chance. Then came the memory of his debauch in Halifax. Maybe he talked too much? Mayhap he dropped valuable information into ears which understood? Curse the rum! It had ruined him, and always would.

With a deprecatory shudder at his own short-comings, McDonald turned away from the wharf and, making his way uptown, dropped into Morrison's Pool Room. He didn't know what led him there. It was warm, and perhaps there was a chance of picking up something.

The room was dense with tobacco smoke. One or two men, presumably fishermen, were knocking the balls about, while a big, rawboned fellow, dressed in good clothes but collarless, was holding forth to the gang who lolled on the benches and practised expectorative shots at the brass cuspidor. The big man was evidently disgusted with something, and McDonald listened to the growling monotone of his voice.

"Aye," rumbled the speaker. "Fishin' ain't w'uth a dam' these days. I'll quit th' business for good, ef th' luck don't change. Here we are, jest in from a three weeks' trip from th' Cape shore an' what hev I got to show for it?

Nawthin' but a miserable fifty thousand, mostly hake at that—not enough ter pay fur all th' gear we lost, or even fur th' herrin' bait we used up. Last trip we did about as good—fed th' dog-fish with most o' our bait, bust our fores'l, an' had ter stay out so long, that th' shares went ter pay th' grub bill. I've lost enough this summer ter pay fur a new vessel. Aye! a new vessel!"

"Why don't ye lay her up for a spell, Cap'n?" inquired a man.

"Lay her up?" grunted the other. "I might as well do that as lose money every time I make a set. I'll probably have ter lay her up, as none o' the gang'll sail with me agen. They think I'm a hoodoo. Ef I c'd do anythin' else with that vessel, barrin' fishin', I'd do it."

And Captain Bartley Simons turned dejectedly away.

As he sauntered out of the door, a sun-browned man with red hair plucked him by the elbow.

"Well? What's the matter with you?" growled Simons, as he paused at the threshold.

"Come outside. I want to talk to you—particular."

"What's ter hinder ye talkin' particular here?" snarled the skipper. "I don't owe you anythin', do I?"

Without answering. McDonald caught the disgruntled fisherman by the arm and swung him outside.

"Excuse me," he said. "My name's McDonald. I come from Maitland way. Used to be mate—sealing schooner. I h'ard ye growlin' agin' yer luck inside there, an' I think I kin put ye on a pot o' money, ef ye'll take a risk."

Simons glared at the red-haired one in surprise.

"Ye'll put me on to a pot o' money?" he repeated. "An' how in th' devil's name kin a red-topped scallawag like you put me on to a pot o' money? Why don't ye git it fur yerself?"

With an insistence that was not to be denied McDonald piloted Captain Simons to a quiet spot on the adjacent wharf.

"Sit down," he commanded, and Simons obeyed instinctively. Somehow this McDonald was like the Ancient Mariner and "had his will".

"I used ter be mate on the *Topsail Belle*—a ninety-ton sealin' schooner. Three weeks ago I got back inter Halifax after fourteen months in th' Southern Ocean. When I drew my share—it was quite a wad—I blew it all

in, inside o' two weeks, an' now I'm broke—No! no! I ain't goin' ter make a touch on you, Cap'n—sit still. I've a good fifty-dollar watch left yet, an' a ring which I got in Monte Video w'uth another twenty.

"Now, I sh'd ha' hung on to that there money, but you know th' way. Ye start with a little nip o' rum and end up with gettin' outside o' a puncheon o' th' rot-gut stuff. That's what I did, an' woke up in a shack on Grafton Street, dead broke. My watch an' ring were inside o' a pair o' sea-boots which I had in my bag, an' that's all I got left. That'll do for interduckshun, an' explain why I'm here. Now fur th' business.

"V'y'ge afore last I went with my uncle, Pete McDonald, on a sealin' trip to th' Sou' Georgias—away off Cape Horn. We got down there all right an' did some fair sealin', but my uncle had h'ard that seals were plentiful in the Sou' Shetlands, so we squared away for there. As it was summertime down south, we made th' run inter Bransfield's Straits without much trouble —"

"Did ye git any o' them critters there?" interrupted Simons, visibly interested.

"Did we git seals? Well, I sh'd say so! Th' blessed islands an' rocks were covered with them, an' it did not take us long ter load pelts up ter th' hatch coamings. We made a fortune—"

"Huh!" grunted Simons sarcastically.

"And lost it," continued the other. "It was this way. While rootin' around in th' Strait, we discovered an island to th' west'ard that was shaped like a horseshoe. Isla Decepcion, the Argentines call it. It looked like a snug harbour, so we hauled th' schooner inter th' middle o' it through a narrow passage a cable's length in width. An' unloadin' th' skins, we dressed them in Liverpool salt ready fur th' long trip to th' Cape. On goin' out o' the passage, we ran on th' rocks to th' starboard side, an' knocked a hole in th' schooner's bottom.

"We unloaded her to get her lightened, but as soon as we got all the skins an' stuff out o' her, she lifted in the tide, capsized an' sank. This left us in a fine fix, an' as there was some twenty of us all told, we jest managed ter save provisions enough to ha' lasted th' gang fur eight days—short allowance at that."

Bartley Simons nodded his head, and as the other paused, he reached into his vest pocket and offered a particularly bilious looking cigar to the speaker.

“Smoke up, mate,” he rumbled. “I allus gives a cigar to th’ feller that can spin a good yarn. I believe yours, so fire away!”

McDonald regarded the weed with a doubtful air, and after a suspicious sniff, lighted it, and continued:

“As we did not want ter spend a winter on a blasted, barren rock, we cached th’ pelts in a cave an’ takin’ to th’ boats, steered a course fur Elephant Island, four hundred miles to th’ no’theast.”

“That’s some pull,” commented the fisherman.

“Aye, it was some pull, you bet. Four hundred bitter miles to go—over a sea where th’ smallest waves are like mountains, an’ th’ month o’ May comin’ on. It was no joke, I kin tell ye. We had h’ard that the Argentine Government had established a depot on the island fur shipwrecked sailors, and we cal’lated if we got there we’d spend th’ winter an’ chance bein’ picked up in th’ spring. Ye see, it was gettin’ so late in th’ year, winter was comin’ on down south—an’ th’ whalers an’ sealin’ craft had all gone to the nor’ard.

“Th’ second day after we left Decepcion Island we ran into a heavy sou’west gale, an’ my uncle an’ th’ four men in his boat disappeared. Later we lost sight o’ the other, an’ never saw either o’ them again. This left two boats with five men in each an’ we rode th’ buster out by lashin’ oars together an’ headin’ up to th’ sea with them as a drog. I was sorry ter lose my uncle, for he was a fine feller, but the other men was an infernally hard crowd—mostly cod-haulers from Saint-John’s, Newf’nland.”

“Next day we lost the other boat. She was swamped by a big comber, an’ th’ crew in her went down like stones, in the icy, cold water and with such heavy clothes on. That left us alone—four men an’ myself, an’ for th’ nex’ three days we had a devilish hard time. Look at me left han’!”

As he spoke he thrust out his left hand, from which the third and fourth fingers were missing. Simons gazed on the sight unaffectedly, and McDonald resumed his narrative.

“I lost both o’ my little toes an’ them two claws by frostbite, an’ one o’ th’ men in th’ boat with me was frozen to death. He was as stiff as a frozen cod when I rolled him over th’ gunnel. God, but it was cold! We pulled on the oars for a spell, sang a lot of silly songs, an’ began ter count th’ number o’ strokes we pulled. For th’ whole o’ one night I tugged at them oars, countin’, countin’, countin’, until I was up in th’ millions. I was goin’ batty then, but it kept me warm.

“We were picked up by a Scowegian whaler hangin’ on to th’ last minute, but the other fellers died when we came in sight o’ the East Falkland. I landed at Port Stanley, made my way to Monte Video, an’ findin’ th’ *Topsail Belle* lyin’ there an’ lookin’ for a mate, I got th’ berth. On her we worked around th’ Crozets an’ th’ Indian Ocean grounds, an’ I kep’ a shut mouth regardin’ th’ pelts in th’ cave on Decepcion Island. Ef I had told them, they would ha’ scoffed th’ lot an’ probably bounced me in Cape Town.”

McDonald paused and scrutinized the fisherman’s face with hungry eyes. Bartley knocked the ash off his odoriferous perfecto and spoke slowly:

“I presume, now, that you want ter git them skins?”

“Yes, by Godfrey! I want to get them. I want to get my hands on some money, an’ you’re th’ man that can help me!”

“How?”

“Well, ye hev a schooner. It’s yer own I take it. By yer own sayin’ ye would do anythin’ with her, instead o’ losin’ money fishin’. Fit her out for me, an’ I divide half with you. There’s a good four thousand pelts layin’ in that cave—all salted, dressed an’ in an atmosphere where they’ll keep forever. On th’ basis o’ twenty-five dollars a skin—they sell Cape Horn skins in London for thirty-five to forty dollars—that would make around one hundred thousand cold, hard plunks!”

Captain Simons recoiled.

“One hundred thousand dollars in sealskins! Holy Smoke, what a fortune!” For a moment he pondered, then rising hastily, he grabbed McDonald by the arm. “Come to home with me,” he cried. “I wanter think an’ talk it over. You may be lyin’, but I’ll soon find out. An’ ef ye are, th’ Lord help ye! One hundred thousand dollars! Holy Smoke, but it beats fishin’!”

And taking the red-haired man by the arm as if he were afraid to lose him, he led the way to his home.

II.

McDonald had to undergo a gruelling cross-examination under Simons' questioning tongue. Shipping records were looked up and the loss of the schooner verified under the Government record of "Missing Ships".

McDonald's name was also enumerated among the crew, and when he saw the fateful record, he suddenly thought of his folks at home.

"By Heck!" he cried. "They'll think I'm dead. Well, I won't bother 'em now. When I git my paws on th' dollars I'll go home." Dismissing the subject from his mind, he launched into fitting-out details with the now enthusiastic Bartley Simons.

"Now," said the latter, "I'll provision th' vessel for a six months' trip, an' I'll hev ter git a cook an' at least six men. I wonder ef any o' my gang would go? They're only fishermen, but they know th' vessel an' kin handle her better than any o' yer deep-water fellers. You'll do th' navigatin', an' we'll stand watch an' watch."

And far into the night they discussed ways and means. Thus came the red-haired man to Anchorville. The man, who came from nowhere into Morrison's Pool Room, left the town with Bartley Simons' seventy-five-ton schooner *Roberta S.*, and eight of Anchorville's sons. Where they went to, nobody knew. Simons gave it out that he was running to Newfoundland for dry fish, and maybe a West Indies voyage. He would be gone some considerable time, he calculated—maybe three months maybe six months. It was nobody's business but his own. And with this enigmatical answer, Anchorville had to be satisfied.

Down the Bay of Fundy sped the little vessel under all sail—four lowers, balloon and staysail. Once outside in open water, Simons informed the curious crew of his mission, and McDonald supplied details. They took the news easily, as if a trip to the south'ard of Cape Horn were an ordinary "shacking" trip to Brown's Bank. "If Bartley Simons was going, they would go!" And the *Roberta*, with McDonald laying the courses, swept hot-foot through her old jogging territory off Cape Sable and swung her nose for the Western Islands and the North East Trades.

Since they left the Nova Scotia port for their long trip to the south'ard McDonald's mind was in a state of unrest. He would sit for hours upon the

cabin lockers, smoking, and with a face puckered in anxious thought. One night he unburdened his mind to Simons.

"Skipper," said he. "I'm afraid we may have a tussel ter git them skins."

"How's that?" exclaimed the other in surprise.

"Well," replied McDonald slowly, "I'm thinking there are others after them. It's only fair ye sh'd know. You're puttin' up th' schooner an' th' money an' standin' th' biggest loss ef we don't git them. Ye see, when I got paid off from that schooner I went ashore with Barney Olsen, her skipper, an' we got tanked up together. Now I hev a faint idea that I talked a bit too much to that joker. He's a quick-witted devil an' can see through a bollard further than most people. Now, jest afore we sailed, I looked up a Halifax paper an' sees this little paragraph. Here it is."

"The sealing schooner *Topsail Belle*, recently home from a successful voyage in the Indian Ocean, has left again for the Falklands and the sealing territory around the Crozets and Kerguelen Islands. On being asked by our correspondent the reason for such a quick return after a two week's stay in port, Captain Olsen stated that as sealing was so good lately in the Southern Ocean, he wished to make but one more voyage and settle down ashore. For the past week, the *Topsail Belle*, has been on the railway, and was thoroughly overhauled and recoppered. She carries five men of her former crew."

"Well?" queried Simons, "What d'ye think?"

"What do I think?" reiterated McDonald. "I think that Barney Olsen is at present slammin' th' *Topsail Belle* fur Decepcion Island as hard as she kin go. He ain't goin' to no Crozets nor Kerguelen Islands. Sealin' war nawthin' extraordinary last v'yge, an' furthermore, he niver intended to leave Halifax so soon. I know why he left. I opened my silly mug, an' he got wise. Curse him!"

Simons growled.

"Huh! That's a nice thing ter tell me arter we're well on our way. Sh'd I turn back?"

"Turn back be damned!" cried the other. "We'll git them skins, never fear, even ef I hev ter kill Olsen an' his crowd ter git them—th' thievin' beachcomber! He's only got a week's start o' us, an' his schooner ain't any better at sailin' than this vessel. Slam her ahead an' don't worry."

Having, as it were, shared his depression with Captain Simons, McDonald began to get optimistic, and under his influence the other forgot the ominous import of the intelligence.

From then on it was drive, drive. Down the Northeast Trades, through the Doldrums, over the Line and the Doldrums again, and into the steady blow of the Southeast Trades, the gallant little fishing schooner went, and, taking to her new traverses like an old deep-water clipper, she reeled off the knots in great style. Being easy and quick to handle, she made small bones of the fluky cat'spaws common to the Doldrum latitudes and drifted like a ghost with the least flicker of a breeze.

In the steady, blue-skied Trades she scurried along with balloon, maintopmast, staysail and gaff-topsails set, while her crew would read the trailing patent log with wondering eyes and swear that "it beat fishin' ". A pampero off the Rio de la Plata caught her with kites up and for a few minutes there was some excitement as she rolled half her deck under water, but before she had drained the water off her, it had passed and all was sunshine again.

Forty days from Anchorville the *Roberta S.* made the East Falklands and stood in for Port Stanley. Arriving in the harbour, tenanted by a large fleet of schooners, store hulks, and a dismasted sailing ship, McDonald and Simons slung a banker's dory over the side and rowed ashore. In an hour they were back with a dory load of provisions.

"H'ist th' dory in, fellers!" yelled Simons. "Git the anchor up! Up on yer fores'l there!"

All hands tallied to the fores'l halliards, and after jigging up the sail as taut as a board, the windlass brakes were pumped with frenzied energy. Scarcely stopping to seize the anchor, the schooner was jibed and ran out of Port Stanley harbour under her foresail and jumbo.

"What's th' racket, Skipper?" queried Tom Slocum.

"That other schooner, th' *Topsail Belle*, jest left a couple of days ago. Git th' muslin on her an' don't stan' gapin' thar! Hustle fellers! Up on yer mains'l an' jib! Look alive!"

By dint of much strenuous exertion and bad language, in twenty minutes the little schooner was "dressed" and racing through the long gray-green rollers like a blooded horse. McDonald paced the weather-quarter with an anxious eye to leeward, while Simons sat astride of the wheel-box and steered, his leathern jaws working spasmodically upon a quid of niggerhead.

“Here’s where we’re goin’ ter git some weather, Simons,” remarked McDonald. “Southern Ocean weather—wind an’ seas!”

Simons spat carelessly.

“Huh! I guess me an’ th’ boys ain’t scared o’ th’ Banks in winter and I cal’late we kin stan’ anythin’ we git down hereabouts. Bill Simons, come aft an’ relieve wheel! Sou’west b’ south.”

They got weather as McDonald prophesied. Leaving the Falldands astern the wind hauled ahead and stiffened, and before nightfall the *Roberta* was ratching down the parallels to a buster from the southward and bucking over tremendous seas. The light sails were taken in, and all through the night they kept driving into the gale, which hauled more to the westward as the Horn was opened out.

The fishermen regarded the huge seas with no signs of consternation, and even when the little vessel was performing antics among the overfalls of the Burdwood Bank, they grudgingly “allowed it was a hit worse than th’ tide rips off’n Brier Island.” The swing of the Westerly and the Pacific Antarctic Drift coming around the Horn and meeting the seas flying south with the prevailing Norther on the Atlantic coast of South America, cause these dangerous overfalls. They are great combers with breaking crests—and many a good ship has been sent to the bottom by them.

Before many hours among them the crew of the *Roberta* were forced to admit that they had never seen seas like them before. The wind forbade the mainsail, and the banker’s riding-sail had to be hoisted, while the foresail was double reefed. Heavy seas broke aboard, flooding the decks and streaming down into forecastle and cabin. Men had to be careful in going aft or forward, and the two at the wheel were lashed to the wheel-box. By daylight it was too much for her, and Simons sang out:

“Come on, fellers, douse that jumbo an’ riding sail. We’ll hev ter heave her to.”

While endeavouring to haul down the riding sail, McDonald and Slocum were caught by a big sea which broke over the bow, and under a ton of water, were washed into the belly of the sail. Enveloped in the slack, smothering canvas and the water contained in it, the two men had a narrow escape from being drowned.

“By th’ ’Tarnal Thunder!” cried McDonald, when he recovered his breath. “I’ve had many a close call, but I’ll be darned ef I ever was nearly drowned in th’ belly o’ a sail!”

“Ha! ha!” laughed Simons when they came aft. “Sailed th’ seas to be drowned in a ditch, or rather a sail! That’s a new one on me!”

She was hove-to for ten hours, wheel lashed, and all hands essaying to stay in their bunks below, while the schooner reeled drunkenly over the mighty combers. By the time she had drifted to leeward of the Bank the seas eased down and sail was made again.

For fourteen long and weary days they drove to the southward, clawing on long tacks into south and southwesterly gales. With the pitching and tossing, the cold, and the almost continual rain, all hands were beginning to weary of the voyage, and it came as a pleasant break in the monotony when one of the crew, who had climbed to the fore cross-trees, sang out:

“Land Ho!”

McDonald tumbled up the cabin companion—the sleep still in his eyes.

“Where away?” he bawled.

“Two p’ints off’n port bow!”

“All right,” said McDonald. “That sh’d be Livingstone Island. Keep her as she goes.”

The schooner raised the land rapidly, and as the sun rose it illuminated the gray, sterile cliffs and rocks to port. Upon them the mighty billows of the “Forties” burst and thundered in acres of foam, while, as the mists of the chilly Antarctic morning dissipated, the loom of a high, snow-covered mountain could be seen. McDonald recognized the place at a glance.

“That’s Livingstone Island, boys. We won’t be long now afore we make our destination. How’s she headin’ now?”

“West-sou’west,” answered Simons from the wheel.

“Keep her so!” And the red-headed navigator busied himself in taking a fourpoint bearing.

III.

Decepcion Island lies in latitude sixty-two degrees fifty-six minutes south, and longitude sixty degrees, thirty-three minutes west, and is one of the south Shetland Archipelago. The island is of volcanic origin and of the horseshoe shape peculiar to the atolls of the South Seas. Composed of a vast heap of lava rocks, boulders and ashes, the island rises sheer, forbidding and gaunt looking, and upon its precipitous cliffs the long seas of the Southern Ocean fume and rage in acres of white water. Sterile, blasted and dead, it is the home of countless penguins that march up and down the cliffs and ledges in regiments, and render the region melancholy by their weird and peculiar cries. On the scant rocks that fringe the island at certain spots the Cape Horn seal disports himself with herd or family, and in the darkness of the Antarctic winter the drifting bergs and floes reel and grind on the iron rocks as they swing north on the flood of the Drift.

The interior of the island is a vast, placid lagoon, undisturbed by the strong gales of the high latitudes and completely rimmed in by the stark cliffs. Close ashore there is a depth of thirty fathoms, but no sounding-line has yet plumed the depth in the center. Vessels entering this silent crater lake come in through a narrow channel—a break in the island's rim—taking care to avoid a spur of sunken rocks on the port hand. These rocks were the doom of McDonald's vessel on his former voyage to the island.

As this passage is but a cable's length in width and but a cleft in the cliffs, it is hard to discern from seaward. Thus the name—Decepcion Island.

It was dark when the *Roberta*, with McDonald conning her, passed Sail Rock and ran down to leeward of Nature's monumental deceit. Hauling their wind, they worked in to the entrance of the lagoon and hove the anchor over in twenty fathoms. Instead of chain cable, the eight-inch manilla fishing hawser was bent on—"for good and sufficient future reasons," the enigmatical McDonald explained.

When the cabin clock of the *Roberta* pointed to the hour of midnight, McDonald called all hands aft. The schooner was rolling slightly to the long swell in the lee of the island, and the water chirped and gurgled around her rusty, sea-washed hull. The gang came down into the cabin, quietly and like shadows.

“Now,” said McDonald softly, when all were assembled, “the other craft may be inside that lagoon, an’ she may not. She may have reached the island an’ cleared out again, but I don’t think so, as we must ha’ bin on her heels all th’ way from th’ Falklands. I have a hunch that she’s inside thar, as they’ll spend some time searchin’ fur that cave among them boulders. Ef she ain’t thar, it’ll be plain sailin’ for us, but I’ll lay my hat that she is.”

The red-haired man paused and gave a glance at the clock.

“Th’ Skipper an’ I hev a plan which we’ll carry out to-night without any delay if we mean ter git what we’ve come for. Cookie and Morris’ll stand by th’ vessel here. The rest of us’ll take two dories an’ go inter th’ lagoon. Ef the other vessel is layin’ there, we’ll board her an’ try ter work her outside here. Git th’ hatches off, sails loosed an’ halliards clear. We’ll hev ter do some spry work, maybe.”

The men nodded, voicing their endorsement of the plan by stolid grunts.

“How about guns?” queried Sam Johnson. “Them sealer fellers are all armed.”

McDonald opened a locker and produced three revolvers, while the Skipper drew two repeating rifles from under his bunk mattress.

“They’re all loaded,” said McDonald. “Th’ Skipper an’ I will take a revolver each—Johnson kin take the other. Slocum an’ Corby kin take th’ rifles. You other fellers kin use what ye like. Come on, now, man th’ dory tackles an’ git two dories over.”

Simons tumbled into one dory with three of the gang, while McDonald commanded the other with Johnson and Slocum. With hearts beating hard with excitement, they pulled over the long swells for the entrance—McDonald leading to show the way. As the passage was to leeward, it was sheltered from the heavy swells which thundered on the western shores of the Island, and they had no difficulty in working through.

“Now, fellers,” cried McDonald softly “pull strong an’ quiet, for ef they sh’d hear us, we’d be shark’s meat in two shakes. Ef they’re here at all, they’ll be up at Pendulum Cove, three miles up ter starboard. Give way!”

Silently and like a flotilla of ghosts they pulled the long miles up through the quiet darkness of this curious inland lake. Outside, the thunderous roar of the surf came but as a low murmur. Overhead, the stars blazed with the scintillating glitter of the high latitude, and the gaunt cliffs were shadowed in somber black on the waters—the star reflections dancing in the eddies left by the boats.

“She’s there!” came in an exultant hiss from McDonald. “They’ve lit a fire on th’ cliffs. Easy as ye go, boys.”

Simons pulled up.

“What d’ye intend to do?”

“You board her to port an’ batten th’ gang down in her foc’sle, an’ I’ll attend to the afterguard. Make no noise, an’ keep well in th’ shadow o’ th’ rocks. Give way!”

And McDonald breathed a prayer for success.

IV.

The lookout man upon the *Topsail Belle* was sleepy and leaned against the foremast, his pipe between his teeth. With eyelids as heavy as lead, he shivered and closed them at intervals.

As he gazed with hazy eyes at the fire on the bank of the lagoon he sprang into momentary wakefulness on hearing a slight splash, but with a muttered "Dam' sea-lion havin' a bath!" he relapsed again into a semi-somnolent state. The tired feeling began to take complete possession of him while the snores of the foc'sle gang coming up through the open scuttle acted as a lullaby upon the watchman's soporific nerve, and stowing his pipe inside the furl of the foresail, he crossed his arms and found a soft streak in the mast for his back.

When he awoke again, it was suddenly and with a smothering sensation. Regaining his faculties, his slow mind took in the fact that a heavy hand had him by the throat and a voice was hissing in his ear.

"Make a sound, yuh swab, and I'll choke ye."

He opened his mouth to shout, but a plug of balled up marline filled his facial orifice, and he was unable to utter a sound. Gently, but with tremendous strength, his assailant bore him to the deck and, casting off a coil of halliard lashed him from neck to heels in the strong hemp rope.

"Got th' beggar fast?" inquired a hoarse voice.

"Aye, for sure," answered McDonald out of the gloom. "He's sarved with good foretops'l halliard from head t' foot, an' a hank o' mousin' in his mug ter keep him quiet. Draw that foc'sle hatch, there, Corby, an' stan' by it with yer gun. Slocum kin do th' same aft."

Silent forms flitted around the sealing schooner's decks in stockinged feet, and McDonald peered down the open hatch, feeling with his hands.

"They're all aboard," he whispered to Simons.

"They must ha' found th' cave without any trouble."

"Now, fellers, we've got ter git th' fores'l on her an' git outside with th' little air blowin' down th' lagoon."

“How about the anchor?” growled a man. “There’s three turns o’ chain around th’ windlass an’ a good pile in th’ box. We can’t start haulin’ all their cable over th’ windlass ter let it go!”

“Come for’ard with me,” replied McDonald.

“There’s a shackle at forty-five fathom. He ain’t got any more than forty paid out here, so overhaul th’ cable until ye come to th’ shackle an’ knock it out. Lively, there, lively.”

With the clank and clatter of the chain cable rumbling over the iron-shod windlass barrel, and the horrible creaking from the foresail blocks as the throat and peak halliards were manned, the captives below awoke to sudden activity and commenced to hammer on the drawn scuttles.

“What’s th’ row?” roared a deep voice, which McDonald recognized as that of Olsen, the skipper. “Open th’ hatch, Jim!”

Jim was unfortunately unable to reply, but McDonald answered. “Good mornin’, Cap’n Olsen, an’ how’s yer liver this mornin’?”

“Who th’ hell’s that?” cried Olsen in surprise.

“Why, who sh’d it be but Danny McDonald come aboard for a social call an’ ter git th’ seal pelts he told you about up in Halifax. Oh, but it’s you that is th’ wily bird, Captain Barney Olsen! Ye put great credit in th’ talk o’ drunken men. Well, thank heavin, I kin remember who I was drinkin’ with, an’ git busy on my own hook.” And while McDonald was jibing his late skipper, the schooner was gliding, ghostlike, for the passage.

“Say, Mac,” cried Corby from for’ard, “they’re startin’ ter break th’ foc’sle scuttle. What shall I do?”

“Give ’em a hail, an’ shoot through th’ door!”

Corby carried out his instructions, and silence reigned forward. Not so, aft. Here the hunters berthed and had their rifles, and, after their first surprise, they commenced firing indiscriminately through skylight and planking—making things unpleasant for those on deck. McDonald at the wheel began to get desperate and sang out:

“Cap’n Olsen, hold on a minute!”

“Aye!” growled a voice, while the firing stopped.

“I jest want ter say that ef we hev any more signs o’ resistance from youse fellers or any more shootin’, I’ll pile this schooner up on th’ rocks an’ set fire to her! An’ furthermore, I’ll take all yer boats an’ leave ye on this

blasted island to die like rats! I mean what I say, an' by God, I'll carry it out!"

A long silence ensued after McDonald proclaimed his threat, and, the breeze freshening with the dawn, they made a successful run through the passage. Meanwhile, Simons and the others were busily engaged in getting the sealskin pelts up on deck.

Swinging around the point to the eastward of the Island, they ran down on the *Roberta* as she rode to her anchor.

"Stand by!" yelled McDonald.

By a piece of smart seamanship on his part, they ran alongside the fishing schooner and, cutting the foresail halliards, Simons had the sail down by the run. On the shout from Mac, the cook and Morris caught a rope and made it fast to the *Roberta's* forebits. The *Topsail Belle* swung around and both schooners lay bow to bow, as creaking and grinding, they surged into the long easterly swell.

With feverish haste the *Roberta's* crew began to load the bundles of pelts aboard. Sweating and panting in a chilly air, they laboured like Titans to get the valuable spoil out of the sealer's hold. The banging of rifle-butts against the hatches and the shouts of the prisoners started afresh and acted as incentives to fiercer exertions. A voice cried out from below:

"Mac! You've got th' upper hand. Let's divide th' skins an' call quits."

"No, no, Captain Olsen!" answered McDonald sarcastically. "You're too kind. They belong ter me an' my friends, an' why sh'd I give you any? Besides, seals are plentiful around th' Crozets an' Kerguelen. Arter ye've made a trip thar ye'll make yer fortune an' settle down ashore. Them's yer own words to th' noospaper in Halifax. No, no, me bird! I'll take 'em all—ye'll be able ter catch us easy when ye're flyin' light."

A volley of impotent curses greeted this sally, and Mac laughed easily.

While the last bundles of pelts were being hove aboard the *Roberta*, McDonald went around the sealing schooner with an ax. With a blow he smashed the compass to flinders, and striding to the mainsail halliards, cut them and hauled the ends through the blocks. The main-sheet he chopped through in several places, and a few telling cuts put the wheel-gear out of business. Simons, with a fisherman's bait-knife, severed the forestaysail halliards and cut all the lanyards of the standing rigging.

When the last bundle was hove aboard, McDonald yelled:

“For th’ vessel, now, fellers! Jump!”

With a rush the fishermen piled aboard their vessel.

“Up on yer foresail!” yelled Simons, and McDonald with the ax cut through the manila fishing hawser and cast the *Topsail Belle* adrift.

The sealing schooner had drifted to leeward but a scant hundred yards when a mob of men poured out of her cabin with yells and curses of rage. Olsen stood up on the cabin and, grasping a gun, opened fire.

Bang! Bang! Zip! Zip! and the bullets began to chip and splinter on the *Roberta’s* rail and cabin trunk. The gang were hauling up the foresail, when the fusilade commenced, and McDonald was at the wheel.

“Belay yer halliards!” he commanded. “An’ lie down! We’ll soon git out o’ their range.”

With the foresail half-way up the mast and bulging like a balloon, they ran down the Straits to the eastward, McDonald sitting on deck beside the wheel, steering.

For a moment the firing stopped, and Simons looked cautiously over the rail.

“They’ve tumbled into the dories, and are pulling like the very devil after us!”

McDonald glanced hurriedly around.

“Boys!” he said, “we’ll hev ter git that fores’l an’ mains’l up.” In spite of the occasional bullets which bit the woodwork around the fore and main masts, the gang managed to haul the sails up, and wing and wing they ran before the wind, quickly leaving the dories astern.

Standing alongside the wheel-box, McDonald watched them stop rowing, and waving his hand derisively to Captain Olsen who was standing up in the bow of the foremost dory, he shouted:

“Good-bye, Barney!”

He was about to say something more, but a well-aimed bullet from the enraged Olsen’s rifle missed his head by a hair’s breadth and ripped through the mainsail.

“Damn!” growled Simons. “It ain’t safe to palaver with these jokers. That was a narrow shave.”

“Ho! ho!” laughed McDonald in great glee. “Cleaned out, by Godfrey! ’Twill take them half a day ter reeve that runnin’ gear again, an’ I’m thinkin’ they’ll have ter steer home by starlight or a codhauler’s nose. Ef they git their vessel fixed by ter-morrer, they’re doin’ well. I cut th’ taykles—”

“And I put a shot through th’ bottom o’ their boats afore I left,” exclaimed Corby modestly.

“And I,” cried Simons, “cut all th’ lanyards o’ th’ riggin’.”

“Ho! ho! ha! ha!” McDonald rolled over the wheel-box in paroxyms of laughter. “What a mess for sure! I’ll hev that yarn published from Cape Town to Labrador—Captain Barney Olsen an’ his sealskins, or a skin game at Decepcion Island!” Becoming serious again, he said: “Well, boys, give her all she’ll carry—we ain’t out o’ th’ bush yet. With sich a crowd aboard, he’ll be after us hot-foot, an’ ef he kin catch us, we’ll see th’ lid o’ Davy Jones’ locker openin’ for us. Now, that beggar’ll figure out that we’ll swing off for Cape Town an’ land th’ catch there, but, I know a company in Monte Video that’ll buy our cargo, so I reckon we’d better shape for there. What d’ye say, Simons? Monte Video an’ home?”

“Monte Video, an’ home it is!”

V.

Thirty-five days later, a rusty, seaworn schooner let go her mud-hook in the Inner Anchorage at Monte Video, and McDonald and Simons went ashore. A sale was made and each man pocketed a draft for a handsome amount. Simons and McDonald drew some thirty thousand dollars each out of the adventure, while the men were highly satisfied with a trifle over four thousand apiece. They stayed but a short time in the South American city—long enough to procure fresh water and provisions—and early one morning a small fishing schooner, manned by a crew of wealthy men, stole across the turbid waters of the Rio de la Plata on the long trail for home.

Needless to say, Anchorville gossip was busy. The *Roberta S.* had been reported as arriving at Monte Video and diligent inquiry had failed to solve the mystery. When the report came from the light-house at the entrance to Anchorville Bay that the *Roberta* was passing in, the town flocked to the wharf. Shabby, rusty and scarred with the winds, seas and suns of the waters in which she had sojourned, she rounded up to the wharf with Bartley Simons to the wheel.

Scarcely had the lines been slipped over the bollards, when the little vessel was invaded by all Anchorville and questions flew thick and fast. In answer to excited inquiries Simons with an enigmatical smile remarked that he was engaged “In a skin game at Decepcion Island!” and with this, Anchorville gossip had to be satisfied. Simons had retrieved his ill-luck; his crew were discussing investments in farms and schooners, while McDonald of the flamboyant hair was going home to the old folks, with money to burn.

Out for Business

THERE is no getting away from the fact that Johnny Cannon is an A1, red star, copper-fastened, double-rivetted success as an insurance agent. Johnny would sell insurance to the devil himself, if he had means of locating the gentleman of the cloven hoof, and envious rivals are wont to say that Johnny has both Mephisto and St. Peter down in his prospect book. Thus Cannon would have business to go after in whichever place he was consigned to.

San Francisco, before the big 'quake, used to be his happy hunting ground, until the foggy afternoon he strayed down on the Barbary Coast to peddle Fire, Life, Accident, Plate Glass and Employers' Liability to Roughneck McGinnis of the Golden Gate Employment and Labor Exchange. McGinnis was in an ill humour when Johnny pushed a card upon his desk and opened fire, but whether ill or good, Roughneck always retained his humour, and, calling Johnny into his private sanctum in the rear of the office, he had him "slugged," stripped, and re-rigged in a suit of tarry dungarees and half-leg boots. When the metamorphosis from insurance agent to saltwater flatfoot was complete, Johnny was wheeled down to the dock, transferred to a boat, and finally hustled into a fo'c'sle bunk aboard the American skys'lyarder *Navarino*, outward bound for New York.

As I mentioned before, McGinnis, being Irish, was humourously inclined, and, though he relieved Johnny of his watch, chain, clothes, and odd cash, he stuffed Agent Cannon's Insurance folders, premium list, and application forms into the pockets of the dungerees hiding the nakedness of the crop-headed, walnut-juiced, well-muddied shell-back, now known on the *Navarino's* articles as plain Bill Smith, A.B. "It'll be a little relaxashun fur him in his watch below t' keep his hand in peddlin' his insurance bull to his shipmates," remarked McGinnis. "Maybe he'll git Cap Ganthook an' his hard case mates t' sign up. Ha! ha!"

When John Cannon, alias William Smith, came to his senses some hours later, he wasn't long finding out where he was, and what he was. A remorseless second mate with a voice like the Bull of Bashan, and shod with a pair of number nine sea brogans, elucidated for the benefit of the dazed

Johnny, and inside of a very few minutes, the erstwhile agent of the State Life, Fire and kindred concerns was tallying on to a foretopsail halliard along with a crowd of human nondescripts.

He was feeling very sick and down in the mouth when he saw the hills of the Golden Gate well astern, and he felt sicker still when the second greaser rushed him by the scruff of the neck to the weather fore-rigging and roared in his ear: "Up you go, you sojer, an' loose th' foreto' gallan's'l!" There were numerous naughty adjectives embodied in the command, and they were the only words Johnny understood. "Foreto' gallan's'!" might as well have been original Coptic for all he knew about it, but he was a few feet above the shear-pole before he said so.

"Holy Jumpin Judas!" howled the second officer. "D'ye mean t' tell me ye don't know where th' blazin' foreto' gallan's'l is? An' you togged out like a proper hawse pipe crawler! Holy Old Sailor! if ye try yer monkey shines on me I'll gaudy well kick seventy-eight different kinds o' Sunday out of yer dog's hide. Up ye go, now, or I'll—" Needless to say, John went up and by some strange freak he laid out on the topgallant-yard and cast the gaskets adrift in regulation A.B. fashion.

Cannon possessed nerve. Not only a quantity of the brand known as "gall" but also a fair amount of the real physical kind. Johnny was a college man, a football player, a boxer, and an all-round athlete, so the little task of scrambling up a windjammer's rigging did not cause him to squeeze the tar out of the shrouds or bend the jackstay. But what he didn't know about seafaring would have filled a very large book.

When he came down from aloft, the muslin was set, and the second mate had a few minutes on hand to devote to Johnny. "What d'ye mean by stringin' me a few minutes ago?" he roared. "Ye didn't know th' foreto' gallans'l, eh?"

"It's a fact, sir," replied the other respectfully. "I was really ignorant of the nomenclature of the canvas to which you alluded——"

The officer gasped. " 'Nomenclature'? Th' hell ye say! An' who th' devil may you be?"

Agent Cannon perked up. "I represent the State Life Assurance Company—the largest and strongest concern in the United States of America with funds exceeding twelve million dollars. Now, sir, if you'll spare me a moment of your valuable time I will bring to your notice the greatest and most liberal Endowment Policy ever promulgated by an

American company. It is a gilt-edged twenty-year endowment proposition with cash surrender, loan and paid-up values positively guaranteed——”

“Howling Tophet!” bellowed the mate slipping a stays’l hank over his fist. “What have we here? A blame’ sea lawyer, by all that’s holy! Ye’ll quote th’ Navigation Laws t’ me, will ye?” And he leaped at the surprised Johnny and socked him with the stays’l hanked fist on the ear. Socking on the auricular appendage always did raise Cannon’s ire, and being no slouch with his mitts, he bunched his fives and returned the second officer’s love taps with interest. The foremast gang shrieked with delight when the officer was knocked endwise into the scuppers.

“Let me advocate your taking out one of my Accident and Casualty policies, sir,” said Johnny as he leaned over the fallen greaser. “The premium is small, and if you only had one of them at the present moment you could collect dental expenses for the replacing of the two teeth you have just lost——” But the officer did not wait to hear the rest. He just flew aft yelling “Mutiny!” and in less than a shake of a brace block, William Smith, A.B., was being marched up on to the poop with the mate’s revolver boring into the middle of his back.

Captain Ganthook was pacing the weather alley, and his seamed old visage was saturnine and what Agent Cannon would denominate as an “unlikely prospect.” He stopped and surveyed the mutineer who had mauled his second mate. “And what’s the meanin’ o’ this shenanigan?” he rasped.

“I beg your pardon, sir,” replied the unruly one, “but the truth is that I’m not a sailor and I’ve never been on a ship in my life before. Roughneck McGinnis has shanghaied me. I was down at his place on business and he has evidently put the goods over on Little Willie, and when that man commenced manhandling me for a display of excusable ignorance on my part—Well, I just retaliated, that’s all.”

“Humph!” the skipper grunted. “Don’t ye want me t’ put th’ ship a’bout an’ land ye in ’Frisco again? Or would ye rather I gave up my cabin to ye as a passenger t’ Noo York seein’ that ye’ve bin deluded aboard under false pretences?” Captain Ganthook was sarcastic and waited for an affirmative reply with the toe of his right foot itching.

“No, sir,” answered Johnny respectfully. “I know you can’t put back now, and I know that you’re not likely to do either of the things you proposed. I’ll make the trip now I’m into it. I want a little relaxation anyway, but, though I’m no sailor, I’ll try and do my share, and I trust you’ll pardon my ignorance of ship stuff.”

The skipper was slightly taken aback. He expected the usual rumpus peculiar to the shanghaied longshoreman, tugboat hand, lumberman, and similar characters who are the Employment Bureau's "meat." To find a man express his willingness to work the passage was decidedly novel. The toe ceased to itch, and as Ganthook was no "bully" skipper, he replied gruffly. "All right, my man. I'll give ye a chance but keep your hands to yerself in future. Remember that the officers have the privilege of shootin' a mutineer dead. Go for'ard now. Do yer duty, show willing' an' ye'll be all right. Get sulky an' pull down yer brows an' ye'll smell Hell afore this trip's over!"

John Cannon William Smith turned to in the port watch—the mate picking him out after the disgruntled second officer discarded the pugnacious Insurance Agent in favour of a spineless Chileno. The mate hailed from Down East and was as much of a gentleman as windjammer mates are allowed to be, and though he roared at and cursed his protégé in a voice seething with deep-water oaths, yet he took some pride in trying to make a sailor out of him.

"You infernal bull-con insurance peddler! Don't ye know how t' make a clove hitch yet? See here! Look now, you ruddy purser's clerk, an' see how it's done. Got that?"

"Yes, sir, I see," answered the amateur shell-back, and after he had strung the weather dodger up, he reached into his shirt and pulled out a pamphlet. Handing it to the officer, he said respectfully. "Will you be good enough to read that in your watch below, sir?" And he got away for'ard before the afterguarder could say anything.

A few days later while he was sand and canvasing the poop rail, the mate walked over and William Smith John Cannon, A.B., commenced another kind of canvassing. "That pamphlet, sir. Did you read it?"

"Aye," growled the officer. "An' what has it got t' do with me?"

"You're a married man, sir?"

"Aye! Are ye thinkin' o' callin' on th' missus?"

"No, sir," replied W. S. J. C., "but I'd like to have you insure your life in my company, sir. A sailor's life is fearfully precarious, and if you only had a policy you'd always feel that your wife would never be left penniless if anything happened to you. Now, sir——"

"Suppose you git along with that sand an' canvasin' an leave me an' my precarious life alone."

"Certainly, sir, but the State Life Assurance Company have a particularly attractive non-participating——"

"Ram, stam an' dam' you an' th' State Life Assurance Company!" snapped the mate. "Git away outa this an' lay aloft an' overhaul an' stop th' foreroyal buntlines, an' I hope t' Judas ye'll fall from there an' break yer ruddy neck."

"Aye, aye, sir!" answered Johnny picking up his gear, "but even if I do fall from aloft, my mother will receive fifteen hundred dollars on my death being substantiated, as I hold a Life Policy in the State Life Assurance Company. If I receive injuries which do not result in death, the Accident and Sickness Policy which I hold in the Spreadeagle Sickness and Accident Corporation will allow me twelve dollars a week as long as I am disabled ——"

"An' I'll give them a gaudy good chance to pay up ef ye don't skin aloft an' do as I told ye!" almost howled the angry officer, and Johnny got going while the going was good.

On the run down the Trades and the Great Circle Track from the Line to Diego Ramirez Rocks, Cannon had tried out all the "prospectives" in the forecastle, and though he had even beaten some of his arguments into them physically, yet it did not take him long to find out that there was no business to be done with the *Navarino's* foremast gang. Dagos, Dutchmen, and Squareheads, without a dollar to bless themselves, were poor material to talk insurance to, and Johnny left them alone. Not so the cook, carpenter and steward. Cookee being a steady sober married man was signed on for a $500 life policy; the steward promised to ask his mother about it when he got home, but the carpenter—an Aberdeen Scotchman—was "suspeecious" and "afraid o' his siller."

"Hum!" grunted Johnny as he glanced over his prospect list. "I've landed the cook, and I'll land the steward, but that Scotch carpenter is a dead one. Might as well argue with the fore-bitts as with that tightwad. Now, there's the skipper and the two mates. I'll get after them and sign them up." A very laudable ambition, but Johnny realized that it was easier said than done. The ship was down in the "windy weather latitudes" south of forty, and running her easting with decks awash, high seas running, officers anxious, and crew played out with the continual clew up and haul down which was the order of the day. Naturally enough, the officers were occupied too much with the ship to give ear to insurance.

The *Navarino* made the Ramirez Rocks on a gray July afternoon, and with yards squared she slugged before the westerly for Cape Stiff. The weather was bitterly cold, and the continual wet and hard work had keeled up most of the miserable creatures in the windjammer's forecastle, and during those days, the mate found in the athletic Johnny Cannon a veritable tower of strength. It was Johnny who swung his two hundred pounds on a brace, downhaul, or clew-line to the best advantage, and it was he who was the first to lay aloft to reef or furl. "He'd make a grand sailorman," muttered the mate regretfully. "Too bad he should be wastin' his time panhandlin' insurance—Oho! Wind's comin' away squally. Reckon we'd better git th' fores'l in afore she buries herself for'ard." And he roared a command through the dark of the semi-antarctic night.

The skipper came up and stared over the break rail and above the roar of wind and sea could be heard the shouts and "heave oh's" of the watch trying to hand the sail. The buntlines, leechlines and clew garnets had been hauled taut, but the crowd on the footropes of the foreyard soon found the big sail taking charge of them, and almost exhausted they clung to the jackstay while the canvas bellied and flapped thunderously.

Johnny Cannon at the bunt was bawling. "Come on, you ruddy putty men! Sock it to her! We can get her up if you'd only pull together——"

"Ach! let der verdomded mate call de sta'bord watch to help us," cried a man. "She's too moch for dis gang——"

"Here comes the mate now," cried Johnny as he spied a figure clambering up the weather-rigging. "Come ahead! Fist the wind out of her!" And ripping out lurid anathemas on his watch, the chief officer was among them.

"What in the sanguinary Sheol are you sojers doin'?" he stormed as he swung on to the truss. "Can't this blame bunch o' Fielding's sojers muzzle this cussed rag? Come on, there! Grab a-holt an' give her hell——." While he was speaking, the sail bellied up over the yard as he jumped for the footrope and he missed his footing on the ice covered rope. He would have crashed to the deck forty feet below had not Cannon grabbed him by the coat collar as he fell.

"Holy Sailor! What a shave!" gasped the officer as he grasped the jackstay. "My wife was dam' near being a widow that time——"

"Yes, sir," exclaimed a voice in his ear. "A sailor's life is very precarious. I would advise your taking out a Life Policy as soon as possible,

sir. If you'd have gone then, what would your family have done?" And amid the thunder of sea and wind, the flapping of the sail and the curses and grunts of the men on the yard, Agent Cannon roared into the mate's ear the inducements and easy payment privileges offered by the State Life. The sail had been tied up and the men had laid down from aloft, when Johnny cinched the mate for a twenty-payment policy.

"Now, sir, you can rest easy for the balance of your life," said Johnny. "If you slip your shackle you'll know that the missis and kid'll be provided for. I'll come aft at the end of the watch and sign you up." And as he clambered down on to the deluged main-deck he felt that he had spent a profitable thirty minutes on the foreyard.

Owing to the peculiar nautical sanctity which is invested in the personage of a shipmaster, Johnny found extreme difficulty in broaching the subject of insurance to the marine autocrat who commanded the *Navarino*. Captain Zephaniah Ganthook's face repelled any advances on the part of a foremast hand, and his saturnine, unrelaxing visage filled Johnny's heart with awe. "He's a hard nut," murmured Cannon, "but I'll get him sometime afore Sandy Hook's over the bow."

Agent Cannon worried himself a great deal over the problem of "getting" the skipper, but, somehow or other, the opportunity to broach the subject to the Old Man never came until one fine day when they were in the variables off the River.

It was a fine afternoon, and in a light breeze and smooth sea, all hands were tacking ship. Captain Ganthook was standing by the lee rail for'ard of the mizzen mast and the watches were engaged in trimming sail after coming about. William Smith Cannon, A.B., was looking after the mizzen topmast staysail sheet which was belayed to windward, and he was about to sing out to the skipper to stand clear as he let the sheet go, when an idea came into his fertile brain. Glancing at the sea, at the staysail and the skipper, he cast off the sheet suddenly. Things happened. The sail flew over to loo'ard, and Cannon, hanging on to the weather sheet, "cannoned" against the skipper and both went over the low poop rail into the sea.

"Help!" roared Ganthook as his head went under the brine. "Man overboard!" roared Cannon as he landed on top of the master mariner and drove him further under.

The skipper floundered and coughed, and being unable to swim, became frightened. Cannon, an expert in the natatory art, was calmly treading water

behind him. “I’ll let him get good an’ flustered before I grab him, then I’ll talk business.”

Zephaniah Ganthook, grasping and splashing, thought less of drowning than he did of sharks. The ship was up in the wind a good two cables’ lengths away and the mate was clearing away the quarterboat. “I’m a goner! Help! Help! I’ll log that clumsy swine of a mate——”

“All right, sir. Keep cool an’ don’t grab me. I’ll keep you afloat ’til the boat comes.” And swimming easily, Johnny came up to the choking Zephaniah. “Keep cool, sir. Now let me put my arms under yours. Lay over on your back. That’s th’ ticket. Now, we’re all segarry——”

“Segarry hell!” spluttered the skipper obeying. “It’s th’ sharks I’m worryin’ about——”

“Sharks!” almost screamed Johnny. And to himself he muttered. “Sacred old Leland Stanford! I never thought o’ them.”

Though his toes were itching with imaginary sea tigers nibbling at them, Johnny was out for business.

“Now, sir,” he said looking down into Ganthook’s purple visage. “You see the awful risks we are running. How will Mrs. Ganthook fare if we don’t get picked up? Is she well provided for? See how happy you could die if you knew that she could draw your insurance. You’d have nothing to regret. As it is, we may both be in a shark’s stomach in five minutes, but I know my folks will be all right. I’m well insured in the State Life. Are you insured?”

“No!” gasped Ganthook.

“Then soon as we get aboard, let me sign you up for a twenty-payment non-participating life policy with cash surrender, loan and paid-up values guaranteed——”

“Is that dam’ boat a-comin’?” gurgled Ganthook.

Johnny glanced around. Yes, the boat was coming, but Agent Cannon had a prospect almost cinched.

“Gee, skipper,” he said. “I’m afraid I’ll have to let you go. I’m all in. I can’t see the boat——”

“For God’s sake hang on a minute longer,” implored the shipmaster. “I’ll take out a policy if I ever get out o’ this alive——”

“Good! I’ll keep you up or bust myself.” And thirty seconds later they were in the quarterboat—Cannon very pleased with himself and the Old

Man sputtering salt water and profanity.

After supper that night, Smith Cannon, A.B., and Insurance Agent, went aft and signed up the skipper.

"The Old Man thinks it was an accident," he murmured. "Good! Still if I'd ha' known there were sharks around here I'd ha' thought twice, but *finis coronat opus* as the Latin gink said. Now for the second mate. I'll get him or bust an artery."

The second greaser was pacing the weather alley, smoking. It was his watch and as he pulled at his pipe and cast a watchful eye at the weather leach of the maint'gallan's'l, he thought of the girls he knew and of one in particular whom he hoped to see when the ship was docked and he had his pay in his pocket.

His brow darkened a trifle when Smith Cannon of the port watch came up on the poop, and as the latter advanced toward him, his shoulders squared involuntarily and his right fist stole toward the staysail hank in his coat pocket.

"Waal, an' what in Gehenna are you doin' aft here?" he snapped.

"All right, cully, don't get nasty," soothed the intruder on the sacred planks. "I just came aft to have a little talk with you——"

"I'll talk to you with th' toe of my boot," growled the officer aggressively.

"Now, old chap, keep your wool on," cooed the other as he faced the surly officer. "You can't beat me up, so don't try to. I'm in strong with the skipper aboard here—in fact, I'm the white haired boy with both your superiors, and apart from that, I could lick you out of your boots, blind, drunk or sober. Don't let me do that. I've a strong pull with the newspapermen ashore and it wouldn't be very nice for you to read a column in a paper about how a shanghaied insurance agent knocked Tophet out of the hard case second mate of the *Navarino*——"

"Oho! you think so, do you? Consarn your gall! Here's one for you, you glorified beachcomber!" And the burly second officer went for Cannon with a stamp and go.

Of course, the row over his head brought Captain Ganthook up on the run, and when the combatants sighted him, their respect for the quarterdeck caused them to desist from slugging each other.

"What's th' meanin' o' this shenanigan?" snapped the captain addressing Cannon.

The other pulled his forelock, sailor fashion, and answered respectfully. "It's my watch below, sir, and I wanted to have a few minutes' conversation with Mr. Kennedy about insurance. He's a very quick tempered man, sir, and he started to go for me as soon as I stepped on the poop——"

"Ye gave me some o' yer slack lip, you beachcomber," snapped the second mate rubbing a swollen cheek.

"Have you any objections to our having it out, sir?" said Cannon quickly. "I'll make a deal with Mr. Kennedy. If he can lick me in fair fight—no belaying-pins or sea-boots—I'll let him draw all the wages that are comin' to me at the end of this voyage. If I can trim him, he's to let me have the chance to show him the advantages of insuring for a life policy in the State Life Assurance Company——"

Captain Ganthook smiled and rubbed his hands together. Looking over at the second mate, he said. "Waal, I cal'late that's pretty fair, Mr. Kennedy. You imagine you're some bruiser, I reckon, an' I think it would make a nice little scrap. Git down on th' main-deck, the two of ye, an' let th' best man win. I ain't seen a decent sluggin' match sence the Olympic Club was raided in 'Frisco years agone. Go to it, now!"

It was a great fight. A fight that lasted a good twenty-eight one-minute rounds. A fight which cleaned out all the plug tobacco in the slop chest on bets, and which caused the crew to weep when it was over and the defeated man was carried insensible to his bunk. No! William Smith Cannon did not win. It was he who was knocked out. He put up a great fight, but the harder, tougher-muscled second mate could stand the punishment, and his endurance and toughness overcame the college athlete in the long run, but he won with a wholesome respect for his adversary—a respect which amounted to admiration.

Two or three days later, when a badly cut up Johnny Cannon clambered up the poop ladder to have a talk with the second greaser, the latter was by no means aggressive. In fact, he was almost cordial and listened with attention to what the insurance agent had to say.

"That's all very well, Smith," rumbled the officer; "but what in Hades do I want with an insurance policy, I ain't got no one to leave it to ef I croak or slip my shackle——"

"You have a girl somewhere, ain't you?" persisted Cannon.

The officer scratched his head. “Waal yes, I have two or three around ——”

“Wouldn’t you like to get married to one of them?”

“Waal, yes, I would, but second mates ain’t much of a proposition for a girl to hitch up with——”

“Of course, they’re not,” interrupted Cannon. “No girl cares to marry a man who has only a second officer’s wages and who is away, God knows where, for a year at a stretch. That ain’t much of a marryin’ proposition, is it? But, look you, if you make up to some nice little dame what’s struck your fancy, and you show her a thousand dollar insurance policy made out in her name, and you say to her: ‘Gerty, dear, you’ll be provided for in case anything happens to me; a thousand cold iron dollars will be paid into your lily white mitts by the State Life Assurance Company if I should croak on the briny,’ you’ll be worth something to her both dead and alive, won’t you? Now, if you could be able to say that to your fancy girl, I’ll bet she’d jump for you like a shark to a chunk o’ pork.”

Needless to state, after a whole watch of similar argument, the second officer scrawled his fist on an application form and Johnny retired to the forecastle to ruminate.

“Roughneck McGinnis did me a good turn when he shoved my papers in my dungarees. I’ve cinched all the prospects on this ballyhoo of blazes, and I’ll cinch Mr. McGinnis for a premium big enough to cover all the mental and bodily abuse I’ve undergone on this trip. See if I don’t.”

McGinnis of the Golden Gate Employment and Labor Exchange read over the letter and swore softly to himself.

“Um!” he muttered, reading. “I’ve just arrived an’ been paid off from the *Navarino*. Am comin’ back to ’Frisco in a week or so . . . I am appointed special agent fur th’ Pacific Coast fur th’ State Life Assurance Company. My uncle is Chairman o’ th’ City Improvement Board o’ San Francisco. He has a big pull with th’ Mayor an’ th’ Chief o’ Police an’ other big bugs. He won’t be pleased to hear how his nephew has bin treated. Th’ Manager o’ th’ State Life is a member o’ Congress an’ he contemplates takin’ an action on behalf o’ th’ Company against th’ Golden Gate Employment an’ Labor Exchange fur illegally kidnappin’ their agent. . . . I kin lick ivery man in th’ fo’c’sle o’ th’ *Navarino*. . . . I’m comin’ down t’ see you as soon as I come back an’ I’m packin’ a gun loaded with p’izened bullets. I plan raisin’ more

hell for Patrick McGinnis than he'll ever see when he croaks an' goes where he's bound for. There's a striped suit an' a pile o' stones waitin' for a ten-year stretch in San Quentin an' th' guy that's goin' to crack them has a name that rhymes wid Dennis. . . . Holy Sailor! what a mess I'm gettin' into! . . . No action will be taken ef the enclosed form is signed up an' a check for th' first premium is paid. Um!"

Roughneck McGinnis swore again and picked up one of the State Life Assurance Company's application forms. He looked at the amount the policy called for—$20,000—and for fifteen minutes he used language which would have put a low class Spaniard in the kindergarten. Then he reached across for a pen and scrawled his name on the form.

"Dolan," he said to his boss runner a few hours later, "when shippin' men fur them outward-bounders, ye'll be very careful t' see that they're ornery, low down scrubs. Don't ship no mayors, police captains, Salvation Army men, or insurance agents. Especially insurance agents; an' ef ye sh'd see anny smart lookin' guys comin' in here an' askin' fur me, tell them t' wait until I git a chanst t' hev a squint at them. Thar's one man I don't want t' meet. Understand?"

Dolan understood.

Running a Cargo

THERE are several craft of the same name to be found in the Shipping Register, but there is really only one *Quickstep*, and she was quick and a stepper to boot. Tom Decker of Decker's Island built her. Tom Decker sailed her and fished in her, and a rough-and-tumble gang of Deckers, Westhavers and Morrisseys manned her. Fishermen characterized her as an able vessel with an able skipper and an able gang ever since her first trip haddocking, when she came in with a market-glutting fare.

Quickstep. Official No. 12,783. Schooner. Built 1898 Decker's Island, N.S. Length, 110 ft.; beam, 24 ft.; depth, 10 ft.; 115 tons gross; 98 tons register. Thos. Decker, Managing Owner, Decker's Island, Anchorville Co., N.S.

So runs the entry in the Shipping List regarding her. A simple record only, but enough for Government purposes. Tom Decker, her skipper, would dilate a trifle more upon his vessel and he never wearied of describing her qualities.

"Yes, sir! Me an' th' boys built that there vessel ourselves down on the Island. There's no scamped work in her, let me tell ye. Hardwood plankin' an' framin'—all picked an' seasoned timber; full o' hanging knees an' galvanized-iron fastenin's o' best Swedish. Her two masts are Oregon pine an' th' finest pair o' sticks on th' coast.

"She kin sail better'n any o' them, even though she ain't one o' them new style round-bow knock-abouts drawed out by yacht-designers. She's a toothpick, but her lines are a dream—yes, sir, a perfect dream—an' she's a ghost for sailin'.

"Handle? Jes' like a yacht. She'll come around on her heel 'thout lightin' up th' jib-sheets; an' for lyin' to, that ain't nawthin' round th' Western Ocean that'll beat her for hangin' to a berth under a fores'l.

"She'll hang to forty fathoms of water for a week while some o' them other jokers 'ull hev drifted a hundred mile. Yes, sir, she's a Decker's Island product an', like everything what comes from that there Island, she's as smart as they make 'em."

Speak to an Anchorville man about her.

"Th' *Quickstep*?" he will say. "Yes, she's a lively one, all right. She's owned and sailed by them Decker's Island crowd—a proper gang o' ruddy pirates. We Anchorville fellers don't hev no truck with them—they'd steal th' brass-work off a coffin.

"Ye need only t' git ashore in their vicinity t' see how quick they kin loot an' strip a vessel. Why, they've got finer fittin's in their houses down on that Island than ye'll find in a fust-class hotel—sofys, cushions, saloon-doors, mahogany furniture, pianos an' sich-like what they've stole off'n wrecks.

"Th' blame Gov'ment cutter spends most o' her time down there a-watchin' them when th' lobster season's closed.

"Oh, they's a slick crowd all right," he will nod, "an' that *Quickstep* an' her gang is the shadiest bunch on Bank water. Some o' these fine days they'll git caught at their tricks an' none o' us law-abidin' fishermen 'ull be sorry. They're a disgrace to th' country."

In his official orders, Captain Murray of the Government cutter *Ariel* had a standing entry:

"*Keep a strict supervision over the Decker's Island fishing schooner Quickstep. Off. No. 12,783. Thomas Decker, master and part owner. Several reports have come to the Department regarding illegal acts on the part of this vessel and her crew. Overhaul and search her whenever possible.*"

The cutter's commander knew the *Quickstep* well enough and had overhauled her times without number. He also knew what Tom Decker thought of him and the knowledge rankled in the officer's mind, but so far the *Quickstep* was officially clear of any infraction against the law. However, Captain Murray lived in hope.

The *Quickstep* was scarce twelve months waterborne when she fished the last of her Magdalen Island baiting on St. Peter's Bank. With eighteen hundred quintals of prime salt fish stowed in her holdpens, she was ready to swing off for Anchorville market. The gangs, fore and aft, had already seen the tallyboard and estimated the probable stock and share, and after cleaning up the decks and stowing the gear away for the passage, they awaited the skipper's order to put the sail to her for a grand shoot for home.

But Decker appeared to be in no hurry to swing off. While the men were cleaning up, he paced the quarter saying nothing.

“How about it, Skip?” inquired Tom Morrissey, who was at the wheel. “Will I shoot her on a west b’south course for home? This wind holdin’ southerly ’ull give us a good lift to Anchorville.”

The skipper glanced to windward and stopped in his steady pacing. “Call the gang,” said he to one of the men standing aft.

When the rugged crowd of husky, bewhiskered Islanders gathered on the quarter, he addressed them quietly:

“We got a smart vessel here, boys, an’ a crowd what’ll hang together. Fishin’s all right, but there’s easy money t’ be made in other things ’sides fishin’. What d’ye say if we shoot into French St. Peter an’ lay in a little stock o’ rum for th’ crowd to home? I bin thinkin’ we c’d buy a couple o’ hundred dollars’ worth o’ that French brandy an’ make quite a tidy sum out o’ it. Them Newf’nlanders run it over to their shore. Why shouldn’t we?”

“Where’ll we land it, Skip?” inquired a man doubtfully.

“Where else but at home?” answered the other.

“An git cotched by old Murray in th’ cutter? It’s a chancy, Skip!”

Captain Decker sniffed disdainfully.

“Old Murray an’ th’ cutter couldn’t catch a driftin’ trawl-kag. I’ll guarantee t’ sail circles around his old tea-kettle in this packet. Don’t worry about that brass-bound bridge-stanchion.

“Come on, now, here’s a chanct o’ makin’ an extry dollar or two. Let’s all chip in ’bout ten dollars apiece an’ buy some rum. We’ll run it inter Jimmy Peterson’s place an’ he’ll buy it from us. We’ll clear a hundred per cent. an’ no risks but dodgin’ th’ cutter down home. It’s dead easy.”

Within five minutes, the *Quickstep*, under topsails, stays’l and balloon, was heading N.N.W. for St. Pierre in the French Colony of Miquelon Islands.

These Islands, situated a few miles off the Newfoundland Coast, are the headquarters of the French fishing-fleet; and when the St. Malo, Fecamp, St. Servan and Paimpol “bankers” come across from France they discharge a goodly “ballast” of French cordials and brandy at the Islands. All the Bank fishermen know this, and the thirsty ones are always glad of a chance to run into the French Islands for a cheap drunk.

An American quarter goes a long way in the Miquelons with brandy at five cents a glass—and a beer-glass at that.

"Now, boys," said Decker, when Galantry Head was raised: "We'll jest shoot inter the outer anchorage an' leggo the manila cable. Erne, Bill, Tom an' me'll take th' two dories an' go ashore for th' rum. You fellers better remain aboard!

" 'Taint wise," he explained, "for a whole ship's company to git ashore in S'int Pierre with booze sellin' so cheap."

And as he manoeuvred the *Quickstep* into the harbour among the numerous schooners, brigs, and brigantines at anchor, he turned a deaf ear to the audible growls of the disappointed gang.

They let go the anchor abreast of the antiquated French gun-boat detailed by the Republic to protect the interests of their colony in North American waters, and the mainsail was hardly down before Decker had the dories over.

"Now, fellers, be good ontil we come off," he said with a grin. "Don't git sassin' them Frenchies aboard th' dreadnaught or they'll be after blowin' holes in th' *Quickstep*—"

"Aye, skip," growled big Bill Westhaver, who had been critically examining the vessels anchored around. "That's advice as would be good for you t' remember. There's that Gloucesterman we met in th' Ma'daleens lyin' to loo'ard. Maybe her crowd ain't forgot th' way you stole their bait at Grindstone—"

"Eh? What?" exclaimed Decker, glancing around in evident concern. "Lord Harry, so it is."

"An' I hev no doubt they'll be pleased t' meet ye," continued the other. "She'd a great bunch o' them wild Judiquers an' Cape Breetoners aboard—fair devils for scrappin' they are. Look out they don't catch ye. There ain't much chanst for a rescue with us away out here."

The skipper paused astride the rail.

"Um, yes, there ain't no doubt but ye're right, Bill. Well, Judiquers or no Judiquers, we come here on business, so let you'n Mike, Wally, Boss, Earle, an' John come ashore along o' me. It might be a good plan fur yez to take some o' them iron belayin'-pins with ye. Shove them down yer boots. No need to go ashore twirlin' them an' askin' for trouble."

When the dories pulled up on the beach-wharf, Decker answered the scarlet-trousered *gendarme* who accosted him.

"Yes! *Oui!* Schoonaire *Quickstep*. Canadien. Just shot in for some provisions. Savvy? Goin' out again soon. No need to report. Stick this silver

dollar in yer crimson jeans an' tell me ef Johnny Bosanquet's still doin' business at the old stand?"

"Aw, *oui*! *Merci, m'sieu! M'sieu Bosanquet* up de street, Capitan! Cabaret de Pecheur! I keep eyes on your doree, Capitan. Lot o' dronk Americaine ashore mak mistake with doree——"

"Any o' th' *Frances Cameron's* crowd ashore?" inquired Decker nervously.

The *gendarme* nodded.

"*Oui! Francois Cameerong!* Their doree over the stone jettee. All up at Pierre Leroux—'Auberge de Saint Malo'."

"Then we'll keep clear o' th' Auberge de S'int Malo," muttered Decker as he strode up the windswept street.

At Bosanquet's the purchase was rapidly consummated and Decker made his men hustle the cases of spirits to the dories without wasting time.

"Let's git back to th' vessel now an' to sea afore it comes dark," said he, but the perspiring fishermen demurred.

"Judas! but ye're in a hurry, skipper," growled Westhaver. "There's a drink or two promised us up at Bosanquet's. D'ye think we're a-goin' t' bust our bloomin' hearts out luggin' them cussed cases 'thout somethin' t' cool us off? Be reasonable, skipper."

"An' leave th' dories with all the booze aboard? Not likely."

"Well, tell that ruddy Johnny Darm to keep an eye on them. We won't be more'n ten minutes." Backed up by the others, Westhaver's appeal carried, and after cautioning the *gendarme* to watch the boats, the *Quickstep's* crew made up the street again for the promised thirst-quenchers.

II.

It was Cluny McPherson of the *Frances Cameron's* gang who started the trouble. Cluny was huge, rawboned and stupid, but he had enough Highland Scotch blood in him to retain a vivid memory of any man who insulted him, for the McPherson strain was strong for revenge.

At the herring traps at Grindstone Island, two months previous, McPherson had been insulted by Tom Decker and consequently the big fisherman had a photographic memory for the skipper's features.

Cluny happened to be in Bosanquet's when Decker and his gang entered for the promised drinks, and without wasting a minute he nipped across to the Auberge de Saint Malo for reinforcements. Then the band began to play.

Full of French brandy and the spirit of retaliation, the *Frances Cameron's* crew swarmed into the "*Cabaret de Pecheur*", and Tom Decker turned from the rough bar in time to receive the heft of Cluny's hairy fist on his jaw. Quick as a flash, Decker laid hold of a long-necked cordial bottle and smashed it over the red-thatched McPherson's skull and the latter went down for the count.

With oaths and growls of rage, the twenty husky fishermen congregated in the little room engaged in a battle wherein the Marquis of Queensbury rules had no part—seabooted feet, belaying-pins and bottles being the principal articles of offense.

Then Bosanquet's assistant—a bull-necked Parisian tough, who had migrated to the Miquelons to avoid an unwelcome migration to Devil's Island—took a hand in the fracas and incidentally took a flying belaying-pin on the temple. The missile, hurled by a brawny arm, smashed into his brain, and the man crashed to the floor like a pole-axed ox. The combatants knew that the brawl had culminated in a tragedy.

"Beat it for th' vessel, boys," roared Decker, making for the door. Two *gendarmes* with swords drawn barred the way, but the mob of men flying out of the door went over them like an avalanche and they rolled into the mud with a clatter of accoutrements and French oaths.

Haunted by a common fear, the opposing factions forgot their differences in the desire to reach the beach, and piling pell-mell into their

dories, each gang pulled for their respective vessels with strokes which would have defeated a college eight.

"Sock it to her, son," howled Decker, sweating at an oar. "To th' vessel before we git arrested an' jugged for that shine. Give it to her! One! Two! One! Two! Pull, boys! Put yer backs into it!"

A bullet winged past his ear.

"Th' beggars are firin' at us from th' shore. This is a hangin' scrape! Pull, sons, pull, ef ye ever want t' see Decker's Island again!" And they pulled as they had never done before.

Over the rail of the *Quickstep* they tumbled, and, pausing for a moment to make the dory painters fast, all hands tallied on to the foresail-halyards.

"Up yer fores'l!" roared Decker, running for'ard with the cook's hatchet. "Loose yer jumbo an' h'ist away, some o' yez! Jumbo! Jumbo! Some o' yez! It don't take all hands to h'ist that fores'l! Weather up yer tail-rope an' up with th' wheel. Judas! Th' ruddy gun-boat is gettin' her mud-hook!"

Ere the sail was fully hoisted, the vessel paid off and Decker slashed the straining manila cable with the axe. The rumble of the steam windlass on the French gun-boat inspired the *Quickstep's* crowd to herculean exertions, and within five minutes from the time they had boarded the schooner the foresail and jumbo were set and the vessel paying off across the gun-boat's bows.

The *Frances Cameron* was also under way and standing out to sea with her foreboom cocked high over the nested dories to a full sheet. Tearing along in her wake, a cable's length astern, came the *Quickstep* with all hands snatching the stops off the big mainsail.

Bang! The gun-boat was talking. Giving a hasty glance over the taffrail Decker saw that she was also under way and heading in the harbour-entrance to intercept them.

"Mains'l! mains'l!" yelled the Skipper. "Up with th' big rag or he'll catch us. Jumpin' Jupiter! I see us all swingin' with our necks in th' bight o' the rope if them Sabots git a-holt o' us. Heave away, bullies! Never mind th' crotch. I'll tend to that."

And while th' men panted and pulled on the halyards, the skipper tended crotch, sheet and wheel at one and the same time.

With six hundred and fifty square yards of extra canvas hoisted, the *Quickstep* began to storm along with five dories romping and tumbling to their painters alongside. To windward flew the *Frances Cameron* under

foresail and jumbo—her crowd wrestling with the mainsail and getting ready for hoisting; and to windward of her but a short distance astern was the gun-boat.

"We're goin' to be cotched," panted Tom Morrissey apprehensively. "Th' cruiser's overhaulin' us——"

"Shut yer head, yah big croaker," snapped Decker. "We ain't caught yet."

Glancing at the course the gun-boat was making, Decker did some rapid thinking.

"We're sailin' vessels," he muttered to himself. "He's a steamer. Ef I was him, I'd git to loo'ard o' the *Frances Cameron* an' jam her an' me up to wind'ard. Will he? I wonder now! We'll hev to haul by th' wind when that headland jams us off from runnin' any further. I jest wonder what he'll do? Um, I see his game now. He knows we gotter come by th' wind soon, so he's edgin' to wind'ard o' both of us. That'll mean he intends to jam us down on th' land.

"Um! Tom Decker, it sure looks as if your goose is cooked. Ye'll either hev t' surrender or run a chanct of pilin' up on th' beach, an' it's jail either ways. What did that stupid swab o' a Frenchman want t' mix up in our little scraps for anyway? . . . Oh, boys, stand by sheets fore'n aft."

The long summer evening was darkening up for night when the three vessels came to the point of action. To windward lay the open sea and the French gun-boat. Inside of the steamship was the *Frances Cameron* under foresail, jumbo and half-hoisted mainsail with the gaff jammed up against the lee main-rigging.

To leeward, and approaching the *Cameron's* quarter, stormed the *Quickstep*, running before the wind under her four whole lowers. Ahead of the latter and on her port hand were the rocks.

To clear the land, both schooners would have to sheet in and haul by the wind, and to block such an attempt the old Republican cutter was edging in as fast as her nine-knot engines would drive her. If they held on, the schooner would go ashore. If they hauled their wind, schooners and gun-boat would meet at a converging line.

The nervous watchers on the *Quickstep* could see the red tassels on the caps of the man-o-war's men as they stood at their stations along the rail. They could also see the breakers on the shore; and the strain was intense.

"Sheet in! Lively, boys, lively!" roared Decker, whirling the spokes over.

Up to windward clawed the gallant vessel and she careened to the weight of the breeze in her sails. The other schooner also put her helm down, but not having her mainsail properly hoisted she lacked enough aftersail to hold her head to windward, and she lay right athwart the *Quickstep's* course.

"Thar's two schooners a-comin' in th' harbour, skipper," hailed a man. And on the information Decker did some Napoleonic thinking.

"I gotter git past that stupid plug ahead an' I gotter dodge that gun-boat. Mister Johnny Frenchman cain't turn very well, now them two other schooners hez showed up, an' ef th' *Cameron* keeps a-goin like he is he'll foul th' steamer."

Aloud he shouted: "Stand by for an American shoot. You fellers aft here all yell with me to th' *Cameron* skipper when we come to weather of him: 'Hard up! Hard up!' Remember that."

The gun-boat had slowed down slightly to leeward of the *Cameron* and was engaged hoisting out a boat. Decker noted every phase of the situation.

"Now, boys, light up your jib-sheets."

The *Quickstep* shot up on the *Cameron's* quarter.

"Hold everything for'ard! Now, fellers, all together; 'Hard up! Hard up!' "

The skipper of the *Frances Cameron* was rattled with the predicament he was in. He could see the gun-boat a hundred feet away and just on his lee bow; he saw the rocks to leeward of his beam and also the *Quickstep* on his weather-quarter but a good jump from him. His gang, hauling away at the mainsail halyards, were yelping anxious questions at him, and when the startling "Hard up!" reached his ears, he whirled the wheel over without thinking. The action caused his vessel to fall off before the wind, and before he could avert it, his schooner crashed into the gun-boat dead amidships.

"Jump fer yer dories, boys, an' make for th' schooners a-comin' in," bawled Decker as the *Quickstep* surged past. "I'll tell 'em to pick ye up an' stand out again."

It was needless advice, for the *Frances Cameron's* gang were even then pulling out to sea. The schooner had driven her bowsprit clean through the iron plates of the gun-boat's hull and in the various davits and boat-booms of the war-vessel the *Cameron's* foremast and head-gear had become entangled so that both craft were locked together.

“Rammed by a wooden schooner,” ejaculated Tom Morrissey with a whoop of delight at the gun-boat’s plight. “Waal, what d’ye know about that? S’pose she’s so old an’ her plates so thin with twenty years chippin’ that a knife ’ud go through ’em—”

“Hi-yi! What’s th’ racket, cap?”

The first of the incoming schooners, a Gloucesterman, was on the *Quickstep’s* beam and the skipper was hailing.

“Trouble ashore,” roared Decker in reply. “Run in an’ pick up them dories what’s pullin’ out an’ shoot to sea again. ’Tis the *Frances Cameron’s* gang.”

“I cotton, cap,” sang out the other, luffing. “Raisin’ hell with the Frenchies, I cal’late. All right, bully, jest watch me nip ’em up.”

Decker, however, didn’t wait to watch the Gloucesterman “nip ’em up.” He knew that the *Cameron’s* skipper would be out for his scalp as soon as he got aboard the rescuer.

“Give her th’ stays’l, th’ balloon an’ th’ tops’ls,” he shouted anxiously. “When that Gloucesterman hears th’ story he might be fer givin’ us a chase ——”

Bang! Bang! Bang! The gun-boat was showing her teeth and the *Quickstep’s* crowd ducked their heads instinctively.

“What are they doin’?” cried Decker. “Git my glasses, John. Is th’ gun-boat clear yet? Hurry! It’s gittin’ dark.”

John, with his glasses glued close to his eyes, stared into the dusk astern. “Th’ blame’ gun-boat’s clear . . . an’ here comes that Gloucesterman hoofin’ it like the milltail o’ Hades with Johnny Frenchman after him——”

“Is th’ *Cameron* gang picked up?”

“I sh’d imagine so. Three or four empty dories driftin’ about. Th’ *Cameron* is driftin’ ashore——”

“All right! Git yer dories aboard an’ stow that rum in th’ kid ontil I git a chanct to think. Lord Harry! What a session—what a session! Jupiter! I’ll hev t’ see a lawyer ’bout this scrape ef we git clear. Wonder ef th’ *Cameron’s* owners kin lay a claim ag’in me for that rammin’ business? Judas! What a bluff . . . an’ t’ think that it worked. ‘Hard up!’ I says, an’ he does it—th’ silly swab.”

And Decker pawed the wheel and chuckled as the *Quickstep* hauled off the land and curtseyed to the lift of open water.

III.

The breeze held until the *Quickstep* made the latitude of Sambro; then it dropped flat calm. “Drive her, you!” had been the watchword ever since the flashing lights of Galantry Head had sunk astern, and in the whole sail storming along across St. Pierre Bank, the schooner had eluded her pursuers in the night.

It was a drive which few of the gang would ever forget. Lights doused, a strong breeze, all sail and the lee rail buried in creaming froth, it kept all hands on the alert and nervous with future anxieties.

“I wonder ef th’ news of our racket at th’ Miquelons has been tellygraft to home,” muttered Decker for the twentieth time as he paced the quarter looking for air.

“Why don’t ye pull over to that little handliner an’ see ef he’s got ’ny newspapers?” growled big Westhaver. “He’s only jest made th’ berth an’ ten chances to one he has this mornin’s Halifax papers. I’ll pull ye over.”

“Open one o’ them cases an’ gimme a couple o’ bottles,” said the Skipper. “We’ll pull over an’ see.”

A mile’s pull over the oily swell brought them alongside the handliner, and the trio smoking around her decks were the first to speak.

“Are youse fellers off th’ *Quickstep*? Ye are? Holy trawler. But ye’ve been makin’ things hum. Lord Harry! Th’ whole coast is talkin’ ’bout ye. Let’s see a-holt o’ yer painter.

“Got ’ny noospapers about it?” growled Decker, none too pleased at the notoriety he was receiving.

“Here y’are, cap. This mornin’s Halifax papers. How much rum hev ye got aboard?”

Decker looked up sharply.

“Oh, ye know that too, do ye? Sink me. But when a man buys a ruddy long-neck these days th’ whole coast knows it. Here’s a couple o’ bottles. Maybe ye kin drink it an’ keep yer mouths shut about meetin’ us.”

“Thanks, cap, we sure will,” answered the headliners in chorus. “Trust us for that. We ain’t no Scott Act spotters an’ good S’int Pierre’s a drink for a king. Come aboard an’ give us th’ yarn. Th’ blame noospapers git things reported all wrong.”

There was the suspicion of a breeze ruffling the water and Decker declined the invitation.

“No, thanks, fellers. Got t’ be movin’. So long, an’ keep quiet.”

On the way back to the schooner, Decker hastily perused the papers and his stifled ejaculations had the rowers agog with curiosity. Aboard the *Quickstep*, now gliding along to the first of a breeze, the gang lined the quarter and besieged the skipper with a running fire of questions.

“Wait a second an’ I’ll read it t’ ye,” snapped Decker. “They got th’ whole bill an’ a lot more——”

Seating himself on the house, with the crowd craning their necks over his shoulders, he commenced:

“Strange affair from the Miquelons’ (will ye look at th’ size of th’ print?) Lord Harry! Ye’d think ’twas a ruddy war! ‘French Gun-Boat Rammed by Fishing Schooner. Decker up to His Tricks Again.’ (What d’ye know about that? Decker must be a hell of a feller ’cordin’ to them noospapers. Um!”) “Telegraphic reports from Saint Pierre state that the French Fishery Patrol cruiser *Rouget* was rammed by the American schooner *Frances Cameron* while the cruiser was endeavouring to hold the crew in connection with a shore-brawl. The cruiser sustained slight damage.

“ ‘The crew of the *Frances Cameron* abandoned their vessel after the mishap and escaped in their dories to a near-by schooner. The *Frances Cameron* was engaged in salt-fishing under command of Captain Wallace Doyle, and is owned by the Western Fish Co., of Gloucester, Mass.” (Um! that part’s all right. We ain’t shinin’ in that, but here’s th’ funny part.)

“ ‘Sydney, N.S.’ The American schooner *Geraldine* put into North Sydney last night and landed the crew of the Gloucester schooner *Frances Cameron*, abandoned at Saint Pierre after a collision with the French cruiser *Rouget*. Our correspondent interviewed Captain Wallace Doyle regarding the mishap and learned the following strange story:

“ ‘It appears that the Canadian fishing schooner *Quickstep*, commanded by Thomas Decker, of Decker’s Island, had run into Saint Pierre for the purpose of buying a quantity of spirits, presumably to import to Canada and evade the customs duties, and while ashore making the purchase, the crew of

the *Quickstep* along with the crew of the *Frances Cameron*, got mixed up in a tavern brawl.

" 'During the *mélée* a resident of Saint Pierre was killed, and both crews, frightened at the outcome of the fight, made for their respective vessels and attempted to put to sea. The French Fishery Patrol cruiser *Rouget* followed the fleeing schooners and endeavoured to stop them, and in crossing the *Frances Cameron's* bows, was rammed by the fishing vessel.

" 'Captain Doyle stated that it was his intention to heave-to and surrender to the French authorities, but the *Quickstep* coming up on his weather quarter crowded him into the cruiser, causing a collision. Appalled by the mishap, the crew of the *Cameron* took to their dories and were picked up by the *Geraldine* and later landed there.

" 'Captain Doyle is emphatic in his assertion that the *Quickstep* was the cause of the accident, and he is also of the opinion that the crew of the latter vessel were responsible for the death of the man in the tavern ashore.' (Th' ruddy gall o' him! What d'ye know about that? We're t' blame fur th' whole thing, by Jupiter!)

" 'Upon the information of the *Frances Cameron's* crew, the local Customs Department has advised the Protective Service to maintain a strict watch for the *Quickstep* in connection with the liquor-smuggling.' (Now, fellers, here's whar' th' fun comes in. Listen!) 'Captain Murray in the Government cutter *Ariel* left Anchorville this evening. The cutter is presumably on the lookout for the *Quickstep* with her contraband cargo.' "

The newspaper's account caused the *Quickstep's* gang several emotions, but the latter item made them glance apprehensively around the horizon for the sight of steamer smoke. They were frightened—not the least doubt of it—and for five minutes Decker was bombarded with questions:

"Heave that cussed rum over th' side," cried the gang. "It'll save more trouble! Lord Harry! It's jail for th' crowd of us over that Saint Pierre racket. Ef we hadn't ha' listened t' you an' yer crazy scheme, we'd ha' been home now, 'stead o' being chased by cruisers an' cutters. You got us inter this scrape, now git us out of it."

"To be sure! To be sure!" The skipper laughed grimly and surveyed the men with a sarcastic smile on his dark, strong-lined face.

"Yes," he continued ironically. "I got ye into this scrape, so it's up t' me t' git ye out, I cal'late! Nobody kin suggest any plans but t' heave th' booze overboard.

"Waal, I ain't a-goin' t' heave the rum overboard—at least not ontil I see th' cutter overhaulin' us. Now, it's up to popper t' quiet th' children."

"Ye don't need t' fret over th' S'int Pierre racket. They ain't got no case ag'in us. We niver dodged no arrest an' no warrant was served on us. They can't prove we killed that joker. He was in th' fight as well as all of us, so it's accidental death. We niver rammed the gun-boat—'twas th' *Cameron*. We kin prove that she wouldn't tack owin' to havin' no sail on her——"

"How about us all a-yellin' 'Hard up!' to her skipper?" asked a man.

"Waal, what ef we did? Are we th' blame pilots o' the *Frances Cameron*? Her skipper won't say a word about that. He don't want that business t' git around. Th' law can't touch us, so don't worry. We're outside th' three-mile limit yet an' safe as a church."

Decker's explanations satisfied the crowd and they dispersed to their quarters swearing that he was "a dog of a feller" and a "downy son of a gun."

While the schooner glided to the south'ard, the "downy one" paced the quarter absorbed in thought.

"Now, Commander Murray is in th' cutter lookin' for us. He knows th' *Quickstep* an' he knows we're bound for Anchorville with our trip. He knows we got liquor aboard an' he knows we'd land it in no place but Decker's Island.

"Now, where'll th' cutter be? Where'd I be ef I was in his place? In behind Decker's Island. He won't come an' meet us, 'cause he'd miss us in the dark. No, Decker's Island is where he'll hang around. He thinks we ain't wise, so he'll lie low, around there an' keep his search-light a-goin' at night with a motor boat or two handy so's they kin nip out an' ketch us ef we try t' skin away.

"All right! We'll hev some fun with th' cutter, an' ef I don't run that cargo o' stingo, I'm a Dutchman!"

Talking to himself and smoking the while, Captain Decker mapped out a plan of action, which to his mind, was a masterpiece of strategy; and after supper that evening he addressed the mystified crowd in the forecastle:

"We'll unbend th' balloon an' foretops'l an' send down our foretopm'st to-night," he said. "That'll make th' *Quickstep* look a trifle different. Some o' youse kin git busy an' make a length o' buoy-line fast to all them liquor-cases in th' kid——"

“What’s th’ game, Skipper?”

“Do as I tell ye an’ ye’ll find out. I’m a-goin’ t’ jig Cap Murray t’morrow night an’ ye’ll see th’ joke then. Now, hez any o’ you fellers ever been on th’ lobster-ground off West Head?”

“I hev,” replied a man.

“Good! Then you’ll know where they set them traps off-shore?”

“Yes.”

“Then I’ll need you for particular business in th’ mornin’. In th’ meantime you kin rouse all th’ bobbers an’ floats we got aboard. Cut ’em adrift from our gear and hev’ ’em ready. We’ll be off West Head at three ef this breeze holds, so ye’ll get busy an’ send that spar down right away.”

IV.

Commander Murray of the Government cutter Ariel pored over a chart of the coast and addressed his Chief Officer:

"Decker left Miquelon on the fifteenth an' with th' way th' wind has been, he should be off here to-night. We'll steam up an' down th' channel behind the Island there and ye'll see that all lights are screened. Have all hands ready for boarding and the boats out for launching. I'll get Skipper Decker to-night or bust. If I let him slip this time, the Department will have me on th' carpet for sure."

"How about th' search-light, sir? If we keep it playin' around he's liable to see it an' sheer it off."

"I have made arrangements for that," replied the Commander. "Jones an' Thompson are out in motor-boats stationed at Colson's Point an' Tops'l Head. It ain't a very dark night an' they'll be able to see any vessel standin' in, even if they have their lights doused, for a vessel intendin' to make the Island will have to pass either of these places close aboard. When they sight anything, they'll swing a lantern three times so we won't use th' search-light unless we have to."

The mate smiled approval.

"We'll git him sure, sir," he said, "and ef we make a capture, it'll mean promotion for both of us; you to the new cutter an' me to this one."

The Commander nodded.

"And it ain't altogether th' promotion, John, but it's th' chance of layin' Decker by th' heels. He's dodged me an' made a joke of me so long now that I'd give anything to get my hands on him. You'll remember how he stripped that Norwegian bark that ran ashore off here and also that West Indies' boat.

"We raked his place on the Island for th' loot, but never a sight of it did we get, an' he goes struttin' around Anchorville braggin' about how he did me in the eye. And when he was in th' lobsterin' business—look how he bamboozled me then with his traps out th' whole o' th' close season. Yes! I'm sure anxious to get him."

At midnight the lookouts on the cutter reported a signal from Topsail Head. Out from her hiding place went the cutter, but the sight of four headsails and two wide-space masts against the skyline convinced Murray that it was only a coaster hugging the land.

"That ain't him," said the mate. "That's th' Bayport packet an' Tim Johnson wouldn't smuggle a plug o' tobacco to save his life. No use searchin' him."

At 1.30 a.m. they ran out again on signals. This time it was a fisherman and Murray boarded her in a boat, only to find that she was a La Have banker running in for ice and bait. The crowd of sleepy men who tumbled up on the hail of the watch knew nothing of the *Quickstep* except by reputation. They had not seen her, so the cutter's boat returned.

Just before dawn the shivering mate on the *Ariel's* bridge had a fancy that he heard the rattle of blocks and shackles come out of the darkness. Calling the Commander, he said:

"Seems t' me there's a vessel off there somewheres. I c'd hear her gear shakin'."

"I don't see any lights," said the other, peering into the gloom. "Any signal given?"

"No, sir."

"Look out, there! Have you seen or heard anything?"

"No, sir."

"You must have imagined it," growled Murray. "A man fancies all kinds o' things when he's lookin' for somethin'——"

"But I'm quite sure there's a vessel off there, sir. Open out with th' search-light. It won't make any difference—it'll soon be daylight."

The Commander turned on the switch and the piercing beam penetrated the dark of the morning.

"Play her over t' th' west'ard, sir," said the mate. The shaft of light swung around and disclosed a long toothpick fisherman lying to the wind off the Island.

"That's him, by Jupiter," ejaculated mate and superior at once, and Murray rang down, for full speed ahead.

"I've got him with th' goods this time," cried the jubilant official. "No lights burnin'. He's out for business sure enough. Git that for'ard gun trained on him an' call a boat's crew. He won't git away this time."

Within ten minutes Commander Murray was in the boat and being pulled over to where the fishing schooner lay illuminated in the glare of the cutter's search-light.

"Schooner ahoy! What vessel's that?"

"*Quickstep.* What's the row?"

"Stand by. We're comin' aboard."

Murray felt that his hour of triumph had come.

"All right, come ahead," growled a voice which the Commander recognized as Decker's.

The officer, followed by four of the cutter's men, leaped over the *Quickstep's* rail.

"Now, sir," said Murray, addressing Decker, "What are you doin' in here with your lights out?"

"My lights out?" cried Decker in surprise. "Surely ye're mistaken, Admiral. Them side lights are both burnin'. Come for'ard an' see for yerself. The cook put fresh ile in them this mornin' so they sh'd be burnin'. Why, swamp me, they're both burnin'. Can't ye see them?"

Murray stifled an oath. The lights were burning all right.

"Darn funny they weren't visible awhile ago," he snapped.

"Warn't they?" Decker smiled ironically. "That's curious. Yer eyesight must be failin' ye, skipper—excuse me, I mean Admiral. This is th' gravy-eye watch, y'know an' a man's sight gits bad at this time in th' mornin'——"

"That's enough," rasped Murray. "What are you doin' in here?"

Decker's eyebrows expressed surprise at the question and the assembled gang sniggered audibly.

"Why, Commodore," he said, "we all live on that Island off thar. What's t' hinder a man goin' ashore for a spell t' see his folks after bein' thirteen weeks to sea? Is that agin th' law? Sure, I just run in to put a dory over an' see th' wife afore makin' for Anchorville with th' first o' th' flood."

“All right, Decker,” interrupted the other impatiently. “We’ll get to business. I know what you came in here for, so don’t lie about it. Where have you stowed that liquor you bought at Saint Pierre?”

“Liquor I bought at S’int Pierre, Lootenong?” repeated Decker. “Where else but under our belts. Sink me. Can’t a feller buy a few bottles o’ brandy for a little sociable drink ’thout th’ ruddy Gov’ment wantin’ to know where it is? Come below an’ hev a taste. Thar’s a bottle or two left.”

The revenue officer ignored the invitation.

“I’m goin’ to search the vessel. Muster your men in th’ waist here. Bo’sun! Off with these hatches an’ fetch th’ lanterns out th’ boat.”

For over an hour and a half the Commander and his men raked the *Quickstep* for contraband. The salt fish in the hold were prodded and overhauled; the drain-well probed; bunks turned out; dories hoisted out of the nests; gurry-kid and stays’l-box examined; and a man even crawled among the coal in the lazarette under the cabin floor in the quest.

The search was thorough—so thorough that it was impossible for anything to have been concealed in the *Quickstep* from run to peak without the customs men finding it. Murray knew that Decker had bested him again, for all he could find was two full bottles of cognac in the skipper’s locker.

“You ain’t a-goin’ t’ charge me dooty on them two longnecks I hev, Lootenong?” said Decker humbly.

The other felt like a fool and raged inwardly at the fisherman’s sarcasm.

“Look here, Decker,” he said shortly, “you’ve had liquor aboard here with th’ intention of runnin’ it in. Where is it?”

Captain Decker’s attitude changed suddenly and there was a strident snap in his voice when he spoke:

“You’re makin’ accusations, Commander, which I’ve a mind t’ bring ye t’ book for. I got inter trouble enough at S’int Pierre ’thout lookin’ for more. We come in here, as I’ve a right to do, an’ you say our lights ain’t burnin’. They are burnin’, as you kin see. Then ye tarn to an’ rake my vessel ontil ye know every timber an’ bolt in her. Ye found nawthin’. Now, we’ve wasted enough time in shenanigan. I’m goin’ ashore t’ see my wife. You git back to yer old squib-shooter afore I give ye the Jonah Bounce over th’ side for accusin’ honest men——”

“Why is your foretopmast on deck?”

“An’ why shouldn’t it be after carryin’ away our topm’st stay? Any thin’ else that wants explainin’ to yer brass-bound majesty?”

“No,” snapped the other. “You’re clear so far. I’ll keep my eye on you after this. Bo’sun! We’ll get aboard.”

“Good night, an’ thank ye kindly for th’ visit, Admiral,” jeered Decker as Murray went over the side. “It’s men like you what made Nelson say, ‘England expects that every son of a gun will pay th’ dooty.’ So long!”

“Nothin’ doin’,” said the disgruntled Commander when he returned to the cutter. “Not a thing to be found. I really don’t think he tried to run liquor. He had quite a scrap up at the Islands and he wouldn’t look for more trouble.”

“Um,” remarked the mate when the other had retired. “He don’t know Mister Decker. He’s a young bird, but he’s a downy one jest th’ same.”

John Peterson, storekeeper, lobster-buyer, and general agent, smacked his lips over the drink and murmured, “Happy Days!”

“Tell me about it again, skipper, for it’s a yarn worth repeatin’. Ye h’ard that th’ cutter ’ud be lookin’ for ye from th’ noospapers ye got from a vessel off Sambro, so what did ye do?”

“Waal, I know’d he’d be around the Island here,” replied the wily skipper, lighting up one of Petersen’s no-duty-paid Havanas, “so I cal’lated thar ’ud be no chanct o’ landin’ th’ stuff in th’ dories. Then I thought o’ dumpin’ all them cases overboard with a float tied to them, but that dodge’d be suspicious, as Murray might cotton an’ go searchin’ for a queer-lookin’ float.

“I then thought o’ th’ fun he’d hev searchin’ for such a thing with all them lobster buoys around this vicinity, an’ that gimme the idea. He’d never bother pullin’ up lobster buoys with a Decker’s Island fisherman’s mark on them. Yes, says I, we’ll dump them in shoal water with lobster buoys tied to each case, for it would be an easy job to pick ’em up. A case at a time c’d easy be pulled an’ landed by a lobsterman in his dory an’ nobody ’ud be any th’ wiser.

“We had no buoys aboard the *Quickstep*, so I planned runnin’ in off West Head an’ cuttin’ some o’ their buoys adrift from their gear off-shore—leavin’ some of our bobbers and trawl-floats in their place so’s th’ lobstermen wouldn’t lose their traps. To make sure we wouldn’t be

recognized doin' this, I had th' foretopm'st struck in case any one sh'd see us, but thar was no danger.

"We got all th' buoys we wanted afore daylight an' hauled to sea again, so I didn't bother sendin' th' spar aloft as I sh'd ha' done ef we'd been seen on that lobster-ground.

"I jogged for a spell 'bout twenty miles to the eastard till night afore runnin' in an' dumpin' th' stingo. I had gunny-sacks over th' lights while we put th' cases over th' side off Colson's Point in five fathom water.

"Man! But ye sh'd ha' seen old Murray's face when I showed him th' lights burnin'. Soon's he come alongside, I had th' cook whisk the screens off them an' he never caught on. Lord! But I sartainly rubbed it into him good that mornin'. He s'arched the *Quickstep* from taffr'l to jumbo-stay, inside an' out——"

"Aye, an' he come ashore an' s'arched this place an' all th' sheds an' barns on the Island," said Peterson with a laugh. "Lord Harry, Captain Tom, but you're a dog. What with yer scrape at th' French Islands an' yer dodgin' th' cutter down here, you've sartainly been goin' some."

"Aye, Petersen, we've sartainly been goin' some. I ain't makin' friends by it, but 'twas excitin' while it lasted. Now, how'd it be ef we sent Captain Murray a couple of bottles o' that S'int Pierre cognac with 'Captain Decker's compliments?' "

Dory-mates

ELSIE CONOVER was the daughter of a small farmer who owned a place on the shores of Anchorville Bay. Elsie was pretty, vivacious and something of a flirt—so much so that by the time she was twenty-one she had played serious havoc with the hearts of most of the young farmers, fishermen and sailors of Anchorville County. An impartial critic, endowed with the faculty of reading Miss Conover's mind, would have characterized the pretty, brown-eyed young woman as being shallow and heartless.

Tom Anderson and Westley Collins were young sprigs of Anchorville fishermen—both of them smart trawlers and able men in a dory. Tom was intelligent, quick-witted, a bit of a dandy and a good talker. As fishermen would say, "He had a way with the women" which made him attractive in their sight. He had a pleasant manner, the art of concealing his feelings, and was universally known as a good shipmate.

Westley Collins was the opposite. Though smart enough aboard of a vessel, yet he was slow and clumsy when ashore. He dressed anyhow, walked with a shambling slouch, and conversationally was neither brilliant nor edifying. Though slow of speech and apparently surly, he was big-hearted and kind.

Among the young fellows of Anchorville, Elsie Conover was known as Tommy Anderson's girl. Tommy went boat-fishing all one summer and employed most of his time ashore in laying siege to Elsie's heart. He appeared to be the "white-haired boy" until big, blundering West Collins came home after a long salt-fishing trip and unintentionally "horned in" on Tommy's preserves.

Westley had drawn a big share out of a "high line" trip, and in all probability it was the size of his bank-roll which made him attractive in Elsie's eyes. At any rate, the roll gave the girl the means of a good time until the Fall fishing season came around and Westley began to talk of going to sea again.

“Will ye marry me, Elsie?” he blurted out one night in tones which contained more emotion than the girl had ever thought him capable of.

Having anticipated such a question for some time past, Miss Conover had carefully considered it.

“I—I don’t know, Westley,” she faltered, dropping her eyes. “I—I’d want to think it over.”

“So ye kin, sweetheart,” said Westley slowly, “but maybe ye’ll give me somethin’ to go upon? Kin I hope?”

The girl turned her head away as if thinking. After a pause, she looked up and spoke:

“Ask me again in the Spring, Westley. Save your money and ask me then.”

“Are my chances good?” asked the other almost fearfully.

The girl made no reply, but stared at the toe of her shoe.

“Thar ain’t no one else, is there, girlie?” he questioned anxiously.

“N—no! There’s nobody else.”

“Then I might be safe in thinkin’ you’ll say ‘yes’ in th’ Spring?”

He did not wait for an answer, but slipped his arm around her shoulders and drew her to him.

“Gimme a kiss, girlie!” he murmured, and, unresisting, her face turned to his.

After the embrace, she rose to her feet and held out her hand.

“You must go now, Westley,” she said calmly.

“Until the Spring, sweetheart,” he said. “I’m going across to Gloucester to-morrow to join a vessel for the Winter haddockin’ and I’ll come back ’long towards the end o’ March. Wish me good luck an’ high-line trips, dearie, and—and another kiss.”

When the big fisherman strode happily away, Elsie Conover drew her hand sharply across her mouth.

“The big fool!” she murmured callously. “Me marry him? Huh!” She shuddered. “He’ll be telling Jack Hooper about it, and Jack will be sure to tell Tom Anderson. Maybe Tom will get jealous when he hears that West Collins is cutting him out and he’ll keep away from that doll-faced Jennie

Hooper and come to me again. Marry West Collins in the Spring? I don't think!" And with a cold smile she went upstairs to bed.

In company with a crowd of other Nova Scotia deep-sea fishermen West Collins went over to Boston and thence to Gloucester, where he got a "chance" with Captain Tim Davidson in the schooner *Seldovia*, fitting-out for Winter haddocking. It so happened that Tom Anderson arrived in Gloucester two days later and broached the *Seldovia's* skipper for a place with his gang.

"I cal'late I kin give ye a sight," said the fishing skipper. "Thar's a Novy named Collins what's lookin' for a dory-mate. Maybe you know him? Comes from Anchorville."

"Collins? West Collins?" grunted Anderson with a savage look in his eyes. "I'll be damned ef I'd go dory-mates with that skunk." To himself he muttered "*Him*—of all men."

Captain Davidson shrugged his shoulders.

"Don't matter," he said. "Plenty o' men lookin' for chances these days. Collins'll git a dory-mate 'thout much trouble. I cal'lated, seein' you two was down-homers, ye'd be glad to git together."

Anderson's face changed quickly.

"I'll go with him, Skipper," he said with an engaging smile. "He's a good scout, but I was sore on him for a little matter. He's an able man in a dory an' I'll be glad to mate up with him. Where is he now? Aboard th' vessel, ye say? All right, Cap, I'll ship."

Collins was sitting on the *Seldovia's* cabin house, overhauling a tub of haddocking trawl when Anderson jumped aboard.

"Hullo, Westley, boy!" cried Tom heartily as he held out his hand. "Jest came acrost an' h'ard from th' skipper you was lookin' for a dory-mate. I cal'late you an' I will make a pretty good pair in a dory. What d'ye say, West?"

The other grasped the proffered hand and assented heartily.

"Sure thing—bully! I'm more'n glad ye kem aboard. I was for goin' uptown an' lookin' around for a dory-mate, but you're a home-town feller an' jest th' man."

"I'll go git my clothes-bag an' tick down an' see ye later. How many tubs does he rig?"

“Eight to a dory,” replied Westley.

“Humph! American style. Hard fishin’, I reckon,” said Anderson heartily. “Waal, Westley, I cal’late you an’ I kin stand the racket aboard these hard-drivin’ market fishermen. I’m a hound for work myself. We’ll git along fine. So long! I’ll be down in a while an’ help ye overhaul some gear.”

Collins continued his work, whistling happily at the thought of having Tom Anderson for a dory-mate. As he had been away from Anchorville all Summer, he was unaware of the relations that had formerly existed between Elsie Conover and Anderson. He knew that the latter was acquainted with Elsie, but then Tommy Anderson was a devil with all the Anchorville girls. So while Westley crooned and whistled to himself, thinking of Elsie Conover away back home in Nova Scotia, Tom Anderson strode cursefully to his boarding-house with black hate in his heart.

“The silly swab!” he muttered through clenched teeth. “Fancy th’ likes o’ him grabbin’ Elsie. Th’ boob! An’ to tell that silly mug, Jack Hooper, all about it, an’ Jack to put th’ hook into me by th’ tellin’ of it. ‘West Collins has cut ye out with Elsie Conover,’ says he, with his smug face laughin’ as he spun th’ yarn afore his sister. Thought maybe that Jen Hooper would stand a better chance with Elsie out of th’ way. An’ when I telephoned Elsie! ‘He’s to ask me again in th’ Spring,’ says she. ‘Towards th’ last o’ March. Westley’ll be back then an’ I’ll know my mind which o’ youse it’ll be.’ Th’ big mug, dam’ him! Ay, to hell with him!”

So vociferous had he become in his denunciatory epithets that he spoke his thoughts aloud, and two or three people looked at him strangely.

His facility in concealing his feelings came uppermost; and while hate consumed him inwardly, yet outwardly he carried an air of heartiness which belied the murderous thoughts fermenting in his brain.

Carrying his bag and mattress to the vessel, a half-formed notion raced through his mind. It was a sinister notion—a black idea—but there was nothing of it in his voice as he hailed his dory-mate.

“Hey ye go, Westley, boy! Catch a-holt o’ my dunnage. I’m all ready t’ give ye a hand now, ol’ dory-mate!”

II.

The *Seldovia* put to sea and fished on Georges bank. As dory-mates, Collins and Anderson got along famously, and the rest of the gang remarked that Collins had picked up a dandy partner. Anderson not only did his share of the work, but seemed eager to help Collins in every way. In the dory, Anderson was for doing all the trawl-hauling—the hardest and heaviest work—and his dory-mate often protested. "You must let me do my share, Tom," he would say. "You're doing all your work an' part o' mine too. I'm able enough, an' ye mustn't do it. Not but what I take it as kindly of ye, Tom. It shows th' big heart ye have, and a better dory-mate I never sailed with."

Anderson laughed.

"I'd do anythin' for a good scout," he said, "an' you're one o' th' best, Westley, boy. Watch an' wheel, baitin' up an' haulin' trawls, it's a pleasure for me to work with ye. Lord Harry, old townie! We'll hold her down together this Winter—the best an' ablest pair that ever swung a dory over."

He turned his back to Collins and the smile on his face turned into a look of the most malignant hate. Lord! How he detested the big simple-minded fool! He'd *get* him even though he had to play his masquerade the whole Winter season.

Aboard a fishing vessel a man has a thousand opportunities to rid himself of a rival or an enemy. An accidental shove on a dark night when the two were alone on watch, and Collins would swell the list of fishermen "drowned at sea from the vessel."

Yet many times, Westley stood by the lee rail absolutely unsuspicious of the sinister thoughts in the mind of his dory-mate a few feet behind him. In the dory, with Westley standing in the bow, hauling, and Anderson coiling just aft of his hated rival, a smash on the head with the bailer, a sling-ding rock, or the dory-jar would send him headlong into the chilly green depths never to rise again.

A man clad in heavy sea-boots, with winter clothing and oilskins on, goes down like a stone, and dories are easy craft to fall out of. Out on a bowsprit furling a jib in the dark of a winter's night with the wind blowing and the sea roaring, a moderately strong push under the chin would topple a

man over backwards and his shout would be unheard by his shipmates a few feet away. Oh, ay, there were many ways, but Anderson waited his chance and smiled and joked and laughed while the man he was out to kill trusted him and felt that never, in all his going a-fishing, had he shipped with a truer and better dory-mate.

When dories are alongside the schooner in anything over a flat calm, a dory-painter *must* be held in the hands of some person aboard. On no account must it be made fast to a pin or a cleat. With a vessel under sail and heading through the water, the dory is rolling alongside and tugging and jerking at the painter in the rise and fall of the sea. The man holding the bow rope eases off when the dory tugs, but were the painter belayed to an unresisting object, the cranky craft is liable to capsize or swamp.

On a rough January day on Brown's Bank, the *Seldovia* was running out her string of ten dories. All the little craft were slung over, and Number Ten, Collins' and Anderson's, was the last put over the rail.

Westley jumped down into the boat and Anderson handed him the four tubs of baited trawl, while the cook held the painter and the skipper busied himself aft. The latter had occasion to go into the cabin for something and slipped the wheel into the becket. Anderson turned suddenly to the cook.

"Jump down, Jack, an' hand me up a few doughnuts or something for a mug-up for me an' West. I'll take that painter."

The cook handed the rope over and went down into the forecastle. Anderson saw that his dory-mate was busy stacking the trawl tubs and clearing the buoy-lines in the pitching dory, and with lightning-like swiftness he belayed the painter to a pin in the rail. Springing over to the forecastle scuttle, he jumped down the ladder and began shouting to the cook: "Hurry up with them there doughnuts—!"

A cold sweat broke out on his face as a muffled yell told him something had happened and he leaped on deck to see the skipper with the long dory-gaff in his hand make a dive at something over the rail.

"Aft here, some one!" roared Tim Davidson. "Gimme a hand or I'll lose him!"

And as Anderson raced to the quarter, he felt that his plan had failed.

When Collins had been hauled, gasping and red-faced, over the rail, the skipper opened the ball.

“What in Hades d’ye mean by belayin’ that dory-painter?” he bawled. “Don’t ye know enough? Ain’t you bin a fishin’ long enough to know that dory-painters sh’d never be made fast when there’s a man in the dory? Consarn me! Ef I hadn’t jest happened to come on deck jest as that dory capsized an’ gaffed yer dory-mate, there would ha’ bin a drownin’ scrape on yer hands. Help me git that dory up on th’ tackles while th’ cook sees to Collins. He’s ’most all in.”

A few minutes later, Anderson was down in the forecastle where Collins was changing his sodden clothing. Striding across to him, Tom grasped his hand.

“Say, old man, I’m sorry I was guilty o’ sich a lubber’s trick. I jest went to git some grub from th’ cook for a second an’ I took a turn with th’ painter thinkin’ she’d be all right for a moment. I sh’d ha’ known better, an’ ’tis bitter sorry I am that I sh’d ha’ risked th’ life o’ my old dory-mate. Ye’ll forgive me, West, for ’twould ha’ bin a sore day for me sh’d I have lost ye.”

“Say nawthin’ about it, Tom,” answered Collins with a laugh. “ ‘A miss is as good as a mile’, an’ we all make mistakes sometimes. Too bad we lost th’ gear——’

“I’ll pay for that!” said Anderson hastily.

“No, ye don’t, boy. We’ll half up as good dory-mates should. Say no more about it.”

Anderson went to his bunk in the peak and raged inwardly.

“It was a lubber’s trick all right,” he growled to himself. “But, dam’ him, I’ll get him yet!”

January and February passed and the windy March days worried the fishing-fleets and had them lying at anchor in shelter harbours when they should have been fishing for the great Lenten market. The *Seldovia* had made a good winter of it, but Tim Davidson was anxious to make a high-line haddocking season and took more risks in setting dories out than would most skippers.

Anderson, with wonderful strength of mind, kept up his heartily friendly relations with Collins and effectually disarmed all suspicion. So well did he play his game that Westley looked upon him as his best chum and even confided in him his prospects for the future. One can imagine the tumult which raged in Anderson’s mind as he listened to Collins’ clumsily worded confidences about Elsie Conover.

"We'll ha' made a good stock this winter, Tom," confided Westley, "and I cal'late I'll hev enough to get married on. I'm for buyin' that small pink o' John Anson's and I'll go hake fishin' in the bay so's to be near home an' her."

Anderson puffed hard at his pipe and nodded interestedly.

"Sure Westley, boy, that's the grand idea. No married man sh'd go off Bank fishin'. It's risky, an' ye're away from home too much."

He spoke the words easily, but his whole nature longed to beat, kick, tear and kill the man he addressed.

With hate burning in his heart, Anderson went on watch that night and took the first trick at the wheel. Collins paced the lee quarter, keeping a lookout. It was a black dark night with plenty of wind, and the *Seldovia* was storming along on her way to the Bank, plunging and pitching through the gloom.

Collins in his pacing had a habit of standing for a minute or so at the after end of the cabin-house near the wheel. Anderson, with a calculating eye, noticed this—he had noticed it for weeks—and he pondered over a plan as he steered.

"Next time he stands aft with his back to me I'll give him a shove," muttered Anderson coolly glancing at the low rail. "It won't take much to push him over that, and I kin swear he was for'ard when he went over th' side."

Collins continued his pacing and Anderson watched him like a cat and muttered to himself:

"He'll make four turns an' then stop. That's one—there's two—three—four. He's stoppin'. Now for it!"

He let the wheel-spokes go and nerved himself for the push on the broad oilskinned back of the man three feet in front of him. Collins was crooning a little song to himself and standing with his mittened hands behind his back. Anderson tensed his muscles for the shove that would send his rival headlong into the roaring void of sea.

"Wheel thar! How's she headin'?" It was the skipper's voice from out the cabin gangway and Anderson grabbed the spokes again in sudden fright, and in the reaction forgot the course.

"Wheel thar! How's she headin'?" The skipper came half-way up the steps and shouted louder.

“Er—er—ah—west b’south-half-south, sir!” blurted Anderson wildly.

“That ain’t what I gave th’ watch,” growled the skipper coming on deck and glancing in the binnacle, “and you ain’t steerin’ that. You’ve let her run off. She’s headin’ sou’west. Bring her up west half south and watch yer steerin’. Some o’ you fellers don’t seem to know th’ compass yet.” And he went below.

Collins looked hard at his dory-mate.

“Say, old man, you’re lookin’ sick. Gimme that wheel an’ you go down for’ard an’ hev a mug o’ tea. West half south! I got ye, Tom, so go ahead!”

Anderson felt sick, but it was more the sickness occasioned by strained nerves and thwarted revenge than anything else. He was furious. Muttering curses to himself, he dropped below into the forecastle and poured himself out a cup of tea. One of the men was sitting on the lockers doctoring a poisoned hand, and being anxious to rid his mind of an unpleasant episode, Anderson spoke to him.

“What stuff is that ye’re puttin’ on there, Jim?”

“That’s arsenic,” answered the man. “It’s great stuff fur burnin’ away th’ proud flesh from them p’izenings by rusty hooks.”

“Ain’t that arsenic a deadly p’izen itself?”

“It sure is—ef ye were to drink it. A teaspoonful ’ud stretch ye stiff inside a minute. It’s one o’ th’ deadliest p’izens known. Thar’s enough in this bottle to p’izen ivery man aboard. Drop it in that tea-kettle an’ th’ *Seldovia* ’ud hev a gang o’ corpses arter breakfust-time.”

The man finished his doctoring and stowed the bottle away under his bunk mattress. Anderson watched him curiously and as he finished his tea an idea flashed through his mind which caused him to smile.

III.

It was a dark, dirty-looking morning when they made the Bank, and the barometer was hovering on the 29.5 and dropping. Davidson was anxious to make a few sets before the next March gale struck in, and he blinded himself to unpromising forecasts and ordered the dories away.

"Set tub an' tub, fellers," he sung out. "An' watch th' vessel. I'll h'ist th' queer thing for ye to come aboard ef it comes away nasty, but ye can't always tell—we may git a whole day here afore it breezes up. Away ye go, now, top dory over."

Collins and Anderson oilskinned and seabooted hauled their baited trawl tubs to the rail and overhauled their buoy-lines.

"Cal'late I'll go below an' fill th' dory-jar with fresh water," said Anderson. "I'll git a bit grub as well. Ye never know when one o' them snow squalls is a-comin' up an' we'll take no chances 'case we git astray from th' vessel. A drink an' a bite help some ef ye sh'd be a day or two adrift in a dory."

Grasping the earthenware water-jar, Anderson jumped below into the forecastle. The cook was on deck giving a hand at the dory tackles and there was nobody below. The fisherman gave a hasty glance around and delved with his hand under the mattress in a lower starboard bunk until he found a small bottle.

"Arsenic!" he muttered. "That's the stuff!" And drawing the cork, he poured the poison into the dory-jar.

"I'll fill Jim's med'cine bottle with water or he'll maybe git suspicious. Enough to kill ivery man aboard, he said—Um! I cal'late West Collins 'ull take a sudden turn o' heart trouble in th' dory to-day after he has a drink. Our tank-water is bilgey an' he'll niver notice any queer taste. Now for some grub."

On deck, the men were busy swinging the dories over, and Anderson placed the water-jug and the parcel of food on top of the gurry-kid.

"That's our water an' grub, West," he said to his dory-mate who nodded.

“Git that jib on her some o’ yez!” cried the skipper just then. “You Anderson and you Watson—ye might jump out an’ set that jib!” And the treacherous fisherman turned to execute the order with an apparently careless glance at his dory-mate who was carrying the water-jar and the food to their dory.

Some hours later when they were hauling their third tub of gear in the dory, the weather changed with the fickleness of the season. The wind came from the southeast in spiteful gusts, and the swell was momentarily getting heavier. Overhead, the leaden clouds spread across the sky in an opaque thickness and the horizon became misty and undefined.

Collins, hauling the trawl in the bow of the dory, paused and looked around.

“Don’t see th’ vessel, Tommy! Cal’late it’s a-goin’ to breeze soon!” Anderson, coiling the gear amidships, was smoking and staring anxiously at the dory-jar lying at his dory-mate’s feet. He was nervous, terribly nervous, and his overwrought imagination was picturing the sight of his hated rival writhing in the death-agonies among the fish and blood-stained water in the dory bottom. So preoccupied was he with his ghastly thoughts that he did not heed the ominous portent of the weather.

“I reckon we’ll jest haul this tub an’ make for th’ vessel,” said Collins. “We’re a-goin’ to git a snifter in a while.”

“Aw, hell!” growled Anderson irritably. “This ain’t goin’ to be nawthin’ but a little snow squall. Ef we run back aboard every time it gits cloudy we’ll niver git ’ny fish. We’ll set the other tub yet.”

Westley looked at him strangely, glanced at sea and sky, and resumed his trawl hauling.

“You may be right, Tom,” he thought, “but th’ weather looks bad—mighty bad. And th’ vessel’s nowheres in sight.”

The other had sense enough to know that it was time to be getting aboard, but he wanted to see Collins drink first. Blast the man! He had been hauling for hours—hot, thirsty work—and hadn’t even broached the jar for a drink. Usually, West Collins would drink half the jar inside of the first two hours. He was an awful man for water and drank more than any man aboard. Anderson had purposely allowed him to do all the trawl hauling that morning, as the exertion would be likely to excite thirst and cause him to drink earlier than usual.

There was a wind rising now and the black-green sea was beginning to crest under its impetus. A breaker burst under them and slapped a few gallons of water into the dory which was jumping and rearing like a fiery, untamed bronco.

"Startin' to breeze!" shouted Westley, turning a spray-reddened face to his dory-mate.

"Keep-a-haulin'—it's nawthin'!" answered the other, bailing the water out.

The dory gave a wild lurch and the heft coming on the thin trawl-line caused it to part at the roller.

"We're parted!" yelled Collins. "Git yer oar out an' head her up, Tom!"

Suddenly the horizon was blotted out in a pall of smoky gray. The wind began to pipe up and tear the crests off the waves and hurl them through the air like rain, and stinging sleet hurtled down from the somber gloom aloft. The dory, tossing like a chip, drove off to leeward, with the two men in her tugging at the oars.

"Where in blazes is th' vessel, Tommy, boy?" shouted Collins trying hard to peer into the blinding, face-stinging spray and sleet.

"I didn't notice," growled the other sullenly. He was feeling savage at the predicament his folly had got him into. Adrift on Brown's Bank in a March southeaster! It was no joke. In his blind hate, he felt less chagrined over that than in the fact that Collins had not broached the water-jar yet. However, there was time enough. But he hoped that his rival would drink before the schooner drove out of the smother and picked them up.

For an hour they tossed around in the inferno of gale-whipped, sleet-lashed sea; plying the oars to keep the little craft from swamping and keeping a lookout for the vessel. The perspiration was pouring off Collins's face and Anderson noted the fact with strange satisfaction.

"By golly, Tom, but I'm thirsty!" grunted Westley, panting. "I ain't had a drink sence we left th' schooner. Gimme that dory-jar!"

Suppressing the wild feeling of joy which thrilled him, Anderson passed the water-jug aft. The other threw in his oars, drew the jar plug, and deftly tipped the receptacle into the crook of his elbow preparatory to drinking. Anderson watched him with bated breath and bulging eyes. Suddenly, Collins lowered his arm and put the cork back in the jar.

“No!” he said slowly. “I cal’late I won’t drink yet awhile. We may need that water badly afore we git out o’ this. If we’re astray it might mean a pull to the land—a good seventy or a hunder’ miles away. Here ye are, Tommy! Hev a little swig ef ye feel like it. I kin hang out for a spell.”

“No—no—no!” almost shrieked Anderson. “I don’t need any. Keep it for later.”

And when his dory-mate placed the precious jug carefully down on the dory-bottom, the potential murderer grasped the oar handles savagely and clenched his teeth to suppress the flood of raging oaths which rose to his lips.

For two hours they pitched and tossed about, saying but little to each other. The sea was blank of any other craft, and both knew that they were astray. The wind was increasing in violence. It was snowing heavily, and the sea was running over fifty fathom water of the Bank in gigantic undulations capped with roaring crests.

“We’ll hev to make th’ land somewheres!” yelled Collins. “We’ll pitch out th’ fish an’ git her ship-shape fur a long pull. Due north by th’ dory compass oughter fetch us up somewheres on th’ Cape Sable shore. What d’ye say, Tommy, boy, shall we run for it?”

“Ay! Go ahead!” growled the other.

Westley noticed the change in his demeanour, but put it down to the fact that he was frightened.

“Cal’late he don’t like the idea o’ bein’ adrift,” thought Wesley. “Wall, I don’t blame him. Thar’s plenty good men scared when they know they’re astray. I ’member wunst pickin’ up a dory on Green Bank, iced up an’ with two men in it frozen as stiff as herrin’s. Th’ thought o’ gittin’ like them scares me too, but never say die!” And he set to work pitching out the fish.

Swinging the dory off before wind and sea, they shipped their oars and pulled for the land some sixty or seventy miles away.

IV.

The wind commenced to veer to the northwest by sundown and it blew hard and bitterly cold. The change in wind and the set of the tides kicked up a terrible sea, and both men realized that they could not run the dory much longer.

"We'll lash that trawl anchor inside o' that trawl tub an' pay it out to wind'ard with th' buoy-line to it. It sh'd make a drogue that'll keep us headin' to it ontil things ease up." It was Collins who made the suggestion.

Anderson nodded sullenly and made no attempt to assist his dory-mate. He was parched with thirst and eyed the dory-jar with a decidedly uneasy mind.

Westley whistled calmly as he prepared the drogue. Not being gifted with much imagination, he did not worry about the future. Properly handled, the dory would live out the sea; there was enough water for a week in the dory-jar if used sparingly; they had some bread and doughnuts. The cold would be the worst peril.

With the wind northwest, it would freeze the spray which drenched the frail dory, and they would have to pound the gunwales and the dory interior clear of weighty, encumbering ice—ice which would swamp them if allowed to make. Well, pounding ice would keep them warm, so there was always a bright side to things. Westley whistled cheerfully, while his dory-mate regarded him with a baleful light in his eyes, and strange suspicions crept into his disordered mind.

"Thar we go!" cried Collins happily, after heaving his improvised drag over. "She'll ride like a duck now, an' we'll lay to the oars in the mornin'. Sure to be lots o' vessels around. We'll see them to-morrow, for this wind'll clear things up." Looking at Anderson, he said with some concern, "You ain't lookin' bright, Tommy, boy. Better hev a little drink an' a bite."

Anderson was about to refuse, when an idea entered his head. Yes! he'd make a bluff at drinking from the water-jar. If he were to decline, the chances were that Westley would decline also.

"Pass me the jug," he said hoarsely.

He tilted it up, placed the jar to his lips and allowed the water to wet them. Not a drop entered his mouth, though the temptation was terrible. What a queer smell the water had!

"Here ye are, Westley," he grunted thickly. "You hev a slug now. I've had mine."

Collins took the jar, and looked hard at him.

"I don't believe you took a drink at all," he said. "You made a bluff at it!"

"Aw, ye're crazy!" growled Anderson, restraining his desire to smash the smiling Collins across the face for his suspicions. "What sh'd I make a bluff for? D'ye think I'm a blasted camuel?"

The other took a long, almost affectionate look at his dory-mate, and raised the jar to his lips. "Waal, here's happy days, Tommy, boy!" And he took two great gulps while Anderson watched him almost fascinated.

"Lord Harry! But the water tastes good," said Westley. "Better'n all th' rum ever brewed." He made a wry face. "Ain't it bilgy an' bitter-like, though?"

It was getting dark now, and Anderson could hardly discern his shipmate's face. He watched him intently. Something would happen soon.

"I cal'late this wind'll blow hard from th' nor'west all night," remarked Collins calmly. "She's beginnin' to ice up already."

He took the bailer and knocked the film of ice off the dory gunwales beside him. Anderson cowered aft in the stern of the dory and waited developments.

"God!" he thought. "He sh'd feel that p'izen now! I wonder how he'll die? Will he git suspicious, an' make for me afore he goes? Or will he crumple up quickly?"

For fully ten minutes he waited, every nerve on edge, for the hoarse cry or the sliding thump of Collins' body into the slush and water on the dory bottom. Heavens! The man was a long time feeling the effects of the poison. It was strong enough to kill a man in a few minutes, he knew, and the water in the dory-jar was highly charged with the stuff.

The sea was running wild and the foaming crests gleamed phosphorescent in the dark of the night. Anderson lolled in the dory's stern

and watched Collins like a hawk for half an hour, and when he heard Westley singing to himself, he felt that something was wrong.

"He couldn't ha' drunk that water," he murmured to himself. "He's wise, an' made a bluff. I wonder ef he knows how I hate him——"

"Oh, thar, Tommy!" came Collin's cheery voice. "How ye makin' out?"

"All right!" growled the other.

"Ain't feeling th' cold?"

"Naw!"

Westley resumed his singing, and Anderson cursed him under his breath.

"How kin that swab sing," he muttered, "when I kin hardly speak with th' dryness o' my tongue an' mouth, damn him!"

Throughout the long night the dory pitched to the drogue, and ice formed on the gunnels and thwarts. Collins sat for'ard and kept an eye on the buoy-line holding the drogue, and occasionally busied himself clearing the ice away.

Anderson, burning with thirst, lay huddled up aft, his mind a whirl of conflicting thoughts and strange schemes. In a daze he watched his dory-mate, and his hate for the unsuspecting Collins grew until it almost consumed him.

"He bluffed me, by Judas!" thought he. "He never drank that water, or he'd have been a dead one by now. God! How thirsty I am!"

He broke a piece of ice from the gunnel and began to suck at it. It was salty, so he threw it away with a curse. He pulled out his pipe and attempted to smoke, but it only seemed to increase his thirst, so he stowed it away again.

The tardy daylight came at length, and Collins rose to his feet and stretched himself with a yawn.

"How ye feelin', dory-mate?" he said cheerfully.

"All right," grunted Anderson.

"Cal'late w'd better hev a small drink an' a bite, an' make a move. What d'ye say?"

The other nodded, and rising to his feet stamped his rubber boots and swung his arms. Though heavily clothed, both felt the cold.

Collins carefully opened the little paper parcel and handed Anderson a doughnut.

"Pass me th' jar!" said the latter.

He turned his back to Collins and placed it to his lips. Fear of the poison which it contained restrained him from allowing a single drop of the precious fluid to moisten his parched tongue, though the temptation was frightfully hard to resist. With a great show of wiping his lips, he passed the jug to Westley.

"Aha! that feels better," he remarked hoarsely.

The other was chewing at a doughnut, and washed it down with a swig of water from the fateful jar while the other watched him swallow. It was only a small gulp, but after finishing the doughnut Collins took another one, and without replacing the cork, handed the receptacle to Anderson.

"Hev another little swig, Tom!"

"Naw, I've had enough."

He was vainly trying to swallow the doughnut, but the food tasted like sawdust in his mouth, and with a muttered oath he blew it out again when Collins was hauling in the drogue.

"He'll croak this time," thought he. "He didn't bluff in that drink. I c'd see it goin' down his throat——"

"All aboard!" cried the other. "Lay to yer oars, Tom, old son. We'll head to th' no'th'ard."

Both men shipped their oars and commenced to row. It was twenty-four hours since Anderson had a drink or anything to eat. He was feeling the pangs of hunger and thirst—thirst especially—but he pulled stolidly and awaited the tragedy which he knew *must* happen soon. Collins may have made a bluff at drinking yesterday, but he surely drank that morning.

Several times he glanced over his shoulder to make sure that his dory-mate was still alive. He did not need to do that, as he could see the blades of Collins' oars at the end of his stroke, but he wanted to see his face. The sight was not encouraging. Westley was smiling and smoking and very much alive.

“Hell! There’s something wrong,” muttered Anderson savagely. “Th’ p’izen don’t seem to hurt him.”

The wind was going down and the sea ran in long swells, over which they pulled monotonously. They sighted a vessel, but she was far off and making a passage. Anderson was feeling the lack of a drink, and suffered acutely. He was beginning to think that the poison was neutralized to some extent by the amount of water it was mixed with. Later on he would take a small drink himself. If West Collins was strong enough to be proof against the poison, so was he, and a small drink would relieve his agonies.

They pulled, with but a short spell now and again to rest, until late in the afternoon. Not a vessel was to be seen, and around them rolled the blank expanse of tumbling blue-green sea.

“Better hev another little drink,” said Anderson throatily. “Go ahead, an’ pass me th’ jug.”

Collins hove in his oars, reached for the dory-jar and took a good mouthful. “Thar’s plenty water left,” he said, giving the jar a shake before handing it to the other.

Anderson turned around in his seat and grasped the jug with his mittened hand. His fingers were almost frozen inside his mittens, and he failed to hold the handle tight enough, and it slipped from his hands. Striking the dory gunwale as the little craft gave a lurch, the precious water-jar plopped into the sea and vanished with but a few bubbles marking where it disappeared.

“God!” almost screamed Anderson. “It’s gone!”

“It sure is!” grunted Collins dolefully.

Thirty-six hours without water made Anderson endure the torments of Dives. The hard work of pulling the dory made him sweat all the moisture out of his body. He was suffering, and Collins noticed it.

“Feelin’ bad, Tommy, boy?” he asked kindly.

“Yes, blast you, yes!” snarled the other, and Westley looked at him curiously.

“H’m,” he murmured sadly. “Poor Tommy’s breakin’ up quick. I sh’d ha’ thought he’d have hung out better’n this. He’s had th’ same as me, and I ain’t feelin’ anyways weak yit. Hope we sight a vessel soon, fur I can’t tell when we’ll make th’ land with them queer tides swingin’ us all ways.” Aloud he said: “Throw in yer oars, Tom. I’ll pull her along, an’ you take a rest——”

“I don’t want a rest!” snapped the other. “We’ve got to git out o’ this. Gimme that compass aft here——”

He was going to say more, but his articulation failed him.

When night shut down they were still rowing, and the wind was beginning to breeze again from the northeast. Collins noticed it, and shook his head.

“A bad quarter. We’re goin’ to git another blow,” he said.

V.

Daylight revealed a dory lifting and tumbling over a wind-whipped sea flecked with roaring crests of foam. The drogue was out again, and Westley Collins sat on the bow thwart and watched the line.

In the stern crouched Tom Anderson, red-eyed and panting like a dog, his tongue was swollen and clove to the roof of his mouth. Every now and again, in spite of his dory-mate's objections, he sucked at a handful of sleet.

"Tommy, old man, don't suck that stuff," pleaded Collins. "It's salty, an' 'twill make ye mighty thirsty."

Anderson answered with a hoarse, throaty growl. He was suffering intense agony, and his brain whirled with the idea that he owed his tortures to his companion. The mad hate which imbued him was increased a thousand fold now, and he longed to kill the man who was his successful rival in love and who seemed to be invulnerable against the various attempts he had made on his life. Strange it was that a man's love for a flighty girl should conjure murderous thoughts and actions and result in such implacable hatred. Anderson was going mad.

Throughout the long day the dory rode to the drogue while the wind blew a bitter gale from the northeast and a heavy sea tossed the frail craft like a chip. Sleet and snow fell at intervals, and Collins collected some in his sou'wester and forced the frozen moisture between Anderson's swollen lips. Even while he was engaged in this act of kindness, Anderson had the dory-knife hidden underneath his body and seriously contemplated an effort to stab the man who was trying to alleviate his sufferings.

He lacked the energy, however, to make the effort then, and decided to wait until dark. The little water that Collins had collected for him in the short squalls of snow and sleet refreshed him a little and made him feel better, but his head throbbed and his tongue was so swollen that he was unable to talk. Collins himself was beginning to feel the lack of water, but while his dory-mate lay in the stern, he busied himself bailing out the boat and tending the drogue-line. Smoking made him feel thirstier, so he threw his pipe and tobacco overboard.

When the night shut down again, the gale showed signs of breaking up. The wind quieted down to a moderate breeze, but the sea still ran very

heavy.

"We'll git under way at daylight," muttered Collins. "I hope we'll git picked up to-morrer. It's a long pull to the land from here, and I reckon we've been blowed off-shore agin. Another day, an' poor Tommy'll croak."

It was bitterly cold—savage weather to be lying in a dory-bottom—and West went aft and tied lashings of marline around the wrists and the legs of Anderson's oilskins to keep the bitter wind and spray out.

"You'll be warmer now, Tommy, boy," he said cheerfully. "We'll git picked up to-morrer sure, an we won't do a thing in muggin' up on th' vessel that takes us aboard. We'll eat our way through th' shack locker an' drink her tanks dry. Ain't gittin' friz, are ye, Tom?"

The other gave an inarticulate groan and glared at Collins with a strange light in his eyes.

"I don't like his looks," muttered Westley. "He's goin' batty, sure. Another day, an' he'll go crazy an' jump overboard. He's bin drinkin' salt water an' chewin' at his mitts all day. God help us! I wonder ef He sees us in this here dory bargin' around th' Western Ocean. I cal'late I'll say a little prayer."

And the brave fellow knelt over the for'ard thwart and prayed—a sailor's prayer, simple, original and pregnant with a childlike faith:

"Dear God, our Father in Heaven. I ain't always singin' out to You to bear a hand like church an' Salvation Army gangs, but listen to me now, an' send a vessel this ways before noon to-morrer, or my dory-mate'll croak. I thank You, God, for listenin' to me, an' I promise not to bother You again. Amen!"

It was black dark—the hour before the dawn—and Westley Collins lay dozing in the bow of the dory. Anderson, awake, and with his mad hate spurring him to extraordinary efforts, felt for the handle of the dory-knife concealed behind him. Grasping it, he sat up and peered at his sleeping dory-mate. God—how he hated him!

His feet were too numb to stand up on. Encased in rubber boots, they were chilled to the bone. So he crawled laboriously for'ard with the knife in his hand. Crawling over the midship thwart he made a noise, and Collins awoke from his lethargic doze and sat up.

"What's up?" he cried as Anderson made a savage lunge at him with the knife.

The blade drove into Westley's oilskin coat and ripped it from the shoulder to the waist, but the heavy sweater which he wore under the oil-jacket prevented the knife from cutting his skin.

"Eh, eh!" growled Collins closing with the maddened Anderson. "Crazy already!"

Imbued with extraordinary strength, Anderson rose to his feet and made several vicious stabs at the other who held him around the waist and by the right wrist. Both struggled desperately—the one to kill, and the other for possession of the knife—and the dory careened dangerously with their efforts. For a few seconds they wrestled, panting and growling, and then the dory capsized and threw both men into the water.

Both were separated by the sudden immersion, and as quick as a flash Collins struck out and grasped the drogue-line and the bow of the upturned dory. Turning to look for Anderson, he saw the gleam of yellow oilskins floundering and splashing a fathom away and caught sight of his dory-mate's face.

Without a moment's hesitation he reached for the trailing dory-painter, and twisting it around his arm, swam for the drowning man. Grasping him by the collar, he hauled himself and Anderson back to the dory and hung to it for a minute while he regained his breath.

Tom Anderson was unconscious, but, though heavily clothed, he was no great weight in the water owing to the lashings around his wrists and the bottoms of his oil-pants keeping in enough air to buoy his weight. Collins knew that, as his own were keeping him up, but he also knew that the air would gradually escape and the dead weight of winter clothing and top boots would soon send him under.

On all dories there is a rope-loop rove through the dory-plug. This loop is outside on the dory-bottom and is made for the purpose of a hand-hold should the dory be capsized, and many a fisherman owes his life to a dory-plug becket.

Collins crawled up on the dory-bottom and grasped the plug-strap with one hand and dragged the inanimate body of Anderson alongside with the other. Thrusting his dory-mate's arm through the loop, he got the dory-painter and tied a bowline under Anderson's shoulders and made it fast to the plug becket. This served to secure him and keep his head and shoulders out of water.

With his dory-mate safe for the moment, Collins caught the two trawl buoys which floated near the upturned boat, and hauling himself to the bow by the bight of the dory-painter, pulled himself up on the dory-bottom. By doing so, he steadied the capsized craft and brought the unconscious Anderson farther out of the water at the other end of the dory.

The water was bitterly cold and the air colder. Though thirsty and half-famished, chilled with the cold and played out with his strenuous exertions, Westley set to work, and, overhauling the buoy-lines, he lashed the kegs on either side of the dory.

"That'll steady her," he panted. "We may have to hang here for a good many hours. Now for Tom. I'll git him on th' dory-bottom, an' lashed."

And dropping into the water again, he worked his way aft and, hoisting his dory-mate's prone body on to the dory-bottom, he passed several turns of buoy-line around him and the boat.

The sea was smoothing out and ran in long, oily swells. A light breeze was blowing from the west and when the first flush of the dawn illuminated the eastern sky, Westley hailed the prostrate Anderson:

"Oh, thar, Tommy, boy! How're ye makin' out?"

The other evidently heard him and waved a feeble hand. The immersion in salt water relieved him considerably from the tortures of thirst, and he felt better. Lying on the dory-bottom, Anderson, though in a comatose condition, was able to sense his position and knew how much he owed to Collins. In a dull yet comprehending way he felt that his feelings had changed.

In spite of the dreadful experiences he had undergone, Collins had an instinctive feeling that rescue was near. Since he prayed, his heart had lightened considerably, and he hung to life with a hopeful persistence which gave renewed strength to his abnormally rugged constitution.

"Ef Howard Blackburn c'd stick out nine days adrift in a dory, I cal'late I kin hang out part o' that time on a dory-bottom ef it don't git colder or breeze——"

He turned his head, and there burst upon his sea weary eyes the joyful sight of a vessel heading towards them.

It was a fisherman under four lowers, and from his position Collins could see her sails shivering as she rounded up to windward. A voice rolled down the wind.

"Weather up yer jumbo! Git a starboard dory over! Away ye go!"

“We’re saved!” hoarsely shrieked Westley. “Tommy, boy, wake up! We’re saved! Vessel ahoy! Dear God, I thank ye! We’re all right now, dory-mate. Plenty to eat an’ drink ’board o’ that packet.” And he talked and shouted until the rescuers in a dory cut him adrift and hauled him and Anderson aboard.

“Three days an’ three nights adrift in a dory in that last breeze!” exclaimed the skipper of the *Annie L. Westhaver*. “An’ no food an’ water! Sufferin’ Judas! You’re a tough guy, Collins. Your dory-mate ain’t made very good weather of it, though I think he’ll come around. We’ll run ye into Shelburne an’ git ye fixed up—a tough guy, by Jupiter!”

In a forecastle bunk, Anderson, with toes and fingers badly frost-bitten, lay and raved in delirium. He talked strangely of a dory-jar and arsenic, and in his ravings the name of Elsie Conover was mentioned. Westley Collins, little the worse for his experiences, sat on a lee locker and yarned with the gang while the schooner stormed on her way to Shelburne.

“He’s the best dory-mate a man ever had,” he was saying. “He got himself into that state because o’ me. Boys, he purposely avoided drinkin’ from our dory-jar so’s I’d git th’ water sh’d we be adrift long. He knew I was promised to a gal back home, an’ he wanted to see me live. Ain’t he a *man* for ye?

“And d’ye know, boys, it might ha’ ’bin worse, ’cause I was nearly goin’ off in th’ dory without a jug that day. We was in a hurry settin’ out th’ string that mornin’ an’ when I hove our dory-jug down inter th’ dory it struck one o’ th’ trawl anchors an’ broke. I wasn’t a-goin’ to bother gittin’ another one, but th’ skipper sees it an’ says to me: ‘Here! Take this spare jug with ye, an’ git away. Winter fishin’s no time to neglect carryin’ a full dory-jar, and I never let a dory leave th’ vessel without water aboard.”

“Lucky for me he was so particular, but it done poor Tom no good. He hung out without drinkin’ a drop so’s I’d git it all. An’ when he couldn’t hold out no longer he lost th’ jar overboard jest as he was for havin’ a drink. Poor old Tom! Boys, oh boys, but he’s a man with a big heart!”

VI.

Miss Elsie Conover knocked apprehensively on the door of the Anderson cottage. An elderly lady answered the summons.

"Oh, Miss!" she exclaimed anxiously, "I'm glad ye've come. Tom's bin askin' to see ye all afternoon. He's had a terrible time down on th' fishin'-grounds, an' 'most died but for West Collins. Come right up."

With a strange fluttering at her heart, Elsie entered the plain bed-room and hesitated half-frightened when she caught sight of the haggard features of the man she loved.

"Oh, Tom!" she cried with a catch in her voice.

The sick man turned and beckoned to her.

"Come over here, Elsie," he said quietly. "Mother, please leave us for a spell."

The girl approached the bed and sat down in a chair.

"Tom, Tom," she said. "What happened out there?"

He ignored the question and stared at her with eyes which were cold and penetrating.

"I'm a-goin' to talk to you, girl!" he said after a pause. "What kind of a game are you playin' with West Collins?"

She flushed and dropped her eyes in confusion at the question. "I—I'm not playing any game with him, Tom."

"Do you intend to marry him?"

She made no answer, but fingered her dress feverishly.

"Do you intend to marry him?" came Anderson's insistent voice.

"No!" blurted the girl.

"What did ye mean by tellin' him ye'd give him yer answer in th' Spring?"

"I—I—oh, don't ask me, Tom. I—oh, don't be so cruel!"

“All right, I won’t. Ye told me th’ same thing. What was your idea? Who did you intend to have? Him or me?”

The girl grasped his bandaged hand nervously.

“Why, you, Tom. I always intended to marry you, but you were chasing around with ‘Jen’ Hooper. I—I told him that so’s you’d be jealous and come to me again.”

Anderson withdrew his hand and nodded slowly.

“Huh! So that was the idea. Waal, you started a fine pot a-boilin’. Now, I’ll talk to ye. West Collins and I hev bin dory-mates all this Winter. He’s th’ best dory-mate I ever had, and a man’s man. He told me about his deal with you. Me, of all men! Me, that was crazy over you an’ whom you made th’ same promise to. He told me of his prospects an’ his future with you as his wife. He’s madly in love with you, and talked to me about you in our watches and in th’ dory. To me, mind ye—me that really wanted you worse than he did!”

He paused for a moment and stared at her pallid face.

“I made a vow that he’d never see you again. I was out to kill him. Actin’ as his dory-mate, mind ye, I meant to put him out o’ th’ way at th’ first chance. I tried it several times—” she shuddered—“but failed every time, thank God! He never suspected, an’ treated me as his best friend. Then we got adrift in th’ dory. ’Twas my fault, that. I tried to kill him then by p’izenin’ th’ water in our dory-jar. Th’ jar was changed, but I didn’t know it, an’ fur three days an’ three nights adrift I darsen’t have a drink.

“I went through hell then, woman, an’ went crazy. I tried to knife Westley, an’ th’ dory capsized. He saved me an’ hauled me up on th’ dory an’ lashed me there. I won’t tell ye any more. I’ve told ye enough, an’ ye’ll please not breathe a word o’ what I’ve told ye.”

The look in his eyes frightened her.

“Now,” he continued steadily, “when West Collins goes to see you you’ll take him. I won’t have ye, for I don’t care about ye any more. He’s in love with you, an’ believes in you. He thinks you love him. You do—you’ll have to! You ain’t a-goin’ to make a bluff like I did. You’ve played your bluff—so did I. I pretended to be his friend. I hated him, but I love him now. He’s a man’s man. You’ll love him too.”

He paused and continued in a kinder tone:

“Elsie—my love for you is dead. I’ve changed it for West Collins. He’s a man what’s true blue. He ain’t none o’ yer fancy kind, but he’s all there, and he’ll make ye a better husband than ye deserve. You marry him, an’ ye’ll be happy.”

“But, Tom, I don’t love him,” almost wailed Elsie. “It’s you I——”

“Forget it!” snapped the other. “I have no use for ye. I’m for hookin’ up with Jennie Hooper whom I used to go with for years.”

Miss Conover felt a strange pang, and Anderson knew that the shot had gone home. Jennie would have him, he knew, and Jennie was a nice girl. He saw her in the hospital at Yarmouth before he came home, and was sure of his ground.

“Yes,” he said, “you can count me out. West Collins is your man, and he’s one o’ th’ best. You’ll marry him, Elsie, an’ keep yer promise. Good-bye!”

The following announcement in the Anchorville *Daily Echo* pertains to the story:

> At the Anchorville Baptist Church, on Wednesday afternoon, Miss Elsie Conover was united in holy matrimony to Mr. Westley Collins—both of this place. Miss Jessie Theriault acted as bridesmaid, and Mr. Thomas Anderson acted as best man.

Human nature is a queer thing. Love begets jealously; jealousy begets deceit and hate; and hate begets murder. Yet in the case of Westley Collins and Tom Anderson, these passions led to mutual respect and abiding love between them. If Collins had known? It is perhaps better he did not.

Off Decker's Island

Mr. Clarence De Houten, member of an aristocratic New England family, showed evidences of being worried.

As a Newport social light, a dilettante, clubman and a member of the idle rich, Mr. De Houten was outraging all the ethics of his "set" by allowing carking care to furrow his patrician brow. However, anxiety is not the exclusive prerogative of the working class, and De Houten had every right to wear the rueful countenance.

When a man is married to an expensive wife who prefers buying her gowns in Paris to shopping on Fifth Avenue; when the said encumbrance is touring Europe with a daily flood of unpaid bills informing her husband of her whereabouts, and hubby has a number of unpaid obligations of his own coming to roost, there is no occasion for uproarious mirth.

Mr. De Houten was by no means exuberant in spirits as he wended his steps in the direction of the yacht club landing.

An urgent summons to produce twenty thousand dollars in cold cash by a certain date or face poverty, social ruin, and unenviable notoriety is sufficient to dampen any man's optimistic viewpoint on the smoothness of life.

"Put me aboard the *Carmencita*," he growled to the man in charge of the yacht club's tender at the landing float, and stepping into the launch, Mr. De Houten was soon puttering out among the fleet of anchored pleasure craft. A few minutes later he clambered wearily up the accommodation ladder of a beautiful schooner yacht of a hundred tons.

"Send Captain Dillon to my room," he said to the uniformed deckhand at the gangway, and as the sailor saluted and turned to execute the order, the yacht owner swung down into the elaborate quarters sacred to himself.

At the saloon sideboard, he poured himself out a good stiff whisky from the swinging decanter, and ignoring the soda siphon, absorbed the liquor neat.

“That’s better,” he murmured, and placing the glass on the tray again, he turned to greet the yacht’s master.

“Oh, ah, Dillon. Step inside here a moment and close the door.”

The bronzed Nova Scotian sailing master obeyed, and De Houten motioned him to a chair.

“Sit down,” he said. “I want to talk to you in private.”

The other nodded wonderingly and twirled his uniformed cap with the nervous apprehension of a man about to be dismissed.

“Is the yacht all ready for a cruise?”

“Yes, sir,” replied the captain. “If the steward has all his truck aboard we can be standin’ out inside an hour, sir.”

De Houten stared hard at the man seated before him and hesitated for a space before speaking.

“I wonder if I can trust you, Dillon,” he said after a pause.

The sailor raised his eyebrows in surprise. “I don’t see any reason why ye shouldn’t, sir.”

“You’ve been well paid for your work aboard here, haven’t you, Dillon? You haven’t been rushed in any way? I’ve always been a considerate employer, haven’t I?”

(“He’s found out about that overhauling rake-off or the graft I got from the sail-maker,” thought the captain. “Here’s where I get my walkin’ orders.”)

Aloud, he replied: “Yes, sir, you’ve been a good man to work for, sir.”

“Um!” Mr. De Houten tapped the arm of his chair with nervous fingers, and his face betrayed signs of perplexity. After an awkward pause, during which the captain searched his memory for the person likely to have informed the owner of his little grafts, the latter upset his calculations by broaching what was on his mind.

“Now, look here, Dillon,” he said firmly. “I’m going to take a chance and trust you. I think you can be trusted——”

“I hope so, sir,” murmured the other with an air of virtue.

“Very well, then, I’ll take the chance: Now, Dillon, I’m in a hole—a bad hole—financially. If you help me out, I’ll promise you a thousand dollars

and my recommendation for a steady job. If you don't, well, there's nothing doing and you lose your position as master of this yacht."

"How's that, sir?"

"It's this way," continued the owner. "I've got to raise the sum of twenty thousand dollars by the first of September to tide me over a little deal. To put it bluntly, I can't get the money. Everything I own, except this yacht, is mortgaged to the hilt, and I can't raise a dollar from my best friend.

"This vessel cost me fifty thousand dollars, but I can't sell her for half that amount, nor can I sell her at all at this time of the year. She's insured for thirty thousand, and I paid the premium for the last four years without a claim. Now, I'm going to try and realize on it. D'ye understand?"

Captain Dillon stared at the other vaguely. "I—I can't say as I do, sir. I don't know much about them business games."

"Then I'll have to elucidate. I can't sell this craft. She's insured for thirty thousand against loss by fire, perils of the sea, act of God, piracy and all sorts of things, y'know. If she should be lost I'll get thirty thousand dollars. *Now* d'ye see?"

The yacht master smiled knowingly.

"I got ye, sir. If she should be lost you'd git the insurance o' thirty thousand dollars——"

"Yes," interrupted the owner, "and you'd get a thousand dollars and a sure recommendation for a good job. How does it look to you, Dillon?"

It evidently looked all right to Captain Daniel Dillon, and employer and employee waxed quite fraternal over the whisky decanter and fifty-cent panatelas while discussing ways and means.

"This here American coast ain't a good place for such a job," said Captain Daniel. "Too many beach patrols, life-savers an' revenue cutters pokin' about ready to lend a helpin' hand to vessels in distress.

"Up whar I come from—the Cape Shore o' Novy Scotia—is a grand spot for wreckin'. Plenty o' ledges, plenty o' fog, an' plenty o' currents an' tides to set a feller off'n his course. The Cape Shore's the place, sir, an' if ye'll leave it to me, I'll pile the *Carmencita* on a nice handy ledge whar she'll make a beautiful wreck——"

"Then, Captain Dillon, I'll thank you to get under way for a two-weeks' cruise to the Cape Shore."

And feeling greatly relieved, Mr. Clarence De Houten retired to write a few letters, while his captain proceeded to get everything in readiness for the voyage.

With a fair wind, the *Carmencita* made a fast run-off from Newport to the northern edge of Brown's Bank.

Twenty-four hours of light airs and calms ghosted her to a spot where Seal Island light blinked at them in the darkness of a murky August evening. The following night, if all went well, the beautiful schooner would be pounding to pieces on the "nice handy ledge" selected by Captain Dillon.

Mr. De Houten before he left had passed the word around his friends that he was just making a short cruise up the Nova Scotia coast to Halifax.

No guests were invited, and aboard the *Carmencita* the owner, Captain Dillon and a colored steward berthed aft, while the mate, boatswain, a Japanese cook, and eight Americanized Swedes and Norwegians who formed the schooner's crew, berthed forward.

Thus, it will be seen, De Houten and his skipper were thrown very much together.

It sounds like an easy proposition to make away with a vessel, but Dillon found it a trifle more difficult than he bargained for. In piling the vessel up he had to make due allowance for a safe getaway for himself and the others.

He had to land her on a spot where she would break up quickly and be a total loss before the insurance company could salvage or tow her off. He also had to make the stranding appear as being something beyond his control, or the Marine Inquiry would have something to say on his seamanship and cancel his license as a coasting master; and above all the scheme would have to be carried out without in any way raising the suspicions of the crew.

The more Captain Dillon thought over the matter the colder his feet became. The thousand dollars promised him seemed very large while the yacht was lying at anchor in Newport harbour, but off Seal Island it seemed an utterly disproportionate amount when the manifold difficulties were considered.

Every knot the *Carmencita* logged on her voyage to the eastward conjured up new obstacles in the sailing master's imagination, and he retailed them to his employer.

“Confound it, man!” ejaculated the latter testily. “It should be easy enough to carry out. All you have to do is run her on some rock or sand bank. Any fool can do that——”

“Kin they?” said Dillon. “I don’t know about that. We got to be careful to put her ashore in a spot where we can all git away in the boats, or there’ll be a drownin’ scrape on my conscience. I got to work it so’s the mate an’ the crew don’t git wise an’ talk afterward.

“There’ll be an investigation over the wreck, an’ I got to frame things up so’s the blame inspector don’t cotton that it was a done job. Sounds easy, don’t it?

“Then thar’s the weather to consider. I ain’t chancin’ puttin’ her on the beach in a heavy sea where a boat wouldn’t live. . . .”

“Have you any plans then?” interrupted the other. “When do you intend pulling the trick off?”

“Waal, that’s hard to say. But if this breeze’ll stiffen up a little from the south’ard I’ll run in among the Cape Shore Islands to-night an’ put her on some ledge handy to a place whar the boats can make a landing. We’ll see how the wind is, an’ if thar’s any southing in it I’ll turn the trick in my watch after midnight.”

The captain picked up his cap and went on deck leaving De Houten alone.

II.

As Dillon had hoped the wind freshened from the southward, and before midnight the watch took the light sails in, leaving the schooner under mainsail, foresail, forestaysail and jib.

At twelve Captain Dillon came on deck and relieved the mate. It was a dark, starless night with a fresh breeze blowing, and the beautiful vessel was logging an even eight knots through a smooth sea.

Dillon had spent the best part of the evening poring over a chart of the Cape Shore ledges, and he had decided to take a chance and put the vessel on Henniker's Reef—a shoal water ledge four miles off-shore and an underwater menace responsible for many wrecks.

Logging eight knots under four lowers, the *Carmencita* would be up to the spot by two in the morning.

At one the schooner passed Cobtown Harbour fairway buoy, nearly seven miles west by south from Henniker's Reef.

Dillon had laboriously figured out the set of the tide in the vicinity, and he gave the wheelman a course which was a full point less than what it should have been. With careful steering, no shift in the wind, and an accurate allowance made for the abnormal tide set at the time and place, the *Carmencita* should strike before four bells.

The investigation remained an obsession in the skipper's mind, and he was particular about giving the course. The wheelman would not forget it, and Dillon trusted to the Inquiry Court for an easy reprimand in not allowing enough to counteract the set of the tide.

At half-past one Mr. De Houten came on deck and gazed apprehensively around. The tense waiting had made him nervous, and he shivered as he stared out into the darkness through which the schooner was storming.

"Godfrey! but it's dark," he muttered to the skipper, standing aft of the wheel-box. "Are the boats all clear for lowering?"

"Yep!" grunted Dillon, puffing away at his pipe. "I got the covers off'n the gig an' the yawl. I only hope there ain't no accidents," he added gloomily.

Mr. De Houten thought of that twenty thousand dollar debt and it nerved him.

"There isn't much of a sea on," he encouraged. "We should be able to get clear all right. When are we due to strike?"

" 'Bout two o'clock, I cal'late."

Dillon went aft and looked into the dial of the taffrail log, which showed clear in the light streaming from the open companionway. Coming forward again, he glanced at the clock in the gangway and gave a perceptible start.

"We're due now!" he whispered hoarsely. "Git a grip o' somethin' an' look out for fallin' spars!"

Both men were in little short of a nervous panic, and the perspiration stood out on their foreheads in clammy beads. The suspense was agonizing, and De Houten was inwardly cursing himself for suggesting such an adventure. A few feet away from them the stolid, unsuspecting Swede at the wheel was calmly chewing his quid and watching compass and sails.

An apparently interminable minute passed, and De Houten felt ready to faint.

"God Almighty!" he rasped. "When's she going to hit?"

Dillon wiped the perspiration off his brow with a trembling hand, and stared into the darkness ahead.

"Lord, sir, I don't know!" His mouth had become so dry that he was scarcely able to articulate the words.

Swash! The schooner side-wiped a heavy swell and both conspirators gave a jump which caused the Swede at the wheel to glance over in their direction.

"Mind yer steerin'!" snarled Dillon savagely, and the man almost swallowed his quid in surprise.

After a space of about five minutes, during which Mr. De Houten felt that Hades would have no terrors for him, the skipper ground out an oath and looked in at the gangway clock.

"Jupiter!" he growled huskily. "Somethin's wrong, somewhere." And he walked forward.

"Seen anythin'?" he snapped at the lookout lolling over the heel of the bowsprit.

"Not'ing, sir," answered the man. "T'ought Ay saw der breakers to windward a while ago, sir, bud Ay tank was only breakin' sea——"

"How long ago—an' how fur off?" yelped the other.

"Ay guess about ten minutes, sir—'bout two cable's length off de wedder bow."

When he reported the fact to the yacht owner, De Houten gave a nervous laugh.

"You're a h—— of a navigator!" he said. "You've missed them altogether."

"Waal, don't let that bother ye, sir," replied Dillon sullenly. "Thar's plenty more reefs an' ledges 'round this here place. I kin put her on one o' them inside half an hour."

"Not if I know it," said De Houten hastily. "At least, not to-night. I've had enough for a spell. I'm all unstrung. Wait till to-morrow. I'm going to turn in."

"What'll I do with the schooner?"

"Anything you like, as long as you don't wreck her. Head her off-shore or into a harbour. Good night."

If Mr. De Houten reckoned on having a calm, undisturbed slumber after his harrowing ordeal, he was destined to be mistaken. Captain Dillon had got the *Carmencita* in among a regular nest of Cape Shore ledges, and the southerly breeze stiffened toward dawn and kicked up a wild sea.

The tide was running strong, and the schooner did some frantic plunging in the rips swinging round the shoal spots.

The lookout had sighted breakers ahead three times before daylight, and the schooner was swung off in time to avoid a really nasty wreck. All hands were called to work ship, and De Houten was treated to another hair-raising experience when the Half Moon Ledges were cleared by a very narrow margin.

Dillon was not an extraordinary nervy sailor, but he certainly dragged sail on the *Carmencita* to weather the Half Moons, and the process did not soothe his owner's already jarred equilibrium.

"Is she all right now?" he enquired anxiously of his skipper when the welter of white water had faded astern.

“She won’t be all right till we’re twenty miles off shore an’ away from this cussed coast,” grunted the much worried sailor. “The glass is fallin’ for a breeze from the southward——”

“Get into harbour then.”

“No, siree! No pokin’ for harbour ’round here in a southerly. We’ll heave-to off-shore an’ run in again when th’ wind hauls.”

Pale and half seasick, Mr. De Houten was assisted into his bunk by the colored steward about six in the morning. Paler and wholly seasick, he remained there until noon next day while the schooner rode out a nasty August breeze under foresail and forestaysail.

While under the depressing influence of *mal-de-mer*, the yacht owner cared little whether he lived or died. Impending ruin and a social downfall were to him things of no account, and when Dillon came in with a wild plan to bore holes in the schooner’s hull and scuttle her there and then, Mr. De Houten cursed him and his scheme in language which would have gained him a job as a boss stevedore anywhere.

Toward evening the sea had eased off a bit and the wind veered to the westward. Mr. De Houten felt a little better, and when Dillon came to his stateroom he was ready to listen to him.

“I bin a thinkin’, sir,” said the skipper hopefully. “I ain’t much on them wreckin’ jobs, but I have a cousin livin’ on the Cape Shore what has a long head on him, an’ maybe he can help us out.

“He’s a fishin’ skipper—name o’ Decker, sir—an’ he’d do any thin’ for a dollar or so. He’s full of all kinds o’ dodges an’ devil’s tricks, an’ I’ll bet he can fix us up——”

“Where is he now?”

“He’s livin’ on a place called Decker’s Island, which lies ’bout forty miles no’west from here.”

“Are you sure he’s at home? Perhaps he’s away fishing.”

“Oh, no, he ain’t away. He’ll have his vessel hauled up now, gettin’ her ready fur haddockin’.”

De Houten pursed his lips doubtfully. “I’m not at all in favour of getting too many persons in this barratry business. First thing I know I’ll be getting blackmailed——”

The yacht master laughed.

“You don’t need to worry about Tom Decker, sir,” he said. “He’s bin mixed up in a dozen queer jobs, an’ ye’ll never hear a word from him. He never double-crossed a friend in his life. Ye could tell every soul on Decker’s Island what ye planned doin’ with th’ *Carmencita*,’ an’ nary a word ’ud come back to ye. They’re all professional wreckers an’ smugglers.”

The other was about to say something when a calendar pad on the writing table caught his eye. The date shown brought forcibly to his mind that he had just an even ten days before keeping a certain disagreeable appointment in New York City when twenty thousand dollars would be needed to stave off certain disagreeable consequences.

His whole body grew suddenly clammy at the thought, and he was quick to act.

“Get to Decker’s Island then as quick as you know how,” he ordered.

III.

The *Carmencita* was lying at anchor off Decker's Island just inside the Little Decker—an islet lying to the southward which afforded protection to the craft hailing from the isolated fishing settlement.

Surrounded by a maze of ledges and sunken reefs, Decker's Island, so the gossips of the mainland say, was inhabited by certain astute families who had been quick to see the advantages of the locality when coastwise and other shipping fouled the various danger spots.

No Decker's Island family was poverty-stricken. For people engaged in such humble pursuits as boat-fishing and lobstering, the islanders boasted of homes and furnishings which would have done credit to a summer colony of American "rusticators."

Closeted with Mr. De Houten and Captain Dillon in the owner's stateroom aboard the yacht was a sturdy, bronzed individual about forty years of age. All three were smoking cigars and the stranger was listening to Mr. De Houten with the ghost of a smile upon his swarthy, strong-lined face.

"Now, Captain Decker," the yacht owner was saying, "I've told you the situation, and I want your assistance. First of all, I'd like to know what you expect for pulling off the job?"

Decker puffed slowly at his cigar, and blew a wreath of smoke before replying. Glancing with an appraising eye at the rich furnishings of the yacht, he answered calmly:

"Wal, y' know, it's quite a job, but if you'll give me five hundred dollars and the privilege o' strippin' this here craft afore she goes ashore, I'll tackle it."

"You'll be sure to make a proper total loss wreck out of her?" enquired De Houten anxiously.

"She'll be kindlin' wood twelve hours after she hits."

"Is there going to be any danger in the business?"

"None whatever—an' it'll be a thorough, seamanlike job."

De Houten nodded, and Dillon grinned in satisfaction.

“I told ye,” remarked the latter, “that Cap Decker ’ud fix ye up.”

“All right, then, Captain Decker,” said the owner. “Now let me hear your plans before I guarantee anything. I’m not hankering for another night waiting for the schooner to strike a rock. You’ll have to work it different from Dillon’s nerve-shaking trick.”

Decker laughed. “Yes, sir, I cal’late you had a scary session.

“No, I won’t work it thataways. Maybe, when ye came in between the two islands here, ye noticed that ledge lyin’ to the eastward o’ th’ Little Decker? Yes, the one with th’ long breakers runnin’ over it. It’s called the Southeast Breaker Ledge ’round these parts, an’ the craft what hits it never gits away again.

“When the tide’s on the ebb it’ll be lyin’ ’bout half-a-mile dead astern o’ this craft. The tide sets through here powerful strong, an’ all as ye need to do is to part yer cable an’ ye’ll be on it in less’n fifteen minutes.

“No matter how calm it is, thar’s always a breakin’ sea pilin’ over that ledge ’count o’ the heavy set o’ the tides. Slack water’s the only time ye kin git anywheres near it.

“All we got to do is slip yer anchor cable some night when the tide’s runnin’ strong ebb, an’ the Sou’east Breaker’ll do the rest.”

“That sounds mighty good,” said De Houten, “but how will we square off the crew? They’re liable to cotton to something.”

“I’ll soon fix them,” answered Decker lightly. “I’ll git a clam bake goin’ ashore, an’ we’ll see that all the yacht’s crew are invited. You can give ’em all permission to go, but don’t you go among them a tellin’ them to go ashore. Let ’em ask ye first. Then they can’t say they was got out of the way a purpose.”

It was Decker—Decker the “downy”—who framed up all the minute details. They seemed but trifling, insignificant items to a landsman, but the minutiæ of seamanship assumes glaring aspects when under the searching questionings of marine insurance surveyors and wreck commissioners.

Thirty thousand dollars was at stake, and the least bungle meant severe penalties to all concerned, for insurance companies are particular.

“The tide’ll serve us best day after to-morrow,” said Decker after a lengthy discussion. “It’ll be runnin’ strong ebb ’bout nine o’clock at night.

"I'll go ashore an' git this clam bake racket under way, an' I'll make arrangements for me and another feller to bring out a motor boat an' git some o' them s'loon fittin's an brass-work ashore afore we let her adrift on th' ledge.

"Now, rest easy an' leave it to me!"

When the redoubtable Decker departed, the yacht owner looked at the calendar and shuddered.

"That'll leave me seven days to get back to New York and square the other thing. Lord, I'll be gray-headed before Angelina comes back from Europe!" he muttered.

Two very pretty Nova Scotia girls had visited the *Carmencita*, and after they had departed for the shore, the mate and the boatswain respectfully approached Mr. De Houten, lolling aft in a wicker deck-chair.

"Permission for all hands to go ashore to a clam bake to-night?" repeated the *Carmencita's* owner when the two made the request. "Certainly, men, certainly! Take the launch, all of you, but see and be aboard in time to get under way to-morrow morning at eight o'clock. We're going to start for Halifax then, so run along and enjoy yourselves—all hands."

The Jap cook and the colored steward were graciously ordered to prepare some fancy cakes and French pastry for the feast and to join the crew and assist the islanders in the entertainment.

Needless to say, they were delighted to go.

Decker, seated at supper in his home, chuckled to himself at the easiness of it all, and glanced out of the window to where the tall sparred *Carmencita* was lying.

"Um!" he murmured to himself. "This is the easiest thing I've struck for a dog's age. Nawthin' to do but slip a shackle an' rake in five hundred cold iron dollars and a couple dory loads o' valuable fittin's. Oh! it's too good. It's too—Sufferin' Judas Iscariot!"

He dropped a cup of coffee with a crash and glared out of the window with a string of muttered oaths.

"What's the matter, Tom?" anxiously enquired his wife, rising from her chair.

"Nawthin, m'dear," replied the captain hastily, sopping up the tablecloth with his napkin. "Nawthin 'at all. This blame' coffee burnt my mouth, that's

all."

He got up from the table a minute later and went outside.

"Damn him!" he growled savagely. "Why'n Tophet sh'd he poke in here on *this* night of all nights?" And he shook his fist at a small, slate-coloured steamer which had just come to an anchor astern of the schooner yacht.

It was the Government Fishery cutter *Ariel*, commanded by William Murray—an official for whom Decker had but little use, owing to his vigilance in endeavouring to thwart several smuggling and vessel-looting enterprises of the islander.

Ten minutes later Decker and big Bill Westhaver puttered out to the *Carmencita* in the latter's motor boat and clambered aboard. It was seven o'clock, and all the yacht's complement, with the exception of Mr. De Houten and Captain Dillon, had gone ashore.

Down in the cabin Captain Decker gave vent to his feelings.

"That interferin' scum astern of us has pretty well jigged our plans for to-night," he snarled. "Thar ain't a-goin' to be a chanst to git a blame' thing off'n this hooker, fur ten chances to one the skipper o' that iron kettle'll be over t' pay ye a visit to-night——"

Decker paused suddenly, and a beatific smile spread over his swarthy features. De Houten, whose spirits had dropped as low as the barometer in a West India hurricane, looked at the fisherman with an air of hope.

Decker thumped the table with his fist.

"It's all right, Mr. De Hooter!" he said with a grim laugh. "Everything'll go nicely in spite o' the cutter."

Turning to Dillon he gave that worthy some instructions which caused him not a little surprise.

"Take yer dingey, Cap, an' pull over to the cutter," he said. "Ask for Captain Murray, present yer compliments, and invite him and his mate to come over to the yacht here an' jine you an' Mr. De Hooter in a smoke and a friendly drink.

"Pull over now, but don't come back too quick. Ask Murray some questions 'bout navigatin' the coast an' keep him off for 'bout half an hour. That'll give me an' Bill Westhaver time to git things ready.

"Go ahead now!"

IV.

Forward on the *Carmencita*, Decker and Westhaver were working like Trojans in the darkness.

“Here’s a fine coil o’ three-inch manilla we can take,” whispered Westhaver.

“All right. Make it fast to the line an’ drop it overboard easy. Don’t make a splash. Tie all them blocks an’ bull’s-eyes together an’ drop ‘ern too. We can easy drag for all that gear afterward an’ pick it up. Too bad we can’t strip that s’loon.”

While Westhaver was removing valuable gear from the forward part of the yacht and dropping it overboard into the harbour, Captain Decker was silently wrestling with the *Carmencita’s* ground tackle.

The yacht was riding to her starboard anchor, and Decker knocked out the pin of the thirty fathom shackle. After making a stout piece of rope fast to the cable link forward of the shackle he paid the cable out of the hawse pipe and took a turn of the rope around the windlass.

The inboard end of the chain was thrust through the hawse pipe and dangled overboard, while all the strain of the anchor came upon the piece of rope.

Giving the stout manila a slash with a knife which cut through one of the strands, Decker smiled grimly.

“As soon as th’ tide sets hard agin her in an hour’s time, she’ll part that or I’m a Dutchman,” he muttered. And with a sigh of satisfaction he proceeded to range all the chain of the port anchor, which was catheaded, forward of the windlass.

“What in blazes are ye monkeyin’ with *that* chain for?” growled Westhaver.

“Wait an’ see,” answered the other. “Nawthin’ like preparin’ for every thin’. How’ve you got on?”

“No so bad. Got more’n a dozen good blocks, two or three gratin’s, all the cook’s aluminum galley gear, some brass fittin’s, the fore sheet an’ all

the heads'l halliards unrove an' over the side—not countin' the stuff what was in the bos'un's locker—Hist! Here comes the dingey."

"Come on, then! Git down aft as quick's ye can——"

Westhaver glanced at the riding light of the Fishery cruiser, and clutched Decker by the arm.

"Say," he muttered apprehensively, "that blame' hooker's dead stern of us. We're a-goin' to foul her when we break adrift——"

"Waal, what ef we do? She can't stop us. We'll give her a wipe as we pass her—that's all. Tide's on the ebb now an' the wind's with the tide. We'll fetch the Southeast Breaker easier'n steerin' for it under sail."

"Too bad we couldn't ha' got a chanst at lootin' that saloon. Thar's a fine mahogany sideboard in it that would ha' come in fine for the wife's dinin'-room—not to mention them clocks an' silver eatin' gear.

"Go easy, now," he added, "an' set down with Mister De Hooter as ef ye'd been thar for an hour."

Commander Murray and Chief Officer Kerr of the *Ariel* looked somewhat surprised when they entered the *Carmencita's* palatial saloon to see Decker and Westhaver hobnobbing with the wealthy American yachtsman.

The cutter's commander had no reason to love Decker, as the latter was a man whom the government official hoped to catch red-handed in some looting or smuggling venture in the near future. He had chased the wily fishing skipper many a time, but somehow or other Decker had always eluded him.

Needless to state the antipathy was mutual.

With a curt nod to the two fishermen, Murray and his chief officer shook hands with the smiling and genial De Houten, and forgetting for the nonce their personal and official differences, the six men waxed congenial over cigars and whisky.

Decker, though anxious, was feeling too happy to cause a row with Murray. No! Poor Murray would have troubles of his own in a very short time, and while the others were chatting, the "downy" one puffed at his cigar and made a mental calculation of the amount of damage a hundred-ton schooner drifting with a strong wind and tide would do to the anchored cutter.

“She’ll dint him some an’ maybe carry away a boat or so,” he reflected. “Won’t he catch it from the Marine Department when he sends in his report—an’ him aboard here drinkin’! Yes, drinkin’ will sound good—drinkin’ an’ smokin’ aboard th’ craft what breaks adrift an’ damages his vessel!

“I cal’late I got him dead to loo’ard this time. He won’t be so cussed ready to hang around Decker’s Island so much. Suspicious swab——”

He paused in his ruminations and looked across at Westhaver. The yacht had given a perceptible shudder and from under the run Decker imagined he heard the sullen trickle of water.

De Houten, Dillon and the two government officials were engaged in discussing pilotage of the Nova Scotia coast.

Crash!

The men in the *Carmencita’s* cabin were thrown to the floor as the yacht reeled to a sudden shock. The lamps went out and there came a smashing of glass and crockery from the pantry.

“God Almighty! What’s happened?” yelled De Houten.

“Some craft’s run us down!” shouted Murray and Decker together, and in the darkness the occupants of the saloon made a rush for the gangway.

“Clear the way, you clumsy hound!” roared Decker, who was half-way out of the companionway and struggling with the big bulk of Westhaver, and doing his best to keep from laughing outright at the other’s efforts to get past.

Behind them, Murray and Kerr were endeavouring to force their way up the narrow exit, with De Houten and Dillon engaged in the same object.

Decker released his grip on Westhaver and gave him a mighty shove up the steps, and in a trice the six men were on deck.

The fishing skipper gave a hasty glance into the darkness and clutched Westhaver by the arm in a grip that made the big man wince.

“Holy Mackeral!” he hissed. “*The cutter’s adrift too!*”

It was as Decker had said. A scant cable’s length from the rapidly drifting yacht the small government steamer was swinging idly towards the line of surf piling over the Southeast Breaker Ledge!

Commander Murray and the mate had noticed it, too, and they were screaming to the cutter’s crew to let go an anchor.

Decker made no move for a space and after casting an eye at the surf he caught the commander's arm and shouted:

"Come for'ard an' help me save this craft from goin' on the ledge! If she hits we'll all be dead men. Westhaver! Git yer boat alongside so's we kin jump in an' git clear. Come on, Cap!"

The distracted Murray did not know what to do, but instinctively he ran forward with Decker to the catheaded port anchor.

"The chain's all ranged, I think," bawled the fisherman as he cast off the ring stopper and shank painter. Grabbing the handspike, he shouted a "Stand clear!" and pried the flukes off the rail.

"We're too late! She's a-goin' to hit!" he roared as the chain thundered out through the port hawse. "Jump for the boat, Cap, or well be gone coons!"

Westhaver had the engine going, and when Decker and Murray piled aboard he slipped the painter and headed off from the doomed schooner.

"We sh'd ha' snubbed that chain," cried Decker to the cutter's skipper. "We've paid out too much. See! She's struck——"

"Oh, my yacht! My beautiful yacht!" wailed De Houten hypocritically wringing his hands. "Fifty thousand dollars gone——"

"Damn an' blast yer yacht!" snarled the commander. "The Canadian government's lost a valuable cutter through this night's work, an' I've prob'ly lost my job! An' all through a lubberly yachtsman what couldn't anchor his vessel properly——"

"Run over toward the cutter, Bill!" cried Decker a little anxiously. "We'll hev to try an' pick up the crew."

Both the cutter and the yacht could be discerned as black spots in the white welter of surf tumbling over the ledge. They were on, all right, and daylight would show two more victims to the credit of the Southeast Breaker.

"Hi-yi!" The hail came out of the darkness, and Decker's heart lightened when he made out the cutter's yawl crowded with men.

"Are ye all there?" yelled the commander.

"Aye! We all got clear jest afore she went on."

"How is it ye couldn't fetch her up with the other anchor?"

“The blame’ chain warn’t shackled on, sir, an’ we didn’t git time to do anythin’. We was all below when that there yacht broke adrift, an’ we had t’ git the yawl out. I was tryin’ to git that chain shackled on, but she was makin’ for that blame’ ledge so fast that I hed t’ skin out. We did all we could, sir.”

As the two boats made for the Island wharf, there were four members of the shipwrecked crews whose sorrowful faces belied their real feelings. De Houten felt that his troubles were over; Dillon thought of the thousand dollars and the good job, while Decker and Westhaver almost howled with glee at the plight of the cutter.

At home late that night Decker threw himself down on a sofa and laughed until the tears ran down his cheeks.

“Oh, my, but it’s too good!” he gasped at last. “What a pity I darsent tell the yarn to the boys. They’d never git over it. Five hundred and a raft o’ gear comin’ to me, an’ Bill, an’ th’ cutter a total wreck on th’ Breaker!”

And he went into another silent paroxysm.

The manifold advantages of strict attention to detail came out when Captain Murray sent in his report:

The insurance company and the Wreck Commissioner could find nothing wrong with the simple, seamanlike statement of the informal investigation held at Decker’s Island by the cutter’s commander:

On the night of August 23 about 9.30 p.m., the American schooner yacht *Carmencita*, Clarence De Houten of New York, owner, and Daniel Dillon, also of New York, master, while anchored off Decker’s Island, N.S., parted her cable during a strong ebb tide.

While adrift, she collided with the Dominion Government Fisheries Protection cruiser *Ariel*, William Murray, commander, and caused her to part her cable also. Both craft drifted onto the Southeast Breaker Ledge and became total wrecks.

On the *Carmencita* an attempt was made to anchor the vessel before she drifted too far. The port anchor was let go, but the scope of chain allowed failed to fetch her up before reaching the breakers.

A similar attempt was made aboard the cutter, but the time was too short to allow of saving the vessel, and no steam was available owing to fires being drawn for boiler cleaning.

So ran the gist of the report, and before the cross-examination of the official inquiry, held some time later, the witnesses testified to the events of the evening just as they had happened.

The crew of the yacht could give no evidence, but Commander Murray and Chief Officer Kerr of the lost cutter were able to prove a clear case for the *Carmencita*. Both the commander and Thomas Decker described how they had tried to save the yacht by letting go the port anchor.

The insurance company paid without demur, and Dillon was exonerated with a caution to examine ground tackle in future before anchoring in currents and tide-riding anchorages. Commander Murray of the cutter was also found blameless, but received a reprimand similar to Dillon's regarding anchors.

Captain Decker took a trip to New York some weeks later and fixed up a little outstanding business with Mr. De Houten. The latter had overcome his financial embarrassment and was viewing life with the serenity of a man who had never known care.

"No, Captain Decker," he was saying. "I do not think I shall take up yachting again. My nerves won't stand it. By the bye, I want to ask you something. Why did you let go that anchor? You surely didn't want to save the vessel?"

The other smiled and twirled his dark mustache.

"I did that so's *not* to save her," he said.

"Explain!"

"Waal, ye wanted a total wreck made o' that yacht. She was a wooden craft an' pretty light, an' might ha' bumped clean over that ledge. To stop that *I ranged enough chain to that port anchor to keep her right in the breakers when I let it go*. I cal'late it kept her, for thar warn't much of her left by next mornin'."

When the wily fisherman departed De Houten recalled a line of Bret Harte's anent Chinamen:

"For tricks that are dark—the sailormen of Decker's Island are peculiar!" he paraphrased with a seraphic smile.

THE END

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Misspelled words and printer errors have been corrected.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

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[The end of *Tea from China and other yarns of the sea* by Frederick William Wallace]