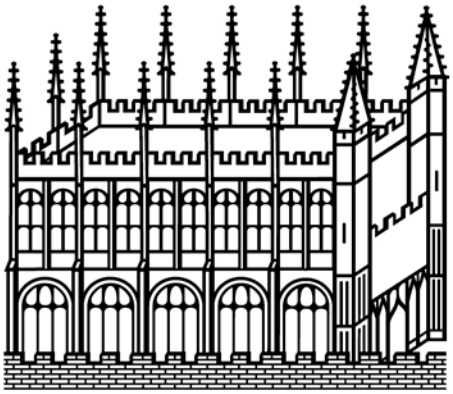

Treasuries of Modern Prose

Tales of the Sea

by

A. CONAN DOYLE
CHARLES KINGSLEY
EDGAR ALLAN POE
HERMAN MELVILLE
REAR-ADMIRAL GORDON CAMPBELL
V.C., D.S.O.
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LOUIS BECKE
"TAFFRAIL"

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Selected by H. A. TREBLE, M.A.

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TALES OF THE SEA

I

HOW THE GOVERNOR OF ST. KITT'S CAME HOME

A. CONAN DOYLE

WHEN the great wars of the Spanish Succession had been brought to an end by the Treaty of Utrecht, the vast number of privateers which had been fitted out by the contending parties found their occupation gone. Some took to the more peaceful but less lucrative ways of ordinary commerce, others were absorbed into the fishing-fleets, and a few of the more reckless hoisted the Jolly Rodger at the mizzen and the bloody flag at the main, declaring a private war upon their own account against the whole human race.

With mixed crews, recruited from every nation, they scoured the seas, disappearing occasionally to careen in some lonely inlet, or putting in for a debauch at some outlying port, where they dazzled the inhabitants by their lavishness and horrified them by their brutalities.

On the Coromandel Coast, at Madagascar, in the African waters, and above all in the West Indian and American seas, the pirates were a constant menace. With an insolent luxury they would regulate their depredations by the comfort of the seasons, harrying

New England in the summer and dropping south again to the tropical islands in the winter.

They were the more to be dreaded because they had none of that discipline and restraint which made their predecessors, the Buccaneers, both formidable and respectable. These Ishmaels of the sea rendered an account to no man, and treated their prisoners according to the drunken whim of the moment. Flashes of grotesque generosity alternated with longer stretches of inconceivable ferocity, and the skipper who fell into their hands might find himself dismissed with his cargo, after serving as boon companion in some hideous debauch, or might sit at his cabin table with his own nose and his lips served up with pepper and salt in front of him. It took a stout seaman in those days to ply his calling in the Caribbean Gulf.

Such a man was Captain John Scarrow, of the ship *Morning Star*, and yet he breathed a long sigh of relief when he heard the splash of the falling anchor and swung at his moorings within a hundred yards of the guns of the citadel of Basseterre. St. Kitt's was his final port of call, and early next morning his bowsprit would be pointed for Old England. He had had enough of those robber-haunted seas. Ever since he had left Maracaibo upon the Main, with his full lading of sugar and red pepper, he had winced at every topsail which glimmered over the violet edge of the tropical sea. He had coasted up the Windward Islands, touching here and there, and assailed continually by stories of villainy and outrage.

Captain Sharkey, of the 20-gun pirate barque, *Happy Delivery*, had passed down the coast, and had

littered it with gutted vessels and with murdered men. Dreadful anecdotes were current of his grim pleasantries and of his inflexible ferocity. From the Bahamas to the Main his coal-black barque, with the ambiguous name, had been freighted with death and many things which are worse than death. So nervous was Captain Scarrow, with his new full-rigged ship and her full and valuable lading, that he struck out to the west as far as Bird's Island to be out of the usual track of commerce. And yet even in those solitary waters he had been unable to shake off sinister traces of Captain Sharkey.

One morning they had raised a single skiff adrift upon the face of the ocean. Its only occupant was a delirious seaman, who yelled hoarsely as they hoisted him aboard, and showed a dried-up tongue like a black and wrinkled fungus at the back of his mouth. Water and nursing soon transformed him into the strongest and smartest sailor on the ship. He was from Marblehead, in New England, it seemed, and was the sole survivor of a schooner which had been scuttled by the dreadful Sharkey.

For a week Hiram Evanson, for that was his name, had been adrift beneath a tropical sun. Sharkey had ordered the mangled remains of his late captain to be thrown into the boat, "as provisions for the voyage," but the seaman had at once committed them to the deep, lest the temptation should be more than he could bear. He had lived upon his own huge frame, until, at the last moment, the *Morning Star* had found him in that madness which is the precursor of such a death. It was no bad find for Captain Scarrow, for, with a short-handed crew, such a seaman as this

big New Englander was a prize worth having. He vowed that he was the only man whom Captain Sharkey had ever placed under an obligation.

Now that they lay under the guns of Basseterre, all danger from the pirate was at an end, and yet the thought of him lay heavily upon the seaman's mind as he watched the agent's boat shooting out from the custom-house quay.

"I'll lay you a wager, Morgan," said he to the first mate, "that the agent will speak of Sharkey in the first hundred words that pass his lips."

"Well, captain, I'll have you a silver dollar, and chance it," said the rough old Bristol man beside him.

The negro rowers shot the boat alongside, and the linen-clad steersman sprang up the ladder.

"Welcome, Captain Scarrow!" he cried. "Have you heard about Sharkey."

The captain grinned at the mate.

"What devilry has he been up to now?" he asked.

"Devilry! You've not heard, then! Why, we've got him safe under lock and key here at Basseterre. He was tried last Wednesday, and he is to be hanged to-morrow morning."

Captain and mate gave a shout of joy, which an instant later was taken up by the crew. Discipline was forgotten as they scrambled up through the break of the poop to hear the news. The New Englander was in the front of them with a radiant face turned up to heaven, for he came of the Puritan stock.

"Sharkey to be hanged!" he cried. "You don't know, Master Agent, if they lack a hangman, do you?"

"Stand back!" cried the mate, whose outraged sense of discipline was even stronger than his interest at the news. "I'll pay that dollar, Captain Scarrow, with the lightest heart that ever I paid a wager yet. How came the villain to be taken?"

"Why, as to that, he became more than his own comrades could abide, and they took such a horror of him that they would not have him on the ship. So they marooned him upon the Little Mangles to the south of the Mysteriosa Bank, and there he was found by a Portobello trader, who brought him in. There was talk of sending him to Jamaica to be tried, but our good little governor, Sir Charles Ewan, would not hear of it. 'He's my meat,' said he, 'and I claim the cooking of it.' If you can stay till to-morrow morning at ten, you'll see the joint swinging."

"I wish I could," said the captain, wistfully, "but I am sadly behind time now. I should start with the evening tide."

"That you can't do," said the agent with decision. "The Governor is going back with you."

"The Governor!"

"Yes. He's had a dispatch from Government to return without delay. The fly-boat that brought it has gone on to Virginia. So Sir Charles has been waiting for you, as I told him you were due before the rains."

"Well, well!" cried the captain, in some perplexity, "I'm a plain seaman, and I don't know much of governors and baronets and their ways. I don't remember that I ever so much as spoke to one. But

if it's in King George's service, and he asks a cast in the *Morning Star* as far as London, I'll do what I can for him. There's my own cabin he can have and welcome. As to the cooking, it's lobscouse and salmagundy six days in the week; but he can bring his own cook aboard with him if he thinks our galley too rough for his taste."

"You need not trouble your mind, Captain Scarrow," said the agent. "Sir Charles is in weak health just now, only clear of a quartan ague, and it is likely he will keep his cabin most of the voyage. Dr. Larousse said that he would have sunk had the hanging of Sharkey not put fresh life into him. He has a great spirit in him, though, and you must not blame him if he is somewhat short in his speech."

"He may say what he likes and do what he likes so long as he does not come athwart my hawse when I am working the ship," said the captain. "He is Governor of St. Kitt's, but I am Governor of the *Morning Star*. And, by his leave, I must weigh with the first tide, for I owe a duty to my employer, just as he does to King George."

"He can scarce be ready to-night, for he has many things to set in order before he leaves."

"The early morning tide, then."

"Very good. I shall send his things aboard to-night, and he will follow them to-morrow early if I can prevail upon him to leave St. Kitt's without seeing Sharkey do the rogue's hornpipe. His own orders were instant, so it may be that he will come at once. It is likely that Dr. Larousse may attend him upon the journey."

Left to themselves, the captain and mate made

the best preparations which they could for their illustrious passenger. The largest cabin was turned out and adorned in his honour, and orders were given by which barrels of fruit and some cases of wine should be brought off to vary the plain food of an ocean-going trader. In the evening the Governor's baggage began to arrive—great ironbound ant-proof trunks, and official tin packing-cases, with other strange-shaped packages, which suggested the cocked hat or the sword within. And then there came a note, with a heraldic device upon the big red seal, to say that Sir Charles Ewan made his compliments to Captain Scarrow, and that he hoped to be with him in the morning as early as his duties and his infirmities would permit.

He was as good as his word, for the first grey of dawn had hardly begun to deepen into pink when he was brought alongside, and climbed with some difficulty up the ladder. The captain had heard that the Governor was an eccentric, but he was hardly prepared for the curious figure who came limping feebly down his quarter-deck, his steps supported by a thick bamboo cane. He wore a Ramillies wig, all twisted into little tails like a poodle's coat, and cut so low across the brow that the large green glasses which covered his eyes looked as if they were hung from it. A fierce beak of a nose, very long and very thin, cut the air in front of him. His ague had caused him to swathe his throat and chin with a broad linen cravat, and he wore a loose damask powdering-gown secured by a cord round the waist. As he advanced he carried his masterful nose high in the air, but his head turned slowly from side to side in the helpless

manner of the purblind, and he called in a high, querulous voice for the captain.

"You have my things?" he asked.

"Yes, Sir Charles."

"Have you wine aboard?"

"I have ordered five cases, sir?"

"And tobacco?"

"There is a keg of Trinidad."

"You play a hand at piquet?"

"Passably well, sir."

"Then up anchor, and to sea!"

There was a fresh westerly wind, so by the time the sun was fairly through the morning haze, the ship was hull down from the islands. The decrepit Governor still limped the deck, with one guiding hand upon the quarter-rail.

"You are on Government service now, captain," said he. "They are counting the days till I come to Westminster, I promise you. Have you all that she will carry?"

"Every inch, Sir Charles."

"Keep her so if you blow the sails out of her. I fear, Captain Scarrow, that you will find a blind and broken man a poor companion for your voyage."

"I am honoured in enjoying your Excellency's society," said the captain. "But I am sorry that your eyes should be so afflicted."

"Yes, indeed. It is the cursed glare of the sun on the white streets of Basseterre which has gone far to burn them out."

"I had heard also that you had been plagued by a quartan ague."

"Yes; I have had a pyrexy, which has reduced me much."

"We had set aside a cabin for your surgeon."

"Ah, the rascal! There was no budging him, for he has a snug business amongst the merchants. But hark!"

He raised his ring-covered hand in the air. From far astern there came the low deep thunder of cannon.

"It is from the island!" cried the captain in astonishment. "Can it be a signal for us to put back?"

The Governor laughed.

"You have heard that Sharkey, the pirate, is to be hanged this morning. I ordered the batteries to salute when the rascal was kicking his last, so that I might know of it out at sea. There's an end of Sharkey!"

"There's an end of Sharkey!" cried the captain; and the crew took up the cry as they gathered in little knots upon the deck and stared back at the low, purple line of the vanishing land.

It was a cheering omen for their start across the Western Ocean, and the invalid Governor found himself a popular man on board, for it was generally understood that but for his insistence upon an immediate trial and sentence, the villain might have played upon some more venal judge and so escaped. At dinner that day Sir Charles gave many anecdotes of the deceased pirate; and so affable was he, and so skilful in adapting his conversation to men of lower degree, that captain, mate, and Governor smoked their long pipes and drank their claret as three good comrades should.

"And what figure did Sharkey cut in the dock?" asked the captain.

"He is a man of some presence," said the Governor.

"I had always understood that he was an ugly, sneering devil," remarked the mate.

"Well, I dare say he could look ugly upon occasions," said the Governor.

"I have heard a New Bedford whaleman say that he could not forget his eyes," said Captain Scarrow. "They were of the lightest filmy blue, with red-rimmed lids. Was that not so, Sir Charles?"

"Alas, my own eyes will not permit me to know much of those of others! But I remember now that the Adjutant-General said that he had such an eye as you describe, and added that the jury were so foolish as to be visibly discomposed when it was turned upon them. It is well for them that he is dead, for he was a man who would never forget an injury, and if he had laid hands upon any one of them he would have stuffed him with straw and hung him for a figure-head."

The idea seemed to amuse the Governor, for he broke suddenly into a high, neighing laugh, and the two seamen laughed also, but not so heartily, for they remembered that Sharkey was not the last pirate who sailed the western seas, and that as grotesque a fate might come to be their own. Another bottle was broached to drink to a pleasant voyage, and the Governor would drink just one other on the top of it, so that the seamen were glad at last to stagger off —the one to his watch and the other to his bunk. But when after his four hours' spell the mate came

down again, he was amazed to see the Governor in his Ramillies wig, his glasses, and his powdering-gown, still seated sedately at the lonely table with his reeking pipe and six black bottles by his side.

"I have drunk with the Governor of St. Kitt's when he was sick," said he, "and God forbid that I should ever try to keep pace with him when he is well."

The voyage of the *Morning Star* was a successful one, and in about three weeks she was at the mouth of the British Channel. From the first day the infirm Governor had begun to recover his strength, and before they were halfway across the Atlantic he was, save only for his eyes, as well as any man upon the ship. Those who uphold the nourishing qualities of wine might point to him in triumph, for never a night passed that he did not repeat the performance of his first one. And yet he would be out upon deck in the early morning as fresh and brisk as the best of them, peering about with his weak eyes, and asking questions about the sails and the rigging, for he was anxious to learn the ways of the sea. And he made up for the deficiency of his eyes by obtaining leave from the captain that the New England seaman—he who had been cast away in the boat—should lead him about, and above all that he should sit beside him when he played cards and count the number of the pips, for unaided he could not tell the king from the knave.

It was natural that this Evanson should do the Governor willing service, since the one was the victim of the vile Sharkey, and the other was his avenger. One could see that it was a pleasure to

the big American to lend his arm to the invalid, and at night he would stand with all respect behind his chair in the cabin and lay his great stub-nailed forefinger upon the card which he should play. Between them there was little in the pockets either of Captain Scarrow or of Morgan, the first mate, by the time they sighted the Lizard.

And it was not long before they found that all they had heard of the high temper of Sir Charles Ewan fell short of the mark. At a sign of opposition or a word of argument his chin would shoot out from his cravat, his masterful nose would be cocked at a higher and more insolent angle, and his bamboo cane would whistle up over his shoulder. He cracked it once over the head of the carpenter when the man had accidentally jostled him upon the deck. Once, too, when there was some grumbling and talk of a mutiny over the state of the provisions, he was of opinion that they should not wait for the dogs to rise, but that they should march forward and set upon them until they had trounced the devilment out of them. "Give me a knife and a bucket!" he cried with an oath, and could hardly be withheld from setting forth alone to deal with the spokesman of the seamen.

Captain Scarrow had to remind him that though he might be only answerable to himself at St. Kitt's, killing became murder upon the high seas. In politics he was, as became his official position, a stout prop of the House of Hanover, and he swore in his cups that he had never met a Jacobite without pistolling him where he stood. Yet for all his vapouring and his violence he was so good a companion,

with such a stream of strange anecdote and reminiscence, that Scarrow and Morgan had never known a voyage pass so pleasantly.

And then at length came the last day, when, after passing the island, they had struck land again at the high white cliffs at Beachy Head. As evening fell the ship lay rolling in an oily calm, a league off from Winchelsea, with the long dark snout of Dungeness jutting out in front of her. Next morning they would pick up their pilot at the Foreland, and Sir Charles might meet the king's ministers at Westminster before the evening. The boatswain had the watch, and the three friends were met for a last turn of cards in the cabin, the faithful American still serving as eyes to the Governor. There was a good stake upon the table, for the sailors had tried on this last night to win their losses back from their passenger. Suddenly he threw his cards down, and swept all the money into the pocket of his long-flapped silken waistcoat.

"The game's mine!" said he.

"Heh, Sir Charles, not so fast!" cried Captain Scarrow; "you have not played out the hand, and we are not the losers."

"Sink you for a liar!" said the Governor. "I tell you that I *have* played out the hand, and that you *are* a loser." He whipped off his wig and his glasses as he spoke, and there was a high, bald forehead, and a pair of shifty blue eyes with the red rims of a bull terrier.

"Good God!" cried the mate. "It's Sharkey!"

The two sailors sprang from their seats, but the big American castaway had put his huge back against

the cabin door, and he held a pistol in each of his hands. The passenger had also laid a pistol upon the scattered cards in front of him, and he burst into his high, neighing laugh.

"Captain Sharkey is the name, gentlemen," said he, "and this is Roaring Ned Galloway, the quartermaster of the *Happy Delivery*. We made it hot, and so they marooned us: me on a dry Tortuga cay, and him in an oarless boat. You dogs—you poor, fond, water-hearted dogs—we hold you at the end of our pistols!"

"You may shoot, or you may not!" cried Scarrow, striking his hand upon the breast of his frieze jacket. "If it's my last breath, Sharkey, I tell you that you are a bloody rogue and miscreant, with a halter and hell-fire in store for you!"

"There's a man of spirit, and one of my own kidney, and he's going to make a very pretty death of it!" cried Sharkey. "There's no one aft save the man at the wheel, so you may keep your breath, for you'll need it soon. Is the dinghy astern, Ned?"

"Ay, ay, captain!"

"And the other boats scuttled?"

"I bored them all in three places."

"Then we shall have to leave you, Captain Scarrow. You look as if you hadn't quite got your bearings yet. Is there anything you'd like to ask me?"

"I believe you're the devil himself!" cried the captain. "Where is the Governor of St. Kitt's?"

"When last I saw him his Excellency was in bed with his throat cut. When I broke prison I learnt from my friends—for Captain Sharkey has those who

love him in every port—that the Governor was starting for Europe under a master who had never seen him. I climbed his verandah and I paid him the little debt that I owed him. Then I came aboard you with such of his things as I had need of, and a pair of glasses to hide these tell-tale eyes of mine, and I have ruffled it as a governor should. Now, Ned, you can get to work upon them."

"Help! Help! Watch ahoy!" yelled the mate; but the butt of the pirate's pistol crashed down on to his head, and he dropped like a pithed ox. Scarrow rushed for the door, but the sentinel clapped his hand over his mouth, and threw his other arm round his waist.

"No use, Master Scarrow," said Sharkey. "Let us see you go down on your knees and beg for your life."

"I'll see you——" cried Scarrow, shaking his mouth clear.

"Twist his arm round, Ned. Now will you?"

"No; not if you twist it off."

"Put an inch of your knife into him."

"You may put six inches, and then I won't."

"Sink me, but I like his spirit!" cried Sharkey. "Put your knife in your pocket, Ned. You've saved your skin, Scarrow, and it's a pity so stout a man should not take to the only trade where a pretty fellow can pick up a living. You must be born for no common death, Scarrow, since you have lain at my mercy and lived to tell the story. Tie him up, Ned."

"To the stove, captain?"

"Tut, tut! there's a fire in the stove. None of

your rover tricks, Ned Galloway, unless they are called for, or I'll let you know which of us two is captain and which is quartermaster. Make him fast to the table."

"Nay, I thought you meant to roast him!" said the quartermaster. "You surely do not mean to let him go?"

"If you and I were marooned on a Bahama cay, Ned Galloway, it is still for me to command and for you to obey. Sink you for a villain, do you dare to question my orders?"

"Nay, nay, Captain Sharkey, not so hot, sir!" said the quartermaster, and, lifting Scarrow like a child, he laid him on the table. With the quick dexterity of a seaman, he tied his spreadeagled hands and feet with a rope which was passed underneath, and gagged him securely with the long cravat which used to adorn the chin of the Governor of St. Kitt's.

"Now, Captain Scarrow, we must take our leave of you," said the pirate. "If I had half a dozen of my brisk boys at my heels I should have had your cargo and your ship, but Roaring Ned could not find a foremast hand with the spirit of a mouse. I see there are some small craft about, and we shall get one of them. When Captain Sharkey has a boat he can get a smack, when he has a smack he can get a brig, when he has a brig he can get a barque, and when he has a barque he'll soon have a full-rigged ship of his own—so make haste into London town, or I may be coming back, after all, for the *Morning Star*.'

Captain Scarrow heard the key turn in the lock as they left the cabin. Then, as he strained at his bonds, he heard their footsteps pass up the companion

and along the quarter-deck to where the dinghy hung in the stern. Then, still struggling and writhing, he heard the creak of the falls and the splash of the boat in the water. In a mad fury he tore and dragged at his ropes, until at last, with flayed wrists and ankles, he rolled from the table, sprang over the dead mate, kicked his way through the closed door, and rushed hatless on to the deck.

"Ahoy! Peterson, Armitage, Wilson!" he screamed. "Cutlasses and pistols! Clear away the long-boat! Clear away the gig! Sharkey, the pirate, is in yonder dinghy. Whistle up the larboard watch, bo'sun, and tumble into the boats all hands."

Down splashed the long-boat and down splashed the gig, but in an instant the coxswains and crews were swarming up the falls on to the deck once more.

"The boats are scuttled!" they cried. "They are leaking like a sieve."

The captain gave a bitter curse. He had been beaten and outwitted at every point. Above was a cloudless, starlit sky, with neither wind nor the promise of it. The sails flapped idly in the moonlight. Far away lay a fishing-smack, with the men clustering over their net.

Close to them was the little dinghy, dipping and lifting over the shining swell.

"They are dead men!" cried the captain. "A shout all together, boys, to warn them of their danger."

But it was too late.

At that very moment the dinghy shot into the shadow of the fishing-boat. There were two rapid pistol-shots, a scream, and then another pistol-shot,

followed by silence. The clustering fishermen had disappeared. And then, suddenly, as the first puffs of a land-breeze came out from the Sussex shore, the boom swung out, the mainsail filled, and the little craft crept out with her nose to the Atlantic.

From "Tales of Pirates and Blue Water."

II

DEFEAT OF THE SPANISH ARMADA

CHARLES KINGSLEY

AND now began that great sea-fight which was to determine whether Popery and despotism, or Protestantism and freedom, were the law which God had appointed for the half of Europe, and the whole of future America. It is a twelve days' epic, worthy not of dull prose but of the thunder-roll of Homer's verse: but having to tell it, I must do my best, rather using, where I can, the words of contemporary authors than my own.

"The Lord High Admirall of England, sending a pinnace before, called the *Defiance*, denounced war by discharging her ordnance; and presently approaching within musquet-shot, with much thundering out of his own ship, called the *Arkroyall* (*alias* the *Triumph*), first set upon the admirall's, as he thought, of the Spaniards (but it was Alfonso de Leon's ship). Soon after, Drake, Hawkins, and Frobisher played stoutly with their ordnance on the hindmost squadron, which was commanded by Recalde." The Spaniards soon discover the superior "nimbleness of the English ships;" and Recalde's squadron, finding that they are getting more than they give, in spite of his endeavours, hurry forward to join the rest of the fleet. Medina the admiral, finding his ships scattering fast, gathers them into a half-moon; and the Armada tries

to keep solemn way forward, like a stately herd of buffaloes, who march on across the prairie, disdaining to notice the wolves which snarl around their track. But in vain. These are no wolves, but cunning hunters, swiftly horsed, and keenly armed, and who will "shamefully shuffle" (to use Drake's own expression) that vast herd from the Lizard to Portland, from Portland to Calais Roads; and who, even in this short two hours' fight, have made many a Spaniard question the boasted invincibleness of this Armada.

One of the four great galliasses is already riddled with shot, to the great disarrangement of her "pulpits, chapels," and friars therein assistant. The fleet has to close round her, or Drake and Hawkins will sink her; in effecting which manœuvre, the "principal galleon of Sevile," in which are Pedro de Valdez and a host of blue-blooded Dons, runs foul of her neighbour, carries away her fore-mast, and is, in spite of Spanish chivalry, left to her fate. This does not look like victory, certainly. But courage! though Valdez be left behind, "our Lady" and the saints, and the Bull *Coena Domini* (dictated by one whom I dare not name here), are with them still, and it were blasphemous to doubt. But in the meanwhile, if they have fared no better than this against a third of the Plymouth fleet, how will they fare when those forty belated ships, which are already whitening the blue between them and the Mewstone, enter the scene to play their part?

So ends the first day; not an English ship, hardly a man, is hurt. It has destroyed for ever, in English minds, the prestige of boastful Spain. It has justified utterly the policy which the good Lord Howard had

adopted by Ralegh's and Drake's advice, of keeping up a running fight, instead of "clapping ships together without consideration," in which case, says Ralegh, "he had been lost, if he had not been better advised than a great many malignant fools were, who found fault with his demeanour."

Be that as it may, so ends the first day, in which Amyas and the other Bideford ships have been right busy for two hours, knocking holes in a huge galleon, which carries on her poop a maiden with a wheel, and bears the name of *Sta. Catharina.* She had a coat of arms on the flag at her sprit, probably those of the commandant of soldiers; but they were shot away early in the fight, so Amyas cannot tell whether they were De Soto's or not. Nevertheless, there is plenty of time for private revenge; and Amyas, called off at last by the admiral's signal, goes to bed and sleeps soundly.

But ere he has been in his hammock an hour, he is awakened by Cary's coming down to ask for orders.

"We were to follow Drake's lantern, Amyas; but where it is, I can't see, unless he has been taken up aloft there among the stars, for a new Drakium Sidus."

Amyas turns out grumbling: but no lantern is to be seen; only a sudden explosion and a great fire on board some Spaniard, which is gradually got under, while they have to lie-to the whole night long, with nearly the whole fleet.

The next morning finds them off Torbay; and Amyas is hailed by a pinnace, bringing a letter from Drake, which (saving the spelling, which was some-

what arbitrary, like most men's in those days) ran somewhat thus :—

"DEAR LAD,

"I have been wool-gathering all night after five great hulks, which the Pixies transfigured overnight into galleons, and this morning again into German merchantmen. I let them go with my blessing; and coming back, fell in (God be thanked!) with Valdez' great galleon; and in it good booty, which the Dons his fellows had left behind, like faithful and valiant comrades, and the Lord Howard had let slip past him, thinking her deserted by her crew. I have sent to Dartmouth a sight of noblemen and gentlemen, maybe a half-hundred; and Valdez himself, who when I sent my pinnace aboard must needs stand on his punctilios, and propound conditions. I answered him, I had no time to tell with him; if he would needs die, then I was the very man for him; if he would live, then, *buena querra*. He sends again, boasting that he was Don Pedro Valdez, and that it stood not with his honour, and that of the Dons in his company. I replied that, for my part, I was Francis Drake, and my matches burning. Whereon he finds in my name salve for the wounds of his own, and comes aboard, kissing my fist, with Spanish lies of holding himself fortunate that he had fallen into the hands of fortunate Drake, and much more, which he might have kept to cool his porridge. But I have much news from him (for he is a leaky tub); and among others, this, that your Don Guzman is aboard of the *Sta. Catharina*, commandant of her soldiery, and has his arms flying at her sprit, beside *Sta.*

Catharina at the poop, which is a maiden with a wheel, and is a lofty built ship of 3 tier of ordnance, from which God preserve you, and send you like luck with

"Your deare Friend and Admirall,

"F. DRAKE.

"She sails in this squadron of Recalde. The Armada was minded to smoke us out of Plymouth; and God's grace it was they tried not: but their orders from home are too strait, and so the slaves fight like a bull in a tether, no further than their rope, finding thus the devil a hard master, as do most in the end. They cannot compass our quick handling and tacking, and take us for very witches. So far so good, and better to come. You and I know the length of their foot of old. Time and light will kill any hare, and they will find it a long way from Start to Dunkirk."

"The admiral is in gracious humour, Leigh, to have vouchsafed you so long a letter."

"*Sta. Catharina?* why, that was the galleon we hammered all yesterday!" said Amyas, stamping on the deck.

"Of course it was. Well, we shall find her again, doubt not. That cunning old Drake! how he has contrived to line his own pockets, even though he had to keep the whole fleet waiting for him."

"He has given the Lord High Admiral the dor, at all events."

"Lord Howard is too high-hearted to stop and plunder, Papist though he is, Amyas."

Amyas answered by a growl, for he worshipped Drake, and was not too just to Papists.

The fleet did not find Lord Howard till nightfall; he and Lord Sheffield had been holding on steadfastly the whole night after the Spanish lanterns, with two ships only. At least there was no doubt now of the loyalty of English Roman Catholics, and, indeed, throughout the fight, the Howards showed (as if to wipe out the slurs which had been cast on their loyalty by fanatics) a desperate courage, which might have thrust less prudent men into destruction, but led them only to victory. Soon a large Spaniard drifts by, deserted and partly burnt. Some of the men are for leaving their place to board her; but Amyas stoutly refuses. He has "come out to fight, and not to plunder; so let the nearest ship to her have her luck without grudging." They pass on, and the men pull long faces when they see the galleon snapped up by their next neighbour, and towed off to Weymouth, where she proves to be the ship of Miguel d'Oquenda, the vice-admiral, which they saw last night, all but blown up by some desperate Netherland gunner, who, being "mis-used," was minded to pay off old scores on his tyrants.

And so ends the second day; while the Portland rises higher and clearer every hour. The next morning finds them off the island. Will they try Portsmouth, though they have spared Plymouth? The wind has shifted to the north, and blows clear and cool off the white-walled downs of Weymouth Bay. The Spaniards turn and face the English. They must mean to stand off and on until the wind shall change, and then to try for the Needles. At least, they shall have some work to do before they round Purbeck Isle.

The English go to the westward again: but it is only to return on the opposite tack; and now begin a series of manœuvres, each fleet trying to get the wind of the other; but the struggle does not last long, and ere noon the English fleet have slipped close-hauled between the Armada and the land, and are coming down upon them right before the wind.

And now begins a fight most fierce and fell. "And fight they did confusedly, and with variable fortunes; while, on the one hand, the English manfully rescued the ships of London, which were hemmed in by the Spaniards; and, on the other side, the Spaniards as stoutly delivered Recalde being in danger." "Never was heard such thundering of ordnance on both sides, which notwithstanding from the Spaniards flew for the most part over the English without harm. Only Cock, an Englishman" (whom Prince claims, I hope rightfully, as a worthy of Devon), "died with honour in the midst of the enemies in a small ship of his. For the English ships, being far the lesser, charged the enemy with marvellous agility; and having discharged their broadsides, flew forth presently into the deep, and levelled their shot directly, without missing, at those great and unwieldy Spanish ships." "This was the most furious and bloody skirmish of all" (though ending only, it seems, in the capture of a great Venetian and some small craft), "in which the Lord Admiral fighting amidst his enemies' fleet, and seeing one of his captains afar off (Fenner by name, he who fought the seven Portugals at the Azores), cried, 'O George, what doest thou? Wilt thou now frustrate my hope and opinion conceived of thee? Wilt thou forsake

me now?' With which words he being enflamed, approached, and did the part of a most valiant captain;" as, indeed, did all the rest.

Night falls upon the floating volcano; and morning finds them far past Purbeck, with the white peak of Freshwater ahead; and pouring out past the Needles, ship after ship, to join the gallant chase. For now from all havens, in vessels fitted out at their own expense, flock the chivalry of England; the Lords Oxford, Northumberland, and Cumberland, Pallavicin, Brooke, Carew, Ralegh, and Blunt, and many another honourable name, "as to a set field, where immortal fame and honour was to be attained." Spain has staked her chivalry in that mighty cast; not a noble house of Arragon or Castile but has lent a brother or a son—and shall mourn the loss of one: and England's gentlemen will measure their strength once for all against the cavaliers of Spain. Lord Howard has sent forward light craft into Portsmouth for ammunition: but they will scarce return to-night, for the wind falls dead, and all the evening the two fleets drift helpless with the tide, and shout idle defiance at each other with trumpet, fife, and drum.

The sun goes down upon a glassy sea, and rises on a glassy sea again. But what day is this? The twenty-fifth, St. James's Day, sacred to the patron saint of Spain. Shall nothing be attempted in his honour by those whose forefathers have so often seen him with their bodily eyes, charging in their van upon his snow-white steed, and scattering Paynims with celestial lance? He might have sent them, certainly, a favouring breeze; perhaps he only means to try their faith; at least, the galleys shall

attack; and in their van three of the great galliasses (the fourth lies half-crippled among the fleet) thrash the sea to foam with three hundred oars apiece; and see, not St. James leading them to victory, but Lord Howard's *Triumph*, his brother's *Lion*, Southwell's *Elizabeth Jonas*, Lord Sheffield's *Bear*, Barker's *Victory*, and George Fenner's *Leicester*, towed stoutly out, to meet them with such salvos of chain-shot, smashing oars, and cutting rigging, that had not the wind sprung up again toward noon, and the Spanish fleet come up to rescue them, they had shared the fate of Valdez and the *Biscayan*. And now the fight becomes general. Frobisher beats down the Spanish admiral's mainmast; and, attacked himself by Mexia and Recalde, is rescued by Lord Howard; who, himself endangered in his turn, is rescued in his turn; "while after that day" (so sickened were they of the English gunnery), "no galliasse would adventure to fight."

And so, with variable fortune, the fight thunders on the livelong afternoon, beneath the virgin cliffs of Freshwater; while myriad sea-fowl rise screaming up from every ledge, and spot with their black wings the snow-white wall of chalk; and the lone shepherd hurries down the slopes above to peer over the dizzy edge, and forgets the wheatear fluttering in his snare, while he gazes trembling upon glimpses of tall masts and gorgeous flags, piercing at times the league-broad veil of sulphur-smoke which welters far below.

So fares St. James's Day, as Baal's did on Carmel in old time. "Either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is on a journey; or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked." At least, the only fire by

which he has answered his votaries has been that of English cannon: and the Armada, "gathering itself into a roundel," will fight no more, but make the best of its way to Calais, where perhaps the Guises' faction may have a French force ready to assist them, and then to Dunkirk, to join with Parma and the great flotilla of the Netherlands.

So on, before "a fair Etesian gale," which follows clear and bright out of the south-south-west, glide forward the two great fleets, past Brighton cliffs and Beachy Head, Hastings and Dungeness. Is it a battle or a triumph? For by sea, Lord Howard instead of fighting is rewarding; and after Lord Thomas Howard, Lord Sheffield, Townsend, and Frobisher have received at his hands that knighthood which was then more honourable than a peerage, old Admiral Hawkins kneels and rises up Sir John, and, shaking his shoulders after the accolade, observes to the representative of majesty, that his "old woman will hardly know herself again, when folks call her My Lady."

But where is Amyas Leigh all this while? Day after day he has been seeking the *Sta. Catharina* in the thickest of the press, and cannot come at her, cannot even hear of her: one moment he dreads that she has sunk by night, and balked him of his prey; the next, that she has repaired her damages, and will escape him after all. He is moody, discontented, restless, even (for the first time in his life) peevish with his men. He can talk of nothing but Don Guzman; he can find no better employment, at every spare moment, than taking his sword out of the sheath, and handling it, fondling it, talking to it even,

bidding it not to fail him in the day of vengeance. At last, he has sent to Squire, the armourer, for a whetstone, and, half-ashamed of his own folly, whets and polishes it in by-corners, muttering to himself. That one fixed thought of selfish vengeance has possessed his whole mind; he forgets England's present need, her past triumph, his own safety, everything but his brother's blood. And yet this is the day for which he has been longing ever since he brought home that magic horn as a fifteen years' boy; the day when he should find himself face to face with an invader, and that invader Antichrist himself. He has believed for years, with Drake, Hawkins, Grenville and Ralegh, that he was called and sent into the world only to fight the Spaniard: and he is fighting him now, in such a cause, for such a stake, within such battle-lists as he will never see again: and yet he is not content; and while throughout that gallant fleet, whole crews are receiving the Communion side by side, and rising with cheerful faces to shake hands, and to rejoice that they are sharers in Britain's Salamis, Amyas turns away from the holy elements.

"I cannot communicate, Sir John. Charity with all men? I hate, if ever man hated on earth."

"You hate the Lord's foes only, Captain Leigh."

"No, Jack, I hate my own as well."

"But no one in the fleet, Sir?"

"Don't try to put me off with the same Jesuit's quibble which that false knave Parson Fletcher invented for one of Doughty's men, to drug his conscience withal when he was plotting against his own admiral. No, Jack, I hate one of whom you know; and somehow that hatred of him keeps me

from loving any human being. I am in love and charity with no man, Sir John Brimblecombe—not even with you! Go your ways, in God's name, Sir! and leave me and the devil alone together, or you'll find my words are true."

Jack departed with a sigh, and while the crew were receiving the Communion on deck, Amyas sate below in the cabin sharpening his sword, and after it, called for a boat and went on board Drake's ship to ask news of the *Sta. Catharina*, and listened scowling to the loud chants and tinkling bells, which came across the water from the Spanish fleet. At last, Drake was summoned by the Lord Admiral, and returned with a secret commission, which ought to bear fruit that night; and Amyas, who had gone with him, helped him till nightfall, and then returned to his own ship as Sir Amyas Leigh, knight, to the joy and glory of every soul on board, except his moody self.

So there, the livelong Sabbath day, before the little high-walled town and the long range of yellow sand-hills, lie those two mighty armaments, scowling at each other, hardly out of gunshot. Messenger after messenger is hurrying towards Bruges to the Duke of Parma, for light craft which can follow these nimble English somewhat better than their own floating castles; and, above all, entreating him to put to sea at once with all his force. The duke is not with his forces at Dunkirk, but on the future field of Waterloo, paying his devotions to St. Mary of Halle in Hainault, in order to make all sure in his Pantheon, and already sees in visions of the night that gentle-souled and pure-lipped saint, Cardinal Allen, placing the crown of England on his head. He returns for answer: first,

that his victual is not ready; next, that his Dutch sailors, who have been kept at their post for many a week at the sword's point, have run away like water; and thirdly, that over and above all, he cannot come, so "strangely provided of great ordnance and musketeers" are those five-and-thirty Dutch ships, in which round-sterned and stubborn-hearted heretics watch, like terriers at a rat's hole, the entrance of Nieuwport and Dunkirk. Having ensured the private patronage of St. Mary of Halle, he will return to-morrow to make experience of its effects: but only hear across the flats of Dixmude the thunder of the fleets, and at Dunkirk the open curses of his officers. For while he has been praying, and nothing more, the English have been praying, and something more; and all that is left for the Prince of Parma is to hang a few purveyors, as peace-offerings to his sulking army, and then "chafe," as Drake says of him, "like a bear robbed of her whelps."

For Lord Henry Seymour has brought Lord Howard a letter of command from Elizabeth's self, and Drake has been carrying it out so busily all that Sunday long, that by two o'clock on the Monday morning, eight fire-ships "besmeared with wild-fire, brimstone, pitch, and rosin, and all their ordnance charged with bullets and with stones," are stealing down the wind straight for the Spanish fleet, guided by two valiant men of Devon, Young and Prowse. (Let their names live long in the land!) The ships are fired, the men of Devon steal back, and in a moment more, the heaven is red with glare from Dover cliffs to Gravelines Tower; and weary-hearted Belgian boors far away inland, plundered and dragooned for many

a hideous year, leap from their beds, and fancy (and not so far wrongly either) that the Day of Judgment is come at last, to end their woes, and hurl down vengeance on their tyrants.

And then breaks forth one of those disgraceful panics which so often follow overweening presumption; and shrieks, oaths, prayers, and reproaches make night hideous. There are those too on board who recollect well enough Jenebelli's fire-ships at Antwerp three years before, and the wreck which they made of Parma's bridge across the Scheldt. If these should be like them! And cutting all cables, hoisting any sails, the Invincible Armada goes lumbering wildly out to sea, every ship foul of her neighbour.

The largest of the four galliasses loses her rudder, and drifts helpless to and fro, hindering and confusing. The duke, having (so the Spaniards say) weighed his anchor deliberately instead of leaving it behind him, runs in again after awhile, and fires a signal for return: but his truant sheep are deaf to the shepherd's pipe, and swearing and praying by turns, he runs up Channel towards Gravelines, picking up stragglers on his way, who are struggling as they best can among the flats and shallows: but Drake and Fenner have arrived as soon as he. When Monday's sun rises on the quaint old castle and muddy dykes of Gravelines town, the thunder of the cannon recommences, and is not hushed till night. Drake can hang coolly enough in the rear to plunder when he thinks fit; but when the battle needs it, none can fight more fiercely, among the foremost; and there is need now, if ever. That Armada must never be

allowed to re-form. If it does, its left wing may yet keep the English at bay, while its right drives off the blockading Hollanders from Dunkirk port, and sets Parma and his flotilla free to join them, and to sail in doubled strength across to the mouth of Thames.

So Drake has weighed anchor, and away up Channel with all his squadron, the moment that he saw the Spanish fleet come up; and with him Fenner, burning to redeem the honour which, indeed, he had never lost; and ere Fenton, Beeston, Crosse, Ryman, and Lord Southwell can join them, the Devon ships have been worrying the Spaniards for two full hours into confusion worse confounded.

But what is that heavy firing behind them? Alas for the great galliasse! She lies, like a huge stranded whale, upon the sands where now stands Calais pier; and Amyas Preston, the future hero of La Guayra, is pounding her into submission, while a fleet of hoys and drumblers look on and help, as jackals might the lion.

Soon, on the south-west horizon, loom up larger and larger two mighty ships, and behind them sail on sail. As they near, a shout greets the *Triumph* and the *Bear*; and on and in the Lord High Admiral glides stately into the thickest of the fight.

True, we have still but some three-and-twenty ships which can cope at all with some ninety of the Spaniards: but we have dash, and daring, and the inspiration of utter need. Now, or never, must the mighty struggle be ended. We worried them off Portland: we must rend them in pieces now; and in rushes ship after ship, to smash her broadsides through and through the wooden castles, "sometimes not a pike's length

asunder," and then out again to reload, and give place meanwhile to another. The smaller are fighting with all sails set; the few larger, who, once in, are careless about coming out again, fight with topsails loose, and their main and foreyards close down in deck, to prevent being boarded. The duke, Oquenda, and Recalde, having with much ado got clear of the shallows, bear the brunt of the fight to seaward: but in vain. The day goes against them more and more as it runs on. Seymour and Winter have battered the great *San Philip* into a wreck; her masts are gone by the board; Pimentelli in the *San Matthew* comes up to take the mastiffs off the fainting bull and finds them fasten on him instead; but the *Evangelist*, though smaller, is stouter than the *Deacon* and of all the shot poured into him, not twenty "lackt him thorough." His masts are tottering: but sink or strike he will not.

"Go ahead, and pound his tough hide, Leigh," roars Drake off the poop of his ship, while he hammers away at one of the great galliasses. "What right has he to keep us all waiting?"

Amyas slips in as best he can between Drake and Winter; as he passes, he shouts to his ancient enemy—

"We are with you, Sir; all friends to-day!" and slipping round Winter's bows, he pours his broadside into those of the *San Matthew*, and then glides on, to reload: but not to return. For not a pistol-shot to leeward, worried by three or four small craft, lies an immense galleon; and on her poop—can he believe his eyes for joy?—the maiden and the wheel which he has sought so long!

"There he is!" shouts Amyas, springing to the starboard side of the ship. The men, too, have already caught sight of that hated sign; a cheer of fury bursts from every throat.

"Steady, men!" says Amyas, in a suppressed voice. "Not a shot! Reload, and be ready; I must speak with him first;" and silent as the grave, amid the infernal din, the *Vengeance* glides up to the Spaniard's quarter.

"Don Guzman Maria Magdalena Sotomayor de Soto!" shouts Amyas, from the mizzen rigging, loud and clear amid the roar.

He has not called in vain. Fearless and graceful as ever, the tall, mail-clad figure of his foe leaps up upon the poop-railing, twenty feet above Amyas's head, and shouts through his visor—

"At your service, Sir! whosoever you may be."

A dozen muskets and arrows are levelled at him: but Amyas frowns them down. "No man strikes him but I. Spare him, if you kill every other soul on board. Don Guzman! I am Captain Sir Amyas Leigh: I proclaim you a traitor and a ravisher, and challenge you once more to single combat, when and where you will."

"You are welcome to come on board me, Sir," answers the Spaniard in a clear, quiet tone: "bringing with you this answer, that you lie in your throat;" and lingering a moment out of bravado, to arrange his scarf, he steps slowly down again behind the bulwarks.

"Coward!" shouts Amyas at the top of his voice.

The Spaniard reappears instantly. "Why that

name, Señor, of all others?" asks he in a cool, stern voice.

"Because we call men cowards in England, who leave their wives to be burnt alive by priests."

The moment the words had passed Amyas's lips, he felt that they were cruel and unjust. But it was too late to recall them. The Spaniard started; clutched his sword-hilt: and then hissed back through his closed visor—

"For that word, sirrah, you hang at my yard-arm, if St. Mary gives me grace."

"See that your halter be a silken one, then," laughed Amyas, "for I am just dubbed knight." And he stepped down, as a storm of bullets rang through the rigging round his head; the Spaniards are not as punctilious as he.

"Fire!" His ordnance crash through the stern-works of the Spaniard; and then he sails onward, while her balls go humming harmlessly through his rigging.

Half an hour has passed of wild noise and fury; three times has the *Vengeance*, as a dolphin might, sailed clean round and round the *Sta. Catharina*, pouring in broadside after broadside, till the guns are leaping to the deck-beams with their own heat, and the Spaniard's sides are slit and spotted in a hundred places. And yet so high has been his fire in return, and so strong the deck defences of the *Vengeance*, that a few spars broken, and two or three men wounded by musketry, are all her loss. But still the Spaniard endures, magnificent as ever; it is the battle of the thresher and the whale: the end is certain, but the work is long.

"Can I help you, Captain Leigh?" asked Lord Henry Seymour, as he passes within oar's length of him, to attack a ship ahead. "The *San Matthew* has had his dinner, and is gone on to Medina to ask for a digestive to it."

"I thank your lordship: but this is my private quarrel, of which I spoke. But if your lordship could lend me powder——"

"Would that I could! But so, I fear, says every other gentleman in the fleet."

A puff of wind clears away the sulphureous veil for a moment; the sea is clear of ships towards the land; the Spanish fleet are moving again up Channel, Medina bringing up the rear; only some two miles to their right hand, the vast hull of the *San Philip* is drifting up the shore with the tide, and somewhat nearer, the *San Matthew* is hard at work at her pumps. They can see the white stream of water pouring down her side.

"Go in, my lord, and have the pair," shouts Amyas.

"No, Sir! Forward is a Seymour's cry. We will leave them to pay the Flushingers' expenses." And on went Lord Henry, and on shore went the *San Philip* at Ostend, to be plundered by the Flushingers; while the *San Matthew*, whose captain, "on a hault courage," had refused to save himself and his gentlemen on board Medina's ship, went blundering miserably into the hungry mouths of Captain Peter Vanderduess and four other valiant Dutchmen, who, like prudent men of Holland, contrived to keep the galleon afloat till they had emptied her, and then "hung up her banner in the great church of Leyden,

being of such a length that, being fastened to the roof, it reached unto the very ground."

But in the meanwhile, long ere the sun had set, comes down the darkness of the thunder-storm, attracted, as to a volcano's mouth, to that vast mass of sulphur-smoke which cloaks the sea for many a mile; and heaven's artillery above makes answer to man's below. But still, through smoke and rain, Amyas clings to his prey. She too has seen the northward movement of the Spanish fleet, and sets her top-sails; Amyas calls to the men to fire high, and cripple her rigging: but in vain; for three or four belated galleys, having forced their way at last over the shallows, come flashing and sputtering up to the combatants, and take his fire off the galleon. Amyas grinds his teeth, and would fain hustle into the thick of the press once more, in spite of the galleys' beaks.

"Most heroical captain," says Cary, pulling a long face; "if we do, we are stove and sunk in five minutes; not to mention that Yeo says he has not twenty rounds of great cartridge left."

So, surely and silent, the *Vengeance* sheers off, but keeps as near as she can to the little squadron, all through the night of rain and thunder which follows. Next morning the sun rises on a clear sky, with a strong west-north-west breeze, and all hearts are asking what the day will bring forth.

They are long past Dunkirk now; the German Ocean is opening before them. The Spaniards, sorely battered and lessened in numbers, have, during the night, regained some sort of order. The English hang on their skirts a mile or two behind. They have no ammunition, and must wait for more. To

Amyas's great disgust, the *Sta. Catharina* has rejoined her fellows during the night.

"Never mind," says Cary; "she can neither dive nor fly, and as long as she is above water, we—What is the admiral about?"

He is signalling Lord Henry Seymour and his squadron. Soon they tack, and come down the wind for the coast of Flanders. Parma must be blockaded still; and the Hollanders are likely to be too busy with their plunder to do it effectually. Suddenly there is a stir in the Spanish fleet. Medina and the rearmost ships turn upon the English. What can it mean? Will they offer battle once more? If so, it were best to get out of their way, for we have nothing wherewith to fight them. So the English lie close to the wind. They will let them pass, and return to their old tactic of following and harassing.

"Good-bye to Seymour," says Cary, "if he is caught between them and Parma's flotilla. They are going to Dunkirk."

"Impossible! They will not have water enough to reach his light craft. Here comes a big ship right upon us! Give him all you have left, lads; and if he will fight us, lay him alongside, and die boarding."

They gave him what they had, and hulled him with every shot; but his huge side stood silent as the grave. He had not wherewithal to return the compliment.

"As I live, he is cutting loose the foot of his main-sail! the villain means to run."

"There go the rest of them! Victoria!" shouted Cary, as one after another, every Spaniard set all the sail he could.

There was silence for a few minutes throughout

the English fleet; and then cheer upon cheer of triumph rent the skies. It was over! The Spaniard had refused battle, and thinking only of safety, was pressing downward toward the Straits again. The Invincible Armada had cast away its name, and England was saved.

"But he will never get there, Sir," said old Yeo, who had come upon deck to murmur his *Nunc Domine*, and gaze upon that sight beyond all human faith or hope: "Never, never will he weather the Flanders shore, against such a breeze as is coming up. Look to the eye of the wind, Sir, and see how the Lord is fighting for His people!"

Yes, down it came, fresher and stiffer every minute out of the grey north-west, as it does so often after a thunder-storm; and the sea began to rise high and white under the *Claro Aquilone*, till the Spaniards were fain to take in all spare canvas, and lie-to as best they could; while the English fleet, lying-to also, awaited an event which was in God's hands and not in theirs.

"They will be all ashore on Zealand before the afternoon," murmured Amyas: "and I have lost my labour! Oh, for powder, powder, powder! to go in and finish it at once!"

"O Sir," said Yeo, "don't murmur against the Lord in the very day of His mercies. It is hard, to be sure; but His will be done."

"Could we not borrow powder from Drake there?"

"Look at the sea, Sir!"

And, indeed, the sea was far too rough for any such attempt. The Spaniards neared and neared the fatal dunes, which fringed the shore for many a dreary

mile; and Amyas had to wait weary hours, growling like a dog who has had the bone snatched out of his mouth, till the day wore on; when, behold, the wind began to fall as rapidly as it had risen. A savage joy rose in Amyas's heart.

"They are safe! safe for us! Who will go and beg us powder? A cartridge here and a cartridge there?—anything to set to work again!"

Cary volunteered, and returned in a couple of hours with some quantity: but he was on board again only just in time, for the south-wester had recovered the mastery of the skies, and Spaniards and English were moving away; but this time northward. Whither now? To Scotland? Amyas knew not, and cared not, provided he was in the company of Don Guzman de Soto.

The Armada was defeated, and England saved.

From "Westward Ho!"

III

A DESCENT INTO THE MAELSTRÖM

EDGAR ALLAN POE

The ways of God in Nature, as in Providence, are not as *our* ways; nor are the models that we frame in any way commensurate to the vastness, profundity, and unsearchableness of His works *which have a depth in them greater than the well of Democritus.*

JOSEPH GLANVILL.

WE had now reached the summit of the loftiest crag. For some minutes the old man seemed too much exhausted to speak.

"Not long ago," said he at length, "and I could have guided you on this route as well as the youngest of my sons; but, about three years past, there happened to me an event such as never happened before to mortal man—or, at least, such as no man ever survived to tell of—and the six hours of deadly terror which I then endured have broken me up body and soul. You suppose me a *very* old man—but I am not. It took less than a single day to change these hairs from a jetty black to white, to weaken my limbs, and to unstring my nerves, so that I tremble at the least exertion, and am frightened at a shadow. Do you know I can scarcely look over this little cliff without getting giddy?"

The "little cliff," upon whose edge he had so carelessly thrown himself down to rest that the weightier portion of his body hung over it, while

he was only kept from falling by the tenure of his elbow on its extreme and slippery edge—this "little cliff" arose, a sheer unobstructed precipice of black shining rock, some fifteen or sixteen hundred feet from the world of crags beneath us. Nothing would have tempted me to be within half a dozen yards of its brink. In truth so deeply was I excited by the perilous position of my companion, that I fell at full length upon the ground, clung to the shrubs around me, and dared not even glance upward at the sky—while I struggled in vain to divest myself of the idea that the very foundations of the mountain were in danger from the fury of the winds. It was long before I could reason myself into sufficient courage to sit up and look out into the distance.

"You must get over these fancies," said the guide, "for I have brought you here that you might have the best possible view of the scene of that event I mentioned—and to tell you the whole story with the spot just under your eye.

"We are now," he continued, in that particularising manner which distinguished him—"we are now close upon the Norwegian coast—in the sixty-eighth degree of latitude—in the great province of Nordland, and in the dreary district of Lofoden. The mountain upon whose top we sit is Helseggen, the Cloudy. Now raise yourself up a little higher—hold on to the grass if you feel giddy—so—and look out, beyond the belt of vapour beneath us, into the sea."

I looked dizzily, and beheld a wide expanse of ocean, whose waters wore so inky a hue as to bring at once to my mind the Nubian geographer's account of the *Mare Tenebrarum*. A panorama more

deplorably desolate no human imagination can conceive. To the right and left, as far as the eye could reach, there lay outstretched, like ramparts of the world, lines of horribly black and beetling cliff, whose character of gloom was but the more forcibly illustrated by the surf which reared high up against it its white and ghastly crest, howling and shrieking for ever. Just opposite the promontory upon whose apex we were placed, and at a distance of some five or six miles out at sea, there was visible a small, bleak-looking island; or, more properly, its position was discernible through the wilderness of surge in which it was enveloped. About two miles nearer the land arose another of smaller size, hideously craggy and barren, and encompassed at various intervals by a cluster of dark rocks.

The appearance of the ocean, in the space between the more distant island and the shore, had something very unusual about it. Although, at the time, so strong a gale was blowing landward that a brig in the remote offing lay to under a double-reefed trysail, and constantly plunged her whole hull out of sight, still there was here nothing like a regular swell, but only a short, quick, angry dashing of water in every direction—as well in the teeth of the wind as otherwise. Of foam there was little except in the immediate vicinity of the rocks.

"The island in the distance," resumed the old man, "is called by the Norwegians Vurrgh. The one midway is Moskoe. That a mile to the northward is Ambaaren. Yonder are Islesen, Hotholm, Keildhelm, Suarven, and Buckholm. Farther off, between Moskoe and Vurrgh, are Otterholm, Flimen, Sand-

flesen, and Stockholm. These are the true names of the places, but why it has been thought necessary to name them at all, is more than either you or I can understand. Do you hear anything? Do you see any change in the water?"

We had now been about ten minutes upon the top of Helseggen, to which we had ascended from the interior of Lofoden, so that we had caught no glimpse of the sea until it had burst upon us from the summit. As the old man spoke, I became aware of a loud and gradually increasing sound, like the moaning of a vast herd of buffaloes upon an American prairie; and at the same moment I perceived that what seamen term the *chopping* character of the ocean beneath us, was rapidly changing into a current which set to the eastward. Even while I gazed, this current acquired a monstrous velocity. Each moment added to its speed, to its headlong impetuosity. In five minutes the whole sea as far as Vurrgh, was lashed into ungovernable fury; but it was between Moskoe and the coast that the main uproar held its sway. Here the vast bed of the waters, seamed and scarred into a thousand conflicting channels, burst suddenly into frenzied convulsion—heaving, boiling, hissing—gyrating in gigantic and innumerable vortices, and all whirling and plunging on to the eastward with a rapidity which water never elsewhere assumes, except in precipitous descents.

In a few minutes more, there came over the scene another radical alteration. The general surface grew somewhat more smooth, and the whirlpools, one by one, disappeared, while prodigious streaks of foam became apparent where none had been seen before.

These streaks, at length, spreading out to a great distance, and entering into combination, took unto themselves the gyratory motion of the subsided waters and seemed to form the germ of another more vast. Suddenly—very suddenly—this assumed a distinct and definite existence, in a circle of more than a mile in diameter. The edge of the whirl was represented by a broad belt of gleaming spray; but no particle of this slipped into the mouth of the terrific funnel, whose interior, as far as the eye could fathom it, was a smooth, shining, and jet-black wall of water, inclined to the horizon at an angle of some forty-five degrees, speeding dizzily round and round with a swaying and sweltering motion, and sending forth to the winds an appalling voice, half shriek, half roar, such as not even the mighty cataract of Niagara ever lifts up in its agony to Heaven.

The mountain trembled to its very base, and the rock rocked. I threw myself upon my face, and clung to the scant herbage in an excess of nervous agitation.

"This," said I at length, to the old man—"this *can* be nothing else than the great whirlpool of the Maelström."

"So it is sometimes termed," said he. "We Norwegians call it the Moskoe-ström, from the island of Moskoe in the midway."

The ordinary account of this vortex had by no means prepared me for what I saw. That of Jonas Ramus, which is perhaps the most circumstantial of any, cannot impart the faintest conception either of the magnificence, or of the horror of the scene—or of the wild bewildering sense of *the novel* which

confounds the beholder. I am not sure from what point of view the writer in question surveyed it, nor at what time; but it could neither have been from the summit of Helseggen, nor during a storm. There are some passages of his description, nevertheless, which may be quoted for their details, although their effect is exceedingly feeble in conveying an impression of the spectacle.

"Between Lofoden and Moskoe," he says, "the depth of the water is between thirty-six and forty fathoms; but on the other side, toward Ver (Vurrgh) this depth decreases so as not to afford a convenient passage for a vessel without the risk of splitting on the rocks, which happens even in the calmest weather. When it is flood, the stream runs up the country between Lofoden and Moskoe with a boisterous rapidity; but the roar of its impetuous ebb to the sea is scarce equalled by the loudest and most dreadful cataracts, the noise being heard several leagues off, and the vortices or pits are of such an extent and depth, that if a ship comes within its attraction, it is inevitably absorbed and carried down to the bottom, and there beat to pieces against the rocks; and when the water relaxes, the fragments thereof are thrown up again. But these intervals of tranquillity are only at the turn of the ebb and flood, and in calm weather, and last but a quarter of an hour, its violence gradually returning. When the stream is most boisterous, and its fury heightened by a storm, it is dangerous to come within a Norway mile of it. Boats, yachts, and ships have been carried away by not guarding against it before they were carried within its reach. It likewise happens frequently, that whales come too near the

ſtream, and are overpowered by its violence; and then it is impossible to describe their howlings and bellowings in their fruitleſs ſtruggles to diſengage themſelves. A bear once, attempting to ſwim from Lofoden to Moskoe, was caught by the ſtream and borne down, while he roared terribly, ſo as to be heard on ſhore. Large ſtocks of firs and pine-trees, after being abſorbed by the current, riſe again broken and torn to ſuch a degree as if briſtles grew upon them. This plainly ſhows the bottom to conſiſt of craggy rocks, among which they are whirled to and fro. This ſtream is regulated by the flux and reflux of the ſea—it being conſtantly high and low water every ſix hours. In the year 1645, early in the morning of Sexageſima Sunday, it raged with ſuch noiſe and impetuoſity that the very ſtones of the houſes on the coaſt fell to the ground."

In regard to the depth of the water, I could not ſee how this could have been aſcertained at all in the immediate vicinity of the vortex. The "forty fathoms" muſt have reference only to portions of the channel cloſe upon the ſhore either of Moskoe or Lofoden. The depth in the centre of the Moskoeſtröm muſt be unmeaſurably greater; and no better proof of this faſt is neceſſary than can be obtained from even the ſidelong glance into the abyſs of the whirl which may be had from the higheſt crag of Helſeggen. Looking down from this pinnacle upon the howling Phlegethon below, I could not help ſmiling at the ſimplicity with which the honeſt Jonas Ramus records, as a matter difficult of belief, the anecdotes of the whales and the bears, for it appeared to me, in fact, a ſelf-evident thing, that the

largeſt ships of the line in exiſtence, coming within the influence of that deadly attraction, could reſiſt it as little as a feather the hurricane, and muſt disappear bodily and at once.

The attempts to account for the phenomenon—some of which, I remember, seemed to me sufficiently plausible in perusal—now wore a very different and unsatisfactory aſpect. The idea generally received is that this, as well as three smaller vortices among the Ferroe Islands, " have no other cause than the collision of waves rising and falling, at flux and reflux, againſt a ridge of rocks and shelves, which confines the water so that it precipitates itself like a cataract; and thus the higher the flood rises, the deeper muſt the fall be, and the natural result of all is a whirlpool or vortex, the prodigious ſuction of which is sufficiently known by lesser experiments."—These are the words of the *Encyclopædia Britannica.* Kircher and others imagine that in the centre of the channel of the Maelſtröm is an abyss penetrating the globe, and issuing in some very remote part—the Gulf of Bothnia being somewhat decidedly named in one inſtance. This opinion, idle in itself, was the one to which, as I gazed, my imagination moſt readily assented; and, mentioning it to the guide, I was rather surprised to hear him say that, although it was the view almoſt universally entertained of the subject by the Norwegians, it nevertheless was not his own. As to the former notion he confessed his inability to comprehend it; and here I agreed with him—for, however conclusive on paper, it becomes altogether unintelligible, and even absurd, amid the thunder of the abyss.

"You have a good look at the whirl now," said the old man, "and if you creep round this crag, so as to get in its lee, and deaden the roar of the water, I will tell you a story that will convince you I ought to know something of the Moskoe-ström."

I placed myself as desired, and he proceeded.

"Myself and my two brothers once owned a schooner-rigged smack of about seventy tons burthen, with which we were in the habit of fishing among the islands beyond Moskoe, nearly to Vurrgh. In all violent eddies at sea there is good fishing, at proper opportunities, if only one has the courage to attempt it: but among the whole of the Lofoden coastmen, we three were the only ones who made a regular business of going out to the islands, as I tell you. The usual grounds are a great way lower down to the southward. There fish can be got at all hours, without much risk, and therefore these places are preferred. The choice spots over here among the rocks, however, not only yield the finest variety, but in far greater abundance; so that we often got in a single day, what the more timid of the craft could not scrape together in a week. In fact, we made it a matter of desperate speculation—the risk of life standing instead of labour, and courage answering for capital.

"We kept the smack in a cove about five miles higher up the coast than this; and it was our practice, in fine weather, to take advantage of the fifteen minutes' slack to push across the main channel of the Moskoe-ström, far above the pool, and then drop down upon anchorage somewhere near Otterholm, or Sandflesen, where the eddies are not so violent

as elsewhere. Here we used to remain until nearly time for slack-water again, when we weighed and made for home. We never set out upon this expedition without a steady side wind for going and coming —one that we felt sure would not fail us before our return—and we seldom made a miscalculation upon this point. Twice, during six years, we were forced to stay all night at anchor on account of a dead calm, which is a rare thing indeed just about here; and once we had to remain on the grounds nearly a week, starving to death, owing to a gale which blew up shortly after our arrival, and made the channel too boisterous to be thought of. Upon this occasion we should have driven out to sea in spite of everything (for the whirlpools threw us round and round so violently, that, at length, we fouled our anchor and dragged it) if it had not been that we drifted into one of the innumerable cross currents—here to-day and gone to-morrow—which drove us under the lee of Flimen, where, by good luck, we brought up.

"I could not tell you the twentieth part of the difficulties we encountered 'on the ground'—it is a bad spot to be in, even in good weather—but we made shift always to run the gauntlet of the Moskoeström itself without accident; although at times my heart has been in my mouth when we happened to be a minute or so behind or before the slack. The wind sometimes was not as strong as we thought it at starting, and then we made rather less way than we could wish, while the current rendered the smack unmanageable. My eldest brother had a son eighteen years old, and I had two stout boys of my own. These would have been of great assistance at such times, in

using the sweeps as well as afterward in fishing, but, somehow, although we ran the risk ourselves, we had not the heart to let the young ones get into the danger—for, after all said and done, it *was* a horrible danger, and that is the truth.

"It is now within a few days of three years since what I am going to tell you occurred. It was on the tenth of July, 18—, a day which the people of this part of the world will never forget—for it was one in which blew the most terrible hurricane that ever came out of the heavens. And yet all the morning, and indeed until late in the afternoon, there was a gentle and steady breeze from the south-west, while the sun shone brightly, so that the oldest seaman among us could not have foreseen what was to follow.

"The three of us—my two brothers and myself—had crossed over to the islands about two o'clock p.m., and soon nearly loaded the smack with fine fish, which, we all remarked, were more plenty that day than we had ever known them. It was just seven, *by my watch*, when we weighed and started for home, so as to make the worst of the Ström at slack water, which we knew would be at eight.

"We set out with a fresh wind on our starboard quarter, and for some time spanked along at a great rate, never dreaming of danger, for indeed we saw not the slightest reason to apprehend it. All at once we were taken aback by a breeze from over Helseggen. This was most unusual—something that had never happened to us before—and I began to feel a little uneasy, without exactly knowing why. We put the boat on the wind, but could make no

headway at all for the eddies, and I was upon the point of proposing to return to the anchorage, when looking astern, we saw the whole horizon covered with a singular copper-coloured cloud that rose with the most amazing velocity.

"In the meantime the breeze that had headed us off fell away, and we were dead becalmed, drifting about in every direction. This state of things, however, did not last long enough to give us time to think about it. In less than a minute the storm was upon us—in less than two the sky was entirely overcast—and what with this and the driving spray, it became suddenly so dark that we could not see each other in the smack.

"Such a hurricane as then blew it is folly to attempt describing. The oldest seaman in Norway never experienced anything like it. We had let our sails go by the run before it cleverly took us; but, at the first puff, both our masts went by the board as if they had been sawed off—the mainmast taking with it my youngest brother, who had lashed himself to it for safety.

"Our boat was the lightest feather of a thing that ever sat upon water. It had a complete flush deck, with only a small hatch near the bow, and this hatch it had always been our custom to batten down when about to cross the Ström, by way of precaution against the chopping seas. But for this circumstance we should have foundered at once, for we lay entirely buried for some moments. How my elder brother escaped destruction I cannot say, for I never had an opportunity of ascertaining. For my part, as soon as I had let the foresail run, I threw myself flat on

deck, with my feet against the narrow gunwale of the bow, and with my hands grasping a ring-bolt near the foot of the foremast. It was mere instinct that prompted me to do this—which was undoubtedly the very best thing I could have done—for I was too much flurried to think.

"For some moments we were completely deluged, as I say, and all this time I held my breath, and clung to the bolt. When I could stand it no longer I raised myself upon my knees, still keeping hold with my hands, and thus got my head clear. Presently our little boat gave herself a shake, just as a dog does in coming out of the water, and thus rid herself, in some measure, of the seas. I was now trying to get the better of the stupor that had come over me, and to collect my senses so as to see what was to be done, when I felt somebody grasp my arm. It was my elder brother, and my heart leaped for joy, for I had made sure that he was overboard; but the next moment all this joy was turned into horror, for he put his mouth close to my ear, and screamed out the word "*Moskoe-ström*!"

"No one ever will know what my feelings were at that moment. I shook from head to foot as if I had had the most violent fit of the ague. I knew what he meant by that one word well enough—I knew what he wished to make me understand. With the wind that now drove us on, we were bound for the whirl of the Ström, and nothing could save us!

"You perceive that in crossing the Ström *channel*, we always went a long way up above the whirl, even in the calmest weather, and then had to wait and watch carefully for the slack—but now we were driving

right upon the pool itself, and in such a hurricane as this! 'To be sure,' I thought, 'we shall get there just about the slack—there is some little hope in that'; but in the next moment I cursed myself for being so great a fool as to dream of hope at all. I knew very well that we were doomed, had we been ten times a ninety-gun ship.

"By this time the first fury of the tempest had spent itself, or perhaps we did not feel it so much, as we scudded before it, but at all events the seas, which at first had been kept down by the wind, and lay flat and frothing, now got up into absolute mountains. A singular change, too, had come over the heavens. Around in every direction it was still as black as pitch, but nearly overhead there burst out, all at once, a circular rift of clear sky—as clear as I ever saw, and of a deep bright blue—and through it there blazed forth the full moon with a lustre that I never before knew her to wear. She lit up everything about us with the greatest distinctness—but, O God, what a scene it was to light up!

"I now made one or two attempts to speak to my brother, but in some manner which I could not understand, the din had so increased that I could not make him hear a single word, although I screamed at the top of my voice in his ear. Presently he shook his head, looking as pale as death, and held up one of his fingers, as if to say '*listen!*'

"At first I could not make out what he meant, but soon a hideous thought flashed upon me. I dragged my watch from its fob. It was not going. I glanced at its face by the moonlight, and then burst into tears as I flung it far away into the ocean. *It had run down*

at seven o'clock! We were behind the time of the slack, and the whirl of the Ström was in full fury!

"When a boat is well built, properly trimmed, and not deep laden, the waves in a strong gale, when she is going large, seem always to slip from beneath her—which appears strange to a landsman—and this is what is called *riding*, in sea phrase. Well, so far we had ridden the swells very cleverly; but presently a gigantic sea happened to take us right under the counter, and bore us with it as it rose—up—up—as if into the sky. I would not have believed that any wave could rise so high. And then, down we came with a sweep, a slide, and a plunge that made me feel sick and dizzy, as if I was falling from some lofty mountain-top in a dream. But while we were up I had thrown a quick glance around—and that one glance was all-sufficient. I saw our exact position in an instant. The Moskoe-ström whirlpool was about a quarter of a mile dead ahead—but no more like the everyday Moskoe-ström than the whirl, as you now see it, is like a mill-race. If I had not known where we were, and what we had to expect, I should not have recognised the place at all. As it was, I involuntarily closed my eyes in horror. The lids clenched themselves together as if in a spasm.

"It could not have been more than two minutes afterwards until we suddenly felt the waves subside, and were enveloped in foam. The boat made a sharp half-turn to larboard, and then shot off in its new direction like a thunderbolt. At the same moment the roaring noise of the water was completely drowned in a kind of shrill shriek—such a sound as you might imagine given out by the water-pipes of many

thousand steam-vessels letting off their steam all together. We were now in the belt of surf that always surrounds the whirl; and I thought, of course, that another moment would plunge us into the abyss, down which we could only see indistinctly on account of the amazing velocity with which we were borne along. The boat did not seem to sink into the water at all, but to skim like an air-bubble upon the surface of the surge. Her starboard side was next the whirl, and on the larboard arose the world of ocean we had left. It stood like a huge writhing wall between us and the horizon.

"It may appear strange, but now, when we were in the very jaws of the gulf, I felt more composed than when we were only approaching it. Having made up my mind to hope no more, I got rid of a great deal of that terror which unmanned me at first. I suppose it was despair that strung my nerves.

"It may look like boasting, but what I tell you is truth. I began to reflect how magnificent a thing it was to die in such a manner, and how foolish it was in me to think of so paltry a consideration as my own individual life, in view of so wonderful a manifestation of God's power. I do believe that I blushed with shame when this idea crossed my mind. After a little while I became possessed with the keenest curiosity about the whirl itself. I positively felt a *wish* to explore its depths, even at the sacrifice I was going to make; and my principal grief was that I should never be able to tell my old companions on shore about the mysteries I should see. These, no doubt, were singular fancies to occupy a man's mind in such extremity; and I have often thought since, that the

revolutions of the boat around the pool might have rendered me a little light-headed.

"There was another circumstance which tended to restore my self-possession, and this was the cessation of the wind, which could not reach us in our present situation,—for, as you saw for yourself, the belt of surf is considerably lower than the general bed of the ocean, and this latter now towered above us, a high, black, mountainous ridge. If you have never been at sea in a heavy gale, you can form no idea of the confusion of mind occasioned by the wind and spray together. They blind, deafen, and strangle you, and take away all power of action or reflection. But we were now, in a great measure, rid of these annoyances,—just as death-condemned felons in prison are allowed petty indulgences, forbidden them while their doom is yet uncertain.

"How often we made the circuit of the belt it is impossible to say. We careered round and round for perhaps an hour, flying rather than floating, getting gradually more and more into the middle of the surge, and then nearer and nearer to its horrible inner edge. All this time I had never let go of the ring-bolt. My brother was at the stern, holding on to a small empty water-cask which had been securely lashed under the coop of the counter, and was the only thing on deck that had not been swept overboard when the gale first took us. As we approached the brink of the pit he let go his hold upon this, and made for the ring, from which, in the agony of his terror, he endeavoured to force my hands, as it was not large enough to afford us both a secure grasp. I never felt deeper grief than when I saw him attempt this act—although

I knew he was a madman when he did it—a raving maniac through sheer fright. I did not care, however, to contest the point with him. I knew it could make no difference whether either of us held on at all; so I let him have the bolt, and went astern to the cask. This there was no great difficulty in doing; for the smack flew round steadily enough, and upon an even keel, only swaying to and fro with the immense sweeps and swelters of the whirl. Scarcely had I secured myself in my new position, when we gave a wild lurch to starboard, and rushed headlong into the abyss. I muttered a hurried prayer to God, and thought all was over.

"As I felt the sickening sweep of the descent, I had instinctively tightened my hold upon the barrel and closed my eyes. For some seconds I dared not open them, while I expected instant destruction, and wondered that I was not already in my death-struggles with the water. But moment after moment elapsed. I still lived. The sense of falling had ceased; and the motion of the vessel seemed much as it had been before while in the belt of foam, with the exception that she now lay more along. I took courage, and looked once again upon the scene.

"Never shall I forget the sensation of awe, horror, and admiration with which I gazed about me. The boat appeared to be hanging, as if by magic, midway down, upon the interior surface of a funnel vast in circumference, prodigious in depth, and whose perfectly smooth sides might have been mistaken for ebony but for the bewildering rapidity with which they spun around, and for the gleaming and ghastly radiance they shot forth, as the rays of the full moon,

from that circular rift amid the clouds which I have already described, streamed in a flood of golden glory along the black walls, and far away down into the inmost recesses of the abyss.

"At first I was too much confused to observe anything accurately. The general burst of terrific grandeur was all that I beheld. When I recovered myself a little, however, my gaze fell instinctively downward. In this direction I was able to obtain an unobstructed view from the manner in which the smack hung on the inclined surface of the pool. She was quite upon an even keel—that is to say, her deck lay in a plane parallel with that of the water—but this latter sloped at an angle of more than forty-five degrees, so that we seemed to be lying upon our beam ends. I could not help observing, nevertheless, that I had scarcely more difficulty in maintaining my hold and footing in this situation than if we had been upon a dead level; and this, I suppose, was owing to the speed at which we revolved.

"The rays of the moon seemed to search the very bottom of the profound gulf; but still I could make out nothing distinctly on account of a thick mist in which everything there was enveloped, and over which there hung a magnificent rainbow, like that narrow and tottering bridge which Mussulmans say is the only pathway between Time and Eternity. This mist or spray was no doubt occasioned by the clashing of the great walls of the funnel, as they all met together at the bottom, but the yell that went up to the heavens from out of that mist I dare not attempt to describe.

"Our first slide into the abyss itself, from the belt

of foam above, had carried us to a great distance down the slope; but our further descent was by no means proportionate. Round and round we swept, not with any uniform movement, but in dizzying swings and jerks that sent us sometimes only a few hundred yards, sometimes nearly the complete circuit of the whirl. Our progress downward, at each revolution, was slow, but very perceptible.

"Looking about me upon the wide waste of liquid ebony on which we were thus borne, I perceived that our boat was not the only object in the embrace of the whirl. Both above and below us were fragments of vessels, large masses of building-timber and trunks of trees, with many smaller articles, such as pieces of house furniture, broken boxes, barrels and staves. I have already described the unnatural curiosity which had taken the place of my original terrors. It appeared to grow upon me as I drew nearer and nearer to my dreadful doom. I now began to watch, with a strange interest, the numerous things that floated in our company. I *must* have been delirious, for I even sought *amusement* in speculating upon the relative velocities of their several descents toward the foam below. 'This fir-tree,' I found myself at one time saying, 'will certainly be the next thing that takes the awful plunge and disappears'; and then I was disappointed to find that the wreck of a Dutch merchant ship overtook it and went down before. At length, after making several guesses of this nature, and being deceived in all, this fact—the fact of my invariable miscalculation—set me upon a train of reflection that made my limbs tremble again, and my heart beat heavily once more.

"It was not a new terror that thus affected me, but the dawn of a more exciting *hope*. This hope arose partly from memory, and partly from present observation. I called to mind the great variety of buoyant matter that strewed the coast of Lofoden, having been absorbed and then thrown forth by the Moskoeström. By far the greater number of the articles were shattered in the most extraordinary manner—so chafed and roughened as to have the appearance of being stuck full of splinters—but then I distinctly recollected that there were *some* of them which were not disfigured at all. Now I could not account for this difference except by supposing that the roughened fragments were the only ones which had been *completely absorbed*—that the others had entered the whirl at so late a period of the tide, or, from some reason, had descended so slowly after entering, that they did not reach the bottom before the turn of the flood came, or of the ebb, as the case might be. I conceived it possible, in either instance, that they might thus be whirled up again to the level of the ocean, without undergoing the fate of those which had been drawn in more early or absorbed more rapidly. I made, also, three important observations. The first was that, as a general rule, the larger the bodies were, the more rapid their descent; the second, that, between two masses of equal extent, the one spherical, and the other *of any other shape*, the superiority in speed of descent was with the sphere; the third, that, between two masses of equal size, the one cylindrical, and the other of any other shape, the cylinder was absorbed the more slowly. Since my escape, I have had several conversations on this

subject with an old schoolmaster of the district, and it was from him that I learned the use of the words 'cylinder' and 'sphere.' He explained to me—although I have forgotten the explanation—how what I observed was, in fact, the natural consequence of the forms of the floating fragments, and showed me how it happened that a cylinder, swimming in a vortex, offered more resistance to its suction, and was drawn in with greater difficulty than an equally bulky body, of any form whatever.

"There was one startling circumstance which went a great way in enforcing these observations, and rendering me anxious to turn them to account, and this was that, at every revolution, we passed something like a barrel, or else the yard or the mast of a vessel, while many of these things which had been on our level when I first opened my eyes upon the wonders of the whirlpool were now high up above us, and seemed to have moved but little from their original station.

"I no longer hesitated what to do. I resolved to lash myself securely to the water-cask upon which I now held, to cut it loose from the counter, and to throw myself with it into the water. I attracted my brother's attention by signs, pointed to the floating barrels that came near us, and did everything in my power to make him understand what I was about to do. I thought at length that he comprehended my design, but, whether this was the case or not, he shook his head despairingly, and refused to move from his station by the ring-bolt. It was impossible to reach him, the emergency admitted of no delay, and so, with a bitter struggle, I resigned him to his fate,

fastened myself to the cask by means of the lashings which secured it to the counter, and precipitated myself with it into the sea, without another moment's hesitation.

"The result was precisely what I hoped it might be. As it is myself who now tell you this tale; as you see that I *did* escape, and as you are already in possession of the mode in which this escape was effected, and must therefore anticipate all that I have further to say, I will bring my story quickly to conclusion. It might have been an hour, or thereabouts, after my quitting the smack, when, having descended to a vast distance beneath me, it made three or four wild gyrations in rapid succession, and, bearing my loved brother with it, plunged headlong, at once and for ever, into the chaos of foam below. The barrel to which I was attached sank very little farther than half the distance between the bottom of the gulf and the spot at which I leaped overboard, before a great change took place in the character of the whirlpool. The slope of the sides of the vast funnel became momently less and less steep. The gyrations of the whirl grew gradually less and less violent. By degrees the froth and the rainbow disappeared, and the bottom of the gulf seemed slowly to uprise. The sky was clear, the winds had gone down, and the full moon was setting radiantly in the west, when I found myself on the surface of the ocean, in full view of the shores of Lofoden, and above the spot where the pool of the Moskoe-ström *had been*. It was the hour of the slack, but the sea still heaved in mountainous waves from the effects of the hurricane. I was borne violently into the channel of the Ström, and in a few

minutes was hurried down the coast into the 'grounds' of the fishermen. A boat picked me up, exhausted from fatigue and—now that the danger was removed—speechless from the memory of its horror. Those who drew me on board were my old mates and daily companions, but they knew me no more than they would have known a traveller from the spirit-land. My hair, which had been raven black the day before, was as white as you see it now. They say too that the whole expression of my countenance had changed. I told them my story—they did not believe it. I now tell it to *you*, and I can scarcely expect you to put more faith in it than did the merry fishermen of Lofoden."

From "Tales of Mystery and Imagination."

IV

THE PEQUOD MEETS THE ROSEBUD

HERMAN MELVILLE

In vain it was to rake for Ambergriese in the paunch of this Leviathan, insufferable fetor denying not inquiry.

SIR T. BROWNE, V.E.

IT was a week or two after the last whaling scene recounted, and when we were slowly sailing over a sleepy, vapory, mid-day sea, that the many noses on the Pequod's deck proved more vigilant discoverers than the three pairs of eyes aloft. A peculiar and not very pleasant smell was smelt in the sea.

"I will bet something now," said Stubb, "that somewhere hereabouts are some of those drugged whales we tickled the other day. I thought they would keel up before long."

Presently, the vapors in advance slid aside; and there in the distance lay a ship, whose furled sails betokened that some sort of whale must be alongside. As we glided nearer, the stranger showed French colours from his peak; and by the eddying cloud of vulture sea-fowl that circled, and hovered, and swooped around him, it was plain that the whale alongside must be what the fishermen call a blasted whale, that is, a whale that has died unmolested on the sea, and so floated an unappropriated corpse. It may well be conceived, what an unsavory odor

such a mass must exhale; worse than an Assyrian city in the plague, when the living are incompetent to bury the departed. So intolerable indeed is it regarded by some, that no cupidity could persuade them to moor alongside of it. Yet are there those who will still do it; notwithstanding the fact that the oil obtained from such subjects is of a very inferior quality, and by no means of the nature of attar-of-rose.

Coming still nearer with the expiring breeze, we saw that the Frenchman had a second whale alongside; and this second whale seemed even more of a nosegay than the first. In truth, it turned out to be one of those problematical whales that seem to dry up and die with a sort of prodigious dyspepsia, or indigestion; leaving their defunct bodies almost entirely bankrupt of anything like oil. Nevertheless, in the proper place we shall see that no knowing fisherman will ever turn up his nose at such a whale as this, however much he may shun blasted whales in general.

The Pequod had now swept so nigh to the stranger, that Stubb vowed he recognised his cutting spade-pole entangled in the lines that were knotted round the tail of one of these whales.

"There's a pretty fellow, now," he banteringly laughed, standing in the ship's bows, "there's a jackal for ye! I well know that these Crappoes of Frenchmen are but poor devils in the fishery; sometimes lowering their boats for breakers, mistaking them for Sperm Whale spouts; yes, and sometimes sailing from their port with their hold full of boxes of tallow candles, and cases of snuffers, foreseeing that all the oil they will get won't be enough to dip the Captain's wick into; aye, we all know these

things; but look ye, here's a Crappo that is content with our leavings, the drugged whale there, I mean; aye, and is content too with scraping the dry bones of that other precious fish he has there. Poor devil! I say, pass round a hat, some one, and let's make him a present of a little oil for dear charity's sake. For what oil he'll get from that drugged whale there, wouldn't be fit to burn in a jail; no, not in a condemned cell. And as for the other whale, why, I'll agree to get more oil by chopping up and trying out these three masts of ours, than he'll get from that bundle of bones; though, now that I think of it, it may contain something worth a good deal more than oil; yes, ambergris. I wonder now if our old man has thought of that. It's worth trying. Yes, I'm in for it;" and so saying he started for the quarter-deck.

By this time the faint air had become a complete calm; so that whether or no, the Pequod was now fairly entrapped in the smell, with no hope of escaping except by its breezing up again. Issuing from the cabin, Stubb now called his boat's crew, and pulled off for the stranger. Drawing across her bow, he perceived that in accordance with the fanciful French taste, the upper part of her stem-piece was carved in the likeness of a huge drooping stalk, was painted green, and for thorns had copper spikes projecting from it here and there; the whole terminating in a symmetrical folded bulb of a bright red colour. Upon her head boards, in large gilt letters, he read "Bouton de Rose,"—Rose-button, or Rosebud; and this was the romantic name of this aromatic ship.

Though Stubb did not understand the *Bouton* part

of the inscription, yet the word *rose*, and the bulbous figure-head put together, sufficiently explained the whole to him.

"A wooden rosebud, eh?" he cried with his hand to his nose, "that will do very well; but how like all creation it smells!"

Now in order to hold direct communication with the people on deck, he had to pull round the bows to the starboard side, and thus come close to the blasted whale; and so talk over it.

Arrived then at this spot, with one hand still to his nose, he bawled—"Bouton-de-Rose, ahoy! are there any of you Bouton-de-Roses that speak English?"

"Yes," rejoined a Guernsey-man from the bulwarks, who turned out to be the chief mate.

"Well, then, my Bouton-de-Rosebud, have you seen the White Whale?"

"*What* whale?"

"The *White* Whale—a Sperm Whale—Moby Dick, have ye seen him?"

"Never heard of such a whale. Cachalot Blanche! White Whale—no."

"Very good, then; good-bye now, and I'll call again in a minute."

Then rapidly pulling back towards the Pequod, and seeing Ahab leaning over the quarter-deck rail awaiting his report, he moulded his two hands into a trumpet and shouted—"No, Sir! No!" Upon which Ahab retired, and Stubb returned to the Frenchman.

He now perceived that the Guernsey-man, who had just got into the chains, and was using a cutting-spade, had slung his nose in a sort of bag.

"What's the matter with your nose, there?" said Stubb. "Broke it?"

"I wish it was broken, or that I didn't have any nose at all!" answered the Guernsey-man, who did not seem to relish the job he was at very much. "But what are you holding *yours* for?"

"Oh, nothing! It's a wax nose; I have to hold it on. Fine day, ain't it? Air rather gardenny, I should say; throw us a bunch of posies, will ye, Bouton-de-Rose?"

"What in the devil's name do you want here?" roared the Guernsey-man, flying into a sudden passion.

"Oh! keep cool—cool? yes, that's the word; why don't you pack those whales in ice while you're working at 'em? But joking aside, though; do you know, Rosebud, that it's all nonsense trying to get any oil out of such whales? As for that dried up one, there, he hasn't a gill in his whole carcase."

"I know that well enough; but, d'ye see, the Captain here won't believe it; this is his first voyage; he was a Cologne manufacturer before. But come aboard, and mayhap he'll believe you, if he won't me; and so I'll get out of this dirty scrape."

"Anything to oblige ye, my sweet and pleasant fellow," rejoined Stubb, and with that he soon mounted to the deck. There a queer scene presented itself. The sailors, in tasselled caps of red worsted, were getting the heavy tackles in readiness for the whales. But they worked rather slow and talked very fast, and seemed in anything but a good humour. All their noses upwardly projected from their faces like so many jib-booms. Now and then pairs of

them would drop their work, and run up to the mast-head to get some fresh air. Some thinking they would catch the plague, dipped oakum in coal-tar, and at intervals held it to their nostrils. Others having broken the stems of their pipes almost short off at the bowl, were vigorously puffing tobacco-smoke, so that it constantly filled their olfactories.

Stubb was struck by a shower of outcries and anathemas proceeding from the Captain's round-house abaft; and looking in that direction saw a fiery face thrust from behind the door, which was held ajar from within. This was the tormented surgeon, who, after in vain remonstrating against the proceedings of the day, had betaken himself to the Captain's round-house (*cabinet* he called it) to avoid the pest; but still, could not help yelling out his entreaties and indignations at times.

Marking all this, Stubb argued well for his scheme, and turning to the Guernsey-man had a little chat with him, during which the stranger mate expressed his detestation of his Captain as a conceited ignoramus who had brought them all into so unsavoury and unprofitable a pickle. Sounding him carefully, Stubb further perceived that the Guernsey-man had not the slightest suspicion concerning the ambergris. He therefore held his peace on that head, but otherwise was quite frank and confidential with him, so that the two quickly concocted a little plan for both circumventing and satirizing the Captain, without his at all dreaming of distrusting their sincerity. According to this little plan of theirs, the Guernsey-man, under cover of an interpreter's office, was to tell the Captain what he pleased, but as coming from

Stubb; and as for Stubb, he was to utter any nonsense that should come uppermost in him during the interview.

By this time their destined victim appeared from his cabin. He was a small and dark, but rather delicate looking man for a sea-captain, with large whiskers and moustache, however; and wore a red cotton velvet vest with watch-seals at his side. To this gentleman, Stubb was now politely introduced by the Guernsey-man, who at once ostentatiously put on the aspect of interpreting between them.

"What shall I say to him first?" said he.

"Why," said Stubb, eyeing the velvet vest and the watch and seals, "you may as well begin by telling him that he looks a sort of babyish to me, though I don't pretend to be a judge."

"He says, Monsieur," said the Guernsey-man, in French, turning to his captain, "that only yesterday his ship spoke a vessel, whose captain and chief-mate with six sailors, had all died of a fever caught from a blasted whale they had brought alongside."

Upon this the captain started, and eagerly desired to know more.

"What now?" said the Guernsey-man to Stubb.

"Why, since he takes it so easy, tell him that now I have eyed him carefully, I'm quite certain that he's no more fit to command a whale-ship than a St. Jago monkey. In fact, tell him from me he's a baboon."

"He vows and declares, Monsieur, that the other whale, the dried one, is far more deadly than the blasted one; in fine, Monsieur, he conjures us, as we value our lives, to cut loose from these fish."

Instantly the captain ran forward, and in a loud voice commanded his crew to desist from hoisting the cutting-tackles, and at once cast loose the cables and chains confining the whales to the ship.

"What now?" said the Guernsey-man, when the Captain had returned to them.

"Why, let me see; yes, you may as well tell him now that—that—in fact, tell him I've diddled him, and (aside to himself) perhaps somebody else."

"He says, Monsieur, that he's very happy to have been of any service to us."

Hearing this, the captain vowed that they were the grateful parties (meaning himself and mate) and concluded by inviting Stubb down into his cabin to drink a bottle of Bordeaux.

"He wants you to take a glass of wine with him," said the interpreter.

"Thank him heartily; but tell him it's against my principles to drink with the man I've diddled. In fact, tell him I must go."

"He says, Monsieur, that his principles won't admit of his drinking; but that if Monsieur wants to live another day to drink, then Monsieur had best drop all four boats, and pull the ship away from these whales, for it's so calm they won't drift."

By this time Stubb was over the side, and getting into his boat, hailed the Guernsey-man to this effect,—that having a long tow-line in his boat, he would do what he could to help them, by pulling out the lighter whale of the two from the ship's side. While the Frenchman's boats, then, were engaged in towing the ship one way, Stubb benevolently towed away

at his whale the other way, ostentatiously slacking out a most unusually long tow-line.

Presently a breeze sprang up; Stubb feigned to cast off from the whale; hoisting his boats, the Frenchman soon increased his distance, while the Pequod slid in between him and Stubb's whale. Whereupon Stubb quickly pulled to the floating body, and hailing the Pequod to give notice of his intentions, at once proceeded to reap the fruit of his unrighteous cunning. Seizing his sharp boat-spade, he commenced an excavation in the body, a little behind the side fin. You would almost have thought he was digging a cellar there in the sea; and when at length his spade struck against the gaunt ribs, it was like turning up old Roman tiles and pottery buried in fat English loam. His boat's crew were all in high excitement, eagerly helping their chief, and looking as anxious as gold-hunters.

And all the time numberless fowls were diving, and ducking, and screaming, and yelling, and fighting around them. Stubb was beginning to look disappointed, especially as the horrible nosegay increased, when suddenly from out the very heart of this plague, there stole a faint stream of perfume, which flowed through the tide of bad smells without being absorbed by it, as one river will flow into and then along with another, without at all blending with it for a time.

"I have it, I have it," cried Stubb, with delight, striking something in the subterranean regions, "a purse! a purse!"

Dropping his spade, he thrust both hands in, and drew out handfuls of something that looked like ripe Windsor soap, or rich mottled old cheese;

very unctuous and savoury withal. You might easily dent it with your thumb; it is of a hue between yellow and ash colour. And this, good friends, is ambergris, worth a gold guinea an ounce to any druggist. Some six handfuls were obtained; but more was unavoidably lost in the sea, and still more, perhaps, might have been secured were it not for impatient Ahab's loud command to Stubb to desist, and come on board, else the ship would bid them good-bye.

From "Moby-Dick."

V

THE SINKING OF U.83

REAR-ADMIRAL GORDON CAMPBELL

JANUARY 1917 was spent at Plymouth in refitting, giving leave, and getting ready for the next round. The opportunity was taken of studying all that had happened in the submarine warfare during our absence abroad, and I came to the conclusion that the only way for us to ensure decoying the enemy to the surface was deliberately to get torpedoed and trust to still being in a position to fight with our guns afterwards. On the two previous occasions when torpedoes had been fired at us, we had merely taken our chance, but now I decided we must ensure getting hit. It can easily be seen that if a torpedo missed just ahead, as has been related already, it would have hit the ship provided we had been going a bit faster; so the idea now was that the ship would be manœuvred so as to make the torpedo hit.

I explained my intentions to my crew and called for volunteers to remain, giving any man who wished to leave the ship an opportunity to do so; but they all remained.

It was rather a strange coincidence that, previous to this, two men of different ratings had been showing signs of nervousness, and, on being questioned, they both stated that their wives were trying to

persuade them to get out of it, as they (the wives) had dreamt that something dreadful was going to happen to the ship. In one case I was not too sorry for the excuse to get rid of the man, as, although a good fellow, he was not very skilled at his trade; but the other was an excellent fellow and obviously didn't want to leave. As his wife had only dreamt that the ship was coming to grief, and that he himself would be all right, it was suggested that he should square his wife by saying how lucky he was at being sure he would be all right, as no one else on board could say the same. He sailed.

During our refit it became known that the German intensified submarine warfare was due to start on February 1st. This meant that all ships were liable to be sunk without warning if found approaching the British Isles, so we cut down our refit as much as possible and got away back to Queenstown before the end of the month. We sailed again on the last day of January, and had instructions to return after ten days, as this was considered the suitable length for "mystery ships" to be at sea at a time, owing to their limited capacity for carrying fresh food and to the rather strenuous time the crew had when out. I protested without avail that we should like to remain out till we burnt our coal—twenty-two to twenty-three days. I knew my crew, and having had them, for the most part, with me a year, I knew also that fresh food, etc., didn't worry them so much as getting a submarine.

We proceeded at once to our old hunting-ground off the south-west of Ireland. This was where most of the traffic passed between America and

England; where, too, the water being deep and the weather atrocious at times, the submarine was fairly free from the menace of mines or the molestation of auxiliary patrol craft. We intended working continually in this area, and some disguise in the appearance of the ship had to be made each night: this was particularly necessary, as the sinkings and attacks became increasingly numerous, showing that the submarines were unusually active, and one could not expect that by this time of the war they didn't know a good deal about mystery ships, and any chance of getting one would not be missed.

We arranged our procedure so that every night we were steaming to the westward, the dark hours being the time when the submarine would probably be busy recharging batteries or getting fresh air. During each day we were steaming east, as if homeward bound from America or Canada with a good fat cargo.

Daily we had reports of some ship being attacked or sunk, sometimes ten or fifteen miles away from us; sometimes anything up to a hundred. It seemed to be only a mathematical problem of "odds" as to when our turn to get torpedoed would come. The whole crew were waiting for it with enthusiasm. There is a good deal of difference between being in a ship where you know that if a torpedo is seen approaching, you are going to avoid it, and in being in one where you know you are going to make it hit; and yet I never saw a crew more anxious for a fray. They realised that if the German's intensified submarine warfare was a success, then England would be beaten. We were losing some 600,000 tons of

shipping of all nationalities a month, and this of course could not go on for ever. And as there was nothing to stop the submarine coming out, it was up to the auxiliary patrols and the "side-show" parties, such as we were, to spare no effort and to risk everything in an attempt to grapple with the one weapon which could and nearly did bring England to her knees. So it was that, when our ten days were up and we were due to return, I decided to remain out. Three times we were ordered to return, but three times I evaded. I felt we were "in touch with the enemy," and there are few orders which justify one in losing touch. I knew my C.-in-C. would do the same if he had been in my place. We remained out till our chance came after seventeen days. I have often heard people say we were lucky in our chance. There is, however, such a thing as looking for an opportunity, and my crew denied their leave, fresh food, and all the rest of it in order not to miss the chance if it came—and we should have stayed out till our coal was burnt.

The seventeen days were not without incident, apart from the attacks all around us. One day when approaching the south-west point of Ireland, in the afternoon, we sighted a submarine on the surface on our port bow; he remained in sight a few minutes and then dived. He had been heading towards us, and we expected an attack. At the estimated time for the torpedo to come, I had passed the word through the voice-pipes that a torpedo would arrive in a couple of minutes, but none came; and all we saw was a mine which passed a few yards off the ship. Nothing further was seen of the submarine, but a

large number of mines were swept up the following day by the ever-alert minesweepers and trawlers. No ships were actually struck, though there were a number in sight at the time.

On February 4th we sighted a barque that had all sail set, but appeared suspicious. On closing her she appeared to be abandoned, and later, from intercepted signals, we gathered the crew had been picked up by one of H.M. sloops. She was a neutral ship who had been boarded by a submarine, and the Master had been told that if he approached within a hundred miles of the British coast he would be sunk; as, however, he had not enough drinking water to return to America, he had abandoned his ship, although in perfect condition and with a cargo of maize. It happened that we were sailing under the same neutral colours, and I decided to take her in tow, as I thought she would make a good "decoy," not to mention a chance of salvage money. After dark we closed her, and I put a party on board to furl her square sails, leaving the fore and aft set. It was a slow job doing all this and getting her in tow, as I couldn't afford to deplete my ship too much, in case I got attacked, and so I only put Lieutenant Stuart, R.N.R., and three men aboard to do the job, and they, for the most part, did not know much about sailing ships. We eventually got her in tow about 3 a.m. on the 5th, and I left on board Lieutenant Russell, R.N.R., three men, and a Maxim gun for self-defence. Arrangements were also made as to what to do if we got attacked. On no account were they to use their Maxim gun, except as a last act of self-defence—the entire action would be fought

by Q.5. The latter event nearly came off, as the following afternoon a ship which had been in sight nearly all day and was about 8–10 miles ahead suddenly blew up in a large explosion. She was an ammunition ship, and had been torpedoed. The flames and smoke went to a great height. The alarm was sounded, and we awaited an attack on ourselves; but, much to our disgust, the periscope of a submarine was seen close on our starboard side, though no attack was made. It turned out afterwards that the submarine had herself been damaged by the force of the explosion and was obliged to return back home.

When we got to the place where the ship had sunk, there was nothing to be seen except one small piece of wood and a lifebelt.

Even this sight didn't deter my crew from the intention of risking a similar fate, though the strain was fairly severe, especially for the men in the engine- and boiler-rooms, as they have the least chance of coming out free from a hit by torpedo or mine, and also see least or nothing of the "fun." But the engineering staff can always be relied on to turn up trumps: they are the men who take a ship into action, see it through, and bring her out; without them we should be done.

After this slight flutter of excitement we continued our tow without incident, till we got to Berehaven about 2 a.m. on the 6th. Here we were met by a most important M.L., who, having received a fictitious name from me, ordered us to follow him into harbour. I would gladly have done so, but he went over shallow water through which I couldn't possibly follow him, especially with a ship in tow. Very

irate he returned, and in his best language, at which he was evidently a pastmaster, he ordered me to obey his orders forthwith and follow him. Again I was obliged to decline his lead, and when he returned a second time I suggested he might give me the secret signal for the night to pass through the defence. He told me to mind my own business! Pity I didn't understand English! etc., etc. Eventually we got past the defences, and I hoped all was peace, but back he came to tell me to anchor in a certain position. I replied that I was going farther up, as I wanted to see the Senior Naval Officer urgently. He then wanted to know who the something something I thought I was. I told him Commander Gordon Campbell. No sooner had we anchored than he came alongside full of apologies, and over a cup of cocoa we both agreed we had carried out our duties entirely to our satisfaction. It was Keble Chatterton.

Having turned our "tow" over to the Senior Naval Officer, we got away again before daylight and returned to our old haunt. Our ten days were now nearly up, but, as I have related, we went on. It is difficult to explain the feelings we had and the anxiety we felt to get at the job when ships with valuable cargoes were being sunk almost under our very noses. Surely our chance must come, and sure enough on February 17th it arrived.

On the previous night we had heard two submarines talking to each other. It was nothing very unusual, but, for some reason undefinable, we were particularly interested.

At 9.45 a.m. on the 17th we were on our easterly course "homeward bound" in about longitude

11½° west, latitude 51½° north. The sea was calm, it was a nice fine day, and everything looked peaceful. Suddenly a torpedo was seen approaching from our starboard side: it was fired at a great range and we would have had time to avoid it, but (as had been prearranged) we wanted to make sure it hit. Nothing, therefore, was done till it was close to the ship and coming straight for the engine-room. At the last moment, when it would be too late for the enemy to see our movement, I put the helm over to avoid unnecessary loss of life and brought the torpedo just abaft the engine-room, which undoubtedly saved the lives of those below, but caught us on the bulkhead and flooded, in consequence, two-thirds of the ship.

Whilst the torpedo was approaching, I sang out to the Navigator, who was in the chart-house working out his morning observations, "Look out, we are going to get it all right." He only bobbed his head outside and said, "Aye, aye, sir; just time to finish this sight," and back he went, quite disinterested except to complete his job, which was to have our position always accurate in case we wanted it.

The torpedo exploded with a great crash and knocked several of us down, including myself. Smith, who was on watch in the engine-room and nearest to the explosion, had the worst shaking, but he quickly recovered himself and went to his panic-party station in charge of a boat. After getting up, I observed a thing which I hadn't foreseen and I couldn't help laughing at. It will be remembered that we had drilled for nearly every emergency, and how I would say "Torpedo coming,"

and then "Torpedo hit" or "Torpedo missed." Now the torpedo had hit and I saw the men rushing for the boats, but on looking over the front of the bridge I saw a group of men still smoking and lolling over the ship's side when they ought to have been "panicking." I shouted out to know why the something something they weren't rushing for the boats. The reply was, "Waiting for the order, sir, 'Torpedo hit.'" They then joined in the pandemonium, and whilst the panic party were getting away in the boats, the submarine was seen watching us through his periscope about 200 yards off the ship. This will show the necessity of even the "panic" being done in correct detail, and sure enough it was. The boats were lowered in a fashion enough to give any Commander seven fits, and the crew got in anyhow; one boat was only partially lowered and then allowed to "jam," so that a rush was made for the next one, but two lifeboats and a dinghy eventually shoved off with "all" the crew, Lieutenant Hereford with my M.O.B.C. hat getting down last. An unrehearsed incident added to the panic, and this was through my friend the Chief Steward (who was a very fat man) getting pushed over the side with the crowd; his weight was too much for his arms to support from the rope and he landed with a great thud in the boat, squashing two or three men who were already in.

Whilst this pantomime was going on, things were happening on board. The ship had only two bulkheads and the torpedo had burst the after one, so that she was free to the water from the fore side of the boiler-room right to the stern, and she rapidly

began to settle by the stern—so rapidly that our black cat, which had either been blown off the forecastle by the explosion or had jumped over in fright, swam down the ship's side and inboard over the stern.

The Chief Engineer reported that the engine-room was flooded, and I ordered him and his men to hide, which they did by crawling on the top gratings: the ship being abandoned, they couldn't come out on deck—again an unrehearsed incident, but Loveless and all of them knew the game we were out to play.

As soon as the boats were away, the submarine went close to them only a few yards off; she was obviously going to leave nothing to chance, and it was as well that the crew were carefully dressed to their part with no service flannels. One of the crew in the boats was heard telling another, as the periscope was looking at them, "Don't talk so loud; he'll hear you!"

The submarine now came and inspected the ship at very close range, some 10 or 15 yards—so close that from my look-out at the starboard end of the bridge I could see the whole of his hull under water. The temptation to open fire on the periscope was very great, though obviously not the thing to do, as it would have done no harm. But it looked at the time as if, after getting deliberately torpedoed, we were going to have nothing to show for it, since he appeared to be moving off.

The Chief had reported the ship sinking by the stern; still, there was nothing for it but to wait and watch the submarine move slowly past the ship and away ahead. All this time the men on board were

lying hidden, feeling the ship getting deeper by the stern—in fact, the men at the after-gun were practically awash—but they all stuck it and never moved a muscle. Each one had a responsibility. Had one man got in a real panic and showed himself, the game would have been up; the scrutiny of the submarine was indeed a severe one. The wireless operator, locked up in his cabin by himself, had to sit still and do nothing; he must have been aching to send out an S.O.S. and have his picture in the illustrated papers next day as "the man who sent out the S.O.S.," but he knew we wanted no one to interfere with our cold-blooded encounter with the enemy.

After the submarine had passed up the starboard side, he crossed our bow and went over towards port; the signalman and I, therefore, did our "belly crawl" and swopped places. At 10.5 a.m. the enemy broke surface about 300 yards on our port bow, but not in the bearing of any of the guns. Anyhow, things were looking more hopeful, and I was able to tell the men that all was going well. The boats had by this time got to our port quarter, and towards them the submarine now proceeded. We heard afterwards that their intention had been to take the "Master" prisoner and also get some provisions. It was only a matter of waiting now, as the submarine was right up with conning tower open. It was obvious that she would pass very close to the ship, and we might just as well have all guns bearing, so as to make sure of it. As she came abreast of the ship the Captain was seen coming out of the conning tower. At this moment I gave the order to open fire—at 10.10—twenty-five minutes after we had been

torpedoed. The White Ensign fluttered at the mast-head, and three 12-pounders, a 6-pounder, the Maxim guns and rifles all opened fire together. What a shock it must have been for the Captain suddenly to see our wheel-house collapse, our sides to fall down, and the hen-coop to splutter forth Maxim shots! But he had not long to think, as the first shot, which was from the 6-pounder, hit him, and I believe the first intimation the submarine crew had that anything was wrong was seeing their Captain drop through the conning tower.

The range was only about 100 yards, so the submarine never had a chance of escape. It seemed almost brutal to fire at such close range, but we had taken a sporting chance ourselves in decoying him to such an ideal position that one really had no other thought than destruction.

The submarine never seemed to recover from her surprise as she lay on the surface upon our beam, whilst we pumped lead and steel into her. Forty-five shells were fired in all, practically every one being a hit, so that she finally sank with the conning tower shattered and open, the crew pouring out as hard as they could. About eight men were seen in the water, which was bitterly cold and thick with oil. I ordered the boats to their assistance, and they were just in time to rescue one officer and one man—as the panic party called them, a "sample of each." Thus ended U.83. That night we heard his pal calling him up on the wireless and receiving no reply.

I received the prisoners on the bridge, having slipped on a decent uniform monkey-jacket and

cap, which I always kept handy for the purpose. As the service expression goes, they had "no complaints," and I regret that after being transferred to a destroyer, one of the prisoners died before he could be landed and was buried at sea.

Our main object of destroying the enemy having been achieved, the next important consideration was the ship itself. As soon as the submarine had come to the surface, I had sent out a wireless to our C.-in-C. informing him that we had been torpedoed, and now further signals were sent for assistance.

The panic party came back to the ship, whilst a rapid survey was being made. The engine-room and boiler-room were both full of water; and Nos. 3 and 4 holds, the two after ones, were rapidly filling. I didn't appreciate at that time what stability the cargo of wood would give us, and it appeared that in a very short time the ship would sink by the stern, as she was surely and slowly settling down. I therefore mustered my crew and called for twelve volunteers to stand by the ship, the remainder to get out of harm's way in the boats. Everyone volunteered to stay, so I selected twelve. It never struck me at the time that with myself the number was now thirteen; anyhow, the sequel will show that thirteen is after all a lucky number.

By eleven o'clock there were still no signs of any rescue ships, though I knew without being told that our C.-in-C. would send everything available. The ship was settling still more, and I gave orders for all confidential matter to be destroyed, as we could not afford to run the risk that any of it might float about if the ship sank and be picked up by

the enemy. This specially referred to secret charts we had on board, which had to be burnt. The steel chest with our codes, etc., was therefore ditched; but before doing so, we sent in code a farewell message to our Commander-in-Chief: "Q.5 slowly sinking respectfully wishes you good-bye."

H.M.S. *Narwhal*, a destroyer, arriving about noon, I sent the major part of my crew on board her and myself went over to see what could be done in the way of towing. H.M.S. *Buttercup* arrived shortly afterwards, and I arranged for her to take us in tow. With the twelve men I had, we got the ship in tow, thanks chiefly to the good seamanship of the *Buttercup*.

Q.5 herself had now ceased to get any deeper in the water, and had assumed a more or less definite position; presumably because as much water as possible had got into the ship and she was only now gradually getting water-logged.

No sooner were we in tow than the cable parted, owing to our helm being jammed hard over and immovable. Luckily, our donkey-boiler, or auxiliary boiler, was high up in the ship, and we were able to raise steam in this, which gave power to steer and assistance in working the cable, and we eventually got in tow about 5 p.m., the raising of steam and the necessary connections to the steering gear taking some time. The ship towed fairly well, but of course the movement ahead increased the strain, and with the swell breaking on board the stern gradually got deeper—in fact, the after-gunhouse was sometimes under water.

H.M.S. *Laburnum* had in the meantime arrived and acted as escort, whilst the *Narwhal* returned to

harbour with my main crew and the prisoners. At about 2 o'clock on the following morning the ship suddenly started to heel over, and the water gained to such an extent as to put the donkey-boiler out, which once more deprived us of our rudder; luckily we were able to heave it amidships before the last "drop of steam" vanished.

The Chief and I made a tour of the ship to try to find the cause of this inrush of water. It was pitch dark, and we had only candles which kept on going out, but we were able to grovel into the bunkers. We found that the coal had been washed out of the starboard bunkers and replaced by water, which was gradually rising. Whilst we were down below, the ship gave another lurch and we thought we would be trapped; and to add to the uncanniness of the situation, our candle having gone out, we heard the cat somewhere near us meowing, and, despite the somewhat critical situation, we spent quite a time groping about trying to find it, but without success. The humour of the situation did not strike me then, but has often done so since. Here was a ship in a sinking condition and two of her senior officers groping about in the dark in bunker spaces trying to find a cat. I think it must have been recollections of the unhappiness caused by its disappearance at Bermuda which made us do it and its success in getting back to the ship after being torpedoed.

At 3.30 a.m. I ordered my remaining crew into the boat, which we had kept alongside, and told the *Laburnum* we were coming over. I was doing a last "walk round" to see that everyone was out of it, when one of the depth charges exploded on its

own account, just as I was approaching the after-part. It was right in the stern, which at that time was under water, and what caused it to go off will, of course, never be known. Anyhow, I didn't waste much time thinking about it, as at the moment I was the only person on board, and knowing that a magazine was just below it, it didn't take me many seconds to get with the others in the boat. I said I was alone, but I found afterwards I wasn't, as Stuart hadn't obeyed the order to get into the boat, for he thought it part of his job to see I was "all right." Like the rest of them, he used to spoil me looking after my comfort and welfare.

Having got into the motor-boat we shoved off, but, of course, it wouldn't run, so we drifted about till we were picked up by the *Laburnum*. None of us, of course, had any lights showing. The *Buttercup*, having heard the explosion of the depth charge, thought the ship had been torpedoed again, and without more ado or looking for survivors quietly slipped the tow and returned to harbour, reporting that we had been torpedoed again and probably all lost.

It is true that the depth charge had done further damage, but when daylight came the ship was still afloat, more or less a derelict. A party of six of us went over, and the *Laburnum* got us in tow again. Having got the ship in tow, we returned to the *Laburnum*, as there was nothing of use to be done on board and it was unnecessarily risking life to remain there. During the day I received orders to sink the old ship, for the C.-in-C. thought she would become a water-logged derelict and a danger to others. Since she was still safely in tow, and

there was a reasonable chance of beaching her, I reported accordingly and towing continued. Towards the evening we were approaching Berehaven and I went over again with a few men. The ship at this time was heeling over 20°, and the stern was eight feet under water. As we got towards the harbour a mine was sighted on the surface, and I remarked that it would be bad luck to be "done in" by a mine now. My old pensioner, Truscott, who was always at hand, especially if there was any seamanship required, said, "Don't you worry, sir; not fifty mines could sink us now." It was just typical of the spirit of the men.

As we got to the entrance, the King's Harbour Master, Commander Sharpe, came on board and told us the best place to beach her; the *Laburnum* slipped the tow, the trawler *Luneda* and the tug *Flying Sportsman* came alongside, and, aided by them, we pushed the old *Loderer*, alias *Farnborough*, alias Q.5, on the beach at 9.30 p.m.

As I reported at the time, I think our safe arrival in harbour was chiefly due to the good seamanship displayed by Lieutenant-Commander Hallwright in the *Laburnum*, for it was no easy job getting the ship in tow with such conditions. It was done chiefly by the very skilful handling of his ship, but also in a very short space of time the few men I had on board had done their full share, and I smiled to think that had we been a full-fledged man-of-war we should have had some fifty men on the forecastle instead of five.

We had already received a wireless from our C.-in-C. after the action, saying, "Splendidly done;

your magnificent perseverance and ability are well rewarded," and now we got another message: "Very good piece of work. Well done." Such messages mean a lot at any time. When the men were tired after a trying time, and being as we were under a man who is not given to wasting words, they were all the more appreciated.

After the ship had been beached we had a "night in"—such as it was, because we found that though at low tide the ship was fairly dry of water and we could raise steam in our donkey-boiler again, yet at high tide the ship was under water up to the bridge and we had about 40° list. All our provisions and luxuries had, of course, gone, and living on board ship with a 40° list is no pleasant job, but I suppose we were imbued with the Army tradition of "saving the guns," and we decided to try to salve the lot. Admiral Bayly had kindly sent his flagship, under Captain Hyde (now Rear-Admiral Hyde, R.A.N.), to give us assistance and comfort, but being pig-headed we refused the comfort, though were glad of the assistance, especially of his Warrant Officers, such as the gunner and shipwright—possibly a foolish decision on my part, because it was unnecessarily hard going for the thirteen of us on board, although it had its sense of humour. As the tide fell, the Chief would raise steam in the donkey-boiler and we would get steam on the windlass and derricks; then as the tide rose, he would damp his fires, and, instead of our being able to work on salvage, we were by the increasing list of the ship unable to do anything except await the turn of tide, or in the meantime start the gramophone and enjoy life on a deck sloping at 40°.

While we were doing all this, much to our surprise Admiral Bayly made a special visit to Berehaven in H.M.S. *Penelope* to see the ship, and he had us all aboard his temporary flagship to say a few words, which we all much appreciated.

After a week's hard work, all the guns were salved and everything else that could be, and we left the old ship on the beach. She was eventually salved, and not only sailed again during the war as an ordinary tramp steamer, but was still running till May 1928, under various names and owners, her last name being *Hollypark*.

Since the war she has frequently been to a great friendly nation's ports, and I have seen from time to time notices of her career in various papers; the last I saw credited her with twenty-two submarines, the correct number being the two without the twenty. The old ship has now been sold to the ship breakers; and I have not only been able to obtain and present the ship's binnacle to my old school Dulwich College, but have myself received a gift of the ship's bell, both due to the kindness of Old Alleynians. After the war the Admiralty presented the ship with a tablet recalling her war services, the presentation being made in the presence of the then First Sea Lord (Admiral of the Fleet Lord Wester Wemyss) by Admiral Sir A. L. Duff, G.C.B., etc.

After leaving the old ship, I proceeded to Queenstown to report, and then with the remnants of my crew to the Barracks at Devonport. I found it extremely difficult to word my official report without overstating the case; but having seen the whole

action, I was filled with the greatest pride in the conduct of all my crew. It is seldom one can say that anything is 100 per cent., yet the success was not due to any one individual, but to each one individually; and the strain on those remaining concealed after the old ship had been torpedoed, and might for all we knew sink at any minute, can very easily be imagined. I reported that I thought they might almost be said to have passed through the supreme test of discipline, and on looking back I don't think I overstated the case.

On arrival at Plymouth I was ordered to read to the whole crew a telegram from the Admiralty conveying their "keen appreciation of the skill, nerve, and gallantry they recently displayed" and awarding the ship £1,000 as before.

I had the honour of being received by H.M. the King a few days later, when he informed me that he had awarded me the Victoria Cross; my First Lieutenant and Chief the Distinguished Service Order; as well as decorations to other officers and men. In fact, His Majesty wished every man who had remained on board after the ship was torpedoed to receive some recognition. I was glad to have the opportunity to say that the success was not due to me more than anyone else. The result was due to each officer and man; had one failed or done the wrong thing, the action would have been a failure.

Unfortunately—for me—the award of the Victoria Cross appeared in the *Court Circular* without having been announced in the *Gazette*; and this unusual procedure was picked up by the Press, so that I

have been saddled ever since with the title of "Mystery V.C."

There was no mystery really, yet it was obviously difficult to allow it to leak out that it had any connection with "mystery" ships, as it might have not only endangered our lives unnecessarily, but, what was of far more importance, reduced the chance of doing the same again.

The notice in the *Gazette* appeared shortly afterwards, and gave nothing away. It stated the V.C. had been awarded for "conspicuous gallantry, consummate coolness, and skill in command of one of H.M. ships in action."

From "My Mystery Ships."

VI

EAST, HALF SOUTH

DAVID W. BONE

ON a day of high action in sea and sky we fled, hot-foot, before the fury of a nor'-west gale. We had run her overlong. Old Jock, for once at any rate, had had his weather eye bedimmed. He was expecting a quick shift into the sou'-west, a moderate gale, and a chance to make his "easting" round Cape Horn, but the wind hung stubbornly in the nor'-west; there was no break in the sky, no cessation in the black bursts of rain and sleet that swept upon us. A huge sea set up, and we were past the time when we could, in safety, heave her to the wind. There was nothing for it but to run—run she did.

We had tops'ls and a reefed foresail on her while daylight lasted, but on threat of darkness we stowed all but the foretops'l; wings enough for the weight of a hurricane wind. Under that narrow band of straining canvas she sped on into the murk of advancing night, while behind the lurid western sky showed threat of a mightier blast in bank upon bank of ragged storm-cloud. It was a wild night, never a wilder!

In the darkness the uncanny green shimmer of breaking seas gave an added terror to the scene of

storm. Rain and stinging sleet swept constantly over us, thundering seas towered and curled at our stern, lapping viciously at the fleeting quarter, or, parting, crashed aboard at the waist, filling the decks man high with a power of destruction. Part of the bulwarks was torn from the side. That was, perhaps, the saving of us, for the seas swept off as fast as they thundered aboard, and the barque rode buoyant, when, with bulwarks standing, the weight of compassed water would have held her at mercy of the next towering greybeard. A boat on the forward skids was smashed to atoms and the wreck swept overboard, and every moment we looked to see our crazy half-deck go tottering to ruin. The fo'c'sle was awash through a shattered door, and all hands were gathered on the poop for such safety as it held. There was nowhere else where man could stand on the reeling hull, and crouching at the rails, wet and chilled to the marrow, we spent the night a-watching.

The bo'sun and Martin and Hans took turns of the steering; that was work beyond the rest of us, and the most we could do was to stand by a-lee and bear on the spokes with the helmsman. Dutchy was the best steersman, and his steering was no truer than the stout heart of him. Once she pooped, and the crest of a huge following sea came crashing on top of us. But for our hold-fasts, all would have been swept away. That was the time of trial. A falter at the helm—she would have "broached-to" —to utter destruction!

Amid the furious rush of broken water, "Dutchy" stood fast at his post, though there was a gash on

his forehead and blood running in his eyes—the work of the wrenching wheel.

We showed no lights; no lamps would stand to the weather. There was only the flickering binnacle, tended as never was temple fire, to show the compass card. By turns we kept a look-out from the tops'l yard, but of what use was that when we could steer but to one point? We were a ship of chance, and God help us and the outward-bounder, "hove-to" in the trough, that had come between us and the east that night!

How we looked for daylight! How it was long a-coming! How the mountain seas raced up and hove our barque, reeling from the blow, from towering crest to hollow of the trough! How every day of the twenty-five years of her cried out in creak of block, in clatter of chain sheet, in the "harping" of the backstays, the straining groan of the burdened masts!

From time to time through the night the Mate and some of us would go forward to see to the gear; there was no need to touch a brace, for the wind blew ominously true. When we got back again, battered and breathless, it was something to know that the foretops'l still stood the strain. It was a famous sail, a web of "oo storm," stitched and fortified at seam and roping for such a wind as this. Good luck to the hands that stitched it, to the dingy sail loft in the Govan Road that turned it out, for it stood us in stead that night!

Once an ill-stowed clew of the mains'l blew out with a sounding crack, and thrashed a "devil's tattoo" on the yard. We thought it the tops'l

gone—but no! Macallison's best stood bravely spread to the shrieking gale, and we soon had the ribbons of the main clew fast to the yard.

There was no broad dawn, no glow in the east to mark its breaking; the light grew out of the darkness. The masts and spars shaped themselves out of the gloom, till they stood outlined against the dull grey clouds. We could see the great seas, white-streaked by lash of driven spray, running up into the lowering sky. When day came, and the heaving, wind-swept face of the waters became plain to us, we saw the stormy path round the Horn in its wildest, grandest mood. Stretching far to the black murky curtain—the rear of the last shrieking rain squall—the great Cape Horn greybeards swept on with terrific force and grandeur, their mile-long crests hurtling skyward in blinding foam. The old barque ran well, reeling through the long, stormy slopes with buoyant spring, driving wildly to the trough, smashing the foam far aside. At times she poised with sickening uncertitude on the crest of a greater wave, then steadied, and leapt with the breaking water to the smoother hollow.

The Old Man stood by the helmsman, "conning" her on. All night he had stood there, ordering, to the shock of following seas, a steady-voiced command. Never a gainly man—short-legged, broad, uncouth—his was yet a figure in keeping with the scene; unkempt and haggard, blue-lipped, drenched by sea and rain, he was never less than a Master of the Sea. At daybreak we heard a hail from the tops'l yard, and saw the "look-out" pointing ahead. Peering down the wind, we made out the loom of a

ship rising and falling in the trough of the sea. A big "four-master" she proved, lying "hove-to" the wind. We shuddered to think of what would have been if daylight had been further delayed!

Out of the mist and spray we bore down on her and flew by, close to her stern. We could see figures on her poop staring and pointing, a man with glasses at his eyes. Only a fleeting glimpse—for she was soon swallowed up by the murk astern, and we were driving on. The shift of wind came suddenly. Nearly at noon there was a heavier fall of rain, a shrieking squall that blew as it had never blown. The Old Man marked the signs—the scud of the upper clouds, a brightening low down in the south.

"Stan' by . . . head . . . yards," he yelled, shouting hoarsely to be heard. "Quick . . . the word!"

All hands struggled to the braces, battling through the wash of icy water that swept over the decks.

The squall passed, followed by a lull that served us to cant the yards; then, sharp as a knife-thrust, the wind came howling out of the sou'-west. The rain ceased and the sky cleared as by a miracle. Still it blew and the seas, turned by the shift of wind, broke and shattered in a whirl of confusion. For a time we laboured through the treacherous cross sea—the barque fretting and turning to windward, calling for all of "Dutchy's" cunning at the helm, but it was none so ill with the sun in sight and a clearing overhead.

"Blast ye," said the Old Man, shaking his benumbed arms towards the sou'-west. "Blast ye—but ye've been a long time comin'!"

The wind was now to his liking, it was the weather

he had looked for, and sure enough, as quick succeeding squalls rolled up on us, the sea grew less and ran truer, and the barque sailed easier. The wind fell to a moderate gale, and by four in the afternoon we had a reefed foresail and the tops'ls set, and were staggering along at a great speed.

The decks were yet awash, there was no comfort on deck or below; but through it all we had one consoling thought: *East, half south*, we were covering the leagues that lay between us and our journey's end!

From "The Brassbounder."

VII

AN OFFICER OF THE GUNROOM

PATRICK VAUX

IMMEDIATELY after divisions and muster of all the working hands at 9 a.m., school had begun for the gunroom, and now the padre, who was chaplain, naval instructor, and an expert in boxing as well, was noting, checking, and correcting the work of the midshipmen.

Where the young head was tired, and the young eyes heavy with the duties of the 12 to 4 a.m. or the Middle Watch—for what is only three hours' sleep to a fatigued lad?—he was patient and long-suffering as he pointed out the mistakes in the intricate reckoning. For each youthful officer was now working out the "sights" each had taken for himself last night: "sights," that great linking calculation the factors of which are the sun and moon, the answer of which is an angle, and the purport of which is the safety of his own ship some day.

As the padre moved slowly along, pausing every few feet to lean over the shoulder of each small figure sitting at the long table placed athwart the vessel and midway between her great armoured sides, the slip of a lad who was next to the navigating lieutenant's assistant put his flaming red head down behind his work-book, and nudged the "Tankey."

"Off Santorini or thereabouts, eh?"

"Yes," was the whispered reply. "Heard the 'Owner' say on bridge, last night, it's thought some of their beastly submarines use Santorini or Therasia as a base. P'rhaps, going in to find out."

"We'll hook 'em out," Kerell muttered reply behind his hand. "Hope to goodness, I bear a hand in catching the rats."

It was just then that out of the broad open gangway at hand running forward and aft—one to port and one to starboard of the table—where seamen trooped past, and the smells hung thick of tar and freshly-scrubbed wood-work, and the great dinners cooking in the galley not far away—a fore-bridge messenger doubled, and gained the school space. Smartly the lad saluted, and delivered the message to the chaplain.

At a nod from him to Midshipman Kerell the latter jumped from the school bench, and ran quickly to the gunroom for his cutlass and belt.

A few seconds later he was on the fore-bridge, and taking his orders. As he saluted and made away quickly, his eye rested for a second or two on the Levantine trader, that was running down the wind, and away off the warship's port bow. In two minutes his boat was off, and pulling strongly toward her.

"She don't want to heave to, sir," his coxswain remarked.

"Looks suspicious, eh?" the young officer returned. "We'll bring her up short."

Tugging his cap-band the closer to his ears, for the wind was gusty, he stared ahead.

There the crescent-shaped island of Santorini lay,

with Therasia and two other islets forming a circle in its great historic bay. The islands were so near that the few villages could be picked out, and the blots of green showing the vineyards amid the pumice-covered slopes that reach down to the edge of the blue waters.

Five minutes ago the midshipman was a tired youngster in school, bending over the long red table, thick-headed with the heat, with the heavy atmosphere below, and lack of sleep. Now he was the officer, smart, sharp-eyed, and vigilant. Behind him stood the power of the British Empire.

A gun boomed out sullenly on board the huge gaunt vessel now some three hundred yards astern, and the projectile screamed overhead to plop into the sea just nicely ahead of the Levantine, and throw up a big plume of spray glittering like silver in the bright sunshine.

The trader punched onward for some eighty feet. Suddenly her fore-sail went over, and she surged slowly through the tumbling waters.

Then the cutter heard a distinct splash.

"They ain't got no more seamanship in 'em nor a Gib scorpion, sir," the coxswain said derisively. "They've flung hout the kellick to stop 'er way."

"An' something of an anchor it is too," the officer replied. "By the splash I'd say it's a lump of rock or other!"

So saying, he slipped his service pistol from its pouch and saw to its charges, and felt that his cutlass was handy as well. The cutter's crew were all armed, for in these times of war surprises happen.

As the boat neared, a brown night-cap with a short yellow tassel hanging from the top of it showed for an instant over the trader's gunwale when she rose on a lift of sea.

"Some cut-throat Greeks barging around for light cargo," the midshipman muttered in disgust to himself.

Already the two bow oars had been laid inboard with a thump. Smartly the bow men gripped the trader's quarter with their boat-hooks, then immediately thrust her off again, and the cutter surged level abeam with her.

When Kerell leaped deftly on board her, Yellow Tassel and two Greeks, each wearing a filthy, knitted cap pulled well down over their villainous features, greeted him with hostile looks, and the others of the trader's crew crowded to the gunwale to look over at the boat.

The Levantine, Kerell noticed in one glance, was undecked save for the rough boards laid across her beam. Between them some cargo was visible in the shallow hold—fruits stowed in nets, and in open baskets and crates of green wickerwork, together with some jars of wine.

Yellow Tassel with a cringing gesture pulled off his dirty headgear.

"From Napoli I come, sar, to Santorini an' Pativo an' Nio. I come for ze lemon an' ze feeg an' ze wine, an' ozzer things, sar," he replied to the officer's question.

These words were fair and definite. But in his soft voice and on his short wrinkled face with its liquid brown eyes there was an expression of derision.

His general bearing, too, was quick with something more acute than uneasiness.

The restiveness and open hostility shown in the gestures and looks of his crew, as they talked volubly among themselves in clipped dialect of the Cyclades Archipelago, made the midshipman's suspicions mount into certainty.

Jumping down into the waist of the craft, which was just deep enough for him to stand with bent head, he looked about in the cargo.

Everything was in order and well stowed.

Under the planking on which the hand at the long tiller stood, there was a gap among the baskets, crates, and nets containing the fruits. A small earthenware jar had been jammed into it hastily, and, the neck of the jar being tilted downward, the ruddy wine was oozing fast away.

"Been done in the very deuce of a hurry, an' quite lately too," the officer muttered. "A rummy thing! Very!"

Then his ferreting eyes saw a small piece of broken copper filigree work, that was caught in the stout wicker of the crate beneath the jar. On picking it up, the officer noted a few short coarse red hairs as if from bullock's hide entangled in the bent open-work. Thoughtfully he thrust it into his pocket, hoisted himself on to the rough deck again, and gazed closely up and down the craft.

"It ees for ze lemon an' ze feeg an' ze wine, sar, I come to Santorini," Yellow Tassel protested vigorously.

"Aye, you come for them. But, what else do you carry, eh?" the midshipman grunted, looking

up at him, for he stood a head and a half taller. "Some rascally errand you are on, I think."

Slowly Kerell stepped forward to the bows, and satisfied himself nothing was concealed there.

As he paused, baffled, his eyes rested on the hawser straining over the gunwale, and he leant across to look down the side.

At one blow of his hatchet a Levantine posted there cut the rope.

The small officer's voice rang out, and blue-jackets sprang up, and came tumbling on board.

"Bundle all the hands into the hold, lads," he curtly ordered. "Two of you, Evans and Hinkson, stand guard, and shoot if there's trouble. Keep your eyes spry on 'em, and don't let 'em shift around."

And therewith His Britannic Majesty's officer returned to make his extraordinary report.

The captain spoke his mind at once.

"Something of a cock-and-bull story!" quoth he, turning to the commander.

"A yarn for the marines!" responded the "Bloke."

But the "Owner" being of an open mind, and impressed by the youngster's strength of belief in the facts of his report, set to and plied him with questions.

"You are certain of it, then?" the C.O. asked for the third time, as he turned over the bit of filigree work in his left palm and scrutinized it again.

"Certain as I am that noon hasn't been made yet, sir," the midshipman replied quietly.

"So you say you saw some of the same red hairs sticking to the gunwale beside the hawser," the

captain continued. "Um! These Levantines are always dirty dogs, and doing the enemy's work when well paid for it. There is a chance . . . Yes, it may be so. . . . Pipe away a diver—thanks. The water shoals rapidly hereabouts on a bank of fine shell and mud, and the job can't take us long. But, if you prove wrong," added he very grimly, turning again to the midshipman, "I shall leave the commander to deal with you drastically for fooling the Ship."

Steadily the sun climbed up toward midday, and the sea lay now like glass, an occasional puff of wind ruffling it into silver. But in the boat of the diver's crew there was deep gloom.

With a monotonous heave of their shoulders the two seamen slowly drove round the air-pump, which sucked in the life-sustaining ozone, to force it through the fathoms of snaky air-pipe. Only it and the lifeline connected the diver, an able seaman, now deep below, with life and safety overhead.

Every few minutes the bluejacket holding the air-pipe and the lifeline in either hand gave a slight jerk at the latter, which was immediately jerked in answer indicating the diver was all right. Once the lifeline jerked twice, and instantly the bluejacket shouted, "More air," giving two sharp jerks back into the depths, and the men at the air-pump turned their wheels faster.

The sub-lieutenant-in-charge, sitting on the gunwale of the gently-rocking boat, was tired of watching sea and sky and the restless life-line. By means of it he could easily see the diver was some way off, by the place in which the bubbles were rising.

He nodded to the battleship, lying motionless and gigantic.

"You've got yourself into it, up to the neck, right up to the neck, youngster," he commented sarcastically, and as becoming one who was head of the gun-room, though in years only two and a half older. "You'll get somethin' more'n your—— What's that, Bates, three jerks?"

"Yessir. 'E's comin' up," replied the seaman at the lines.

To Midshipman Kerell the minutes were hours and days as line and pipe came slowly in and were coiled down neatly. Then with a gurgling sound and a splashing heave the great helmet top of the diver appeared. Pulled carefully to the side of the boat, the goggled, india-rubbered and heavily-weighted monster clutched the ladder with his right hand.

In his left he held up IT.

"By Jove, these rotten Greeks did sling something over with their killick then," the sub remarked excitedly. "This'll be no end of a good thing for you, Kerell, you young sleuth!"

Not till the midshipman was again summoned from "school," which does not end till the boatswain's mates pacing four abreast along the upper deck shrill on their whistles that noon has been made, did he understand the far-reaching importance of his success.

A small chest, covered with bullock-hide, not dressed, and of short, coarse red hair, and clamped with Turkish filigree in copper, was standing on the floor of the chart-house along-side the log-desk. On the desk and the table lay piles of money, and many

documents now being translated by the navigator, who was a first-class interpreter in German.

"Here are further instructions, sir," the wondering "snotty" heard him say, "for their U-boats picking up another base, planted on Milo this time."

Just then the captain looked up and saw Kerell, who saluted.

"Here is our 'Sherlock Holmes,'" he exclaimed, a merry twinkle in his piercing grey eyes. "I congratulate you, youngster, on your good work. It's almost as good as sinking half-a-dozen of their submarines. We have now the instructions for them operating in the Levant here. They evidently were to have been handed over this evening, off Santorini, to the officer commanding their flotilla; but I'll attend to him instead. Again, I most heartily congratulate you on your shrewdness and activity as an officer of the gunroom."

There was an unwonted vigour of friendliness in the C.O.'s habitually hard voice.

The midshipman felt that it was all very embarrassing.

From "Salt Sea Patrols."

VIII

THE TREASURE OF DON BRUNO

LOUIS BECKE

MANY hundreds of tales have been written about the discovery of buried treasure, and the wise people of to-day laugh and shake their heads when some boy, pondering over an exciting treasure story in which doubloons, and pieces of eight, and pirates, and buccaneers inflame his imagination, asks some one "if any part of it at all is true." Yet, although ninety-nine out of a hundred of such tales may be, and probably are, the purest fiction, treasure *has* been found, not only in the haunts of the old-time pirates of the Caribbean Sea and the Spanish Main, but in both the North and South Pacific Oceans; and the story of the finding of the treasure of Bruno do Bustamente on an island in the North Pacific is true—true in every detail as here narrated, save that the name of one of those who found it has been changed. He was an Englishman, and less than thirty years ago was well known in the Southern Colonies as the chief officer of a steamer trading between Sydney, Hobart, and Melbourne. At that time he was a young man of twenty-six.

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In those days there was a line of mail steamers running between Sydney and Panama. They were rivalled in size and speed only by the Peninsula and

Oriental Company's steamers, and were named the *Rakaia*, *Mataura*, *Ruahine*, and *Kaikoura*. To be appointed to one of these liners was considered a distinction, and therefore young Forrest—for so I will call him—naturally felt elated when he was offered the berth of first officer on one of the new liners. He therefore was not long in making up his mind; and bidding goodbye to the captain and officers of the *City of Hobart*, he went on board the mail steamer, and immediately tackled the duties of his new position.

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Two months had elapsed, and the steamer was in Panama Harbour coaling for the return trip to Sydney, when Forrest was sent for by the agent on some business that required his presence at the office. A number of passengers for the Sydney steamer had just arrived by train from Aspinall, or Colon, as the Americans call it, on the Atlantic side of the isthmus, and the agent's offices were thronged.

Forrest was anxious to return as quickly as possible, and, sending in his name by a clerk, waited for five minutes or so with a fair amount of patience. After taking in his name to the agent, the clerk had returned and said that Mr. Macpherson would see Mr. Forrest presently. At the end of ten minutes Forrest, pacing angrily to and fro on the pavement outside, strode in again, and in sharp tones asked the clerk to tell Mr. Macpherson that he could not possibly remain another five minutes.

The clerk disappeared into the inner office, and Mr. Macpherson himself came out.

Now this Macpherson was a man to whom Forrest had an intense dislike. He had been sent out from

England to take charge of the Panama office, and during the passage over from Sydney his offensive and haughty manner to his fellow-passengers and the ship's officers had caused him to be heartily detested. He was a measly-looking, insignificant little creature, with very weak eyes, but a hideously strong Scotch dialect. And yet his wife—who had come over with him in the *Rakaia*—was the prettiest and sweetest little Scotswoman imaginable.

The moment Forrest saw him he endeavoured to get through the crowd of people in the front office, who, seeing by his uniform he was an officer of the *Rakaia*, made way for him.

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"What is it, Mr. Macpherson?" said Forrest, shortly.

"I'll no' hae ye addressin' me in such a disrespectfu' way, young man. An' I'll no hae ye stormin' and fumin' and sendin' in messages for me to come oot tae ye when ye ken I've varra important beesnis ta attend to."

Forrest was not a bad-tempered man, but the audible titter that ran round the office angered him almost beyond endurance. Gulping down his wrath, he said—

"You sent for me—on an important matter, you said. We have, as you know, only twelve hours to finish coaling in. Tell me what it is. I have no time to waste here."

"Hoo daur ye talk to me like that," and the little man's watery eyes shone green with rage. "Weel, it's just this. Ma wife tells me that there is a watter-

colour peecture belonging ta *me* hanging up in your cabin. Ye'll just understand I'll hae no nonsense aboot it, and sae I sent for ye ta tell ye so mysel'; ye'll please send it ta me directly."

"You infernal little sweep!"

The passengers fell back hastily on either side, and Mr. Macpherson tried to get back into his office, but he was too late—Forrest had got him by the collar. His temper had quite mastered him now, and his face was black with passion.

"You d——d miserable little beast! So you only sent for me to insult me? Well, you've done it. And now I'm going to take it out of you. Will any one lend me a cane?"

There was a quick response of "Si, senor," and a short, nuggety-looking man, who looked like a Spaniard, handed Forrest a light Malacca cane.

Quick as lightning Forrest pulled the little agent over his knees, and then for a minute or so he belaboured him savagely. Then he stood him up on his trembling legs again, and, dragging him through the crowded front office to the street door, he gave him a kick and sent him flying head first out on to the pavement.

"By Jove, sir!" said a big fat man to Forrest, as he stood glaring contemptuously at the prostrate figure, "you'd better get aboard again. Served the cheeky little beast rightly, *I say*. Gad, he won't be able to sit down for a month; but I think he's stunned. Hallo, here's a couple of *aguazlis*. Look sharp, sir, and get away."

Muttering his thanks, Forrest proceeded on his way to the railway wharf, where a launch awaited

to take him over to Flamenco, where the *Rakaia* was coaling.

Just as he had reached the wharf he heard hurried footsteps behind him, and turning, he saw four policemen, who at once arrested him, and in half an hour he was in prison—the result of hanging pretty little Mrs. Macpherson's gift, the "watter-colour peecture," in his cabin instead of stowing it away in his chest, as she had desired him. At dinner-time his captain came, and Forrest learned he was in for more serious trouble than he had apprehended. The little agent, so the captain said, was stated to be dying from a cracked skull, and Forrest would have to stay in prison till he was tried on a charge of attempted murder.

Two days afterwards the *Rakaia* was gone, and Forrest lay in prison cursing his luck, hoping that it wasn't true about the fractured skull, and wondering, if it were, if he should propose to the widow after he came out of prison.

On the third day his gaolers told him that a gentleman wanted to see him. He had had plenty of visitors, principally Englishmen, from the Consul down to merchant's clerks. They all tried to cheer him up, but said that little Macpherson, who was still very bad, meant to press the charge of attempted murder, and that the Consul could do nothing for him. However, he was glad to have another visitor.

The moment he entered Forrest recognised him. He was the little, square-built Spanish gentleman who had lent him the cane.

"Good-day, señor," he said, extending his hand; and then, in a low voice, he added in English, "What

is this fellow's name?" pointing to the gaoler who stood in the corridor.

"Manuel."

Calling him over to him, the Spaniard put in his hand a ten-dollar gold piece, and said—

"Friend Manuel, I want to have half an hour's talk with my friend here. I am interested in him. Every time I come here I will beg of you to accept a ten-dollar piece from me."

Señor Manuel discreetly withdrew, and the Spaniard taking a little stool, placed it in front of Forrest, who sat on a bench, and commenced to talk to him in English.

. . . . .

"Señor Forrest," he said, "I desire to assist you, and in two days, if you will accept my assistance, you will be a free man. In the State of Columbia a little money goes a long way with those in power. Do you understand?"

The Englishman was about to thank him, when he stopped him with a smile.

"Be patient, please, and listen, and I will tell you why I desire to see you free. First of all, though, answer me one question. Will you, when free, enter into my service for one year, at a salary to be named by you?"

"What is the nature of the employment?"

"I wish you to take the command of a vessel."

"Ah!" and Forrest instantly jumped to the conclusion that his visitor was connected with some revolutionary project. "I am not a naval officer; I am in the merchant service."

"Precisely; I know that. But the service upon

which you will be employed is one that, while you—and I—may be exposed to a certain amount of danger and run risks, does not need the training of a naval officer, and it is a perfectly honourable and legitimate adventure. Does that satisfy you?"

"Perfectly."

"I was informed, Mr. Forrest, that you are a skilful navigator."

He was silent for a while, and the Englishman took a good look at him. Not a sailor, thought Forrest, looking at his small, well-kept hands. Perhaps he was a soldier. He certainly had the bearing of one. Presently he looked up and caught the young seaman's eye. He smiled pleasantly, and stroked his pointed beard and iron-grey moustache.

"You are wondering who I am. I should have been more courteous. My name is Pedro do Bustamente. Until six months ago I was a captain of infantry in the Spanish army in garrison at Malaga. My father then died—in Cuenca. At his death certain property and documents came into my possession. I read the documents, and, placing faith in what I read, I sold the property, threw up my commission, took passage to Colon, and, had it not been for my witnessing your beating of the little man, would now be on my way to San Francisco or some American seaport, where I could buy a small vessel for the purpose I have in view. But, señor, I like your face. I believe you to be an honourable man, and that a good Fate designed our meeting. Goodbye for the present; in less than forty-eight hours you will be out of Panama."

"Well, that's queer!" muttered Forrest, as he

watched the obsequious Manuel bow his visitor out. "What the deuce does he want me for? Any way, I'll go—that is if I don't get stabbed or garotted here. I wonder if that poor little begger is really dying?"

. . . . .

But although Mr. Macpherson was a long way off dying, both the English and American Consuls knew that Forrest was in for a long imprisonment, and so did Captain Pedro do Bustamente. And Bustamente also knew that by judicious expenditure he could be quickly got out. So he lost no time.

At midnight as Forrest lay asleep, Manuel came to his cell, awoke him, and handed him a note. It read—

"Put on the cloak and follow Manuel."

The gaoler handed him a heavy woollen poncho, and motioned him to follow. In another minute they were out of the prison and walking quietly down the street. For half an hour they continued on in the same direction, till they came to where a man was waiting, holding three mules. It was Bustamente. Without a word they mounted and jogged quietly along, following the coast-line northwards. At daylight they drew up beside a small roadside *fonda*, and, to Forrest's surprise, Bustamente said, "Let us halt and get some breakfast; these people here are expecting us. There is no fear of any pursuit—that is, if money has any virtue." As they ate, Bustamente told Forrest that he had learnt English in England, having been for many years on the suite of the Spanish Minister in London.

All that day they rode northwards, and at nightfall

entered a little seaport town on the shore of Parita Bay. Here Manuel left them, and Bustamente and Forrest in another ten hours were on board an American steamer bound to San Francisco. Bustamente had arranged with the captain of the steamer to call for them on her way down the coast.

. . . . .

As the clumsy old side-wheeler *Nebraska* steamed along the coast of Costa Rica, the Spaniard and Forrest sat in their deck cabin, and Bustamente put his hand in his bosom and pulled out a bundle of papers.

"Now, my friend, I can talk. I think you will find my story interesting."

And it was interesting. Briefly told, it was this: In 1850 his father, Bruno do Bustamente, a Spaniard by birth, was the richest merchant at Mazatlan, on the coast of Mexico, and traded largely with the East. The Governor of the province of Durango, whose hostility he had incurred, had him imprisoned on a trumped-up charge, and from that day he was the prey of the Mexican authorities, who sought to subject him to a continuous process of extortion and blackmail. His wife was a Mexican lady of San Blas. By her he had two children, a son and daughter. The son, Pedro, he had sent to Spain to enter the army. Upon regaining his freedom and paying a fine of 5,000 dollars to the Governor of Durango, he determined to leave Mexico and return to Spain. About this time his wife died. Quickly but cautiously, he realised upon his various estates, and sold his vessels as well—all but one, a brig of 120 tons, named the *Bueno Esperanza*. The captain of this vessel was an American named Devine, a man in

whom he had the most implicit confidence. At that time there was but little gold coin in use in that part of Mexico, and he had in many cases to take payment for the properties he had sold in silver Mexican dollars. Of these he received something like ninety thousand, and about twenty-five thousand dollars in gold coin. The money was secured in bags made of green hide, and conveyed from time to time on board the *Bueno Esperanza*. Fearing every moment that he would be detained, and his money seized by the Mexican authorities, he gave out that he was despatching the brig on one of her usual voyages to San Blas, and that his daughter, Engracia, was going there also to visit her mother's relatives. Accompanied by her nurse, the little girl went on board, and Don Bruno had the satisfaction of seeing the brig get safely away without suspicion arising as to the treasure she carried. But instead of San Blas, the *Bueno Esperanza* was bound to Manilla, in the Philippine Islands, where Devine was to await the arrival of his master.

A month later, Don Bruno, having disposed of the remainder of the property, followed them in an American trading schooner he had chartered for the purpose, and after a quick passage arrived safely at Manilla, and, to his dismay and grief, learned that nothing had been seen of the *Bueno Esperanza*, which should have reached Manilla a month before him.

Month after month passed by, and then the distracted merchant, broken in health and fortune, returned to end his days in his native town of Cuenca. His death was very sudden, and his son Pedro learnt from the old housekeeper that it occurred on the same

day on which he had received a letter, bearing a foreign postmark. Upon reading this letter he became terribly agitated. Telling his housekeeper that he desired to write to his son in Malaga, she left him and upon returning a quarter of an hour afterwards she found him with his head upon the table, quite dead. Under his cold hand was a sheet of paper, on which were scrawled a few words to his son. Death had smitten him too quickly to write more, and beside it lay the letter bearing the foreign postmark.

These were given to Captain Bustamente as soon as he reached the house a few days later.

. . . . .

"Here are my father's last words," said the Spaniard, and taking up a paper he read—

"The money will be there. Seek for it. I command you in the name of the Holy Virgin to give Christian burial to the bones of your sister. I pray——"

The remaining two or three lines were undecipherable.

"And now," continued Bustamente, "read this—the letter he received an hour before his death. It is in English, and is dated just one year and two months ago. The enclosure is in Spanish."

"Ship 'Sadie Wilmot,'
"New Bedford, U.S.A.,
"*6th March*, 1861.

"Mr. Bruno do Bustamente,
"*Cuenca, Spain.*

"Dear Sir,—The ship *Sadie Wilmot*, of which I am master, while cruising for sperm whales between

Mindanao (Philippine Islands) and the Pelews, on the 14th August, 1860, picked up a ship's boat containing the dead bodies of five persons, who had evidently died from thirst and starvation. In a tin box found in the boat was the enclosed letter to you, and the sum of one thousand dollars in Mexican gold coin. If you can establish a claim to this I am prepared to forward same, less charges. My second mate, who is a native of the Azores, read the letter addressed to you. I believe that the island mentioned is uninhabited. I was too far to the westward when the boat was found to go back and see if any of the crew had remained there. Please reply to A. Wilmot, New Bedford.

"Yours truly,
"AMOS WILMOT."

Forrest handed him back the letter, and then Bustamente slowly unfolded a single sheet of paper, written upon in pencil. On the top of the sheet was written in English—

"In case of my death I ask that this may be sent to Don Bruno do Bustamente, Cuenca, Spain, or to his son Pedro, at Malaga."

Then in Spanish—

"Wrecked on an uninhabited island in lat. 7° 29′ N. long. 160° 42′ E. Six of the crew drowned, also owner's child, Engracia Bustamente, and her nurse. The body of the former was buried at a spot above high-water mark, about 300 yards from a large round

knob of rock, covered with vines on the eastern point, and bearing E. by N. from the grave. No provisions were saved except some jerked beef, packed in hide bags. Were four months on the island. Left there July 3rd, in open boat, to try and reach Manilla.

"DEVINE."

With flashing eyes the Spaniard sprang to his feet and placed his hands on Forrest's shoulders.

"Ah, that brave man, that Devine! Cannot you understand? These words of his were written so that my father, if ever they came to his hand, would know that the treasure had been saved and hidden. "The jerked beef in hide bags." The money was in hide bags! And I think that instead of my poor sister being buried on the spot he speaks of, there we will find it."

He walked up and down the cabin quickly, and then resumed.

"And then, see how careful he has been to avoid telling the name of the brigantine, where she was from and where bound to. He knew that my father would return to Spain after he had given up all hope of the *Bueno Esperanza*; that in Cuenca, his birth-place, he would spend the rest of his days; he feared to say more. My good friend, I am certain that unless my father spoke of those bags of bullock-hide to people in Manilla, not a living soul but you and I know that the brig carried a hundred and fifteen thousand dollars in gold and silver. And we will go to this island and get them."

Their course of action was soon decided upon. By

the sale of the little property he had inherited from old Don Bruno his son had realised nearly a thousand pounds. Out of this he had paid nearly two hundred pounds, the greater part of which had gone to effect Forrest's escape, and with something like seven hundred pounds ($3,500) he and Forrest landed in San Francisco.

A week afterward they had chartered a small fore-and-aft vessel of fifty tons, the *Marion Price*, for five hundred dollars a month, provisioned her for six months, and with three Hawaiian natives for a crew, sailed out of the Golden Gate for the island.

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On the twenty-seventh day out the little *Marion Price* passed the first of the Caroline Group, a chain of low, sandy atolls, covered densely with coconuts. That night Forrest hove-to, for if the position of the island they sought was given correctly in Devine's account of the wreck they were not more than forty miles to the eastward of it.

At daylight Forrest stood away to the westward, and sent one of the Hawaiians up aloft; and whilst he and Bustamente were at breakfast they heard the cry of "Land, ho!"

The breeze was steady and of good heart, and at eleven o'clock the *Price* was within a mile, and the two white men were scanning the strange island with interest.

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It was, for its smallness—being barely two miles in circumference—of considerable height. On three sides grey coral cliffs rose steep-to from the surf that lashed and foamed unceasingly at their base; for only

on the lee-side was the island protected by a fringing reef. In some places the summits of the wall of cliff sunk to perhaps fifty or sixty feet, in others it rose to nearly two hundred or more, but preserved the same grim and savage monotony of appearance throughout. Right to the very verge the broken, jagged pinnacles of coral were concealed by a dense, impenetrable growth of short, stunted scrub and masses of vine and creepers. Here and there these creepers had grown over the face of the cliff itself and hung down over the boiling surf below like monstrous carpets of green and yellow, in other places they clambered up and wrapt around sharp pinnacles of rock, so that from the deck of the *Marion Price* these pinnacles looked like densely-verdured and neatly-trimmed pine-trees.

"Small hope for a man did a ship strike here," said Forrest, with an involuntary shudder, looking at the wild seeth of the breakers as they dashed in quick succession against the beetling heights, and fell back in frothy, streaming clouds and whirling flakes of foam. "Ah, we're opening up the south point now, and there's a long reef running out there. Get aloft, one of you fellows, and see if there is a break in it anywhere."

As the schooner stood out again they got a better view of the island, and could see that although on the weather side it was clad in short, impenetrable scrub, it sloped gradually to the westward, and presently the man aloft called out that he could see the tops of coconut trees showing up over the other vegetation, and then: "There is smooth water, sir; I see beach and passage, too."

Rounding the point of the long stretch of reef, Forrest hauled up and ran close in again, and then his arm was seized by the Spaniard.

"Look!" and he pointed to the shore.

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On the eastern point of the island, which they had now opened well out, there stood out in bold relief from the points and knobs of vine-covered rock, a huge, round boulder, flattened at the apex, but perfected in the symmetry of its outlines by a closely fitting mantle of vivid green.

The two men grasped each other's hands in silence. It was the rock spoken of by Devine.

Another half-hour and Forrest had let go his anchor in five fathoms, on a bottom of white sand, and taking one native, he and his friend lowered the boat and pulled ashore.

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The *Bueno Esperanza* had evidently struck on the long, fringing reef before mentioned, as the first objects they saw were some spars, a lower-mast and a broken topsail yard, the ends of which were protruding from a heaped-up pile of loose coral slabs that the action of the surf had backed up above high-water mark. Further along they could see a part of her decking and other wreckage.

The Spaniard leading, they clambered over the bank of stones and sand, and directly in front of them they saw a grove of coconuts, beneath which were the ruins of a deck-house and a quantity of planking, barrels, ironwork and other material saved from the brigantine. There for two years the wreckage had lain undisturbed, blistering and cracking under the

rays of a tropical sun, ever since the hapless men that had tenanted the deck-house had left its shelter to die of the horrors of thirst in a small open boat.

. . . . .

Fifty feet or so from the rotting, tumbledown deck-house was that which they sought, the grave of the little Spanish child; a rude, square structure of coral slab, over which the kindly creepers had crept and bound lovingly together.

Pedro do Bustamente, baring his head, knelt for a moment and prayed for the soul of the little sister he had never seen since they had played together in the days of his childhood.

Then, by a motion of his hand, he directed the Hawaiian sailor to cut away the binding creepers from the stones.

In a few minutes this was done, and the three men rapidly removed the small slabs of loose coral, and then the sandy nature of the soil rendered the rest of their task easy.

The coffin of the little girl had been constructed very solidly, and as a protection from decay had been covered with copper taken from the wreck.

After carefully lifting it out and placing it aside, Forrest, at the Spaniard's request, made an examination of the bottom of the grave. He was soon satisfied that it had contained nothing else but that which they had taken from it.

To his surprise Pedro showed no disappointment, and asked him in quiet tones if he would help him to carry the coffin to the boat.

This was done, and they returned to the schooner.

Placing the coffin on the cabin table and covering it with a flag, the two men came on deck again.

"My friend," said the Spaniard, "now that that duty is done, let us get the treasure."

"Where shall we look for it?"

"There," said Bustamente, pointing to the great round green mass outlined clearly before them, "three hundred yards east by north from the grave!"

Taking with them the three Hawaiians, who were provided with long, heavy knives to cut through the scrub, they returned to the shore.

It took them some time to clear a way, but at last they stood at the foot of the great round boulder. A thorough examination revealed nothing in the way of any cave or hollow anywhere about the foot or sides.

With great difficulty the two white men, by clinging to the vines, succeeded in gaining the top, and immediately discovered that the flattened summit of the rock was in reality a large depression in the centre, over which the luxuriant creepers had grown and formed a thick network.

Standing in the centre they found that, although the bed of vines sank under their feet, there was still a hollow space between them and the bottom. Then the Hawaiians were called up and set to work slashing the vines all round the edge of the miniature crater with their knives.

Then the five men, hauling on the heavy mass, dragged it to the edge and tumbled it over the side, and Bustamente, with an excited face, jumped down into the hollow, and sank up to his knees in the accumulation of dead leaves and *débris* from the vines.

In a moment he plunged his hands amongst this and groped about. Then he looked up.

"It is here!"

Forrest and a native sprang down after him.

The moment Forrest's feet touched the bottom Pedro's calmness gave way, and in his wild excitement he threw his arms around his comrade and embraced him. Releasing him, he turned to the native sailor—

"Clear away these dead leaves."

There was barely standing room for them to work in; and as they had neither bags nor baskets, the sailors took off their shirts and threw them down to Pedro and Forrest, who quickly filled them with *débris* and then passed it up to the men above, and as they worked they could feel under their feet the rotted hide bags giving way and bursting under their weight; and as the last shirtful of rubbish was collected the native sailor dragged up a piece of hide bagging, clinging to the inside of which were some Mexican sun dollars, stained and discoloured.

And then, tearing away the uppermost side of the rotting bags of hide, there lay at their feet the lost treasure of Bruno do Bustamente, just as his faithful captain had placed it in the hollow rock two years before. So rotten and decayed were the topmost layer of bags, that the contents, under the pressure of their feet, had spread out and formed a thick and even surface of silver coins, which hid from view the bags beneath.

For an hour the two white men and one native sailor worked collecting the loose Mexican dollars together; and then, whilst two of the sailors were sent back to the schooner for some canvas needles,

palms and twine, Forrest, clambering to the top again, was passed up handful after handful of money, which he poured out on the rock beside him.

As soon as the sailors returned, the five men set to work at the canvas, cutting it up and sewing it into rough bags, into which the loose coin was placed and sewn up. Then they descended again.

The rest of the bags, with careful handling, were taken safely out, and then they came to eight smaller packages, which proved to be wooden boxes covered with hide. Taking a hatchet, Bustamente knocked the outside covering off one, and then prized open the lid. It contained gold.

Securing it firmly again, the eight boxes were lifted out and placed on the rock beside the bags.

Then, satisfying themselves that all the treasure was secured, they had a hurried meal, and each man picking up a box or bag, they all made their way in single file back to the beach, and returned again and again till the last load had been brought down and put in the boat.

It was dark before their work was finished, and then the two white men went below to the cabin again. Around them lay the bags and boxes of gold and silver, and the light from the lamp fell upon the flag-covered coffin of the little Spanish girl.

"Poor little one," murmured Pedro do Bustamente, placing his hand tenderly on the flag, "thou shalt rest beside our father in Spain."

. . . . .

That night they opened the boxes of gold and counted the money. Each box contained three thousand dollars, and in one, a little larger than the

rest, they found a paper written by Devine, which gave a detailed account of the wreck of the *Bueno Esperanza*, and concluded by saying that he had opened the largest of the boxes, which contained £4,000 and had taken from it a thousand dollars, for it was his intention to leave the island and endeavour to reach Manilla, where he expected to find Don Bruno awaiting him. They could then charter a vessel and return to the island for the treasure.

As Forrest surmised, the *Bueno Esperanza* had run ashore at night on the long horn of reef stretching out from the south point. The sea was fairly smooth at the time, but the ship ground heavily on the coral; and seeing no hope of floating her, Devine and his crew proceeded to save all they could. The treasure was safely landed at daylight, and then the sea rose, and the ship commenced to break up. In returning to the shore both boats were capsized by a huge sea, and six men drowned from the mate's boat, and the Mexican nurse, and the little Engracia, who were in the captain's boat, were, although rescued from drowning, so badly injured by the coral, that they died from exhaustion the next day. The nurse was buried on the beach, and the little girl, who lingered longest, in the grove of palms.

. . . . .

After reading this sorrowful record the two men proceeded to open and count the bags of silver. In all it amounted to ninety-three thousand Mexican and Spanish dollars.

The next morning Bustamente called the three Hawaiians aft, and told them that on the arrival of the schooner at Manilla he would give them five

hundred dollars each over and above their wages; but he asked them to swear secrecy.

Kahola, a huge broad-shouldered native from the island of Oahu, looked intently into the Spaniard's face, and then, bidding his fellow-countrymen stand back, he said, gravely—

"What I swear, those two men he swear too. If you please, sir, you wait till I get something."

He walked for'ard and disappeared below, returning in a minute or two with a book, whose size was only surpassed by its dirty appearance.

Standing before Bustamente, the Hawaiian saluted, beckoned to the two others to stand beside him, and held out the book to the Spaniard.

"All right, sir, now. You go ahead and swear me and this two man here on book."

Taking the volume from him, the white man opened it. It was in a language utterly unknown to him. He called to Forrest, who was steering, and asked him what it was.

Forrest shook his head. "What book is that, Kahola?"

The seaman looked at him in mild surprise.

"That Bible in my country language, sir."

Forrest grasped the situation at once, and rapidly explained the man's wishes to Bustamente.

The Spaniard nodded gravely, and took off his cap; the Hawaiians already held their battered old *fala* hats under their arms, which were crossed over their broad and naked chests. With their dark eyes fixed upon his face, they waited. He raised the book.

"Will you, Kahola, and you, Liho, and you, Bob,

swear to me, Pedro do Bustamente, to speak to no man about the money on board this ship till you return to your own country, or till such time as I and Captain Forrest shall fix upon?"

Kahola conversed rapidly with his countrymen for a brief space. Them, with gravely respectful demeanour, but intense earnestness, he said—

"I think, sir, all us man here swear. But, sir, if you please, me and my countrymen like you swear something too, first."

"What would you have me swear, Kahola?" said Bustamente.

"Me and my countrymen like you swear, sir, on this good book, that this money belong to you. Suppose you no swear, me and this two man here no swear. We 'fraid you steal money."

The Spaniard raised the book to his lips. "On this book, which is the Word of God, and by the body of my dead sister, who lies in her coffin beneath us, I swear to you, Kahola, and you, Liho, and you, Bob, that the money we have taken is mine. It was once my father's. He is dead; but before he died he told me where to seek for it."

"Good," said Kahola, and he reached out his brawny hand for the book, and then added, in Hawaiian, "What is the father's shall be the son's, for that is the law of God and the law of man."

So in his simple, earnest manner the big native sailor swore the oath—

"I, Kahola, will no tell no man one word about the money. Suppose I tell something, I hope God kill me dead, and give me dam bad luck."

Liho and Bob repeated the same words, and then

with smiling faces they shook hands with Bustamente and Forrest, and turned to again to their duty.

At noon the island had sunk to a purple speck on the horizon, and Pedro and Forrest, with joy bubbling in their hearts, were sitting on the deck talking.

. . . . .

"My dear comrade," said Pedro, placing his hand affectionately on Forrest's shoulder, "you must—you *shall* do as I wish. Both you and I are alone in the world. Let us be comrades always. See now, it was so intended by God for us to meet, and therefore fifty thousand dollars of the money is thine; that will leave me sixty-four thousand."

Forrest began to remonstrate, but Pedro placed his hand on his mouth. "But that I had found such a true man, I may have never succeeded in finding it."

And this is the story of the finding of the lost treasure of Don Bruno do Bustamente.

From "Pacific Tales."

IX

SAVED BY A BOX OF MATCHES

"TAFFRAIL"

IT had been one of those dull, leaden-coloured days, with an overcast sky and a heavy, tumbling sea—regular North Sea weather. It was our third day out, and for the past twelve hours the wind had been chopping and changing, over every point of the compass between north and west. But during the latter part of the afternoon, when a watery, yellow sun shone intermittently between the broken cloud-masses piled up in the western sky, the clerk of the weather seemed to make up his mind once and for all, for the wind veered suddenly to north-north-west, remained steady, and rapidly increased in violence.

It had been blowing hard for some time, and we knew from the ugly look of the sky and the reading of our aneroid—which had been well down towards twenty-eight for thirty-six hours—that we were in for a regular snorter. Our dismal forebodings were speedily justified, for within an hour it was blowing a full gale with all the might and fury of the broad ocean behind it.

We were well out in the middle of the North Sea. What we were doing in that inhospitable region, and in such weather, must perforce remain a secret.

Owing, no doubt, to the previous changeability

of the wind, the sea was soon very confused, and the great foaming white-caps came rolling down upon us from no particular direction and in no ordered sequence, but from all points between north and west. And such seas they were!—huge grey monsters, each with its summit of frothy white, which literally blotted out the horizon when our bows sank into the hollows between them. There is no more magnificent spectacle than a heavy, breaking sea; no more exhilarating feeling than to know that one's ship and those who man her are pitting their puny strength and skill against the fierce, elemental fury of Nature. But the best place from which to enjoy the sight is the deck of a large ship, not the spray-swept, reeling bridge of a destroyer battling against the gale.

From fifteen knots we were soon compelled to ease to twelve to avoid damage. From twelve we reduced to ten, and from ten to eight; but even at this leisurely crawl we bumped badly, as the bows, flung bodily out of the water on the back of some mighty comber, fell into the next abyss with a crash and a thud which shook the whole ship. And every time they came down tons of water surged across the forecastle in masses ten to fifteen feet deep, to go pouring overboard again in miniature Niagaras as the ship shook herself free.

And the motion—how can I describe it? The nearest approach I can imagine would be a switchback railway with the track at varying inclinations up to 40 degrees either side of the horizontal, its alternate hills and valleys thirty feet apart, each dip filled with six feet of water, and a shower-bath all the time. The movement was dizzy and violent, a combined

pitching and rolling, lurching and sliding, thudding and crashing, as the ship plunged and wallowed and the seas broke on board. It was a terrible corkscrew motion, which nearly hurled us off our feet, and certainly caused all except our most seasoned shellbacks to retire to the mess-decks, and there to lie, comatose, white-lipped, and utterly dejected, in the throes of the acutest internal discomfort.

Great lumps of solid water, overtopping the rail amidships, came toppling down on deck, to go sweeping aft like liquid avalanches. Occasionally, on glancing aft from the bridge, one could see nothing of the stern save a seething maelstrom of white, with canopies, torpedo-tubes, and other deck fittings appearing here and there like boulders in the bed of a torrent. Life-lines were rigged fore and aft; but even so, passing along the slippery, reeling deck was an undertaking fraught with no little danger.

We were battened down, but still it was a case of "water, water everywhere," even in the wardroom, cabins, mess-deck, and engine-room. As for the charthouse—my inevitable domicile when the ship is at sea, unless I am actually on the bridge—it was long past redemption. Both side-doors were shut, and therefore nominally water-tight, but the water squirted in through many a crevice. It dripped in a steady stream through a faulty pipe-connection in the ceiling, straight on to the settee. A turgid flood went slopping dismally from side to side across the floor with the heavy rolling of the ship, and mingled with it went sundry sodden woollen garments of mine, the remains of a broken tea-cup, the relics of

my afternon meal, a couple of charts in a state of pulpy disintegration, some bound volumes of Sailing Directions and Tide Tables in like condition, most of our navigational instruments, and a bottle of indelible copying-ink with the cork out. It was a joyful sight, but any destroyer officer can supply what details I have missed.

The wind brought the spray flying high over the bridge. It was not ordinary spray in drops, but water in solid, blinding sheets, which left us breathless and gasping. Within five minutes, in spite of oil-skins, we felt the moisture trickling slowly down our backs. In half-an-hour our sea-boots were filled and squelching, while in forty minutes we were in such a state of saturation that we could become no wetter unless we actually fell overboard.

Hot food was not to be had, as by some stroke of evil fortune the galley fire had long since been extinguished by a particularly heavy sea, which, breaking on board abreast the foremost funnel, almost filched the whaler from her davits and flooded the galley. But not only was our kitchen *hors de combat;* so also was the cook. He, poor wight! had lately joined on from some snug billet in a depot ashore. He was unused to destroyers and their gyrations, and was lying somewhere amongst that sodden, seasick collection of humanity under the forecastle, and nobody troubled to sort him out and send him about his business. We all knew from bitter experience that "cookie" went under in even a capful of wind. He was a broken reed, a fraud, a delusion, and a snare, certainly no seaman, and, like many of his shipmates, would never revive until we

drew in under the lee of the land on our homeward journey.

I have no wish to be unkind, for a destroyer's cook, who has to exercise the culinary art for nearly a hundred men in a small galley about eight feet by ten, undoubtedly labours under difficulties undreamt of by any shore-going cook. But the ancient mariner who called some one else a "lop-eared son of a sea-cook," with, of course, the usual nautical embellishments, certainly had some reason for his term of opprobrium.

Our diet had been the same as usual in bad weather —thick sandwiches made with corned beef, ship's biscuits, and cocoa out of vacuum bottles; and glad enough we were to get it.

"Huh!" grunted the first lieutenant, arriving on the bridge at six o'clock to take over the last dog-watch from the sub. "This is a mug's game! Why on earth didn't my people put me into the army?"

"Fool of the family?" I suggested mildly.

"No, sir," he grinned, retaliating with the time-honoured chestnut as he wrung out his dripping muffler. "Things have altered since your day."

"I don't doubt it," said I. "I don't profess to be a scientist, like you new-fangled Jacks-of-all-trades from Osborne and Dartmouth. But tell me, what's it like aft?"

"Like, sir!" he snorted. "There's a foot o' water in the wardroom, and the doctor, in the intervals of trying to rescue his sterilising-gadget, is busy playing leap-frog with the chairs. Every bloomin' one of our gramophone records is smashed, and the

deck of the pantry is covered with food and broken crockery, with the stewards lying speechless on top of it! It's a pretty sight, takin' it all round!"

"And what about our flat?" I asked with some anxiety, since No. 1's cabin is opposite to mine and in the same compartment.

"Last time I saw it, it was flooded out," he answered. "Your steward was crawling about the deck of your cabin on all fours, rescuing your boots. All your drawers had opened, and most of your shirts, and socks, and books, and things were sculling around on the deck. I told him he'd better get a move on and get the water mopped up, or else you'd probably have his blood; but the poor devil's almost too seasick to move. I rescued your typewriter myself."

"Are you certain it was the typewriter?" I anxiously asked.

"Quite, sir," he said cheerfully. "It had fallen out of its case, and was cruising round about in a pool of water."

"Damaged?"

"Seemed a bit bent, but I wiped it on your towel and put it on your bunk."

I thanked him, and groaned aloud, for my typewriter is worth its weight in gold. Seawater never agrees with the poor thing, and how many times I have taken portions of it to pieces and put them together again I cannot remember.

When we eventually arrived in harbour after this particular trip, I took it wholly to pieces, with the result that it now prints an occasional "k" instead of a "g," "h" instead of "e," and a few other little

things of that kind. But it still writes far better than I do, and people who are good at cryptograms are generally able to read its efforts.

The night came down very dark, the sky being overcast, and a feeble moon being partly obscured by wisps of low-lying cloud streaming across its surface. With the coming of darkness the gale seemed to increase its fury, for the howling of the wind through our scanty rigging became shriller, the screeching of the squalls more ominous as they drove down upon us. And mingled with the eerie howling, like a booming bass accompaniment, came the mournful, sobbing thunder of the breaking seas, and the steady drumming of the flying spray as it pattered against the painted canvas bridge-screens. It was a wild and dirty night.

There is something awe-inspiring and majestic about the furious orchestra of a gale far out in deep water—something which can be felt in the blood and bone, rather than expressed in mere words. Man may bridge space, harness rivers, and, within limits, change God's configuration of the land; but he can never compel the great ocean to do his bidding, never control the raging of the storm. The sea is ever such a fickle mistress, smiling and gay in her happiness, but quick to anger, and relentless in her passion. She is a thing of whims and fancies, now joyous, now depressed, and always very difficult to please; a merciless enemy, ever eager to reap the advantage of the slightest lapse or most momentary indiscretion on the part of her servants. She is utterly implacable, and rarely forgives a grievance. Sometimes we hate her, for she punishes cruelly—killing, maiming, and

drowning our seamen; battering and wrecking our ships; swallowing millions of our money. But even in her fury she fascinates, so that at the back of our minds we really love and respect her. Moreover, it is to the sea, and to the effect that she has had in moulding our national traits and characteristics, that we owe our greatness as an Empire.

Soon after nine o'clock, when we had again reached the southern limit of our patrol, we suddenly sighted a reddish, flickering glare reflected on the underside of the low clouds far away to the southward. And as we watched it danced in and out, now waxing to a lurid crimson, like a splash of blood against the dark background of sea and sky; now waning to a gentle orange glow, like the sheen of the rising moon.

It was a ship on fire. It could be nothing else, though as yet she was still so far over the edge of the horizon that we could see nothing but her flaming advertisement in the sky. But a vessel ablaze in the middle of the North Sea probably meant that some prowling submarine had been at her dirty work, and that even now the wretched survivors might be adrift in open boats, battling for their lives against the fury of the storm. They were a full two hundred miles from the nearest land. It might have been two million, for all the chance they had of reaching it.

Our leader at once altered course towards the glare, and we followed round in her wake.

"Fifteen knots," came her signal, winking from ship to ship.

"Twenty knots," a few minutes later, as we swung into line astern of her.

There was still a chance of saving lives, still a

remote possibility that Fritz might yet be lurking near the scene of his evil handiwork.

But I shivered to think of what might already have been the fate of the crew of that ship; for the vessel, judging from the blaze, had been alight for many hours. They must long since have taken to their boats; but how could they live in such a turmoil? Even the sturdy old *Triptolemus*, with the gale astern of her, plunged and wallowed like a mad thing as she took the seas in her stride, and, yawing drunkenly in her course, slid giddily down the liquid valleys with propellers racing and the water bubbling and frothing deep over the forecastle.

There is something very exhilarating in steaming fast in a destroyer with the wind and a heavy sea astern. One feels the ship being hurled bodily forward with a swift rush like an arrow as the afterpart rears up and the bows go under, while the next moment the stern falls into a trough and the speed seems to lessen as the forepart goes tobogganing along on the back of a huge breaking sea. There is no sensation quite equal to it, but it takes a tricky helmsman to keep a vessel anywhere near her course in such conditions.

Our rush through the night towards that burning ship is indelibly stamped upon my memory. It was the first fire at sea I had ever witnessed—but not the last, for before we had gone very far we sighted another blaze on the horizon, perhaps eight miles to the eastward of the first. Two burning ships in one night within half-a-score miles of each other—Fritz had certainly been busy!

A magnificent spectacle the first ship presented as

we approached and circled round to investigate. She was a large, barque-rigged vessel, deeply laden with timber, and, with her fore and main topsail set and her helm evidently lashed, still sailed on before the wind, yawing wildly as she went. Her slender hull, silhouetted as black as ebony against the ruddy reflection on the water, rolled and pitched heavily, now and then to disappear entirely in the deep troughs between the waves. Her deck was ablaze from end to end, a raging inferno of flame, so that her masts seemed to be standing erect out of a sea of fire. The flames leapt and played about her, sometimes darting as high as her tops, occasionally streaming to leeward like the tail of a comet. We could see flickering streaks of fire mounting higher and higher in her tarred rigging, and the canvas of her furled sail smouldering redly and bursting into bright flame. Masts, yards, and rigging, indeed, were outlined in vivid scarlet, like some gigantic set-piece at a firework display.

A billowing cloud of smoke, tinged crimson and orange, and mingled with sudden rushes of brilliant sparks and larger fragments of blazing débris, went rolling away to leeward in a dense, impalpable curtain which blotted out the horizon. Above the howling of the gale we could hear the roaring crash and crackle of the fire, and the hiss and splutter of the seas as they sprayed on board and vanished in steam. Sea and sky alike were dyed a light crimson-orange, and even three cables or more to windward the heat was intense enough to be uncomfortable.

Then the mainmast burned through, swayed drunkenly for a moment as the ship rolled, and

tumbled with a crash and a swift shower of sparks. It was followed in turn by the fore and the mizzen masts, until presently that once tall and stately barque was nothing but a blazing hull on the wild waste of waters, a mute, flaming testimony to the senseless passion of war. Fire and water fought avidly for her mastery, but fire would hold its own until she burned to the water's edge, and became a charred derelict.

Her boats had gone; but though we searched the vicinity, swept the sea with searchlights, and cruised to and fro with our eyes and glasses busy, we could find no trace of any survivors. It was not until we had given up the search as hopeless, and were steaming towards the second vessel, indeed, that suddenly, far to the southward, we saw a flickering, dancing glimmer of light.

"Take its bearing, some one!" I shouted instinctively.

"South ten east," said the first lieutenant, bending down to run his eye along the compass, as the light waned to a faint sparkle, and then vanished altogether.

"That'll be a boat," I said. "They've spotted our searchlights."

An instant later came a signal from our leader: "Close light to the southward and investigate," she said; and hard a-starboard, and away we went.

Finding that light was like hunting a will-o'-the-wisp, for, though we knew its original bearing, it flickered into being only at long and irregular intervals, shone dimly for a moment, and then was suddenly eclipsed.

It was, as we discovered afterwards, a home-

made flare of teased-out rope-yarn, soaked in oil, and lashed to a boat-hook stave. In the boat was a single sodden box of matches with which to ignite it; so, what with the difficulty of striking a light when the boat fell into comparative calm in the troughs of the waves, shielding the feeble flicker from the drenching spray and the raging wind as she rose on the crests, and then applying it to the damp torch and nursing the latter into flame, it seems very wonderful that they got it to burn at all. Their supply of matches was perilously low, and time and time again the flare was raised aloft, only to be extinguished immediately by wind and spray.

But the survivors had seen our light, and knew that help was at hand if only they could attract our attention. They persisted in their efforts; and well it was that they did so, for it was only due to these sudden sparks in the wild blackness of the night that we were able to find them.

"Saved by a box of matches!" Quite a stirring title for a melodrama at the "movies;" but it was only a box of matches that prevented this particular affair from becoming another tragedy of the sea.

And so, fifteen miles to leeward, we eventually came across a boat crowded with men. Even now our difficulties had not altogether vanished. There was only one possible method of rescuing them, and that was by placing the *Triptolemus* herself between the boat and the wind, and keeping her there. From this position the ship could give the boat something of a lee, and could drift down upon her until she was close alongside, when the occupants would have to scramble aboard with the ropes' ends that we should

have ready for them. It was taking a risk—rather a big risk, for the ship, with the sea broad on the bow, would roll and plunge madly, so that there was always the danger of the boat being capsized and every soul in her flung into the water. But it was neck or nothing. It simply had to be done.

The helm went over, and the port engine went astern, to bring the ship round short on her heel. She answered nobly, for there was a brief respite, followed by the thundering crash of three heavy seas breaking on board in quick succession as she came broadside on to the sea. And how she rolled! Fifty degrees either way, without exaggeration, until we could scarcely stand on the bridge, while the lee edge of the upper deck went under, and we could see the white water creaming and surging round the bases of the funnels.

Presently the boat was close alongside, poised dizzily on the swirling crest of a wave at one moment, and the next sinking deep into a hollow, until she was hidden out of sight of the bridge somewhere under the curve of the hull. Many times we held our breath in suspense, expecting to see her stove in and swamped as the ship lurched drunkenly towards her, or else carried bodily inboard and capsized as she rose on a sea and the lee edge of the deck dipped under water.

But the men did their work well. They fended her off without mishap, and one by one, watching their opportunity, the occupants leapt to safety, or were dragged on board with ropes' ends. There were sixteen of them all told—sixteen and Booster—the entire crew of one of the burning ships, and happy

enough they were to be rescued. They were scantily clad, wet through to the skin, perishing with cold, and very much exhausted; but our men, tender-hearted as usual, vied with each other in forcing their spare garments upon them. Indeed, it was not very long before our guests, full of hot grog, ship's biscuit, and the inevitable salmon and corned beef, were smoking cigarettes on the mess-deck, snug and warm in their borrowed finery. Their distressing ordeal had certainly not affected their appetites.

We should have liked to salve the boat, for she was a stoutly built craft fitted with a motor; but the stories we had heard of German submarines lurking in the vicinity of boats with survivors aboard, with the idea of torpedoing any vessel which came to their assistance, effectually prevented our remaining in one place for any longer than was absolutely necessary. So we left her drifting, and steamed back to rejoin our mates.

Until dawn we scanned the sea for the survivors of the other vessel, zigzagging to and fro and covering many miles; but our efforts were unsuccessful. They seemed to have vanished completely from off the face of the waters, and to this day we have never heard what became of them.

From "A Little Ship."