Title: Stories by English Authors: The Sea

Author: Various

Release Date: July, 2004 [EBook #6041]
[Yes, we are more than one year ahead of schedule]
[This file was first posted on October 23, 2002]

Edition: 10

Language: English

Character set encoding: ASCII

This eBook was produced by Charles Aldarondo, Charles Franks, Nicole
Apostola and The Online Distributed Proofreading Team.

STORIES BY ENGLISH AUTHORS

THE SEA

THE EXTRAORDINARY ADVENTURE OF A CHIEF MATE

BY W. CLARK RUSSELL

In the newspapers of 1876 appeared the following extracts from the log of a merchantman: "VOLCANIC ISLAND IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC. --The ship Hercules, of Liverpool, lately arrived in the Mersey, reports as follows: March 23, in 2 deg. 12' north latitude, 33 deg. 27' west longitude, a shock of earthquake was felt, and shortly afterward a mass of land was hove up at a distance of about two miles from the ship. Michael Balfour, the chief officer, fell overboard. A buoy was thrown to him, the ship brought to the wind, and a boat lowered within fifteen minutes of the occurence. But though the men sought the chief mate for some time, nothing could be seen of him, and it is supposed that he sank shortly after falling into the sea. Masters of vessels are recommended to keep a sharp lookout in approaching the situation of the new island as given above. No doubt it will be sighted by other ships, and duly reported."

I am Michael Balfour; I it was who fell overboard; and it is needless for me to say here that I not drowned. The volcanic island was only reported by one other ship, and the reason why will be read at large in this account of my strange adventure and merciful deliverance.

It was the evening of the 23d of March, 1876. Our passage to the equator from Sydney had been good, but for three days we had been bothered with light head winds and calms, and since four o'clock this day the ocean had stretched in oil-smooth undulations to its margin, with never a sigh of air to crispen its marvellous serenity into shadow. The courses were hauled up, the staysails down, the mizzen brailed up; the canvas delicately beat the masts to the soft swing of the tall spars, and sent a small rippling thunder through the still air, like a roll of drums heard at a distance. The heat was great; I had never remembered a more biting sun. The pitch in the seams was soft as putty, the atmosphere was full of the smell

of blistered paint, and it was like putting your hand on a red-hot stove to touch the binnacle hood or grasp for an an instant an iron belaying-pin.

A sort of loathing comes into a man with a calm like this. "The very deep did rot," says the poet; and you understood his fancy when you marked the blind heave of the swell to the sun standing in the midst of a sky of brass, with his wake under him sinking in a sinuous dazzle, as though it was his fiery glance piercing to the green depths a thousand fathoms deep. It was hot enough to slacken the nerves and give the imagination a longer scope than sanity would have it ride by.

That was why, perhaps, I found something awful and forbidding in the sunset, though at another time it might scarcely have detained my gaze a minute. But it is true, nevertheless, that others besides me gaped at the wonderful gushings of hot purple,--arrested whirlpools of crimson haze, they looked,--in the heart of which the orb sat rayless, flooding the sea with blood under him, so magnificently fell was the hue, and flushing the sky with twenty dyes of gold and orange, till, in the far east, the radiance fainted into the delicacy of pale amber.

"Yon's a sunset," said Captain Matthews, a North of England man, to me, "to make a fellow think of the last day."

"I'm looking at it, sir," said I, "as though I had never seen a sunset before. That's the oddest part of it, to my mind. There's fire enough there to eat a gale up. How should a cat's-paw crawl then?" And I softly whistled, while he wetted his finger and held it up; but to no purpose; the draught was all between the rails, and they blew forward and aft with every swing of the sails.

When the dusk came along, the silence upon the sea was something to put all sorts of moods into a man. The sky was a hovering velvet stretch of stars, with a young moon lying curled among them, and winkings of delicate violet sheet-lightning down in the southwest, as though some gigantic-tinted lantern, passing, flung its light upon the dark blue obscure there. The captain went below, after a long, impatient look round, and I overhung the rail, peering into the water alongside, or sending my gaze into the frightful distance, where the low-lying stars hung. With every soft dip of the ship's side to the slant of the dark folds, there shot forth puffs of cloudy phosphor, intermixed with a sparkling of sharper fires now and again, blue, yellow, and green, like worms of flame striking out of their cocoons of misty radiance. The noise of the canvas on high resembled the stirring of pinions, and the cheep of a block, the grind of a parrel, helped the illusion, as though the sounds were the voices of huge birds restlessly beating their pinions aloft.

Presently the man at the wheel startled me with an observation. I went to him, and he pointed upward with a long, shadowy arm. I

looked, and saw a corposant, as it is called at sea,--a St. Elmo’s fire,--burning at the end of the crossjack-yard. The yard lay square, and the polished sea beneath gave back the reflection so clearly that the mystic fire lay like a huge glow-worm on the black mirror.

"There should be wind not far off," said the helmsman, in a subdued voice; for few sailors can see one of these lights without a stirring of their superstitious instincts, and this particular exhalation hung close to us.

"I hope so," said I, "though I don’t know where it’s to come from."

As I spoke, the light vanished. I ran my eye over the yards, expecting its reappearance; but it returned no more, and the sails rose pale and phantom-like to the stars. I was in an odd humour, and this was an apparition not to brighten one up. Of course one knows all about these maritime corpse-candles, and can explain their nature; but nevertheless the sudden kindling of them upon the darkness of the night, in the dead hush of the calm or amid the fury of the shrieking hurricane, produces feelings which there is nothing in science to resolve. I could have laughed to find myself sending a half-awed look aloft, as if I expected to see some visionary hand at work upon another one these graveyard illuminations-with a stealing out of some large, sad face to the melancholy glow; but I returned to the side very pensive for all that, and there stood watching the fiery outline of a shark subtly sneaking close to the surface (insomuch that the wake of its fin slipped away in little coils of green flame) toward the ship’s bows.

Half an hour later the dark curl of a light air of wind shattered the starlight in the sea, and our canvas fell asleep. I called to the watch to trim sail, and in a few moments the decks were busy with the figures of men pulling and hauling and surging out at the ropes in sulky, slumberous growlings. The captain arrived.

"Little worth having in this, I fear," said he. "But make the most of it--make the most of it. Get the foretopmast stunsail run up. If she creeps but a league, it is a league to the good."

The sail was sleepily set. Humbugging about with stunsails to the cat’s-paws little pleased the men, especially at night. For three days they had been boxhauling the yards about to no purpose, and it was sickening work running stunsail-booms out to airs that died in their struggles to reach us. However, here was a draught at last, and the old gurgling and moaning sounds of the breathless, sluggish swell washing heavily like liquid lead to the sides were replaced by the tinkling noises of waters parting at the bows with a pretty little seething of expiring foam, and the hiss of exploding froth-bells. At eleven o’clock the light breeze was still holding, and the ship was floating softly through the dusk, the paring of moon swaying like a silver sickle over the port mizzen topsail yard-arm, everything quiet along the decks, no light save the

sheen from the lamps in the binnacle, and nothing stirring but the figure of a man on the forecastle pacing athwartships, and blotting out at every step a handful of the stars which lay like dust on the blackness, under the yawn of the forecourse. On a sudden a steamer's lights showed on the starboard bow--a green beam, and a yellow one above, with the water on fire beneath them, and sparks floating away upon her coil of smoke, that made you think of the spangles of a falling rocket. She went past swiftly, at no great distance from us. There was not a moan in the hot breeze to disturb the wonderful ocean stillness, and you almost thought you caught the beating of the iron heart in her, and the curious monotonous songs which engines sing as they work. She swept past like a phantom, running a line of illuminated windows along, which resembled a row of street-lamps out in the darkness; and as she came on to our quarter she struck seven bells (half-past eleven), the rich metallic notes of which I clearly heard; and with the trembling of the last stroke upon the ear her outline melted.

At that instant a peculiar thrill ran through the ship. It may be likened to the trembling in a floor when a heavy waggon passes in the street outside. It was over in a breath, but I could have sworn that it was not my fancy. I walked aft to the wheel, and said to the man, "Did you notice anything just now?"

"Seemed to me as if the vessel trembled like," he replied.

As he spoke the ship shook again, this time strongly. It was something more than a shudder; the sensation was for all the world as though she had scraped over a shoal of rock or shingle. There was a little clatter below, a noise of broken glass. The watch, who had been dozing on deck, sprang to their feet, and their ejaculations of surprise and fear rolled in a growl among them. The captain ran out of the companionway in his shirt and trousers.

"What was that, Mr. Balfour?" he bawled.

"Either the shock of an earthquake," said I, "or a whale sliding along our keel."

"Get a cast of the lead! get a cast of the lead!" he shouted.

This was done to the full scope of the hand-line, without bottom, of course. By this time the watch below had tumbled up, and all hands were now on deck, staring aloft or over the side, sniffing, spitting, muttering, and wondering what had happened.

"There's that bloomin' compreesant come again!" exclaimed a hoarse voice; and, sure enough, a light similar to the one that had hung at the crossjack yard-arm now floated upon the end of the upper maintopsail-yard.

"The devil's abroad to-night!" exclaimed the captain. "There's sulphur enough about," and he fell a-snuffling.

What followed might have made an infidel suppose so; for scarce were the words out of his mouth when there happened an astonishing blast of noise, as loud and violent as that of forty or fifty cannons fired off at once, and out of the black sea no farther than a mile broad on the starboard beam rose a pillar of fire, crimson as the light of the setting sun and as dazzling too; it lived while you might have counted twenty, but in that time it lighted up the sea for leagues and leagues, put out the stars, and made the sky resemble a canopy of yellow satin; we on the ship saw one another's faces as if by daylight; the shrouds and masts and our own figures cast jet-black shadows on the deck; the whole ship flashed out to that amazing radiance like a fabric sun-touched. The column of fire then fattened and disappeared, and the night rolled down upon our blinded eyes as black as thunder.

There was no noise--no hissing as of boiling water. If the furious report that preceded the leap of the fire had rendered its coming terrible, its extinction was made not less awful by the tomb-like stillness that attended it. I sprang on to the rail, believing I could perceive a dark mass--like a deeper dye upon the blackness that way--upon the water, and to steady myself caught hold of the mizzen loyal backstay, swinging out to my arm's length and peering with all my might. My excitement was great, and the consternation that posessed the ship's crew was upon me. As I leaned, the vessel heeled violently to a large swell caused by the volcanic disturbances. The roll was extraordinarily severe, heaving the vessel down to her covering-board; and the great hill of water running silent and in darkness through the sea, so that it could neither be viewed nor heard, made the sickening lurch a dreadful surprise and wonder.

It was in that moment that I fell overboard. I suppose my grip of the backstay relaxed when the ship lay down; but, let the thing have happened how it would, in a breath I was under water. It is said that the swiftness of thought is best shown by dreams. This may be so; yet I cannot believe that thought was ever swifter in a dream than it was in me ere I came to the surface; for in those few seconds I gathered exactly what had befallen me, wondered whether my fall had been seen, whether I should be saved, realised my hopeless condition if I had not been observed, and, above all, was thinking steadfastly and with horror of the shark I had not long ago watched stemming in fire past the ship. I was a very indifferent swimmer, and what little power I had in that way was like to be paralysed by thoughts of the shark. I rose and fetched a breath, shook the water out of my eyes, and looked for the ship. She had been sliding along at the rate of about four knots an hour; but had she been sailing at ten she could not seem to have gone farther from me during the brief while I was submerged. From the edge of the water, where my eyes were, she appeared a towering pale shadow about a mile off. I endeavoured to scream out; but whether the cold of the plunge had bereft me of my voice, or that I had swallowed water enough to stop my pipes, I found I could utter nothing

louder than a small groan. I made several strokes with my arms, and suddenly spied a life-buoy floating almost twenty yards ahead of me. I made for it in a transport of joy, for the sight of it was all the assurance I could ask that they knew on the ship that I had tumbled overboard; and, coming to the buoy, I seized and threw it over my head, and then got it under my arms and so floated.

The breeze, such as it was, was on the ship's quarter, and she would need to describe a considerable arc before she rounded to. I could hear very faintly the voices on board, the flinging down of coils of rope, the dim echoes of hurry and commotion. I again sought to exert my lungs, but could deliver no louder note than a moan. The agony of mind I was under lest a shark should seize me I cannot express, and my strained eyeballs would come from the tall shadow of the ship to the the sea about me in a wild searching of the liquid ebony of it for the sparkling configuration of the most abhorred of all fish. I could have sworn that hours elapsed before they lowered a boat from the ship, that seemed to grow fainter and fainter every time I looked at her, so swallowing is the character of ocean darkness, and so subtle apparently, so fleet in fact, the settling away of a fabric under canvas from an object stationary on the water. I could distinctly hear the rattle of the oars in the rowlocks, and the splash of the dipped blades, but could not discern the boat. It was speedily evident, however, that they were pulling wide of me; my ear could not mistake. Again I tried to shout, but to no purpose. Manifestly no one had thought of taking my bearings when I fell, and I, who lay south, was being sought for southwest.

Time passed; the boat never approached me within a quarter of a mile. They must instantly have heard me, could I have halloed; but my throat refused its office. I reckoned that they continued to row here and there for about half an hour, during which they were several times hailed by the captain, as I supposed; the sound of the oars then died. A little later I heard the very faint noises made by their hoisting the boat and hauling in upon the braces, and then there was nothing for me to do but to watch, with dying eyes, the shadow of the ship till it faded, and the stars shone where she had been.

The sky shed very little light, and there was no foam to cast an illumination of its own. However, by this time, as you will suppose, I was used to my situation; that is to say, the horror and novelty of my condition had abated, and settled into a miserable feeling of despair; so that I was like a dying man who had passed days in an open boat, and who languidly directs his eyes over the gunwale at the sea, with the hopelessness that is bred by familiarity with his dreadful posture. It was some time after the ship had melted into the airy dusk that I seemed to notice, for the first time since I had been in the life-buoy, the lump of blackness at which I had been straining my eyes when the vessel heeled and I fell. It had the elusiveness of a light at sea, that is best seen (at a distance) by gazing a little on one side of it. It lay, a black

mass, and whether it was a vast huddle of weeds, or a great whale killed by the earthquake, or solid land uphove by the volcanic rupture, was not conjecturable. It hung, still and not very tall, for I could not see that it put out any stars, and was about a mile distant. Whatever it might prove, I could not be worse off near or on or amid it than i was here; so, setting my face toward it, I began to strike out with my legs and arms.

The water was so fiery, it chipped in flashes to every blow of my hands. I swam in the utmost terror, never knowing but that the next moment I should be feeling the teeth of a shark upon my legs, for the sparkling of the sea to my kicks and motions was signal enough for such a beast if it was a league distant; but I may as well say here that there is no doubt the shock of earthquake and the flame effectually cleared the sea in its neighbourhood of every kind of fish that floated in it, though the hope of such a thing could yield me but very little comfort while I swam.

I continued to make good progress, and presently approaching the block of blackness, for so it looked, perceived that it was certainly land,--a solid rock, in short,--the head of some mountainous submarine formation lifted ten or twelve feet above the sea. I could now discern a faintness of vapour circling up from it and showing like steam against the stars. Its front stretched a length of a few hundred feet; how far it went behind I could not tell. A small sound of creaming waters came from it, produced by the light swell washing its shelter side. It lay all in a line of grayish darkness even when I was quite close, and I could see nothing but the shapeless body of it. Of a sudden my feet struck ground, and I waded thirty paces along a shelf that was under water till my paces lifted to the dry beach. But by this time I was fearfully exhausted; I could scarcely breathe. My legs and arms were numbed to the weight of lead. The atmosphere was warm, but not unbearably so--not hotter than it had been at noon in the ship. Steam crawled up from every pore, like the drainings of smoke from damp straw, but it did not add to the distress of my breathing. I made shift to stagger onward till I had gone about fifty feet from the wash of the sea. Nature then broke down; my knees gave way, I stumbled and fell--whether in a swoon or whether in a death-like slumber, I cannot say; all I can tell is that when I awoke, or recovered my senses, the sun stood fifteen degrees above the horizon, and I opened my eyes upon a hot and dazzling sky.

I sat up in the utmost amazement. My mind for some time was all abroad, and I could recollect nothing. Memory then entered me with a bound, and I staggered to my feet with a cry. The first thing I took notice of was that my clothes were nearly dry, which was not very reconcilable with the steam that was still issuing from the island, though it was as I say. My bones ached cruelly, but I was not sensible of any particular languor. The brilliance was so blinding that I had to employ my eyes very warily in order to see; and it was not until I had kept opening and shutting them and shading them with my hands for some minutes that they acquired

their old power. The island on which I stood had unquestionably been hove up in the night by the earthquake. I cannot figure it better than by asking you to imagine a gigantic mass of pumice-stone, somewhat flat on top, and shelving on all sides very gently to the water, lying afloat but steady on the sea. It was of the hue of pumice, and as clean as an egg-shell, without a grain of calcined dust or any appearance of scoriae that I could anywhere observe. It was riddled with holes, some wide and deep--a very honeycomb; and that I did not break my neck or a limb in staggering walk from the beach in the darkness, I must ever account the most miraculous part of my adventure.

But what (when I had my whole wits) riveted my attention, and held me staring open-mouthed, as though in good truth the apparition of the devil had risen before me, was the body of a ship leaning on its bilge, at not more than a gunshot from where I stood, looking toward the interior. When my eyes first went to the thing I could not believe them. I imagined it some trick of the volcanic explosion that had fashioned a portion of the land or rock (as it may be called) into the likeness of a ship, but, on gazing steadfastly, I saw that it was indeed a vessel, rendered extraordinarily beautiful and wonderful by being densely covered with shells of a hundred different kinds, by which her bulk was enlarged, though her shape was preserved. Bright fountains of water were gushing from fifty places in her, all these waterfalls shone like rainbows, and showed surprisingly soft and lovely against the velvet green of the moss and the gray and kaleidoscopic tints of the shells upon her. Lost in amazement, I made my way toward her, and stood viewing her at a short distance. She had three lower masts standing--one right in the bows, and the mizzen raking very much aft. All three masts were supported by shrouds, and that was all the rigging the sea had left. She looked to be made of shells and moss; her shrouds and masts were incrusted as thickly as her hull. She was a mere tub of a ship in shape, being scarce twice as long as she was broad, with great fat buttocks, a very tall stern narrowing atop, and low bows with a prodigious curve to the stem-head. I am not well versed in the shipping of olden times, but I would have willingly staked all I was worth in the world that the fabric before me belonged to a period not much later than the days of Columbus, and that she had been sunk at least three centuries below the sea; and it was also perfectly clear to me that she had risen in the daylight, out of her green and oozy sepulchre, with the upheaval of the bed on which she lay to the convulsion that had produced this island.

But my situation was not one to suffer me to stand long idly wondering and staring. The moment I brought my eyes away from the ship to the mighty desolation of the blue and gleaming ocean, a horror broke upon me, my heart turned into lead, and in the anguish of my spirits I involuntarily lifted my clinched hands to God. What was to become of me? I had no boat, no means of making anything to bear me, nothing but the life-buoy, that was no better than a trap for sharks to tear me to pieces in. I was thirsty, but there was no fresh water on this steaming speck of rock, and I tell

you, the knowing that there was none, and that unless rain fell I must die of thirst, had like to have driven me mad. Where the ship was, and beyond it, the island rose somewhat in the form of a gentle undulation. I walked that way, and there obtained a view of the whole island, which was very nearly circular, like the head of a hill, somewhat after the shape of a saucepan lid. It resembled a great mass of sponge to the sight, and there was no break upon its surface save the incrusted ship, which did, indeed, form a very conspicuous object. Happening to look downward, I spied a large dead fish, of the size of a cod of sixteen or eighteen pounds, lying a-dry in a hole. I put my arm down and dragged it out, and, hoping by appeasing my hunger to help my thirst somewhat, I opened my knife and cut a little raw steak, and ate it. The moisture in the flesh refreshed me, and, that the sun might not spoil the carcass, I carried it to the shadow made by the ship, and put it under one of the waterfalls that the play might keep it sweet. There was plenty more dead fish in the numerous holes, and I picked out two and put them in the shade; but I knew that the great heat must soon taint them and rot the rest, whence would come a stench that might make the island poisonous to me.

I sat down under the bends of the ship for the shadow it threw, and gazed at the sea. Perhaps I ought to have felt grateful for the miraculous creation of this spot of land, when, but for it, I must have miserably perished in the life-buoy, dying a most dreadful, slow, tormenting death, if some shark had not quickly despatched me; but the solitude was so frightful, my doom seemed so assured, I was threatened with such dire sufferings ere my end came, that, in the madness and despair of my heart, I could have cursed the intervention of this rock, which promised nothing but the prolongation of my misery. There was but one live spark amid the ashes of my hopes; namely, that the island lay in the highway of ships, and that it was impossible a vessel could sight so unusual an object without deviating from her course to examine it. That was all the hope I had; but God knows there was nothing in it to keep me alive when I set off against it the consideration that there was no water on the island, no food; that a ship would have to sail close to remark so flat and little a point as this rock; and that days, ay, and weeks might elapse before the rim of yonder boundless surface, stretching in airy leagues of deep blue to the azure sky at the horizon, should be broken by the star-like shining of a sail.

Happily, the wondrous incrusted bulk was at hand to draw my thoughts away from my hideous condition; for I verily believe, had my eye found nothing to rest upon but the honeycombed pumice, my brain would have given way. I stood up and took a long view of the petrified shell-covered structure, feeling a sort of awe in me while I looked, for it was a kind of illustration of the saying of the sea giving up its dead, and the thing stirred me almost as though it had been a corpse that had risen to the sun, after having been a secret of the deep for three hundred years.

It occurred to me that if I could board her she might furnish me

with a shelter from the dew of the night. She had channels with long plates, all looking as if they were formed of shells; and stepping round to the side toward which she leaned, I found the fore channel-plates to be within reach of my hands. The shells were slippery and cutting; but I was a sailor, and there would have been nothing in a harder climb than this to daunt me. So, after a bit of a struggle, I succeeded in hauling myself into the chains, and thence easily dragged myself over the rail on to the deck.

The sight between the bulwarks was far more lovely and surprising than the spectacle presented by the ship's sides. For the decks seemed not only formed of shells of a hundred different hues; there was a great abundance of branching corals, white as milk, and marine plants of kinds for which I could not find names, of several brilliant colours; so that, what with the delicate velvet of the moss, the dark shades of seaweed of figurations as dainty as those of ferns, and the different sorts of shells, big and little, all lying as solid as if they had been set in concrete, the appearance of the ship submitted was something incredibly fantastic and admirable. Whether the hatches were on or not I could not tell, so thickly coated were the decks; but whether or not, the deposits and marine growths rendered the surface as impenetrable as iron, and I believe it would have kept a small army of labourers plying their pickaxes for a whole week to have made openings into the hold through that shelly coating of mail.

My eye was taken by a peculiar sort of protuberance at the foot of the mainmast. It stood as high as I did, and had something of the shape of a man, and, indeed, after staring at it for some time, I perceived that it had been a man; that is to say, it was a human skeleton, filled up to the bulk of a living being by the shells and barnacles which covered it. Ashore, it might have passed for some odd imitation in shells of the human figure; but, viewing it as I did, in the midst of that great ocean, amid the frightful solitude of the great dome of heaven, in a ship that was like the handiwork of the sea-gods at the bottom of the deep--I say, looking at it as I did, and knowing the thing had had life in centuries past, and had risen thus wildly garnished out of the unfathomable secret heart of the ocean, it awed me to an extent I cannot express, and I gazed as though fascinated. In all probability, this was a man who, when the ship foundered, had been securely lashed to the mast for safety or for punishment.

I turned away at last with a shudder, and walked aft. The wreck was unquestionably some Spanish or Portuguese carrack or galleon as old as I have stated; for you saw her shape when you stood on her deck, and her castellated stern rising into a tower from her poop and poop-royal, as it was called, proved her age as convincingly as if the date of her launch had been scored upon her.

What was in her hold? Thousands of pounds' worth of precious ore in gold and silver bars and ingots, for all I knew; but had she been flush to her upper decks with doubloons and ducats, I have exchanged

them all for the sight of a ship, or for a rill of fresh water. I searched the horizon with feverish eyes; there was nothing in sight. The afternoon was advancing; the sun was burning unbearably midway down the western sky, and my thirst tormented me. I dropped over the side and cut another steak of fish; but though the moisture temporarily relieved me, the salt of the water flowing upon it dried into my throat and increased my sufferings. There was a light air blowing, and the sea trembled to it into a deeper hue of blue, and met in a glorious stream of twinkling rubies under the setting sun. I counted half a score of wet black fins round about the island, and understood that the sharks had recovered from their scare, and had returned to see if the earthquake had cast up anything to eat.

When the sun sank, the night came along in a stride; the curl of the moon looked wanly down upon me, and the sky flashed with starshine, so rich and magnificent was the glow of the nearer luminaries. I reentered the ship and stepped to the cabin front, over which extended a "break" or penthouse, under which I might find some shelter from the dew that was already falling like rain, and squatted down, lascar-fashion, with my back against the shell-armoured bulkhead. Great Father! never had I known what solitude was till then. There was no sound save the quiet foaming of waters draining from the wreck, and the purring of the very light swell softly moving upon the beach, and the faint, scarce audible whispering of the dew-laden draught of air stirring in the stony, fossilised shrouds. My throat felt like hot brass; I tried to pray, but could not. Imagination grew a little delirious, and I would sometimes fancy that the terrible shape at the foot of the mainmast moved as if seeking to free itself and approach me. There was a constant glancing of shooting stars on high, swift sparklings and trailings of luminous dust, and, as on the previous night, here and there upon the horizon a dim violet play of sheet-lightning. It was like being at the bottom of the sea, alive there, to be in this black, shelly, weed-smelling ship. Whether my thoughts came to me waking or sleeping I cannot tell, but I know some mad fancies possessed me, and upon the sable canvas of the night, imagination, like a magic lantern, flung a dozen febriletinctured pictures, and I particularly recollect conceiving that I was my own soul at the bottom of the ocean in the ship; that, in the green twilight of the valley in which I was, I saw many forms of dead men standing or lying or sitting, preserving the postures in which they had come floating down into the darkly gleaming profound--figures of sailors of different centuries clad in the garb of their times, intermixed with old ordnance making coarse and rusty streaks upon the sand, the glitter of minted money, the gleam of jewels, and fish brightly apparelled and of shapes unknown to man floating round about like fragments of rainbow. My dreams always wound up with imaginations of babbling drinks, and then I’d wake with the froth upon my lips. However, I got some ease by leaving my handkerchief to soak in the dew and then sucking it.

Several times during the night I had got on to the upper poop--the deck above the poop anciently termed the poop-royal--and looked

around me. But there was nothing to see, not a shadow to catch the eye. The breeze freshened somewhat about midnight, and the air was made pleasant by the musical noises of running waters. I fell asleep an hour before dawn, and when I awoke the early ashen line was brightening in the east. The birth of the day is rapid in those parallels, and the light of the morning was soon all over sea and sky. I turned to search the ocean, and the first thing I saw was a brig not above half a mile from the island. She had studding sails set, and was going north, creeping along before the breeze. The instant I saw her I rushed on to the poop, where my figure would be best seen, and fell to flourishing my handkerchief like a maniac. I sought to shout, but my voice was even weaker than it had been after I fell overboard. I have no power to describe my feelings while I waited to see what the brig would do. I cursed myself for not having kept a lookout, so that I might have had plenty of time to signal to her as she approached. If she abandoned me I knew I must perish, as every instant assured me that I had neither mental nor physical power to undergo another day and night without drink and without hope upon the island.

On a sudden she hauled up the lee clew of her mainsail, boom-ended her studding sails, and put her helm over. I knew what this signified, and, clasping my hands, I looked up to God.

Presently a boat was lowered and pulled toward the island. I dropped over the side, tumbling down upon my nose in my weakness, and made with trembling legs to the beach, standing, in my eagerness, in the very curl of the wash there. There were three men in the boat, and they eyed me, as they rowed, over their shoulders as if I had been a spectre.

"Who are you, mate, and what country is this?" exclaimed the man who pulled stroke, standing up to stretch his hand to me.

I pointed to my throat, and gasped, "Water!" I could barely articulate.

Nothing in this wide world moves sailors like a cry to them for water. In an instant the three men had dragged me into the boat, and were straining like horses at their oars, as they sent the boat flashing through the rippling water. We dashed alongside.

"He’s dying of thirst!" was the cry.

I was bundled on deck; the captain ran below, and returned with a small draught of wine and water.

"Start with that," said he. "You’ll be fitter for a longer pull later on."

The drink gave me back my voice; yet for a while I could scarce speak, for the tears that swelled my heart.

"Are there any more of ye?" said the captain.

I answered, "No."

"But what land's this?" he inquired.

"An island uphove by an earthquake," said I.

"Great thunder!" he cried. "And what's that arrangement in shells and weeds atop of it?"

"A vessel that's probably been three hundred years at the bottom," I answered.

"The quake rose it, hey?"

"Just as it is," said I.

"Well, boil me," cried the worthy fellow, "if it don't seem too good to be true! Mr. Fletcher, trim sail, sir. Best shove along--shove along. Come, sir, step below with me for a rest and a bite, and give me your tale."

A warily eaten meal with another sup of wine and water made me a new man. We sat below a long while, I telling my story, he making notes and talking of the credit he would get for bringing home a report of a new country, when suddenly the mate put his head into the skylight.

"Captain!"

"Hillo!"

"The island's gone, sir."

"What d' ye mean? that we've sunk it?"

"No, by the Lord; but that it's sunk itself."

We ran on deck, and where the island should have been was all clear sea.

The captain stared at the water, with his mouth wide open.

"Nothing to report after all!" he cried.

"I saw it founder!" exclaimed the mate. "I had my eye on it when it sank. I've seen some foundering in my day; but this beats all my going a-fishing!"

"Well," said the captain to me, "we didn't come too soon, sir."

I hid my face in my hands.

The Susan Gray was the name of the brig that rescued me. The Hercules saw the first of the island, and the Susan Gray the last of it. Hence, as I said at the start, it was reported by two vessels only.

QUARANTINE ISLAND

BY SIR WALTER BESANT

"No!" he cried, passionately. "You drew me on; you led me to believe that you cared for me; you encouraged me! What! can a girl go on as you have done without meaning anything? Does a girl allow a man to press her hand--to keep her hand--without meaning anything? Unless these things mean nothing, you are the most heartless girl in the whole world; yes--I say the coldest, the most treacherous, the most heartless!" It was evening, and moonlight; a soft and delicious night in September. The waves lapped gently at their feet, the warm breeze played upon their faces, the moon shone upon them--an evening wholly unfit for such a royal rage as this young gentleman (two and twenty is still young) exhibited. He walked about on the parade, which was deserted except for this solitary pair, gesticulating, waving his arms, mad with the madness of wounded love.

She sat on one of the seaside benches, her hands clasped, her head bent, overwhelmed and frightened and remorseful. He went on: he recalled the day when first they met; he reminded her of the many, many ways in which she had led him on to believe that she cared for him; he accused her of making him love her in order to laugh at him. When he could find nothing more to say, he flung himself upon the bench,--but on the other end of it,--and crossed his arms, and dropped his head upon them. So that there were two on the bench, one at either end, and both with their heads dropped--a pretty picture in the moonlight of a lovers' quarrel. But this was worse than a lovers' quarrel. It was the end of everything, for the girl was engaged to another man.

She rose. If he had been looking up, he would have seen that there were tears in her eyes and on her cheek.

"Mr. Fernie," she stammered, timidly, "I suppose there is nothing more to say. I am no doubt all that you have called me. I am heartless; I have led you on. Well, but I did not know--how could

I tell that you were taking things so seriously? How can you be so angry just because I can’t marry you? One girl is no better than another. There are plenty of girls in the world. I thought you liked me, and I--but what is the use of talking? I am heartless and cold; I am treacherous and vain and cruel, and--and--won’t you shake hands with me once more, Claude, before we part?"

"No! I will never shake hands with you again; never--never! By heavens! nothing that could happen now would ever make me shake hands with you again. I hate you, I loathe you, I shudder at the sight of you, I could not forgive you--never! You have ruined my life. Shake hands with you! Who but a heartless and worthless woman could propose such a thing?"

She shivered and shook at his wild words. She could not, as she said, understand the vehemence of the passion that held the man. He was more than half mad, and she was only half sorry. Forgive the girl. She was only seventeen, just fresh from her governess. She was quite innocent and ignorant. She knew nothing about the reality and vehemence of passion; she thought that they had been very happy together. Claude, to be sure, was ridiculously fond of taking her hand; once he kissed her head to show the depth of his friendship. He was such a good companion; they had had such a pleasant time; it was a dreadful pity that he should be so angry. Besides, it was not as if she liked the other man, who was old and horrid.

"Good-bye, then, Claude," she said. "Perhaps when we meet again you will be more ready to forgive me. Oh," she laughed, "it is so silly that a man like you--a great, strong, clever, handsome man--should be so foolish over a girl! Besides, you ought to know that a girl can’t have things her own way always. Good-bye, Claude. Won’t you shake hands?" She laid her hand upon his shoulder,--just touched it,--turned, and fled.

She had not far to go. The villa where she lived was within five minutes’ walk. She ran in, and found her mother alone in the drawing-room.

"My dear," the mother said, irritably, "I wish to goodness you wouldn’t run out after dinner. Where have you been?"

"Only into the garden, and to look at the sea."

"There’s Sir William in the dining-room still."

"Let him stay there, mother dear. He’ll drink up all the wine and go to sleep, perhaps, and then we shall be rid of him."

"Go in, Florence, and bring him out. It isn’t good for him, at his age, to drink so much."

"Let the servants go," the girl replied, rebellious.

"My dear, your own accepted lover! Have you no right feeling? O Florence! and when I am so ill, and you know--I told you--"

"A woman should not marry her grandfather. I've had more than enough of him to-day already. You made me promise to marry him. Until I do marry he may amuse himself. As soon as we are married, I shall fill up all the decanters, and keep them full, and encourage him to drink as much as ever he possibly can."

"My dear, are you mad?"

"Oh no! I believe I have only just come to my senses. Mad? No. I have been mad. Now, when it is too late, I am sane. When it is too late--when I have just understood what I have done."

"Nonsense, child! What do you mean by being too late? Besides, you are doing what every girl does. You have accepted the hand of an old man who can give you a fine position and a great income and every kind of luxury. What moree can a girl desire? When I die--you know already--there will be nothing--nothing at all for you. Marriage is your only chance."

At this moment the door opened, and Sir William himself appeared. He was not, although a man so rich, and therefore so desirable, quite a nice old man to look at--not quite such an old man as a girl would fall in love with at first sight; but perhaps under the surface there lay unsuspected virtues by the dozen. He was short and fat; his hair was white; his face was red; he had great white eyebrows; he had thick lips; his eyes rolled unsteadily, and his shoulders lurched; he had taken much more wine than is good for a man of seventy.

He held out both hands and lurched forward. "Florenshe," he said, thickly, "letsh sit down together somewhere. Letsh talk, my dear."

The girl slipped from the proffered hands and fled from the room.

"Whatsh matter with the girl?" said Sir William.

Out at sea, all by itself, somewhere about thirty miles from a certain good-sized island in a certain ocean, there lies another little island--an eyot--about a mile long and half a mile broad. It is a coral islet. The coral reef stretches out all round it, except in one or two places, where the rock shelves suddenly, making it possible for a ship to anchor there. The islet is flat, but all round it runs a kind of natural sea-wall, about ten feet high and as many broad; behind it, on the side which the wall protects from the prevailing wind, is a little grove of low, stunted trees, the name and kind of which the successive tenants of the island have never been curious to ascertain. I am therefore unable to tell you what they are. The area protected by the sea-wall, as low as the sea-level, was covered all over with long, rank grass. At the

north end of the islet a curious round rock, exactly like a martello tower, but rather higher, rose out of the water, separated from the sea-wall by twenty or thirty feet of deep water, dark blue, transparent; sometimes rolling and rushing and tearing at the sides of the rock, sometimes gently lifting the seaweed that clung to the sides. Round the top of the rock flew, screaming all the year round, the sea-birds. Far away on the horizon, like a blue cloud, one could see land; it was the larger island, to which this place belonged. At the south end was a lighthouse, built just like all lighthouses, with low white buildings at its foot, and a flagstaff, and an enclosure which was a feeble attempt at a flower-garden. You may see a lighthouse exactly like it at Broadstairs. In fact, it is a British lighthouse. Half a mile from the lighthouse, where the sea-wall broadened into a wide, level space, there was a wooden house of four rooms--dining-room, salon, and two bedrooms. It was a low house, provided with a veranda on either side. The windows had no glass in them, but there were thick shutters in case of hurricanes. There were doors to the rooms, but they were never shut. Nothing was shut or locked up or protected. On the inner or land side there was a garden, in which roses (a small red rose) grew in quantities, and a few English flowers. The elephant-creeper, with its immense leaves, clambered up the veranda poles and over the roof. There was a small plot of ground planted pineapples, and a solitary banana-tree stood under the protection of the house, its leaves blown to shreds, its head bowed down,

Beyond the garden was a collection of three or four huts, where lived the Indian servants and their families.

The residents of this retreat--this secluded earthly paradise--were these Indian servants with their wives and children; the three lighthouse men, who messed together; and the captain, governor, or commander-in-chief, who lived in the house all by himself because he had no wife or family.

Now the remarkable thing about this island is that, although it is so far removed from any other inhabited place, and although it is so small, the human occupants number many thousands. With the exception of the people above named, these thousands want nothing: neither the light of the the day or the warmth of the sun; neither food nor drink. They lie side by oide under the rank grass, without headstones or even graves to mark their place, without a register or record of their departure, without even coffins! There they lie,--sailors, soldiers, coolies, negroes,--forgotten and lost as much as if they had never been born. And if their work lives after them, nobody knows what that work is. They belong to the vast army of the Anonymous. Poor Anonymous! They do all the work. They grow our corn and breed our sheep; they make and mend for us; they build up our lives for us. We never know them, nor thank them, nor think of them. All over the world, they work for their far-off brethren; and when one dies, we know not, because another takes his place. And at the last a mound of green grass, or even nothing but an undistinguished strip of ground!

Here lay, side by side, the Anonymous--thousands of them. Did I say they were forgotten? Not quite; they are remembered by the two or three Indian women, wives of the Indian servants, who live there. At sunset they and their children retreat to their huts, and stay in them till sunrise next morning. They dare not so much as look outside the door, because the place is crowded with white, shivering, sheeted ghosts! Speak to one of these women; she will point out to you, trembling, one, two, half a dozen ghosts. It is true that the dull eye of the Englishman can see nothing. She sees them--distinguishes them one from the other. She can see them every night; yet she can never overcome her terror. The governor, or captain, or commander-in-chief, for his part, sees nothing. He sleeps in his house quite alone, with his cat and dog, windows and doors wide open, and has no fear of any ghosts. If he felt any fear, of course he would be surrounded and pestered to death every night with multitudes of ghosts; but he fears nothing. He is a doctor, you see; and no doctor ever yet was afraid of ghosts.

How did they come here--this huge regiment of dead men? In several ways. Cholera accounts for most, yellow fever for some, other fevers for some, but for the most cholera has been the destroyer. Because, you see, this is Quarantine Island. If a ship has cholera or any other infectious disease on board, it cannot touch at the island close by, which is a great place for trade, and has every year a quantity of ships calling; the infected ship has to betake herself to Quarantine Island, where her people are landed, and where they stay until she has a clear bill; and that sometimes is not until the greater part of her people have changed their berths on board for permanent lodgings ashore. Now you understand. The place is a great cemetery. It lies under the hot sun of the tropics. The sky is always blue; the sun is always hot. It is girdled by the sea. It is always silent; for the Indian children do not laugh or shout, and the Indian women are too much awed by the presence of the dead to wrangle; always silent, save for the crying of the sea-birds on the rock. There are no letters, no newspapers, no friends, no duties--none save when a ship puts in; and then, for the doctor, farewell rest, farewell sleep, until the bill of health is clean. Once a fortnight or so, if the weather permits and if the communications are open,--that is, if there is no ship there,--a boat arrives from the big island with rations and letters and supplies. Sometimes a visitor comes, but not often, because, should an infected ship put in, he would have to stay as long as the ship. A quiet, peaceful, monotonous life for one who is weary of the world, or for a hermit; and as good as the top of a pillar for silence and for meditation.

The islet lay all night long in much the same silence which lapped and wrapped it all the day. The water washed musically upon the shore; the light in the lighthouse flashed at intervals; there was no other sign of life. Toward six o’clock in the morning the dark east grew gray; thin, long white rays shot out across the sky, and then the light began to spread. Before the gray turned to pink or

the pink to crimson, before there was any corresponding glow in the western sky, the man who occupied the bungalow turned out of bed, and came forth to the veranda, clad in the silk pajamas and silk jacket which formed the evening or dress suit in which he slept. The increasing light showed that he was a young man still, perhaps about thirty --a young man with a strong and resolute face and a square forehead. He stood under the veranda watching, as he had done every day for two years or more. the break of day and the sunrise. He drank in the delicious breeze, cooled by a thousand miles and more of ocean. No one knows the freshness and sweetness of the air until he has so stood in the open and watched the dawn of a day in the tropics. He went back to the house, and came out again clad in a rough suit of tweeds and a helmet. His servant was waiting for him with his morning tea. He drank it, and sallied forth. By this time the short-lived splendour of the east was fast broadening to right and left, until it stretched from pole to a pole. Suddenly the sun leaped up and the colours fled and the splendour vanished. The sky became all over a deep, clear blue, and round about the sun was a brightness which no eye but that of the sea-bird can face and live. The man in the helmet turned to the sea-shore, and walked briskly along the natural mound or sea-wall. Now and then he stepped down upon the white coral sand, picked up a shell, looked at it, and threw it away. When he came to the sea-birds' rock, he sat down and watched it. In the deep water below, sea-snakes, red and purple and green, were playing about; the bluefish, who are not in the least afraid of the snakes, rolled lazily round and round the rock; in the recesses lurked unseen the great conger-eel, which dreads nothing but the thing of long and horny tentacles, the ourite or squid: round and round the rock darted the humourous tazaar, which bites the bathers in shallow waters all for fun and mischief, and with no desire at all to eat their flesh; and besides these a thousand curious creatures, which this man, who had trained his eyes by days and days of watching, came here every day to look at. While he stood there the sea-birds took no manner of notice of him, flying close about him, lighting on the shore close at his feet. They were intelligent enough to know that he was only dangerous with a gun in his hand. Presently he got up and continued his walk. All round the sea-wall of the island measures about three miles. He took this walk every morning and every evening in the early cool and the late. The rest of the time he spent indoors.

When he got back it was nearly seven, and the day was growing hot. He took his towels, went down to the shore, to a place where the coral reef receded, leaving a channel out to the open. The channel swarmed with sharks, but he bathed there every morning, keeping in the shallow water while the creatures watched him from the depths beyond with longing eyes. He wore a pair of slippers on account of the laf, which is a very pretty little fish indeed to look at; but he lurks in dark places near the shore, and he is too lazy to get out of the way, and if you put your foot near him he sticks out his dorsal fin, which is prickly and poisoned; and when a man gets that into the sole of his foot he goes home and cuts his leg off, and has to pretend that he lost it in action.

When he had bathed, the doctor went back to his house, and performed some simple additions to his toilet. That is to say, he washed the salt water out of his hair and beard; not much else. As to collars, neckties, braces, waistcoats, black coats, rings, or any such gewgaws, they were not wanted on this island. Nor are watches and clocks; the residents go by the sun. The doctor got up at daybreak, and took his walk, as you have seen, and his bath. He was then ready for his breakfast, a solid meal, in which fresh fish, newly caught that morning, and curried chicken, with claret and water, formed the principal part. A cup of coffee came after, with a cigar and a book on the veranda. By this time the sun was high, and the glare of forenoon had succeeded the coolness of the dawn. After the cigar the doctor went indoors. The room was furnished with a few pictures, a large bookcase full of books, chiefly medical, a table covered with papers, and two or three chairs. No curtains, carpets, or blinds; the doors and windows wide open to the veranda on both sides.

He sat down and began writing; perhaps he was a novel. I think no one could think of a more secluded place for writing a novel. Perhaps he was doing something scientific. He continued writing till past midday. When he felt hungry, he went into the dining-room, took a biscuit or two, and a glass of vermuth. Then, because it was now the hour for repose, and because the air outside was hot, and the sea-breeze had dropped to a dead calm, and the sun was like a red-hot glaring furnace overhead, the doctor kicked off his boots, threw off his coat, lay down on a grass mat under the mosquito-curtain, and instantly fell fast asleep. About five o’clock he awoke and got up; the heat of the day was over. He took a long draught of cold tea, which is the most refreshing and the coolest drink in the world. The sun was now getting low, and the air was growing cool. He put on his helmet, and set off again to walk round his domain. This done, he bathed again. Then he went home as the sun sank, and night fell instantly without the intervention of twilight. They served him dinner, which was like his breakfast but for the addition of some cutlets. He took his coffee; he took a pipe--two pipes, slowly, with a book; he took a whisky-and-soda; and he went to bed. I have said that he had no watch; it hung idly on a nail; therefore he knew not the time, but it would very likely be about half-past nine. However that might be, he was the last person up in this ghostly Island of the Anonymous Dead.

This doctor, captain-general, and commandant of Quarantine Island was none other than the young man who began this history with a row royal and a kingly rage. You think, perhaps, that he had turned hermit in the bitterness of his wrath, and for the faults of one simple girl had resolved on the life of a solitary. Nothing of the kind. He was an army doctor, and he left the service in order to take this very eligible appointment, where one lived free, and could spend nothing except a little for claret. He proposed to stay there for a few years in order to make a little money by means of which he might become a specialist. This was his ambition. As for

that love-business seven years past, he had clean forgotten it, girl and all. Perhaps there had been other tender passages. Shall a man, wasting in despair, die because a girl throws him over? Never! Let him straightway forget her. Let him tackle his work; let him put off the business of love--which can always wait--until he can approach it once more in the proper spirit of illusion, and once more fall to worshipping an angel.

Neither nature nor civilisation ever designed a man’s life to be spent in monotony. Most of us have to work for our daily bread, which is always an episode, and sometimes a pretty dismal episode, to break and mark the day. One day there came such a break in the monotonous round of the doctor’s life. It came in the shape of a ship. She was a large steamer, and she steamed slowly.

It was early in the morning, before breakfast. The doctor and one of the lighthouse men stood on the landing-place watching her.

"She’s in quarantine, doctor, sure as sure," said the man. "I wonder what’s she’s got. Fever, for choice; cholera, more likely. Well, we take our chance."

"She’s been in bad weather," said the doctor, looking at her through his glass. "Look; she’s lost her mizzen, and her bows are stove in. I wonder what’s the meaning of it. She’s a transport." She drew nearer. "Troops! Well, I’d rather have soldiers than coolies."

She was a transport. She was full of soldiers, time-expired men and invalids going home. She was bound from Calcutta to Portsmouth. She had met with a cyclone; driven out of her course and battered, she was making for the nearest port when cholera broke out on board.

Before nightfall the island was dotted with white tents; a hospital was rigged up with the help of the ship’s spars and canvas. The men were all ashore, and the quarantine doctor, with the ship’s doctor, was hard at work among the cases, and the men were dropping in every direction.

Among the passengers were a dozen ladies and some children. The doctor gave up his house to them, and retired to a tent or to the lighthouse or anywhere to sleep. Much sleep could not be expected for some time to come. He saw the boat land with the ladies on board; he took off his hat as they walked past. There were old ladies, middle-aged ladies, young ladies. Well, there always is this combination. Then he went on with his work. But he had a curious sensation, as if something of the past had been revived in his mind. It is, however, not an uncommon feeling. And one of the ladies changed colour when she saw him.

Then began the struggle for life. No more monotony in Quarantine Island. Right and left, all day long, the men fell one after the other; day after day more men fell, more men died. The two doctors quickly organised their staff. The ship’s officers became clinical

clerks; some of the ladies became nurses. And the men, the rough soldiers, sat about in their tents with pale faces, expecting. Of those ladies who worked there was one who never seemed weary, never wanted rest, never asked for relief. She was at work all day and all night in the hospital; if she went out, it was only to cheer up the men outside. The doctor was but conscious of her work and of her presence; he never spoke to her. When he came to the hospital, another nurse received him; if he passed her, she seemed always to turn away. At a less troubled time he would have observed this. At times he felt again that odd sensation of a recovered past, but he regarded it not; he had other things to consider. There is no time more terrible for the courage of the stoutest man than a time of cholera on board ship or in a little place whence there is no escape; no time worse for a physician than one when his science is mocked and his skill avails nothing. Day after day the doctor fought from morning till night, and far on to the morning again; day after day new graves were dug; day after day the chaplain read over the new-made graves the service of the dead for the gallant lads who thus died, inglorious, for their country.

There came a time, at last, when the conqueror seemed tired of conquest; he ceased to strike. The fury of the disease spent itself; the cases happened singly, one or two a day instead of ten or twenty. The sick began to recover; they began to look about them. The single cases ceased; the pestilence was stayed; and they sat down to count the cost. There had been on board the transport three hundred and seventy-five men, thirty-two officers, a dozen ladies, a few children, and the ship’s crew. Twelve officers, two of the ladies, and a hundred men had perished when the plague abated.

"One of your nurses is ill, doctor."

"Not cholera, I do hope."

"No; I believe a kind of collapse. She is at the bungalow. I told them I would send you over."

"I will go at once."

He left a few directions, and walked over to the house. It was, he found, the nurse who had been of all the most useful and the most active. She was now lying hot and feverish, her mind wandering, inclined to ramble in her talk. He laid his hand upon her temples; he felt her pulse; he looked upon her face; the odd feeling of something familiar struck him again. "I don’t think it is very much," he said. "A little fever. She may have been in the sun; she has been working too hard; her strength has given way." He still held her wrist.

"Claude," murmured the sick girl, "you are very cruel. I didn’t know--and a girl cannot always have her own way."

Then he recognised her.

"Good heavens!" he cried, "it is Florence!"

"Not always have her own way," she repeated. "If I could have had my own way, do you think I would--"

"Florence!" he said again; "and I did not even recognise her. Strange!"

Another of the ladies, the colonel's wife, was standing beside him.

"You know her, doctor?"

"I knew her a long time ago--some years ago --before she married."

"Married? Florence is not married. You must be thinking of some one else."

"No. This is Florence Vernon, is it not? Yes. Then she was formerly engaged to marry a certain Sir William Duport."

"Oh, I believe there was some talk about an old man who wanted to marry her. But she wouldn't have him. It was just before her mother died. Did you know her mother?"

"I knew her mother a little when they were living at Eastbourne. So she refused the old man, did she? and has remained unmarried. Curious! I had almost forgotten her. The sight of her brings back the old days. Well, after she has pulled so gallantly through the cholera, we cannot have her beaten by a little fever. Refused the old man, did she?"

In the dead of night he sat watching by the bedside, the colonel's wife with him.

"I had almost forgotten," whispered the lady, "that story of the old baronet. She told me about it once. Her mother was ill, and anxious about her daughter because she had next to nothing except an annuity. The old man offered; he was an unpleasant old man, but there was a fine house and everything. It was all arranged. The girl was quite a child, and understood nothing. She was to be sold, in fact, to this old person, who ought to have been thinking of his latter end instead of a pretty girl. Then the mother died suddenly, and the girl broke it off. She was a clever girl, and she has been teaching. For the last three years she has been in India; now she is going home under my charge. She is a brave girl, doctor, and a good girl. She has received half a dozen offers, but she has refused them all; so I think there must be somebody at home."

"Claude," murmured the girl, wandering, "I never thought you would care so much. If I had thought so, I would not have encouraged you. Indeed, indeed, I would not. I thought we were only amusing

ourselves."

"Claude is a pretty name. What is your own Christian name, doctor?" asked the colonel's wife, curiously.

"It is--in fact--it is Claude," he replied, blushing; but there was not enough light to see his blushes.

"Dear me!" said the colonel's wife.

A few days later the patient, able to sit for a while in the shade of the veranda, was lying in a long cane chair. Beside her sat the colonel's wife who had nursed her through the attack. She was reading aloud to her. Suddenly she stopped. "Here comes the doctor," she said; "and, Florence, my dear, his name, you know, is Claude. I think you have got something to talk about with Claude besides the symptoms." With these words she laughed, nodded her head, and ran into the salon.

The veranda, with its green blinds of cane hanging down, and its matting on the floor, and its easy-chairs and tables, made a pretty room to look at. In the twilight, the fragile figure, pale, thin, dressed in white, would have lent interest even to a stranger. To the doctor, I suppose, it was only a "case." He pushed the blinds aside and stepped in, strong, big, masterful. "You are much better," he said; "you will very soon be able to walk about. Only be careful for a few days. It was lucky that the attack came when it did, and not a little earlier when we were in the thick of the trouble. Well, you won't want me much longer, I believe."

"No, thank you," she murmured, without raising her eyes.

"I have had no opportunity," he said, standing over her, "of explaining that I really did not know who you were, Miss Vernon. Somehow I didn't see your face, or I was thinking of other things. I suppose you had forgotten me. Anyhow, it was not until the other day, when I was called in, that I remembered. But I dare say you have forgotten me."

"No; I have not forgotten."

"I thought that long ago you had become Lady Duport."

"No; that did not take place."

"I hear that you have been teaching since your mother's death. Do you like it?"

"Yes; I like it."

"Do you remember the last time we met--on the sea-shore? Do you remember, Florence?" His voice softened suddenly. "We had a quarrel about that old villain; do you remember?"

"I thought you had forgotten such a little thing as that long ago, and the girl you quarrelled with."

"The point is rather whether you remember. That is of much more importance."

"I remember that you swore that you would never forgive a worthless girl who had ruined your life. Did I ruin your life, Dr. Fernie?"

He laughed. He could not honestly say that she had. In fact, his life, so far as concerned his work, had gone on much about the same. But then, such a man does not allow love to interfere with his career.

"And then you went and threw over the old man. Florence, why didn't you tell me that you were going to do that? You might have told me."

She shook her head. "Until you fell into such a rage, and called me such dreadful names, I did not understand."

"Why didn't you tell me, Florence?" he repeated.

She shook her head again.

"You were only a little innocent, ignorant child then," he said; "of course you could not understand. I was an ass and a brute and a fool not to know."

"You said you would never forgive me. You said you would never shake hands with me again."

He held out his hand. "Since," he said, "you are not going to marry the old man, and since you are not engaged to anybody else, why--then--in that case--the old state of things is still going on; and--and--Florence--but if you give me your hand, I shall keep it, mind."

"Dear me!" said the colonel's wife, standing in the doorway. "Do quarantine doctors always kiss their patients? But you told me, doctor dear, that your Christian name was Claude; didn't you? That explains everything."

The ship, with those of her company whom the plague had spared, presently steamed away, and, after being repaired, made her way to Portsmouth dockyard. But one of her company stayed behind, and is now queen or empress of the island of which her husband is king, captain, commandant, and governor-general, and also resident quarantine doctor.

THE ROCK SCORPIONS

(ANONYMOUS)

The screw steamer Jenny Jones was lying alongside a coal-hulk at Gibraltar one October afternoon. By three o'clock her bunkers were nearly filled, and the captain was getting ready for casting off, when one of the natives came on board. Captain Hindhaugh looked about for something to throw at the visitor, and only the difficulty of selecting an efficient missile from a large and varied assortment prevented him from letting fly at once.

The "Scorpion" said, "Ah, no, no, Capeetan! No been throw nothin' at myself. Beesiness! I'se been com' for beesiness. Big thing, Capeetan!"

The last phrase was spoken with such a profound wink that Hindhaugh held his hand, and, addressing the man as one would an ill-conditioned dog, said, "Don't keep bowing and scraping there, you tastrel! Get it out sharp!"

The Scorpion whispered, "No been talk up here. Keep ship one hour, two hour, three hour. You'se been com' with me, and I speak you somethin' myself."

Like many of his tribe, this interesting native spoke a kind of English which is not heard anywhere else on the Mediterranean shore. A few of the people on the Rock learn to talk very well to our men, but most of those who come about the ships use a picturesque lingo in which "myself" the place of quite a variety of parts of speech.

Hindhaugh invited the man below, and asked him to explain himself. The fellow leaned over the table and chattered on, throwing quick side glances at every few words.

"This been big thing, Capeetan. You get away a little; drop your anchor a little. Then three felucca com' alongside, and you'se been hoist bales. Then you 'se go where agent say you. Very big thing. Five thousand sovereign."

"What is it? tobacco?"

"That been it."

"Where for?"

"Huelva."

"I’m not going out of Portuguese waters at no price."

"Ah, no, no, Cheesu, Capeetan--no! Five mile. We have felucca there ready. I ’se been see him myself."

"What’s the figure? what’s the money?"

"You com’ ’shore and see agent with myself."

Hindhaugh put a revolver in his pocket and went on deck; the Scorpion got ashore, and hung about with an air of innocence. The captain was about to follow when the man in charge of the hulk called out, "Do you intend to keep bumping us like this all night? Why don’t you cast off? You’re knocking us all to flinders."

Hindhaugh beckoned. "Look here, my good chap, it won’t matter to you for a couple of hours. Let us lie till dusk, and then I’ll get away. I’ve got important business ashore."

"That’s very well, Captain. But look here; if there’s anything on, I’m in it. You understand --I’m in it."

"You understand that, do you? Well then, I’ll tell you to keep your mouth shut just now, or never another ton of coal will you put aboard of us as long as I run here."

"All right, Captain. No need to be nasty. You’ll do the square thing, I bet."

Then Hindhaugh went ashore, and the Scorpion walked on ahead, gazing on architectural beauties with easy interest. Presently the two men came to a narrow stairway, and the Englishman gripped his revolver. A dark-eyed Spaniard was waiting on a landing, and held up two fingers when the guide passed. The Scorpion knocked at a greasy door, and an ugly fellow, with a cowl on, looked out and nodded. Hindhaugh stepped into a room that reeked with garlic and decay. Two men sat in the steamy dusk at the far side. An oily gentleman rose and bowed. "I’m the interpreter, Captain. You and this merchant must do your business through me. What’ll you take to drink?"

"Get through your business, mister. I’m not wanting any drink."

In brief, jerky sentences the interpreter explained what was wanted.

"You steam slowly till you’re near the Fleet. Then put all your men on and get the stuff up. This man goes with you, and he’ll tell you where to go. Lie five miles off Huelva."

"I sha’n’t go except to Portuguese waters."

"Good. Then the lighters will come and the men will discharge you."

"And now," said the captain, "what about me? How much?"

"One hundred and twenty pounds."

"Can’t be done. Make it two hundred and fifty."

After some haggling, a bargain was made for two hundred and twenty. Then Hindhaugh went further: "I want one hundred and ten down before we start, and the balance before you take an ounce of tobacco out of us."

This was settled; the merchant bowed, and the skipper went away, still keeping his hand on the revolver. Every cranny in the walls seemed fit to hide a murderer--seemed made for nothing else; and Hindhaugh thought what a fool he must have been to venture under that foul arch.

On getting aboard, the captain sent for his brother, who sailed as mate with him. He said, "Now, Jack, I’m going to run some risk. You take this pistol, and get her oiled and put right. When you see three feluccas coming alongside, get all the chaps on deck--the Dora’s crew as well as ours." (Hindhaugh was taking home a ship-wrecked crew, and he was very grateful just then for that accession of force.) "Whack on everything you know, and get the bales up sharp. Tell the engineers to stand by for driving her, and leave the rest to me. If we’re nailed we’ll be detained, and I don’t know what may happen; so you’ll have to look slippy."

Jack replied, "All right, sir!" Quarter-deck manners were punctiliously observed by one of the brothers.

The shadows fell low, and the crown of the Rock grew dim. The creeping wind stole over the Pearl Rock, and set the sinister ripples dancing; the bugles sang mysteriously through the gloom, and the mystery of the night was in the air. The Jenny Jones stole quietly toward the broad sheet of water where the vessels of the Fleet heaved up their shadowy bulk above the lapping flood. All the English sailors were stripped to the shirt, and a low hum of excited talk came from amidships. Suddenly the raking yard of a felucca started out from amid the haze; then came another, and another. A sailor slipped a cork fender over the side, and there was a muffled bump and a slight scrape. Jack, the mate, whispered, "Now, you cripples!" and a brief scene of wild hurry and violent labour ensued. Bale after bale was whisked aboard; the Englishmen worked as only English sailors can, and the Scorpions excelled themselves under the influence of fear and black wine. When the last bale was up, Hindhaugh said to the man who first boarded him, "Who’s got the money?"

"Me, Capeetan. All right. Honest man myself. You’se been have every dollar."

"Well then, it’s neck or nothing. We have half an hour to clear out into the Gut. Come below, and shell out."

The Scorpion counted out one hundred pounds in gold, and then asked, "That be enough? Other money all right other end."

"Deuce a bit! Down with the other ten or I sliver you."

The Scorpion did not know what "sliver" meant, but the gleam of the skipper’s cold eye was enough for him. He paid up and went on deck.

Hindhaugh had just said to the engineer, "Now, rive the soul out of her," when a low, panting sound was heard, and a white shape appeared gliding over the water. The captain had let the feluccas go, and the Jenny Jones was moving. He waved for the mate. "It’s all up. Here’s a mess. You must go home overland; suppose you swim ashore. Steady the men down."

Jack performed one or two steps of a dance, and placed his finger against his nose. He rather enjoyed a scrape, did this frivolous chief officer. The white shape came nearer, and a sharp whistle sounded. Hindhaugh had known well enough that it was a steam-launch that made the panting noise, and he got ready for the worst. The launch drew right across the bows of the steamer, and then the throbbing of the little engines ceased. Again the whistle sounded; the launch gave a bound forward; then she struck away into the darkness, and Hindhaugh drew a long breath.

In an instant every possible ounce of steam was put on, and the Jenny Jones went away at eleven knots toward the Gut. All night long the firemen were kept hard at it, and before morning the Rock was far astern of the driving steamboat.

Three of the Scorpions had stayed aboard, and Captain Hindhaugh noticed that they earned their knives. He noticed, too, that the cringing manner which the fellows had shown before the Rock was cleared had given place to a sort of subdued swagger.

About noon the engines were slowed down almost to nothing, and the Jenny Jones crept gently on toward the shore. By four o’clock the vessel was well into Portuguese waters, and Hindhaugh was prepared to defy any quantity of Spanish coast-guards. When the sun had dipped low the Scorpion-in-chief came aft, and pointed mysteriously to the northeast.

"You’se been look where I point myself. Feluccas! You’se follow them in and drop anchor."

Hindhaugh smiled. "Do you think you’re talking to a fool? Come you

below there, and let me have that other money sharp."

"Ah, Capeetan, wait till agent's man come with felucca. I'se been have no money myself."

Hindhaugh was not a person to be trifled with. He quietly took out his revolver. "Now, do you see that pretty thing? First shot for you. Look at that block forrad, and see how much chance you'll have if I fire at you." The pop of the revolver sounded, and then Hindhaugh went forward, pulling the Scorpion with him. "Do you see that hole, you image? How would you like if that was your gizzard? Now, no games, my joker."

The Scorpion begged for time, and Hindhaugh was so sure of his man that he made no further objection. He had another conference with Jack, and, to that worthy man's great delight, he expressed certain forebodings.

"We're going to have a fight over this job," said the skipper. "I'm dead sure of it. Go down and load the two muskets, and give them to the safest men. When the lighters DO come, borrow the fireman's iron rods. I've lent the steward my bowie that I got at Charleston, and you can try and hold that old bulldog straight. We mustn't show the least sign of funking."

Then Hindhaugh and his brother called for tea, and fed solidly.

The Scorpion whispered down the companion, "They'se been com'," and the captain went on deck. Two large felucca-rigged lighters hove up slowly through the dusk, and the chief Scorpion's signal was answered. Hindhaugh saw both lighters draw near, he felt the usual scraping bump, and then he heard a sudden thunder of many feet. The second mate sung out, "Here's half a hundred of these devils, sir. They're all armed to the teeth." And sure enough, a set of ferocious-looking rapscallions had boarded the steamer. They looked like low-class Irishmen browned with walnut-juice. Each man had a heavy array of pistols in his sash, and all of them carried ugly knives. The Scorpion waved to the gang, and they arranged themselves around the pile of bales that stuck out through the after-hatch. Hindhaugh had fully discounted all the chances, and had made up his mind to one thing: he wouldn't be "done."

The Scorpion imperiously observed, "Come below, Capeetan," and Hindhaugh went. Then the defiant native of the Rock put his back against the cabin door, heaved out his chest in a manly way, and said, "Now, Capeetan, you no have more money. You speak much, and I'se been get your throat cut myself."

"You've got no money?"

"No; not a damn dollar."

"You won't keep to your bargain?"

"No; you come ’shore for your money if you want him."

Hindhaugh made up his mind in a flash. In spite of his habit of wearing a frock-coat and tall hat, he was more than half a pirate, and he would have ruffled it, like his red-bearded ancestors, had fighting been still the usual employment of Norsemen. He marked his man’s throat, and saw that the insolent hands could not get at a knife quickly. Then he sprang at the Scorpion, gripped him by the windpipe, and swung him down. The fellow gurgled, but he couldn’t cry out. Hindhaugh called the steward, and that functionary came out of his den with the long bowie. "Sit on him," said the captain. "If he stirs cut his throat. Now, you, if you move a finger you’re done." The steward straddled across the Scorpion, and held the knife up in a sarcastic way.

Hindhaugh went swiftly on deck, and stepped right among the jabbering Spaniards. He smiled as though nothing had happened, but when he saw one man lay hold of a bale he pulled him back. "Tell them I’ll shoot the first man that tries to lift a bale till I’m ready."

This message brought on a torrent of talk, which gave the captain time. He whispered to Jack, "Sneak you round through the engine-room. That lighter’s made fast forrad; the second one’s fast here. Get a hatchet from the carpenter, and set him alongside of the second rope. When I whistle twice, both of you nick the ropes, and we’ll jink these swindling swine." The engineer also received orders to go full speed ahead on the instant that the whistle sounded.

Hindhaugh kept up his air of good-humour, although the full sense of the risk he ran was in his mind. His threat of shooting had made the Spaniards suspicious, although they were used to big talk of the kind. One peep into the cabin would have brought on a collision, and although the Englishmen might have fought, there was nothing to gain by a fight. Everything depended on swiftness of action, and Hindhaugh determined grimly that if rapidity could do anything he would teach the "furriners" a lesson for trying to swindle him.

He said, very politely, "We’re all ready now. You get your men aboard the lighters, and we’ll soon rash your cargo over the side." This was transmitted to the smugglers, and immediately they swarmed aboard their own boats. They had rather expected a quarrel, and this pacific solution pleased them. As Jack afterward said, "They blethered like a lot o’ wild geese."

All the foreigners were gone but three. Hindhaugh stepped quietly up to the interpreter, and said, very low, "I’m covering you with my revolver from inside my pocket. Don’t you stir. Is that other money going to be paid?"

The interpreter had been innocent of all knowledge of the wild work in the cabin. He stammered, "I thought by your way it was all right. Where’s our man?"

"I've got him safe enough. Ask those fellows in the lighters if any of them can pay the freight for the job. If you tell them to fire they may miss me, and I can't miss you."

No one, not even the consignee's man, had any money; the smugglers meant to trick the Revenue, and the English captain as well. Hindhaugh whistled, and then roared out, "Lie down, all of you! Ram her ahead!" The hatchets went crack, crack; the steamer shuddered and plunged forward; and the lighters bumped swiftly astern.

"Over the side, you animals, or I'll take you out to sea and drown you."

The three Spaniards rushed to the side, and took flying leaps into the lighters. Hindhaugh stooped low and ran to the companion. "Let that beggar up," he shouted. The Scorpion scuttled on deck. "Now, mister, I'll let you see if you'll take me in. Over you go. Over the stern with you, and mind the propeller doesn't carve you." Two shots were fired, but they went wild. The Scorpion saw the whole situation; he poised for a second on the rail, and then jumped for it, and Hindhaugh laughed loudly as his enemy came up blowing. Jack performed a triumphal war-dance on the steamer's bridge, and the Jenny Jones was soon far out of pistol range.

All that night Captain Hindhaugh did not sleep a wink. He was quite persuaded that he had acted the part of an exemplary Briton. What is the use of belonging to the ruling race if a mere foreigner is to do as he likes with you? But the adventurous skipper had landed himself in a pretty mess, and the full extent of his entanglement grew on him every minute. At twelve o'clock, when the watch was relieved, Jack came aft in a state of exultation that words cannot describe. He chuckled out, "Well, sir, we've made our fortunes this time." Hindhaugh damped his spirits by saying, slowly, "Not too fast; that 'baccy's got to go overboard, my boy." Jack's mental processes became confused. He had been measuring the cubic contents of the smuggled goods, and the thought of wasting such a gift of the gods fairly stunned him. Had it been cotton, his imagination would not have been touched. But 'baccy! and overboard! It was too much, and he groaned. He was ready with expedients at once.

"Why not run it to Holland?"

"Can't be done; where's our bill of lading?"

"Make up one yourself; you have plenty of forms."

"And suppose the luck goes the wrong way. What's to happen to me--and to you too for that matter?"

"Run to a tobacco port, and warehouse the stuff in your own name."

"We're not bound for a tobacco port. What's to be done about the

cargo of ore that we are carrying? No, John; the whole five thousand pounds must go over the side."

Next morning broke joyously. The sea looked merry with miles of brisk foam, and the little Portuguese schooners flew like butterflies hither and thither. Every cloud of spray plucked from the dancing crests flashed like white fire under the clear sun. It was one of the mornings when one cannot speak for gladness. But Hindhaugh's thoughts were fixed on material things. The rich bales lay there, and their presence affected him like a sarcasm. The men were called aft, and the shovels used for trimming grain were brought up. Then the captain said, "Now each of you take a pound or two of this tobacco, and then break the bales and shovel the rest overboard." The precious packages were burst, and the sight of the beautiful leaf, the richness of the tender aroma, affected the sailors with remorse. It was like offering up a sacrifice. But the captain's orders were definite; so until near noon the shovels were plied smartly, and one hundredweight after another of admirable tobacco drifted away on the careless sea.

Hindhaugh watched grimly until at last his emotions overcame him. He growled, "Confound it, I can't do it! Belay there, men; I'll have another think over this job." And think he did, with businesslike solemnity, all day long. He saw that he might make a small fortune by risking his liberty, and the curious morality of the British sailor prevented him from seeing shades of right or wrong where contraband business was concerned. Had you told him that the tobacco was stolen, he would have pitched you overboard; he felt his morality to be unimpeachable; it was only the question of expediency that troubled him. For three days it was almost unsafe to go near him, so intently did he ponder and plan. On the fifth day he had worked his way through his perplexities, and was ready with a plan. A pilot cutter came in sight, and Hindhaugh signalled her. The pilot's boat was rowed alongside, and the bronzed and dignified chief swaggered up to the captain with much cordiality. No one is so cordial as a pilot who has secured a good ship. The two men exchanged news, and gradually slid into desultory talk. Suddenly Hindhaugh said, "Are you game for a bit of work? Do you ever DO anything?"

The pilot was virtuously agitated. He drew himself up, and, taking care that the mate should hear, answered, "Me! Not for the wurrrld, Cap'n. I've got a wife and children, sir."

"All right, Pilot, never mind; come down and have some tea."

Then Hindhaugh gradually drew his man out, until the pilot was absolutely confidential. The captain knew by the very excess of purity expressed in the pilot's first answer that he was not dealing with a simpleton; but he carefully kept away from the main subject which was in his (and the pilot's) mind. At last the man leaned over and gave a masonic sign. "What was that job you was speaking about, Cap'n? We're near home now, you know. Better not

go too near."

Hindhaugh played a large card. He smiled carelessly. "Fact is, I've just told the fellows to shy the stuff overboard; I shall risk no more."

"Mercy me, Cap'n! You're mad. How did I know who you were? I see all about it now, but I did not know what game you might have on with me. I'm in it, you know, if the dimes is right!"

"How?"

"Why, if the job's big enough. You stand off for a day; go down to the Sleeve, and hang round, and I'll find you a customer."

"If you do, I pay you three hundred pound as soon as his money's down."

"Done, then. My boat's not gone far. Whistle her, and I'll go slap for Bristol. Never you mind for a day or two. How's your coals?"

"They're all right. You scoot now, and fetch your man over this way. I'll go half-speed to the sou'west for twelve hours, another twelve hours half-speed back. You'll find us."

In thirty-six hours the pilot cutter came back, and a Hebrew gentleman boarded the Jenny Jones from her. After a long inspection, the visitor said, "Now look here, I must have a hundred per cent. margin out of this. What's your figure?"

"Two thousand five hundred."

"Won't do. Say two thousand, and you pay the jackal out of that."

"Done. And how do you manage?"

"I'll split the lot up among three trawlers. You wait off, and give the jackal an extra fifty for bringing the boats down. I risk the rest."

Another night passed, and the dawn was breaking coldly when the dirty sails of the trawlers came in sight. Ship after ship had hailed Hindhaugh, and offered to tow him if anything had happened to his engines. He knew he would be reported as lying off apparently disabled, and he was in a feverish state of excitement. The Hebrew speculator watched the last bale down the side, and then handed over the money, had a glass of brandy with the pilot, and departed--whither Hindhaugh neither knew nor cared. The Jenny Jones ran for her port. She had just slowed down, and the great waves of smoke from the town were pouring over her, when two large boats, heavily laden with men, came off to her. The men swarmed up the side, and the officer in command shouted, "Bring up the pickaxes, and go to work!" The hatches were pulled off before the steamer had taken up

her moorings, and the men went violently to work among the ore. Hindhaugh looked innocent, and inquired, "What's all this about, officer?"

"Fact is, Captain, we've got a telegram from Gibraltar to say you have contraband on board. You may save all trouble if you make a clean breast."

"Contraband! Who told you that?"

"Oh, we should have known without the wire. That gentleman on the quay there came overland, and he put us up to you."

Hindhaugh looked ashore, and saw a dark face that he knew well. He whistled and smiled. Then he said to the officer, "You may just as well stop those poor beggars from blistering their hands. You won't find anything here except what the men have in the forecastle. You're done this journey fairly. Come away down and liquor, and I'll tell you all about it." Then Hindhaugh gave an artistic account of the whole transaction, and put the matter in such a light that the custom-house officer cordially congratulated him on having escaped without a slit weasand.

The Jenny Jones went back to Gibraltar, and Captain Hindhaugh was very careful never to go ashore without a companion. One day he was passing a chandler's shop when a sunken glitter of dark eyes met him. His old acquaintance, the chief Scorpion, was looking stilettos and poison at him. But Hindhaugh went by in his big, burly way, and contented himself with setting on three watchmen every night during his stay. To this day he is pleased with himself for having given the foreigners a lesson in the elements of morality, and he does not fear their knives one whit.

THE MASTER OF THE "CHRYSOLITE"

BY G. B. O'HALLORAN

Captain Anderson stood alone in the world. But he was one who COULD stand alone, for his will was strong and his affections were weak. Those who thought they knew him best said he was hardy. The remainder said he was hard, his heart a stone. Still he was a human being, for, like others, he cherished hobbies. His hobbies, however, were not of that class which is compassed about by rest and roses. Instead, they were clothed with a stern delight born of defiance and danger.

To work his ship across the Bay in the teeth of an adverse gale; to weather a lee shore; to master a rebellious crew single-handed--these were the wild diversions which satisfied him. Once, in the China seas, his men grew mutinous, said the ship was "leaking like a lobster-pot," and straightway put her about for Singapore; swore they did not care what the skipper thought--in fact, would like to talk to him a bit. The skipper was below when the first mate brought down the news and a very pale face as well.

"Tell the men to muster!"

So soon as the mate's back was turned, John Anderson took a revolver from a locker and charged it; then, ascending the companion-ladder, he walked to the break of the poop, with his hands buried in the pockets of a pea-jacket. Down below him were the men, lolling about in a sullen crowd on the weather side of the quarter-deck. They were thirty or forty in number, and were a vicious-looking set.

"Now then, my men! Half an hour ago we were steering due northeast. Who was it dared to lay the ship's nose the other way?"

The burly boatswain swung his way out of the crowd, planted his foot on the first step of the poop-ladder, and stared up at the captain.

"I did, and be damned to you!" roared he. There was a loud report. The boatswain dropped, shot in the leg. And the crew shivered under a gleaming eye and a gleaming weapon.

"All hands 'bout ship!" cried the master. The wounded boatswain, raising himself for a moment on one hand, piped faintly, and fell back unconscious. But the men were already at their stations, and in five minutes more the Chrysolite was heading northeast again.

Such incidents as these gave John Anderson an unenviable reputation among sailors. It was seldom that the same crew served him twice. Two voyages under this tartar were more than could be stood, and from his subordinates, therefore, he gained nothing but hatred and fear.

It was very difficult, then, to find out where Captain Anderson's weakness lay. Everybody, of course, has his weakness. But this man appeared to be all strength. His whole life seemed like a rod of burnished steel--a passion-proof life, a fire-proof rod. The owners of the Chrysolite, Messrs. Ruin & Ruin, of Billiter Street, piqued themselves on knowing his tender point. He was avaricious, thought they; he would do much for money, and they would some day try him in the furnace. It was true, indeed, that the old sailor had amassed considerable wealth during his frequent voyages to the East. It was true also that he was sparing and saving; that he drove bargains to the verge of perdition, and clinched them at the crucial moment. But it was equally true that he was free from fraud. His teas were what they pretended to be, his silks unimpeachable, and no man

ever came back upon him with complaints of their genuineness. The world allowed that he was at least commercially honourable, but felt fully convinced that he was eaten up with the desire for gold.

But the world was wrong. The captain himself was sometimes given to metaphysical speculation, and even HE was puzzled to know if his heart had a whit more feeling than any other pumping-engine. Women he looked upon as frivolities of vanity to which he could not reconcile his stern nature; and men he regarded as instruments to be rigorously disciplined, not failing at the same time to discipline himself. His heart was of no use to him except to circulate his blood. In default, therefore, of loving anything, he fell naturally to pursuing a difficult task--the piling up of a mountain of gold. This was congenial solely because it was difficult, and difficulties overcome were his only sources of satisfaction.

Now it happened that a new firm trading to the East, in competition with Messrs. Ruin & Ruin, had made advances to Captain Anderson with a view to engaging him in their service; and as they offered liberal terms, including a handsome percentage, it was not long before the old seaman was won over. Here is a chance, thought he, of heaping up my mountain so much the more quickly, and I am determined that my actions shall not be hampered by sentiment. Notwithstanding this last threat, he found it a very unpleasant thing to break with his old employers, one of whose ships he had commanded for a score of years. But he would get scot-free of them before he finally concluded negotiations with the new people. And so it came to pass that one morning he walked along Billiter Street with his twenty-year-old commission in his pocket.

It is curious how fond real old salts are of dress when ashore. Here was John Anderson in a top-hat and kid gloves, looking anything but at home in them. The glossy hat was a mockery to his bold sea-worn face, and his big knuckles were almost bursting through the soft kid with indignation at the affront put upon them.

He reached the chambers in which the firm of Messrs. Ruin & Ruin was established, and ascended the staircase, for the office was on the second floor. The senior partner was within, and the captain was admitted into his room without delay.

"Glad to see you, Captain Anderson," said Mr. Ruin, in an unusually cordial tone, at the same time shaking hands. "You've made a capital passage, and freighted the Chrysolite well."

Mr. Ruin was a big, fat man who spoke oilily. His clean-shaven face was never without the remnants of a smile--a smile, though, which was not remarkable for its sincerity. Still, it had its value,--in the market,--for it was a commercial smile. A pair of small gray eyes were almost hidden by the obese curves of his cheeks; but you learned in a very short time that they kept a sharp and shrewd lookout from behind those ramparts. The two men sat down at opposite sides of the table, the owner guessing from the captain's

manner that there was something in the wind, and the captain thinking his employer’s exuberance of civility betokened more than was manifest.

"Yes, I brought her a quick passage," replied Anderson; then, looking straight at the owner, "and it’s the last she’ll make under me."

The remnants of a smile coalesced, ploughing up Mr. Ruin’s cheeks into greasy furrows.

"My dear Captain, we could not hear of it! We’re too old friends to part like that."

"Well, sir, I’ve come this morning, for private reasons, to throw up my commission," said the captain, simultaneously throwing down his commission before the senior partner’s eyes.

"I can’t accept it, Mr. Anderson; I can’t indeed," replied the owner, picking up the parchment. "And I’ll tell you why. My brother and I have been thinking matters over, and we’ve really been obliged to confess, for conscience’ sake, that the Chrysolite is getting old."

"Devilish old!" muttered the captain, forgetting himself for a moment.

"Well, now I think of it again, I believe my brother did say she was ’devilish old’--a strange coincidence. Still she is a fine model of a boat. What d’ ye think yourself?"

"She has rare lines," said the other, with a slight approach to grave enthusiasm.

"The very remark I made myself only yesterday. Yes, we agreed she was a pretty boat; and I admit, from sheer sentiment, I cannot bear to think of her being chopped up for firewood. So inharmonious, don’t you think?"

The old sailor looked sullen and said nothing.

Mr. Ruin leaned his elbows well on to the table in a confidential manner, and reduced his voice to husky whispering.

"My brother told me he should not mind seeing her end her days as a picturesque wreck, but to sell her for match-wood was barbarous. I was really of the same opinion. And--and--couldn’t it be managed for her, Captain Anderson?"

The two looked at each other narrowly. "If you can get any one to do it, of course it can be done. But _I_ would sooner--"

"Now before you judge, hear me, Captain. I feel sure you could find that man if you chose. See; the Chrysolite is insured in

the Jupiter Insurance Company for nine thousand pounds. Here is the policy. And the man that saves her from the axe, and makes a picturesque wreck of her, will earn the gratitude of Messrs. Ruin & Ruin, and three thousand pounds besides."

For once even the remnants of a smile had disappeared from the senior partner's face, and he stood confessed--the type of a cool financial scoundrel.

The sailor, on the other hand, was agitated as no one had ever seen him before. The veins stood out on his brawny throat like rope; his eyelids were purple; for a few moments his head swam. Then he righted himself as suddenly, with an emphatic refusal ready on his lips. But the wily partner had left the room. This gave Anderson time to think, and the more he thought the more that pile of gold forced itself before him, until, forsooth, he fell to thinking how such an end COULD be compassed--by another commander. He saw clearly that a skilful seaman might achieve this thing with slight danger to himself and his crew. And all this time the three thousand pounds shone so lustrously that his moral vision was dazzled, and the huge iniquity of the whole affair was rapidly vanishing from sight.

When Mr. Ruin reentered, Anderson was looking ashamed and guilty.

"Well, Captain, can I help you to a conclusion?" came from the oily lips.

"It's this way," replied the old man, turning round, but keeping his eyes fixed on the carpet; "I can't do it. No, I can't."

Mr. Ruin eyed him dubiously, and rubbed his chin gently. "I'm sorry--very, very sorry! Three thousand pounds won't go long begging, though. And I shall have to accept your resignation, Captain."

Anderson only took up his hat and walked slowly out of the room. He had not descended many steps when he turned back and reopened the door.

"No, sir," he said; "it can't be done. I must think it over, and--no--it can't be done." With that he went his way, miserable.

The same night he received a letter by post. It contained his old commission, reinstating him in the command of the Chrysolite.

Four months later the Chrysolite was unloading a general cargo in Mauritius harbour. Captain Anderson had thought it over.

The quay was quickly covered with Manchester bales and Birmingham cases; and it was not long before the tackle at the main-yard arm was set a-clicking, as the baskets of sand ballast were hove up to be poured into the empty hold. No such luxuries were there as steam-winches; not any of those modern appliances for lightening

labour. Instead, five or six hands plied the ponderous work at the winch handles, the labour being substantially aggravated by the heat of a vertical sun. A spell at the orthodox hand-winch in the tropics is an ordeal not to be lightly spoken of, and sailors have the very strongest objection to the work. It requires the utmost vigilance on the part of the captain, therefore, to prevent the feebler spirits from deserting. He was able, however, to reckon a full crew as he steered out of Port Louis harbour and shaped his course for Ceylon.

Some of the hands had grumbled at not having more liberty to go ashore. In an excess of passion, Anderson made answer:

"To your kennels, you dogs! I'll put you ashore soon enough, and I'll warrant you'll stay there longer than you care for."

It was indiscreet language, and the men puzzled over it. They concluded that the skipper meant to obtain their imprisonment at the next British port they should touch for mutinous conduct, and, knowing he was a man of his word, they assumed their best behaviour.

Captain Anderson had not changed for the better. Hitherto he had maintained a firmness of discipline boarding upon severity, and he certainly had never relaxed from that attitude. Now he had become an incomprehensible mixture of indulgence and cruelty. The two elements were incompatible, and the more intelligent of his officers were not long in perceiving that there was a vicious and variable wind in their superior's moral atmosphere, under which his canvas strained or flapped unaccountably. They imagined, to pursue their own figure, that his hand did not grasp the reason tiller with its customary grip, and that his bark was left more or less to the conflicting guidance of other influences. Many a time since his departure from England had the old sailor been stung with remorse at the unwritten tenor of his present commission. He would frequently try to look the whole thing in the face--would endeavour to account for the acceptance of an office against which his whole self revolted. He would recite the interview in the Billiter Street chambers with his employer, passing rapidly over the preliminary parts until he came to the REWARD. No! he was not false enough or euphemistic enough to call it a reward; he would regard it as a bribe. But he could never get further. He always grounded on his reef of gold, and no tide of indignation or regret, no generous current of honour, had power to sweep him off again into the saving waters. Here the fierce rays of desire shot down upon the resplendent heap, whose reflected glory filled the whole vision of the water with its lustre. Blame him not too much, nor it. For, after all, man is but man, and gold is a thing of comfort.

But had Captain Anderson followed his mental inquiries to a conclusion, had he demonstrated to himself the depth of moral degradation into which he must be plunged, his pride would never have allowed him to do anything but redeem his unuttered word.

As an illustration of the captain's lately acquired habit of indulgence, the most remarkable was his treatment of the watch on deck during the night. The man on the lookout, for instance, was in the habit of going to sleep if the weather made it at all practicable. The rest of the watch, some fifteen or twenty hands, followed suit, or even skulked back into the fo'castle, there to stretch themselves out on their chests and smoke. These things the captain connived at, and the men were only too glad of the relief to inquire too curiously into his reasons. The main object of a sailing-ship sailor is to gain as much sleep as he can by whatever means, and in pursuit of this end he will evade even those duties which are most essential to the safety of the ship.

One night, during the middle watch, the captain came on deck, and took to walking up and down with the second mate. The night was clear, though dark. The Chrysolite was close-hauled on the starboard tack, and was making good headway under a clinking breeze. She was an old-fashioned, frigate-built, full-rigged ship, such as one seldom happens on now, her quarter-galleries, chain-plates, to' gallant bulwarks, and single topsail-yards being all out of date among the ship-builders of to-day. It has been said that she had "rare lines," and the remark was just. A more imposing pile of timber was possibly never floated. She had plenty of beam to cope with the South Atlantic wave-giants, and not too much sheer. Her fiddle-stem was gracefully cut, and harmonised to perfection with the slight rake aft of her lofty masts. Her spars, also, were finely proportioned to the breadth of her hull. So that, with her canvas spread in an unwavering breeze, the Chrysolite was a stately creature and "a thing of beauty."

"Mr. Grant," said the captain, addressing his subordinate officer, "be good enough to take a star and work out the ship's position."

The second mate quickly brought his sextant, and took the altitude of a star convenient for his purpose. He then went below to the cabin to perform his calculations. The lookout man, a ready sleeper, was in a heavy slumber, upon which the stiffening breeze made no effect. The rest of the watch had disappeared in the customary fashion. Captain Anderson was practically alone on deck.

He walked forward, leaned over the weather-rail, and directed his glass. He saw just exactly what he expected to see. There, right ahead in the distance, the binoculars showed a long, thin streak of sparkling silver, appearing like a lightning flash held fast between the darkness and the deep sea. It was phosphorescent water playing on a sand-bank.

Anderson put the glass into his pocket. He was sullen and determined. He stood motionless for full half an hour, trying to repress the workings of an aroused conscience; but his thoughts would not let him alone. There was something behind them, some new sensations, which set them buzzing in his mind. These sensations were his finest feelings--ennobling emotions which had been cramped in the

grip of discipline for forty years. He could not comprehend it, but he found himself pursuing a train of thoughts of finer sensibility than he had ever experienced, and in which the great bribe had no place. He foreshadowed in his mind’s eye the tragic events over which he was now presiding. He foresaw the danger to life and limb with a fresh clearness of vision. He pictured to himself the possible agonies of his fellow-creatures (never once thinking of his own) with a sentiment much akin to pity--strong, too, but not sufficiently strong to overcome that unbending guide which forbade him for honour’s sake to go back upon his promise. Then there was the doom of the ship itself--

The man is not angry, much less fearful; but his lips are quivering and his nostrils widening with a passion hitherto unknown. He sees the picture vividly--a majestic, gallant ship done to destruction; a rich, ruined seaman wandering on earth a broken heart in a dishonoured bosom. Not only a gallant ship, but a lifelong pride and the fulness of a heart’s desire swept recklessly into limbo. Here, at last, had his love revealed itself.

"No, by God, she SHALL not perish!"

With a rapid movement he gains the fo’castle, and roars into it, "All hands ’bout ship! Quick now, for your very lives!"

There is no mistaking his tone. It is not one of driving tyranny, but of urgent agony, and it goes right home to every man.

Up they tumble in a ready crowd, many in their shirts alone. They are all sleepy, but the business on hand will soon cure them of this.

They stand by. The helm is put down, and quickly the Chrysolite veers round in process of reaching the other tack. Will she do it? No! She trembles almost in the teeth of the wind, misses stays, and falls off again on to the old tack.

Anderson cannot understand it, old sailor as he is; puts the helm down once more; once more she misses.

"Back the main-yard! Shiver the foreyard!"

Soon every stitch of canvas on the mainmast is swung about to face the breeze, while that on the foremast is hauled in. Although she be going at eight knots, THAT should check her.

But it does not.

"Mizzen topsail braces, then!" Quick as thought the lee braces are slacked off, and those on the weather side made taut. Still she is not checked. Strange, too, for the breeze is stiff. Anderson feels she is in the stream of a strong current.

There had been no need to say what was the cause of danger. The heavy boom of breakers rose above the tread of feet, the clashing of spars, and the chorus of curses.

Meanwhile Mr. Grant has finished his calculations below. He has found for a result that the ship is among the Maldive reefs. He is certain there must be some error in his work, and he sets himself to revise his figures. But the breeze sweeps into the cabin with a faint command from the upper air--"Back the main-yard!"--and he shrewdly guesses that his calculations are correct.

The captain is everywhere at once, urging and aiding. He sees the whole canvas aback, and yet the Chrysolite drifts on. He cannot ’bout his ship nor back her.

The reef is quite within appreciable distance now. The hands can do nothing more, so they gaze at the dancing line of phosphorescent atoms, and curse tremendously--though these may be their last moments.

"All hands wear ship!" comes sharply from Anderson.

"--you and your orders!" cries some one. "To the boats, to the boats!"

Although the Chrysolite carried five boats, no less than four of them were unseaworthy. In those days the examination of an outward-bound ship was slurred over, with the natural consequence that the marine law was more frequently broken than observed. The only boat on board the Chrysolite worth launching was the life-boat, which stood bottom upward between the main and mizzen masts. At the cry "To the boats!" there was a rush for her. But Anderson is first. He carries in his hand a small axe, meant for clearing away light wreckage. With a vigorous blow the life-boat is stove in. The men stop short, daunted. He turns about and faces them, looking like an angry Titan.

"Now then, you hell-hounds, wear the ship or sink!" They see he means to be master to the end.

It is too late even for imprecation. The men literally spring to their work, with an alacrity begot of desperation. Every moment is of the utmost value, for the reef is very close and the horrible breakers are in all ears.

Anderson himself holds the wheel. He has put the helm up, and soon the great ship, with swelling sails, breaks out of the current. He feels the change in an instant; the hands know it too. But the danger is not past. Leaving the wheel to another, he runs quickly forward to lean over the weather-rail. As he passes through the crowd on the fo’castle, the poor fellows cheer him ringingly. The fine old seaman doffs his cap and makes them a grand, manly bow.

He glances at the reef and then mutters quietly to himself, "She will never clear it, and God forgive me!" Then, wheeling round, he gives a command.

"Let go both anchors; it is our only chance!"

Many hearts sink at the order, but in as few moments as possible the cables are smoking through the hawse-pipes. The anchors touch bottom, and hold. All hands clutch the stanchions or shrouds in anticipation of the shock. It comes. The ship, racing on, is brought up with a round turn of such sudden force as to shake every nail in her timbers. Aloft there is crash upon crash, and the lighter spars come showering on to the deck, bringing with them ragged remnants of canvas. One man is struck down. The hawsers hum with strenuous vibration. The timbers at the bluff of the bow crack almost vertically, until the ship's nose is well-nigh torn out. The tension is too great and the port cable snaps. The starboard one is tougher. But were it ever so tough it would not save the ship, for its anchor is dragging. Back she sags, gathered into her doom by the whitening waters; until at length, thus lifted along, her keel rests athwart the bank, and she heels over. Her sailing days are done. As the consecutive seas sweep up the reef, she lifts her head and drops it again and again, like a poor recumbent brute in its death-hour. But the wind must sometime cease, and the waves forget their anger. Then will she take a long repose, leaning on her shattered side--the very type of a picturesque wreck.

About this time Messrs. Ruin & Ruin were more than usually interested in the shipping news, and one morning they saw, under the heading of "Wrecks and Casualties," this:

"MINICOY (MALDIVE ISLANDS).--The ship Chrysolite, of London, went ashore yesterday night on the southern reefs, and is now a total wreck. All hands saved except John Anderson, master, who was killed by a falling spar."

The result of the whole business had far exceeded the owners' expectations. It had been so neatly done; and the greatest comfort of all was that no one was now left who could tell tales. They did not exactly thank God in so many words for the death of their faithful servant. That was very sad, as of course it should be. But they thanked Him in all humility for a certain sum of three thousand pounds, which would have gone elsewhere but for--If he, Anderson, had had wife or children, Messrs. Ruin & Ruin felt almost certain they would have made provision for them. But they thanked God again that he had never married. All that was necessary to be done now was to send in a claim for the insurance money, and, if well advised, retire into private life.

Messrs. Ruin & Ruin talked the matter over between them, congratulated themselves upon their prosperity, made no end of choice little plans for the future, and finally decided to forsake the commercial profession. And, indeed, they would have done so, but that the

evening papers contained an item of intelligence which, though less expected, and therefore more startling, contained just as lively an interest for them as the report of the wreck. It ran thus:

"It is currently reported that the Jupiter Insurance Company has failed heavily, and is only able to meet its liabilities with a composition of sixpence on the pound."

Messrs. Ruin & Ruin still carry on business near Billiter Street, but their offices are now on the top floor in a very back alley.

"PETREL" AND "THE BLACK SWAN"

(ANONYMOUS)

"Sail, ho!"

Never, surely, did the cry fall upon more welcome ears, save and except those of men becalmed in a boat upon the open sea. For twelve weary days and nights had we, the officers and men of H.M.S. Petrel (six guns, Commander B. R. Neville), been cooped up in our iron prison, patrolling one of the hottest sections of the terrestrial globe, on the lookout for slavers. From latitude 4 deg. north to latitude 4 deg. south was our beat, and we dared not venture beyond these limits. Our instructions were to keep out of sight of land and try to intercept some of the larger vessels, which, it was suspected, carried cargoes of slaves from the ---- coast. The ship, the sea, the cloudless sky--there was nothing else to see, nothing else to think of. Work, study, play even, were alike impossible in that fierce, scorching heat. If you touched a bit of iron on deck it almost burned your hand. If you lay down between-decks covered with a sheet, you awoke in a bath of perspiration.

"Sail, ho!"

The man, in his excitement, repeated the shout before he could be hailed from the deck.

"Where away?" sang out the captain.

"Two points on the weather-bow, sir," was the reply.

That phrase about the "weather-bow" was a nautical fiction, for there was no wind to speak of, and what there was was nearly dead

astern.

"Keep her away two points," said Commander Neville; and the order was promptly obeyed.

In a few seconds the news had spread through the ship, and the men clustered on the bulwarks, straining their eyes to get a glimpse of the stranger. Even the stokers, poor fellows, showed their sooty faces at the engine-room hatchway. Of course the stranger might be, and probably was, an innocent trader; but then she might be a slaver; and golden visions of prize-money floated before the eyes of every man and boy on board the Petrel.

We did not steam very fast, as of course our supply of coal was limited; and it was about two hours before sundown when we fairly sighted the stranger. She was a long three-masted schooner, with tall raking masts, lying very low in the water. All her canvas was set; and as a little wind had sprung up, she was slipping through the water at a fair pace.

"She looks for all the world like a slaver, sir," remarked Mr. Brabazon, the first lieutenant, to the commander.

Neville said nothing, but his lips were firmly compressed, and a gleam of excitement was in his eyes.

"Fire a blank cartridge, Mr. O'Riley," said he to the second lieutenant; "and signal her to ask her nationality and her code number."

This was done; and in answer to the signal the schooner slowly hoisted the American colours.

"She has eased away her sheets, and luffed a point or two, sir," said the quartermaster, touching his cap.

The captain merely answered this by a nod.

"Put a shot in your gun, Mr. O'Riley," said he. "Lower your hoist and make a fresh hoist demanding her name."

This was done, but the American took no notice.

"Fire a shot, Mr. O'Riley--wide, of course," said the commander.

Again the deafening report of the big gun sounded in our ears; and we could see the splash of the shot as it struck the water about fifty yards from the schooner. Immediately a flag was run up, then another and another; and we saw that she was not giving us her code number, but was spelling out her name, letter by letter--The Black Swan.

"Just look that up in the United States Merchant Registry," said

the captain to the first lieutenant. And in half a minute he had reported--"No such name, sir." This was something more than suspicious. And the wind was rising.

"Hoist the signal for her to heave to!" cried Commander Neville. "Take a boat and half a dozen hands, Mr. O'Riley," he continued; "board her, inspect her papers, and come back to report. If her papers are not in order," added he, "you may search for slaves; but if they are you had better do nothing further. You know it is clearly set down in the Protocol that we are not entitled to search the hold if the papers are in order; and there have been complaints lately against some over-zealous officers, who have got into trouble in consequence. So be careful. But keep your eyes open. Note any suspicious circumstances, and come back and report."

Before Lieutenant O'Riley reached the ship he saw that everything about her had been sacrificed to speed. Her spars, especially, were unusually heavy for a craft of her size.

The British officer was received by a little, thin, elderly man wearing a Panama hat and speaking with a strong Yankee accent.

"Produce your papers, if you please," said O'Riley. They were handed out at once, and seemed to be perfectly regular.

"What have you got on board?" was the next question.

"General cargo--dry goods, and so on."

"Why isn't your name on the register?"

"Ain't it now? Well, I guess it must be because this is a new ship. We can't put our name on by telegraph, mister."

"Just tell your men to knock off the hatches. I want to have a look at your cargo."

The skipper shook his head.

"I've been delayed long enough," said he, "and have lost a great part of the only wind we've had in this darned latitude for a week."

"I'll do it myself, then!" cried O'Riley.

"Not now, sir; not with six men while I have fifteen. You have no right to search the hold of a respectable merchantman and disturb her cargo. Do you take me for a slaver, or what? Ef you must have the hatches up, send back to your man-of-war for a larger crew, so as to overpower me, you understand, and you may do it with pleasure. Bet I guess there'll be a complaint lodged at Washington, and you folks in London will have to pay for it. That's all, mister. I only want things fair and square, within my treaty rights."

And having delivered himself of this long speech, the Yankee skipper turned on his heel.

Of course O'Riley could only return to the Petrel and report all this to his commander. "I'm convinced she is a slaver, sir," said he in conclusion.

"But you have no evidence of it; and you say the papers were all in order."

"Apparently they were, sir."

"Then I'm afraid I can do nothing," said the commander. And to the deep disgust of the whole ship's crew, the order was given for the Petrel to return to her course.

All that night, however, Commander Neville was haunted by a doubt whether he had not better have run the risk of a complaint and a reprimand, rather than forego the overhauling of so suspicious-looking a craft; and in the morning a rumour reached his ears that the cockswain, who had accompanied Mr. O'Riley to The Black Swan, had noticed something about her of a doubtful nature. The man was sent for and questioned; and he said that, while the lieutenant was on board, the boat of which he was in charge had dropped a little way astern; and that he had then noticed that the name of the vessel had been recently painted out, but that the last two letters were distinctly visible. And these letters were LE, not AN.

"The scoundrel said she was a new ship!" cried the commander. "'Bout ship!"

"We can't possibly catch her up, sir," said the first lieutenant, drily.

"I don't know that, Mr. Brabazon," answered Neville. "There has been hardly any wind, and we know the course she was steering. She could not expect to see us again; so in all probability she has kept to that course. By making allowances, we may intercept her; I am convinced of it."

The hope of again encountering The Black Swan, faint as it was, caused quite a commotion in our little world. The day passed without our sighting a single sail; but when the morning dawned Lieutenant Brabazon was forced to own that the commander's judgment had proved better than his own. By the greatest good luck we had hit upon the right track. There, right in front of us, was the American schooner, her sails lazily flapping against her masts.

"Full speed ahead, and stand by!" shouted the captain down the engine-room tube.

"Signal to her to heave to, and if she does not obey, fire a shot right across her bows, Mr. O'Riley," continued the commander.

"Mr. Brabazon, you take a boat and thirty men well armed. Board her, and have her hatches off at once. You'll stand no nonsense, I know."

"All right, sir," cried the lieutenant, an active, somewhat imperious officer, of the Civis Romanus sum type. He had been unusually disgusted at his commander's decision to leave The Black Swan without searching her; and he was delighted that a more active policy had been begun.

"I say, Brabazon," whispered the commander to him, as he was going over the side, "you know I'm stepping a bit beyond bounds, and I'm just a little anxious. If she turns out to be a slaver, as we suspect, step to the taffrail and wave your handkerchief, will you?"

"I will, sir; I'm certain it will be all right," cheerfully responded the first lieutenant.

A tall, slim, youngish man, in white linen, received the British officer as he set foot on the deck of The Black Swan.

"I am at present in command of this craft, sir," said the young American. "The skipper is not fit just at present. We had a visit from you two days ago, I think. Can I do anything for you?"

"Yes; I want you to take off your hatches," said the lieutenant, sharply.

"Well, sir," began the Yankee, "I guess your demand is beyond your treaty powers."

"I know all about that. I must have the hatches off."

"And you are detaining me and overhauling my cargo on no grounds whatever--"

"Will you do it at once?" broke in the British officer.

"I repeat--ON NO GROUNDS WHATEVER; will cause an in--ter--na--tional difficulty, and may bring re--markably unpleasant con--sequences to your captain. Now--"

"Off with your hatches!" cried the lieutenant.

"Sir!"

"If you don't, by George, I will!"

"You know clearly what you're doing, sir?"

"I do."

"And you know the risk you run?"

"I do. No more palaver. Off with them at once, or I'll break them open."

Further resistance was useless. The thing was done; and the moment the first hatch was raised the sickening effluvium that issued from the hold proclaimed the truth. Nearly three hundred slaves were packed between-decks, many of the poor creatures standing so close that they could not lie down.

With a look of speechless contempt at the young mate of the schooner, the lieutenant walked to the side of the ship and waved his handkerchief. That instant a loud British cheer rang over the water, given by the blue-jackets, who could be seen clustering in the rigging like bees.

"I told our skipper judgment would overtake us," said the Yankee. "Say, mister," he added, in another tone, "seeing that the game's up, suppose we have a glass of iced champagne downstairs?"

The lieutenant hesitated. To drink with the mate of a slaver! But--iced champagne!

Slowly he moved toward the companionway. "I don't mind if I do," he said, at length; "and you may as well bring up your papers with the drinks, for I shall carry them on board the Petrel. Of course you understand that you are my prize."

And having set a guard at the hatchways, the lieutenant descended the cabin stairs.

The iced champagne was duly forthcoming, and under its genial influence Lieutenant Brabazon began to feel something like pity for the young mate who had been so early seduced into the paths of crime. Probably he had a mother or a sweetheart somewhere in the States who imagined that he was already on his way home, whereas now his character was ruined, even if he escaped a long term of imprisonment.

This feeling was strengthened as he saw that his companion was gazing mournfully at his glass without speaking a word. At length the young man lifted his head.

"Say, mister, what'll they do to me, do you think?"

"I can't tell. Of course you know that what you have been engaged in is a kind of piracy?"

"No!"

"I believe so. Cargo and crew are confiscated, of course. What they will do with you I can't tell."

"They won’t hang me, will they?"

"Probably not," said the lieutenant; "but let this be a warning to you. You see what it is to wander off the straight course and hanker after forbidden gains. Lead an honest life in future, when you are released from custody. Avoid vicious companions--But what’s this?" he cried, as his eye fell on an empty scabbard hanging on the wall. It looked very like a United States service sword scabbard, and immediately the thought darted through his mind that this hypocritical young Yankee (who had been pretending to wipe away a tear as he listened to the lieutenant’s good advice) had been doing something worse, or at least more heavily punished, than running cargoes of slaves.

The British officer looked round the cabin. A United States navy cap was lying on a plush-covered bench.

"Ah! you’ve been having a brush with an American man-of-war!" cried Lieutenant Brabazon. "You will have to tell my superior officer how you came into possession of these articles. I most place you under arrest!" And, bitterly regretting that he had sat down to table with the fellow, the British officer rushed on deck.

"Quartermaster," he cried, "bring up a guard of four men, and take this man," pointing to the Yankee, who had followed him on deck, "to the Petrel. If he tries to escape, shoot him at once!"

The quartermaster advanced to seize the prisoner; but before he reached him he involuntarily stopped short. A roar of laughter sounded in his ears. The American mate and his companions were shrieking and staggering about the deck; even the crew of the slaver were, every man Jack of them, grinning from ear to ear. The lieutenant was dumfounded.

"Excuse me, sir; but the joke was too good," said the Yankee, coming forward and holding out his hand. "I am the first lieutenant of the United States war-ship Georgia, in command of a prize crew on board this vessel, taking her to ---- to have her condemned. We seized her yesterday. Hearing that you had been on a visit to her the day before, and had gone away without doing anything, I couldn’t resist the temptation of taking you in. Hope you don’t bear malice? Let’s finish that magnum of champagne."

It was evidently the best thing to be done; but the lieutenant was not a first-rate companion on that occasion.

"Give my respects to your commander," called out the United States officer, as his guest went down into his boat, "and advise him from me not to be so jolly particular another time. And I’ll try to take your kind advice and sail a straight course in future!" he cried, as her Majesty’s boat shot away for the last time from the side of The Black Swan.

MELISSA’S TOUR

BY GRANT ALLEN

Lucy looked across the table at me with a face of blank horror. "O Vernon," she cried, "what are we EVER to do? And an American at that! This is just TOO ghastly!" It’s a habit of Lucy’s, I may remark, to talk italics.

I laid down my coffee-cup, and glanced back at her in surprise. "Why, what’s up?" I exclaimed, scanning the envelope close. "A letter from Oxford, surely. Mrs. Wade, of Christchurch--I thought I knew the hand. And SHE’s not an American."

"Well, look for yourself!" Lucy cried, and tossed the note to me, pouting. I took it, and read. I’m aware that I have the misfortune to be only a man, but it really didn’t strike me as quite so terrible.

"DEAR MRS. HANCOCK: George has just heard that your husband and you are going for a trip to New York this summer. COULD you manage to do us a VERY GREAT kindness? I hope you won’t mind it. We have an American friend--a Miss Easterbrook, of Kansas City, niece of Professor Asa P. Easterbrook, the well-known Yale geologist--who very much wishes to find an escort across the Atlantic. If you would be so good as to take charge of her, and deliver her safely to Dr. Horace Easterbrook, of Hoboken, on your arrival in the States, you would do a good turn to her, and at the same time confer an eternal favour on "Yours very truly, "EMILY WADE."

Lucy folded her hands in melodramatic despair.

"Kansas City!" she exclaimed, with a shudder of horror. "And Asa P. Easterbrook! A geologist, indeed! That horrid Mrs. Wade! She just did it on purpose!"

"It seems to me," I put in, regarding the letter close, "she did it merely because she was asked to find a chaperon for the girl; and she wrote the very shortest possible note, in a perfunctory way, to the very first acquaintance she chanced to hear of who was going to America."

"Vernon!" my wife exclaimed, with a very decided air, "you men are such simpletons! You credit everybody always with the best and

purest motives. But you're utterly wrong. I can see through that woman. The hateful, hateful wretch! She did it to spite me! Oh, my poor, poor boy; my dear, guileless Bernard!"

Bernard, I may mention, is our oldest son, aged just twenty-four, and a Cambridge graduate. He's a tutor at King's, and though he's a dear good fellow, and a splendid long-stop, I couldn't myself conscientiously say I regard guilelessness as quite his most marked characteristic.

"What are you doing?" I asked, as Lucy sat down with a resolutely determined air at her writing-table in the corner.

"Doing!" my wife replied, with some asperity her tone. "Why, answering that hateful, detestable woman!"

I glanced over her shoulder, and followed her pen as she wrote:

"MY DEAR MRS. WADE: It was INDEED a delight to us to see your neat little handwriting again. NOTHING would give us greater pleasure, I'm sure, than to take charge of your friend, who, I'm confident, we shall find a most charming companion. Bernard will be with us, so she won't feel it dull, I trust. We hope to have a very delightful trip, and your happy thought in providing us with a travelling companion will add, no doubt, to all our enjoyment--especially Bernard's. We both join in very kindest regards to Mr. Wade and yourself, and I am ever

"Yours most cordially,

"LUCY B. HANCOCK."

My wife fastened down the envelope with a very crushing air. "There! THAT ought to do for her," she said, glancing up at me triumphantly. "I should think she could see from that, if she's not as blind as an owl, I've observed her atrocious designs upon Bernard, and mean to checkmate them. If, after such a letter, she has the cheek to send us her Yankee girl to chaperon, I shall consider her lost to all sense of shame and all notions of decency. But she won't, of course. She'll withdraw her unobtrusively." And Lucy flung the peccant sheet that had roused all this wrath on to the back of the fireplace with offended dignity.

She was wrong, however. By next evening's post a second letter arrived, more discomposing, if possible, to her nerves than the first one.

"Mrs. Lucy B. Hancock, London.

"DEAR MADAM: I learn from my friend, Mrs. Wade, of Oxford College, that you are going to be kind enough to take charge of me across the ocean. I thank you for your courtesy, and will gladly accept your friendly offer. If you will let me know by what steamer you

start, I will register my passage right away in Liverpool. Also, if you will be good enough to tell me from what depot you leave London, and by what train, I will go along with you in the cars. I'm unused to travel alone. "Respectfully, "MELISSA P. EASTERBROOK."

Lucy gazed at it in despair. "A creature like that!" she cried, all horror-struck. "Oh, my poor, dear Bernard! 'The ocean,' she says! 'Go along with you in the cars!' 'Melissa P. Easterbrook!'"

"Perhaps," I said, tentatively, "she may be better than her name. And at any rate, Bernard's not BOUND to marry her!"

Lucy darted at me profound volumes of mute feminine contempt. "The girl's pretty," she said, at last, after a long, deep pause, during which I had been made to realise to the full my own utter moral and intellectual nothingness. "You may be sure she's pretty. Mrs. Wade wouldn't have foisted her upon us if she wasn't pretty, but unspeakable. It's a vile plot on her part to destroy my peace of mind. You won't believe it, Vernon; but I KNOW that woman. And what does the girl mean by signing herself 'Respectfully,' I wonder?"

"It's the American way," I ventured gently to interpose.

"So I gather," my wife answered, with a profound accent of contempt. To her anything that isn't done in the purest English way stands ipso facto self-condemned immediately.

A day or two later a second letter arrived from Miss Easterbrook, in reply to one of Lucy's suggesting a rendezvous. I confess it drew up in my mind a somewhat painful picture. I began to believe my wife's fears were in some ways well grounded.

"Mrs. Lucy B. Hancock, London [as before].

"DEAR MADAM: I thank you for yours, and will meet you on the day and hour you mention at St. Pancras depot. You will know me when you see me, because I shall wear a dove-coloured dress, with bonnet to match, and a pair of gray spectacles.

"Respectfully,

"MELISSA P. EASTERBROOK."

I laid it down and sighed. "A New England schoolmarm!" I exclaimed, with a groan. "It sounds rather terrible. A dove-coloured dress and a pair of gray spectacles! I fancy I can picture her to myself: a tall and bony person of a certain age, with corkscrew curls, who reads improving books and has views of her own about the fulfilment of prophecy."

But as my spirits went down so Lucy's went up, like the old man and woman in the cottage weather-glass. "That looks more promising," she said. "The spectacles are good. Perhaps, after all, dear

Bernard may escape. I don’t think he’s at all the sort of person to be taken with a dove-coloured bonnet."

For some days after Bernard came home from Cambridge we chaffed a good deal among ourselves about Miss Melissa Easterbrook. Bernard took quite my view about the spectacles and dress. He even drew on an envelope a fancy portrait of Miss Easterbrook, as he said himself, "from documentary evidence." It represented a typical schoolmarm of the most virulent order, and was calculated to strike terror into the receptive mind of ingenuous youth on simple inspection.

At last the day came when we were to go to Liverpool. We arrived at St. Pancras in very good time, and looked about on the platform for a tall and hard-faced person of transatlantic aspect, arrayed in a dove-coloured dress and a pair of gray spectacles. But we looked in vain; nobody about seemed to answer to the description. At last Bernard turned to my wife with a curious smile. "I think I’ve spotted her, mother," he said, waving his hand vaguely to the right. "That lady over yonder--by the door of the refreshment-room. Don’t you see? That must be Melissa." For we knew her only as Melissa already among ourselves; it had been raised to the mild rank of a family witticism.

I looked in the direction he suggested, and paused for certainty. There, irresolute by the door, and gazing about her timidly with inquiring eyes, stood the prettiest, tiniest, most shrinking little Western girl you ever saw in your life--attired, as she said, in a dove-coloured dress, with bonnet to match, and a pair of gray spectacles. But oh, what a dove-coloured dress! Walter Crane might have designed it--one of those perfect travelling costumes of which the America girl seems to possess a monopoly; and the spectacles--well, the spectacles, though undoubtedly real, added just a touch of piquancy to an otherwise almost painfully timid and retiring little figure.

The moment I set eyes on Melissa Easterbrook, I will candidly admit, I was her captive at once; and even Lucy, as she looked at her, relaxed her face involuntarily into a sympathetic smile. As a rule, Lucy might pose as a perfect model of the British matron in her ampler and maturer years--"calmly terrible," as an American observer once described the genus; but at sight of Melissa she melted without a struggle. "Poor wee little thing, how pretty she is!" she exclaimed, with a start. You will readily admit that was a great deal from Lucy.

Melissa came forward tentatively, a dainty blush half rising on her rather pale and delicate little cheek. "Mrs. Hancock?" she said, in an inquiring tone, with just the faintest suspicion of an American accent in her musical, small voice. Lucy took her hand cordially. "I was sure it was you, ma’am," Melissa went on, with pretty confidence, looking up into her face, "because Mrs. Wade told me you’d be as kind to me as a mother; and the moment I saw you I just said to

myself, 'That MUST be Mrs. Hancock; she's so sweetly motherly.' How good of you to burden yourself with a stranger like me! I hope, indeed, I won't be too much trouble."

That was the beginning. I may as well say, first as last, we were all of us taken by storm "right away" by Melissa. Lucy herself struck her flag unconditionally before a single shot was fired; and Bernard and I, hard hit at all points, surrendered at discretion. She was the most charming little girl the human mind can conceive. Our cold English language fails, in its roughness, to describe her. She was petite, mignonne, graceful, fairy-like, yet with a touch of Yankee quaintness and a delicious espieglerie that made her absolutely unique in my experience of women. We had utterly lost our hearts to her before ever we reached Liverpool; and, strange to say, I believe the one of us whose heart was most completely gone was, if only you'll believe it, that calmly terrible Lucy.

Melissa's most winning characteristic, however, as it seemed to me, was her perfect frankness. As we whirled along on our way across England, she told us everything about herself, her family, her friends, her neighbours, and the population of Kansas City in general. Not obtrusively or egotistically,--of egotism Melissa would be wholly incapable,--but in a certain timid, confiding, half-childlike way, as of the lost little girl, that was absolutely captivating. "Oh no, ma'am," she said, in answer to one of Lucy's earliest questions; "I didn't come over alone. I think I'd be afraid to. I came with a whole squad of us who were doing Europe. A prominent lady in Kansas City took charge of the square lot. And I got as far as Rome with them, through Germany and Switzerland, and then my money wouldn't run to it any further; so I had to go back. Travelling comes high in Europe, what with hotels and fees and having to pay to get your baggage checked. And that's how I came to want an escort."

Bernard smiled good-naturedly. "Then you had only a fixed sum," he asked, "to make your European tour with?"

"That's so, sir," Melissa answered, looking up at him quizzically through those pretty gray spectacles. "I'd put away quite a little sum of my own to make this trip upon. It was my only chance of seeing Europe and improving myself a piece. I knew when I started I couldn't go all the round trip with the rest of my party; but I thought I'd set out with them, anyway, and go ahead as long as my funds held out; and then, when I was through, I'd turn about and come home again."

"But you put away the money yourself?" Lucy asked, with a little start of admiring surprise.

"Yes, ma'am," Melissa answered, sagely. "I know it. I saved it."

"From your allowance?" Lucy suggested, from the restricted horizon of her English point of view.

Melissa laughed a merry little laugh of amusement. "Oh no," she said; "from my salary."

"From your salary!" Bernard put in, looking down at her with an inquiring glance.

"Yes, sir; that's it," Melissa answered, all unabashed. "You see, for four years I was a clerk in the post-office." She pronounced it "churk," but that's a detail.

"Oh, indeed!" Bernard echoed. He was burning to know how, I could see, but politeness forbade him to press Melissa on so delicate a point any further.

Melissa, however, herself supplied at once the missing information. "My father was postmaster in our city," she said, simply, "under the last administration,--President Blanco's, you know,--and he made me one of his clerks, of course, when he'd gotten the place; and as long as the fun went on, I saved all my salary for a tour in Europe."

"And at the end of four years?" Lucy said.

"Our party went out," Melissa put in, confidentially. "So, when the trouble began, my father was dismissed, and I had just enough left to take me as far as Rome, as I told you."

I was obliged to explain parenthetically, to allay Lucy's wonderment, that in America the whole personnel of every local government office changes almost completely with each incoming President.

"That's so, sir," Melissa assented, with a wise little nod. "And as I didn't think it likely our folks would get in again in a hurry,--the country's had enough of us,--I just thought I'd make the best of my money when I'd got it."

"And you used it all up in giving yourself a holiday in Europe?" Lucy exclaimed, half reproachfully. To her economic British mind such an expenditure of capital seemed horribly wasteful.

"Yes, ma'am," Melissa answered, all unconscious of the faint disapproval implied in Lucy's tone. "You see, I'd never been anywhere much away from Kansas City before; and I thought this was a special opportunity to go abroad and visit the picture-galleries and cathedrals of Europe, and enlarge my mind and get a little culture. To us a glimpse of Europe's an intellectual necessary."

"Oh, then you regarded your visit as largely educational?" Bernard put in, with increasing interest. Though he's a fellow and tutor of King's, I will readily admit that Bernard's personal tastes lie rather in the direction of rowing and foot-ball than of general culture; but still, the American girl's point of view decidedly attracted him by its novelty in a woman.

"That’s so, sir," Melissa answered once more, in her accustomed affirmative. "I took it as a sort of university trip. I graduated in Europe. In America, of course, wherever you go, all you can see’s everywhere just the same--purely new and American; the language, the manners, the type, don’t vary. In Europe, you cross a frontier or a ribbon of sea, and everything’s different. Now, on this trip of ours, we went first to Chester to glimpse a typical old English town--those rows, oh, how lovely! And then to Leamington for Warwick Castle and Kenilworth. Kenilworth’s just glorious--isn’t it?--with its mouldering red walls and its dark-green ivy, and the ghost of Amy Robsart walking up and down upon the close-shaven English grass-plots."

"I’ve heard it’s very beautiful," Bernard admitted, gravely.

"What! you live so close, and you’ve never BEEN there!" Melissa exclaimed, in frank surprise.

Bernard allowed with a smile he had been so culpably negligent.

"And Stratford-on-Avon, too!" Melissa went on, enthusiastically, her black eyes beaming. "Isn’t Stratford just charming! I don’t care for the interminable Shakespeare nuisance, you know; that’s all too new and made up; we could raise a Shakespeare house like that in Kansas City any day. But the church and the elms and the swans and the river! I made such a sweet little sketch of them all, so soft and peaceful. At least, the place itself was as sweet as a corner of heaven, and I tried as well as I could in my way to sketch it."

"I suppose it IS very pretty," Bernard replied, in a meditative tone.

Melissa started visibly. "What! have you never been there, either?" she exclaimed, taken aback. "Well, that IS odd, now! You live in England, and have never run over to Stratford-on-Avon! Why, you do surprise me! But there! I suppose you English live in the midst of culture, as it were, and can get to it all right away at any time; so perhaps you don’t think quite as much of it as we, who have to save up our money, perhaps for years, to get, for once in our lives, just a single passing glimpse of it. You live at Cambridge, you see; you must be steeped in culture right down to the finger-ends."

Bernard modestly responded, twirling his manly moustache, that the river and the running-ground, he feared, were more in his way than art or architecture.

"And where else did you go besides England?" Lucy asked, really interested.

"Well, ma’am, from London we went across by Ostend to Bruges, where I studied the Memlings, and made a few little copies from them,"

Melissa answered, with her sunny smile. "It's such a quaint old place--Bruges; life seems to flow as stagnant as its own canals. Have you ever been there?"

"Oh, charming!" Lucy answered; "most delightful and quiet. But--er--who are the Memlings? I don't quite recollect them."

Melissa gazed at her open-eyed. "The Memlings?" she said, slowly; "why, you've just missed the best thing at Bruges if you haven't seen them. They've such a naive charm of their own, so innocent and sympathetic. They're in the Hopital de St. Jean, you know, where Memling put them. And it's so delightful to see great pictures like those (though they're tiny little things to look at) in their native surroundings, exactly as they were first painted--the 'Chasse de Ste. Ursule,' and all those other lovely things, so infantile in their simplicity, and yet so exquisitely graceful and pure and beautiful. I don't know as I saw anything in Europe to equal them for pathos in their own way --except, of course, the Fra Angelicos at San Marco in Florence."

"I don't think I've seen them," Lucy murmured, with an uncomfortable air. I could see it was just dawning upon her, in spite of her patronising, that this Yankee girl, with her imperfect command of the English tongue, knew a vast deal more about some things worth notice than she herself did. "And where did you go then, dear?"

"Oh, from Bruges we went on to Ghent," Melissa answered, leaning back, and looking as pretty as a picture herself in her sweet little travelling dress, "to see the great Van Eyck, the 'Adoration of the Lamb,' you know--that magnificent panel picture. And then we went to Brussels, where we had Dierick Bouts and all the later Flemings; and to Antwerp for Rubens and Vandyck and Quentin Matsys; and the Hague, after that, for Rembrandt and Paul Potter; and Amsterdam, in the end, for Van der Heist and Gerard Dow and the late Dutch painters. So, you see, we had quite an artistic tour; we followed up the development of Netherlandish art from beginning to end in historical order. It was just delightful."

"I went to Antwerp once," Bernard put in, somewhat sheepishly, still twirling his moustache; "but it was on my way to Switzerland, and I didn't see much, as far as I can recollect, except the cathedral and the quay and the hotel I was stopping at."

"Ah, that's all very well for YOU," Melissa answered, with a rather envious air. "You can see these things any day. But for us the chance comes only once in a lifetime, and we must make the most of it."

Well, in such converse as this we reached Liverpool in due time, and went next morning on board our steamer. We had a lovely passage out, and, all the way, the more we saw of Melissa the more we liked her. To be sure, Lucy received a terrible shock the third day out, when she asked Melissa what she meant to do when she returned to

Kansas City. "You won't go into the post-office again, I suppose, dear?" she said, kindly, for we had got by that time on most friendly terms with our little Melissa.

"I guess not," Melissa answered. "No such luck any more. I'll have to go back again to the store as usual."

"The store!" Lucy repeated, bewildered. "I --I don't quite understand you."

"Well, the shop, I presume you'd call it," Melissa answered, smiling. "My father's gotten a book-store in Kansas City, and before I went into the post-office I helped him at the counter; in fact, I was his saleswoman."

"I assure you, Vernon," Lucy remarked, in our berth that night, "if an Englishwoman had said it to me, I'd have been obliged to apologise to her for having forced her to confess it, and I don't know what way I should ever have looked to hide my face while she was talking about it. But with Melissa it's all so different somehow. She spoke as if it was the most natural thing on earth for her father to keep a shop, and she didn't seem the least little bit in the world ashamed of it, either."

"Why should she?" I answered, with my masculine bluntness. But that was perhaps a trifle too advanced for Lucy. Melissa was exercising a widening influence on my wife's point of view with astonishing rapidity; but still, a perfect lady must always draw a line somewhere.

All the way across, indeed, Melissa's lively talk was a constant delight and pleasure to every one of us. She was so taking,--that girl,--so confidential, so friendly. We really loved her. Then her quaint little Americanisms were as pretty as herself--not only her "Yes, sirs," and her "No, ma'ams," her "I guess" and "That's so," but her fresh Western ideas, and her infinite play of fancy in the queen's English. She turned it as a potter turns his clay. In Britain our mother tongue has crystallised long since into set forms and phrases. In America it has the plasticity of youth; it is fertile in novelty--nay, even in surprises. And Melissa knew how to twist it deftly into unexpected quips and incongruous conjunctions. Her talk ran on like a limpid brook, with a musical ripple playing ever on the surface. As for Bernard, he helped her about the ship like a brother, as she moved lightly around, with her sylph-like little form, among the ropes and capstans. Melissa Hked to be helped, she said; she didn't believe one bit in woman's rights; no, indeed; she was a great deal too fond of being taken care of for that. And who wouldn't take care of her,--that delicate little thing,--like some choice small masterpiece of cunning workmanship? Why, she almost looked as if she were made of Venetian glass, and a fall on deck would shatter her into a thousand fragments.

And her talk all the way was of the joys of Europe--the castles and abbeys she was leaving behind, the pictures and statues she had

seen and admired, the pictures and statues she had left unvisited. "Somebody told me in Paris," she said to me one day, as she hung on my arm on deck, and looked up into my face confidingly with that childlike smile of hers, "the only happy time in an American woman's life is the period when she's just got over the first poignant regret at having left Europe, and hasn't just reached the point when she makes up her mind that, come what will, she really MUST go back again. And I thought, for my part, then my happiness was fairly spoiled for life, for I shall never be able again to afford the journey."

"Melissa, my child," I said, looking down at those ripe, rich lips, "in this world one never knows what may turn up next. I've observed on my way down the path of life that, when fruit hangs rosy red on the tree by the wall, some passer-by or other is pretty sure in the end to pluck it."

But that was too much for Melissa's American modesty. She looked down and blushed like a rose herself; but she answered me nothing.

A night or two before we reached New York I was standing in the gloom, half hidden by a boat on the davits amidships, enjoying my vespertinal cigar in the cool of evening; and between the puffs I caught from time to time stray snatches of a conversation going on softly in the twilight between Bernard and Melissa. I had noticed of late, indeed, that Bernard and Melissa walked much on deck in the evening together; but this particular evening they walked long and late, and their conversation seemed to me (if I might judge by fragments) particularly confidential. The bits of it I caught were mostly, it is true, on Melissa's part (when Bernard said anything he said it lower). She was talking enthusiastically of Venice, Florence, Pisa, Rome, with occasional flying excursions into Switzerland and the Tyrol. Once, as she passed, I heard something murmured low about Botticelli's "Primavera"; when next she went by it was the Alps from Murren; a third time, again, it was the mosaics at St. Mark's, and Titian's "Assumption," and the doge's palace. What so innocent as art, in the moonlight, on the ocean?

At last Bernard paused just opposite where I stood (for they didn't perceive me), and said very earnestly, "Look here, Melissa,"--he had called her Melissa almost from the first moment, and she to prefer it, it seemed so natural,--"look here, Melissa. Do you know, when you talk about things like that, you make me feel so dreadfully ashamed of myself."

"Why so, Mr. Hancock?" Melissa asked, innocently.

"Well, when I think what opportunities I've had, and how little I've used them," Bernard exclaimed, with vehemence, "and then reflect how few you've got, and how splendidly you've made the best of them, I just blush, I tell you, Melissa, for my own laziness."

"Perhaps," Melissa interposed, with a grave little air, "if one

had always been brought up among it all, one wouldn't think quite so much of it. It's the novelty of antiquity that makes it so charming to people from my country. I suppose it seems quite natural, now, to you that your parish church should be six hundred years old, and have tombs in the chancel, with Elizabethan ruffs, or its floor inlaid with Plantagenet brasses. To us, all that seems mysterious, and in a certain sort of way one might almost say magical. Nobody can love Europe quite so well, I'm sure, who has lived in it from a child. YOU grew up to many things that burst fresh upon us at last with all the intense delight of a new sensation."

They stood still as they spoke, and looked hard at one another. There was a minute's pause. Then Bernard began again. "Melissa," he faltered out, in a rather tremulous voice, "are you sorry to go home again?"

"I just hate it!" Melissa answered, with a vehement burst. Then she added, after a second, "But I've enjoyed the voyage."

"You'd like to live in Europe?" Bernard asked.

"I should love it!" Melissa replied. "I'm fond of my folks, of course, and I should be sorry to leave them; but I just love Europe. I shall never go again, though. I shall come right away back to Kansas City now, and keep store for father for the rest of my natural existence."

"It seems hard," Bernard went on, musing, "that anybody like you, Melissa, with such a natural love of art and of all beautiful things,--anybody who can draw such sweet dreams of delight as those heads you showed us after Filippo Lippi, anybody who can appreciate Florence and Venice and Rome as you do,--should have to live all her life in a far Western town, and meet with so little sympathy as you're likely to find there."

"That's the rub," Melissa replied, looking up into his face with such a confiding look. (If any pretty girl had looked up at ME like that, I should have known what to do with her; but Bernard was twenty-four, and young men are modest.) "That's the rub, Mr. Hancock. I like--well, European society so very much better. Our men are nice enough in their own way, don't you know; but they somehow lack polish--at least, out West, I mean, in Kansas City. Europeans may n't be very much better when you get right at them, perhaps; but on the outside, anyway to ME, they're more attractive somehow."

There was another long pause, during which I felt as guilty as ever eavesdropper before me. Yet I was glued to the spot. I could hardly escape. At last Bernard spoke again. "I should like to have gone round with you on your tour, Melissa," he said. "I don't know Italy; I don't suppose by myself I could even appreciate it. But if YOU were by my side, you'd have taught me what it all meant; and then I think I might perhaps understand it."

Melissa drew a deep breath. "I wish I could take it all over again," she answered, half sighing. "And I didn't see Naples, either. That was a great disappointment. I should like to have seen Naples, I must confess, so as to know I could at least in the end die happy."

"Why do you go back?" Bernard asked, suddenly, with a bounce, looking down at that wee hand that trembled upon the taffrail.

"Because I can't help myself," Melissa answered, in a quivering voice. "I should like--I should like to live always in England."

"Have you any special preference for any particular town?" Bernard asked, moving closer to her--though, to be sure, he was very, very near already.

"N--no; n--none in particular," Melissa stammered out, faintly, half sidling away from him.

"Not Cambridge, for example?" Bernard asked, with a deep gulp and an audible effort.

I felt it would be unpardonable for me to hear any more. I had heard already many things not intended for me. I sneaked off, unperceived, and left those two alone to complete that conversation.

Half an hour later--it was a calm, mooolight night--Bernard rushed down eagerly into the saloon to find us. "Father and mother," he said, with a burst, "I want you up on deck for just ten minutes. There's something up there I should like so much to show you."

"Not whales?" I asked, hypocritically, suppressing a smile.

"No, not whales," he replied; "something much more interesting."

We followed him blindly, Lucy much in doubt what the thing might be, and I much in wonder. after Mrs. Wade's letter, how Lucy might take it.

At the top of the companion--ladder Melissa stood waiting for us, demure, but subdued, with a still timider look than ever upon that sweet, shrinking, small face of hers. Her heart beat hard, I could see by the movement of her bodice, and her breath came and went; but she stood there like a dove, in her dove-coloured travelling dress.

"Mother," Bernard began, "Melissa's obliged to come back to America, don't you know, without having ever seen Naples. It seems a horrid shame she should miss seeing it. She hadn't money enough left, you recollect, to take her there."

Lucy gazed at him, unsuspicious. "It does a pity," she answered, sympathetically.

"She’d enjoy it so much. I’m sorry she hasn’t been able to carry out all her programme."

"And, mother," Bernard went on, his eyes fixed hard on hers, "how awfully she’d be thrown away on Kansas City! I can’t bear to think of her going back to ’keep store’ there."

"For my part, I think it positively wicked," Lucy answered, with a smile, "and I can’t think what--well, people in England are about, to allow her to do it."

I opened my eyes wide. Did Lucy know what she was saying? Or had Melissa, then, fascinated her--the arch little witch!--as she had fascinated the rest of us?

But Bernard, emboldened by this excellent opening, took Melissa by the hand as if in due form to present her. "Mother," he said, tenderly, leading the wee thing forward, "and father, too, THIS is what I wanted to show you--the girl I’m engaged to!"

I paused and trembled. I waited for the thunderbolt. But no thunderbolt fell. On the contrary, Lucy stepped forward, and, under cover of the mast, caught Melissa in her arms and kissed her twice over. "My dear child," she cried, pressing her hard, "my dear little daughter, I don’t know which of you two I ought most to congratulate."

"But I do," Bernard murmured low. And, his father though I am, I murmured to myself, "And so do I, also."

"Then you’re not ashamed of me, mother dear," Melissa whispered, burying her dainty little bead on Lucy’s shoulder, "because I kept store in Kansas City?"

Lucy rose above herself in the excitement of the moment. "My darling wee daughter," she answered, kissing her tenderly again, "it’s Kansas City alone that ought to be ashamed of itself for putting YOU to keep store--such a sweet little gem as you are!"

VANDERDECKEN’S MESSAGE HOME;

OR,

THE TENACITY OF NATURAL AFFECTION

(ANONYMOUS)

Our ship, after touching at the Cape, went out again, and, soon losing sight of the Table Mountain, began to be assailed by the impetuous attacks of the sea, which is well known to be more formidable there than in most parts of the known ocean. The day had grown dull and hazy, and the breeze, which had formerly blown fresh, now sometimes subsided almost entirely, and then, recovering its strength for a short time, and changing its direction, blew with temporary violence, and died away again, as if exercising a melancholy caprice. A heavy swell began to come from the southeast. Our sails flapped against the masts, and the ship rolled from side to side as heavily as if she had been water-logged. There was so little wind that she would not steer.

At 2 P.M. we had a squall, accompanied by thunder and rain. The seamen, growing restless, looked anxiously ahead. They said we would have a dirty night of it, and that it would not be worth while to turn into their hammocks. As the second mate was describing a gale he had encountered off Cape Race, Newfoundland, we were suddenly taken all aback, and the blast came upon us furiously. We continued to scud under a double-reefed mainsail and foretopsail till dusk; but, as the sea ran high, the captain thought it safest to bring her to. The watch on deck consisted of four men, one of whom was appointed to keep a lookout ahead, for the weather was so hazy that we could not see two cables' length from the bows. This man, whose name was Tom Willis, went frequently to the bows as if to observe something; and when the others called to him, inquiring what he was looking at, he would give no definite answer. They therefore went also to the bows, and appeared startled, and at first said nothing. But presently one of them cried, "William, go call the watch."

The seamen, having been asleep in their hammocks, murmured at this unseasonable summons, and called to know how it looked upon deck. To which Tom Willis replied, "Come up and see. What we are minding is not on deck, but ahead."

On hearing this they ran up /vithout putting on their jackets, and when they came to the bows there was a whispering.

One of them asked, "Where is she? I do not see her." To which another replied, "The last flash of lightning showed there was not a reef in one of her sails; but we, who know her history, know that all her canvas will never carry her into port."

By this time the talking of the seamen had brought some of the passengers on deck. They could see nothing, however, for the ship was surrounded by thick darkness and by the noise of the dashing waters, and the seamen evaded the questions that were put to them.

At this juncture the chaplain came on deck. He was a man of grave

and modest demeanor, and was much liked among the seamen, who called him Gentle George. He overheard one of the men asking another if he had ever seen the Flying Dutchman before, and if he knew the story about her. To which the other replied, "I have heard of her beating about in these seas. What is the reason she never reaches port?"

The first speaker replied, "They give different reasons for it, but my story is this: She was an Amsterdam vessel, and sailed from that port seventy years ago. Her master's name was Vanderdecken. He was a staunch seaman, and would have his own way in spite of the devil. For all that, never a sailor under him had reason to complain, though how it is on board with them now nobody knows. The story is this, that, in doubling the Cape, they were a long day trying to weather the Table Bay, which we saw this morning. However, the wind headed them, and went against then more and more, and Vanderdecken walked the deck, swearing at the wind. Just after sunset a vessel spoke him, asking if he did not mean to go into the bay that night. Vanderdecken replied, 'May I be eternally d--d if I do, though I should beat about here till the day of judgment!' And, to be sure, Vanderdecken never did go into that bay; for it is believed that he continues to beat about in these seas still, and will do so long enough. This vessel is never seen but with foul weather along with her."

To which another replied, "We must keep clear of her. They say that her captain mans his jolly-boat when a vessel comes in sight, and tries hard to get alongside, to put letters on board, but no good comes to them who have communication with him."

Tom Willis said, "There is such a sea between us at present as should keep us safe from such visits."

To which the other answered, "We cannot trust to that, if Vanderdecken sends out his men."

Some of this conversation having been overheard by the passengers, there was a commotion among them. In the meantime the noise of the waves against the vessel could scarcely be distinguished from the sounds of the distant thunder. The wind had extinguished the light in the binnacle, where the compass was, and no one could tell which way the ship's head lay. The passengers were afraid to ask questions, lest they should augment the secret sensation of fear which chilled every heart, or learn any more than they already knew. For while they attributed their agitation of mind to the state of the weather, it was sufficiently perceptible that their alarms also arose from a cause which they did not acknowledge.

The lamp at the binnacle being relighted, they perceived that the ship lay closer to the wind than she had hitherto done, and the spirits of the passengers were somewhat revived.

Nevertheless, neither the tempestuous state of the atmosphere nor

the thunder had ceased, and soon a vivid flash of lightning showed the waves tumbling around us, and, in the distance, the Flying Dutchman scudding furiously before the wind under a press of canvas. The sight was but momentary, but it was sufficient to remove all doubt from the minds of the passengers. One of the men cried aloud, "There she goes, topgallants and all."

The chaplain had brought up his prayer-book, in order that he might draw from thence something to fortify and tranquillise the minds of the rest. Therefore, taking his seat near the binnacle, so that the light shone upon the white leaves of the book, he, in a solemn tone, read out the service for those distressed at sea. The sailors stood round with folded arms, and looked as if they thought it would be of little use. But this served to occupy the attention of those on deck for a while.

In the meantime the flashes of lightning, becoming less vivid, showed nothing else, far or near, but the billows weltering round the vessel. The sailors seemed to think that they had not yet seen the worst, but confined their remarks and prognostications to their own circle.

At this time the captain, who had hitherto remained in his berth, came on deck, and, with a gay and unconcerned air, inquired what was the cause of the general dread. He said he thought they had already seen the worst of the weather, and wondered that his men had raised such a hubbub about a capful of wind. Mention being made of the Flying Dutchman, the captain laughed. He said he "would like very much to see any vessel carrying topgallantsails in such a night, for it would be a sight worth looking at." The chaplain, taking him by one of the buttons of his coat, drew him aside, and appeared to enter into serious conversation with him.

While they were talking together, the captain was heard to say, "Let us look to our own ship, and not mind such things;" and, accordingly, he sent a man aloft to see if all was right about the foretopsail-yard, which was chafing the mast with a loud noise.

It was Tom Willis who went up; and when he came down he said that all was tight, and that he hoped it would soon get clearer; and that they would see no more of what they were most afraid of.

The captain and first mate were heard laughing loudly together, while the chaplain observed that it would be better to repress such unseasonable gaiety. The second mate, a native of Scotland, each other without offering to do anything. The boat had come very near the chains, when Tom Willis called out, "What do you want? or what devil has blown you here in such weather?" A piercing voice from the boat replied, in English, "We want to speak with your captain." The captain took no notice of this, and, Vanderdecken’s boat having come close alongside, one of the men came upon deck, and appeared like a fatigued and weather-beaten seaman holding some letters in his hand.

Our sailors all drew back. The chaplain, however, looking steadfastly upon him, went forward a few steps, and asked, "What is the purpose of this visit?"

The stranger replied, "We have long been kept here by foul weather, and Vanderdecken wishes to send these letters to his friends in Europe."

Our captain now came forward, and said, as firmly as he could, "I wish Vanderdecken would put his letters on board of any other vessel rather than mine."

The stranger replied, "We have tried many a ship, but most of them refuse our letters."

Upon which Tom Willis muttered, "It will be best for us if we do the same, for they say there is sometimes a sinking weight in your paper."

The stranger took no notice of this, but asked where we were from. On being told that we were from Portsmouth, he said, as if with strong feeling, "Would that you had rather been from Amsterdam! Oh, that we saw it again! We must see our friends again." When he uttered these words, the men who were in the boat below wrung their hands, and cried, in a piercing tone, in Dutch, "Oh, that we saw it again! We have been long here beating about; but we must see our friends again."

The chaplain asked the stranger, "How long have you been at sea?"

He replied, "We have lost our count, for our almanac was blown overboard. Our ship, you see, is there still; so why should you ask how long we have been at sea? For Vanderdecken only wishes to write home and comfort his friends."

To which the chaplain replied, "Your letters, I fear, would be of no use in Amsterdam, even if they were delivered; for the persons to whom they are addressed are probably no longer to be found there, except under very ancient green turf in the churchyard."

The unwelcome stranger then wrung his hands and appeared to weep, and replied, "It is impossible; we cannot believe you. We have been long driving about here, but country nor relations cannot be so easily forgotten. There is not a raindrop in the air but feels itself kindred to all the rest, and they fall back into the sea to meet with each other again. How then can kindred blood be made to forget where it came from? Even our bodies are part of the ground of Holland; and Vanderdecken says, if he once were to come to Amsterdam, he would rather be changed into a stone post, well fixed into the ground, than leave it again if that were to die elsewhere. But in the meantime we only ask you to take these letters."

The chaplain, looking at him with astonishment, said, "This is the insanity of natural affection, which rebels against all measures of time and distance."

The stranger continued, "Here is a letter from our second mate to his dear and only remaining friend, his uncle, the merchant who lives in the second house on Stuncken Yacht Quay."

He held forth the letter, but no one would approach to take it.

Tom Willis raised his voice and said, "One of our men, here, says that he was in Amsterdam last summer, and he knows for certain that the street called Stuncken Yacht Quay was pulled down sixty years ago, and now there is only a large church at that place."

The man from the Flying Dutchman said, "It is impossible; we cannot believe you. Here is another letter from myself, in which I have sent a bank-note to my dear sister, to buy some gallant lace to make her a high head-dress."

Tom Willis, hearing this, said, "It is most likely that her head now lies under a tombstone, which will outlast all the changes of the fashion. But on what house is your bank-note?"

The stranger replied, "On the house of Vanderbrucker & Company."

The man of whom Tom Willis had spoken said, "I guess there will now be some discount upon it, for that banking house was gone to destruction forty years ago; and Vanderbrucker was afterward a-missing. But to remember these things is like raking up the bottom of an old canal."

The stranger called out, passionately, "It is impossible; we cannot believe it! It is cruel to say such things to people in our condition. There is a letter from our captain himself, to his much-beloved and faithful wife, whom he left at a pleasant summer dwelling on the border of the Haarlemer Mer. She promised to have the house beautifully painted and gilded before he came back, and to get a new set of looking-glasses for the principal chamber, that she might see as many images of Vanderdecken as if she had six husbands at once."

The man replied, "There has been time enough for her to have had six husbands since then; but were she alive still, there is no fear that Vanderdecken would ever get home to disturb her."

On hearing this the stranger again shed tears, and said if they would not take the letters he would leave them; and, looking around, he offered the parcel to the captain, chaplain, and to the rest of the crew successively, but each drew back as it was offered, and put his hands behind his back. He then laid the letters upon the deck, and placed upon them a piece of iron which was lying near, to prevent them from being blown away. Having done this, he swung

himself over the gangway, and went into the boat.

We heard the others speak to him, but the rise of a sudden squall prevented us from distinguishing his reply. The boat was seen to quit the ship's side, and in a few moments there were no more traces of her than if she had never been there. The sailors rubbed their eyes as if doubting what they had witnessed; but the parcel still lay upon deck, and proved the reality of all that had passed.

Duncan Saunderson, the Scotch mate, asked the captain if he should take them up and put them in the letter-bag. Receiving no reply, he would have lifted them if it had not been for Tom Willis, who pulled him back, saying that nobody should touch them.

In the meantime the captain went down to the cabin, and the chaplain, having followed him, found him at his bottle-case pouring out a large dram of brandy. The captain, although somewhat disconcerted, immediately offered the glass to him, saying, "Here, Charters, is what is good in a cold night." The chaplain declined drinking anything, and, the captain having swallowed the bumper, they both returned to the deck, where they found the seamen giving their opinions concerning what should be done with the letters. Tom Willis proposed to pick them up on a harpoon, and throw it overboard.

Another speaker said, "I have always heard it asserted that it is neither safe to accept them voluntarily, nor, when they are left, to throw them out of the ship."

"Let no one touch them," said the carpenter. "The way to do with the letters from the Flying Dutchman is to case them up on deck, so that, if he sends back for them, they are still there to give him."

The carpenter went to fetch his tools. During his absence the ship gave so violent a pitch that the piece of iron slid off the letters, and they were whirled overboard by the wind, like birds of evil omen whirring through the air. There was a cry of joy among the sailors, and they ascribed the favourable change which soon took place in the weather to our having got quit of Vanderdecken. We soon got under way again. The night watch being set, the rest of the crew retired to their berths.

unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we usually do not keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

We are now trying to release all our eBooks one year in advance of the official release dates, leaving time for better editing. Please be encouraged to tell us about any error or corrections, even years after the official publication date.

Please note neither this listing nor its contents are final til midnight of the last day of the month of any such announcement. The official release date of all Project Gutenberg eBooks is at Midnight, Central Time, of the last day of the stated month. A preliminary version may often be posted for suggestion, comment and editing by those who wish to do so.

Most people start at our Web sites at:
http://gutenberg.net or
http://promo.net/pg

These Web sites include award-winning information about Project Gutenberg, including how to donate, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter (free!).

Those of you who want to download any eBook before announcement can get to them as follows, and just download by date. This is also a good way to get them instantly upon announcement, as the indexes our cataloguers produce obviously take a while after an announcement goes out in the Project Gutenberg Newsletter.

http://www.ibiblio.org/gutenberg/etext04 or
ftp://ftp.ibiblio.org/pub/docs/books/gutenberg/etext04

Or /etext03, 02, 01, 00, 99, 98, 97, 96, 95, 94, 93, 92, 92, 91 or 90

Just search by the first five letters of the filename you want, as it appears in our Newsletters.

Information about Project Gutenberg (one page)

We produce about two million dollars for each hour we work. The time it takes us, a rather conservative estimate, is fifty hours to get any eBook selected, entered, proofread, edited, copyright searched and analyzed, the copyright letters written, etc. Our projected audience is one hundred million readers. If the value per text is nominally estimated at one dollar then we produce $2 million dollars per hour in 2002 as we release over 100 new text files per month: 1240 more eBooks in 2001 for a total of 4000+ We are already on our way to trying for 2000 more eBooks in 2002 If they reach just 1-2% of the world’s population then the total will reach over half a trillion eBooks given away by year’s end.

The Goal of Project Gutenberg is to Give Away 1 Trillion eBooks!
This is ten thousand titles each to one hundred million readers,
which is only about 4% of the present number of computer users.

Here is the briefest record of our progress (* means estimated):

eBooks Year Month

1	1971	July
10	1991	January
100	1994	January
1000	1997	August
1500	1998	October
2000	1999	December
2500	2000	December
3000	2001	November
4000	2001	October/November
6000	2002	December*
9000	2003	November*
10000	2004	January*

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation has been created
to secure a future for Project Gutenberg into the next millennium.

We need your donations more than ever!

As of February, 2002, contributions are being solicited from people
and organizations in: Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Connecticut,
Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois,
Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts,
Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New
Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio,
Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South
Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West
Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

We have filed in all 50 states now, but these are the only ones
that have responded.

As the requirements for other states are met, additions to this list
will be made and fund raising will begin in the additional states.
Please feel free to ask to check the status of your state.

In answer to various questions we have received on this:

We are constantly working on finishing the paperwork to legally
request donations in all 50 states. If your state is not listed and
you would like to know if we have added it since the list you have,
just ask.

While we cannot solicit donations from people in states where we are
not yet registered, we know of no prohibition against accepting

donations from donors in these states who approach us with an offer to donate.

International donations are accepted, but we don't know ANYTHING about how to make them tax-deductible, or even if they CAN be made deductible, and don't have the staff to handle it even if there are ways.

Donations by check or money order may be sent to:

Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation
PMB 113
1739 University Ave.
Oxford, MS 38655-4109

Contact us if you want to arrange for a wire transfer or payment method other than by check or money order.

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation has been approved by the US Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) organization with EIN [Employee Identification Number] 64-622154. Donations are tax-deductible to the maximum extent permitted by law. As fund-raising requirements for other states are met, additions to this list will be made and fund-raising will begin in the additional states.

We need your donations more than ever!

You can get up to date donation information online at:

http://www.gutenberg.net/donation.html

***

If you can't reach Project Gutenberg,
you can always email directly to:

Michael S. Hart <hart@pobox.com>

Prof. Hart will answer or forward your message.

We would prefer to send you information by email.

The Legal Small Print

(Three Pages)

START**THE SMALL PRINT!**FOR PUBLIC DOMAIN EBOOKS**START
Why is this "Small Print!" statement here? You know: lawyers.
They tell us you might sue us if there is something wrong with
your copy of this eBook, even if you got it for free from

on a physical medium, you must return it with your note, and such person may choose to alternatively give you a replacement copy. If you received it electronically, such person may choose to alternatively give you a second opportunity to receive it electronically.

THIS EBOOK IS OTHERWISE PROVIDED TO YOU "AS-IS". NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, ARE MADE TO YOU AS TO THE EBOOK OR ANY MEDIUM IT MAY BE ON, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE.

Some states do not allow disclaimers of implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of consequential damages, so the above disclaimers and exclusions may not apply to you, and you may have other legal rights.

INDEMNITY
You will indemnify and hold Michael Hart, the Foundation, and its trustees and agents, and any volunteers associated with the production and distribution of Project Gutenberg-tm texts harmless, from all liability, cost and expense, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following that you do or cause: [1] distribution of this eBook, [2] alteration, modification, or addition to the eBook, or [3] any Defect.

DISTRIBUTION UNDER "PROJECT GUTENBERG-tm"
You may distribute copies of this eBook electronically, or by disk, book or any other medium if you either delete this "Small Print!" and all other references to Project Gutenberg, or:

[1] Only give exact copies of it. Among other things, this requires that you do not remove, alter or modify the eBook or this "small print!" statement. You may however, if you wish, distribute this eBook in machine readable binary, compressed, mark-up, or proprietary form, including any form resulting from conversion by word processing or hypertext software, but only so long as *EITHER*:

[*] The eBook, when displayed, is clearly readable, and does *not* contain characters other than those intended by the author of the work, although tilde (~), asterisk (*) and underline (_) characters may be used to convey punctuation intended by the author, and additional characters may be used to indicate hypertext links; OR

[*] The eBook may be readily converted by the reader at no expense into plain ASCII, EBCDIC or equivalent form by the program that displays the eBook (as is

the case, for instance, with most word processors);
OR

[*] You provide, or agree to also provide on request at
no additional cost, fee or expense, a copy of the
eBook in its original plain ASCII form (or in EBCDIC
or other equivalent proprietary form).

[2] Honor the eBook refund and replacement provisions of this
"Small Print!" statement.

[3] Pay a trademark license fee to the Foundation of 20% of the
gross profits you derive calculated using the method you
already use to calculate your applicable taxes. If you
don't derive profits, no royalty is due. Royalties are
payable to "Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation"
the 60 days following each date you prepare (or were
legally required to prepare) your annual (or equivalent
periodic) tax return. Please contact us beforehand to
let us know your plans and to work out the details.

WHAT IF YOU *WANT* TO SEND MONEY EVEN IF YOU DON'T HAVE TO?
Project Gutenberg is dedicated to increasing the number of
public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed
in machine readable form.

The Project gratefully accepts contributions of money, time,
public domain materials, or royalty free copyright licenses.
Money should be paid to the:
"Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation."

If you are interested in contributing scanning equipment or
software or other items, please contact Michael Hart at:
hart@pobox.com

[Portions of this eBook's header and trailer may be reprinted only
when distributed free of all fees. Copyright (C) 2001, 2002 by
Michael S. Hart. Project Gutenberg is a TradeMark and may not be
used in any sales of Project Gutenberg eBooks or other materials be
they hardware or software or any other related product without
express permission.]

*END THE SMALL PRINT! FOR PUBLIC DOMAIN EBOOKS*Ver.02/11/02*END*

permission.]

*END THE SMALL PRINT! FOR PUBLIC DOMAIN EBOOKS*Ver.02/11/02*END*

ITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR A

PARTICULAR PURPOSE.

Some states do not allow disclaimers of implied warranties or

the exclusio