

The Ship That Saw a Ghost

Frank Norris

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VERY much of this story must remain untold, for the reason that if it were definitely known what business I had aboard the tramp steam-freighter *Glarus*, three hundred miles off the South American coast on a certain summer's day some few years ago, I would very likely be obliged to answer a great many personal and direct questions put by fussy and impertinent experts in maritime law — who are paid to be inquisitive. Also, I would get "Ally Bazan," Strokher and Hardenberg into trouble.

Suppose, on that certain summer's day, you had asked of Lloyd's agency where the *Glarus* was, and what was her destination and cargo. You would have been told that she was twenty days out from Callao, bound north to San Francisco in ballast; that she had been spoken by the bark *Medea* and the steamer *Benevento*; that she was reported to have blown out a cylinder head, but being manageable, was proceeding on her way under sail.

That is what Lloyd's would have answered.

If you know something of the ways of ships and what is expected of them, you will understand that the *Glarus* to be some half a dozen hundred miles south of where Lloyd's would have her, and to be still going south, under full steam, was a scandal that would have made her brothers and sisters ostracize her finally and forever.

And that is curious, too. Humans may indulge in vagaries innumerable, and may go far afield in the way of lying; but a ship may not so much as quibble without suspicion. The least lapse of "regularity," the least difficulty in squaring performance with intuition, and behold she is on the black list and her captain, owners, officers, agents and consignors, and even supercargoes are asked to explain.

And the *Glarus* was already on the blacklist. From the beginning her stars had been malign. As the *Breda*, she had first lost her reputation, seduced into a filibustering escapade down the South American coasts, where in the end a plain-clothes United States detective — that is to say a revenue cutter — arrested her off Buenos Ayres and brought her home, a prodigal daughter, besmirched and disgraced.

After that she was in some dreadful black-birding business in a far quarter of the South Pacific; and after that — her name changed finally to the *Glarus* — poached seals for a syndicate of Dutchmen who lived in Tacoma, and who afterwards built a club house out of what she earned.

And after that we got her.

We got her, I say, through Ryder's South Pacific Exploitation Company. The "President" had picked out a lovely, lively little deal for Hardenberg, Strokher and Ally Bazan (the three Black Crows), which he swore would make them "independent rich" the rest of their respective lives. It is a promising deal (B. 300 it is on Ryder's map), and if you want to know more about it you may write to ask Ryder what B. 300 is. If he chooses to tell you that is his affair.

For B. 300 — let us confess it — is, as Hardenberg puts it, as crooked as a dog's hind leg. It is as risky as barratry. If you pull it off you may — after paying Ryder his share — divide sixty-five, or possibly sixty-seven, thousand dollars betwixt you and your associates. If you fail, and you are perilously like to fail, you will be sure to have a man or two of your companions shot, maybe yourself obliged to pistol certain people, and in the end fetch up at Tahiti, prisoner in a French patrol boat.

Observe that B. 300 is spoken of as still open. It is so, for the reason that the Three Black Crows did not pull it off. It still stands marked up in red ink on the map that hangs over Ryder's desk in the San Francisco office; and anyone can have a chance at it who will meet Cyrus Ryder's terms. Only he can't get the *Glarus* for the attempt.

For the trip to the island after B. 300 was the last occasion on which the *Glarus* will smell blue water or taste the trades. She will never clear again. She is lumber.

And yet the *Glarus* on this very blessed day of 1902 is riding to her buoys off Sausalito in San Francisco bay, complete in every detail (bar a broken propeller shaft), not a rope missing, not a screw loose, not a plank started — a perfectly equipped steam-freighter.

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But you may go along the Front in San Francisco from Fisherman's Wharf to the China steamships' docks and shake your dollars under the seamen's noses, and if you so much as whisper Glarus they will edge suddenly off and look at you with scared suspicion, and then, as like as not, walk away without another word. No pilot will take the Glarus out; no captain will navigate her; no stoker will feed her fires; no sailor will walk her decks. The Glarus is suspect. She has seen a ghost.

* * * * *

It happened on our voyage to the Island after this same B. 300. We had stood well off from shore for day after day, and Hardenberg had shaped our course so far from the track of navigation that since the Benevento had hulled down and vanished over the horizon, no stitch of canvas nor smudge of smoke had we seen. We had passed the Equator long since, and would fetch a long circuit to the southward, and bear up against the Island by a circuitous route. This to avoid being spoken. It was tremendously essential that the Glarus should not be spoken. I suppose, no doubt, that it was the knowledge of our isolation that impressed me with the dreadful remoteness of our position. Certainly the sea in itself looks no different at a thousand than at a hundred miles from shore. But as day after day I came out on deck, at noon, after ascertaining our position on the chart (a mere pin point in a reach of empty paper), the sight of the ocean weighed down upon me with an infinitely great awesomeness — and I was no new hand to the high seas even then.

But at such times the Glarus seemed to me to be threading a loneliness beyond all words and beyond all conception desolate. Even in more populous waters, when no sail notches the line of the horizon, the propinquity of one's kind is nevertheless a thing understood, and to an unappreciated degree, comforting. Here, however, I knew we were out, far out in the desert. Never a keel for years upon years before us had parted these waters, never a sail had bellied to these winds. Perfunctorily, day in and day out we turned our eyes through long habit towards the horizon. But we knew, before the look, that the searching would be bootless. Forever and forever, under the pitiless sun and cold blue sky stretched the indigo of the ocean floor. The ether between the planets can be no less empty, no less void. I never, till that moment, could have so much as conceived the imagination of such loneliness, such utter stagnant abomination of desolation. In an open boat, bereft of comrades, I should have gone mad in thirty minutes.

I remember to have approximated the impression of such empty immensity only once before, in my younger days, when I lay on my back on a treeless, bushless mountain side, and stared up into the sky for the better part of an hour. You probably know the trick. If you do not, you must understand that if you look up at the blue long enough, steadily enough, the flatness of the thing begins little by little to expand, to give here and there; and the eye travels on and on and up and up, till at length (well for you that it lasts but the fraction of a second), you all at once see space. You generally stop there and cry out, and — your hands over your eyes — are only too glad to grovel close to the good old solid earth again. Just as I, so often on short voyage, was glad to wrench my eyes away from that horrid vacancy, to fasten them upon our sailless masts and stack, or to lay my grip upon the sooty smudged taffrail of the only thing that stood between me and the Outer Dark.

For we had come at last to that region of the Great Seas, where no ship goes, the silent sea of Coleridge and the Ancient One, the unplumbed, untracked, uncharted Dreadfulness, primordial, hushed, and we were as much alone as a grain of star dust whirling in the empty space beyond Uranus and the ken of the greater telescopes.

So the Glarus plodded and churned her way onward. Every day and all day the same pale blue sky and unwinking sun bent over that moving speck. Every day and all day the same black-blue water-world, untouched by any known wind, smooth as a slab of syenite, colorful as an opal, stretched out and around and beyond and before and behind us, forever, illimitable, empty. Every day the smoke of our fires veiled the streaked whiteness of our wake. Every day Hardenberg (our skipper) at noon pricked a pin-hole in the chart that hung in the wheel house, and that showed we were so much farther into the wilderness. Every day the world of men, of civilization, of newspapers, policemen, and street railways, receded, and we steamed on alone, lost and forgotten in that silent sea.

"Jolly lot o' room to turn raound in," observed Ally Bazan, the colonial, "withaout steppin' on y'r neighbor's toes."

"We're clean, clean out o' the track of navigation," Hardenberg told him. "An' a blessed good thing for us, too. Nobody ever comes down into these waters. Ye couldn't pick no course here. Everything leads to nowhere."

"Might as well be in a bally balloon," said Strokher.

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I shall not tell of the nature of the venture on which the Glarus was bound, further than to say it was not legitimate. It had to do with an ill thing done over two centuries ago. There was money in the venture, but it was to be gained by a violation of metes and bounds which are better left intact.

The island toward which we were heading is associated in the minds of men with a Horror. A Ship had called there once, two hundred years in advance of the Glarus — a ship not much unlike the crank high-prowed caravel of Hudson, and her company had landed, and having accomplished the evil they had set out to do, made shift to sail away. And then, just after the palms of the island had sunk from sight below the water's edge, the unspeakable had happened. The Death that was not Death had arisen from out the sea and stood before the Ship; and over it and the blight of the thing lay along the decks like mould, and the ship sweated in the terror of that which is yet without a name. Twenty men died in the first week, all but six in the second. These six, with the shadow of insanity upon them, made out to launch a boat, returned to the island and died there, after leaving a record of what had happened.

The six left the ship exactly as she was, sails all set, lanterns all lit, left her in the shadow of the Death that was not Death. The wind made at the time, they said, and as they bent to their bars, she sailed after them, for all the world like a thing refusing to abandon them or be herself abandoned, till the wind died down. Then they left her behind, and she stood there, becalmed, and watched them go. She was never heard of again.

Or was she — well, that's as may be.

But the main point of the whole affair to my notion, has always been this. The ship was the last friend of those six poor wretches who made back for the island with their poor chests of plunder. She was their guardian, as it were, would have defended and befriended them to the last; and also we, the Three Black Crows and myself, had no right under heaven, nor before the law of men, to come prying and peeping into this business — into this affair of the dead and buried past. There was sacrilege in it. We were no better than body snatchers.

* * * * *

When I heard the others complaining of the loneliness of our surroundings, I said nothing at first. I was no sailor man and I was on board only by tolerance. But I looked again at the maddening sameness of the horizon — the same vacant, void horizon that we had seen now for sixteen days on end, and felt in my wits and in my nerves that same formless rebellion and protest such as comes when the same note is reiterated over and over again.

It may seem a little thing that the mere fact of meeting with no other ship should have ground down the edge of the spirit. But let the incredulous — bound upon such a hazard as ours — sail straight into nothingness for sixteen days on end, seeing nothing but the sun, hearing nothing but the thresh of his own screw, and then put the question.

And yet, of all things, we desired no company. Stealth was our one great aim. But I think there were moments — toward the last — when the Three Crows would have welcomed even a cruiser.

Besides, there was more cause for depression, after all, than mere isolation.

On the seventh day, Hardenberg and I were forward by the cat-head adjusting the grain with some half-formed intent of spearing the porpoises that of late had begun to appear under our bows, and Hardenberg had been computing the number of days we were yet to run.

"We are some five hundred odd miles off that island by now," he said, "and she's doing her thirteen knots handsome. All's well so far — but do you know, I'd just as soon raise that point o' land as soon as convenient."

"How so?" said I, bending on the line. "Expect some weather?"

"Mr. Dixon," said he, giving me a curious glance, "the sea is a queer proposition, put it any ways. I've been a sea-farin' man since I was as big as a minute, and I know the sea, and what's more, the Feel o' the Sea. Now, look out yonder. Nothin', hey? Nothin' but the same ol' skyline we've watched all the way out. The glass is as steady as a steeple, and this ol' hooker, I reckon, is as sound as the day she went off the ways. But just the same, if I were to home now, a-foolin' about Gloucester way in my little dough-dish — d'ye know what? I'd put into port. I sure would. Because why? Because I got the Feel o' the Sea, Mr. Dixon. I got the Feel o' the Sea."

I had heard old skippers say something of this before, and I cited to Hardenberg the experience of a skipper captain I once knew who had turned turtle in a calm sea off Trincomalee. I asked what this Feel of the Sea was warning him against just now (for on the high sea any premonition is a premonition of evil, not of good.) But he was not explicit.

"I don't know," he answered moodily, and as if in great perplexity, coiling the rope as he spoke. "I don't know."

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There's some blame thing or other close to us, I'll bet a hat. I don't know the name of it, Mr. Dixon, and I don't know the game of it, but there's a big Bird in the air, just out of sight som-eres, and," he suddenly exclaimed, smacking his knee and leaning forward, "I — don't — like — it — one — dam' — bit."

The same thing came up in our talk in the cabin that night, after the dinner was taken off, and we settled down to tobacco. Only, at this time, Hardenberg was on duty on the bridge. It was Ally Bazan who spoke instead.

"Seems to me," he hazarded, "as haow they's somethin' or other a-goin' to bump up, pretty blyme soon. I shouldn't be surprized, naow, y'know, if we piled her up on some bally uncharted reef along o' to-night and went strite daown afore we'd had a bloomin' charnce to s'y 'So long, gen'lemen all.'"

He laughed as he spoke, but when, just at that moment, a pan clattered in the galley, he jumped suddenly with an oath, and looked hard about the cabin.

Then Strokher confessed to a sense of distress also. He'd been having it since day before yesterday, it seemed.

"And I put it to you the glass is lovely," he said, "so it's no blow. I guess," he continued, "we're all a bit seedy and ship sore."

And whether or not this talk worked upon my own nerves, or whether in very truth the Feel of the Sea had found me also, I do not know; but I do know that after dinner that night, just before going to bed, a queer sense of apprehension came upon me, and that when I had come to my stateroom, after my turn upon deck, I became furiously angry with nobody in particular, because I could not at once find the matches. But here was a difference. The other men had been merely vaguely uncomfortable.

I could put a name to my uneasiness. I felt that we were being watched.

* * * * *

It was a strange ship's company we made after that. I speak only of the Crows and myself. We carried a scant crew of stokers, and there was also a chief engineer. But we saw so little of him that he did not count. The Crows and I gloomed on the quarter-deck from dawn to dark, silent, irritable, working upon each other's nerves till the creak of a block would make a man jump like cold steel laid to his flesh. We quarreled over absolute nothings, glowered at each other for half a word, and each one of us, at different times, was at some pains to declare that never in the course of his career had he been associated with such a disagreeable trio of brutes. Yet we were always together, and sought each other's company with painful insistence.

Only once were we all agreed, and that was when the cook, a Chinaman, spoiled a certain batch of biscuits. Unanimously we fell foul of the creature with so much vociferation as fish wives till he fled the cabin in actual fear of mishandling, leaving us suddenly seized with noisy hilarity — for the first time in a week. Hardenberg proposed a round of drinks from our single remaining case of beer. We stood up and formed an Elk's chain and then drained our glasses to each other's health with profound seriousness.

That same evening, I remember, we all sat on the quarter-deck till late and — oddly enough — related each one his life's history up to date; and then went down to the cabin for a game of euchre before turning in.

We had left Strokher on the bridge — it was his watch — and had forgotten all about him in the interest of the game, when — I suppose it was about one in the morning — I heard him whistle long and shrill. I laid down my cards and said:

"Hark!"

In the silence that followed we heard at first only the muffled lope of our engines, the cadenced snorting of the exhaust, and the ticking of Hardenberg's big watch in his waistcoat that he had hung by the arm hole to the back of his chair. Then from the bridge, above our deck, prolonged, intoned — a wailing cry in the night — came Strokher's voice: "Sail oh-h-h."

And the cards fell from our hands, and, like men turned to stone, we sat looking at each other across the soiled red cloth for what seemed an immeasurably long minute.

Then stumbling and swearing, in a hysteria of hurry, we gained the deck.

There was a moon, very low and reddish, but no wind. The sea beyond the taffrail was as smooth as lava, and so still that the swells from the cutwater of the Glarus did not break as they rolled away from the bows.

I remember that I stood staring and blinking at the empty ocean — where the moonlight lay like a painted stripe reaching to the horizon — stupid and frowning, till Hardenberg, who had gone on ahead, cried:

"Not here — on the bridge!"

We joined Strokher, and as I came up the others were asking:

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"Where? Where?"

And there, before he had pointed, I saw — we all of us saw — . And I heard Hardenberg's teeth come together like a spring trap, while Ally Bazan ducked as though to a blow, muttering:

"Gord'a mercy, what nyme do ye put to a ship like that?"

And after that no one spoke for a long minute, and we stood there, moveless black shadows, huddled together for the sake of the blessed elbow touch that means so incalculably much, looking off over our port quarter.

For the ship that we saw there — oh, she was not a half mile distant — was unlike any ship known to present day construction.

She was short, and high-pooped, and her stern, which was turned a little towards us, we could see, was set with curious windows, not unlike a house. And on either side of this stern were two great iron cressets such as once were used to burn signal fires in. She had three masts with mighty yards swung 'thwart ship, but bare of all sails save a few rotting streamers. Here and there about her a tangled mass of rigging drooped and sagged.

And there she lay, in the red eye of the setting moon, in that solitary ocean, shadowy, antique, forlorn, a thing the most abandoned, the most sinister I ever remember to have seen.

Then Strokher began to explain volubly and with many repetitions.

"A derelict, of course. I was asleep; yes I was asleep. Gross neglect of duty. I say I was asleep — on watch. And we worked up to her. When I woke, why — you see, when I woke, there she was," he gave a weak little laugh, "and — and now, why, there she is, you see. I turned around and saw her sudden like — when I woke up, that is."

He laughed again, and as he laughed, the engines far below our feet gave a sudden hiccough. Something crashed and struck the ship's sides till we lurched as we stood. There was a shriek of steam, a shout — and then silence.

The noise of the machinery ceased; the Glarus slid through the still water, moving only by her own decreasing momentum.

Hardenberg sang, "Stand by!" and called down the tube to the engine room.

"What's up?"

I was standing close enough to him to hear the answer in a small faint voice:

"Shaft gone, sir."

"Broke?"

"Yes, sir."

Hardenberg faced about.

"Come below. We must talk." I do not think any of us cast a glance at the Other Ship again. Certainly I kept my eyes away from her. But as we started down the companionway, I laid my hand on Strokher's shoulder. The rest were ahead. I looked him straight between the eyes as I asked:

"Were you asleep? Is that why you saw her so suddenly?"

It is now five years since I asked the question. I am still waiting for Strokher's answer.

Well, our shaft was broken. That was flat. We went down into the engine room and saw the jagged fracture that was the symbol of our broken hopes. And in the course of the next five minutes' conversation with the chief, we found that, as we had not provided against such a contingency, there was to be no mending of it. We said nothing about the mishap coinciding with the appearance of the Other Ship. But I know we did not consider the break with any degree of surprise after a few moments.

We came up from the engine room and sat down to the cabin table.

"Now what?" said Hardenberg, by way of beginning.

Nobody answered at first.

It was by now three in the morning. I recall it all perfectly. The ports opposite where I sat were open and I could see. The moon was all but full set. The dawn was coming up with a copper murkiness over the edge of the world. All the stars were yet out. The sea, for all the red moon and copper dawn, was gray, and there, less than half a mile away, still lay our consort. I could see her through the portholes with each slow careening of the Glarus.

"I vote for the island," cried Ally Bazan, "shaft or no shaft. We rigs a bit o' syle, y'know — " and thereat the discussion began.

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For upwards of two hours it raged, with loud words and shaken forefingers, and great noisy bangings of the table, and how it would have ended I do not know, but at last — it was then maybe five in the morning — the lookout passed word down to the cabin:

"Will you come on deck, gentlemen?" It was the mate who spoke, and the man was shaken — I could see that — to the very vitals of him. We started and stared at one another, and I watched little Ally Bazan go slowly white to the lips. And even then no word of the Ship, except as it might be this from Hardenberg:

"What is it? Good God Almighty, I'm no coward, but this thing is getting one too many for me."

Then without further speech he went on deck.

The air was cool. The sun was not yet up. It was that strange, queer mid-period between dark and dawn, when the night is over and the day not yet come, just the gray that is neither light nor dark, the dim dead blink as of the refracted light from extinct worlds.

We stood at the rail. We did not speak, we stood watching. It was so still that the drip of steam from some loosened pipe far below was plainly audible, and it sounded in that lifeless, silent grayness, like — God knows what — a death tick.

"You see," said the mate, speaking just above a whisper, "there's no mistake about it. She is moving — this way."

"Oh, a current, of course," Strokher tried to say cheerfully, "sets her toward us."

Would the morning never come?

Ally Bazan — his parents were Catholic — began to mutter to himself.

Then Hardenberg spoke aloud.

"I particularly don't want — that — out — there — to cross our bows. I don't want it to come to that. We must get some sails on her."

"And I put it to you as man to man," said Strokher, "where might be your wind."

He was right. The Glarus floated in absolute calm. On all that slab of ocean nothing moved but the Dead Ship.

She came on slowly; her bows, the high clumsy bows pointed toward us, the water turning from her forefoot. She came on; she was near at hand. We saw her plainly — saw the rotted planks, the crumbling rigging, the rust corroded metal work, the broken rail, the gaping deck, and I could imagine that the clean water broke away from her sides in refluent wavelets as though in recoil from a thing unclean. She made no sound. No single thing stirred aboard the hulk of her — but she moved.

We were helpless. The Glarus could stir no boat in any direction; we were chained to the spot. Nobody had thought to put out our lights, and they still burned on through the dawn, strangely out of place in their red and green garishness, like masquers surprised by daylight.

And in the silence of that empty ocean, in that queer half light between dawn and day, at six o'clock, silent as the settling of the dead to the bottomless bottom of the ocean, gray as fog, lonely, blind, soulless, voiceless, the Dead Ship crossed our bows.

I do not know how long after this the Ship disappeared, or what was the time of day when we at last pulled ourselves together. But we came to some sort of decision at last. This was to go on — under sail. We were too close to the Island now to turn back for — for a broken shaft.

The afternoon was spent fitting on the sails to her, and when after nightfall the wind at length came up fresh and favorable, I believe we all felt heartened and a deal more hardy — until the last canvass went aloft, and Hardenberg took the wheel.

We had drifted a good deal since the morning, and the bows of the Glarus were pointed homeward, but as soon as the breeze blew strong enough to get steerage way, Hardenberg put the wheel over, and as the booms swung across the deck headed for the island again.

We had not gone on this course half an hour — no, not twenty minutes — before the wind shifted a whole quarter of the compass and took the Glarus square in the teeth, so that there was nothing for it but to tack. And then the strangest thing befell.

I will make allowance for the fact that there was no center board nor keel to speak of to the Glarus. I will admit that the sails upon a nine hundred ton freighter are not calculated to speed her, nor steady her. I will even admit the possibility of a current that set from the island toward us. All this may be true, yet the Glarus should have advanced. We should have made a wake.

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And instead of this, our stolid, steady, trusty old boat was — what shall I say?

I will say that no man may thoroughly understand a ship — after all. I will say that new ships are cranky and unsteady, that old and seasoned ships have their little crotchets, their little fussinesses that their skippers must learn and humor if they are to get anything out of them, that even the best ships may sulk at times, shirk their work, grow unstable, perverse, and refuse to answer helm and handling. And I will say that some ships that for years have sailed blue water as soberly and as docilely as a street-car horse has plodded the treadmill of the 'tween-tracks, have been known to balk, as stubbornly and as conclusively as any old Bay Billy that ever wore a bell. I know this has happened, because I have seen it. I saw, for instance, the Glarus do it.

Quite literally and truly we could do nothing with her. We will say, if you like, that that great jar and wrench when the shaft gave way shook her and crippled her. It is true, however, that whatever the cause may have been, we could not force her toward the island. Of course, we all said "Current;" but why didn't the log-line trail?

For three days and three nights we tried it. And the Glarus heaved and plunged and shook herself just as you have seen a horse plunge and rear when his rider tries to force him at the steam roller.

I tell you I could feel the fabric of her tremble and shudder from bow to stern post, as though she were in a storm; I tell you she fell off from the wind, and broad-on drifted back from her course till the sensation of her shrinking was as plain as her own staring lights and a thing pitiful to see.

We rowelled her and we crowded sail upon her, and we coaxed and bullied and humored her, till the Three Crows, their fortune only a plain sail two days ahead, raved and swore like insensate brutes, or shall we say like mahouts, trying to drive their stricken elephant upon the tiger — and all to no purpose. "Damn the damned current and the damned luck and the damned shaft and all," Hardenberg would exclaim, as from the wheel he would watch the Glarus falling off. "Go on, you old hooker — you tub of junk! My God, you'd think she was scared!"

Perhaps the Glarus was scared, perhaps not; that point is debatable. But it was beyond doubt or debate that Hardenberg was scared.

A ship that will not obey is only one degree less terrible than a mutinous crew. And we were in a fair way to have both. The stokers whom we had impressed into duty as A. B.'s, were of course superstitious. They had seen — what we had seen; and they knew how the Glarus was acting and it was only a question of time before they got out of hand.

That was the end. We held a final conference in the cabin and decided that there was no help for it — we must turn back.

And back we accordingly turned, and at once the wind followed us, and the "current" helped us, and the water churned under the forefoot of the Glarus, and the wake whitened under her stern, and the log line ran out from the rail and strained back as the ship worked homeward.

We had never a mishap from the time we finally swung her about; and, considering the circumstances, the voyage back to San Francisco was propitious.

But an incident happened just after we had started back. We were perhaps some five miles on the homeward track. It was early evening and Strokher had the watch. At about seven o'clock he called me up on the bridge.

"See her?" he said.

And there, far behind us, in the shadow of the twilight, loomed the Other Ship again, desolate, lonely beyond words. We were leaving her rapidly astern. Strokher and I stood looking at her till she dwindled to a dot. Then Strokher said:

"She's on post again."

And when months afterward we limped into the Golden Gate and cast anchor off the "Front," our crew went ashore as soon as discharged, and in half a dozen hours the legend was in every sailor's boarding house and in every seaman's dive, from Barbary Coast to Black Tom's.

It is still there, and that is why no pilot will take the Glarus out, no captain will navigate her, no stoker feed her fires, no sailor walk her decks. The Glarus is suspect. She will never smell blue water again, nor taste the trades. She has seen a Ghost.