LOST SHIPS AND LONELY SEAS

RALPH D. PAINE

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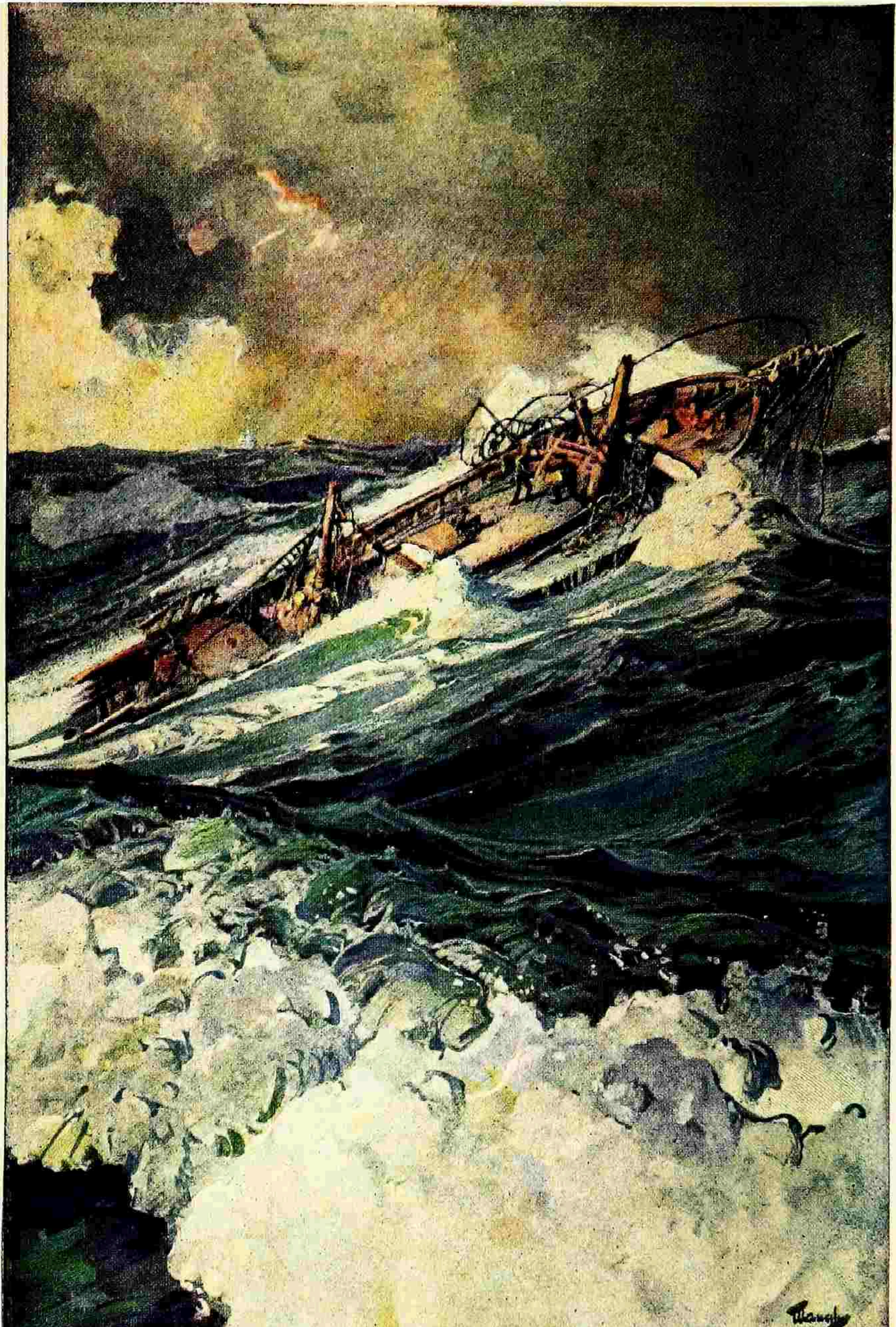


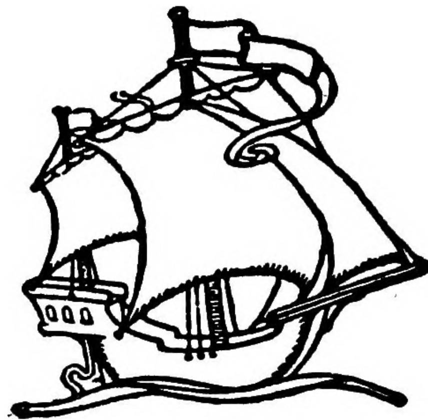
THE WRECK OF THE “POLLY”

LOST SHIPS AND LONELY SEAS

BY

RALPH D. PAINE

ILLUSTRATED



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LOST SHIPS AND LONELY SEAS

CHAPTER I

THE SINGULAR FATE OF THE BRIG *POLLY*

"Oh, night and day the ships come in,
The ships both great and small,
But never one among them brings
A word of him at all.
From Port o' Spain and Trinidad,
From Rio or Funchal,
And along the coast of Barbary."

STEAM has not banished from the deep sea the ships that lift tall spires of canvas to win their way from port to port. The gleam of their topsails recalls the centuries in which men wrought with stubborn courage to fashion fabrics of wood and cordage that should survive the enmity of the implacable ocean and make the winds obedient. Their genius was unsung, their hard toil forgotten, but with each generation the sailing ship became nobler and more enduring, until it was a perfect thing. Its great days live in memory with a peculiar atmosphere of romance. Its humming shrouds were vibrant with the eternal call of the sea, and in a phantom fleet pass the towering East Indiaman, the hard-driven Atlantic packet, and the gracious clipper that fled before the Southern trades.

A hundred years ago every bay and inlet of the New England coast was building ships which fared bravely forth to the West Indies, to the roadsteads of Europe, to the mysterious havens of the Far East. They sailed in peril of pirate and privateer, and fought these rascals as sturdily as they battled with wicked weather. Coasts were unlighted, the seas uncharted, and navigation was mostly by guesswork, but these seamen were the flower of an American merchant marine whose deeds are heroic in the nation's story. Great hearts in little ships, they dared and suffered with simple, uncomplaining fortitude. Shipwreck was an incident, and to be adrift in lonely seas or cast upon a barbarous shore was sadly commonplace. They lived the stuff that made fiction after they were gone.

Your fancy may be able to picture the brig *Polly* as she steered down Boston harbor in December, 1811, bound out to Santa Cruz with lumber and salted provisions for the slaves of the sugar plantations. She was only a hundred and thirty tons burden and perhaps eighty feet long. Rather clumsy to look at and roughly built was the *Polly* as compared with the larger ships that brought home the China tea and silks to the warehouses of Salem. Such a vessel was a community venture. The blacksmith, the rigger, and the calker took their pay in shares, or "pieces." They became part owners, as did likewise the merchant who supplied stores and material; and when the brig was afloat, the master, the mate, and even the seamen were allowed cargo space for commodities that they might buy and sell to their own advantage. A voyage directly concerned a whole neighborhood.

Every coastwise village had a row of keel-blocks sloping to the tide. In winter weather too rough for fishing, when the farms lay idle, the Yankee Jack of all trades plied his axe and adz to shape the timbers and peg together such a little vessel as the *Polly*, in which to trade to London or Cadiz or the Windward Islands. Hampered by an unfriendly climate, hard put to it to grow sufficient food, with land immensely difficult to clear, the New-Englander was between the devil and the deep sea, and he sagaciously

chose the latter. Elsewhere, in the early days, the forest was an enemy, to be destroyed with great pains. The pioneers of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine regarded it with favor as the stuff with which to make stout ships and the straight masts they “stepped” in them.

Nowadays, such a little craft as the *Polly* would be rigged as a schooner. The brig is obsolete, along with the quaint array of scows, ketches, pinks, brigantines, and sloops which once filled the harbors and hove their hempen cables short to the clank of windlass or capstan-pawl, while the brisk seamen sang a chantey to help the work along. The *Polly* had yards on both masts, and it was a bitter task to lie out in a gale of wind and reef the unwieldy single topsails. She would try for no record passages, but jogged sedately, and snugged down when the weather threatened.

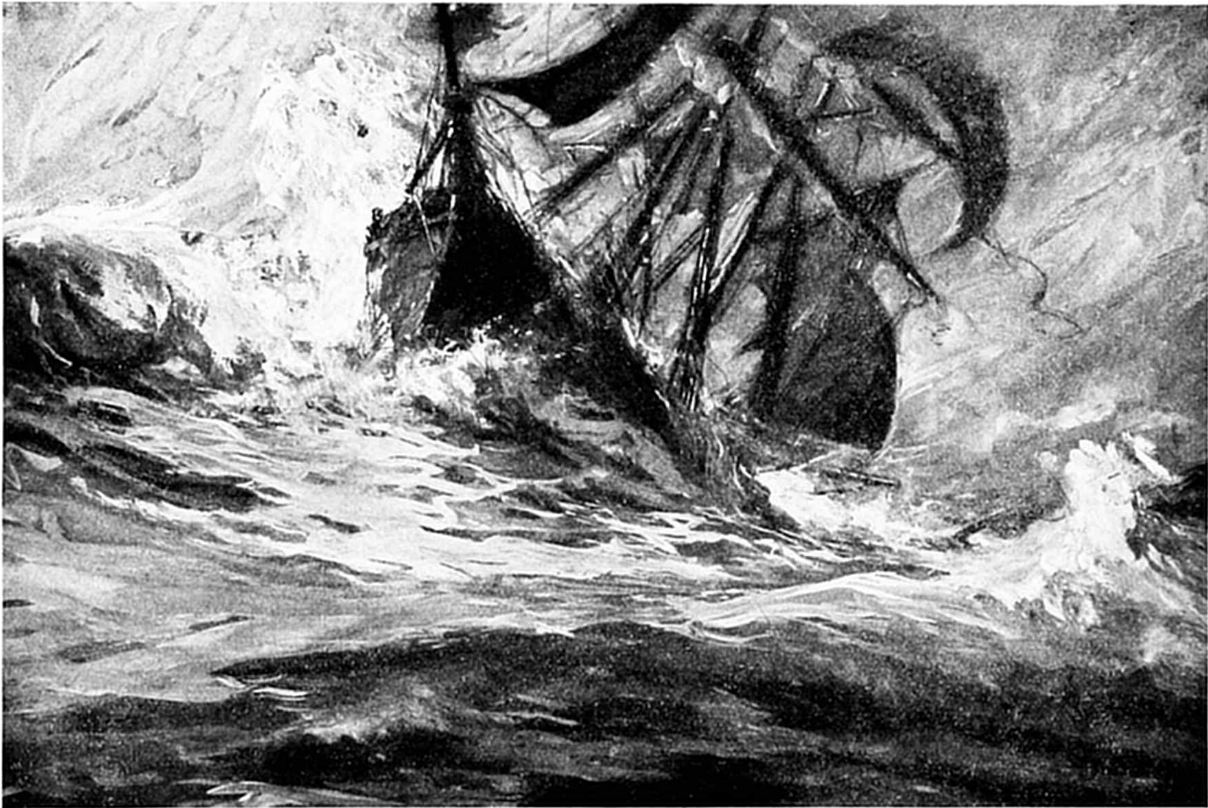
On this tragic voyage she carried a small crew, Captain W. L. Cazneau, a mate, four sailors, and a cook who was a native Indian. No mention is to be found of any ill omens that forecasted disaster, such as a black cat, or a cross-eyed Finn in the forecastle. Two passengers were on board, “Mr. J. S. Hunt and a negro girl nine years old.” We know nothing whatever about Mr. Hunt, who may have been engaged in some trading “adventure” of his own. Perhaps his kinsfolk had waved him a fare-ye-well from the pier-head when the *Polly* warped out of her berth.

The lone piccaninny is more intriguing. She appeals to the imagination and inspires conjecture. Was she a waif of the slave traffic whom some benevolent merchant of Boston was sending to Santa Cruz to find a home beneath kindlier skies? Had she been entrusted to the care of Mr. Hunt? She is unexplained, a pitiful atom visible for an instant on the tide of human destiny. She amused the sailors, no doubt, and that austere, copper-hued cook may have unbent to give her a doughnut when she grinned at the galley-door.

Four days out from Boston, on December 15, the *Polly* had cleared the perilous sands of Cape Cod and the hidden shoals of the Georges. Mariners were profoundly grateful when they had safely worked offshore in the winter-time and were past Cape Cod, which bore a very evil repute in those days of square-rigged vessels. Captain Cazneau could recall that somber day of 1802 when three fine ships, the *Ulysses*, *Brutus*, and *Volusia*, sailing together from Salem for European ports, were wrecked next day on Cape Cod. The fate of those who were washed ashore alive was most melancholy. Several died of the cold, or were choked by the sand which covered them after they fell exhausted.

As in other regions where shipwrecks were common, some of the natives of Cape Cod regarded a ship on the beach as their rightful plunder. It was old Parson Lewis of Wellfleet, who, from his pulpit window, saw a vessel drive ashore on a stormy Sunday morning. “He closed his Bible, put on his outside garment, and descended from the pulpit, not explaining his intention until he was in the aisle, and then he cried out, ‘*Start fair*’ and took to his legs. The congregation understood and chased pell-mell after him.”

The brig *Polly* laid her course to the southward and sailed into the safer, milder waters of the Gulf Stream. The skipper’s load of anxiety was lightened. He had not been sighted and molested by the British men-of-war that cruised off Boston and New York to hold up Yankee merchantmen and impress stout seamen. This grievance was to flame in a righteous war only a few months later. Many a voyage was ruined, and ships had to limp back to port short-handed, because their best men had been kidnapped to serve in British ships. It was an age when might was right on the sea.



SEAMANSHIP WAS HELPLESS TO WARD OFF THE ATTACK OF THE STORM THAT LEFT THE BRIG A SODDEN HULK

The storm which overwhelmed the brig *Polly* came out of the southeast, when she was less than a week on the road to Santa Cruz. To be dismasted and waterlogged was no uncommon fate. It happens often nowadays, when the little schooners creep along the coast, from Maine and Nova Scotia ports, and dare the winter blows to earn their bread. Men suffer in open boats, as has been the seafarer's hard lot for ages, and they drown with none to hear their cries, but they are seldom adrift more than a few days. The story of the *Polly* deserves to be rescued from oblivion because, so far as I am able to discover, it is unique in the spray-swept annals of maritime disaster.

Seamanship was helpless to ward off the attack of the storm that left the brig a sodden hulk. Courageously her crew shortened sail and made all secure when the sea and sky presaged a change of weather. These were no green hands, but men seasoned by the continual hazards of their calling. The wild gale smote them in the darkness of night. They tried to heave the vessel to, but she was battered and wrenched without mercy. Stout canvas was whirled away in fragments. The seams of the hull opened as she labored, and six feet of water flooded the hold. Leaking like a sieve, the *Polly* would never see port again.

Worse was to befall her. At midnight she was capsized, or thrown on her beam-ends, as the sailor's lingo has it. She lay on her side while the clamorous seas washed clean over her. The skipper, the mate, the four seamen, and the cook somehow clung to the rigging and grimly refused to be drowned. They were of the old breed, "every hair a rope-yarn and every finger a fish-hook." They even managed to find an ax and grope their way to the shrouds in the faint hope that the brig might right if the masts went overside. They hacked away, and came up to breathe now and then, until foremast and mainmast fell with a crash, and the wreck rolled level. Then they slashed with their knives at the tangle of spars and ropes until they drifted clear. As the waves rush across a half-tide rock, so they broke over the shattered brig, but she no longer wallowed on her side.

At last the stormy daylight broke. The mariners had survived, and they looked to find their two passengers, who had no other refuge than the cabin. Mr. Hunt was gone, blotted out with his affairs and his ambitions, whatever they were. The colored child they had vainly tried to find in the night. When the sea boiled into the cabin and filled it, she had climbed to the skylight in the roof, and there she clung like a bat. They hauled her out through a splintered gap, and sought tenderly to shelter her in a corner of the streaming deck, but she lived no more than a few hours. It was better that this bit of human flotsam should flutter out in this way than to linger a little

longer in this forlorn derelict of a ship. The *Polly* could not sink, but she drifted as a mere bundle of boards with the ocean winds and currents, while seven men tenaciously fought off death and prayed for rescue.

The gale blew itself out, the sea rolled blue and gentle, and the wreck moved out into the Atlantic, having veered beyond the eastern edge of the Gulf Stream. There was raw salt pork and beef to eat, nothing else, barrels of which they fished out of the cargo. A keg of water which had been lashed to the quarter-deck was found to contain thirty gallons. This was all there was to drink, for the other water-casks had been smashed or carried away. The diet of meat pickled in brine aggravated the thirst of these castaways. For twelve days they chewed on this salty raw stuff, and then the Indian cook, Moho by name, actually succeeded in kindling a fire by rubbing two sticks together in some abstruse manner handed down by his ancestors. By splitting pine spars and a bit of oaken rail he was able to find in the heart of them wood which had not been dampened by the sea, and he sweated and grunted until the great deed was done. It was a trick which he was not at all sure of repeating unless the conditions were singularly favorable. Fortunately for the hapless crew of the *Polly*, their Puritan grandsires had failed in their amiable endeavor to exterminate the aborigine.

The tiny galley, or “camboose,” as they called it, was lashed to ring-bolts in the deck, and had not been washed into the sea when the brig was swept clean. So now they patched it up and got a blaze going in the brick oven. The meat could be boiled, and they ate it without stint, assuming that a hundred barrels of it remained in the hold. It had not been discovered that the stern-post of the vessel was staved in under water and all of the cargo excepting some of the lumber had floated out.

The cask of water was made to last eighteen days by serving out a quart a day to each man. Then an occasional rain-squall saved them for a little longer from perishing of thirst. At the end of forty days they had come to

the last morsel of salt meat. The *Polly* was following an aimless course to the eastward, drifting slowly under the influence of the ocean winds and currents. These gave her also a southerly slant, so that she was caught by that vast movement of water which is known as the Gulf Stream Drift. It sets over toward the coast of Africa and sweeps into the Gulf of Guinea.

The derelict was moving away from the routes of trade to Europe into the almost trackless spaces beneath the tropic sun, where the sea glittered empty to the horizon. There was a remote chance that she might be descried by a low-hulled slaver crowding for the West Indies under a mighty press of sail, with her human freightage jammed between decks to endure the unspeakable horrors of the Middle Passage. Although the oceans were populous with ships a hundred years ago, trade flowed on habitual routes. Moreover, a wreck might pass unseen two or three miles away. From the quarter-deck of a small sailing ship there was no such circle of vision as extends from the bridge of a steamer forty or sixty feet above the water, where the officers gaze through high-powered binoculars.

The crew of the *Polly* stared at skies which yielded not the merciful gift of rain. They had strength to build them a sort of shelter of lumber, but whenever the weather was rough, they were drenched by the waves which played over the wreck. At the end of fifty days of this hardship and torment the seven were still alive, but then the mate, Mr. Paddock, languished and died. It surprised his companions, for, as the old record runs,

> he was a man of robust constitution who had spent his life in fishing on the Grand Banks, was accustomed to endure privations, and appeared the most capable of standing the shocks of misfortune of any of the crew. In the meridian of life, being about thirty-five years old, it was reasonable to suppose that, instead of the first, he would have been the last to fall a sacrifice to hunger and thirst and exposure, but Heaven ordered it otherwise.

Singularly enough, the next to go was a young seaman, spare and active, who was also a fisherman by trade. His name was Howe. He survived six days longer than the mate, and “likewise died delirious and in dreadful distress.” Fleeting thunder-showers had come to save the others, and they had caught a large shark by means of a running bowline slipped over his tail while he nosed about the weedy hull. This they cut up and doled out for many days. It was certain, however, that unless they could obtain water to drink they would soon be all dead men on the *Polly*.

Captain Cazneau seems to have been a sailor of extraordinary resource and resolution. His was the unbreakable will to live and to endure which kept the vital spark flickering in his shipmates. Whenever there was strength enough among them, they groped in the water in the hold and cabin in the desperate hope of finding something to serve their needs. In this manner they salvaged an iron tea-kettle and one of the captain’s flint-lock pistols. Instead of flinging them away, he sat down to cogitate, a gaunt, famished wraith of a man who had kept his wits and knew what to do with them.

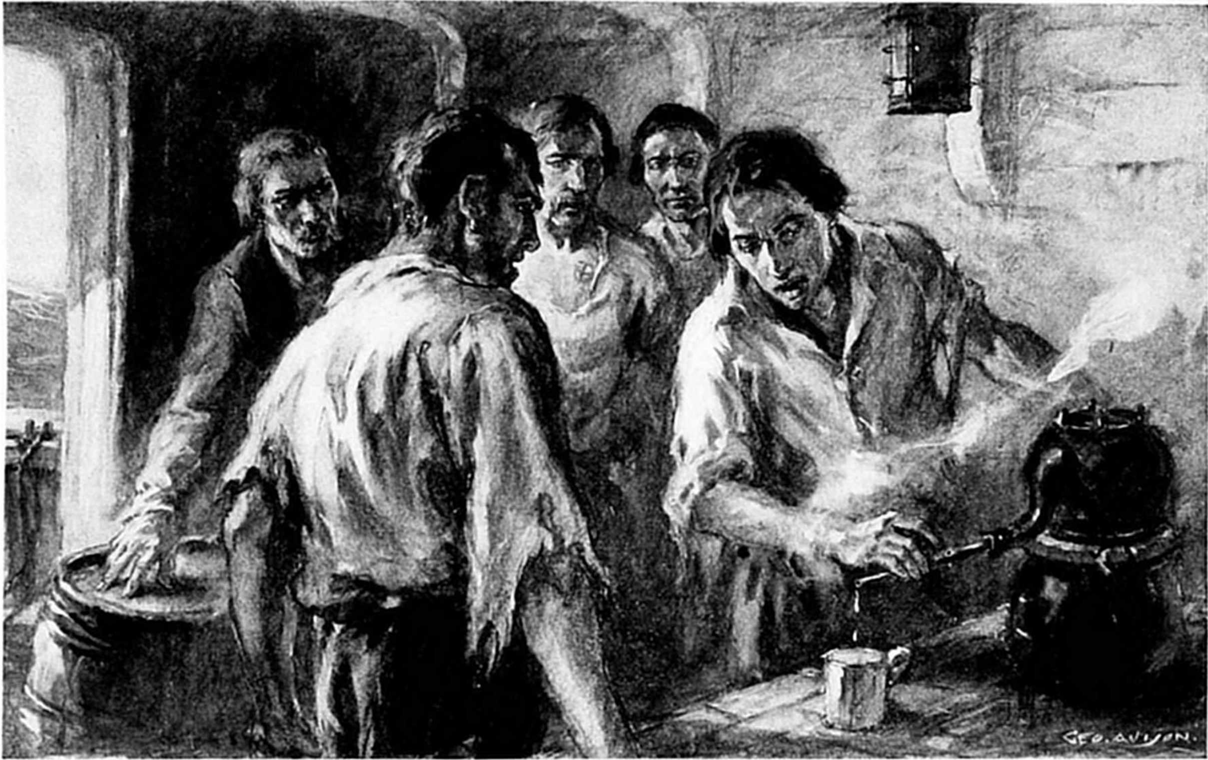
At length he took an iron pot from the galley, turned the tea-kettle upside down on it, and found that the rims failed to fit together. Undismayed, the skipper whittled a wooden collar with a seaman’s sheath-knife, and so joined the pot and the kettle. With strips of cloth and pitch scraped from the deck-beams, he was able to make a tight union where his round wooden frame set into the flaring rim of the pot. Then he knocked off the stock of the pistol and had the long barrel to use for a tube. This he rammed into the nozzle of the tea-kettle, and calked them as well as he could. The result was a crude apparatus for distilling seawater, when placed upon the bricked oven of the galley.

Imagine those three surviving seamen and the stolid redskin of a cook watching the skipper while he methodically tinkered and puttered! It was

absolutely the one and final chance of salvation. Their lips were black and cracked and swollen, their tongues lolled, and they could no more than wheeze when they tried to talk. There was now a less precarious way of making fire than by rubbing dry sticks together. This had failed them most of the time. The captain had saved the flint and steel from the stock of his pistol. There was tow or tarry oakum to be shredded fine and used for tinder. This smoldered and then burst into a tiny blaze when the sparks flew from the flint, and they knew that they would not lack the blessed boon of fire.

Together they lifted the precious contrivance of the pot and the kettle and tottered with it to the galley. There was an abundance of fuel from the lumber, which was hauled through a hatch and dried on deck. Soon the steam was gushing from the pistol-barrel, and they poured cool salt water over the upturned spout of the tea-kettle to cause condensation. Fresh water trickled from the end of the pistol-barrel, and they caught it in a tin cup. It was scarcely more than a drop at a time, but they stoked the oven and lugged buckets of salt water, watch and watch, by night and day. They roused in their sleep to go on with the task with a sort of dumb instinct. They were like wretched automatons.

So scanty was the allowance of water obtained that each man was limited to “four small wine glasses” a day, perhaps a pint. It was enough to permit them to live and suffer and hope. In the warm seas which now cradled the *Polly* the barnacles grew fast. The captain, the cook, and the three seamen scraped them off and for some time had no other food. They ate these shell-fish mostly raw, because cooking interfered with that tiny trickle of condensed water.



FRESH WATER TRICKLED FROM THE END OF THE PISTOL-BARREL, AND THEY CAUGHT IT IN A TIN CUP

The faithful cook was the next of the five to succumb. He expired in March, after they had been three months adrift, and the manner of his death was quiet and dignified, as befitted one who might have been a painted warrior in an earlier day. The account says of him:

> On the 15th of March, according to their computation, poor Moho gave up the ghost, evidently from want of water, though with much less distress than the others, and in the full exercise of his reason. He very devoutly prayed and appeared perfectly resigned to the will of God who had so sorely afflicted him.

The story of the *Polly* is unstained by any horrid episode of cannibalism, which occurs now and then in the old chronicles of shipwreck.

In more than one seaport the people used to point at some weather-beaten mariner who was reputed to have eaten the flesh of a comrade. It made a marked man of him, he was shunned, and the unholy notoriety followed him to other ships and ports. The sailors of the *Polly* did cut off a leg of the poor, departed Moho, and used it as bait for sharks, and they actually caught a huge shark by so doing.

It was soon after this that they found the other pistol of the pair, and employed the barrel to increase the capacity of the still. By lengthening the tube attached to the spout of the tea-kettle, they gained more cooling surface for condensation, and the flow of fresh water now amounted to "eight junk bottles full" every twenty-four hours. Besides this, wooden gutters were hung at the eaves of the galley and of the rough shed in which they lived, and whenever rain fell, it ran into empty casks.

The crew was dwindling fast. In April, another seaman, Johnson by name, slipped his moorings and passed on to the haven of Fiddler's Green, where the souls of all dead mariners may sip their grog and spin their yarns and rest from the weariness of the sea. Three men were left aboard the *Polly*, the captain and two sailors.

The brig drifted into that fabled area of the Atlantic that is known as the Sargasso Sea, which extends between latitudes 16° and 38° North, between the Azores and the Antilles. Here the ocean currents are confused and seem to move in circles, with a great expanse of stagnant ocean, where the seaweed floats in tangled patches of red and brown and green. It was an old legend that ships once caught in the Sargasso Sea were unable to extricate themselves, and so rotted miserably and were never heard of again. Columbus knew better, for his caravels sailed through these broken carpets of weed, where the winds were so small and fitful that the Genoese sailors despaired of reaching anywhere. The myth persisted and it was not

dispelled until the age of steam. The doldrums of the Sargasso Sea were the dread of sailing ships.

The days and weeks of blazing calms in this strange wilderness of ocean mattered not to the blindly errant wreck of the *Polly*. She was a dead ship that had outwitted her destiny. She had no masts and sails to push her through these acres of leathery kelp and bright masses of weed which had drifted from the Gulf and the Caribbean to come to rest in this solitary, watery waste. And yet to the captain and his two seamen this dreaded Sargasso Sea was beneficent. The stagnant weed swarmed with fish and gaudy crabs and mollusks. Here was food to be had for the mere harvesting of it. They hauled masses of weed over the broken bulwarks and picked off the crabs by hundreds. Fishing gear was an easy problem for these handy sailormen. They had found nails enough; hand-forged and malleable. In the galley they heated and hammered them to make fish-hooks, and the lines were of small stuff "unrove" from a length of halyard. And so they caught fish, and cooked them when the oven could be spared. Otherwise they ate them raw, which was not distasteful after they had become accustomed to it. The natives of the Hawaiian Islands prefer their fish that way. Besides this, they split a large number of small fish and dried them in the hot sun upon the roof of their shelter. The sea-salt which collected in the bottom of the still was rubbed into the fish. It was a bitter condiment, but it helped to preserve them against spoiling.

The season of spring advanced until the derelict *Polly* had been four months afloat and wandering, and the end of the voyage was a long way off. The minds and bodies of the castaways had adjusted themselves to the intolerable situation. The most amazing aspect of the experience is that these men remained sane. They must have maintained a certain order and routine of distilling water, of catching fish, of keeping track of the indistinguishable procession of the days and weeks. Captain Cazneau's recollection was quite clear when he came to write down his account of

what had happened. The one notable omission is the death of another sailor, name unknown, which must have occurred after April. The only seaman who survived to keep the skipper company was Samuel Badger.

“VOLUSIA” OFF SALEM, BUILT AT FALMOUTH, MASS., IN 1801, AND WRECKED AT CAPE COD IN 1802

From a painting in Marine Room, Peabody Museum, Salem

By way of making the best of it, these two indomitable seafarers continued to work on their rough deck-house, “which by constant improvement had become much more commodious.” A few bundles of hewn shingles were discovered in the hold, and a keg of nails was found

lodged in a corner of the forecastle. The shelter was finally made tight and weather-proof, but, alas! there was no need of having it "more commodious." It is obvious, also, that "when reduced to two only, they had a better supply of water." How long they remained in the Sargasso Sea it is impossible to ascertain. Late in April it is recounted that "no friendly breeze wafted to their side the seaweed from which they could obtain crabs or insects." The mysterious impulse of the currents plucked at the keel of the *Polly* and drew her clear of this region of calms and of ancient, fantastic sea-tales. She moved in the open Atlantic again, without guidance or destination, and yet she seemed inexplicably to be following an appointed course, as though fate decreed that she should find rescue waiting somewhere beyond the horizon.

The brig was drifting toward an ocean more frequented, where the Yankee ships bound out to the River Plate sailed in a long slant far over to the African coast to take advantage of the booming trade-winds. She was also wallowing in the direction of the route of the East Indiamen, which departed from English ports to make the far-distant voyage around the Cape of Good Hope. None of them sighted the speck of a derelict, which floated almost level with the sea and had no spars to make her visible. Captain Cazneau and his companion saw sails glimmer against the sky-line during the last thousand miles of drift, but they vanished like bits of cloud, and none passed near enough to bring salvation.

June found the *Polly* approaching the Canary Islands. The distance of her journey had been about two thousand miles, which would make the average rate of drift something more than three hundred miles a month, or ten miles per day. The season of spring and its apple blossoms had come and gone in New England, and the brig had long since been mourned as missing with all hands. It was on the twentieth of June that the skipper and his companion—two hairy, ragged apparitions—saw three ships which appeared to be heading in their direction. This was in latitude 28° North and

longitude 13° West, and if you will look at a chart you will note that the wreck would soon have stranded on the coast of Africa. The three ships, in company, bore straight down at the pitiful little brig, which trailed fathoms of sea-growth along her hull. She must have seemed uncanny to those who beheld her and wondered at the living figures that moved upon the weather-scarred deck. She might have inspired "The Ancient Mariner."

Not one ship, but three, came bowling down to hail the derelict. They manned the braces and swung the main-yards aback, beautiful, tall ships and smartly handled, and presently they lay hove to. The captain of the nearest one shouted a hail through his brass trumpet, but the skipper of the *Polly* had no voice to answer back. He sat weeping upon the coaming of a hatch. Although not given to emotion, he would have told you that it had been a hard voyage. A boat was dropped from the davits of this nearest ship, which flew the red ensign from her spanker-gaff. A few minutes later Captain Cazneau and Samuel Badger, able seaman, were alongside the good ship *Fame* of Hull, Captain Featherstone, and lusty arms pulled them up the ladder. It was six months to a day since the *Polly* had been thrown on her beam-ends and dismasted.

The three ships had been near together in light winds for several days, it seemed, and it occurred to their captains to dine together on board the *Fame*. And so the three skippers were there to give the survivors of the *Polly* a welcome and to marvel at the yarn they spun. The *Fame* was homeward bound from Rio Janeiro. It is pleasant to learn that Captain Cazneau and Samuel Badger "were received by these humane Englishmen with expressions of the most exalted sensibility." The musty old narrative concludes:

> Thus was ended the most shocking catastrophe which our seafaring history has recorded for many years, after a series of distresses from December 20 to the 20th of June, a period of one

> hundred and ninety-two days. Every attention was paid to the sufferers that generosity warmed with pity and fellow-feeling could dictate, on board the *Fame*. They were transferred from this ship to the brig *Dromio* and arrived in the United States in safety.

Here the curtain falls. I for one should like to hear more incidents of this astonishing cruise of the derelict *Polly* and also to know what happened to Captain Cazneau and Samuel Badger after they reached the port of Boston. Probably they went to sea again, and more than likely in a privateer to harry British merchantmen, for the recruiting officer was beating them up to the rendezvous with fife and drum, and in August of 1812 the frigate *Constitution*, with ruddy Captain Isaac Hull walking the poop in a gold-laced coat, was pounding the *Guerrière* to pieces in thirty minutes, with broadsides whose thunder echoed round the world.

"Ships are all right. It is the men in them," said one of Joseph Conrad's wise old mariners. This was supremely true of the little brig that endured and suffered so much, and among the humble heroes of blue water by no means the least worthy to be remembered are Captain Cazneau and Samuel Badger, able seaman, and Moho, the Indian cook.

CHAPTER II

HOW THE SCHOONER *EXERTION* FELL AMONG THIEVES

THIS is the story of a very shabby set of rascals who wrecked and plundered an honest little merchant vessel a hundred years ago and disgraced the profession of piracy. In truth, even in the heyday of the black flag and the Spanish Main, most pirates were no better than salt-water burglars who would rather run than fight. The glamour of romance has been kinder to them than they deserved. Their vocation had fallen to a low ebb indeed in the early part of the nineteenth century, when they still infested the storied waters of the Caribbean and struggled along, in some instances, on earnings no larger than those of a minister or school-teacher of to-day. Ambitious young men had ceased to follow piracy as a career. The distinguished leaders had long since vanished, most of them properly hanged in chains, and it was no longer possible to become a William Kidd, a Captain Ned England, or a Charles Vane.

The schooner *Exertion*, Captain Barnabas Lincoln, sailed from Boston, bound to Trinidad, Cuba, on November 13, 1821, with a crew consisting of Joshua Brackett, mate; David Warren, cook; and Thomas Young, George Reed, and Francis De Suze as able seamen. There was nothing in the cargo to tempt a self-respecting pirate; no pieces of eight or doubloons or jewels, but flour, beef, pork, lard, butter, fish, onions, potatoes, apples, hams, furniture, and shooks with a total invoiced value of eight thousand dollars. In this doleful modern era of the high cost of living, such a cargo would, of

course persuade almost any honest householder to turn pirate if he thought there was a fighting chance of stowing all these valuables in his cellar.

The *Exertion* jogged along without incident for a five weeks' passage, which brought her close to Cape Cruz and the end of the run, when a strange sail swept out of a channel among the sandy Cuban keys, with sweeps out and a deck filled with men. There were forty of them, unkempt, bewhiskered, and they appeared to be so many walking arsenals of muskets, blunderbusses, cutlasses, pistols, and dirks. Their schooner mounted two carronades, and flew a blue-and-white flag of the Republic of Mexico, which was a device popular among sea-rovers who were no better than they should be. It permitted liberty of action, something like a New Jersey charter which corporations have found elastic in times more recent.

Captain Lincoln hove the *Exertion* to and hoped for the best, having only five men and seven muskets with which to repel boarders. The United States was at peace with Mexico and Spain, and he tried to believe, as he tells us, that "the republican flag indicated both honor and friendship from those who wore it." Alas! it was soon discovered that these were common pirates, for they sent a boat aboard in charge of the first lieutenant, Bolidar, with six or eight Spaniards, "armed with as many of the aforementioned weapons as they could well sling about their bodies." The *Exertion* was ordered to follow the other schooner, the *Mexican* by name, and the two vessels came to anchor off Cay Largo, about thirty leagues from Trinidad.

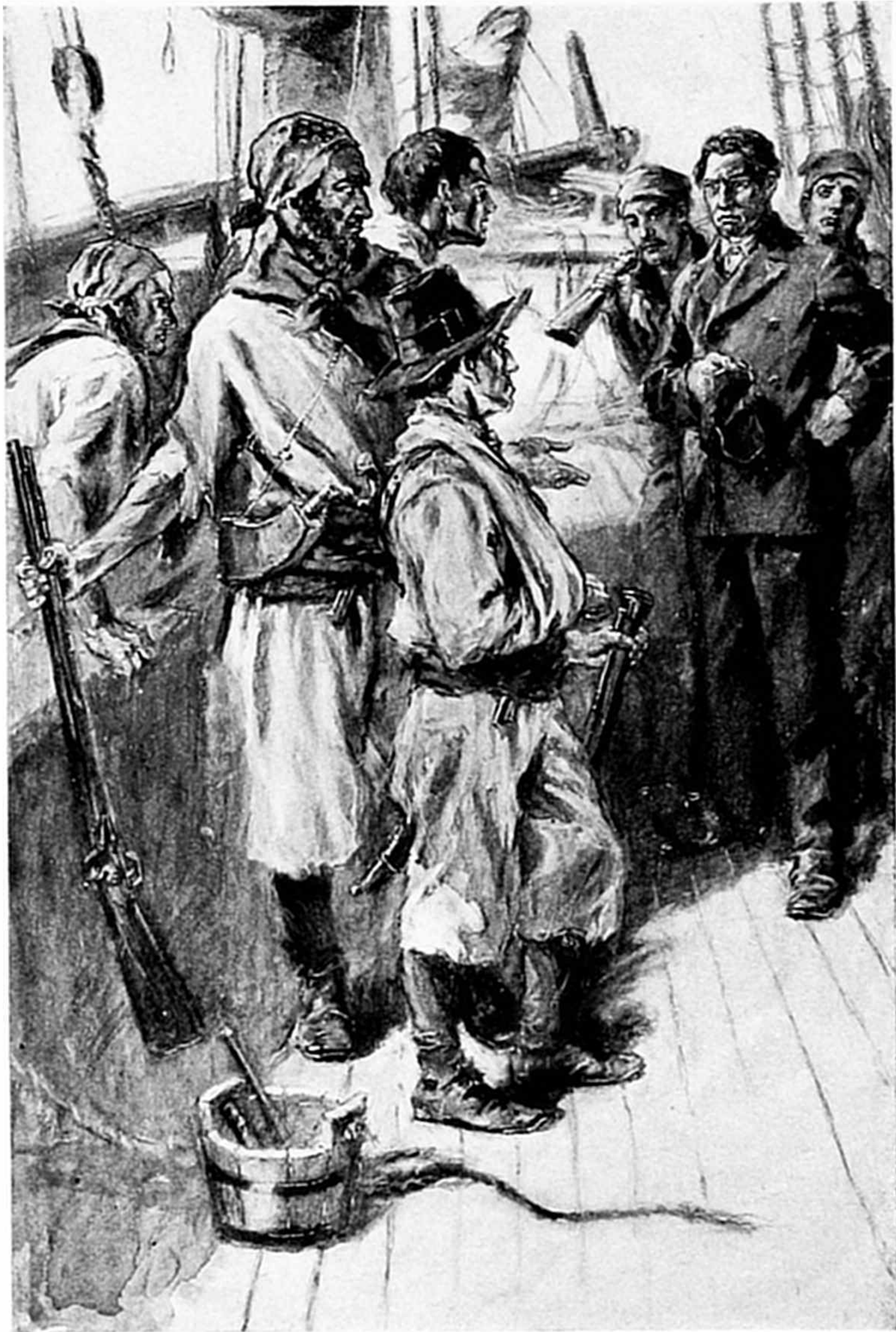
There one of the pirates, the sailing-master, who called himself Nikola, remained in the *Exertion* to examine the captain's papers. This forbidding person was, in fact, a Scotchman, as his speech readily disclosed, and he was curiously out of place among the dirty crew of Spanish renegades. In him the unlucky skipper of the *Exertion* had found a friend, of whom he said:

> This Nikola had a countenance rather pleasing, although his beard and mustachios had a frightful appearance,—his face, apparently full of anxiety, indicated something in my favor. He gave me back my papers, saying, “Take good care of them, for I am afraid you have fallen into bad hands.”

The pirates then sent a boat to the *Exertion* with more men and arms, leaving a heavy guard on board and taking Captain Lincoln and his Yankee seamen off to their own low, rakish craft, where they served out the rum and vainly tried to persuade them to enlist, with promise of dazzling booty. Captain Lincoln was not at all attracted by this business opportunity, and sadly he returned to his schooner, where he found Lieutenant Bolidar in the cabin and the place in a sorry mess. It is well known that, whatever their other virtues, pirates as a class had no manners. With a few exceptions the best of them lived like pigs and behaved like hooligans. The captain’s narrative declares:

> They had emptied a case of liquors, and broken a cheese to pieces and crumbled it on the table and the cabin floor and, elated with their prize as they called it, they had drunk so much as to make them desperately abusive. I was permitted to lie down in my berth but, reader, if you have ever been awakened by a gang of armed desperadoes who have taken possession of your habitation in the midnight hour, you can imagine my feelings. Sleep was a stranger to me and anxiety was my guest. Bolidar, however, pretended friendship and flattered me with the prospect of being set at liberty, but I found him, as I suspected, a consummate hypocrite. Indeed, his very looks indicated it.
>
> He was a stout and well-built man, of a dark swarthy complexion, with keen, ferocious eyes, huge whiskers and beard under his chin and

on his lips. He was a Portuguese by birth but had become a naturalized Frenchman,—had a wife and children in France and was well-known there as commander of a first-rate privateer. His appearance was truly terrific. He could talk some English and had a most lion-like voice.



THE PIRATE CAPTAIN BOARDING THE CAPTURED “EXERTION”

Next day the scurvy knaves began plundering the *Exertion* of her cargo of potatoes, butter, apples, beans, and so on, ripped up the floors in search of more liquor, found some hard cider, and guzzled it until officers and men were in a fight, all tipsy together, and then simmered down to sing sentimental ditties in the twilight. Soon after this both schooners got under way and sailed to another haven in the lee of Brigantine Cay. Captain Lincoln now saw something more of the roving scapegrace of a Scotchman who called himself Nikola. He was a pirate with a sentimental streak in him and professed himself to be unhappy in his lawless employment and declared he had signed articles in the belief that he was bound privateering.

A theatrical person was the bewhiskered Nikola, who properly belonged to fiction of the romantic school. Sympathetic Captain Lincoln wrote that he

> lamented most deeply his own situation, for he was one of those men whose early good impressions were not entirely effaced. He told me that those who had taken me were no better than pirates and their end would be the halter, but he added, with peculiar emotion, “I will never be hung as a pirate,” showing me a bottle of laudanum which he had found in my medicine chest and saying, “If we are overtaken, this shall cheat the hangman before we are condemned.”

Another day’s cruise to the eastward and the trim, taut little *Exertion* suffered the melancholy fate of shipwreck, not bravely in a gale, but mishandled and wantonly gutted by her captors. First she stranded on a bar while making in for a secluded creek, and was floated after throwing overboard the deck-load of shooks for making sugar-barrels. Then her sails were stripped, the rigging cut to pieces, and the masts chopped over the side lest they be sighted from seaward. After that the pirates hewed gaps in the

deck and bulwarks in order to loot the rest of the cargo more easily, and the staunch schooner was left to bleach her bones on the Cuban coast.

The amiable Nikola found himself in trouble because of his friendly feeling for Captain Lincoln. The Spanish sailors tied him to a tree and were about to shoot him as a soft-hearted traitor who was guilty of unprofessional conduct, but a courageous French pirate surged into the picture with several men of his own opinion, and remarked that when the shooting began there would be other targets besides Nikola. This convinced the mob that it might be healthier to let the Scotchman alone.

The captain and crew of the *Exertion* were threatened and ill used, but there seemed to be no intention of making them walk the plank or hewing them down with cutlasses. What to do with them was a problem rather perplexing, which was proof that the trade of piracy had fallen from its former estate. These were thrifty freebooters, however, and the business was capably organized. There were even traces of the efficiency management which was to become the religion of the twentieth century. The pirates’ largest boat was manned by a crew which discarded some of its weapons, combed its whiskers, even washed its faces, and set off for the port of Principe in charge of the terrifying Bolidar.

The boat carried letters to a merchant by the name of Dominico who acted as the commercial agent of the industrious pirates and sold their plunder for them. A representative of his was kept on board the wicked schooner and went to sea with her, presumably to make sure of honest dealings, a sensible precaution in the case of such slippery gentry. The whole arrangement was most reprehensible, of course, but it had flourished on a much larger scale in the godly ports of Boston and New York during an earlier era.

It was to put a stop to such scandalous traffic that Richard Coote, Earl of Bellomont, had been sent out by King William III in 1695 as royal

governor of the colonies of New York and Massachusetts. Colonial merchants, outwardly the pattern of respectability, were in secret partnership with the swarm of pirates which infested the American coast and waxed rich on the English commerce of the Indian Ocean.

“I send you, my Lord, to New York,” said King William to Bellomont, “because an honest and intrepid man is wanted to put these abuses down, and because I believe you to be such a man.”

As a result of these instructions, Captain William Kidd was employed to hunt the pirates down by sea while Governor Bellomont made it hot for the unscrupulous merchants ashore who were, no doubt, the ancestors of the modern American profiteers in food and clothing, who are also most respectable men. Captain Kidd was a merchant shipmaster of brave and honorable repute who had a comfortable home in Liberty Street, New York, was married to a widow of good family, and was highly esteemed by the Dutch and English people of the town. A shrewd trader who made money for his owners, he was also a fighting seaman of such proved mettle that he had been given command of privateers which cruised off the coasts of the colonies and harried the French in the West Indies. His excellent reputation and character are attested by official documents.

ARMED WITH AS MANY OF THE AFOREMENTIONED WEAPONS AS THEY COULD WELL SLING ABOUT THEIR BODIES

How Captain Kidd, sent out to catch pirates, was convicted of turning pirate himself rather than sail home empty-handed is another story. Fate has played strange tricks with the memory of this seventeenth-century seafarer who never cut a throat or scuttled a ship, and who was hanged at Execution Dock for the excessively unromantic crime of cracking the skull of his mutinous gunner with a wooden bucket.

Poor Captain Barnabas Lincoln of Boston, having lost his schooner and cargo, was righteously indignant at discovering how the infamous business was carried on. Said he:

> I was informed by a line from Nikola that the pirates had a man on board, a native of Principe, who in the garb of a sailor was a partner with Dominico, but I could not get sight of him. This lets us a little into the plan by which this atrocious system has been conducted. Merchants having partners on board of these pirates! Thus pirates at sea and robbers on land are associated to destroy the peaceful trader.

Nikola remained true to Captain Lincoln, even sending him a letter from Principe to tell him about the disposition of the stolen cargo and what prices it was fetching. In this letter he revealed the fact that his true name was Jamieson and concluded with this romantic flight:

> Perhaps in your old age, when you recline with ease in a corner of your cottage, you will have the goodness to drop a tear of pleasure to the memory of him whose highest ambition should have been to subscribe himself, though devoted to the gallows, your friend,
>
> NIKOLA MONACRE.

Another streak of sentiment was discovered in one of the *Exertion's* sailors, Francis De Suze, a Portuguese, who finally weakened and decided to join the outlaws. He was won over by the artful persuasions of his fellow-countryman, Lieutenant Bolidar of the ferocious mien and lion-like voice. To Captain Lincoln he explained, with tears in his eyes:

> "I shall do nothing but what I am compelled to do and will not aid in the least to hurt you or your vessel. I am very sorry to leave you."

The pious master of the *Exertion* bore up under his troubles with a spirit truly admirable, but it was one thing after another, and under date of Sunday, December 30, he wrote in his diary:

> This day, which particularly reminds Christians of the high duties of compassion and benevolence, is never observed by these pirates. This, of course, we might expect, as they do not often know when Sunday comes and if they do, it is spent in gambling. Early this morning, the merchant, as they call him, came with a large boat for more cargo. I was ordered into a boat with my crew, without any breakfast, and carried about three miles to a small island out of sight of the *Exertion* and left there by the side of a pond of thick, muddy water with nothing to eat but a few biscuits. One of the boat's crew told us that the merchant was afraid of being recognized, and when he had gone the boat would return for us, but we passed the day in the greatest anxiety. At night, however, the boat came and took us again on board the *Exertion* where to our surprise and grief we found they had broken open the trunks and chests and taken all our wearing apparel, not leaving me even a shirt or a pair of pantaloons, nor sparing a small miniature of my wife which was in the trunk.

The pirate schooner was employed a few days later to fill her hold with cargo from the *Exertion* and hoist sail for Principe. They lifted the stuff out with a "Yo, ho, ho!" which made Captain Lincoln so unhappy that he pensively wrote:

> How different was this sound from what it would have been had I been permitted to pass unmolested by these lawless plunderers and been favored with a safe arrival at the port of my destination where my cargo would have found an excellent sale. Then would the "*yo, ho, ho!*" on its discharging have been a delightful sound to me.

As a final touch to affect the modern reader with a sense of comedy and the captain with additional woe, the pirates fished out the *Exertion's*

consignments of furniture and, for lack of space below, sailed off with chairs lashed to the rail in rows and tables hung in the rigging. There now appears the figure of the pirate commander himself, for Bolidar was merely the lieutenant, or executive officer. To Captain Lincoln, gloomily watching the pirate schooner in the offing, with her picturesque garniture of hand-made New England furniture, came Bolidar with five men, his own personal armament consisting of a blunderbuss, cutlass, a long knife, and a pair of pistols. This fearsome lieutenant took Captain Lincoln by the arm, led him aside, and imparted:

"My *capitan* sends me for your wash."

Properly resentful, the master of the *Exertion* replied:

"Damn your eyes! I have no clothes, nor any soap to wash with. You have stolen them all."

"Ah, ha, but I will have your wash, *pronto*!" cried Bolidar, waving the blunderbuss. "What you call him that makes *tick-tock*, same as the clock?"

Disgustedly Captain Lincoln extracted his watch from the place where he had hidden it. The cloud had a silver lining, for Bolidar graciously handed over a small bundle at parting.

> It contained a pair of linen drawers sent me by Nikola, also the Rev. Mr. Brooks' Family Prayer Book. This gave me great satisfaction. Soon after, Bolidar returned with his captain who had one arm slung up, yet with as many implements of war as his diminutive self could conveniently carry. He told me (through an interpreter who was his prisoner) that on his last cruise he had fallen in with two Spanish privateers and beat them off, but had fourteen of his men killed and was himself wounded in the arm. Bolidar turned to me and said, "It is a d—n lie," which words proved to be correct for his arm was not wounded and when I saw him again he had forgotten to sling it up.

An accurate and convincing portrait, this, and painted with very few strokes—the strutting little braggart of a pirate chief who resorted to such cheap and stagy tricks as bandaging his arm to make an impression! Having disposed of the cargo, it now transpired that the prisoners were to be marooned and left to perish. After all, the traditions of piracy had not been wholly lost and these sordid rascals were running true to form. With an inkling of this fate, Mr. Joshua Brackett, the mate of the *Exertion*, was heard to say:

“I cannot tell what awaits us, but it appears to me that the worst is to come.”

This is how Captain Lincoln quoted it in his diary, but the mate of the schooner, sorely tried as he must have been, was more likely to exclaim:

“I can’t fathom all their —— —— tricks, but it looks to me as if the bloody rogues had made up their minds to scupper us, and may they sizzle in hell for a million years!”

The pirate chief and his officers held a whispered conference and then spent the last night ashore in gambling, the diminutive leader “in hopes of getting back some of the five hundred dollars he had lost a few nights before; which made him unusually fractious.”

Before they were marooned, Captain Lincoln took pains to note down that the pirates were sporting new canvas trousers made from the light sails of the *Exertion* and that they had cut up the colors to make fancy belts to keep their money in, and he added this vivid little touch to the portrait of the chief, “The captain had on one of my best shirts, a cleaner one than I had ever seen him wear before.”

At sunset the crew of the *Exertion*, with several prisoners taken out of a Spanish merchant prize, were put into a boat. At this lamentable moment, Nikola stepped to the front again and said to Captain Lincoln:

“My friend, I will give you your book,” (a volume of Rev. Mr. Coleman’s sermons). “It is the only thing of yours that is in my possession. I dare not attempt anything more. *Never mind, I may see you again before I die.*”

There were eleven prisoners in all, without arms, and to sustain life only a ten-gallon keg of water, part of a barrel of flour, one ham, and a little salt fish, not forgetting the precious volume of Mr. Coleman’s sermons. They were carried to a tiny key, or islet, no more than a shoal of white sand an acre in extent and barely lifted above high tide, forty miles off the Cuban coast and well out of the track of vessels. No wonder that Captain Lincoln was moved to ejaculate:

> “Look at us now, my friends, left benighted on a little spot of sand in the midst of the ocean, with every appearance of a violent thunder tempest and a boisterous night. Judge of my feelings and the circumstances which our band of sufferers now witnessed. Perhaps you can, and have pitied us. I assure you we were very wretched, and to depict the scene is beyond my power.”

They found a fragment of a thatched hut built by turtle fishermen, but now whipped bare by the winds, and it served as a slight shelter from the burning sun. Fire they kindled by means of a piece of cotton-wick yarn and a flint and steel. They dug holes for fresh water, but it was too salty to drink. At bedtime the captain read aloud selections from the Rev. Mr. Brooks’s Family Prayer-Book, and they slept in the sand when the scorpions, centipedes, lizards, and mosquitoes permitted.

Of driftwood, palmetto logs, and bits of board they fashioned a little raft and so explored the key nearest them. There they discovered some shooks, planks, and pieces of spar which had been in the *Exertion’s* deck-load and were thrown overboard when she grounded on the bar. With the

amazing handiness of good seamen they proceeded to build a boat of this pitiful material. “Some of the Spaniards had secreted their long knives in their trouserlegs, which proved very useful in fitting timbers, and a gimblet of mine enabled us to use wooden pins,” explains Captain Lincoln. “And now our spirits began to revive, although *water*, *water* was continually in our minds. Our labor was extremely burdensome, and the Spaniards considerably peevish, but they would often say to me, ‘Never mind, Captain, bye-and-bye Americans or Spanish catch ’em and we go see ’em hung.’”

David Warren, the cook of the *Exertion*, had been ailing, and the cruel ordeal of being marooned was too much for him. The captain perceived that he was soon to leave them and suggested, as they sat by the fire:

“I think it most likely that we shall die here soon, David, but as some one of us may survive to carry the tidings to our friends, if you have anything to say respecting your family, now is the time.”

The young sailor—he was only twenty-six—replied to this: “I have a mother in Saco where I belong—she is a second time a widow. To-morrow, if you can spare a scrap of paper and a pencil, I will write something.”

No to-morrow came to him. He passed out in the night, and the skipper thought of his own wife and children in Boston. They dug a grave in the sand, made a coffin of shooks, and stood with bare heads while Captain Lincoln read the funeral prayer from the consolatory compilation of the Rev. Mr. Brooks. One of the Spanish prisoners, an old man named Manuel, made a wooden cross, and with great pains carved upon it the words, “Jesus Christ Hath Him Now,” and placed it at the head of the grave. There was the old Puritan strain in Captain Lincoln, who commented, “Although I did not believe in the mysterious influence of the cross, yet I was perfectly willing it should stand there.”

Enfeebled and lacking food and water, they stubbornly toiled at building the boat, which was shaped like a flat-iron. When at length they launched the wretched little box, it leaked like a basket, and, to their dismay, would hold no more than six of them and stay afloat, four to row, one to steer, and one to bail. Three Spaniards and a Frenchman argued that they should go in search of help because they were acquainted with the lay of the coast and could talk to the people. This was agreed to, and Mr. Brackett, the mate, was also selected to go, because the captain considered it his duty to stay with his men. The sixth man was Joseph Baxter, and there is no other mention of him in the narrative, so he must have been one of the prisoners who had been brought along from another prize. They were given a keg of water, "the least salty," a few pancakes and salt fish, and embarked with the best wishes and prayers of the other survivors.

On the torrid key waited the captain, old Manuel, Thomas Young, and George Reed, while the painful days and the anxious nights dragged past until almost a week had gone. The flour-barrel was empty, and they were trying to exist on prickly pears and shell-fish, while the torments of thirst were agonizing. At last they sighted a boat drifting by about a mile distant, and hope flickered anew. The raft was shoved off, and two of them overhauled the empty boat, which seemed to offer a way of escape. Imagine their feelings at discovering that it was the same boat in which Mr. Brackett and the five men had rowed away to find rescue in the last extremity! It was full of water, without oars or paddles. No wonder that Captain Lincoln wrote in his journal next day:

> "This morning was indeed the most gloomy I had ever experienced. There appeared hardly a ray of hope that my friend Brackett could return, seeing the boat was lost. Our provisions gone, our mouths parched extremely with thirst, our strength wasted, our spirits broken, and our hopes imprisoned within the circumference of

> this desolate island in the midst of an unfrequented ocean,—all these things gave to the scene the hue of death.”

Later in this same day a sail was seen against the blue horizon. The sloop boldly tacked among the tortuous shoals and was evidently heading for the islet. Soon she fired a gun, and the castaways took her to be another pirate vessel. She dropped anchor and lowered a boat in which three men pulled to the beach. “Thinking it no worse to die by sword than famine,” Captain Lincoln walked down to meet them. As the boat drove through the surf, the man in the bow jumped out, waded ashore, and rushed to embrace the captain.

It was none other than the Scotchman, Nikola Monacre, henceforth to be known by the reputable and rightful name of Jamieson! He had shorn off his ruffianly whiskers and abandoned his evil ways. The moment could have been no more dramatic, the coincidence any happier, if it had been contrived by a motion-picture director. To the modern reader it will come as an agreeable surprise, I fancy, for until now the character of Nikola, as conveyed in glimpses by Captain Lincoln, fails to win one’s implicit confidence. While among the pirates he seemed a bit mushy and impressionable, not quite the man to stand by through thick and thin and hew a way out of his difficulties; but this was an unfair judgment. He was leal and true to the last hair of his discarded mustachios. As though he surmised that Captain Lincoln might have formed the same opinion of him, the first words of this worthy hero were:

“Do you now believe that *Jamieson* is your friend? And are these all that are left of you? Ah, I suspected, and now I know what you were put here for!”

Captain Lincoln explained the absence of the mate and the five sailors who had vanished from the waterlogged boat. Jamieson had heard nothing

of them and ventured the conjecture:

“How unfortunate! They must be lost, or some pirates have taken them.”

He called to the two comrades who had come ashore with him, Frenchmen and fine fellows, who also embraced the castaways and held to their parched lips a tea-kettle filled with wine, and then fed them sparingly with a dish of salt beef and potatoes. The others of the sloop’s crew were summoned ashore, and while they all sat on the beach and ate and drank, the admirable Jamieson spun the yarn of his own adventures. The pirates had captured four small coasting-vessels and, being short of prize-masters, had put him in charge of one of them, with a crew which included the two Frenchmen. The orders were to follow the piratical *Mexican* into a harbor.

His captured schooner leaked so much that Jamieson abandoned her and shifted to a sloop, in which he altered his course at night and so slipped clear of the pirates. First he sailed back to the wreck of the *Exertion* on the chance that Captain Lincoln might be there. Disappointed in this, he went to sea again and laid a course for the key on which the prisoners had been marooned.

“We had determined among ourselves,” he explained, “that, should an opportunity occur, we would come and save your lives, as we now have.”

All hands went aboard Jamieson’s sloop, and left the horrid place of their banishment over the stern. The first port of call was the inlet in which the *Exertion* lay stranded. She was a forlorn derelict, stripped of everything, and Captain Lincoln bade his luckless schooner a sorrowful farewell. While beating out of this passage, an armed brig was sighted five miles distant. She piped a boat away, which fired several musket-balls through the sloop’s mainsail as soon as they drew near each other, and it was suspected that these might be the same old pirates of the *Mexican*. Declining to surrender, Jamieson and Captain Lincoln served out muskets, and they peppered the

strange boat in a brisk little encounter until the brig sent two more boats away, and resistance was seen to be futile.

The armed vessel turned out to be a lawful Spanish privateer, whose captain showed no resentment at the fusillade. Indeed, he was handsomely cordial, a very gentlemanly sailor, and invited Captain Lincoln and his men into the cabin for dinner, where he informed them that he had commanded a Yankee privateer out of Boston during the War of 1812. Jamieson and his crew, for reasons best known to themselves, signed articles as privateersmen and stayed in the brig. This was preferable to risking the halter ashore.

Captain Lincoln was landed at Trinidad, Cuba, where he found American friends and was soon able to secure a passage to Boston. It was not until months later that he learned of the safe arrival on the Cuban coast of Mr. Brackett, the mate, and the five men who had vanished in the open boat. What befell them at sea, and how they were picked up, is not revealed.

It would be a pity to dismiss the engaging Jamieson without some further knowledge of his checkered career. A year and a half after their parting, Captain Lincoln received a letter from him. He was living quietly in Montego Bay, Jamaica, and at the captain’s very urgent invitation he came to Boston for a visit. While in the privateer brig, as he told it, they had fought a Colombian eighteen-gun sloop-of-war for three hours. After a hammer-and-tongs engagement, both ships drew off, very much battered. The Spanish privateer limped into Santiago for repairs, and Jamieson was sent to a hospital with a bullet through his arm. From there he had made his way to Jamaica, where friends cared for him and kept him clear of the law.

He had the pleasure of seeing several of his old shipmates of the *Mexican* brought into Montego Bay, whence they were carried to Kingston and ceremoniously hanged by the neck. Among them was Baltizar, pilot of the pirate schooner, and in the words of Captain Lincoln:

> “He was an old man, and as Jamieson said, it was a melancholy and heart-rending sight to see him borne to execution with those gray hairs which might have been venerable in virtuous old age, now a reproach and shame to this hoary villain, for he was full of years and old in iniquity.”

You may be sure that the picaresque Scotch rover, who had been so faithful and kind, found a warm welcome at the fireside of Captain Lincoln and in the taverns of the Boston waterside. He was contented to lead the humdrum life of virtue and sailed with the skipper as mate in a new schooner on several voyages to the West Indies. In his later years he tired of the offshore trade and joined the fishing-fleet out of Hingham during the summer months, while in the winter he taught navigation to the young sailors of the neighborhood who aspired to rise to a mate’s or master’s berth.

His grave is on the shore of Cape Cod, and as Captain Lincoln wrote of him, “Peace to his ashes. They rest in a strange land, far from his kindred and his native country.”

According to his own account, Jamieson was of a very respectable family in Greenock. His father was a cloth merchant of considerable wealth, but being left an orphan, he had run away to sea and engaged in an astonishing variety of adventures. Of him Captain Lincoln said:

> He had received a polite education and was of a very gentlemanly deportment. He spoke several languages and was skilled in drawing and painting. He had travelled extensively and his wide fund of information made him a most entertaining companion. His observations on the character of different nations were very liberal; with a playful humorousness quite free from bigotry and narrow prejudice.

An entertaining companion and philosopher, indeed, whose outlook had been mellowed by the broadening influence of piracy, and you and I would like nothing better than to have sat down with this reformed gentleman of fortune a hundred years ago and listened to his playful comments on the virtues and the vices of mankind, and his wondrous yarns of men and ships and the winds that tramp the world.

Perhaps as he moved so sedately in the ordered life of Boston and Hingham, or fared to the southward again as mate of a trading-schooner, he shivered at recollection of that day in Kingston when ten of his old shipmates of the *Mexican* dangled from the gallows-tree and the populace crowded to enjoy the diverting spectacle. And in his dreams he may have heard the wailing voice of Pedro Nondre, when the rope broke and he fell to the ground alive: “Mercy! mercy! they kill me without cause! Oh, good Christians, protect me. Is there no Christian in this land? *Muero innocente! Adios, para siempre adios!*”

A true tale this, every word of it, as are all the others in this book, but lacking one essential thing to make it complete. There is no mention in the diary of Captain Lincoln to bring us the comforting assurance that Bolidar, the swaggering lieutenant, and his diminutive blackguard of a chief received the solicitous attention of the hangman, as they handsomely deserved.

CHAPTER III

THE TRAGEDY OF THE FRIGATE *MEDUSA*

AMONG the countless episodes of disaster at sea, the fate of the French frigate *Medusa* and her people still possesses a poignant and mournful distinction. Other ships have gone down with much greater loss of life, including such modern instances as the *Titanic* and the *Lusitania*, or have been missing with all hands, but the story of the *Medusa* casts a dark shadow across the chronicles of human suffering, even though a century has passed since the event. There are some enterprises which seem foredoomed to failure by a conspiracy of circumstances, as if a spell of evil enchantment had been woven to thwart and destroy them. Of such a kind was this most unhappy voyage.

As an incident of the final overthrow of Napoleon, Great Britain returned to France the colonial territory of Sénégal on the west coast of Africa, between Cape Blanco and the Gambia River. A French expedition was equipped and sent out to reoccupy and govern the little settlements and clearings which thinly fringed the tropical wilderness. It included officials, scientists, soldiers, servants, and laborers, who sailed from Rochefort in the *Medusa* frigate and three smaller vessels on the seventeenth of June, 1816.

The French Navy had been shattered and swept from the seas by the broadsides of Nelson’s fleets, and its morale had ebbed. This mission, moreover, was not a strictly naval affair, and the personnel of the frigate was recruited with no particular care. The seamen were the scrapings of the waterfront, and the officers had not been selected for efficiency. They were

typical neither of the French arms nor people. It seemed a commonplace task, no doubt, to sail with the summer breezes on a voyage not much farther than the Cape Verd Islands and disembark the passengers and cargo.

Captain de Chaumareys of the *Medusa* was a light-hearted, agreeable shipmate, but he appears to have been a most indifferent seaman and a worse master of men and emergencies. When no more than ten days out from port he discovered that his reckoning had set him thirty leagues, or almost a hundred miles, out of his course. This was not enough to condemn him utterly, because navigation was a crude art a century ago and ships blundered about the high seas and found their way to port in the most astonishing manner. But Captain de Chaumareys was not made cautious by his error, and he drove along with fatuous confidence in his ability and would pay no heed to the opinions of his officers. He also managed to lose touch with the three smaller ships of the squadron, and they vanished from his ken. It was one fatal mischance after another.

On the first of July, when the frigate crossed the tropic of Cancer, the debonair captain made it an excuse for a holiday and took personal charge of the gaieties which so absorbed him that he turned over the command of the ship to M. Richefort, one of the civilian officials who had seen naval service. There was a feeling of uneasiness on board, for all the fiddling and singing and dancing, and the officers discussed it over their wine in the ward-room and the passengers were aware of it in the cabins, "while the crew performed the fantastic ceremonies usual on such occasions although the frigate was surrounded by all the unseen perils of the ocean. A few persons, aware of the danger, remonstrated, but without effect, even when it was ascertained that the *Medusa* was on the bank of Arguin."

The ship was, in fact, entrapped among the shoals and reefs which extended like a labyrinth far out from the African coast. It was an area of many disasters to stout ships, whose crews had been taken captive or killed

by savage tribes, if they survived the hostility of the sea. M. Richefort, who was so obligingly acting as commander of the *Medusa*, insisted that there were a hundred fathoms of water under the keel and not the slightest cause for anxiety, and they still danced on deck to the scraping of the fiddles.

With a crash that flung the merry-makers this way and that, and brought the spars tumbling about their ears, the *Medusa* struck in only sixteen feet of water, and the deadly sands had inextricably gripped her. She was a lost ship on this bright day of calm seas and sunny weather and the sailors blithely tripping it heel-and-toe. It was soon realized that the frigate might pound to pieces in the first gale of wind, and that advantage had best be taken of the quiescent ocean to get away from her. The coast was known to be no more than forty miles distant, and the hope of escape was strong.

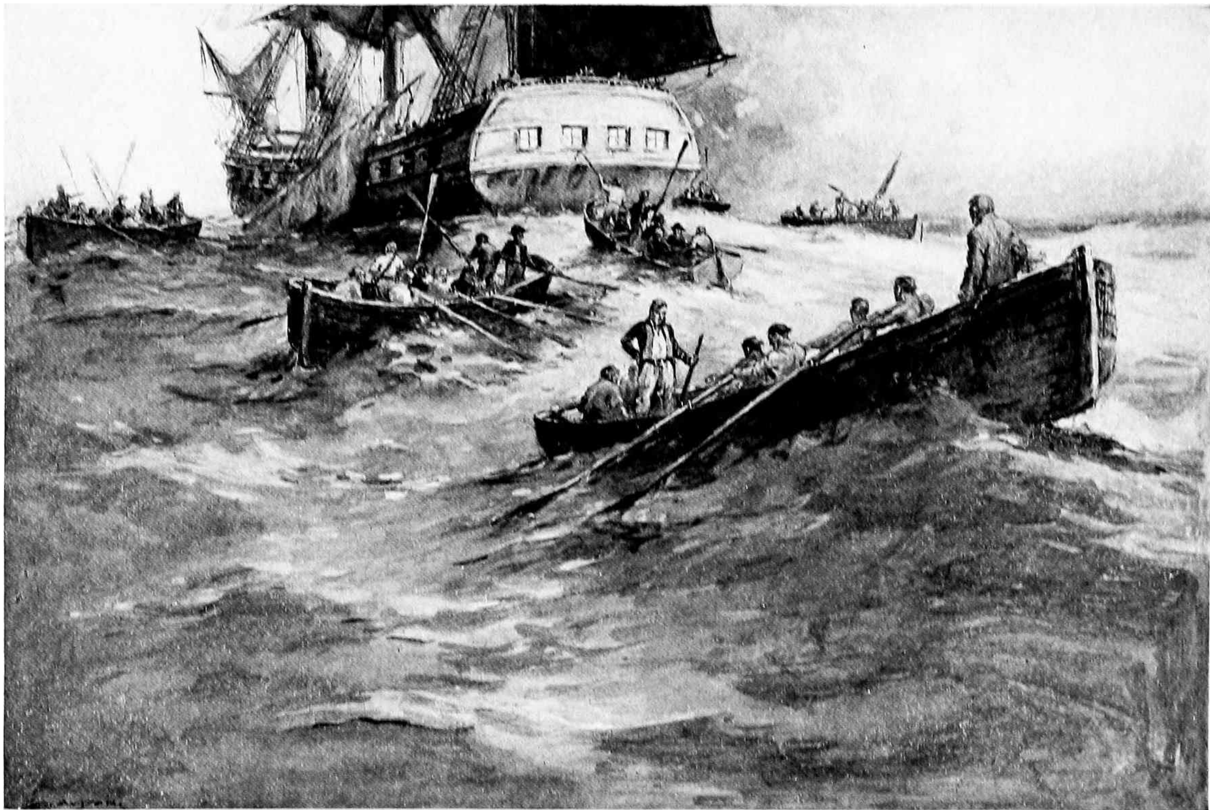
There was ample time in which to abandon ship with some order and method, to break out provisions and water-barrels, to build a number of buoyant rafts and carefully equip them, to safeguard the lives of the people as far as possible. The frigate carried carpenters, mechanics, and other artisans, and all manner of tools for the colony of Sénégal. Hundreds of people had been saved from other ships in situations even more desperate than this. There had been strong men, unwavering authority, and disciplined obedience in them, however, but this doomed frigate was like a madhouse, and panic ran from deck to deck. The crew was slack at best, but it could not be held altogether responsible for the demoralization. The soldiers and laborers were Spanish, French, Italian, and negroes, many of whom had probably been in prison or the convict hulks, and were sent to Africa for their country's good.

The frigate had five seaworthy boats, which were hurriedly launched and filled with people whose only thought was to save their own skins. In one of them was the governor of Sénégal and his family, and in another were placed four children and the wives of the officials. In this respect the

ancient chivalry of the sea was lived up to. There were heroes among the French army officers, as might have been expected, for they kept clear of the struggle for the boats, and succeeded in holding most of their men, who were assigned to the one raft which had been frantically thrown together.

The five boats shoved off and waited for the raft, which it was proposed to take in tow. Barrels of bread and wine and water had been hoisted on deck, but in the confusion almost all the stores were thrown into the boats. M. Correard, geographical engineer attached to the expedition, had gallantly volunteered to take chances with his own men on the raft. He had kept his wits about him, and delayed to ask Captain de Chaumareys whether navigation instruments and charts had been provided for the raft. He was assured that a naval officer was attending to these essentials and would be in charge of the party. Forgetting his duty entirely, this faithless officer scrambled into one of the boats, and the raft was left without means of guidance.

There are cowards in all services, afloat and ashore, but they are seldom conspicuous. Among those who fled away in the boats was the gay Captain de Chaumareys, who oozed through a port-hole without delaying a moment. In this manner he disappeared from the narrative, the last glimpse of him as framed in the port-hole while his ship was still crowded with terrified castaways for whom there were no boats. He was a feather-brained poltroon who, by accident, happened to be a Frenchman.



BOATS WERE FILLED WITH MEN WHOSE ONLY THOUGHT WAS TO SAVE THEIR SKINS

There were intrepid men in the *Medusa* who bullied the others into helping make a raft. The best that they could do was to launch a pitiful contrivance of spars and planks held together by lashings. It was sixty-five feet long and twenty broad, not even decked over, twisting and working to the motion of the waves which slapped over it or splashed between the timbers when the ocean was smooth. As soon as it floated alongside the frigate, *one hundred and fifty persons* wildly jammed themselves upon it, standing in water to their waists and in danger of slipping between the spars and planks. The only part of the raft which was unsubmerged when laden had room for no more than fifteen men to lie down upon it.

The weather was still calm, and the ship rested solidly upon her sandy bed, the upper decks clear of water. It seems incredible that no barrels of beef and biscuit were lashed to the timbers of the raft, no water-casks rolled from the tiers and swung overside. A kind of mob hysteria swept these people along, and the men of resolution were carried with it. They were unaccustomed to the sea, and a frenzied fear of it stampeded them. The flimsy, wave-washed raft floated away from the *Medusa* with only biscuit enough for one scanty meal and a few casks of wine. The stage was set, as one might say, for inevitable horrors.

One of the boats which was not so crowded as the others had the grace to row back to the ship with orders to take off a few, if there were men still aboard. To the surprise of the lieutenant in the boat, sixty men had been left behind because there was not even a foothold for them upon the raft. The boat managed to stow all but seventeen of them, who were very drunk by this time and preferred to stand by the ship and the spirit-room. The fear of death had ceased to trouble them.

For the moment let us shift the scene to survey the fate of these seventeen poor wretches who were abandoned on board of the *Medusa*. The five boats reached the African coast and most of their company lived to find Sénégal. The governor bethought himself that a large amount of specie had been left in the wreck, and he sent a little vessel off; but lack of provisions and bad weather drove her twice back to port, so that fifty-two days, more than seven weeks, had passed before the *Medusa* was sighted, her upper works still above water.

Three of the seventeen men were found alive, “but they lived in separate corners of the hulk and never met but to run at each other with drawn knives.” Several others had sailed off on a tiny raft which was cast up on the coast of the Sahara, but the men were drowned. A lone sailor drifted away on a hencoop as the craft of his choice, and foundered in sight

of the frigate. All the rest had died of too little food and too much rum, after the provisions had been lost or spoiled by the breaking up of the ship.

It was understood that the raft, with its burden of one hundred and fifty souls, was to be taken in tow by the five boats strung in a line, and this flotilla would make for the nearest coast, which might have been reached in two or three days of favoring weather. After a few hours of slow, but encouraging, progress, the tow-line of the captain's boat parted. Instead of making fast to the raft again, all the other boats cast off their cables and, under sail and oar, set off to the eastward to save themselves. The miserable people who beheld this desertion denounced it as an act of cruelty and perfidy beyond belief. It may have been in the captain's mind to make haste and send a vessel to pick up the castaways, but his previous behavior had been such that he scarcely deserves the benefit of the doubt.

On the makeshift raft there were those who knew how to die like Frenchmen and gentlemen. What they endured has been handed down to us in the personal accounts of M. Correard and M. Savigny, colonial officials who wrote with that touch, vivid and dramatic, which is the gift of many of their race. Even in translation it is profoundly moving. When they saw the boats forsake them and vanish at the edge of the azure horizon, a stupor fell upon these unfortunate people as they clung to one another with arms locked and bodies pressed together so that they might not be washed off the raft.

A small group in whom nobility of character burned like an unquenchable flame assumed the leadership, attempting to maintain some sort of discipline and decency, to ration the precious wine, to make the raft more seaworthy. One of the artisans had a pocket compass, which he displayed amid shouts of joy, but it slipped from his fingers and was lost. They had no chart or any other resource of the kind.

> "The first day passed in a manner sufficiently tranquil. We talked of the means by which we would save ourselves; we spoke of it as a certain circumstance, which reanimated our courage; and we sustained that of the soldiers by cherishing in them the hope of being able, in a short time, to revenge themselves on those who had abandoned them.... In the evening our hearts and our prayers, by a feeling natural to the unfortunate, were turned toward Heaven. Surrounded by inevitable dangers, we addressed that invisible Being who has established the order of the universe. Our vows were fervent and we experienced from our prayers the cheering influence of hope. It is necessary to have been in similar circumstances before one can rightly imagine what a solace to the hearts of the sufferers is the sublime idea of a God protecting the afflicted."

Such were the reflections of a little group of devout and high-minded Frenchmen whose example helped to steady the rest of the castaways in the early hours of their ordeal. During the first night the wind increased, and the sea became so boisterous that the waves gushed and roared across the raft, most of which was three feet under water. A few ropes were stretched for the people to cling to, but they were washed to and fro, and many were caught and killed or cruelly hurt between the grinding timbers. Others were swept into the sea. Twenty of the company had perished before dawn. Two ship's boys and a baker, after bidding farewell to their comrades, threw themselves into the ocean as the easier end. A survivor wrote:

> "During the whole of this night we struggled against death, holding ourselves closely to those spars which were firmly bound together; tossed by the waves from one end to the other, and sometimes precipitated into the sea; floating between life and death, mourning over our misfortunes, certain of perishing, yet contending for the

> remainder of existence with that cruel element which had determined to swallow us up. Such was our situation till break of day."

Already the minds of some of the castaways were affected. When the day came clear and beautiful, they saw visions of ships, of green shores, of loved ones at home. While the ocean granted them a respite, the emotion of hope strongly revived, and their manifold woes were forgotten as they gazed landward or waited for sight of a sail.

> "Two young men raised and recognized their father who had fallen and was lying insensible among the feet of the soldiers. They believed him to be dead and their despair was expressed in the most affecting manner. He slowly revived and was restored to life in response to the prayers of his sons who supported him closely folded in their arms. This touching scene of filial piety drew our tears."

The second night again brought clouds and squally weather, which agitated the ocean and swept the raft. In a wailing mass the people were dashed to and fro and were crushed or drowned. The ruffianly soldiers and sailors broached the wine-casks, and so lost such last glimmerings of reason as terror had not deprived them of. They insanely attacked the other survivors, and at intervals a battle raged all night long, with sabers, knives, and bayonets. The brave M. Correard had fallen into a swoon of exhaustion, but was aroused by the cries of "To arms, comrades! Rally, or we are lost!" He mustered a small force of loyal laborers and a few officers and led them in a charge. The rebels surrounded them, but were beaten back after much bloodshed. The scenes were thus depicted by the pen of M. Savigny:

> The day had been beautiful and no one seemed to doubt that the boats would appear in the course of it, to relieve us from our perilous

state; but the evening approached and none was seen. From that moment a spirit of sedition spread from man to man, and manifested itself by the most furious shouts. Night came on, the heavens were obscured by thick clouds, the wind rose and with it the sea. The waves broke over us every moment, numbers were carried into the sea, particularly at the ends of the raft, and the crowding towards the centre of it was so great that several poor people were smothered by the pressure of their comrades who were unable to keep their legs.

Firmly persuaded that they were all on the point of being drowned, both soldiers and sailors resolved to soothe their last moments by drinking until they lost their reason. Excited by the fumes acting on empty stomachs and heads already disordered by danger, they now became deaf to the voice of reason and boldly declared their intention to murder their officers and then cut the ropes which bound the raft together. One of them, seizing an axe, actually began the dreadful work. This was the signal for revolt. The officers rushed forward to quell the tumult and the mutineer with the axe was the first to fall, his head split by a sabre.

The passengers joined the officers but the mutineers were still the greater number. Luckily they were but badly armed, or the few bayonets and sabres of the opposite party could not have kept them at bay. One fellow, detected in secretly cutting the ropes, was immediately flung overboard. Others destroyed the shrouds and halliards of the sail, and the mast, deprived of support, fell upon a captain of infantry and broke his thigh. He was instantly seized by the soldiers and thrown into the sea, but the officers saved him. A furious assault was now made upon the mutineers, many of whom were cut down.

At length this fit of desperation subsided into weeping cowardice. They cried out for mercy and asked for forgiveness upon their knees. It was now midnight and order appeared to be restored, but after an hour of deceitful calm the insurrection burst forth anew. The mutineers ran upon the officers like madmen, each having a knife or sabre in his hand, and such was the fury of the assailants that they tore with their teeth the flesh and even the clothing of their adversaries. There was no time for hesitation, a general slaughter took place, and the raft was strewn with dead bodies.

There was one woman on the raft, and the villains had thrown her overboard during the struggle, together with her husband, who had heroically defended her. M. Correard, gashed with saber-wounds as he was, leaped into the sea with a rope and rescued the wife, while Lavilette, the head workman, swam after the husband and hauled him to the raft.

THE BRIG, WHICH HAD MADE A LONG TACK AND WAS NOW STEERING STRAIGHT TOWARD THE RAFT

> The first thing the poor woman did, after recovering her senses, was to acquaint herself with the name of the person who had saved her and to express to him her liveliest gratitude. Finding that her words but ill reflected her feelings, she recollected that she had in her pocket a little snuff and instantly offered it to him. Touched with the gift but unable to use it, M. Correard gave it to a wounded sailor, which served him two or three days. But it is impossible to describe a still more affecting scene,—the joy this unfortunate couple testified when they were again conscious, at finding they were both saved.

The woman was a native of the Swiss Alps who had followed the armies of France as a sutler, or vivandière, for twenty years, through many of Napoleon's campaigns. Bronzed, intrepid, facing death with a gesture, she said to M. Correard:

> I am a useful woman, you see, a veteran of great and glorious wars. Therefore, if you please, be so good as to continue to preserve my life. Ah, if you knew how often I have ventured upon the fields of battle and braved the bullets to carry assistance to our gallant men! Whether they had money or not, I always let them have my goods. Sometimes a battle would deprive me of my poor debtors, but after the victory others would pay me double or triple for what they had consumed before the engagement. Thus I came in for a share of the victories.

It was during a lull of the dreadful conflict among these pitiful castaways that M. Savigny was moved to exclaim:

> The moon lighted with her melancholy rays this disastrous raft, this narrow space on which were found united so many torturing

anxieties, a madness so insensate, a courage so heroic, and the most generous, the most amiable sentiments of nature and humanity.

Another night came, and the crazed mutineers made an attack even more savage. It was not altogether impelled by the blind instinct of survival, for again they tried to tear the raft apart and destroy themselves with it. They were so many ravening beasts. Those who resisted them displayed many instances of brave and beautiful self-sacrifice. One of the loyal laborers was seized by four of the rebels, who were about to kill him, but Lavilette, formerly a sergeant of Napoleon's Old Guard, rushed in and subdued them with the butt of a carbine and so saved the victim of their rage.

A young lieutenant fell into the hands of these maniacs, and again there were volunteers to rush in against overwhelming numbers and effect a rescue, regardless of their grievous wounds. Bleeding and exhausted, M. Coudin had fallen upon a barrel, but he still held in his arms a twelve-year-old sailor-boy whom he was trying to shield from harm. The rebels tossed them both into the sea, but M. Coudin clung to the lad and insisted that he be placed upon the raft before he permitted himself to be helped.

During these periods of hideous combat among men who should have been brethren and comrades in tribulation, as many as sixty of them were drowned or died of their wounds. Only two of these belonged to the little party of finely tempered souls who had shown themselves to be greatly heroic. They had withstood one onslaught after another, and there were never more than twenty of them, in honor preferring one another, untouched by the murderous delirium which had afflicted the others.

True, they saw phantasms and talked wildly, but the illusions were peaceful. M. Correard imagined that he was traveling through the lovely, fruitful fields of Italy. One of the officers said to him, quite calmly, "I

recollect that we were abandoned by the boats, but there is no cause for anxiety. I am writing a letter to the Government, and in a few hours we shall be saved." And while they were babbling of the cafés of Paris and Bordeaux and ordering the most elaborate meals, they chewed the leather of the shoulder-belts and cartridges, and famine took its daily toll of them. In these circumstances it was inevitable that sooner or later they would begin devouring one another for food. The details are repugnant, and it is just as well to pass over them. With this same feeling in mind, one of the survivors confessed:

> It was necessary, however, that some extreme measure should be adopted to support our miserable existence. We shudder with horror on finding ourselves under the necessity of recording that which we put into practice. We feel the pen drop from our hands, a deadly coldness freezes all our limbs, and our hair stands on end. Readers, we entreat you not to entertain, for men already too unhappy, a sentiment of indignation; but to grieve for them, and to shed a tear of pity over their sad lot.

On the fourth day a dozen more had died, and the survivors were "extremely feeble, and bore upon their faces the stamp of approaching dissolution." Shipwrecked crews have lived much longer than this without food, but the situation of these sufferers was peculiarly dreadful. And yet one of them could say:

> This day was serene and the ocean slumbered. Our hearts were in harmony with the comforting aspect of the heavens and received anew a ray of hope. A shoal of flying fish passed under our raft and as there was an infinite number of openings between the pieces which composed it, the fish were entangled in great numbers. We threw

> ourselves upon them and took about two hundred and put them in an empty barrel. This food seemed delicious, but one man would have required a score. Our first emotion was to give thanks to God for this unhoped for favor.

An ounce of gunpowder was discovered, and the sunshine dried it, so that with a steel and gun-flints a fire was kindled in a wetted cask and some of the little fish were cooked. This was the only food vouchsafed them, a mere shadow of substance among so many, “but the night was made tolerable and might have been happy if it had not been signalized by a new massacre.”

A mob of Spaniards, Italians, and negroes had hatched a plot to throw all the others into the sea and so obtain the raft and what wine was left. The black men argued that the coast was near and that they could traverse it without danger from the natives and so act as guides. The leader of this outbreak was a Spaniard, who placed himself behind the mast, made the sign of the cross with one hand, waved a knife in the other, and invoked the name of God as the signal to rush forward and begin the affray. Two faithful French sailors, who were forewarned of this eruption, lost not a moment in grappling with this devout desperado, and he was thrown into the sea along with an Asiatic of gigantic stature who was suspected of being another ringleader. A third instigator of the mob, perceiving that the plot was discovered, armed himself with a boarding-ax, hacked his way free, and plunged into the ocean.

The rest of the mutineers were hardier lunatics, and they fought wildly in the attempt to kill one of the officers, under the delusion that he was a Lieutenant Danglass, whom they had hated for his harsh manners while aboard the *Medusa*. At length they were repulsed, but when the morning came only thirty persons remained alive of the one hundred and fifty who had left the frigate. Occasional glimpses of reason prevailed, as when two

soldiers were caught in the act of stealing wine from the only cask left, and were put to death after a summary courtmartial conducted with singular regard for form and ceremony.

Among those who mercifully passed out at the end of a week was the twelve-year-old sailor-boy, whose name was Leon. M. Savigny describes it so tenderly that the passage is worth quoting:

> He died like a lamp which ceases to burn for want of aliment. All spoke in favor of this young and amiable creature who merited a better fate. His angelic form, his musical voice, the interest inspired by an age so infantile, increased still more by the courage he had shown and the services he had performed, (for he had already made a campaign in the East Indies), moved us all with the deepest pity for this young victim. Our old soldiers, and all the people in general, did everything they could to prolong his existence. Neither the wine of which they deprived themselves without regret, nor all the other means they employed, could arrest his melancholy doom.
>
> He expired in the arms of his friend, M. Coudin, who had not ceased to give him the most unwearied attention. Whilst he had strength to move he ran incessantly from one side to the other, loudly calling for his mother, for water and for food. He trod upon the feet and legs of his wounded companions who in their turn uttered cries of anguish, but these were rarely mingled with threats or reproaches. They freely pardoned all that the poor little lad caused them to suffer.

When the number of the living was reduced to twenty-seven, a solemn discussion was held, and a conclusion reached upon which it is not for us to pass judgment. It was evident that fifteen of the number were likely to live a few days longer, which gave them a tangible hope of rescue. The other twelve were about to die, all of them severely wounded and bereft of

reason. There was still some wine in the last cask. To divide it with these doomed twelve was to deprive the fifteen stronger men of the chance of survival. It was decided to give these dying people to the merciful obliteration of the sea. The execution of this decree was undertaken by three soldiers and a sailor, chosen by lot, while the others wept and turned away their faces.

Among those whose feeble spark of life was snuffed out in this manner was that militant woman, the sutler who had followed Napoleon to the plains of Italy. Both she and her husband had been fatally wounded during the last night of the mutiny, and so they went out of life together, which was as they would have wished it. More than once in war the hopelessly wounded have been put out of the way in preference to leaving them in the wake of a retreat or burdening a column with them. In this tragedy of the sea the decision was held to be justifiable when the French Government investigated the circumstances.

With so few of them remaining, the fifteen survivors were able to assemble themselves upon a little platform raised in the center of the raft and to build a slight protection of plank and spars. To rehearse their sufferings at greater length would be to repel the modern reader. It is only in fiction that shipwreck can be employed as a theme for romance and enjoyable adventure. The reality is apt to be very stark and grim. It is more congenial to remember such fine bits as this, when the handful of them huddled upon the tiny platform in the final days of their agony:

> On this new theatre we resolved to meet death in a manner becoming Frenchmen and with perfect resignation. Our time was almost wholly spent in talking of our beloved and unhappy country. All our wishes, our prayers, were for the prosperity of France.

It was the gallant M. Correard who assured his comrades that his presentiment of rescue was still unshaken, that a series of events so unheard of could not be destined to oblivion and that Providence would certainly preserve a few to tell to the world the melancholy story of the raft. In the bottom of a sack were found thirty cloves of garlic, which were distributed as a precious alleviation, and there was rejoicing over a little bottle of tooth-wash containing cinnamon and aromatics. A drop of it on the tongue produced an agreeable feeling,

> and for a short time removed the thirst which destroyed us. Thus we sought with avidity an empty vial which one of us possessed and in which had once been some essence of roses. Every one, as he got hold of it, respired with delight the odor it exhaled, which imparted to his senses the most soothing impressions. Emaciated by privations, the slightest comfort was to us a supreme happiness.

On the ninth day they saw a butterfly of a species familiar to the gardens of France, and it fluttered to rest upon the mast. It was a harbinger of land and an omen of deliverance in their wistful sight. Other butterflies visited them, but the winds and currents failed to set them in close to the coast, and there was never a glimpse of a sail. They existed in quietude, with no more brawls or mutinies, until sixteen days had passed since the wreck of the *Medusa*. Then a captain of infantry, scanning the sea with aching eyes, saw the distant gleam of canvas.

Soon they were able to perceive that it was a brig, and they took it to be the *Argus* of their own squadron, which they had been hoping would be sent in search of them. They made a flag out of fragments of clothing, and a seaman climbed to the top of the mast and waved it until his strength failed. The vessel grew larger through half an hour of tears and supplication, and then its course was suddenly altered, and it dropped below the sky-line.

Despair overwhelmed them. They laid themselves down under a covering of sail-cloth and refused to glance at the ocean which had mocked them. It was proposed to write their names and a brief account of their experience upon a plank and affix it to the mast on the chance that the tidings might some day reach their government and their families in France.

It was the master gunner who crawled out, two hours later, and trembled as he stared at the brig which had made a long tack and was now steering straight toward the raft. The others dragged themselves to their feet, forgetting their sores and wounds and weakness, and embraced one another. From the foremast of the brig flew an ensign, which they joyously recognized, and they cried, as you might have expected of them, "It is, then, to Frenchmen that we shall owe our deliverance."

The *Argus*, which had been sent out by the governor of Sénégal, rounded to no more than a pistol-shot from the raft while the crew "ranged upon the deck and in the shrouds announced to us by the waving of their hands and hats, the pleasure they felt at coming to the assistance of their unfortunate countrymen."

Fifteen men were taken on board the brig of the hundred and fifty who had shoved away from the frigate *Medusa* a little more than a fortnight earlier. There was no more fiddling and dancing on deck for "these helpless creatures almost naked, their bodies shrivelled by the rays of the sun, ten of them scarcely able to move, their limbs stripped of skin, their eyes hollow and almost savage, and the long beards giving them an air almost hideous."

They were most tenderly cared for by the surgeon of the *Argus*, but six of them died after reaching the African port of St. Louis. Only nine of the castaways of the *Medusa's* raft, therefore, lived to return to France. Their minds and bodies were marked with the scars of that experience, which you will find mentioned very frequently in the old records of shipwreck and

disaster. It was an episode in human history, the best and the worst of it, and a reminder of man's eternal conflict with the sea.

CHAPTER IV

THE WRECK OF THE *BLENDEN HALL*, EAST INDIAMAN

IN this harassing modern age of a world turned upside down and bedeviled with one more problem after another, fancy turns with fond regret to those lucky sailormen who lingered on little, sea-girt isles and lorded it as monarchs of all they surveyed. Many an old forecastle had a *Robinson Crusoe*, hairy and brown and tattooed, who could spin strange yarns of years serenely passed among the untutored natives of the Indian Ocean or the South Seas. Now and then one of them had lived in more solitary fashion on some remote, unpeopled strand, a hermit cast up by the sea, and was actually contented because he had freed himself of the tyranny of bosses and wages and trousers and all the other shackles of civilization.

Alas! there are no more realms like these. The wireless mast lifts above the palm-trees, and the steamer whistle blows to recall the tourists from the beaches where the trade-winds sweep. There are still some very lonely places on the watery globe, however, and one of them is the tiny group of three volcanic islands in the South Atlantic which is known as Tristan da Cunha. These bleak rocks lie two thousand miles west of the Cape of Good Hope and four thousand miles to the northeast of Cape Horn. They loom abruptly from a tempestuous ocean, which lashes the stark, black cliffs, and there are no harbors, only an occasional fringe of beach a few yards wide.

Tristan, the largest of the group, lifts a snow-clad peak almost eight thousand feet above the sea as a warning to mariners to steer wide of the

cruel reefs. It has a small plateau where green things grow, and living streams and cascades of fresh water. The islands were discovered as early as 1506 by the Portuguese admiral, Tristan da Cunha, and in later years the Dutch navigators and the pioneers of the British East India Company hove to in passing, but it was not thought worth while to hoist a flag over the group.

It remained for a Yankee sailor, Jonathan Lambert of Salem, to choose Tristan da Cunha as his abiding-place and to issue a formal proclamation of his sovereignty to the other nations of the world. Said he, “I ground my right and claim on the sure and rational ground of absolute occupancy.” This was undeniable, and the British Empire rests upon foundations no more convincing. Jonathan Lambert was of the breed of Salem seafarers who had first carried the American flag to India, Java, Sumatra, and Japan, who opened the trade with the Fiji Islands and Madagascar, who had been the trail-breakers in diverting the commerce of South America and China to Yankee ships. They had sailed where no other merchantmen dared go, they had anchored where no one else dreamed of seeking trade.

It was therefore nothing extraordinary for Jonathan Lambert to tire of roving the wide seas and to set himself up in business as the king of Tristan da Cunha which had neither ruler nor subjects. What his ambitions were and how a melancholy end overtook them is to be found in the sea-journal of Captain John White, who sailed the American brig *Franklin* out to China in 1819. He wrote:

> On March 12th we saw and passed the island of Tristan da Cunha which was taken possession of in 1810 by Jonathan Lambert. He published a document setting forth his rights to the soil and invited navigators of all nations whose routes might lie near that ocean to touch at his settlement for supplies which he anticipated his industry would draw from the earth and the adjacent sea. He signified his

readiness to receive in payment for his produce, which consisted of vegetables, fruit and fish, whatever might be convenient for the visitors to part with which could be in any way useful to him.

In order to carry out his plan, Jonathan Lambert took with him to the island various implements of husbandry, seeds of the most useful plants, tropical trees for transplanting, etc. After he had been on his island for about two years it was apparent that his efforts would be crowned with success, but unfortunately he was drowned, with his one associate, while visiting one of the nearby islands.

Another adventurous seaman, Thomas Currie, succeeded to this lonely principality by right of occupation, and was joined by two others. They lived contentedly and raised wheat and oats and pigs until in the War of 1812 the American naval vessels began to use Tristan da Cunha as a base from which to harry British commerce in the South Atlantic. Then Great Britain formally annexed the group, and kept a garrison of a hundred men there for two years.

When the garrison was withdrawn, Corporal William Glass of the Royal Artillery was left behind at his own request, with his wife and children, and two privates decided to join him as the beginnings of a colony. A few other rovers or shipwrecked sailors drifted to Tristan da Cunha from time to time, and they found girls at St. Helena and Cape Town who were willing to marry them, so that there was created a peaceful, unworldly little community on this far-away island over which Corporal William Glass ruled as a wise and benevolent patriarch.

The *Blenden Hall* was a stout ship bound out from England to Bombay in 1820, an East Indiaman of the stately fleet that flew the house flag of the Honorable Company. Their era was soon to pass, with all its color and romance, the leisurely voyage, the ceremonious formality and discipline,

the pleasant sociability. The swifter Yankee merchant ships, hard driven under clouds of cotton duck, used to rush past these jogging East India “tea-wagons,” which shortened sail at sunset and snugged down for the night. They carried crews for a man-of-war, what with the midshipmen, the purser, the master-at-arms, the armorer, the calker, the butcher, baker, poulterer, gunner’s mates, sail-maker, six officers to assist the commander, and Indian servants to wait on them.

The passengers enjoyed more comfort and luxury in these handsome old sailing ships than the modern reader might suppose. The cabins were much more spacious than the liner’s state-rooms of to-day, the saloon was ornate with rugs and teakwood, with silver plate and the finest napery, and dinner was an elaborate affair, with a band of music, and the commander and the officers in the Company’s dress uniform of blue coat and gold buttons, with waistcoats and breeches of buff. Wines, ale, beer, and brandy were served without cost to the passengers, and the large staff of cooks and stewards was able to find in the storerooms and pantries such a varied stock of provisions as beef, pork, bacon, and tongues, bread, cheese, butter, herrings, and salmon, confectionery, oatmeal, oranges, and dried and preserved fruits, while a live cow or two supplied cream for the coffee, and the hen-coops stowed in the long-boat contributed fresh eggs.

The *Blenden Hall* was commanded by Captain Alexander Greig, a sailor and a gentleman of the old school, who had laid by a comfortable fortune during his long service. The trading ventures and perquisites of the master of an East Indiaman often yielded an income which a modern bank president would view with profound respect. The captain’s son, young Alexander Greig, sailed as a passenger on this last voyage of the *Blenden Hall*. He was a high-spirited lad, bound out to join the army in India, and life was one zestful adventure after another. The modern youngster may well envy him his luck in being shipwrecked on a desert island, where he wrote a diary, using penguin’s blood for ink and quill feathers for pens.

If the tale were fiction instead of fact, the beginning could be no more auspiciously romantic.

Captain Greig and his son left their English country home in their “travelling carriage” for the journey to Gravesend to join the ship. While crossing Bexley Heath they made their pistols ready, for the stretch of road was notorious for highwaymen, and as young Alexander Greig enjoyably tells us:

> I soon observed that my father’s attention had been attracted by two horsemen riding across the Heath at full gallop, and notwithstanding the postilion was evidently exerting himself to outstrip our pursuers, they appeared to gain fast upon us. And in fifteen minutes they called loudly to him to stop, one of them at the same time discharging a pistol to bring us to. My father, after urging the postilion to drive faster (and we seemed then almost to fly across the Heath) told me to be prepared to receive the man on the left, “for,” said he, “we will give them a warm reception, at any rate.”
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> I was just about to follow his advice when I fancied that the men allowed us to gain ground and were out of pistol-shot, as I could see them curbing their horses while they discussed the prudence of keeping up the pursuit. It was fortunate for them that they did so, for one of them would have received the contents of my Joe Manton, as I was resolved not to fire till he came so close to the carriage that I could make sure of my man.

At the next tavern they described the adventure, and when young Greig mentioned that one of the rascals wore a red waistcoat with white stripes, the landlord exclaimed:

“Jem Turner, by the Lord Harry! Aye, as sure as fate! There is two hundred pounds reward for him, dead or alive. The boldest rascal that rides the Heath!”

Captain Greig concluded, no doubt, that he was safer at sea again. The *Blenden Hall* was ready to sail, and several of her passengers came on board at Gravesend, while the others were taken on from Deal while the ship tarried in the Downs. Sixteen in all were of a social station which permitted them to meet at the cuddy table for dinner while the ship’s band played “The Roast Beef of Old England” and Captain Greig pledged their health in good Madeira. With a most precocious taste for gossip, young Greig managed to portray his fellow-voyagers in an intimate manner that would be hard to match in the true tales of the sea.

It is just as well to let you gain some slight acquaintance with them before the curtain rises on the tragedy of the shipwreck. The most conspicuous figure was Mrs. Lock, wife of a commodore somewhere on foreign service. She was very fat, with a hurricane of a temper, and of mixed blood in which the tar brush was undeniable. Her English was badly broken, and her manners were startling. She had been the commodore’s cook in his Indian bungalow, so the rumor ran, until for reasons inscrutable he decided to marry her. Such a person was enough to set the ship’s society by the ears. Social caste and station were matters of immense importance. The emotions of Dr. Law, a fussy old bachelor of a half-pay naval surgeon, were quite beyond words, although he was heard to mutter:

“A vulgar black woman, by Jove! And, damme, she flung her arms around me when she was taken seasick at table.”

There was also consternation among such exclusive persons as Captain Miles, and six assistant surgeons in the Honorable Company’s military service, Major Reid of the Poonah Auxiliary Forces, and Quartermaster Hormby and his lady, of his Majesty’s foot. The dignified commander of the

Blenden Hall felt it necessary to explain that passage for the chocolate-hued spouse of the erring commodore had been obtained under false pretenses. As if this were not enough, another social shock was in store.

Lieutenant Painter, a bluff, good-humored naval man, had come on board at Gravesend. While the ship was anchored in the Downs, he was one of the passengers who asked the captain to set them ashore in the cutter for a stroll in Deal. When they returned to the boat, Lieutenant Painter was missing. Nothing whatever was heard of him for two days, and Captain Greig felt seriously alarmed. Then a boatman brought off a letter in which the gallant lieutenant explained that he had been

> most actively engaged not only in beginning but in finishing a courtship and that it was his intention to join the ship before dinner when he would do himself the honor to introduce Mrs. Painter to the captain and passengers. He requested that a larger cabin could be prepared, in which he could “stow away his better half.”

There was great excitement and curiosity in the cuddy of the *Blenden Hall* as the dinner-hour drew near. The impetuous romance of the brisk Lieutenant Painter was sensational. At length a boat was pulled alongside, and a chair rigged and lowered from the lofty deck. The boatswain piped, and the lovely burden was safely hoisted to the poop, followed by the beaming lieutenant, who scrambled up the gangway. First impressions were favorable. The bride was young and handsome. Her physical charms were so robust, however, that she stood a foot taller than her bantam of a husband, and the audience was amused when she grasped his arm and heartily exclaimed:

“Come, little Painter, let me see this fine cabin of yours.”

It was soon perceived that the vigorous Mrs. Painter *was not a lady*. The dreadful truth was not revealed, however, until a grizzled Deal boatman was discovered lingering at the gangway. When one of the mates asked him his errand, he answered:

“Why, I only want to say goodbye to my gel, Bet, but I suppose the gold-buttoned swab of a leftenant has turned her ’ead. Blowed if I reckoned my own darter ’ud forget me.”

Hiding in her cabin, the daughter wished to avoid such a farewell scene, but she could hear the old man ramble on:

“She ’as no occasion to feel ashamed of her father. I’ve been a Deal boatman these fifty years and brought up a large family respectably, as Captain Greig well knows.”

At this the emotional Mrs. Painter rushed on deck to embrace her humble sire and weep in his gray whiskers, a scene which the fastidious passengers found too painful to witness. Henceforth, through varied scenes of shipwreck and suffering, the dominant figures were to be the youthful, upstanding Mrs. Painter and the dusky and corpulent Mrs. Lock, heroines of two rash marriages, and foreordained to hate each other with a ferocity which not even the daily fear of death could diminish. In the presence of such protagonists as these, the ship’s company was like a Greek chorus. There was something almost superb in such a feminine feud. It was no peevish quarrel over the tea-cups. Moreover, it could have no dull moments, because both women had vocabularies of singular force and emphasis. The forecastle of the *Blenden Hall* could do no better in its most lurid moments.

It began with an affectionate intimacy, then squalls and reconciliations, while the stately East Indiaman jogged to the southward and the band played on deck for dancing after dinner. How far these two stormy women were responsible must be left to conjecture, but there seems to have been a vast deal of squabbling and bad blood among the passengers, as indicated

by the following entry in the journal of young Alexander Greig, the captain’s son:

> Although I endeavored to detach myself, as much as possible, from any particular party (by giving two entertainments a week in my private cabin and sending around a general invitation) I received one or two polite requests to meet the writers at the first port we might touch at and to grant them the satisfaction due from one gentleman to another, &c., &c., for alleged affronts that I had unconsciously committed. For the life of me I could not have defined what the affronts were, but I wrote each party an answer that I should be happy to accept, and then deposited their beautiful gilt-edged little notes in my desk.

There was an occasional diversion which patched up a truce, such as meeting with an armed brig which was suspected to be a pirate. The chief officer, in the mizzen-rigging with a telescope, shouted down that the brig was cleared for action. The second mate rushed forward and yelled to the boatswain to pipe all hands on deck. The gunner served out pistols and cutlasses to the seamen and the passengers, boarding-pikes were stacked along the heavy bulwarks, and the battery of six eighteen-pounders was loaded with grape and canister. Things looked even more serious when the brig hauled down a British ensign and tacked to get the weather gage of the East Indiaman.

Some of the passengers were frightened, and others professed an eagerness to engage in a “set-to.” Dr. Law, the half-pay naval surgeon, strode the deck with a drawn sword. He was filled with valor and Scotch whisky, and offered to wager any man a hundred guineas that he would be the first to board the enemy. Mrs. Commodore Lock waddled about uttering loud lamentations, and vowed that a friend of hers had been eaten alive by

pirates. Nightfall closed down, however, before the brig could overtake the *Blenden Hall*, which surged before the wind with studding-sails spread.

Captain Greig was in some doubt as to his reckoning, because of thick weather, when the ship had entered the lonely expanse of the South Atlantic, and he therefore steered for a sight of Tristan da Cunha in order to make certain of his position. He proceeded cautiously, but soon after breakfast, on July 23, 1820, breakers were descried close at hand. The wind died, and the ship was drifting. Anchors were let go, but the water was too deep to find holding-ground, and a dense fog obscured the sea. The ship struck in breakers so violent that the decks were swept, the boats smashed, and the houses filled with water. The masts were promptly cut away, but the *Blenden Hall* was rapidly pounding to death with a broken back. All hands rushed forward and crowded upon the forecastle just before the rest of the ship was wrenched asunder and floated away.

Two seamen had been killed by falling spars, but all the rest of the ship's company, eighty souls of them, were alive and praying for rescue. After several hours of misery, a few sailors managed to knock a raft together and so reached the shore, which had disclosed itself as frightfully forbidding and desolate. The ship had been wrecked among the reefs of Inaccessible Island, one of the Tristan da Cunha group. By a sort of miracle the bow of the ship finally detached itself from among the rocks and washed toward the tiny strip of beach. Clinging to the stout timbers of the forecastle, all the survivors were safely delivered from the terrors of the sea.

Through the first night they could only shiver in the rain and wonder what fate had befallen them. At dawn they began to explore the island, which appeared to be no more than a gigantic rock, black and savage, which towered into the clouds. Fresh water was found, but hunger menaced them. The first bit of flotsam from the wreck was a case of "Hibbert's Celebrated Bottled Porter," which was a beverage with a kick to it, and for the moment

life looked not quite so dismal. On the beach were huge sea-lions, creatures twenty feet in length, but there was no way to slay and use them for food. Many sea-birds were killed with clubs and eaten raw, which postponed famine for the time.

And now there floated ashore bales of red broadcloth, which was promptly cut up for clothing. It was grotesque to see the sailors and passengers parading in gorgeous tunics and robes of crimson, with white turbans fashioned from bolts of muslin. With bamboo-poles, also washed from the ship, Captain Greig set his men to making tents for the women. There was very little material, however, and most of the people sat around in a sort of wretched stupor, drenched, benumbed, hopeless. Several barrels of strong liquors came rolling in with the surf, and the sailors, of course, drank all they could hold. One of them, an old barnacle named John Dulliver, showed a streak of marked sagacity. After tapping a barrel of Holland gin and guzzling to the limit of his stowage space, he stove in one end, emptied the barrel, and crawled snugly into it to slumber. This seemed such a brilliant notion that as fast as the ship's water-barrels drifted ashore they were tenanted by castaways who resembled so many hermit-crabs.

For six days the party forlornly existed in continuous rain, with no means of kindling a fire, and eating raw pork that was cast up by the sea and such birds as they could obtain. Then a case of surgical instruments was found on the beach, and it contained a providential flint and steel. Fire was made, and spears were contrived of poles, with knives lashed to them, so that the monstrous sea-lions could be killed and used for food. There were millions of penguins, and their eggs could be had for the gathering. It was hard, revolting fare, but other castaways had lived for months and even years on food no worse, and the horrors of famine were averted.

Captain Greig was taken ill, and his authority therefore amounted to little. His officers were not the men for such a crisis as this, and they do not

appear to have been able to master it. The sailors were insolent and lazy, no doubt of it, and young Mr. Greig devotes many pages of his diary to abuse of them. It is quite evident, however, that the officers and passengers felt themselves to be superior beings and expected the sailors to wait on them as menials. In such a situation as this one man was as good as another, and the doctrines of caste and rank properly belonged in the discard. It was rather pitiful and absurd, as one catches glimpses of it in the ingenuous narrative of the very young Mr. Greig.

> For a few days after the wreck it was hail fellow, well met, but Jack, once put upon an equality, began to take unwarrantable liberties, and as familiarity is generally the forerunner of contempt, so it proved in this case. Quarrels soon began and the passengers now took the opposite course of attempting to issue orders to the sailors and treating them as servants. This exasperated the crew and they swore that no earthly power should ever induce them to render the least assistance to the passengers. Large sums of money were offered the sailors to forage for provisions, but I am firmly persuaded that the man who accepted such an offer would have been murdered by his comrades. Mrs. Lock, for instance, incensed a seaman by telling him,—“You common sailor, why you no wait on lady? You ought to wait on officer’s lady! You refuse me, captain will flog you plenty.”

Inaccessible Island was properly named, and one week after another passed without the sight of a sail or any tangible hope of rescue. Flimsy shelters were contrived, and nobody died of cold or hunger, but they were a gaunt, unkempt company, with much illness among them. Arrayed in their makeshift garments of crimson broadcloth, the camp was more like a travesty than a tragedy. No hardship could dull the militant spirits of Mrs. Commodore Lock and that young and handsome virago, Mrs. Lieutenant

Painter. During one of their clashes, which was about to come to blows, the little lieutenant was trying to drag his strapping spouse into their tent while several passengers laid hold of the ponderous Mrs. Lock. Poor Captain Greig was heard to murmur:

"Thank God we have almost no respectable ladies with us to witness such scenes as these!"

Mrs. Lock had two small children with her, and it pleased the fancy of Mrs. Painter to say that, in her opinion, the paternity of the offspring would have been better established if the commodore had offered marriage a few years earlier. Mrs. Painter put it even more forcefully than this. At the deadly insult Mrs. Lock broke out in impassioned accents:

> "What you think? That vile hussy of a Painter woman, she say me no Commodore Lock's wife. Me lose my—what you call it—wedding 'tifcate on board ship, so me no have proof now—but when we come to Bombay, my commodore he kicks dirty little Painter out of the service, and me get ten thousand rupees of defamation damage. That Painter woman's father am a common, dirty boatman!"

At this Mrs. Painter, with lofty disdain, let fall the remark: "Behold the she-devil and her two little imps!"

The sailors felt so little respect for the commodore's wife that one of them coarsely observed, within her hearing:

"If we run short of them penguins' eggs, Bill, and there ain't nothin' else to eat, we'll pop the old girl's young 'uns into the pot for a bit of broth."

This was reported to Captain Greig by the explosive Mrs. Lock, who declared that the sailors had called her names much stronger than "old girl."

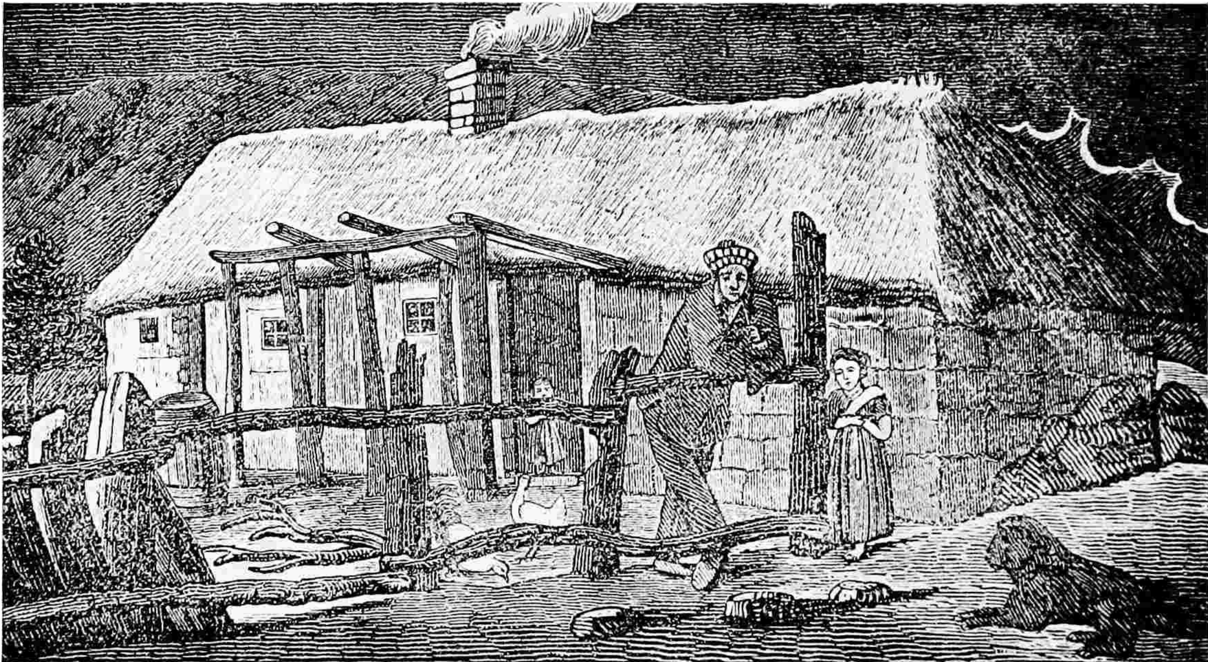
The chivalrous commander was resolved that no man of his crew should insult a woman and go unpunished, wherefore he mustered the seamen loyal to him, and they maintained order while the boatswain gave the chief offender fifty lashes on the bare back with a rope's-end. The dreary exile was further enlivened by the discovery that Lieutenant Painter's tent had been robbed of jewelry and other valuables. A formal trial was held, with young Alexander Greig as judge and a water-cask as the official bench. A sailor named Joseph Fowler was accused of the theft, and Mrs. Lock surged into the proceedings by announcing that, in her opinion, the relations of Mrs. Painter and this common sailorman had been a public scandal.

"Very ladylike of you, I'm sure, Mrs. Lock," cried Mrs. Painter, "but what could a person expect?"

Such episodes as these were trivial when compared with the tragic problem of survival and escape from Inaccessible Island. Exploring parties had climbed the lofty peak, and in clear weather were able to discern the snow-clad summit of the larger island of Tristan, only fifteen miles distant, which was known to be inhabited. It might have been a thousand miles away, however, for the lack of tools and material had discouraged any efforts to build a boat. In a mood of despair a flagstaff was set up on the southwestern promontory, which faced the open ocean, and a bottle tied to it which contained this message:

> On the N. W. side of this island are the remaining part of the crew and passengers of the *Blenden Hall*, wrecked 23rd July, 1821. Should this fall into the hands of the humane, we trust, by the assistance of God, they will do all in their power to relieve us, and the prayers of many unfortunate sufferers will always be for them.
>
> Signed,
>
> Alexander Greig, *Commander*.

This was a month after the shipwreck. Another month passed, and the ship's cook, Joseph Nibbs, a colored man, had begun to build a clumsy little cockle-shell which he called a punt. For tools he managed to find a hand-saw, a chisel, a bolt for a hammer, and a heavy iron hinge ground sharp on the rocks for an ax. It seems extraordinary that this enterprise should have been left to a sea-cook, what with the carpenter and all the officers who should have taken the initiative. At any rate, this handy Joseph Nibbs pegged his boat together and went fishing in it. This appears to have shamed the others into activity, and the carpenter set about building a larger boat. It was the heroic cook, however, who decided to risk the voyage to Tristan in his little floating coffin, and his farewell speech was reported as follows:



GOVERNOR GLASS AND HIS RESIDENCE

"I little thought, Captain Greig, ever to see this day; but I will bring relief to you and young Mr. Alexander, if I perish in the attempt. If I never

see you again, sir, God bless you for your kindness to me during the years we have been shipmates."

In the punt with the cook went five volunteers, three able seamen, the gunner, and the sail-maker, but not one of the ship's officers. These six fine fellows were ready to risk their lives for others, but the quarter-deck failed to share in the splendid action. The punt hoisted sail, the cook and his comrades shouted three cheers, and they stood out from the lee of the island to face a heavy sea. This was the last ever seen of them. They must have perished soon after.

The castaways waited week after week, desperately hungry and wholly discouraged. Meanwhile the carpenter had finished his boat, but delayed his voyage until certain of fine weather, and wasted much time in skirting the island in the hope of finding some trace of the cook. It was late in October, almost three months after the loss of the *Blenden Hall*, before the carpenter attempted to reach Tristan. Nine men were with him, five able seamen, the boatswain, the steward, a boatswain's mate, and a carpenter's mate. Again the list was conspicuous for the absence of an officer.

On the following day two boats were seen approaching Inaccessible Island. They were stanch whale-boats, in one of which was the ruler of Tristan da Cunha, Corporal William Glass, late of the Royal Artillery. He brought provisions and a warm welcome to his kingdom. It was found that more than one trip would be necessary to transport the castaways to Tristan. In the first boat-load were Mrs. Lock and Mrs. Painter, whose animosities were lulled by the blessed fact of rescue. It was an armistice during which they wept on each other's necks and mingled their prayers of thanksgiving while the crew of the *Blenden Hall* sang "God Save the King."

All hands were safely landed at Tristan where they found a neat hamlet of stone cottages thatched with straw, and green fields of grain and potatoes. Mrs. Glass was the only woman of the colony in which there were

five Englishmen and two American sailors. To provide for eighty shipwrecked people severely taxed their resources but the spirit of hospitality was most cordially displayed. The captain and the passengers signed an agreement to pay Governor Glass at the rate of two shillings and sixpence per day for board and lodging, which was no more than fair, but nothing was said about the sailors. They were expected to pay for their keep by working as farm-hands. This rubbed the long-suffering tars the wrong way, and as the diary explains it:

> “The passengers walking about at their ease was a sight to which Jack could not long submit; at last they all struck, declaring that they would not work unless their ‘mortal enemies’ were compelled to do the same. Upon this, the captain begged Governor Glass to be firm with them and on no account to serve out any provisions unless they returned to their duty. Consequently several meetings with a great deal of ill feeling took place upon the subject, and when prayers were read the following Sunday at Government House, every sailor absented himself.”

Food was refused the striking seamen until they threatened to break into the potato sheds and then burn the settlement. The boatswain and his lash tamed the mutiny after Joseph Fowler had been tied up and his back cut to ribbons with *nine dozen* blows of the rope’s-end. After this the seamen marched off to another part of the island and fed themselves by fishing and hunting wild goats and pigs. To their simple minds there was no good reason why they should sweat at building stone walls and digging potatoes while Captain Miles and the six assistant surgeons of the Honorable East India Company, Major Reid of the Poonah Auxiliary Forces, and Quartermaster Hormby of his Majesty’s foot were strolling about in idleness.

For lack of something better to do, the passengers began to find fault with the food supplied by the worthy Governor Glass, and this caused much difficulty and several formal conferences and protests. He promised to do better, and honestly tried to, bearing the situation with unfailing good humor and courtesy. If the rations were scrimped, it was no doubt because he feared he might be eaten out of house and home and left without reserve supplies.

On New Year's day there was a notable celebration, when the four children of the Glass family were formally christened by Dr. Hatch of the *Blenden Hall*, who had taken holy orders in his youth. Governor Glass wore his scarlet uniform of the Royal Artillery, "Mrs. Lock stuck so many white feathers in her hair that it resembled a cauliflower, while Mrs. Painter sported a white turban of such ample dimensions that the Grand Sultan himself might have envied her." Bonfires blazed, flags flew from every roof, and the islanders were dressed in their best.

On January 9 the English merchant ship *Nerinae* hove to off Tristan da Cunha to fill her water-casks. She was bound from Buenos Aires to Table Bay with a hold filled with live mules. Uncomfortable shipmates these, but the people of the *Blenden Hall* were not in a captious mood. They were taken on board, and sailed away from Governor Glass after spending three months with him, and it is to be fancied that he felt no profound regrets.

A bit of romance touched the parting scenes. The night before the *Nerinae* sailed from Tristan, the pretty maid servant of Mrs. Lock slipped ashore in a boat, with what few belongings she had, and joined her sailor sweetheart, Stephen White, who had decided to remain behind on the island. This Peggy was a Portuguese half-caste from Madras who is referred to in the diary as a "female attendant." Seaman White is called a worthless fellow, but this may be taken for what it is worth. The important fact is that he had found a sweetheart during the weary exile on Inaccessible Island and

that they were resolved to stay together and let the rest of the world go hang. Governor Glass was quite competent to unite them in the bonds of a marriage that was proper in the sight of God.

There is one final glimpse of Mrs. Lock and Mrs. Painter shortly before the good ship *Nerinae*, with her freightage of mules and castaways, anchored in Table Bay.

> The two ladies having for a considerable time been very quiet, Captain Greig thought he would make another trial at reconciliation, and begged Mrs. Lock to shake hands with Mrs. Painter which the latter was willing to do, but the commodore's wife declared, "Me do anything Captain like, but me will bring action for defamation against little Painter and his damn wife, please God me ever get back to Bombay."
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> Mrs. Lock used to say that she fully expected to find her dear commodore dead with grief. Mrs. Painter repeatedly retorted that it was far more likely she would find him with another wife, but she might make up her mind it would not be a black one.

Thus concludes the story of the *Blenden Hall*, East Indiaman, but it is so interwoven with the fortunes of Tristan da Cunha and its colonists that further tidings of them may prove interesting. In 1824, four years after the wreck of the East Indiaman, an author and artist of New Zealand, Augustus Earle, was accidentally marooned at Tristan, and stayed six months as the guest of Governor Glass before another ship touched there. He had sailed from Rio for Cape Town in a sloop, the *Duke of Gloucester*, which passed so close to the island in calm weather that the thrifty skipper concluded to land and buy a few tons of potatoes for the Cape market.

The artistic passenger went ashore to stroll about with dog and gun while the sailors were loading potatoes into the boat. A sudden storm swept the sea, and the boat was caught offshore, but managed to reach the sloop, which was driven far from the island and gave up trying to beat back to it. The skipper was a practical man and it was foolish to delay the voyage for such a useless creature as an author and artist. Mr. Augustus Earle was compelled to make the best of the awkward situation, and he seems to have enjoyed his protracted visit of half a year.

The village then consisted of five or six thatched cottages “which had an air of comfort, cleanliness, and plenty truly English.” The young sailor Stephen White, whom the *Blenden Hall* had left behind with his precious Peggy, was still happy in his bargain, and their babies were playing with the lusty little flock of the Glass family. The island was no longer a hermit’s retreat. The marooned artist noted that “children there were in abundance, and just one year older than another.” Small wonder that he saw little of the two women, who were fully occupied with their domestic duties.

The worthy Governor William Glass had a curious yarn to tell of that first ruler of the island, Jonathan Lambert of Salem, who had published his grandiose proclamations and whose ambitious dreams were so soon eclipsed. The accepted account is that he was drowned while out in his boat, but the British garrison had found on the island a man who said he had been there with Lambert and that he suspected another companion of the first king of Tristan da Cunha of having made away with him in order to secure his hoard of gold. Afraid of discovery, the regicide had fled the island, leaving the treasure behind him.

The ingenious inventor of this narrative had professed to know where the treasure was buried,

> and that he would some day reveal it to the man of the garrison who pleased him most, thus insuring good treatment from the men, each hoping to be favored. But one day after drinking immoderately of liquor he was taken suddenly ill and expired before he could explain to his comrades where his treasure was concealed.

At any rate, the story sufficed to supply the imaginative vagabond with free rum and tobacco, which, no doubt, was the end in view.

Augustus Earle hunted the wild goats, which had multiplied on the mountain-slopes, and he has left us this pleasing picture of the simple and righteous existence led by these dwellers on remote Tristan da Cunha:

> Governor Glass informed me that the last time they had ascended the mountain after goats, one of the party got too close to the precipice and fell down several hundred feet. They found the corpse next day in a miserably mangled state. They interred it in the garden near their settlement and placed at the head of the grave a board with his name and age, together with an account of the accident which caused his death, and the remark that it happened on a *Sunday*, a dreadful warning to Sabbath-breakers. The people all say they will nevermore ascend the mountain on that sacred day. Indeed, from all I have seen of them, they pay every respect to the duties of religion that lies in their power.
>
> My clothes beginning to wear out, my kind host, who was an excellent tailor, made me a pair of trousers consisting of sail cloth and the rear of dried goat’s skin, the hair outside, which they all assured me would be very convenient in sliding down the mountains. I laughed heartily when I first sported this Robinson Crusoe habiliment. “Never mind how you look, sir,” said my kind host, “His Majesty himself, God bless him, if he had been left here as you were, could look no better.”

Governor William Glass ruled over the island for thirty-five years, until his death in 1853. By that time the population had increased to a hundred souls, and a flourishing trade was carried on in provisioning the fleet of American whalers out of New Bedford and Nantucket which cruised in those waters. A few years later, twenty-five of the younger men and women emigrated to the United States, stirred by a natural ambition to see more of the world. At the death of Governor Glass, an old man-of-war's-man, William Cotton, who had been for three years one of Napoleon's guards at St. Helena, became the head of the community.

To-day the settlement consists of a hundred people or so, most of them of the old British strain, and many of them descended from the families of Corporal William Glass of the Royal Artillery and the young seaman Stephen White and his devoted Peggy who were wrecked in the *Blenden Hall*, East Indiaman, a century ago. They manage their own affairs without any written laws, and are described by recent visitors as religious, hospitable to strangers, industrious, healthy, and long-lived.

The British Government has kept a paternal eye on them, and from time to time a minister of the Church of England has served in the stone chapel and the trim little school-house. Their worldly wealth is in cattle, sheep, apple and peach orchards, and they are unvexed by politics, the League of Nations, or the social unrest. Enviable people of Tristan da Cunha! And peace to the memories of old William Glass and Jonathan Lambert, and the faithful sweethearts of the stately old *Blenden Hall*!

CHAPTER V

THE ADVENTURES OF DAVID WOODARD, CHIEF MATE

LONG before the art of Joseph Conrad created *Lord Jim* to follow the star of his romantic destiny to the somber, misty coast of Patusan, an American sailor lived and dared amazingly among the sullen people of those same mysterious islands of the Far East. He was of the race of mariners whose ships were first to display the Stars and Stripes in those far-distant waters and to challenge the powerful monopolies of the British and Dutch East India companies. Only seven years earlier, in fact, the American ship *Empress of China* had ventured on the pioneering voyage to Canton. The seas still swarmed with pirates and every merchantman carried a heavy battery of guns and a crew which knew to use them. Amid such conditions were trained the sailors who were to man the *Constitution* and the other matchless frigates of 1812.

The American ship *Enterprise* sailed from Batavia for Manila on the twentieth of January, 1793, and laid a course to pass through the Straits of Macassar. Head winds and currents kept her beating to and fro in this torrid passage for six weeks on end, and the grumbling crew began to wonder if they had signed in another *Flying Dutchman*. Food was running short, for this protracted voyage had not been expected, and while the *Enterprise* drifted becalmed on the greasy tide, another ship was sighted about five miles distant.

Captain Hubbard ordered the chief mate, David Woodard, to take a boat and five seamen and row off to this other vessel and try to buy some stores. The men were William Gideon, John Cole, Archibald Miller, Robert Gilbert, and George Williams. Expecting to be gone only a few hours, they took no food or water, and all they carried with them was an ax, a boat-hook, two pocket-knives, a disabled musket, and forty dollars.

It was sunset when they pulled alongside the other ship, which was China bound and had no provisions to spare. A strong squall and heavy rains prevented them from returning to the *Enterprise* that night, and they stayed where they were until next morning. Then the wind shifted and blew fresh from the southward to sweep the *Enterprise* on her course, and she had already vanished hull down and under. Stout-hearted David Woodard guessed he could find her again, confident that Captain Hubbard would not desert him, and his men cheerfully tumbled into the boat after him.

The skipper of the China ship, a half-caste with a crew of Lascars, was a surly customer who seemed anxious to be rid of his visitors. As a friend in need he was a glaring failure. Protesting that he had no fresh water to spare, all that their money could buy of him was a bottle of brandy and twelve musket-cartridges. The Yankee sailors tugged at the oars all day long, but caught never a glimpse of the missing *Enterprise*. At nightfall they landed on an island and found water fit to drink, but nothing to eat. A large fire was built on the beach in the hope of attracting the attention of their ship, but there was no responsive signal.

It was the land of Conrad's magic fancies, where "the swampy plains open out at the mouth of rivers, with a view of blue peaks beyond the vast forests. In the offing a chain of islands, dark, crumbling shapes, stand out in the everlasting sunlit haze like the remnants of a wall broached by the sea."

The chief mate and his five hardy seamen tightened their leather belts another hole and shoved off again in the small open boat. For six days they

sailed the Straits, blown along by one rain squall after another, until they were within sight of the coast of Celebes. Hunger and thirst then compelled them to seek the land and risk death at the hands of the savage Malays. It was their hope to proceed by sea to Macassar, which they reckoned lay about three degrees to the southward.

They must have had a little water during these six days, but David Woodard's statement that the rations were a few cocoanuts is entirely credible. Many a boat-load of castaways has died or gone mad after privations no more severe, while on the other hand a crew of toughened seamen, in the prime of their youth, is exceedingly hard to kill.

Toward a cove on this unknown, hostile shore of Celebes the gaunt sailors wearily steered their boat and beached it in the languid ripple of surf. They had no sooner crawled ashore than two proas skimmed in from seaward, dropping anchor and making ready to send off a canoe filled with armed Malays. Woodard shouted to his men, and they pushed the boat out and scrambled into it before they were discovered. Skirting a bight of the shore, they headed for the open sea and dodged away from the proas.

Four miles beyond, after they had rounded a green point of land, a feathery cocoanut-grove ran to the water's-edge, and they could go no farther. The mate left two men to guard the boat, and the three others went with him; but they were too weak to climb the trees, and had to hack away at the trunks with an ax. Two of them were mere lads who made such bungling work of it that Woodard sent for a couple of the stronger men in the boat, leaving Archibald Miller alone with it. They were busy gathering cocoanuts to carry to sea with them when poor Miller was heard to "scream aloud in the bitterest manner." The mate ran to the beach and saw his precious boat filled with Malays, who were just shoving off in it. On the sand lay Miller, who had been hacked to death with creeses.

David Woodard and four sailors were therefore marooned with no resources whatever, but they talked it over and agreed to try to get to Macassar by land. Leaving the swampy coast, they slowly toiled toward the blue mountains and, afraid of discovery, concluded to hide themselves in the jungle until night. Then with a star for their guide they bore south, but progress was almost impossible, and they lost their bearings in the dense growth. After blundering about in this manner for several nights, they turned toward the sea again in the hope of finding some kind of native boat. They had existed for thirteen days since losing their ship, and it is evident that the indomitable spirit of the mate kept the other men going.

"Woodard was himself stout in person," explains the narrative, "and much accustomed to fatigue and exercise, whence he felt less exhausted, particularly from keeping up his spirits and having his mind constantly engaged."

At length they came to a deep bay between the mountains, and lay hidden all day in a leafy ambush while they watched the Malay fishermen in their canoes. Three of the sailors were taken desperately ill after eating some yellow berries and thought they were about to die; but the mate could not tolerate this kind of behavior, "although his comrades now resembled corpses more than living men." He used rough language, damned them as worthless swabs if a stomach-ache was to make them lie down and quit, and then went in search of water for them until he found some in a hollow tree. But his strength and courage could haul them along no farther and reluctantly he admitted that they would have to surrender themselves to the natives.

WOODARD RAISED HIS EMPTY HANDS TO ASK FOR PEACE AND MERCY

They went down to the beach of the bay, wondering what their fate might be, John Cole, who was a stripling lad of seventeen, blubbering that he would sooner die in the woods than be killed by the Malays. The canoes had gone away, but three brown-skinned girls were fishing in a brook, and they fled when they saw the tattered castaways. Presently a group of men came down a forest path, and Woodard walked forward to meet them, raising his empty hands to ask for peace and mercy.

The Malays stood silent for a long time, and then the chief advanced to lay down his creese and ceremoniously accept the strangers as captives. They were given food and conducted to a little town of bamboo huts, there to await the pleasure of the rajah in what Woodard called the judgment hall, while all the villagers gathered about them.

Soon the rajah strode in, tall and straight and warlike, a long, naked creese in his hand. These were the first white men that had ever been seen in his wild domain. He gazed admiringly at the stalwart chief mate, who looked him straight in the eyes, while the people murmured approval of the captive's bearing, for "he was six feet and an inch high, strong in proportion, and the largest-boned person they had ever beheld."

These were two bold, upstanding men who stood face to face in the judgment hall, and the rajah, after consultation with his chiefs, gave each of the five American sailors a betel-nut to chew as a token of his gracious inclination to spare their lives.

For twenty days they were closely held as prisoners in this forest settlement, during which time two old men arrived from another town and displayed a lively interest in the situation. They toddled off into the jungle, but came again with a Mahomedan priest called Tuan Hadjee, who was a bit of a linguist in that he spoke a few words of English, some Portuguese, and a smattering of the Moorish tongue. He was a man of the world, having journeyed to Bombay and Bengal on his way to Mecca, and displayed a

letter from the British governor of Balambangan, on the island of Borneo, to show that he was a good and trustworthy person and was empowered to assist all distressed Englishmen.

This Tuan Hadjee lived up to his credentials, for he offered the rajah a hundred dollars in golddust as ransom for the five seamen, which price was haughtily refused, and the kindly priest went away to see what else could be done about it. Nothing more was seen of this amiable pilgrim, and the Americans were set to work in the forest to clear the fields or to gather sago. After two months they were left unguarded by day, but shut up in a house at night. Week after week dragged by in this wearisome drudgery, but they kept alive, and their spirit was unbroken, although the food was poor and scanty and the tropical heat scorched the very souls out of them.

At the end of half a year of this enslavement another rajah who seems to have been a kind of overlord of the region summoned them into his presence at a town on the sea-coast. There Woodard almost died of fever, but a woman befriended him and greatly helped to save his life. The episode suggests a romance, and this viking of a sailor who drifted in so strangely from an unknown world was a man to win the love of women. In this respect, however, he was discreetly silent when it came to relating the story of his wanderings in Celebes, and the interest which he inspired is sedately described as follows:

> At her first visit she looked at him some time in silence, then went to the bazaar and bought some tobacco and bananas which she presented to him, as also a piece of money. Seeing him scantily clothed, she asked whether he had no more clothing and whether he would have some tea. Then carrying one of the other sick men home with her, she gave him tea and a pot to boil it in. She likewise sent rice and some garments, with a pillow and two mats. This good woman was of royal blood and married to a Malay merchant. These were not her

only gifts, for she proved a kind friend to the seamen while they were at that place.

Another house being provided for the five men, Woodard, unable to walk, was carried thither accompanied by a great concourse of young females who immediately on his arrival kindled a fire and began to boil rice. His fever still continued very severe and on the morning of the fourth day of his residence an old woman appeared with a handful of boughs, announcing that she was come to cure him and that directly. In the course of a few minutes four or five more old women were seen along with her, according to the custom of the country in curing the sick. They spent the day in brushing him with the boughs of the trees and used curious incantations. The ceremony was repeated in the evening and he was directed to go and bathe in the river. Although he put little faith in the proceedings, the fever abated and he speedily began to recover.

From a Dutch fort seventy miles away the commandant came to see Woodard and invited him to return with him, offering to buy him out of slavery. The chief mate refused, because he was afraid of being compelled to join the Dutch military service. He was shrewd enough to perceive that this was what the commandant had in mind, and he therefore begged to be sent to Macassar, whence he could make his way to Batavia. At this the commandant lost interest in the castaways and made no more attempt to help them.

Soon after this they were carried back to the village of their first imprisonment, but Woodard had seen blue water again and he was resolved to risk his life for liberty. Eluding his guards, he took a spear for a weapon and followed the forest paths all night until he emerged on a beach, where he discovered a canoe and paddled out to sea. Rough water swamped the

ticklish craft, and he had to swim half a mile to get to land again. Back he trudged to his hut on the mountain-side and crawled into it before dawn.

Undiscouraged, he broke away again, and made for a town called Dungalla, where he had a notion that his friend Tuan Hadjee, the priest, might be found. He somehow steered a course through the forests and ravines and fetched up at the stockade which surrounded Dungalla. As a disquieting apparition he alarmed a nervous old gentleman, who scampered off to shriek to the village that a gigantic white devil was sitting on a log at the edge of the clearing. The old codger turned out to be a servant of Tuan Hadjee, who warmly welcomed the chief mate and took him into his house as a guest.

The rajah to whom Woodard belonged got wind of his whereabouts and wrathfully demanded that he be sent back. The prideful rajah of Dungalla refused in language no less provocative. Woodard smuggled a message through to his men, urging them to escape and join him. This they succeeded in doing, and the people of Dungalla were delighted to receive them. This episode strained the relations of the two rajahs to the breaking-point, and war was promptly declared.

Inasmuch as they were the bone of contention, Woodard and his seamen promptly offered to fight on the side of the rajah of Dungalla; so they proceeded to imperil their skins in one of those tribal feuds which eternally flicker and smolder in the Malaysian forests. Woodard was placed in command of a tower upon the stockade wall, where he served a brass swivel and hammered obedience into a native detachment. His sun-blistered, leech-bitten sailors, clad only in sarongs, held the other barricade with creeses and muskets, and were regarded as supernatural heroes by the simple soldiery of the rajah.

A drawn battle was fought, with about two hundred men in each army, and a good many were killed or wounded. After that the war dragged along

and seemed to be getting nowhere, and the chief mate lost all patience with it; so he bearded the rajah and flatly told him that his men would fight no longer unless some assurance was given that they would be conveyed to Macassar.

The rajah was stubborn and evasive and bruskly commanded the high-tempered Yankees to return to their posts on the firing-line. Woodard argued no longer, but marched back to his watch-tower, sent for his seamen, and told them to turn in their muskets. Before the astonished rajah had decided how to deal with this mutiny, the five mariners broke out of the town under cover of darkness and stole a canoe, carrying with them as much food as they could hastily lay hands on. They were delayed in a search for paddles, and a sentry gave the alarm.

Twenty soldiers surrounded them and dragged them back to the rajah, who locked them up, while he chewed betel-nut and meditated on the case of these madmen who refused to be tamed. Just then the priest Tuan Hadjee was sailing for another port, and he vainly petitioned the royal assent to taking the American sailors along with him. The rajah's wrathful refusal so annoyed the impetuous chief mate that he organized another dash for freedom. Captivity, privation, and disappointment seemed to daunt him not at all.

This time the five mariners surprised the sentries at the gates, deftly tied them up, and lugged them to the beach. There a large canoe was discovered, and the fugitives piled aboard and hoisted the sail of cocoanut matting. Unmolested, they moved out of the starlit bay and flitted along the coast until sunrise. Then they hauled in to hide at an island until night. While making sail again, one of the men carelessly stepped upon the gunwale of the cranky craft, and it instantly capsized almost a mile from shore.

They climbed upon the bottom, managed to save the paddles, and navigated the canoe back to the island by swimming with it. There they rekindled their fire, dried and warmed themselves, and were ready to try it again. They had lost the sail and mast, but they paddled all night and began to hope that they had gone clear of their troublesome rajah.

In the morning, however, a proa swooped down like a hawk, and again the unlucky seamen were taken captive. They told the Malay captain that they were bound to the port for which Tuan Hadjee had sailed, as he was a friend and protector of theirs, and requested that they be landed there. Apparently the amiable priest had some power and influence even among the cutthroats who manned these proas, for the captain agreed to do as he was asked, and he proved to be as good as his word.

In this manner the chief mate and his men were carried to the port, which they called Sawyeh. Tuan Hadjee was there, and he gave them a house and was a genial host while they looked the situation over and endeavored to unravel the strands of their tangled destiny. The priest entertained them with tales of his own career, which had been lurid in spots. He was now sixty years of age, with a girl wife of sixteen, and a man of great piety and much respected, but in his younger days he had been a famous pirate of the island of Mindanao.

Among his exploits was the capture of a Dutch settlement in the Strait of Malacca, when he had commanded a proa of ten guns and two hundred men. He had been in a fair way of becoming one of the most successful pirates of those seas, but while chasing a merchant vessel his proa had turned turtle in a gale of wind, and he thereby lost all his property and riches. After this misfortune he had forsaken piracy and turned to leading an honorable life.

He was an excellent companion to these exiled sailormen from faraway New England and even gave them the use of an island where there was fruit

and wild game and a pleasant house to live in, but they were no more contented. After several weeks, Tuan Hadjee announced that he had some business to attend to on another part of the coast, but would return in twenty days and then attempt to send the chief mate and his men to their own people at Batavia. While he was gone, a merchant proa came into port, and Woodard found that she was bound to Sulu, in the Philippine Islands, whence he felt certain he could get passage in some ship trading with Manila. In high hopes he arranged matters with the master of the proa, and the five castaways sailed away from Celebes.

Alas! this Malay skipper was an honest man, according to his lights, and the gossip of the town had led him to draw his own conclusions. His inference was that these white men belonged to Tuan Hadjee and were bent on running away during his absence. No hint was dropped to Woodard and his companions, and they happily beguiled themselves with visions of deliverance. But the captain of the proa had taken pains to inform himself of the destination of the absent Tuan Hadjee; wherefore he shifted his helm and bore away, to turn his passengers over to their proper owner. To their amazed disgust, they sailed into a little jungle-fringed port called Tomboa, and there, sure enough, was the no less surprised Tuan Hadjee.

The honest Malay skipper explained the situation and sailed away again, while Woodard and his disconsolate shipmates stood on the beach and cursed their luck and shook their fists at the departing proa.

Their reunion with Tuan Hadjee was a painful episode. As a reformed pirate he could swear harder and louder and longer than a Yankee seaman. He took the Malay skipper's view of it, that these guests of his had broken faith with him by absconding while his back was turned. The chief mate had learned to adorn his language with an extra embroidery of Malaysian profanity, and the interview was not only eloquent, but turbulent. Then Tuan Hadjee, having exhausted his breath, turned sulky, and the villagers took the

cue. They ignored the white visitors as though they were under a ban of excommunication until Woodard delivered a speech in the crowded market-place.

Speaking to them in their own tongue, he eloquently declaimed that the unfortunate strangers had been guilty of no other crime than that of yearning to behold once more the faces of their own dear wives and children. The feelings of Tuan Hadjee were profoundly stirred by the oration. Amid the applause of the fickle populace he clasped the chief mate to his breast, and vowed that while a mouthful of rice remained to him, his friends should share it with him.

Nothing was said, however, about setting the captives free, and these energetic sailors began to plan another voyage on their own account. Tuan Hadjee shrewdly suspected something of the sort, and all the canoes were carried away from the beach and guarded when the sun went down. A pirate proa came winging it into the harbor of Tomboa to fill the water-casks and give the crew shore liberty. Woodard noticed that the men came ashore in a canoe unusually large and seaworthy, and resolved to steal it by hook or crook. He asked the sociable pirates to let him use the canoe to go fishing in and offered to share the catch with them. To this they consented, providing he went out in the daytime and stayed well inside the bay.

After several fishing trips, Woodard sauntered down to the beach in the dusk as though to overhaul the canoe for an early start next morning. The villagers had ceased to watch his movements. The proa rode at anchor only a few yards away, where the channel ran close to a steep bank. The pirates were lounging on deck and in the cabin, and none of them happened to glance in the direction of the canoe. Woodard waited a little, and slid the canoe into the quiet water. As silent as a drifting leaf it moved away with the tide, while he lay in the bottom with a fishing-line over the side as a pretext if he should be hailed from the proa.

Unobserved, he landed at another beach, where his comrades awaited him. They embarked, and stole out of the bay with food and water to last them several days. At last they were bound for Macassar and again ready to defy the devil and the deep sea. For three days they held on their way and began to think the luck had turned when a small proa tacked out from the land and overtook the canoe. Woodard recognized the crew as acquaintances of his from Tomboa, and frankly told them where he was going. They commanded him to fetch his men aboard the proa, and they would be given up to the rajah of Tomboa; but the odds were so nearly even, five Americans against seven natives, that Woodard laughed at them. Hoisting sail, he drove his canoe to windward of the proa, and handled it so well that he fairly ran away from pursuit.

The wind was too strong for the fragile canoe, and they had to seek refuge in the mouth of a river, where they built a fire to cook some rice. Here they encountered two natives who had come ashore from a trading proa, one of them a captain who had seen the fugitives while at Tomboa. He insisted that they surrender and return with him. Tired of so much interference, the chief mate knocked him down, and held a knife at his throat until the Malay mariner changed his opinion.

The proa chased them, however, when the canoe resumed its voyage; but night came on, and a thunder squall enabled them to slip away undiscovered. Eight days after leaving Tomboa they began to pass many towns and a great deal of shipping on the coast of Celebes, but they doggedly kept on their course to Macassar. They fought off a war-canoe, which attacked them with arrows and spears, but had no serious misadventures until a large boat came swiftly paddling out of an inlet and fairly overwhelmed them by force of numbers.

Captives again, the five long-suffering seafarers were carried into Pamboon, where the rajah found them unsatisfactory to interview. David

Woodard, chief mate, was in no mood to be thwarted, and it is related of him that "he was examined in the presence of the rajah and all the head men of the place. He made the same answers as before, saying that he must not be stopped and must go on immediately, thus being more desperate and confident from the dangers and escapes he had experienced. The rajah asked him if he could use a musket well, which he denied, having formerly found the inconvenience of acknowledging it. The rajah then showed him a hundred brass guns, but he declined taking charge of them. His wife, a young girl, sat down by the mate and, calling her sister and about twenty other girls, desired them to sit down, and asked Woodard to select a wife from among them. This he refused and, rising up, bade her good night and went out of the house, where they soon brought him some supper."

In the morning this redoubtable Yankee mate who, like Ulysses, was deaf to the songs of the sirens and was also as crafty as he was brave, waited on the rajah of Pamboon and very courteously addressed him in the Malay tongue, requesting prompt passage to Macassar on the ground that the Dutch governor had urgently summoned him, and if he were detained at Pamboon, it would be most unpleasant for the rajah, whose proas would be seized and his ports blockaded, no doubt, by way of punishment.

This gave the haughty rajah something to think about. The fearless demeanor and impressive stature of this keen-eyed mariner made his words convincing. After due reflection, the rajah sent for the captain of a proa, and told him to take these troublesome white men to Macassar with all possible haste. Woodard was worn out, his bare back terribly burned and festered, his strength almost ebbed, and he had to be hoisted aboard the proa upon a litter; but he was still the resolute, unconquerable seaman and leader. The accommodations were so wretched that after three days of suffering he ordered the proa to set him ashore and to send word to the nearest rajah.

This was done, and the dusky potentate who received the message did all in his power to make the party comfortable, fitting out a proa, which enabled them to make the final run of the voyage with no more hardship. Tales of Woodard had passed by word of mouth along the coasts of Celebes until he was almost a legendary character. It was on June 15, 1795, that these five wanderers reached their goal of Macassar after two years and five months of captivity among the Malays. They were not only alive, every man of them, but not one was permanently broken in health.

The Dutch governor of the island and the officers of the garrison of the Dutch East India Company treated them with the most generous hospitality, providing clothes and money and refusing to listen to promises of recompense. They soon sailed for Batavia, where the four sailors, William Gideon, John Cole, Robert Gilbert, and George Williams signed articles in an American ship bound to Boston, and resumed the hard and hazardous toil of the sea to earn their bread. Their extraordinary experience was all in the day's work, and it is unlikely that they thought very much about it.

Woodard took a berth as chief mate in another American ship that was sailing for Calcutta and while in that port was offered command of a country ship engaged in the coastwise trade. During one of his voyages he was strolling ashore when he came face to face with Captain Hubbard of the *Enterprise*, which had vanished in the Straits of Macassar and left its unlucky boat adrift. The delighted captain explained that he had waited and cruised about for three days in a search for the missing boat and had given it up for lost.

He warmly urged Woodard to join him in his fine new ship, the *America*, and go to Mauritius. The former chief mate gladly accepted the invitation, for he was homesick for his own flag and people. At Mauritius Captain Hubbard gave up the command because of ill health and turned it over to David Woodard. Thus the true story all turned out precisely as

should be, and it was Captain Woodard who trod the quarterdeck of his taut ship *America* as she lifted her lofty spars in the lovely harbor of Mauritius.

Coincidence is often stranger in fact than in fiction. Before he left Mauritius, Captain Woodard ran across three of his old sailors of the open boat and the two years of captivity among the Malays. They had been wrecked on another China voyage, and were in distress for lack of clothes and money. Their old chief mate, now a prosperous shipmaster, with a share in the profits of the voyage, outfitted them handsomely and left them with dollars in their pockets.

In later years Captain David Woodard traded to Batavia, and met more than one Malay who had seen him or had listened to fabulous tales of his prowess during his long durance in the jungles and mountains of Celebes. In 1804 this splendid adventurer of the old merchant marine was able to retire from the sea with an independent income. Near Boston he bought a farm and lived on it, and this was the proper way to cast anchor, for such is the ambition of all worthy mariners when they cease to furrow the blue sea.

CHAPTER VI

CAPTAIN PADDOCK ON THE COAST OF BARBARY

THE veterans of the Revolution of ’76, who had won a war for freedom, were still young men when American sailors continued to be bought and sold as slaves for a few dollars a head on the farther side of the Atlantic. It was a trade which had flourished during the colonial period, and was unmolested even after the Stars and Stripes proclaimed the sovereign pride and independence of this Union of States. Indeed, while hundreds of American mariners were held in this inhuman bondage, their Government actually sent to the Dey of Algiers a million dollars in money and other gifts, including a fine new frigate, as humble tribute to this bloody heathen pirate in the hope of softening his heart.

It was the bitterest touch of humiliation that this frigate, the *Crescent*, sailed from the New England harbor of Portsmouth, whose free tides had borne a few years earlier the brave keels of John Paul Jones’s *Ranger* and *America*.

The Christian nations of Europe deliberately granted immunity to these nests of sea-robbers in Algiers, Morocco, Tunis, and Tripoli in order that they might prey upon the ships and sailors of weaker countries and destroy their commerce. This ignoble spirit was reflected in a speech of Lord Sheffield in Parliament in 1784.

> “It is not now probable that the American States will have a very free trade in the Mediterranean. It will not be to the interest of any of the great maritime powers to protect them from the Barbary States. If they know their interests, they will not encourage the Americans to be ocean carriers. That the Barbary States are advantageous to maritime powers is certain.”

It was not until 1803 that the United States, a feeble nation with a little navy, resolved that these shameful indignities could no longer be endured. While Europe cynically looked on and forbore to lend a hand, Commodore Preble steered the *Constitution* and the other ships of his squadron into the harbor of Tripoli, smashed its defenses, and compelled an honorable treaty of peace. Of all the wars in which the American Navy had won high distinction, there is none whose episodes are more brilliant than those of the bold adventure on the coast of Barbary.

The spirit of it was typical of Preble, the fighting Yankee commodore, who fell in with a strange ship one black night in the Straits of Gibraltar. From the quarterdeck of the *Constitution* he trumpeted a hail, but the response was evasive, and both ships promptly manœuvered for the weather gage.

“I hail you for the last time. If you don’t answer, I’ll fire into you,” roared Preble. “What ship is that?”

“His Britannic Majesty’s eighty-four gun ship-of-the-line *Donegal*,” came back the reply. “Send a boat on board.”

Without an instant’s hesitation the commodore thundered from his Yankee frigate:

“This is the United States forty-four-gun ship *Constitution*, Captain Edward Preble, and I’ll be damned if I send a boat aboard any ship. Blow your matches, boys!”

Until the hordes of Moorish and Arab cutthroats and slavers were taught by force to respect the flag flown by American merchantmen, there was no fate so dreaded by mariners as shipwreck on the desert coast of northern Africa. For a hundred and fifty years they risked the dreadful peril of enslavement under taskmasters incredibly inhuman, who lashed and starved and slew them. In the seventeenth century it was no uncommon sight in the ports of Salem and Boston to see an honest sailor trudging from house to house to beg money enough to ransom or buy his shipmates held in Barbary.

The old records note many such incidents, as that in 1700:

> Benjamin Alford and William Bowditch related that their friend Robert Carver was taken nine years before a captive into Sallee, that contributions had been made for his redemption, that the money was in the hands of a person here, and that if they had the disposal of it they could release Carver.

The expansion of American trade in far-distant waters which swiftly followed the Revolution increased the number of disasters of this kind, and among the old narratives of the sea that were written about 1800 no theme is more frequent, and few so tragic, as the sufferings of the survivors of some gallant American ship which laid her bones among the breakers of the African coast. These personal experiences, simply and movingly written by some intelligent master or mate and printed as thin books or pamphlets, were among the “best sellers” of their day when the world of fact was as wildly romantic as the art of fiction was able to weave for later generations.

Among these briny epics of the long ago is the story of Captain Judah Paddock and his crew of the ship *Oswego*. She sailed from Cork in March, 1800, for the Cape Verd Islands, to take on a cargo of salt and hides and then to complete the homeward voyage to New York. The *Oswego* was a

fast and able vessel of 260 tons, absurdly small to modern eyes, and carried thirteen sailors, including boys. After passing Cape Finisterre, Captain Paddock began to distrust his reckoning because of much thick weather, but felt no serious concern until the ship was fairly in the surf, which pounded and hammered her hull with one tremendous blow after another.

Daylight disclosed what the old sea-songs called “the high coast of Barbary” no more than a few hundred yards distant. The *Oswego* was beating out her life among the rocks, and it was time to leave her. The boats were smashed in trying to land, and the only refuge was this cruel and ominous shore, the barren wastes of sand and mountain, the glaring sun, the evil nomads.

With a few bottles of water and such food as they could pack on their backs, these pilgrims set out to trudge along the coast in the direction of Mogador, where they hoped to find the protection of an English consul. It was not an auspicious omen when they discovered a group of roofless huts rudely built of stone, a heap of human bones, and the broken timbers of a large frigate washed up by the tide. These relics were enough to indicate the fate of a large company of seamen who had been cast away in this savage region.

There were men of all sorts among these hapless refugees of the *Oswego*, and most of them endured their hard lot with the patient courage of the deep-water mariner. The cook, however, was an exasperating rascal of an Irishman called Pat who had smuggled himself aboard at Cork as a ragged stowaway, and he lost no time in starting trouble on the coast of Barbary. In his pack was a bottle of gin, which had passed the skipper’s inspection as water, and while on sentry duty at night to watch for prowling Arabs, Pat got uproariously drunk and fought a Danish foremast hand who was tippling with him. In the ruction they smashed several precious bottles of water, and were too tipsy next morning to resume the march.

The other sailors held an informal trial. This was their own affair, and Captain Paddock's protests were unheeded. Pat was so drunk that he could not appear in his own defense, and the sentence was that his share of the bread and water should be taken from him and he be left behind to die. He was accordingly abandoned, blissfully snoring on the sand, the empty gin bottle in his fist; but after a mile or so of painful progress two of the men relented and listened to the captain's appeal. Back they went, and dragged Pat along, damning him bitterly and swearing to kill him on the spot if he misbehaved again.

After three days the torments of thirst were severe, and the heat blistered their souls. In the wreck of the *Oswego* there was water in barrels, plenty of it, and this was all that the fevered minds of most of the sufferers could think of. Captain Paddock urged them to keep on with him to the eastward a few days longer toward Mogador, but they were ready to turn and struggle back to the ship, fifty miles, just to get enough water to drink. It mattered not to them that they were throwing away the hope of survival.

The captain was made of sterner stuff, and so they amiably agreed to part company. A black sailor, Jack, stepped forward and said with simple fidelity:

"Master, if you go on, I go, too."

The other negro of the crew grinned at his comrade and exclaimed:

"If you go, Jack, I reckon I's obliged to stand by."

The scapegrace Pat, regarding the captain as his friend and protector, also elected to stay with him.

So Captain Judah Paddock was left to toil onward with Black Sam and Black Jack and the impossible Irish cook as his companions in misery while the mate and the rest of the crew turned westward to find the wreck of their

ship. The parting scene has a certain nobility and pathos, as the captain's narrative describes it.

> The generosity of my fellow sufferers ought not to pass by unnoticed. To a man they agreed that we should have a larger share of the water remaining than those returning to the ship. Furthermore, they invited us to join them in taking a drink from their own stock and at the conclusion, sailor-like, they proposed a parting glass, also from their own bottles. All things arranged and our packs made up, we took of each other an affectionate leave and thus we separated. The expression of every man on this truly trying occasion can never be erased from my memory as long as my senses remain. Some of us could hardly speak the word *farewell*. We shook hands with each other and silently moved in opposite directions.

Captain Paddock and his little party were captured by Arabs on the very next day. He met them calmly, his umbrella under one arm, spy-glass under the other, expecting instant death; but they were more intent on plunder, and the four men were stripped of their packs and most of their clothes in a twinkling. It was soon apparent that shipwrecked sailors were worth more alive than dead, and they were hustled along by their filthy captors, who gave them no more water and food than would barely keep soul and body together.

The Arabs traveled in haste to reach the wreck of the *Oswego* as a rare prize to be gutted. When they arrived on the scene, another desert clan, two hundred and fifty strong, had already swooped down and was in possession. There was much yelling and fighting and bloodshed before a truce was declared and the spoils were divided. Meanwhile Captain Paddock found opportunity to talk with the mate of the *Oswego* and the band of sailors who had returned to the wreck just in time to be made miserable captives.

Presently Captain Paddock was dragged away from them. This was, indeed, a last farewell, for of this larger party of American castaways only one was ever heard of again.

Flogged and starved and daily threatened with death, Captain Judah Paddock, Irish Pat, and the two black seamen were carried into the desert until their captors came to a wandering community of a thousand Bedouins, with their skin tents and camels and sheep and donkeys. Amid the infernal clamor the Americans heard a voice calling loudly in English:

"Where are they? Where are they? Where are the four sailors?" And then, as Captain Paddock tells it,

> A young man once white pressed through the crowd, burnt with the sun, without hat or shoes, and his nakedness covered only with a few rags. The first words spoken to us by this frightful looking object were, "*Who are you? My friends! My friends!*"
>
> I would have arisen to greet him but was too feeble. He sat down at my side, the tears streaming from his eyes, while he gave an account of himself. His name was George and he had been the steward of a ship called the *Martin Hall* of London, cast away upon that coast more than a year before. Part of the crew had been marched in a southeasterly direction to a place they called Elic, another part had been carried to Swearah and there ransomed, and four of them yet remained among the wandering Arabs who had been very cruel to them. He had no doubt that some of the men had been murdered because it was rumored that their owners could not find a ready sale for them, or the prices offered were too small.

A few days after this, the chief of the tribe, Ahamed, came back from a journey with two other lads of this same English crew. One was Jack, a

cabin boy of thirteen, and the other was named Lawrence, a year or two older. Curiously enough, the English-born urchin, Jack, seemed contented among these wild Bedouins, and was rapidly forgetting his own people and the memories of childhood. These three youngsters from the *Martin Hall* had learned to speak Arabic quite readily, and they informed Captain Paddock that all the white slaves were to be sold at once and that bargaining had already begun.

The captain of the *Oswego* and his two black seamen were held at very high prices, and apparently there was no immediate market for them. In this year of 1800 thrifty New England skippers and merchants were piling up money in the African slave-trade, and there was logic in the argument of Ahamed, the Bedouin chief:

> "I do not wish to sell these two black men at any price. They are used to our climate and can travel the desert without suffering. They are men that you Christian dogs stole from the Guinea coast, and you were going there to get more of them. You are worse than the Arabs who enslave you only when it is God's will to send you on our coast."

Captain Paddock confessed that never did he feel a reproach more sensibly; that a great many wearing the Christian name did force away from their homes and carry into perpetual slavery the poor African negroes, and thereby did make themselves worse than the Arabs. The English lads drove this truth home by secretly admitting to him that their ship, the *Martin Hall*, had been engaged in the Guinea slave-trade when wrecked on the coast of Barbary.

After much dickering with Ahamed, the captain agreed to purchase freedom at the rate of forty dollars per head, in addition to two looking-glasses, two combs, two pairs of scissors, a large bunch of beads, and a knife, as soon as he and his companions should be safely delivered at a

friendly port. This price was not to include any official ransom which the crafty Arabs might squeeze out of the representatives of the British or American governments.

Several days of noisy haggling were necessary before Captain Paddock, Irish Pat, and the three English boys were transferred to a new owner, but the chief retained Black Sam and Black Jack, and his caravan moved off to the mountains with them. “The looks of these poor fellows were so dejected, it was painful to behold them,” wrote the skipper, and in this forlorn manner vanished forever these two seamen of the *Oswego’s* forecastle who had served with a cheerful fidelity and whose hearts were as white as their skins were black.

The Arabs drifted into a region more fertile, where there was grain to reap with sickles and grazing for the large flocks. The mariners were kept at unremitting toil on the scantiest rations, and they became mere skeletons; but their health bore up astonishingly well, and not one of them died by the wayside. The irrepressible Pat came nearest to death when he sang Irish songs and danced jigs for the Arab women, and so delighted them that they fed him on porridge, or “stirabout,” as he called it, until he swelled like a balloon.

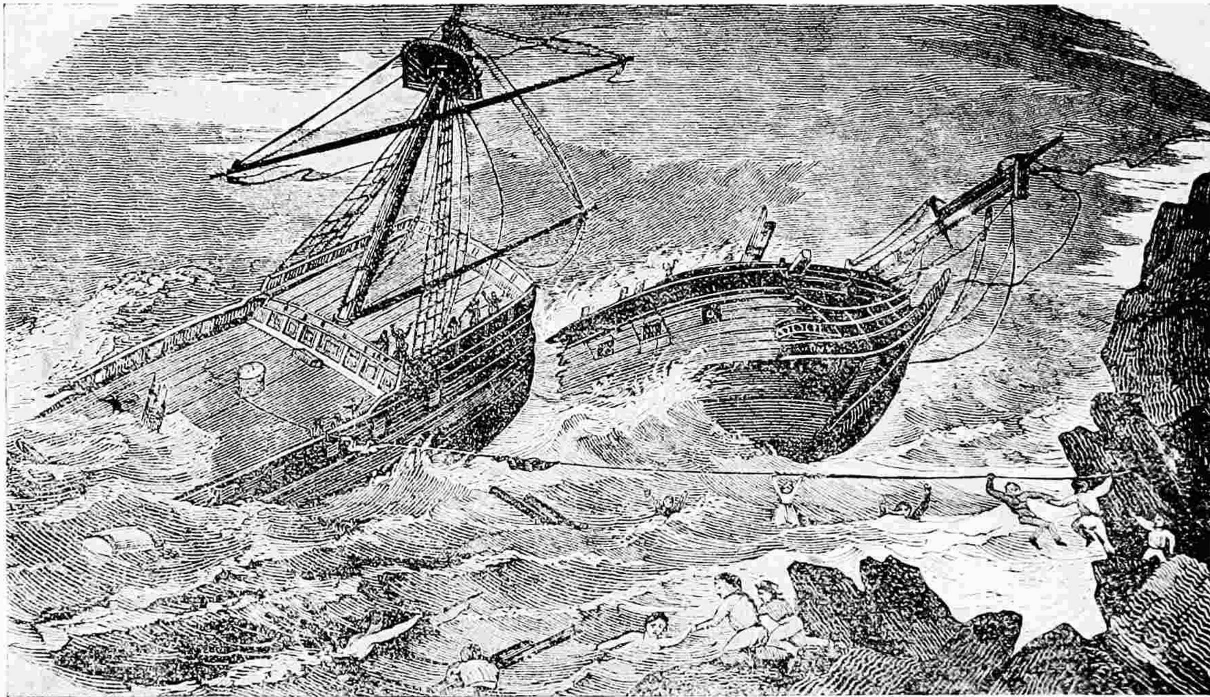
That astute chieftain, Ahamed, reappeared on some important errand of tribal conference, and again held discourse with Captain Paddock concerning the ethics of the slave-trade. In his stately fashion he declaimed:

> “You say that if I were in your country, your people would treat me better than I treat you. There is no truth in you; nothing but lies. If I were there, I should be doomed to a life-time of slavery and be put to the hardest labor in tilling your fields. You are too lazy yourselves to work in your fields, and therefore you send your ships to the negro coast, and in exchange for the worthless trinkets with which you cheat

> those poor blacks, you take away ship-loads of them to your country from which never one returns. We pray earnestly to Almighty God to send Christians ashore here in order that we may gain a little profit of the same kind, and God hears our prayers and often sends us some good ships."

It was this same masterful Bedouin, lord of the desert wastes, who enlightened Captain Paddock as to what had befallen the frigate which drove ashore where the *Oswego's* crew had discovered the sea-washed timbers, the roofless huts of stone, and the heap of human bones. It was a very large warship, French or British, and the crew of several hundred men were able to land much property and to make shelters for themselves before the Arabs found them. A small tribe went down to despoil them of all their belongings, as was righteous and proper, but the armed men-of-war's-men fired upon the Arab visitors, who were enraged at the resistance of these Christian dogs and fell upon them furiously. Many were killed on both sides, and the Arabs, finding the enemy so numerous and well disciplined, sent for help, and another tribe went down to the sea.

It was a great fight, for the Christian sailors shot very straight and often, and the Arabs were not able to close in with their long knives; so a third tribe was summoned, and the command was turned over to Ahamed. He said to Captain Paddock:



WRECK OF THE "GROSVENOR" ON THE COAST OF CAFFRARIA

> "At daylight I made signs to the infidel dogs to lay down their arms upon which their camp seemed all in confusion. At the moment we were preparing to attack them, they formed themselves in a close body and began to march off eastward. We formed ourselves in three divisions, according to the tribes, and the chief of each tribe led his own men. We attacked them in front and in rear, and after fighting a long time we killed half those dogs, and then the remnant left alive laid down their arms. We now all dropped our guns, and fell upon them with our knives, and every one of them was killed, and the whole number we found to be five hundred."

After several months of heartbreaking toil and hopes deferred, Ahamed concluded to take the business in hand and to see what could be done about getting rid of the captain and Pat and the three English boys at a satisfactory profit. The harvests had been gathered, and the demand for labor was not

urgent. Ahamed had been greatly pestered by a hag of a sister who was anxious to get her hands on a looking-glass, comb, and scissors which had been mentioned as part of the bargain.

Accordingly they set out for the coast with Ahamed in charge of a small escort, all mounted on good Arab horses, the captives tortured by uncertainty, for "avarice was the ruling passion of our owners," says Captain Paddock, "and if they could have obtained as much money by putting us to death as by selling us, I verily believe they would not have hesitated to kill us on the spot, for of humane feelings toward Christians they were completely devoid."

Near the coast they met two horsemen, who halted to discuss conditions in the slave-marts, much as modern salesmen meet in the lobby of a hotel. One of these pilgrims advised Ahamed to stay away from Swearah, telling him:

> "It is not best to carry them there. At Elic the Jews will give more for them than the consul at Swearah will pay as ransom. Besides, the plague has been killing so many people that you ought to keep these Christian slaves until the next harvest, when there will be a great scarcity of labor."

This advice seemed plausible until Ahamed encountered two acquaintances afoot, one of them a very bald old man, who held an opinion quite the contrary, explaining:

"In Elic the plague still rages, and if you carry your Christian slaves there, they may all die before you get rid of them. And just now they would not fetch enough to reward you for the trouble of taking them there."

Evidently perplexed, Ahamed changed the course of his journey, to the dismay of Captain Paddock, who feared that he was to be conveyed into the

interior of Barbary, beyond all chance of salvation. In a walled town Ahamed met his own brother, who was also a tribal chief, and for once the wretched captives were given enough to eat.

"Dear brother of mine," was Ahamed's greeting. "I am bound off to find a market for these vile Christians, who have been complaining incessantly of hunger. And I promised that they should have an abundance of victuals upon their arrival here."

The brother gravely assented, and his hospitality was so sincere that when one of his wives failed to cook sufficient stew for the evening meal he felled her with a club and proceeded to beat her to death by way of reproof.

"I will see if my orders cannot be obeyed," he remarked to Ahamed, who viewed it as no affair of his.

An exchange of gossip persuaded Ahamed to seek the little Moorish seaport of Saint Cruz, or Agadir, and try to dispose of them to the best advantage. Four months after the wreck of the *Oswego*, Captain Judah Paddock beheld a harbor and ships riding at anchor. The governor of Agadir, a portly, courteous Moor, commanded Ahamed to take his captives to Mogador without delay and deliver them up to the British consul. To Captain Paddock he declared:

"These Arabs are a set of thieves, robbers, and murderers, and from time immemorial they have been at war with the Moors and with all others within their reach. If there is any more trouble, I will keep you here a few days, when I shall be going myself to Mogador."

The warlike Ahamed was somewhat abashed by this reception, but he made great haste to obey the governor's decree. Mounted on camels, the party crossed the mountain trails, and then halted to consider breaking back into the desert with the captives and seeking a more auspicious market for them. Ahamed regretted that he had not sold them before he foolishly

strayed into the clutches of the accursed Moorish governor of Agadir. More than likely there would be no ransom forthcoming at Mogador.

In the nick of time another Moorish gentleman strolled into the little walled mountain town where they tarried for the night, and demanded to know what was going on. To him Ahamed sourly vouchsafed:

“These be Christians whom God in His goodness cast upon our coast. We bought them on the edge of the great desert from a tribe which had taken them from the wreck. We had intended to carry them on to Mogador, but to-day we have heard that the consul has no money to buy Christians with.”

The Moor suggested that Captain Paddock dictate a letter to the British consul at Mogador, naming a ransom price of four hundred dollars each, which message could be sent on ahead of Ahamed, who might then await a reply before venturing into the city. The messenger galloped away on a spirited steed, but, alas! he soon came galloping back, having met a friend on the road who read the letter and swore that it would not do at all.

Captain Paddock was in the depths of despair when the friendly Moor came to the rescue with another plan. The American captain should be his own messenger into Mogador, with Ahamed and an escort to guard against escape, while the other sailors were held in the mountains as hostages.

This idea was favorably received, and after a wearisome journey Captain Judah Paddock rode into Mogador to find the British consul. When he entered the flat-roofed stone building above which flew the red cross of St. George, six or eight hearty-looking English sailors rushed forward to welcome him as a shipwrecked seamen. They were survivors of the *Martin Hall*, “and when I told them that three of their crew were with my party,” relates Captain Paddock, “their joy was loud and boisterous. One lusty son of Neptune ran to the consul’s door, shouting:

“‘Mr. Gwyn, Mr. Gwyn, an English captain is here from the Arab coast, and the Arabs with him!’”

The consul, an elderly man, hastened out in his shirt and breeches, for the hour was early in the morning, and to him Captain Paddock explained that he was really an American shipmaster whose only chance of rescue had been in calling himself an Englishman. Mr. Gwyn invited him to sit down to breakfast, and tactfully explained that there was supposed to be an American consular agent in Mogador, but the incumbent just then was a Genoese who spoke no English, and had been bundled aboard an outward-bound ship by command of the Emperor of Morocco, who had conceived a dislike for him. Mr. Gwyn went on to break the news that he had no funds with which to ransom captive sailors and that the nearest official resource would be the American consul-general at Tangier.

At this Ahamed was for dragging his slaves back to the desert, but the kindly Mr. Gwyn had no intention of permitting it, and he introduced Captain Paddock to a firm of British merchants, the brothers William and Alexander Court, who promptly offered to pay the amounts stipulated and to trust to the American government for repayment.

It then transpired that even after paying the price to the Arab tribes for the recovery of such shipwrecked waifs as these, it depended upon the whim and the pleasure of the Emperor of Morocco whether they should be allowed to go home from Barbary. He had been known to hold Christian wanderers as prisoners until it suited him to issue a special edict or passport of departure.

While dining at the house of a British resident in Mogador, Captain Paddock met a Jewish merchant recently returned from the Sahara coast who told a yarn which brought a gleam of humor into the bitter experience of the castaways. He had got wind of a shipwreck and posted off to the scene on the chance of a speculation. At the *Oswego* he found two or three

hundred Arabs industriously despoiling the hulk of the ship. She had no cargo in her when she went ashore, being merely ballasted with Irish earth. The Arabs reasonably deduced that this stuff must be valuable or a ship would not be laden with it, and although they were unable to comprehend what it was, they thriftily proceeded to salvage every possible pound of it.

They requested the Jewish merchant to examine the treasure which had cost them much labor, as they had been compelled to dive for most of it. Every Arab had been carefully allotted his rightful share in order to prevent quarreling and bloodshed, and it was guarded in a little heap inside his tent. They were greatly mortified, the merchant recounted, when he laughed and told them the ballast was worth no more than the sand upon which they stood.

Ahamed returned to the mountain stronghold and fetched to Mogador the other mariners who were held as hostages awaiting the tidings of ransom. The little British lad called Jack had no desire to leave Barbary. He promptly ran away from Mr. Gwyn and the consulate and lived with Moorish friends in Mogador and even paraded an adopted father. Much distressed, Captain Paddock consulted the Moorish governor, who replied as follows:

> You shall have all the indulgence that our laws permit, which is this: examine the boy in my presence from day to day, for three successive days, and if you can within that time persuade him to return to the Christian religion, you may receive him back. Otherwise, as he has voluntarily come among us and gone through our ceremonies, we are in duty bound to retain him.

The apostate sea urchin of the *Martin Hall* was accordingly examined in Arabic, and declared that he loved his adopted father, that he had become a Mohammedan, and would never change from it. Asked the reason, he said

he liked this religion much better, because all Christians were to be eternally damned while a Mohammedan should see God and be saved. He repeated the long prayer of Ramadan in Arabic without stumbling over a word, and was otherwise so proficient in the new faith that the governor's verdict favored his plea. There was great rejoicing in Mogador over this conversion, and a procession of true believers escorted young Jack through the narrow streets.

Captain Judah Paddock waited in Mogador until the word came from the imperial palace in Fez that granted him the decree of liberty for himself and any of his men who should be detained elsewhere in Barbary. Soon after this an English brig stood into the harbor, but there was no room for passengers in her, and Captain Paddock lingered in tedious exile until a Portuguese schooner came in from Lisbon. Pat, the Irish cook, refused to leave Mogador, but the reasons had nothing to do with religion. He told his skipper that the mate and the men of the *Oswego* had sworn to kill him wherever they should cross his hawse, afloat or ashore, and if any of them were lucky enough to escape from Barbary, his life would not be worth a candle. He had discovered another Irishman in Mogador who was teaching him the cooper's trade, and the Moorish girls were very fond of his songs and his jig-steps.

From Lisbon Captain Paddock sailed homeward bound in the good ship *Perseverance* of Baltimore, and set foot on his native soil in November, almost a year after his disaster on the coast of Barbary. By invitation he called to see the Secretary of State, John Marshall, and told his story, besides filing the documents in the case.

Four years later than this he was walking through Water Street in New York when he met John Hill, one of the sailors of the ill-fated crew of the *Oswego*. He was the sole survivor of the party of the mate and a dozen men who had been carried away from the wreck into the Barbary desert. He had

been sold separately, and often resold by one owner and another, so that he had heard never a word of his companions, who had been scattered among the wandering tribes of the desert.

He had chanced to meet and talk with one other Christian slave, a sailor from an American schooner out of Norfolk who had swum ashore on a spar when the vessel stranded, and was the only man saved. Seaman John Hill of the *Oswego* and this poor derelict from Norfolk had comforted each other for a little spell, and then they were parted. Hill had finally disguised himself as an Arab, and after a series of wonderful escapes and adventures had managed to reach Agadir, where he was promptly sold to a Jew, who kept him at hard labor for twelve months before the American consul-general heard of his plight and obtained his release.

In concluding his narrative, Captain Judah Paddock ventured this opinion, which was, no doubt, the truth:

"All that I was able to learn while a slave in Barbary confirmed my belief that many unfortunate mariners have been wrecked on that shore and there perished, who were supposed by their relatives and friends to have foundered at sea."

Another story, well known in its day, was that of Captain James Riley of the American brig *Commerce* which was lost on the Barbary coast in 1815. The torments of his crew while in the hands of their Arab captors are really too dreadful to describe in detail. Captain Riley, a herculean sailor weighing more than two hundred pounds, was a mere skeleton of ninety pounds when he gained his liberty at Tangier, but he recovered to command other ships and lived to a ripe old age. His soul wrung with the memories of the experience, he wrote:

> "Not less than six American vessels are known to have been lost on this part of the coast since the year 1800, besides numbers of

> English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, etc., which are also known to have been wrecked there, and no doubt many other vessels that never have been heard from,—but it is only Americans and Englishmen that are ever heard from after the first news of the shipwreck. The French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian governments, it is said, seldom ransom their unfortunate shipwrecked subjects, and they are thus doomed to perpetual slavery and misery,—no friendly hand is ever stretched forth to relieve their distresses and to heal their bleeding wounds, nor any voice of humanity to soothe their bitter pangs,—till worn out with sufferings indescribable they resign their souls to the God who gave them, and launch into the eternal world with pleasure, as death is the only relief from their miseries."

Farther to the southward on this African coast was the land of the black folk, and toward the Cape of Good Hope lay the country of the Kafirs, against whom the Boer settlers waged a war of extermination. All white men looked alike to these savage warriors, and it ill befell the ship that was cast away among them. There are scenes in the wreck of the *Grosvenor*, East Indiaman, lost on the Kafir coast in 1782, that are distinguished for haunting pathos and somber tragedy. It was a large ship's company, with a total number of one hundred and thirty-five men, women, and children, and no more than a dozen survivors succeeded in reaching the Dutch settlements after four months of terrible suffering.

All the rest were killed or died or were missing, and among those who vanished in the jungle were the captain and his party, with which were most of the women and children. There was no trace of these English women until a Colonel Gordon explored the country of the Kafir tribes in 1788, and there met a native who said that a white woman dwelt among his black people. "She had a child," related the informant, "which she frequently embraced, and wept bitterly."

Bad health compelled Colonel Gordon to return homeward, but he promised to reward the native if he would carry a letter to the white woman, and he accordingly wrote in French, Dutch, and English, desiring that some sign, such as a burnt stick or any other token, might be sent back to him, and he would make every exertion to rescue her. The Kafir undertook the mission with eagerness, but nothing more was ever heard of him. An account of the wreck of the *Grosvenor* written before 1812 stated:

> “It is said by officers who have resided at the Cape that a general belief prevailed of the existence of some of the unfortunate females who survived the wreck. It was surmised that they might have it in their power to return and leave the Kaffirs but, apprehending that their place in society was lost and that they should be degraded in the eyes of their equals after spending so great a portion of their lives with savages who had compelled them to a temporary union, they resolved not to forsake the fruits of that union and therefore abode with the chiefs who had protected them.”

In 1796 the American ship *Hercules*, Captain Benjamin Stout, was wrecked on this same coast where the *Grosvenor* had been lost. These castaways were more fortunate, for the Kafirs and the Boers happened to be at peace, and they made their way to the outlying farms of the white pioneers in the Hottentot country. Captain Stout wrote the story of his adventures, and a stirring yarn it is, but the reference of particular interest just here is as follows:

> This being, as I conceived, at no great distance from the spot where the *Grosvenor* was lost in 1782, I inquired whether any of the natives remembered such a catastrophe. Most of them answered in the affirmative and, ascending one of the sand hills, pointed to the place

where the *Grosvenor* had suffered. I then desired to know whether they had received any certain accounts respecting the fate of Captain Coxon who was proceeding on his way to the Cape with a large party of people, including several men and women passengers that were saved from the wreck.

They answered that Captain Coxon and the men were slain. One of the chiefs having insisted on taking two of the white ladies to his kraal, the captain and his officers resisted and not being armed were immediately destroyed. The natives at the same time gave me to understand that at the period when the *Grosvenor* was wrecked their nation was at war with the colonists, and as Captain Coxon and his crew were whites they could not tell but they would assist the colonists.

The fate of the unfortunate English ladies gave me so much uneasiness that I most earnestly requested the natives to tell me all they knew of the situation, whether they were alive or dead, and if living what part of the country they inhabited. They replied with much apparent concern that one of the ladies had died a short time after her arrival at the kraal, but they understood that the other was living and had several children by the chief. “Where she is now, we know not,” said they.

There was evidence of an earlier mystery of this mournful kind when the *Doddington* was wrecked on a rock in the Indian Ocean in 1755. Her crew built a boat in which they coasted along Natal, and while ashore in search of food and water, “the English sailors were extremely surprised to find among these savages, who were quite black, with woolly hair, a youth apparently twelve or fourteen years of age, perfectly white, with European features, fine, light hair, and altogether different from the natives of this country, although he spoke only their language. The people of the *Doddington* remarked that he was treated as a servant, that the savages sent

him on their errands and sometimes did not allow him to eat with them, but that he waited until the end of the repast before making his own.”

CHAPTER VII

FOUR THOUSAND MILES IN AN OPEN BOAT

OF all the stories of blue water there is none so romantic and well remembered as that of the mutineers of the *Bounty* who sought an Arcadia in the South Seas, and found it on Pitcairn Island, where their descendants to-day welcome the occasional ship that stops in passing. In 1787, ten years after Captain Cook had been slain by the natives of Hawaii, a group of West India merchants in London, whose interest was stirred by the glowing reports of the discoverers, urged the Government to explore the natural resources of those enchanted realms of the Pacific and particularly to transport the breadfruit tree to Jamaica and plant it there.

The ship *Bounty* was accordingly fitted out, and sailed in command of Lieutenant William Bligh, who had been one of Cook's officers. After the long voyage to Tahiti, the ship tarried there five months while the hold was filled with tropical trees and shrubs. With every prospect of success, the *Bounty* hove anchor and sheeted topsails to roll out homeward bound.

Every sturdy British sailor was leaving a sweetheart on the beach of languorous Tahiti, where the unspoiled, brown-skinned women were as kind as they were beautiful, and where every dream of happiness was attainable. These were the first white men who had ever lingered to form sentimental attachments in that fortunate isle, and they left it reluctantly to endure the bitter toil and tyranny that were the mariner's lot.

Nor was Lieutenant Bligh a commander to soothe their discontent. His own narrative would lead you to infer that his conduct was blameless, but other evidence convicts him of a harsh and inflexible temper and a lack of tact which helped to bring about the disaster that was brewing in the forecastle and among the groups of seamen who loafed and whispered on deck during the dog-watches. The explosive crises of life are very often touched off by the merest trifles and a few cocoanuts appear to have played a part in the melodramatic upheaval of the *Bounty's* crew. Boatswain's Mate James Morrison kept a journal in which he set down that Lieutenant Bligh missed some of his own personal cocoanuts, which had been stowed between the guns.

The sailors solemnly denied stealing them, and the irate commander questioned Fletcher Christian, the master's mate, who indignantly protested:

"I do not know who took your cocoanuts, sir, but I hope you do not think me so mean as to be guilty of pilfering them."

Lieutenant Bligh, who was red in the face and hot under the collar, burst out in this most unlucky tirade:

"Yes, you hound, I do; you must have stolen them from me, or you would be able to give a better account of them. You are all thieves, you scoundrels, and the officers combine with the men to rob me. I suppose you will steal my yams next, but I'll make you sweat for it, you rascals, if I have to make half of you jump overboard before we get through Endeavor Straits."

This is one of the stories told by the boatswain's mate to extenuate the mutiny, and it may be taken for what it is worth, though with so much smoke, there was sure to be flame. At any rate, it was only a day after the cocoanut episode that Fletcher Christian, the master's mate, led the famous rebellion of the *Bounty*. He was a leader of extraordinary intelligence and character who had always led a godly life. Commander Bligh had provoked

him beyond endurance, and he was persuaded that he could lead his comrades to a palm-shaded kingdom where they would be safe against discovery and capture.

No inkling of the conspiracy was conveyed to the quarterdeck, and Bligh wrote, after the event:

> The women of Tahiti are handsome, mild, and cheerful in manners and conversation, possessed of great sensibility, and have sufficient delicacy to make them admired and beloved. The chiefs were so much attached to our people that they rather encouraged their stay among them than otherwise and even made them promises of large possessions. Under these circumstances it ought hardly to be the subject of surprise that a set of sailors, most of them without home ties, should be led away where they had the power of fixing themselves in the midst of plenty and where there was no necessity to labor and where the allurements to dissipation are beyond any conception that can be formed of it. The utmost, however, that a commander could have expected was desertions, such as have always happened more or less in the South Seas, and not this act of open mutiny, the secrecy of which was beyond belief.

It was a bloodless uprising and conducted with singular neatness and despatch. At sunrise of April 28, 1789, Fletcher Christian and an armed guard entered the commander’s cabin and hauled him out of bed in his night-shirt. His arms were bound, and he was led on deck, where he observed that some of his men were hoisting out a boat. Those of the ship’s company who had remained loyal, seventeen officers and men, were already clapped under hatches to await their turn in the very orderly program. A few of the mutineers damned the commander to his face and

growled threats at him, but this was by way of squaring personal grudges, and he was not otherwise mistreated.

The boat was lowered and outfitted with twine, canvas, cordage, an eight-and-twenty gallon cask of water, a hundred and fifty pounds of bread, or ship's biscuit, a little rum and wine, some salt pork and beef, a quadrant, a compass, and four cutlasses for arms. The seventeen loyal mariners were bundled overside, but Lieutenant Bligh hung back to argue the matter until Fletcher Christian roughly exclaimed:

"Come, Captain Bligh, your officers and men are now in the boat and you must go with them. If you attempt to make the least resistance, you will be instantly put to death."

The commander of the *Bounty* was in no mood to carry it off with a high hand. He implored the master's mate to forego the mad enterprise, and pledged his honor that if the men would return to duty he would make no report of it in England. He spoke of his own wife and children and the mercy due on their account, but Fletcher Christian cut him short and cried:

"I say no, no, Captain Bligh. If you had any honor or manly feeling in your breast, things had not come to this. Your wife and family! Had you any regard for them, you would have thought of them before now and not behaved so like a villain. I have been used like a dog all this voyage and am determined to bear it no longer. On you must rest the consequences."

This ended the argument, and the boat was soon cast adrift, while the mutineers shouted a cheery farewell, and then roared out "Huzza for Tahiti!" while the *Bounty* swung off and filled away with a pleasant breeze. Lieutenant Bligh assumed that it was the deliberate intent to leave him to perish, because dead men tell no tales; but if this were true, the mutineers would not have been so careful to stock the boat with food and water and stores to last the party at least a fortnight without severe hardship.

They were within easy sailing distance of peopled islands, on some of which they might hope to find a friendly reception. By drowning them, Fletcher Christian could have obliterated all traces of the mutiny, and the *Bounty* would have vanished from human ken, gone to the port of missing ships. So infrequented were the islands of the South Seas that the mutineers might have lived and died there unmolested and unsought. Fletcher Christian was too humane a man for such a deed, the most upright and pious outlaw that ever risked the gallows.

The tale of the *Bounty* and of the tragic fate which overtook these rash and childlike wanderers in search of Elysium had been familiar to later generations, but the wonderful voyage of Lieutenant Bligh and his exiles in the open boat has been forgotten and unsung. Even to this day it deserves to be called one of the prodigious adventures of seafaring history. A man disgraced and humiliated beyond expression by the ridiculously easy manner in which his ship had been taken from him, Bligh superbly redeemed himself and wiped the stain from his record by keeping his open boat afloat and his men alive through a voyage and an experience unequaled before or since.

The boat was a small, undecked ship’s yawl only twenty-three feet long, such as one may see hanging from a schooner’s davits. Eighteen men were crowded upon the thwarts, and their weight sank her almost to the gunwale. They were adrift in an unknown ocean which teemed with uncharted reefs and perils, there was only a few days’ supply of food and water, and four cutlasses were the weapons against hostile attack. In the boat, besides Commander Bligh, were the master, the acting surgeon, botanist, gunner, boatswain, carpenter, three mates, two quartermasters, the sail-maker, two cooks, the ship’s clerk, the butcher, and a boy.

After watching the faithless *Bounty* until she gleamed like a bit of cloud, the refugees shoved out their oars and pulled in the direction of the

nearest island, Tofa, about forty miles distant. A slant of wind presently favored them, and they hoisted sail, bowling along until they were able to drop anchor outside the barrier of surf soon after nightfall of the same day.

Next morning they landed in a cove and found natives who seemed amiable enough and who supplied them with cocoanuts, plantains, breadfruit, and water. The humor of these temperamental islanders changed without warning, however, and in a sudden attack with stones and spears they killed one of the quartermasters. This dissuaded Bligh from his plan of cruising from one island to another and so making his way to civilization. He told his men that he purposed to attempt to make no more landings, but to steer for the Dutch East Indies and the port of Timor, almost four thousand miles away. In those wild seas there was no nearer haven where they might hope to find Europeans and a ship to carry them home to England.

In the confusion of escaping from Tofa, they lost most of the fruit which had been taken on there, and so they set sail with just about the amount of stores with which they had been set adrift from the *Bounty*, but with one less man to feed. They were so cramped for space in the yawl that Bligh divided them into watches, and half the men sat upon the cross-seats while the others lay down in the bottom, and every two hours they exchanged places. The bread was stowed in the carpenter’s tool-chest, and all the provisions were scrupulously guarded by sentries.

There were no symptoms of mutiny in this company. Bligh had found himself, and he ruled them with a rod of iron. They were willing and obedient, realizing that this imperious, unshaken commander was their only hope of winning against the odds which loomed black against them. Timor was merely a name to them. Some of them did not even know where it was, but they had implicit faith in Lieutenant William Bligh.

The carpenter whittled for him a pair of scales and some musket-balls were found in the boat. These were known to weigh twenty-five to the pound of sixteen ounces. In order to make the provisions last as long as possible, three meals a day were served, and each consisted of a musket-ball's weight of bread, an ounce of pork, and a teaspoonful of rum in a quarter of a pint of water. If you should be curious enough to measure out such a repast for yourself and try living on it for a few days only, I have no doubt that your weight would be reduced more rapidly than any high-priced specialist in dietetics could possibly achieve for you. A twenty-fifth of a pound of hard bread would not much more than satisfy the appetite of a vigorous canary bird. Yet these seventeen men lived on it and stayed alive for weeks and weeks. Heavy rains came to give them more water, but thirst was a continual torment, so sparingly and prudently did Lieutenant Bligh dole out the precious fluid.

They passed within sight of many islands, green and smiling, and smoke wreathed skyward from native camps and villages, but Bligh sternly checked his men when they yearned to seek the land and a respite from the merciless sea. With him it was Timor or die, and in the lonely watches he recalled that previous voyage with Captain Cook, when the great navigator was lured to his death by the soft-voiced, garlanded people of Oahu. And so the open boat flitted past the mysterious beaches and lagoons of the New Hebrides and veered farther seaward to give a wide berth to the savage coast of New Guinea. After one of the numerous storms which almost swamped them, Bligh noted in his diary:

> I found every person complaining and some of them requested extra allowance. I positively refused. Our situation was miserable, always wet and suffering extreme cold in the night, without the least shelter from the weather. Being constantly compelled to bale the boat to keep her from filling perhaps should not have been reckoned an evil

> because it gave us exercise. Our appearance was shocking and several of my people seemed half-dead. I could look no way without catching the eye of some one in distress. The little sleep we got was in the midst of water and we always awoke with severe cramps and pains in our bones.

This was on May 22, or eighteen days after they had left the island of Tofa, during most of which time there had been drenching rains and somber skies and heavy seas, which broke into the boat and almost swamped her time and again. The seventeen men were still existing on the morsels of bread and pork carefully weighed out with the musket-ball, which they said was “little better than starving,” but Bligh held them in hand, and there was no rebellion even when he explained that the system of rationing would permit them to exist for twenty-nine days longer, though he was not at all certain that they could fetch Timor in that time, and he purposed to make the stores hold out for six weeks.

In order to do that they would have to omit their supper and get along on two meals of a twenty-fifth of a pound of bread. “I was apprehensive that a proposal on this head would be ill received,” Lieutenant Bligh commented, “and that it would require my utmost resolution to enforce it. However, on representing to the people the necessity of guarding against casual delays, from adverse winds, and other causes, they all cheerfully assented.”

There was never a more methodical man than this Lieutenant William Bligh. When they caught a couple of boobies, sea-fowl as large as a duck, the bodies were divided into seventeen portions, and one man was detailed to turn his back while another pointed at the pieces and asked, “Who is to have this?” The first sailor named a companion at random, and drew the fragment designated. In this manner a fair distribution was assured, and the

man who drew the feet of the bird to chew could have no quarrel with the lucky sailor who got a bit of the breast.

Bligh was a capable navigator with the quadrant and compass which the mutineers had given him and he was driving for a passage to the southward of Endeavor Straits and an offing on the coast of New Holland, as Australia was then called. His crew was exceedingly low-spirited, but he diverted them with the hope of finding smoother water inside the far-flung reefs and a landing where they might eat fresh fruits and ease their weary bones for a little while.

After three weeks of misery, this speck of an open boat in a trackless waste of ocean descried the wooded headlands of New Holland and a surf which beat against the outer ramparts of coral. They found an opening and rowed into a lagoon, where they hauled the boat out upon the white sand and feasted luxuriously on oysters. These they roasted in a fire which Lieutenant Bligh kindled with a lens of his spy-glass. Then they cooked a stew, and were so mightily refreshed that "all retained strength and fortitude sufficient to resist what might be expected in our voyage to Timor."

Two or three days of assiduous attention to the oysters, and they were ready to put to sea again, with water-breakers filled. Before they shoved off, Bligh directed all hands to attend prayers; so they knelt on the beach with bared heads while he read service from the Church of England prayer-book. A group of natives, black and naked, came scampering out of the forest just as the boat took the water, but there was no clash with them.

As they steered through the mazes of the Malay Archipelago, many small islands swam in the seas of azure and emerald, and they ventured to land again. Here Bligh had the first trouble with the tempers of his sick and weary men. "When ordered to go scouting for food, one of them went so far as to tell me, with a mutinous look, that he was as good a man as myself,"

relates this inflexible commander who had made such a sorry mess of things in the *Bounty*. He added:

> "It was impossible for me to judge where this might end, therefore to prevent such disputes in future I determined either to preserve my authority or die in the attempt. Seizing a cutlass I ordered him to take hold of another and defend himself; on which he cried out that I was going to kill him and immediately made concessions. I did not allow this to interfere further with the harmony of the boat's crew and everything soon became quiet."

For a week they coasted along New Holland in this manner before risking the open sea again. They caught some turtle and went ashore at night to hunt the noddies, or sea-birds, and knock them over on their nests. One of the sailors, Robert Lamb, stole away from his companions, contrary to orders, and blundered into the birds, which fled away. Much provoked, Bligh gave the culprit a drubbing and made him confess that he had eaten nine noddies raw. It goes without saying that greedy Robert Lamb promised not to do it again.

Much more sanguine of some day reaching the destination of Timor, the argonauts endured another long stretch of the voyage, almost two thousand miles more, but it was fast breaking the strength which they had so amazingly displayed. Surgeon Ledward and Lawrence Lebogue, a hardy old salt, seemed to have come to the end, and Bligh nursed them with teaspoonfuls of wine and crumbs of bread that he had been saving for such emergencies. He now began to fear that the party could not survive to finish the voyage, and mentioned that

> extreme weakness, swelled legs, hollow and ghastly countenances, with an apparent debility of understanding, seemed to me the

> melancholy presages of approaching dissolution. The boatswain very innocently told me that he really thought I looked worse than any one in the boat. I was amused by the simplicity with which he uttered such an opinion and returned him a better compliment.

It was not decreed by destiny that courage and endurance so heroic should be thwarted in the last gasp. Forty-one days after they had so boldly set out from Tofa in the South Seas they made a landfall on the dim and misty shore of the island of Timor. The log recorded a total distance sailed of 3618 nautical miles, which in round numbers amounts to four thousand land, or statute, miles. No wonder that the feat appeared scarcely credible to these castaways themselves whom the mutineers of the *Bounty* had turned adrift with no more than a fortnight's provisions in a fearfully overcrowded open boat. And every man of the seventeen was alive and ready to be patched up and set on his feet again.

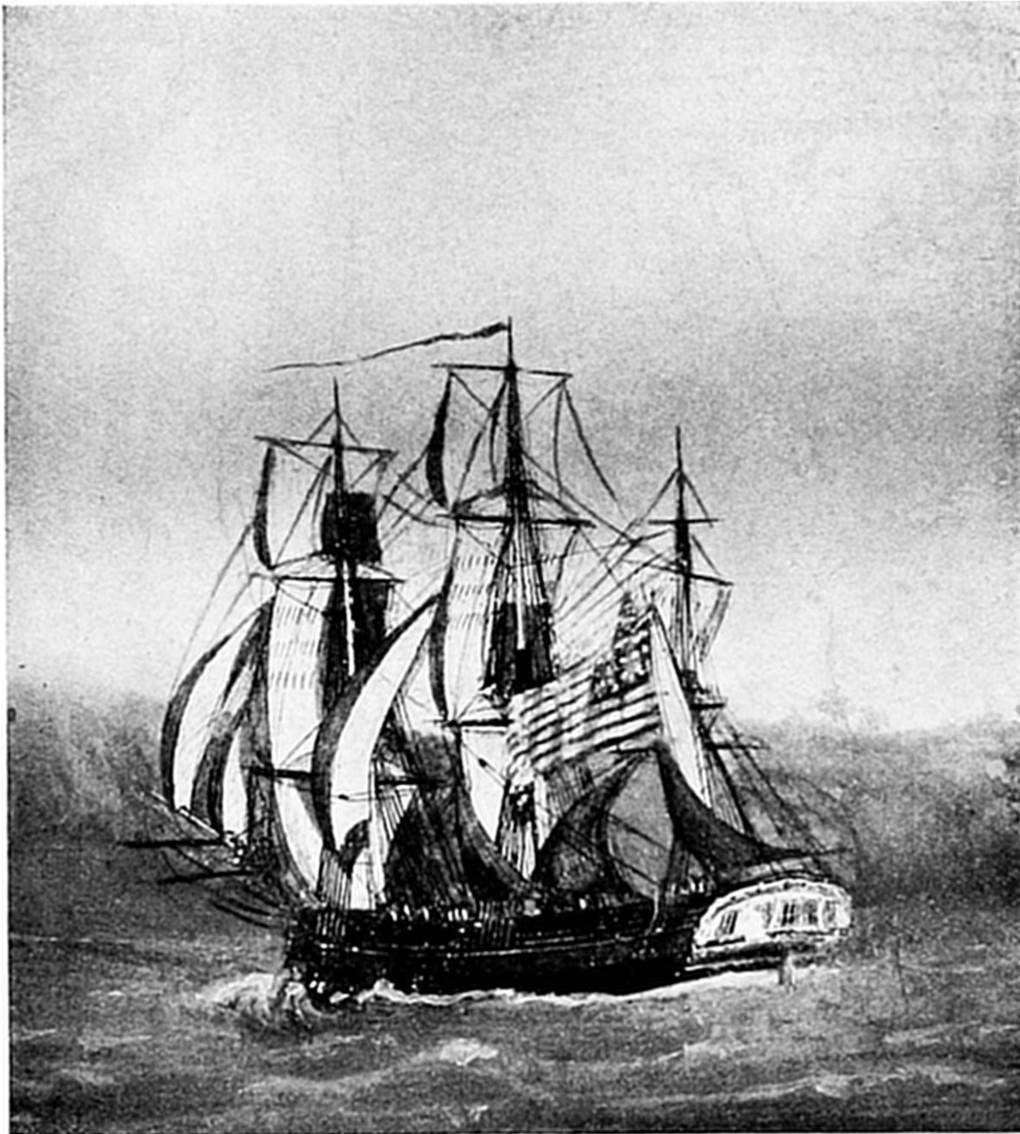
Bligh had no idea where the Dutch settlements were, so he held on along the coast, past very lovely landscapes of mountain, woodland, and park-like spaces. Coming to a large bay, he tacked in and saw a little village of thatched huts. Natives paddled out to meet the boat and told the party where to find the Dutch governor of Timor. In the next harbor they discovered two square-rigged vessels, so they hoisted the union jack as a distress-signal, and anchored off the fort and town of Coupang. This was the end of their troubles. Bligh bought a small schooner from the courteous Dutch governor, and so carried his men to Samarang, where they found passage to Batavia, and were sent home in a Dutch East Indiaman.

It was Commander Bligh himself who took to England the first tidings of the mutiny of the *Bounty*, which aroused great popular interest and indignation. In 1790 he published an account of his sufferings and the heroic voyage to Timor, and in response to the public clamor the Admiralty speedily fitted out the frigate *Pandora* to hunt down Fletcher Christian and

his fellow-criminals and fetch them home for trial and punishment. The voyage of the *Pandora* resulted in tragic shipwreck and another sensational episode of open boats. As a sequel it is inseparable from the strange and unhappy romance of the *Bounty* and her people.

Captain Edwards of the *Pandora* frigate was a martinet of a naval officer, without sympathy or imagination, and the witchery of the South Seas held no lure for him. His errand was to run down the mutineers as outlaws who deserved no mercy and to take them home to be hanged.

First touching at Tahiti, the *Pandora* found that a number of the sentimental sinners still remained on that island, but that Fletcher Christian and the rest had sailed away in the *Bounty* to search for a retreat elsewhere. With a hundred and fifty bluejackets to rake the valleys and beaches of Tahiti, Captain Edwards soon rounded up fourteen fugitives, who were marched aboard the *Pandora* and clapped into irons.



EARLY AMERICAN SHIP OF THE 18TH CENTURY

A small house was knocked together on deck to serve as a jail for them, and was rightly enough dubbed “Pandora’s Box” by the sailors. It was only eleven feet long, without windows or doors, and was entered by a scuttle in the roof. In this inhuman little den the fourteen mutineers were kept with their arms and legs in irons, which were never removed to permit exercise. Sweltering in a tropical climate, the wonder is that they did not perish to a man.

There was suffering far worse to endure, however—the anguish of broken hearts. All of these men were torn from the native wives to whom they had been faithful and true, and their infants were left fatherless. Pitiful was the story of "Peggy," the beautiful Tahitian girl who was beloved by Midshipman Stewart of the mutineers and to whom she had borne a child. She was allowed to visit him in the wretched deck-house of the *Pandora*, but her grief was so violent that she had to be taken ashore by force, and the young husband begged the officers not to let her see him again.

The light of her life had gone out, and she died of sorrow a few months later, leaving her infant son as the first half-caste born in Tahiti. Six years after this, a band of pioneering English missionaries visited Tahiti and heard of the boy and his story. They took this orphan of British blood under their own care and brought him up and educated him.

It is quite evident that Captain Edwards isolated his prisoners and treated them so harshly because of his fear that the bluejackets of his frigate might be stirred to a sympathetic mutiny of their own. It must have wrung the hearts of these honest British tars, who had sweethearts waiting at the end of the long road home, when, as the story runs:

> The families of the captives were allowed to visit them, a permission which gave rise to the most affecting scenes. Every day the wives came down with their infants in their arms, the fathers weeping over their babes who were soon to be bereft of paternal care and protection, and husband and wife mingling cries and tears at the prospect of so calamitous a separation.

The fourteen mutineers had built a little schooner only thirty-five feet long, in which they were hoping to flee to an island more remote, but the *Pandora* swooped down before they were quite ready to embark. Captain Edwards seized this vessel to use as a tender, and manned her with two

petty officers and seven sailors, who sailed away on a cruise of their own to assist in the search for the rest of the pirates, as they were called. The voyage of this tiny cock-boat of a schooner is one of the most remarkable tales in the history of South Sea discovery, but not even a diary or log remains to relate it in detail.

These adventurers were the first white men to set foot on the great group of the Fiji Islands, which Tasman and Cook had passed by. The exploit is sung to this day in one of the poems of the Fijian language which have handed down the traditions of the race from father to son. The little schooner was never seen again by the *Pandora* after they parted at Tahiti to go their separate ways; but after many months the master's mate, the bold midshipman, and the seven handy seamen who comprised the crew came sailing into the Dutch East Indies.

The *Pandora* ransacked the South Seas in vain for Fletcher Christian and his party, and turned homeward after nine months of cruising on this quest. Having cleared the coast of New Guinea, the frigate crashed into the Great Barrier Reef while trying to find a passage through, and foundered after eleven hours of endeavor to keep her afloat by pumping. The discipline was admirable, and in the ship's dying flurry four boats were filled and sent away, besides some rafts and canoes.

During those long hours, however, while the sailors were trying to save themselves and the frigate, the hapless mutineers were left in the "Pandora's Box," in leg-irons and manacles and utterly helpless. Three of them were finally allowed to work at the pumps, still wearing their chains, but Captain Edwards paid no heed to the prayers of the others, who foresaw they were to drown like rats in a trap. It was inhumanity almost beyond belief, for these prisoners could not have escaped if they had been released and allowed to swim for it with the rest of the crew.

His own officers and men interceded and begged permission to knock the shackles off the mutineers before the ship went down, but Captain Edwards threatened to shoot the first man who interfered with his orders, and to kill any of the captives who attempted to free themselves. He was the type of officer who is blindly, densely zealous and regards the letter of the law as to be obeyed under all circumstances. The Admiralty had told him to bring these fugitives back to England in chains. This settled the matter for him.

When the *Pandora* was about to plunge under, a council of officers formally decided "that nothing more could be done for the preservation of His Majesty's ship." The command was then given to quit her before she carried the crew to the bottom, but even then two sentries of the Royal Marines guarded the scuttle of "Pandora's Box" with instructions to shoot if the mutineers tried to smash their irons.

The master-at-arms was a man with a heart, as well as a ready wit, and as he scrambled over the roof of the deck-house with the sea racing at his heels, he dropped his bunch of keys through the open scuttle. The frantic prisoners heard the keys fall and knew what they meant. In semi-darkness, with the water gurgling over the floor of their pen, they strove to fit the keys to the heavy handcuffs and the chains that were locked about their legs. It is a scene that requires no more words to appeal to the emotions a hundred and thirty years after these unhappy British sailors fought their last fight for life.

Ten of them succeeded in releasing themselves and were washed off into the sea, where the boats were kind enough to pick them up, but four of the mutineers were drowned with the ship, still wearing the irons from which Captain Edwards had refused to free them. It is probable that with the bunch of keys which the master-at-arms had dropped among them these four men had died while doing unto others as they would have been done

by. It was almost impossible for a prisoner so heavily manacled to fit a key in the padlock that bound his own wrists together. One comrade helped another, perhaps, and so those who awaited their turn were doomed to die. And thus they redeemed the folly and the crime of that fantastic adventure in the *Bounty*.

Thirty men of the *Pandora's* company were also drowned, but the survivors made a successful voyage of it in their open boats, across a thousand miles of the Indian Ocean, and reached the same Dutch port of Coupang where Lieutenant William Bligh had found refuge. Here they met the actors in still another thrilling drama of an open boat. A party of British convicts, including a woman and two small children, had stolen away from the penal settlement of Port Jackson on the coast of Australia in a ship's gig, and had fled by sea all the way to Timor, living on shell-fish and seabirds and surviving ten weeks of exposure and peril.

They told the Dutch governor at Coupang that they were castaways from an English ship, and he believed the tale until the people of the *Pandora* came into port. Assuming they were survivors of the same wreck, a Dutch officer remarked to one of the convicts that the captain of their ship had reached Coupang. Caught off his guard, the fellow blurted:

"Dam' me! We have no captain."

The cat was out of the bag, and the slip proved fatal. Haled before the governor, the runaways confessed who they really were. The tale they told was interwoven with a romance. The leader of the party, William Bryant, had been transported to Botany Bay for the crime of smuggling, and with him went his sweetheart, Mary Broad, who was convicted of helping him to escape from Winchester Gaol. They were married by the chaplain of Botany Bay, and Bryant was detailed to catch fish for the table of the governor and other officials of that distressful colony. It was while employed as a

fisherman that he was able to steal a boat and plan the escape, and they carried their two children with them.

His Excellency, the Dutch governor of Timor, admired their courage, but he could not be turned from his duty, and the runaway convicts were therefore sent to England. During the voyage William Bryant, the two children, and three men of the party died, but the woman lived, and so rapidly regained her bloom and beauty that before the *Gorgon*, East Indiaman, sighted the forelands of England, an officer of the Royal Marines had fallen in love with her. Through his efforts she was granted a full pardon, and they were wedded and lived happily ever after, so far as we know. Many a novel has paraded a heroine less worthy than this smuggler's sweetheart, Mary Broad of Devonshire and Botany Bay.

Of the ten *Bounty* mutineers who survived the wreck of the *Pandora*, five were acquitted, two received the king's pardon, and three were hanged from a yard-arm of H. M. S. *Brunswick* in Portsmouth Harbor on October 29, 1792. Of Fletcher Christian and his companions who had vanished in the *Bounty* nothing whatever was heard or known, and England forgot all about them. Twenty-five years passed, and they had become almost legendary, one of those mysteries which inspire the conjectures and gossip of idle hours in ship's forecastles.

In 1813 a fleet of British merchantmen sailed for India convoyed by the frigate *Briton*, Captain Sir Thomas Staines. While passing the Marquesas group he discovered a fertile island on which were cultivated fields and a village and people who eagerly paddled out in their canoes to hail the frigate. The captain was trying to shout a few words of the Marquesan language to them when a stalwart youth called out in perfectly good English:

"What is the ship's name? And who is the commander, if you please?"

Dumfounded, the bluejackets swarmed to the bulwark to haul the visitors aboard, and while they wondered, the same young man asked of the quarter-deck:

"Do you know Captain William Bligh in England, and is he still alive?"

The riddle was solved. Captain Staines replied to the courteous, fair-skinned stranger:

"Do you know one Fletcher Christian and where is he?"

"Yes, sir. He is dead, but there is his son, Friday Fletcher October Christian, just coming aboard from the next boat."

These interesting dwellers on Pitcairn Island were invited to breakfast in the ward-room, "but before sitting down to table they fell on their knees and with uplifted hands implored the blessing of Heaven on the meal of which they were about to partake. At the close of the repast they resumed the same attitude and breathed a fervent prayer of thanksgiving for the bounty which they had just experienced."

Captain Staines went ashore with his guests and found a very beautiful village, the houses set around a small park, the streets immaculately clean, the whole aspect of it extraordinarily attractive. There were forty-eight of these islanders, including seven of the Tahitian wives who had been brought in the *Bounty*. The others were children, and fine young men and girls. Of the fathers of the flock only one was left alive, John Adams, a sturdy, dignified man of sixty, who welcomed Captain Staines and frankly revealed the whole story of the *Bounty*, "admitting that by following the fortunes of Fletcher Christian he had lost every right to his country and that his life was even forfeited to the laws. He was now at the head of a little community by whom he was adored and whom he carefully instructed in the duties of religion, industry, and friendship."

It was explained by John Adams that the native women had preferred the British sailors to their own suitors, which inspired a fatal jealousy, and Fletcher Christian and most of his comrades had been killed in quarrels and uprisings against them. The few survivors had founded a new race in this dreamy island of the South Seas, and, as Captain Staines perceived, “a society bearing no stamp of the guilty origin from which it sprung.”

John Adams, the admirable counselor and ruler, had taught them to use the English tongue and to cherish all that was good in the institutions of their mother country. He had even taught the children to read and write by means of a slate and a stone pencil. They were a vigorous, wholesome stock, sheltered from disease and vice, and with a sailor’s eye for a pretty girl Captain Staines noted that “the young women had invariable beautiful teeth, fine eyes, and an open expression of countenance, with an engaging air of simple innocence and sweet sensibility.”

The captain gave John Adams what books and writing-materials he could spare, and the crew of the frigate added many a gift of clothing and useful trinkets from their ditty-boxes. Twelve years passed before any other word was heard from Pitcairn Island, and then the ship *Blossom* made a call. It was found that a wandering whaler had left a seaman named John Buffet, who felt called to serve as schoolmaster and clergyman to the grateful islanders. England now became interested in this idyllic colony, and there was no desire to recall or avenge the mutiny of the *Bounty*. John Adams had long since atoned for the misdeeds of himself and his misguided shipmates, and his good works were to live after him.

In 1830, H. M. S. *Seringapatam* was sent out by the British Government to carry a cargo of agricultural implements, tools, live-stock, and many other things which might increase the happiness and well-being of the people of Pitcairn Island. John Adams had passed away a little while before that, full of years and honor, and it may be safely assumed that he

was not logged on the books of the recording angel as a mutineer. The mantle of his leadership fell upon the broad shoulders of Friday Fletcher October Christian.

It was only a year or so ago that the generous captain of a freight steamer bound out across the South Pacific wrote a letter to a New York newspaper to inform the public that he would be glad to go out of his course to touch at Pitcairn Island and leave any books or other gifts which might be sent in his care. It was near the Christmas season, and the spirit moved him to play Santa Claus to the people of that happy island whose forefathers were the mutineers of the *Bounty* in the year of 1789.

CHAPTER VIII

FRIGATES THAT VANISHED IN THE SOUTH SEAS

WHEN our forefathers were fighting in the Revolution, which was not so very long ago in history, the world was a vastly entertaining place for a man who loved to wander in quest of bold adventures. Nowadays the unknown seas have all been charted, and it is not easy to realize that a great part of the watery globe was unexplored and trackless when George Washington led his ragged Continentals. There were no lean, hard-bitten Australian troops to rally to the call of the mother country when England was fighting most of Europe as well as the American Colonies, because not a solitary Briton had then set foot upon the mighty continent of the South Pacific.

For three centuries the high-pooped merchant ships and the roving buccaneers of all flags had been sailing on the trade routes to the New World and to the East Indies, but scarcely a solitary keel had furrowed the immense expanse of blue water which is called the South Seas. Daring traders as were the old skippers of Salem, it was not until 1811 that the first of them, in the bark *Active*, bartered a cargo with the Fiji Islanders, and he was only four years later than the pioneer ship of the British East India Company.

In the rivalry for the honors of discovery, France was moved by the desire to continue on the sea the illustrious traditions of her great explorers who had won empire in North America. The peace of Versailles in 1783 had ended her conflict with England, and although that absurd blockhead of a

monarch, Louis XVI, was far more interested in exploring the menu of his next meal, there were noble spirits eager to win victories in peace as well as in war, and they persuaded the ministry to send a splendidly equipped expedition to the mysterious Pacific and the legendary coasts of Asia. Their choice of a leader was Captain Jean-François de Galaup, Comte de la Pérouse, soldier and sailor, who had proved his mettle by destroying the Hudson’s Bay posts as an act of war, and thereby wringing with anguish the hearts of the directors of that opulent British company.

La Pérouse is a shadowy name to this generation and wholly forgotten by most of us, but he was a great and gallant gentleman who was of the rare company of those that wrought enduring deeds in a younger, ruder world, and so helped to build for those who should come after him. It was his fate to vanish with his ships, and so utterly were those fine frigates and their hundreds of sailors erased from the seas that no fragment of tidings was discovered for almost forty years. Their disappearance was one of the sensations of an era in which shipwrecks were so frequent that they had to be quite extraordinary to arouse public attention.

The two frigates carried an elaborate party of scientists, which included a geographer, a civil engineer, a noted surgeon, an astronomer, a physicist, a botanist, and a clock-maker. They were prepared to survey, map, and investigate any distant shores which had been overlooked by the persistent English, Dutch, and Portuguese navigators. It was typical of French thoroughness that “Fleurien, the superintendent of ports and arsenals, contributed an entire volume of learned notes and discussions upon the results of all known voyages since the time of Christopher Columbus.”

Laden with all manner of stores and merchandise the two ships *La Boussole* and *L’Astrolabe* sailed bravely out of the ancient port of Brest on August 30, 1785. By way of Madeira they ran the long slant across the Atlantic to Brazil, and during this first leg of the voyage La Pérouse showed

himself to be a wonderfully capable leader. Those old wooden war-ships were so many pest-houses, as a rule, in which sailors sickened and died by scores during prolonged periods of sea duty. The quarters in which the men were crowded were wet and foul and unventilated in rough weather, and the diet of salt meat bred the disease of scurvy. The journal of this voyage says:

> After ninety-six days' navigation we had not one case of illness on board. The health of the crew had remained unimpaired by change of climate, rain, and fog; but our provisions were of first-class quality; I neglected none of the precautions which experience and prudence suggested to me; and above all, we kept up our spirits by encouraging dancing every evening among the crew whenever the weather permitted.

Around Cape Horn and to the Sandwich Islands, which Captain Cook had discovered only a few years earlier, the lonely frigates steered their wandering course, and then northward to the Alaskan coast of America. While exploring a bay among the glaciers two boats were swamped and lost in the breakers, and the shipmates of the drowned officers and men built a monument of stone with this epitaph carved upon it:

At this entrance of this port, twenty-one brave sailors perished.
Whoever you may be, mingle your tears with ours.

Thence La Pérouse coasted down to Monterey Bay, and was cordially welcomed among the Spanish missions of California. He had it in mind to cross the unknown stretches of the Pacific, and so set out to reach China by a new sailing route. This brought him within sight of Guam, where he landed, and then he touched at Manila. Next he explored Formosa and the coast of Tartary, and tarried awhile among the primitive fishing folk of Saghalin and Kamchatka. It was pleasanter when the frigates turned southward again and floated in the warm and tranquil South Seas. The

second in command, M. de Langle, was killed during a clash with the natives of the Navigator Islands, and thirty-two of the French sailors were slain or wounded while trying to fill the water-casks.

Short-handed and dismayed by this tragedy, La Pérouse went to Botany Bay, Australia, where the English were just then beginning to establish a colony, in order to send his sick and wounded ashore and to refit his worn, weary ships. They had been away from France almost three years, and the frigates hoisted sails that were patched and threadbare until it seemed as though a breeze would blow them from the yards. The clothes of the men were no better. The paint was weather-worn on the sides and bulwarks, weeds and barnacles grew thick on the planking, and the decks were cracked and blistered by tropical suns. They were like the phantom ships of some old sailor's yarn.

Yet La Pérouse was ready to go on with his quest, nor was there any sign of mutiny among his men. Most of them were hard and brown and healthy, and ready to follow him to other ends of the earth. It was his purpose to depart from Botany Bay and explore the Australian coast and the Friendly Islands, and finally to lay his course to reach Mauritius, in the Indian Ocean, at the end of the year of 1788. This was the last word that came from him to France. Two more years passed, and not a ship had sighted the roving frigates, nor had they been seen in any port. The people of France were proud of La Pérouse and his romantic achievements, and although the unhappy nation was in the throes of revolution, the National Assembly passed a decree which read in part:

> That the King be entreated to give orders to all ambassadors, residents, consuls, and national agents at the courts of foreign powers that they may engage those different sovereigns, in the name of humanity and of the arts and sciences, to charge all navigators and agents whatsoever, their subjects, in whatever place they may be, but

> especially in the southerly part of the South Sea, to make inquiry after the two French frigates, *La Boussole* and *L'Astrolabe*, commanded by M. de la Pérouse as well as after their crews, and to obtain every information which may ascertain their existence or their shipwreck; so that in case M. de la Pérouse, and his companions should be found, no matter in what place, there shall be given to them every assistance, and all means procured for them, that they may be enabled to return to their country with whatever may belong to them.
>
> It is further decreed that the King be entreated to direct that one or more vessels be equipped and several learned and experienced persons embarked therein, to the commanders of which may be given in charge the double mission, to search after M. de la Pérouse and also at the same time to render this expedition useful and advantageous to navigation, to geography, and to the arts and sciences.

This hope of rescue appealed to the quick imagination of France. La Pérouse was a national hero. It was argued, with good reason, that he might be waiting on some solitary island of those empty seas where topsails had never yet lifted above the blue horizon. Again two frigates were elaborately fitted out at Brest, and rechristened, with a pretty touch of sentiment, *la Recherche* (The *Research*) and *L'Esperance* (The *Hope*). They sailed early in 1791, touching at the Cape of Good Hope, where the vice-admiral in command got wind of a curious rumor that "near the Admiralty Islands in the Pacific Ocean the captain of a British sloop-of-war had seen men dressed in the European style and in what he took to be French uniforms."

This fanned the spark of expectation and seemed a promising trail to follow, but the most careful search failed to confirm the report. Among the reefs and islands the frigates cruised in vain until they had been away from home more than two years. Then without finding a trace of La Pérouse and all his gallant officers and patient, resolute seamen, they sailed to the Dutch

East Indies. There they received amazing news from their beloved France. Louis XVI had been beheaded, and the agonized republic was at war with the armies of Europe. The Dutch officials of Sourabaya, regarding all Frenchmen as lawful enemies, held the crew of the frigates as prisoners, and this was the end of the search for La Pérouse.

The people of storm-tossed France had other things to think of, and they forgot all about the lost explorer and his ships' companies. There was reason to believe that some of them were alive when the two frigates had been trying to find them. In 1791 Captain Edwards was roaming the South Seas in the British frigate *Pandora*, whose mission was to run down and carry home for punishment the famous mutineers of the *Bounty*. He sighted the island of Vanikoro and ran along its shore, no more than a mile outside the barrier reef. In his log he noted that natives appeared to be attempting to communicate with him by means of smoke signals. Captain Edwards was a brave, but stupid, officer of the Royal Navy, and it failed to occur to him that the natives of this little island, which had been undiscovered until then, would be most unlikely to try to talk to him in this manner. In the light of later information there is every probability that this smoke was made by survivors of La Pérouse's party, and they were still marooned on Vanikoro several years after their shipwreck. Their emotions must have been profoundly melancholy when they saw the tall British frigate glide past unheeding and drop from their wistful vision.

It was not until 1813 that the first thread of this tangled skein of mystery was disclosed. La Pérouse had vanished a quarter of a century before, and his ships were long since listed on the sadly eloquent roll of "missing with all hands." It is hard to astonish a deep-water sailor, because nothing is too strange to happen at sea. The British merchantman *Hunter*, on a voyage from Calcutta to New South Wales and Canton, stopped at the Fiji Islands to pick up some sandalwood and *bêche-de-mer* by way of turning over a few dollars in trade. Already the beach-comber had begun to

find a refuge from toil in the South Sea Islands, and Fiji was plagued with runaway sailors whose idea of paradise was to loaf and get drunk and dance with the girls.

While the *Hunter* was taking on her cargo, a party of these salt-water vagabonds engaged in a murderous row with the natives, who decided to be rid of them. The earnest intention of the embattled Fijian warriors was to exterminate their European guests. The chief mate of the *Hunter*, Mr. Dillon, happened to be ashore with a boat's crew, and he was a lusty man in a shindy, as his name might indicate. Out of the mêlée he succeeded in hauling a German beach-comber, Martin Bushart, who seems to have been a sober, decent fellow, and a Lascar sailor. They were taken off to the ship and allowed to remain there.

When the *Hunter* sailed for China, this derelict of a Martin Bushart made the singular request of Chief Officer Dillon that he be landed on the first island that happened to be convenient to the vessel's course. Dillon's story fails to explain why this simple-minded "Prussian," as he called him, should have desired to run the risk of being killed and perhaps eaten after he had escaped by the narrowest margin. However, the captain and the mate of the *Hunter* were obliging mariners who sensibly concluded that it was a man's own business if he yearned to hop from the frying-pan into the fire, and so they let the ship go toward the first land sighted after leaving Fiji.

This happened to be the island of Tucopia, and if you care to prick it off on the chart, Chief Officer Dillon gives the position as latitude 12° 15´ S. and longitude 169° E. The Lascar sailor who also had been saved from the irate Fijians and their uplift movement elected to seek this new place of exile along with Martin Bushart as a sort of Man Friday to a Prussian Robinson Crusoe, and so the singular pair were left on the beach of Tucopia, where they waved an unperturbed farewell, while the *Hunter*

hoisted colors and fired a gun to express her regards and best wishes. What kind of welcome the natives extended them is left to conjecture.

Mr. Dillon, when it came to writing about the episodes, unconsciously employed the trick of the playwright who permits so many years to elapse between the acts of the drama. Nothing could be more concise than his method of joining the facts together. He tells us:

> We landed Martin Bushart and the Lascar on this island the 20th September, 1813. On the 13th of May, 1826, in command of my own ship, the *St. Patrick*, bound from Valparaiso to Pondicherry, I came in sight of the island of Tucopia. Prompted by curiosity, as well as regard for an old companion in danger, I hove my ship to off the island of Tucopia. Shortly a canoe put off from the island and came alongside. In it was the Lascar. Immediately after another canoe came off with Martin Bushart, the Prussian. They were both in sound health and were extremely rejoiced to see me. They informed me that the natives had treated them kindly; that no ship had touched there from the time they were first landed until about a year previous to my arrival when an English whaler visited the island for a short time.

Captain Dillon mentions the dates in a very casual fashion, but some years had elapsed with a vengeance—thirteen of them, in fact—during twelve of which Martin Bushart had dwelt contentedly without seeing the face of another white man. The ties that bound him to his island had been strong enough to hold him there when the chance was offered to sail away in the English whaler.

While the pair of them were visiting Captain Dillon on board of the *St. Patrick*, the Lascar showed the sailors a tarnished old silver sword-guard, and one of them bought it of him for a few fish-hooks. Captain Dillon happened to see it, and asked Martin Bushart where it had come from. In

this strangely accidental way was revealed the clouded mystery of La Pérouse and his lost frigates. Bushart explained that when he had first landed on the island the natives possessed as their chief treasures this ornate sword-guard, the handle of a silver fork, a few knives, tea-cups, glass beads and bottles, and a spoon engraved with a crest and monogram. In addition to these furnishings of a ship's cabin, they had also some iron bolts, chain-plates, and axes.

Martin Bushart had been curious to discover how these islanders had obtained such relics of disaster, for the *Hunter* was the first ship that had ever been seen off Tucopia when he was set ashore there in 1813. He was informed that a large group of islands called Manicola lay to leeward about two days' sail in a canoe, and that voyages were frequently made there for trade and sociability. It was from the people of Manicola that the articles of iron and silver had been obtained. Now, Captain Dillon remembered the story of La Pérouse, as did every shipmaster who traversed the South Seas, and so he examined the sword-guard and discovered engraved initials, faint and worn, but legible enough for him to surmise that they were those of the French discoverer and navigator.

His interest keen, Captain Dillon went ashore with Martin Bushart, who interpreted for him, and they held a long conversation with the chiefs of Tucopia. Many years before, so the tale ran, two great ships had anchored among the islands of Manicola. Before they were able to send any boats ashore or to become acquainted with the natives, a very sudden storm arose, and both ships were driven upon the reefs and were destroyed by the fury of the surf. The people of Manicola rushed in crowds to the beach, armed with clubs, spears, and bows and arrows, and the sailors of the ships fired muskets and big guns at them. This infuriated the people, who killed some of the shipwrecked men when they were washed ashore or managed to make a landing in their boats. The survivors showed a friendly spirit and

offered axes, buttons, and trinkets as gifts, at which the people ceased to attack them.

The foreign sailors saved a large quantity of stores and other material from the wrecks, and at once began to build a small vessel from the timbers of the two shattered frigates. They worked with astonishing skill and speed, and built a schooner that was large enough to carry most of them away. The commander promised to return and bring off those whom he was compelled to leave behind. Crowded into this little makeshift craft, a large number of the officers and men of the lost *Boussole* and *L'Astrolabe* steered away from Manicola and were never heard of again. A second shipwreck swallowed them somewhere in the South Seas. It was impossible to ascertain whether La Pérouse himself was one of this company. Those who were left behind lived with the people of Manicola and were kindly treated by the chiefs.

The Lascar had made two voyages to Manicola and had actually talked with two aged Europeans, who told him that they had been wrecked many years before in a ship, the fragments of which they pointed out to him. They told him that no other ship had ever stopped there since and that most of their companions were dead, but that they had been scattered so widely among the islands of the group that it was impossible to know whether any more of them were still living. By the Lascar's reckoning, this would have been about thirty years after the disaster that overwhelmed the frigates of La Pérouse and, for all that is known, he himself may have been one of those aged men who dwelt so long beyond all knowledge of their countrymen in France and to whom the priceless gift of rescue was denied.

Captain Dillon was determined to proceed at once to Manicola and find and save those two aged castaways whom the Lascar believed to be Frenchmen. Leaving Tucopia, he cracked on sail, and Martin Bushart went with him, having concluded to return to civilization and much moved by the

friendship which prompted the Irish shipmaster to visit him after so many years had passed. The Lascar remained behind, having a large and happy family, which he declined to desert. Within sight of the Manicola group a dead calm held the good ship *St. Patrick*, and for seven days not a breath of wind stirred her spires of canvas. She was running short of provisions, leaking badly, and most reluctantly Captain Dillon was compelled to resume his voyage to India.

Reaching Calcutta, he presented a carefully written report to officials of the British Government and stated his conclusion that the remains of the expedition of La Pérouse were to be found among the islands of the Manicola group. The story was so credible that the Government made a ship ready and placed her in command of Captain Dillon, who got under way in January, 1827. It was September before he arrived at Tucopia, where he found the Lascar, who, for some reason of his own, refused to accompany the party to Manicola. Martin Bushart was still with Captain Dillon, however, and he conducted a thorough investigation among the people of his own island home in order to discover all the relics possible. Tucopia was systematically ransacked, and among the articles brought to light were more swords, bits of iron and copper, and silverware with the monogram of La Pérouse.

After a fortnight, Captain Dillon took his ship to Manicola, where the green mountains towered from the sea. Alas! no aged Frenchmen came down to the beach to greet them, nor could any living survivor be found. Almost forty years had gone since they were cast away, and the last of them had slipped his moorings, with a farewell sigh and a prayer for France. When Captain Dillon’s party went ashore in a flotilla of armed boats, all the chief men of the island were assembled in the council-hall, and the most venerable and influential of them delivered himself of a long oration, the facts of which differed somewhat from the story as the natives of Tucopia had retold it to Martin Bushart and the Lascar. It is probable, however, that

the patriarchal chief, speaking at first hand, told the truth when he said to Captain Dillon:

> A long time ago the people of this island, upon coming out one morning, saw part of a ship on the reef opposite Paiow where it held together until the middle of the day when it was broken by the sea and fell to pieces so that large parts of it floated on shore along the coast. The ship got on the reef in the night when it blew a tremendous hurricane which broke down great numbers of our fruit trees. We had not seen the ship there the day before. Of those saved from her four men were on the beach at this place; whom we were about to kill, supposing them to be evil spirits, when they made a present to our chief of something and he saved their lives.
>
> These men lived with us for a short time and then joined the rest of their own people on the other island of Paiow. None of these four men was a chief. They were only subordinate men who obeyed orders. The things which we have brought together to show you were procured from the ship wrecked on that reef where, at low water, our people were in the habit of diving and bringing up what they could find. Several pieces of the wreck floated on shore, from which we obtained some things; but nothing more has been found for a long, long time.
>
> We killed none of the ship’s crew at this place, but many dead bodies were cast up on the beach. On the same night another great ship struck a reef near another of our islands, Whanou, and went down. There were many men saved from her, and they built a little ship, and went away five moons after the big one was wrecked. While building it, they had a high fence of logs all around them to keep out the islanders, who were also afraid of them, and therefore there was not much intercourse between them.

> The white men often used to look at the sun through something made of wood and brass, but they carried it away with them as being very precious. Two white men remained behind after the rest went away. These I remember, although there were more, no doubt. One of them was a chief and the other a common person, who attended on this other, his master. The white chief died about three years ago. His servant went away to another island with one of our chiefs some time before that. The only white men that the people of these islands have ever seen were those who came ashore from the two wrecked ships and you who stand before me now.

Obedient to orders, the friendly islanders had assembled for Captain Dillon’s inspection everything that had been fished up or handed down to them from the pitiful fragments of La Pérouse’s frigates. There was much iron and copper, broken chinaware, silver plate stamped with the lilies of France, a ship’s bell, several brass cannon, and pewter dishes also bearing the *fleur-de-lis*. On the bronze bell was the emblem of the holy cross between images of the Saviour and the Virgin Mary, and so the symbols of religion, of faith, of suffering, and of consolation had been preserved for those survivors who grew old and died on these undiscovered islands of the South Seas.

It was evident that the frigates had driven ashore on two different islands of the group, and Captain Dillon visited the scenes of both disasters. Native divers explored the reefs and found cannon embedded in the sand and massive oaken timbers and other memorials which enabled him to fix the position of the ships. Of the stockade and the launching-ways upon which the stout-hearted French seamen had built their little schooner not a trace could be found. During forty years of luxuriant growth the jungle had obliterated man’s handiwork, and the logs had rotted into mold.

The extraordinary fact was noted that the survivors who lingered into old age on these islands had left no written record or message behind them, not a word to indicate who they were. Lacking paper, they might have carved upon boards the brief epitome of their story or lettered it with charcoal on bits of bark, and the kindly chiefs of Manicola would have guarded the record with care. Like ghosts of sailormen, they lived in the memories and the traditions of these South Sea Islanders. Captain Dillon made an interesting discovery while exploring the reefs, and he thus describes it:

> Being in want of water, two men from each boat landed with the water kegs and went up to the nearest house. On passing it, one of our people called out in Spanish, “Here is a *fleur-de-lis*,” which M. Chaigneau and I, who followed and understood him, desired him to point out. He directed our attention to the door of a house where we saw at the bottom of the threshold a decayed piece of fir or pine plank with a *fleur-de-lis* and other ornamental work upon it. It had probably formed part of a ship’s stern and when complete exhibited the national arms of France. It was placed upon edge to barricade the passage, for the double purpose of keeping the pigs out and the children in the house. This we bought for a hatchet.

It was in Captain Dillon’s mind that one of the survivors had gone to another island, according to the old chief’s story, and so after finishing the investigation of the Manicola group, he sailed to ransack the seas near by. Nothing came of the search, and the natives whom he questioned here and there had never seen or heard of other white men excepting in the legends of the wreck of the two great ships as they had listened to the tales and songs of visitors from Manicola. Captain Dillon returned to Calcutta, where his enterprise and success were highly approved by the British Government

of India, which ordered him to proceed to France with the precious relics of the lost expedition of La Pérouse.

The Irish merchant skipper found that he had become a distinguished personage. His Most Christian Majesty, Charles X of France, was pleased to make him a chevalier of the Legion of Honor, with an annuity of four thousand francs. Chevalier Dillon relates:

> I was now taken to the French court and presented to the king who received me very graciously and conversed with me upon the subject of my voyage. He was well acquainted with the history of La Pérouse's expedition and addressed several judicious questions to me respecting the loss of that celebrated navigator, and inquired what was my opinion as to the probability of any of the crew being yet alive on the Solomon Islands.
>
> While in Paris I met several times with the Viscount Sesseps who is the only person of La Pérouse's expedition now known to be alive. He was attached to it twenty-six months and was landed at Kamchatka to convey dispatches and the charts and journals to France. He is now sixty-five years of age and in good health. He accompanied me one day to the Ministry of Marine for the purpose of viewing the relics procured at Manicola which he examined minutely. The piece of board with the *fleur-de-lis* on it, he observed, had most probably once formed a part of the ornamental work of the *Boussole's* stern on which the national arms of France were represented. The silver sword handle he also examined and said that such swords were worn by the officers of the expedition. With regard to the brass guns, having looked at them attentively, he observed that the four largest were such as stood on the quarter-deck of both ships, and that the smallest gun was such as they had mounted in the long-boats when going on shore among the savages. On noticing a small mill-stone, he turned around suddenly and

expressed his surprise, exclaiming, “That is the best thing you have got! We had some of them mounted on the quarter-deck to grind our grain.”

Savants and naval officers weighed all the evidence, and were of the opinion that at least two of the survivors had been alive as late as 1824, or thirty-six years after the shipwreck, and that one of them was possibly La Pérouse. The theory was advanced that after his great adventure had been eclipsed by a misfortune so enormous, he might have been unwilling to return to France, fancying himself disgraced, and that he perhaps chose to maroon himself at Manicola when his comrades sailed away in their tiny schooner. Be that as it may, their fate was no less tragic, for the sea conquered them and left no sign or token. Long after Captain Dillon had made his famous voyage of discovery, the belief still persisted in France that La Pérouse and some of his officers and men were existing somewhere in the South Seas and awaiting the rescue that never came.

Soon after Captain Dillon visited Manicola, a French ship arrived there on a similar mission. Having satisfied himself as to the location of the wreck of the flag-ship, *L’Astrolabe*, the captain sent his crew ashore to erect an enduring monument of stone, upon which was carved the words:

“To the Memory of La Pérouse and his Companions.”

CHAPTER IX

WHEN H. M. S. *PHOENIX* DROVE ASHORE

Where Blake and mighty Nelson fell
  Your manly hearts shall glow,
As ye sweep through the deep,
  While the stormy winds do blow!
While the battle rages loud and long
  And the stormy winds do blow.

IT was a British admiral, Sir Lewis Bayly, who told the officers of the American destroyers operating out of Queenstown, “To work with you is a pleasure, to know you is to know the best traits of the Anglo-Saxon race.” In the same spirit it is generous to recall the enduring traditions of the English Navy, which were welded through many centuries of courageous conflict with the sea and the enemy. The wooden frigates and the towering ships of the line gave place to the steel-walled cruiser and the grim, squat dreadnought, but for the men behind the guns the salty lineage was unbroken. As Beatty and his squadrons kept watch and ward in the misty Orkneys, so had Nelson maintained his uneasy vigil off Toulon.

Among the annals of the vanished days of the old navies, of the tarry, pigtailed seamen with hearts of oak, the story of a shipwreck has been preserved in a letter written to his mother by a lieutenant of the frigate *Phoenix* in the year 1780. He tells her about the tragic episode as though he had actually enjoyed it, scribbling the details with a boyish gusto which

conveys to us, in a manner exceedingly vivid, how ships and men lived and toiled in the age of boarding-pikes, hammock-nettings, and single topsails. Few young men write such long letters to their mothers nowadays, and even in that era of leisurely and literary correspondence a friend who was permitted to read the narrative was moved to comment:

“Every circumstance is detailed with feeling and powerful appeals are continually made to the heart. It must likewise afford considerable pleasure to observe the devout heart of a seaman frequently bursting forth and imparting sublimity to the relation.”

This stilted admiration must not frighten the modern reader away, for Lieutenant Archer held his old-fashioned piety well under control, and was as brisk, slangy, and engaging a young officer as you could find afloat in a skittish destroyer of the present day. The forty-four-gun frigate *Phoenix* was commanded by Captain Sir Hyde Parker, who later became an admiral, and under whose orders Nelson served for a time. His name has a flavor of interest for Americans because he took part in the British naval attack on New York in 1776 and later joined in harassing Savannah. With almost no naval strength in the War of the Revolution, the United States had only its audacious privateers to molest the enemy’s commerce and was helpless to convoy or protect its merchant shipping, which was largely destroyed. The British squadron to which the *Phoenix* was attached, finding little American booty afloat in 1780, turned its attention to the Spanish foe and cruised in the waters of the Caribbean.

On August 2d the frigate sailed from Port Royal, Jamaica, escorting two store-ships to Pensacola, and then loafed about in the Gulf and off the Cuban coast for six weeks in quest of Spanish prizes. It was a hot, wretchedly uncomfortable business, this beating about in the tropics in a ship of a hundred and forty years ago. The bluejackets were frequently flogged by way of making them fond of the service, and many of them had

been hauled into this kind of maritime slavery by the brutal press-gangs which raked the English ports. Somehow they managed to survive the chronic hardships of life at sea and to keep their ardor bright, so that in a gale of wind or against a hostile fleet they stubbornly did their duty as long as two planks held together. The bulldog strain made them heroic.

In the ward-room of the *Phoenix*, where the officers perspired and grumbled and cursed their luck, they kept an ingenious lottery going to vary the monotony of an empty sea. Every man put a Spanish dollar into a canvas bag and set down his guess of the date of sighting a sail. No two gamblers were to name the same date. Whenever a man lost, he dropped another dollar into the bag. It was growing heavy, for one week stretched into another without a gleam of royals or topgallant-sails from Vera Cruz to Havana. Like a good sportsman, Captain Sir Hyde Parker paid his stake into the dollar bag and squinted through his long brass spy-glass as he grumpily trudged the quarterdeck.

It was off Cape San Antonio, at the western end of Cuba, that the man at the masthead shouted down:

"A sail upon the weather bow."

"Ha! ha! Mr. Spaniard, I think we have you at last," jubilantly exclaimed the captain. "Turn out all hands! Make sail! All hands give chase!"

A midshipman scrambled aloft and blithely reported:

"A large ship standing athwart us and running right before the wind."

"Larboard! Keep her away! Set the studding-sails!" was the order, and two hundred nimble seamen raced to their stations on deck and in the tops and swarmed out along the yards.

Up from below came the little doctor, rubbing his hands and crying:

“What, ho! I have won the dollar bag!”

“The devil take you and your bag!” roared Lieutenant Archer. “Look yonder! That will fill all our money-bags.”

“Two more sail on the larboard beam,” came from aloft. “A whole fleet of twenty sail coming before the wind.”

“Confound the luck of it!” growled the captain of the frigate, “this is some convoy or other; but we must try to snap up two or three of them. Haul in the studding-sails. Luff her. Let us see what we can make of them.”

They were discovered to be twenty-five sail of Spanish merchantmen, under convoy of three lofty line-of-battle ships, one of which set out in chase of the agile *Phoenix*, which soon showed her heels. A frigate had no business to linger too close to the hundred guns of a ponderous three-decker. The huge Spanish man-of-war lumbered back to the convoy and herded them watchfully while the British nosed about until dark, but found no stray prizes that could be cut out from the flock. In the starlight three ships seemed to be steering a course at some distance from the Spanish fleet, so the frigate gave chase, and came up with a heavy vessel mounting twenty-six guns.

“Archer, every man to his quarters,” said the captain. “Light the battle-lanterns and open the gun-ports. Show this fellow our force, and it may prevent his firing into us and killing a man or two.”

Across the intervening water rang the challenge from the *Phoenix*:

“Ho, the ship ahoy! Lower your sails and bring to instantly, or I will sink you.”

Amid the clatter of blocks and creaking of spars the other ship laid her mainyard aback and hung plunging in the wind while to the sharp interrogation her skipper bawled through his trumpet:

“This is the British armed merchant ship *Polly*, from Jamaica to New York. What ship are you?”

“His Majesty’s forty-four gun frigate *Phoenix*,” was the reply, at which the honest sailors of the merchantman let go three rousing cheers; but a glum old shell-back of the frigate’s crew was heard to mutter:

“Oh, damn your huzzas! We took you to be something else.”

The *Polly* had fallen in with the Spanish fleet that same morning, as it turned out, and had been chased all day, wherefore the frigate stood by her until they had run clear of danger. It was the courtesy of the sea, but Lieutenant Archer was unconsoled and he fretfully jotted down in writing to his mother:

“There I was, from being worth thousands in imagination, reduced to the old four and sixpence a day. The little doctor won the most prize money of us all, for the bag contained between thirty and forty dollars.”

After almost running ashore in a thick night and clawing off by good seamanship, the *Phoenix* ran over to Jamaica for fresh water, and then sailed in company with two other frigates. The verdant mountains of that lovely island were still visible when the sky became overcast. By eleven o’clock that night, “it began to snuffle, with a monstrous heavy appearance from the eastward.” Sir Hyde Parker sent for Lieutenant Archer, who was his navigating officer, and exclaimed:

“What sort of weather have we? It blows a little and has a very ugly look. If in any other quarter but this I should say we were going to have a smart gale of wind.”

“Aye, sir,” replied the lieutenant, “it looks so very often here when there is no wind at all. However, don’t hoist topsails until it clears a little.”

Next morning it was dirty weather, blowing hard, with heavy squalls, and the frigate laboring under close-reefed lower sails.

“I doubt whether it clears,” said the frowning captain. “I was once in a hurricane in the East Indies, and the beginning of it had much the same appearance as this. So be sure we have plenty of sea room.”

All day the wind steadily increased in violence, and the frigate, spray-swept and streaming, rolled in the passage between Jamaica and Cuba, in peril of foundering if she stayed at sea and of fetching up on the rocks if she tried to run for shelter. There was nothing to do but to fight it out. I shall let Lieutenant Archer describe something of the struggle in his own words, old sea lingo and all, because he depicts it with a spirit so high-hearted and adventurous, quite as you would expect it of a true-blue young sailorman.

> At eight o’clock a hurricane; the sea roaring but the wind still steady to a point; did not ship a spoonful of water. However, got the hatchways all secured, expecting what would be the consequence should the wind shift; placed the carpenters by the mainmast with broad-axes, knowing from experience that at the moment you may want to cut it away to save the ship, an axe may not be found. Went to supper; bread, cheese, and porter. The purser frightened out of his wits about his bread bags, the two marine officers as white as sheets, not understanding the ship’s working and groaning in every timber, and the noise of the lower deck guns which by this time made a pretty screeching and straining to people not used to it. It seemed as if the whole ship’s side was going at each roll. Old “Wooden-head,” our carpenter, was all this time smoking his pipe and laughing at the doctor; the second lieutenant upon deck, and the third in his hammock.
>
> At ten o’clock I thought to get a little sleep; came to look into my cot; it was full of water, for every seam, by the straining of the ship had begun to leak and the sea was also flooding through the closed gun-ports. I stretched myself, therefore, upon the deck between two chests

and left orders to be called, should the least thing happen. At twelve a midshipman came up to me:

"Mr. Archer, we are just going to wear ship, sir."

"Oh, very well, I'll be up directly. What sort of weather have you got?"

"It blows a hurricane, sir, and I think we shall lose the ship."

Went upon deck and found Sir Hyde there. Said he:

"It blows damned hard, Archer."

"It does indeed, sir."

"I don't know that I ever remember it blowing so hard before, Archer, but the ship makes a very good weather of it upon this tack as she bows the sea; but we must wear her, as the wind has shifted to the south-east and we are drawing right down upon Cuba. So do you go forward and have some hands stand by; loose the lee yard-arm of the foresail and when she is right before the wind, whip the clew-garnet close up and roll up the sail."

"Sir, there is no canvas that can stand against this a moment. If we attempt to loose him he will fly into ribands in an instant, and we lose three or four of our people. She will wear by manning the fore shrouds."

"No, I don't think she will, Archer."

"I'll answer for it, sir. I have seen it tried several times on the coast of America with success."

The captain accepted the suggestion, and Archer considered it "a great condescension from such a man as Sir Hyde." Two hundred sailors were ordered to climb into the fore-rigging and flatten themselves against the

shrouds and ratlines where the wind tore at them and almost plucked them from their desperate station. Thus arranged, their bodies en masse made a sort of human sail against which the hurricane exerted pressure enough to swing the bow of the struggling ship, and she very slowly wore, or changed direction until she stood on the other tack. It was a feat of seamanship which was later displayed during the historic hurricane in the harbor of Samoa when British, German, and American men-of-war were smashed by the tremendous fury of wind and sea, and the gallant old steam frigates *Vandalia*, *Trenton*, and *Nipsic* faced destruction of the Stars and Stripes gallantly streaming and the crews cheering the luckier British ship that was able to fight its way out to sea.

The hapless *Phoenix* endured it tenaciously, but the odds were too great for her. When she tried to rise and shake her decks free of the gigantic combers, they smashed her with incessant blows. The stout sails were flying out of the gaskets that bound them to the yards. The staunch wooden hull was opening like a basket. The ship was literally being pounded to pieces. Sir Hyde Parker, lashed near the kicking wheel, where four brawny quartermasters sweated as they endeavored to steer the dying frigate, was heard to shout:

“My God! To think that the wind could have such force!”

There was a terrific racket below decks, and fearing that one of the guns might have broken adrift from its tackles, Lieutenant Archer clambered into the gloomy depths, where a marine officer hailed him, announcing:

“Mr. Archer, we are sinking. The water is up to the bottom of my cot. All the cabins are awash and the people flooded out.”

“Pooh! pooh!” was the cheery answer, “as long as it is not over your mouth you are well off. What the devil are you making all this noise about?”

The unterrified Archer found much water between decks, “but nothing to be alarmed at,” and he told the watch below to turn to at the pumps, shouting at them:

> “Come pump away, my lads! Will you twiddle your thumbs while she drowns the lot of you? Carpenters, get the weather chain-pump rigged.”
>
> “Already, sir.”
>
> “Then man it, and keep both pumps going. The ship is so distressed that she merely comes up for air now and then. Everything is swept clean but the quarterdeck.”

Presently one of the pumps choked, and the water gained in the hold, but soon the bluejackets were swinging at the brakes again, while Lieutenant Archer stood by and cheered them on. A carpenter’s mate came running up to him with a face as long as his arm and shouted:

“Oh, sir, the ship has sprung a leak in the gunner’s room.”

“Go, then, and tell the carpenter to come to me, but don’t say a word about it to any one else.”

When the carpenter came tumbling aft he was told:

> “Mr. Goodenow, I am informed there is a leak in the gunner’s room. Do you go and see what is the matter, but don’t alarm anybody and come and make your report privately to me.”
>
> “Sir, there is nothing there,” announced the trusty carpenter, a few minutes later. “’Tis only the water washing up between the timbers that this booby has taken for a leak.”

“Oh, very well, go up on deck and see if you can keep the water from washing down below.”

“Sir, I have four people constantly keeping the hatchways secure, but there is such a weight of water upon the deck that nobody can stand it when the ship rolls.”

Just then the gunner appeared to add his bit of news.

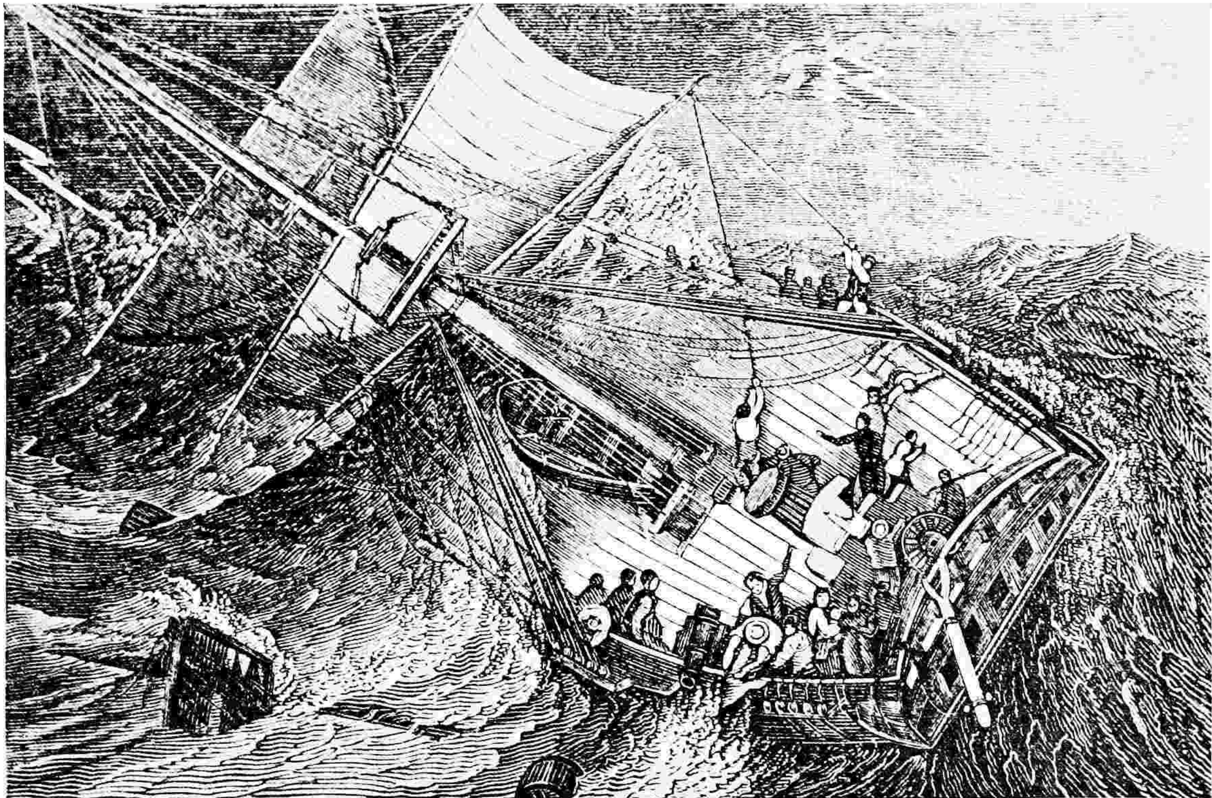
“I thought some confounded thing was the matter, and ran directly,” wrote Lieutenant Archer.

“Well, what is the trouble here?”

“The ground tier of powder is spoiled,” lamented the faithful gunner, “and I want to show you, sir, that it is not because of any carelessness of mine in stowing it, for no powder in the world could be better stowed. Now, sir, what am I to do? If you don’t speak to Sir Hyde in my behalf, he will be angry with me.”

Archer smiled to see how easily the gunner took the grave danger of the ship and replied:

“Let us shake off this gale of wind first and talk of the damaged powder later.”



PERILOUS SITUATION OF THE SHIP

At the end of his watch below, Archer thought that the toiling gangs at the pumps had gained on the water a little. When he returned to the deck he was rather appalled by the situation, although his courage was unshaken. When he later tried to convey a picture of it for the entertainment of his mother, part of the letter read like this:

> If I were to write forever, I could not give you an idea of it—a total darkness all above; the sea on fire, running as it were in Alps or Peaks of Teneriffe (mountains are too common an idea); the wind roaring louder than thunder, the whole made more terrible, if possible, by a very uncommon kind of blue lightning; the poor ship very much pressed, yet doing what she could, shaking her sides and groaning at every stroke. Sir Hyde was lashed upon the deck to windward and I

soon lashed myself alongside of him and told him the state of affairs below, saying that the ship did not make more water than might be expected in such infernal weather and that I was only afraid of a gun breaking loose.

"I am not in the least afraid of that," said the captain. "I have commanded her for six years and have had many a gale of wind in her, so that her iron work, which always gives way first, is pretty well tried. Hold fast, Archer, that was an ugly sea. We must lower the yards, for the ship is much pressed."

"If we attempt it, sir, we shall lose them, for a man aloft can do nothing; besides, their being down would ease the ship very little; the mainmast is a sprung mast; I wish it were overboard without carrying everything with it, but that can soon be done. The gale cannot last forever. 'Twill soon be daylight now."

Found by the master's watch that it was five o'clock, glad it was so near dawn and looked for it with much anxiety. Cuba, thou are much in our way! Sent a midshipman to fetch news from the pumps. The ship was filling with water despite all their labor. The sea broke halfway up the quarterdeck, filled one of the cutters upon the booms and tore her all to fragments. The ship lying almost upon her beam ends and not attempting to right again. Word from below that the water had gained so fast they could no longer stand to the pumps. I said to Sir Hyde:

"This is no time, sir, to think of saving the masts. Shall we cut away?"

"Aye, Archer, as fast as you can."

I accordingly went into the chains with a pole-axe to cut away the lanyards; the boatswain went to leeward, and the carpenters stood by the mast. We were already when a very violent sea broke right on board

> of us, carried away everything that was left on deck, filled the ship with water, the main and mizzen-masts went, the ship righted but was in the last struggle of sinking under us. As soon as we could shake our heads above water Sir Hyde exclaimed:
>
> “We are gone at last, Archer,—foundered at sea.”
>
> “Yes, sir. And the Lord have mercy upon us.”

The unlucky crew of the *Phoenix* frigate, more than three hundred souls, had behaved with disciplined fortitude. The captain, who had commanded her for six years, knew his ship and her people, and they had stood the test. In this weltering chaos of wind and sea, which extended far over the Caribbean, twelve other ships went down, all of them flying the white ensign of the Royal Navy, and more than three thousand seamen perished. Maritime disasters were apt to occur on a tremendous scale in those olden days when ships sailed in fleets and convoys.

It was not ordained that the brave and dogged ship’s company of the *Phoenix* should be entirely swallowed by the sea. While they fought the last fight for life in the broken, sinking hulk, the keel thumped and ground along the back of a reef. Lieutenant Archer and Captain Sir Hyde Parker were floundering about together and had given themselves up for lost. The lieutenant was filled with reflections profoundly religious, as well as with salt water, and he took pains to expound them at length in writing to his mother, and these were a great solace, no doubt, to the good woman who waited for infrequent tidings in a home of green England. Sir Hyde Parker was swearing and spluttering at his men who were crying, “Lord have mercy on us!”

“Keep to the quarter-deck, my boys, when she goes to pieces,” he yelled. “’Tis your best chance.”

The shattered remnants of the frigate were being flailed upon the Cuban reef, but the boatswain and the carpenter rallied volunteers who cut away the foremast, which dragged five men to their death when it fell. All this was in the black, bewildering darkness just before the stormy day began to break; but the crew held on until they were able to see the cruel ledges and the mountainous coast which was only a few hundred feet away. Lieutenant Archer was ready to undertake the perilous task of trying to swim ashore with a line, but after he had kicked off his coat and shoes he said to himself:

> This won't do, for me to be the first man out of the ship, and the senior lieutenant at that. We may get to England again and people may think I paid a great deal of attention to myself and not much to anybody else. No, that won't do; instead of being the first, I'll see every man, sick and well, out of her before me.

Two sailors managed to fetch the shore, and a hawser was rigged by means of which all of the survivors succeeded in reaching the beach. True to his word, Archer was the last man to quit the wreck. Sir Hyde Parker was a man of more emotion than one might infer, and the scene is appealing as the lieutenant describes it.

> The captain came to me, and taking me by the hand was so affected that he was scarcely able to speak. "Archer, I am happy beyond expression, to see you on shore but look at our poor *Phoenix*." I turned about but could not say a single word; my mind had been too intensely occupied before; but everything now rushed upon me at once, so that I could not contain myself, and I indulged for a full quarter of an hour in tears.

The resourceful bluejackets first entrenched themselves and saved what arms they could find in the ship, for this was no friendly and hospitable coast. They were on Spanish soil, and it was not their desire to be marched off to the dungeons of Havana as prisoners of war. Tents and huts were speedily contrived, provisions rafted from the wreck, fires built, fish caught, and the camp was a going concern in two or three days. Archer proposed that the handy carpenters mend one of the boats and that he pick a crew to sail to Jamaica and find rescue. This was promptly done and he says:

> In two days she was ready and I embarked with four volunteers and a fortnight's provisions, hoisted English colors as we put off from the shore and received three cheers from the lads left behind, having not the least doubt that, with God's assistance, we should come and bring them all off. Had a very squally night and a very leaky boat so as to keep two buckets constantly baling. Steered her myself the whole night by the stars and in the morning saw the coast of Jamaica distant twelve leagues. At eight in the evening arrived at Montego Bay.

This dashing lieutenant was not one to let the grass grow under his feet, and he sent a messenger to the British admiral, another to the man-of-war, *Porcupine*, and hustled off to find vessels on his own account. All the frigates of the station were at sea, but Archer commandeered three fishing craft and a little trading brig and put to sea with his squadron. Four days after he had left his shipwrecked comrades he was back again, and they hoisted him upon their shoulders and so lugged him up to Sir Hyde Parker's tent as the hero of the occasion. The *Porcupine* arrived a little later, so there was plenty of help for the marooned British tars. Two hundred and fifty of them were carried to Jamaica. Of the others "some had died of the wounds they received in getting on shore, some of drinking rum, and a few had straggled off into the country."

Lieutenant Archer was officially commended for the part he had played, and was promoted to command the frigate *Tobago* after a few months of duty on the admiral's staff. You will like to hear, I am sure, how he wound up the long letter home which contained the story of the last cruise of the *Phoenix*.

> I must now begin to leave off, else my letter will lose its passage, which I should not like, after being ten days at different times writing it, beating up with a convoy to the northward, which is a reason that this epistle will never read well, for I never sat down with a proper disposition to go on with it. But as I knew something of the kind would please you, I was resolved to finish it; yet it will not bear an overhaul, so don't expose your son's nonsense. You must promise that should any one see it beside yourself, they must put this construction on it—that it was originally intended for the eyes of a mother only—as upon that supposition my feelings may be tolerated. You will also meet with a number of sea terms which if you do not understand, why, I cannot help you, as I am unable to give a sea description in any other words. I remain His Majesty's most true and faithful servant and my dear mother's most dutiful son.

CHAPTER X

THE ROARING DAYS OF PIRACY

In Bristowe I left Poll ashore,
Well stocked wi’ togs an’ gold,
  And off I goes to sea for more,
A piratin’ so bold.
  An’ wounded in the arm I got,
An’ then a pretty blow;
  Come home to find Poll’s flowed away,
  Yo, ho, with the rum below!

IT was in the early part of the eighteenth century, two hundred years ago, when the merchant voyager ran as great a risk of being taken by pirates as he did of suffering shipwreck. Within a brief period flourished most of the picturesque scoundrels who have some claim to distinction. Blackbeard terrified the Atlantic coast from Boston to Charleston until a cutlass cut him down in 1717. He was a most satisfactory figure of a theatrical pirate, always strutting in the center of the stage, and many others who came later were mere imitations. Robert Louis Stevenson was able to imagine nothing better than Blackbeard’s true sea-journal, written with his own wicked hand, which contained such fascinating entries as this:

> Such a day, rum all out;—our company somewhat sober;—a damned confusion amongst us! Rogues a-plotting—great talk of

> separation—so I look sharp for a prize. Took one with a great deal of liquor on board;—so kept the company drunk, damned drunk, then all things went well again.

Captain Avery was plundering the treasure-laden galleons of the Great Mogul off the coast of Madagascar in 1718, and was reported to have stolen a daughter of that magnificent potentate as his bride, while "his adventures were the subject of general conversation in Europe." The flamboyant career of Captain Bartholomew Roberts began in 1719, that "tall, dark man" whose favorite toast was "Damnation to him who lives to wear a halter," and who always wore in action a rich crimson damask waistcoat and breeches, a red feather in his hat, a gold chain and diamond cross around his neck, a sword in his hand, and two pairs of pistols hanging at the ends of a silk sling flung over his shoulder.

In this same year Captain Ned England was taking his pick of the colonial merchantmen which were earning a respectable livelihood in the slave-trade of the Guinea coast. He displayed his merry and ingenious spirit by ordering his crew to pelt to death with broken rum-bottles a captured shipmaster whose face and manners displeased him. Mary Read, the successful woman pirate, was then in the full tide of her exploits and notably demonstrated that a woman had a right to lead her own life. When her crew presumed to argue with her, she pistoled them with her own fair hand, and neatly killed in a duel a rash gentleman pirate who had been foolish enough to threaten her lover. When asked why she preferred a vocation so hazardous, Mary Read replied that "as to hanging, she thought it no great hardship, for were it not for that every cowardly fellow would turn pirate and so infest the seas and men of courage would starve."

It was in the same period that the bold Captain John Quelch of Marblehead stretched hemp, with five of his comrades, and a Salem poet was inspired to write:

Ye pirates who against God’s laws did fight,
Have all been taken which is very right.
Some of them were old and others young
And on the flats of Boston they were hung.

In 1724 two notorious sea-rovers, Nutt and Phillip, were cruising off Cape Ann within sight of Salem harbor’s mouth. They took a sloop commanded by one Andrew Harraden, and thereby caught a Tartar. Harraden and his sailors erupted from the hold into which they had been flung, killed Nutt and Phillip and their officers, tossed the rest of the rascals down below, and sailed into Boston Harbor, where their cargo of pirates speedily furnished another entertainment for the populace that trooped to the row of gibbets on the flats of the town. The old sea-chronicles of New England are filled with episodes of these misfortunes, encounters, and escapes until the marvel grows that the seamen of those quaint brigs, ketches, and scows could be persuaded to set out from port at all. The appalling risk became a habit, no doubt, just as the people of to-day dare to use the modern highway on which automobiles slay many more victims than ever the pirates made to walk the plank.

The experience of an unlucky master mariner in that era of the best-known and most successful pirates may serve to convey a realization of the gamble with fortune which overshadowed every trading voyage when the perils of the deep were so cruel and so manifold. And it is easy to comprehend why the bills of lading included this petition, “And so God send the good sloop to her desired port in safety. Amen.”

In the year of 1718 the *Bird* galley sailed from England in command of Captain Snelgrave to find a cargo of slaves on the coast of Sierra Leone. The galley, as sailors then used the term, was a small, square-rigged vessel not unlike a brig, although properly the name belonged to craft propelled by

oars as well as sails; but seamen in all ages have had a confusing habit of mixing the various classifications of vessels. It was nothing against the character of Captain Snelgrave that he was bound out to the Gold Coast in the rum and nigger trade. The ship-chandlers of Liverpool made special displays in their windows of handcuffs, leg-shackles, iron collars, short and long chains, and furnaces and copper kettles designed for slave-ships. The English Missionary Society owned a plantation and worked it with slaves. In America the New England colonies took the lead in the slave-trade, and the enterprising lads of the coastwise ports sought berths in the forecastles of the African traders because of the chance of profit and promotion. It was not held to the discredit of John Paul Jones that he learned seamanship before the mast in the slaver *King George* before he hoisted the first naval ensign of the United States above the quarter-deck of an American man-of-war.

No sooner had the *Bird* galley dropped anchor in the river of Sierra Leone than three pirate ships came bowling in with a fair breeze. They had been operating together and had already captured ten English vessels. Captain Snelgrave eyed these unpleasant visitors with suspicion, but hoped they might be on the same errand as himself. At eight o'clock in the evening, however, he heard the measured thump of oars and descried the shadow of an approaching boat. The first mate was ordered to muster and arm twenty men on deck in readiness to repel boarders. The second mate hailed the boat and was answered; "The ship *Two Friends* of Barbadoes, Captain Elliott." This failed to satisfy the master of the *Bird* galley, and he shouted to the boat to sheer off and keep clear.

A volley of musket-balls was the reply from the boat, and the first mate of the *Bird* was told to return the fire. His men stood idle, however, and it transpired that he cherished secret ambitions of being a pirate himself and had won over several of the crew. This was extremely embarrassing for Captain Snelgrave, who was compelled to witness the marauders scramble

unresisted up the side of his vessel. The leader of the pirates was in a particularly nasty temper because the mate had been ordered to open fire, and he poked a pistol into the captain’s face and pulled trigger. As quick as he was courageous, the skipper knocked the weapon aside, and was promptly felled with the butt of it. Dodging along the deck, the pirate boatswain swung at him with a broadsword and missed his mark, the blade biting deep into the oaken rail.

There was a grain of spunk left in the crew of the *Bird*, and they rushed upon the evil boatswain before he could kill the captain. For this behavior they were mercilessly slashed with cutlasses, kicked and cursed, and then trussed in a row. With a touch of ferocious whimsicality the pirate chief declared that he would let Captain Snelgrave be tried by his own crew. If they had any complaints to make of him as a shipmaster, he would be swung to a yard, and they should haul the rope. He must have been a just and humane man, for not a sailor voiced a grudge, and the ruffians appeared to forget all about murder. After firing volleys to let their ships know that a prize had been captured, they turned with tremendous enthusiasm to the business of guzzling and feasting.

The captive sailors were released, and told to dress all the hens, ducks, and geese that were in the coops on deck; but no sooner were the heads chopped off than these childish blackguards refused to have supper delayed. The *Bird* carried a huge furnace, or oven, contrived for cooking the food of the five hundred slaves which were expected aboard. Into a roaring fire the pirates flung the hens, ducks, and geese, feathers and all, and hauled them out as soon as they were singed and scorched. The same culinary method was employed for half a dozen Westphalia hams and a sow with a dozen little pigs. A few finicky pirates commanded the ship’s cook, under pain of death, to boil the meat in the great copper caldrons designed for the slaves’ porridge.

The prodigious banquet made these unmannerly guests feel in better humor, and they even told their surgeon to dress the wounds of the *Bird's* sailors. They amused themselves by playing foot-ball with Captain Snelgrave's excellent gold watch, and drank themselves into a state of boisterous joviality. The old record puts it mildly, to say the least, in affirming that "the captain's situation was by no means an agreeable one, even under these circumstances, as ferocious men are generally capricious. He now fared very hard, enduring great fatigue with patience, and submitting resignedly to the Almighty will."

Before the wild night ended he was taken aboard the pirates' flagship, where he was questioned by a sort of commodore or commander-in-chief of the squadron. His name was Cocklyn, and he had ambitions to conduct operations on a scale even larger. He wanted to win over the *Bird's* crew and to fly his black pennant from her, as his talk disclosed, and this was why the lives of her company had been spared. Now occurred one of those romantic incidents which the novelist would hesitate to invent as stretching the probabilities, but in these ancient narratives of the sea things were set down as they actually happened. This is how the story was written in 1724:

> Soon after the captain was on board the pirate ship, a tall man, well armed, came up to him and told him his name was Jack Griffin, one of his old school-fellows. Upon Captain Snelgrave appearing not to recollect him, he mentioned many pranks of their youth together. He said he was forced into the pirate service while chief mate of a British vessel and was later compelled to act as master of one of the pirate ships. His crew he described as most atrocious miscreants. This Jack Griffin, a bold and ready man, promised to watch over the captain's safety, as the pirates would soon be worse intoxicated with the liquors on board their prize.

> Griffin now obtained a bowl of punch and led the way to the cabin, where a carpet was spread to sit upon, as the pirate ship was always kept clear for action. They sat down cross-legged, and Cocklyn, the chief captain, drank Snelgrave's health, saying his crew had spoken well of him. A hammock was slung for Captain Snelgrave at night, by the intercession of Griffin, but the pirates lay rough, as they styled it, because their vessel, as already observed, was always cleared for action.
>
> Griffin, true to his promise of guarding his old school-fellow while asleep, kept near the captain's hammock, sword in hand, to protect him from insults. Towards morning, while the pirates were carousing on deck, the boatswain came toward the hammock in a state of intoxication, swearing that he would slice the captain for ordering the crew to fire, dragged him from his hammock, and would, no doubt, have executed his savage threat if it had not been for Griffin who, as the boatswain pressed forward to stab the sleeping Captain Snelgrave, cut at the fellow with his sword and after a sharp struggle succeeded in beating him off. At length the wretches fell asleep and the captain was no longer molested. Griffin next day complained of the boatswain's conduct and he was threatened with a whipping. However, Captain Snelgrave wisely pleaded for him, by saying he was in liquor.

Shielded from harm by this lawless, but devoted, old school-mate of his, the master of the *Bird* galley was in no great danger of being sliced by some impulsive pirate who was careless with a cutlass. His perfidious first mate and ten of the sailors now signed on as pirates and assisted the others in ransacking Captain Snelgrave's unfortunate ship. Such merchandise as did not happen to please their fancy was pitched overboard, and they saved little more than the provisions, the clothing, and the gold coin. They were like a gang of hoodlums on a lark, and wanton destruction was their very

stupid idea of a pastime. This wild carnival went on for several days. Barrels of claret and brandy were hoisted on deck, the heads knocked in, and the drink baled out with cans and buckets until the roisterers could hold not another swallow. Then they doused one another with buckets of claret and good French brandy as they ran roaring around the deck.

Bottled liquors were opened by whacking off the necks with cutlasses. They pelted one another with cheeses, and emptied the tubs of butter to slide in. One of these sportive pirates dressed himself in the captain's shore-going black suit and his best hat and wig, strutted among his comrades until they drenched him with claret, and then chucked the wardrobe overboard. You will be gratified to learn that "this man, named Kennedy, ended his career in Execution Dock."

Of the two other pirate ships then in the river of Sierra Leone one was British and the other French. The English commander was one of the brave and resourceful sea-rogues of his era, a fighting seaman in whom survived the spirit of those desperate adventurers of the seventeenth century who followed Morgan to Panama and hunted the stately Spanish galleons with Hawkins and Dampier in the waters of the Pacific. This was the famous Captain Davis, who would sooner storm a fort or take a town at the head of a landing party than to loot a helpless merchantman. He had attempted to combine forces with these other pirates at Sierra Leone and had been formally elected admiral in a council of war. But he found reason to suspect the good faith of his associates, whereupon he summoned them into his cabin and told them to their faces:

> "Hear ye, you Cocklyn and La Boise" (the French captain), I find that by strengthening you I have put a rod into your hands to whip myself, but I am able to deal with you both. However, since we met in love let us part in love, for I find that three of a trade can never agree long together.

Captain Davis was getting ready for a cruise on his own account, with the design of attacking the garrison of one of the Portuguese settlements on the African coast, but he found time to interest himself in the affairs of poor Captain Snelgrave of the *Bird* galley. It may have been a spark of genuine manliness and sportsmanship, or dislike of the slippery Cocklyn, but at any rate Captain Davis interceded in his own high-handed manner and told the rascals to give the plundered *Bird* back to her master and to treat him decently.

This altered the situation. Captain Davis was the king wolf of the pack, and his bite was much worse than his bark. Cocklyn and La Boise were disposed to resent this interference and hung back a little, at which the black flag was run up to the masthead of Captain Davis's formidable ship, and the gun-ports were dropped with a clatter to show a crew, disciplined and sober, with matches lighted, and handspikes and tackles ready.

Very promptly the *Bird* galley was restored to Captain Snelgrave, but before going to sea Captain Davis was rowed ashore for a farewell chat with a friend of his named Glynn. This man was living at Sierra Leone for reasons unknown, probably in trade of some kind, and the only information concerning him is that "although he had suffered from pirates, he was on good terms with them and yet kept his hands free from their guilt." He must have been a two-fisted person with a backbone of steel, for Captain Davis was satisfied to intrust to his care the broken fortunes of the master of the *Bird* galley.

Soon after the tall ship of Captain Davis was wafted seaward with the breeze that drew off the land, the pirates twain, Cocklyn and La Boise, were invited to dinner at the house of Captain Glynn. The other guest was Captain Snelgrave, who discovered that the wind had suddenly shifted in his favor and he was treated with the most distinguished cordiality and respect. Fresh clothing was offered him, and he enjoyed the luxury of one

of Captain Glynn's clean shirts. It was explained that the *Bird* was uncommonly well adapted for fitting out as a pirate ship because she had flush decks for mounting guns and was sharply molded for fast sailing. Cocklyn and La Boise politely suggested that they keep her for their own use and give to Captain Snelgrave a merchant vessel of larger tonnage which had been recently captured. By way of making amends for their rudeness, they would be delighted to replace his ruined cargo with merchandise taken from other prizes, and he could take his pick of the stuff.

This was a delicate problem for Captain Snelgrave to decide. The ethical codes of the pirates were so much more unconventional than his own that they failed to see why he should hesitate to sail home to England in a stolen ship with a cargo of looted merchandise. Tactfully, but firmly, he declined the offer, at which they hopefully suggested that he might change his mind and, anyhow, they would do their best to straighten things out for him. It was a pleasant little dinner party, but it is plausible to infer that the thought of the absent Captain Davis hung over it like a grim shadow.

Next day the abandoned merchantman which had been offered to Captain Snelgrave was towed alongside the *Bird* galley, and all of his cargo that had escaped destruction was transferred by his own crew. There was a good deal of it, after all, for it had consisted largely of salted provisions and bolts of cloth for the slave market, and the wanton pirates had tired of the game before they got into the lower holds. Captain Snelgrave moved ashore and found a comfortable refuge in the house of Captain Glynn.

Retribution now overtook that truculent pirate, the boatswain, who had first attempted to blow out the brains of Captain Snelgrave and then to slice him in his hammock. He fell very ill of tropical fever and rum, and realizing that he had come to the end of his cable, he sent for the skipper and implored forgiveness. It is solemnly recorded that "this man fell into a delirium the same night and died before the morning, cursing God his

maker in such a frightful manner that it affected several of the pirates who were yet novices in that mode of life, and they came privately, in consequence, to obtain Captain Snelgrave's advice how they should get out of their evil course. A proclamation of pardon had been issued to all pirates who surrendered before July 1, 1719, and the captain advised them to embrace the pardon so tendered."

Still refusing to accept the gift of a purloined ship, the captain persuaded the pirates to remove all his cargo ashore, which they cheerfully did and built a shelter to cover it. Then they busied themselves at the task of arming the *Bird* for their own wicked use, and were amazingly sober and industrious for as much as a fortnight. When they were ready to put the ship into commission, Captain Snelgrave was invited aboard to a jollification in his own cabin. There was a certain etiquette to be followed, it seemed, and the observance was punctilious. Toasts were drunk to a lucky cruise, and every man smashed his glass upon the table or floor. The ship was renamed the *Windham Galley,* and they all trooped out on deck and waved their hats and huzzaed when the Jolly Roger broke out of stops and showed aloft like a sinister blot against the clean sky from the mast which had displayed the British ensign. The new batteries were fired in salute, with a great noise and clouds of gunpowder smoke, and then, of course, all hands proceeded to get most earnestly drunk though they laid no violent hands upon Captain Snelgrave.

The ships were still in the harbor when the redoubtable Captain Davis came sailing in from his voyage. It had been shorter than expected, for rich booty was overtaken at sea, and he delayed the adventure with the Portuguese fort until he could dispose of his profits and refit. First, he had laid alongside two English and one Scotch ship and lifted out of them such goods as attracted his fancy, permitting them to proceed. A few days later the lookout aloft sighted a sail and, in the words of the record, "it may be proper to inform our readers that, according to the laws of pirates, the man

who first discovers a sail is entitled to the best pair of pistols in the ship and such is the honor attached to these that a pair of them has been known to sell for thirty pounds."

Captain Davis chased this tempting ship until she drove ashore and the terrified crew took to the jungle. She proved to be a gorgeous prize, a heavily armed packet, "having on board the Governor of Acra, with all his substance, going to Holland. There was in her money to the amount of fifteen thousand pounds, besides a large quantity of merchant goods and other valuable articles." This ship had the men and guns to have stood up to it and given Captain Davis a battle royal, but the sight of his evil flag, and perhaps his own bloody repute, made cowards of them. It was quite otherwise with another Dutchman overhauled soon after this. These stolid seamen had the proverbial tenacity of their race, and they scorned the notion of hauling down colors at the sight of a scurvy pirate. To the insolent summons they replied with a broadside and killed nine surprised pirates, who were smelling brimstone in another world before they realized how it happened.

Excessively annoyed, Captain Davis closed in, and soon found that he had a hard nut to crack. With thirty guns and ninety men the Dutchman stood him off, and they fought a stubbornly heroic sea action that lasted from one o'clock at noon until after daylight next morning, occasionally hauling off for rest and repairs and tackling each other again, hammer and tongs. Finally the Dutchman had to strike, for he was outfought by men better drilled and practised. Captain Davis respected their valor, and there was no mention of making them walk the plank. The fifty survivors were taken aboard his own ship to save their lives, for their own ship was so smashed and splintered that she sank soon after.

Reaching Sierra Leone, Captain Davis invited Captain Snelgrave aboard for supper in order to learn how affairs had been going with him. At

the end of a successful cruise, the cutthroats had to be handled with a loose rein. They expected a grand carouse as a matter of course, and such a leader as Captain Davis was wise enough to close his eyes until he was ready to put the screws on again and prepare for another adventure. Most of the ship's company were properly drunk when the alarm of fire was shouted. A lighted lantern had been overturned among the rum-casks, and the flames were running into the hold. Amid the shouting and confusion, the sober men tumbled into boats and pulled for the shore. The fire was eating straight toward the magazine, in which were stowed thirty thousand pounds of gunpowder.

One pirate, who was both astonishingly brave and sober, dropped through a hatchway, groped through the smoke, and yelled that unless they fetched him blankets and buckets of water the ship would blow up. Captain Snelgrave gathered all the rugs and blankets he could find and rushed below to join the fellow. Other men rallied when led by Captain Davis, and formed a bucket brigade to douse the blankets and stuff them against the bulkhead of the magazine. It was a ticklish situation, taking it by and large,

> for the night was dark, the crew drunk, and no hope of mastering the fire seemed to remain. To spring into the water was certain death, from the sharks hovering around the vessel. Having accomplished all that he was able, Captain Snelgrave snatched up a quarter-boat grating and lowered it with a rope, hoping to float away upon that, as several persons had gone off with the boats. While the captain was thus meditating his escape he heard a shout from the main-deck, "*Now for a brave blast to go to hell with.*" On which some of the newly entered pirates near him, believing the ship must blow up in a few minutes, lamented their entering on that vile course of life, with bitter exclamations against the hardened offenders on the main-deck who dared to blaspheme in such an hour as this.

Fifty of the crew crawled out upon the bowsprit and sprit-sail yard, where they clung and hoped to be blown clear of the general upheaval. They handsomely deserved extermination, but a dozen gallant volunteers still toiled and suffered in the hold, and at length they smothered the fire before it ate into the magazine. All of them were terribly burned, and it is fair to assume that Captain Davis awarded them an extra share of the plunder when it was distributed. One of the heroes of the crisis was Captain Snelgrave, or so the pirates admiringly agreed, and they were more than ever anxious to befriend him. They would have been glad to serve under him, but he had no taste for piracy and declined the honor when a vote was passed around the tubs of grog that he go as a sailing master until he had gained experience and was ready to command a crew of gentlemen of fortune.

Disappointed in this, they used their gold to buy back for him a considerable amount of his cargo, which had been divided or sold ashore, and presented him with some of the merchandise allotted to them from the ships lately captured by Captain Davis. There were worse pirates on the high seas than this collection of gallows-birds in the harbor of Sierra Leone, and merchant mariners much less admirable than this London slave-trader, Captain Snelgrave. Thanks to the exertions of the solicitous pirates, he gathered together sufficient possessions to retrieve the voyage from complete disaster, and the stuff was saved from harm in the rough warehouse ashore, where the kindly Captain Glynn was a vigilant guardian.

The pirates were now ready to depart on their disreputable business, Cocklyn and La Boise sailing in company, while Captain Davis ranged off alone. This time he carried out his purpose of raiding the Portuguese colony, the military governor of which received warning from a coasting vessel and accordingly strengthened his defenses and armed every able-bodied man. Captain Davis led his pirates from their boats and stormed the fort under a heavy fire.

The Portuguese governor was a fighting man himself and he gave as good as he took. The pirates gained the parapet and set the wooden buildings afire with hand grenades, but while the issue wavered, Captain Davis fell, a pistol-ball in his stomach. In a hand-to-hand conflict his pirates were driven back to the beach, carrying their dying captain with them. Defeated, they left their dead and wounded and fled in the boats, while in the last gasp Captain Davis discharged both his pistols at the enemy. "And those on board the ship, who expected to hoist in treasure, had to receive naught but their wounded comrades and dead commander."

Captain Snelgrave, left free to work out his own plans, loaded his cargo into one of the vessels which the pirates had abandoned in the river. He was shrewd enough to know that he could not be accused of receiving a stolen ship, for maritime usage now protected him. He was taking possession of a derelict and sailing her home, where he could make terms of sale or salvage with her rightful owners. And so he mustered as many of his crew as had not been lured away by the pirates, and said good-by to his loyal friend Captain Glynn, and took on board six other masters of ships who were stranded at Sierra Leone because they had been unlucky enough to fall in with Cocklyn and La Boise and Captain Davis. On August 1, in the year 1719, Captain Snelgrave dropped anchor in the port of Bristol and trudged ashore to find a pleasant haven in a tavern and tell his troubles to other sun-browned skippers who knew the Guinea coast and the hazards of the slave-trade.

A different kind of fortune was that of Captain George Roberts, who sailed from Virginia for the Guinea coast in the year of 1721. Pirates overtook his sloop off the Cape Verd Islands, and at first treated him rather good-humoredly, as he was a man of spirit and could hold his own when the bottle was passed. The pirate captain took a fancy to him and had a mind to let him resume his voyage, but unluckily the health of the "Old Pretender," James III, was proposed at table, and Captain Roberts, who was no

Jacobite, roundly refused to drink such a damnable toast. He did not purpose to bend his sentiments to suit the fancy of any pirates that ever sailed unhung. One of them was for shooting him through the head, but to the others it seemed more entertaining to put him aboard his own vessel without provisions, water, or sails, and to kidnap his crew as well, and let him drift out to sea. Captain Roberts listened to the discussion and had nothing more to say. He would drink the health of a king of his own choosing if it cost him his skin, and that was the end of it.

The old chronicler who preserved the tale of this stubborn sea-dog took occasion to moralize in this fashion:

> That men of the most abandoned characters should so far forget what humanity is due their fellow men, as to expose any one to almost certain destruction, merely on account of a foolish toast, may excite the astonishment of the reflecting; nor perhaps shall we wonder much less at the romantic resolution of Captain Roberts who braved death rather than submit to an insignificant form.

In the dead of night the sloop was cast off, and the pirates even pilfered all the candles to make matters as uncomfortable as possible. Two boys of the sloop's crew had been left on board, one of them an infant of eight years, and it may have accorded with the piratical style of humor to call this a complement. The eight-year-old urchin was perhaps a cabin-boy; no other information is vouchsafed concerning him. At any rate, he must have turned to like a little man, for he took the wheel while the captain and the elder boy pumped to clear the leaky vessel of water. Fairly confident that she would stay afloat, they took stock at daylight, and found that the pirates had overlooked a few crumbs of bread, ten gallons of rum, a little rice, and some flour, with a two-gallon jug of water. They were unable to kindle a

fire because the jocular pirates had carried off the flint and steel, and so they lived on raw flour and rice and drank rum after the water gave out.

Three days' hard labor sufficed to patch up a sail that pulled the sloop along when the wind blew hard enough. Rain fell and gave them a little more water before they died of thirst. A shark was caught when the food had all been eaten and they lived for three weeks before sighting land again. This was the Isle of St. Anthony, in the Cape Verd group, and the elder boy begged to be allowed to go ashore in the boat and look for water.

He pulled away after sunset and, with the anchor down, Captain Roberts dragged himself into the cabin and was instantly asleep. Rousing out at midnight, there was no sign of the boat and, to his dismay, he discovered that the sloop had drifted almost out of sight of land with a strong night wind. His crew now consisted of the eight-year-old mite of a sailor lad, but they swung on the pump together and tugged at the windlass until the anchor was hove short. They tended the rag of sail, and a kindly breeze slowly wafted them back toward the island until they were able to drop the mud-hook in a sandy bay with a good holding-ground. Captain Roberts was a stalwart man, and hats off to his eight-year-old crew!

The other boy who had rowed ashore was anxiously looking for the vessel, and he appeared aboard with a gang of negroes whom he had hired to work her into the nearest port. They brought food and water with them, and affairs seemed to have taken an auspicious turn, but during the first night out the sail split from top to bottom. There was no other canvas to set, and the negroes promptly tumbled into the boat and made for the island. The voyage appealed to their simple intellects as very much of a failure. Captain Roberts sighed, and resumed the interminable task of finding a haven for his helpless sloop. His two boys did what they could, but they were completely worn out and unable to help rig up another sail of bits of awning, tarpaulins, and so on, and bend it to the spars.

Captain Roberts was inclined to believe that he had played his last card, but one is quite unable to fancy him as regretting his quixotic refusal to join a party of Jacobite pirates in toasting the Pretender. When another day came, he was grimly hanging to the tiller and trying to keep the sloop's head in the direction of land when he heard a commotion in the hold. One of the lads plucked up courage to peer over the hatch-coaming, and in the gloom he descried three negroes in a very bad temper who were holding their heads in their hands. Ordered on deck, they anxiously rolled their eyes, and explained that they had found the puncheon of rum soon after coming on board and had guzzled it so earnestly that they sneaked below to sleep it off. Their comrades had deserted the ship in the darkness, and Captain Roberts, assuming that all hands were quitting him, had not counted them.

Here was a crew provided by a sort of unholy miracle, and they were ready to help take the ship to port to save their own perfectly worthless lives. They managed to carry her close to a harbor called St. John's, and one of the black rascals declared that he was an able pilot; but when the vessel drew close to the rocks he lost his courage and dived overboard, whereupon his comrades followed him, and all swam ashore like fishes. The afflicted Captain Roberts let go his anchor and waited through the night, after which other natives came off to the sloop and brought fresh provisions and water. It seemed as if their troubles might be nearing an end, but a storm blew next day, and the sloop went upon the rocks. Captain Roberts and the two lads were rescued by the kindly natives, who swam out through the raging surf, but the sloop was soon dashed to pieces. She deserved to win a happier fortune.

The voyage to the Guinea coast was ruined, and Captain Roberts had no money to back another venture; but he set about building a boat from the wreck of his sloop, and made such a success of it that with the two lads and three negro sailors he was soon doing a brisk trade from island to island.

Having accumulated some cash, he decided to return to London, where he arrived after an absence of four years.

CHAPTER XI

THE LOSS OF THE *WAGER* MAN-OF-WAR

TO the modern generation, one of the great adventures of seafaring history is familiar only in an eloquent reference of Robert Louis Stevenson, and few readers, I venture to say, have taken the trouble to delve for the facts which inspired the following tribute in the essay called "The English Admirals":

> It was by a hazard that we learned the conduct of the four marines of the *Wager*. There was no room for these brave fellows in the boat, and they were left behind upon the island to a certain death. They were soldiers, they said, and knew well enough it was their business to die; and as their comrades pulled away, they stood upon the beach, gave three cheers, and cried, "God bless the king!" Now one or two of those who were in the boat escaped, against all likelihood, to tell the story. That was a great thing for us; but surely it cannot, by any possible twisting of human speech, be construed into anything great for the marines.
>
> You may suppose, if you like, that they died hoping their behavior would not be forgotten; or you may suppose they thought nothing of the subject, which is much more likely. What can be the signification of the word "fame" to a private of marines, who cannot read and knows nothing of past history beyond the reminiscences of his grandmother? But whatever supposition you make, the fact is unchanged; and I suppose their bones were already white, before the winds and the

> waves and the humor of Indian chiefs and governers had decided whether they were to be unknown and useless martyrs or honored heroes. Indeed, I believe this is the lesson: if it is for fame that men do brave actions, they are only silly fellows after all.... If the marines of the *Wager* gave three cheers and cried “God bless the king,” it was because they liked to do things nobly for their own satisfaction. They were giving their lives, there was no help for that, and they made it a point of self-respect to give them handsomely.

In 1739 the bitter rivalry between England and Spain for the trade and treasure of the New World flamed afresh in war. A squadron of six British men-of-war under Commodore George Anson was sent out to double Cape Horn and vex the dons in their South American ports and on the routes of the Pacific where the lumbering galleons steered for Panama or Manila. With these fighting-vessels went a supply-ship called the *Wager*, an old East Indiaman which had been armed and filled with stores of every description. Clumsy, rotten, and overladen, the *Wager* was no better off for a crew, which consisted of sailors long exiled on other voyages and pining for home. The military guard was made up of worn-out old pensioners from Chelsea Hospital, who were very low in their minds at the prospect of so long and hazardous a cruise. They could not be called a dashing lot aboard the *Wager*, and as for the captain of her his name was Cheap, and he was not much better than that. You shall have the pleasure of damning him as heartily for yourselves as did his forlorn ship’s company.

The crazy old hooker of a store-ship began to go to pieces as soon as she encountered the wild gales and swollen seas off the Horn. Decks were swept, boats smashed, and the mizzenmast carried clean out of her. Disabled and leaking, the *Wager* was somehow worked into the Pacific; but the captain had no charts of the coast, and he blundered along in the hope of finding the rest of the squadron at the rendezvous, which was the island of

Juan Fernandez. He was warned by the first lieutenant, the gunner, and other officers that the floating weed, the flocks of land birds, and the longitude, as they had figured it out, indicated a lee shore not many miles distant. The gunner was a man of sorts and he was bold enough to protest:

“Sir, the ship is a perfect wreck; our mizzenmast gone, and all our people ill or exhausted; there are only twelve fit for duty,—therefore it may be dangerous to fall in with the land.”

Captain Cheap stubbornly held on until he was disabled by a fall on deck which dislocated his shoulder, and confined him to his cabin. The officers were better off without him. On the morning of May 13, 1740, the carpenter’s keen eyesight discerned the lift of land through a rift in the cloudy weather, but the others disagreed with him until they saw a gloomy peak of the Cordilleras. The ship was driving bodily toward the land, and the utmost exertions were made to crowd her offshore; but the sails split in the heavy gale, and so few men were fit for duty that there were no more than three or four active seamen to a watch.

In darkness next morning the *Wager* struck a sunken rock, and her ancient timbers collapsed. She split open like a pumpkin, rolled on her beam-ends, and lodged against other projections of the reef, with the seas boiling clean over her. Then a mountainous billow or two lifted her clear, and she went reeling inshore, sinking as she ran. Several of the sick men were drowned in their hammocks, and others scrambled on deck to display miraculous recoveries. Because the commander of the ship was worthless and disabled besides, the discipline of the ship in this crisis was abominable. The brave men rallied together as by instinct, and tried to hammer courage and obedience into the frenzied mob. The mate, Mr. Jones, was a man with his two feet under him, and he shouted to the cowards:

“Here, lads, let us not be discouraged. Did you never see a ship amongst breakers before? Come, lend a hand; here is a sheet and there is a

brace; lay hold. I doubt not that we can bring her near enough to land to save our lives."

Mr. Jones thought they were all dead men without a ghost of a show of salvation, as he later confessed, but his exhortations put heart into them, and he was not one to die without a gallant struggle. Soon the wreck of the *Wager* piled up in the breakers between two huge rocks, where she stayed fast. Dry land was no more than a musket-shot away, and as soon as daylight came the three boats that were left—the barge, the cutter, and the yawl—were launched and instantly filled with men, who tumbled in helter-skelter. The rest of the sailors proceeded to break open casks of wine and brandy and to get so drunk that several were drowned in the ship. The suffering Captain Cheap permitted himself to be lifted out of bed and borne into a boat with most of the commissioned officers, while the master, gunner, and carpenter, who were not gentlemen at all, but very ordinary persons, in fact, remained in the wreck to save what they could of her and to round up the riotous bluejackets and bear a hand with the surviving invalids.

A hundred and forty people of the *Wager* found themselves alive, and nothing more, on the savage and desolate coast of Patagonia. The boatswain, who was a hard case, had stuck by the ship, but there was nothing noble in his motive. He led a crowd of kindred spirits, who vowed they would stay there as long as the liquor held out. When ordered to abandon the hulk, they threatened mutiny and broached another cask. During the following night, however, another gale drove the sea over the wreck, and the rogues had quite enough of it.

They signaled for the boats to take them off, but this was impossible because of the raging surf; wherefore the gay mutineers lost their tempers and let a cannon-ball whizz from a quarter-deck gun at the refugees on shore. While waiting for rescue, they rifled the cabins for tempting plunder,

and swaggered in the officers' laced coats and cocked hats. The boatswain, who egged them on, saw to it that they were well armed, for he proclaimed defiance of all authority, and there was to be no more of the iron-handed code of sea law. These were pressed men, poor devils, who broke all restraint because they had not been wisely and humanely handled.

When at length they were taken ashore, Captain Cheap showed one of his fitful flashes of resolution by sallying from his tent and knocking the insolent boatswain down with a loaded cane and putting a cocked pistol to his ear. This took the wind out of the sails of the other mutineers, and they tamely submitted to being stripped of their arms, which made them harmless for the moment. So bleak was the coast that the only food obtainable was shell-fish, while from the wreck almost no stores were saved. The most urgent business was to knock huts together of the drift-wood and canvas, and effect some sort of organization. A fortnight passed before Captain Cheap had the provisions properly guarded and the rations dealt out in a systematic manner, while in the meantime the sailors were stealing the stuff right and left, and the battle was to the strongest.

It was ascertained that they were marooned on what appeared to be an island near the coast and about three hundred miles to the northward of the Strait of Magellan. Three canoes of Patagonian Indians happened to discover the camp, and they were friendly enough to barter for two dogs and three sheep, which were no more than a meal for the hungry crew of the *Wager*. The Indians vanished, and the agony of famine took hold of these miserable people. Instead of pluckily working together to master the situation like true British seamen, they split into hostile factions, and insubordination was rampant. There were rough and desperate men among them, it is true, but a leader of courage and resource whom they respected would have stamped out much of this disorder.

They wandered off in sullen groups, ten of them straying away into the woods until starvation drove them back, another party building a punt and sailing away in it, never to be heard of again. These latter fellows were not regretted, according to the narrative of one of the survivors, who declares that

> there was great reason to believe that James Mitchell, one of them, had perpetrated no less than two murders, the first on a sailor found strangled on board and the second on the body of a man who was discovered among some bushes, stabbed in a shocking manner. On the day of their desertion, they plotted blowing up the captain in his hut, along with the surgeon and Lieutenant Hamilton of the marines; they were with difficulty dissuaded from it by one less wicked than the rest; and half a barrel of powder, together with the train, were found actually laid.

Among the officers was a boyish midshipman named Cozens who was of a flighty, impulsive disposition and who had no head for strong liquors. Too much grog made him boisterous, and by way of a lesson he was shut up in a hut under guard. He cherished a hearty dislike for Captain Cheap and was extremely impertinent to that chicken-hearted bully of a commander, who thereupon lashed him with his cane. The doughty sentry of marines interfered, swearing that not even the captain of the ship should strike a prisoner placed in his charge. The midshipman took the disgrace to heart, and what with anger, drink, and privation he seems to have become a bit unbalanced. There had been no more popular young officer in the *Wager*, easy, genial, affectionate; but now he quarreled with the surgeon and had a more serious row with the purser, taking a shot at him and vowing that he was ready to mutiny to get rid of the blockheads and villains who had brought ruin to the expedition.

Captain Cheap heard a report of the uprising of Midshipman Cozens and delayed not to investigate, but rushed out and shot the rash youngster through the head. There was nothing novel in talking mutiny. The whole camp was infected with lawlessness. If it was a crime to ignore authority, all hands were guilty. Flouted and held in contempt, Captain Cheap killed the midshipman as an example to the others, and, of course, they hated and despised him more than before. Poor young Cozens lived long enough to take the hand of his chum, Midshipman Byron, and to smile a farewell to the sailors who had been fond of him. They begged to be allowed to carry him to one of their own tents while he was still breathing, but the captain refused, and flourished his pistol at them; so he died where he fell.

> Captain Cheap, after the deed was done, addressed the people, assembled together by his command, and told them he was resolved to retain his authority over them as usual, and that it remained as much in force as ever. He then ordered them all to return to their respective tents, with which they complied. This event, however, contributed to lessen him in the regard of the people.

Three boats had been saved from the wreck of the *Wager*, and the largest of them was the long-boat, a word that awakens memories of many an old-time romance of the sea and seems particularly to belong to “Robinson Crusoe.” It was what might be called a ship’s launch, and was often so heavy and capacious that vessels towed it astern on long voyages. Two months after the disaster, the *Wager’s* people despairing of rescue, began to patch up the boats with the idea of making their way to the Spanish settlements of the mainland. The long-boat was hauled up on the beach, and the carpenter undertook the difficult task of sawing it in two and building in a section in order to make it twelve feet longer.

While this enterprise was under way, a party of fifty Indians, men, women, and children, found the camp and built wigwams, evidently intending to settle for a while and do some trading. Their canoes were filled with seal, shell-fish, and live sheep, and the visitation was immensely valuable to the castaways; but some of the ruffianly sailors insulted the women, and the indignant Patagonians soon packed up and departed, bag and baggage. As a result, the ravages of famine became so severe that the muster-roll was reduced to a hundred men. This meant that a third of the survivors of the wreck were already dead.

Throughout the whole story of suffering, mutiny, and demoralization the deeds of those who bravely and unflinchingly endured seemed to gleam like stars against a somber background. You will find frequent mention of Midshipman Byron, a lad in his teens, who was the real hero of the *Wager*, although he never realized it. He achieved nothing spectacular in a way, but he always tried to do his duty and something more. The British midshipman of that era was often a mere rosy-cheeked infant who pranced into the thick of a boarding-party with his cutlass and dirk or bullied a boat's crew of old salts in some desperate adventure on an enemy's coast. The precocious breed survives in the Royal Navy of to-day, and in the great battleships of the Grand Fleet, at Rosyth or Scapa Flow, you might have seen these bantam midshipmen standing a deck watch with all the dignity of a four-starred admiral.

Midshipman Byron of the *Wager* built himself a tiny hut in which he lived alone after the captain killed his messmate Cozens, and his companion was a strayed Indian cur, which adored him. The dog faithfully guarded the hut when Byron was absent from it, and they shared together such food as could be found, mostly mussels and limpets. At length a deputation of seamen called to announce that they must eat the dog or starve. Byron made a gallant fight to save his four-legged friend, but was subdued by force, and

for once during the long and terrible experience he wept and was in a hopeless state of mind.

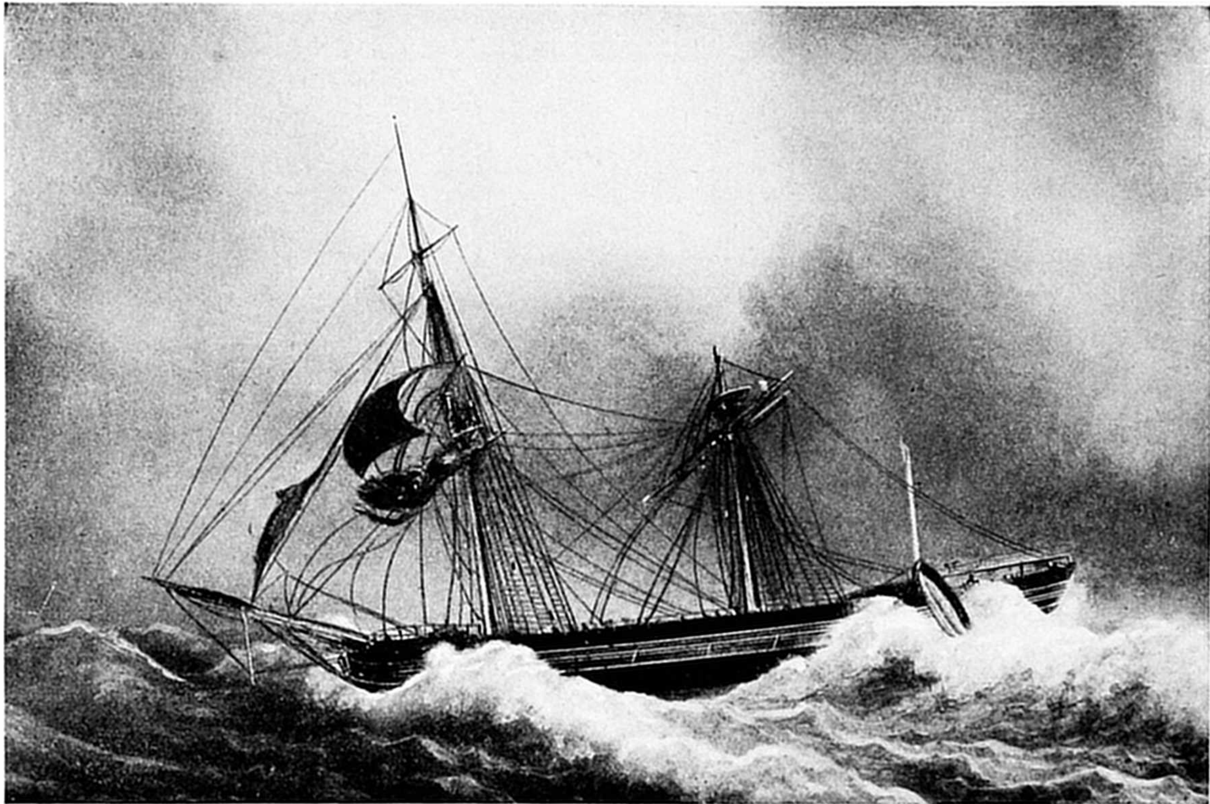
Among the minor characters who commend themselves to our approval was a reckless devil of a boatswain’s mate, who noticed that the seabirds roosted and nested on reefs and islets out to seaward. In the words of one of his shipmates:

> Having got a water puncheon, he scuttled it, then lashing two logs, one on each side of it, he went to sea in this extraordinary and original piece of embarkation. Thus he would frequently provide himself with wild-fowl when all the rest were starving; and the weather was bad indeed when it deterred him from adventuring. Sometimes he would be absent a whole day. At last he was unfortunately overset by a heavy sea when at a great distance from shore; but being near a rock, though no swimmer, he contrived to scramble to it. There he remained two days with little prospect of relief, as he was too far off the land to be visible. Luckily, however, one of the boats happened to go that way in quest of wild-fowl, discovered his signals, and rescued him from his forlorn condition. Yet he was so little discouraged by this accident that, soon after, he procured an ox’s hide from the Indians and, by the assistance of hoops, fashioned something like a canoe in which he made several successful voyages.

In August the three boats had been made seaworthy enough to undertake an escape from the miseries of this hopeless island. Then, as usual, there arose confusion of purpose and violent disagreement. This ship’s company could be trusted to start a row at the drop of the hat. As long as there was breath in them, they were sure to turn against one another. The majority proposed that they try for a passage homeward by way of the Strait of Magellan. Captain Cheap and his partizans were for steering northward,

capturing a Spanish vessel of some sort, and endeavoring to find the British squadron from which the *Wager* had become separated. He blustered about his authority, insisted that his word was law, and so on, until the high-handed majority grew tired of his noise and decided to take him along as a prisoner and hand him over to justice for killing Midshipman Cozens.

They hauled their commander out of bed and lugged him by the head and the heels to the purser's tent, where he was guarded by a sentry of marines and very coarsely derided by these unmannerly rebels. The gunner informed Captain Cheap that he was to be carried to England as a prisoner; at which he retorted, with proper spirit, that he would sooner be shot than undergo such humiliation and, given his choice, he preferred to be left behind on the island. This was agreeable to the mob, who gave three cheers and thought no more about him. His two loyal companions, the surgeon and Lieutenant Hamilton, elected of their own free will to remain with the fallen commander, and this devotion was one of the admirable episodes of the tragedy. The mutineers recognized it as such, and they distributed the provisions fairly with these exiles and gave them arms and ammunition.



THE “CHARLEMAGNE,” A NEW YORK PACKET SHIP

From the painting by Frederic Roux of Havre, 1838

There were now eighty-one men to embark in the long-boat, the cutter, and the barge and set sail for the Strait of Magellan. They started off with huzzas and Ho for Merry England, with about one chance in a thousand of getting there, and coasted along for two days when the wind blew some of their rotten canvas away and they halted to send the barge back to the wreck for more sail-cloth. Midshipman Byron found the company uncongenial, to put it mildly, and the venture seemed so confused and hazardous that he shifted into the barge to return to the island and resume existence in his little hut. The crew of the barge were of the same opinion and so they announced to Captain Cheap that they would take chances with him. Eight

deserters came straggling out of the woods to join the party and there were, in all, twenty men to contrive a voyage of their own.

The most unruly lot had departed in the long-boat and the cutter, and mutiny no longer kept the island in a turmoil. Order was restored to the extent that a sailor was flogged and banished for stealing food, and the party sensibly toiled at the wreck until they salvaged several barrels of salt beef from the hold, and so recruited health and strength. They patched together the remnants of the yawl, and in this and the barge they put to sea to cruise to the northward in December, or more than half a year after the loss of the *Wager*. Misfortune beset them at every turn. It seemed as though their ship had been under a curse. A gale almost swamped the two boats as soon as they were clear of the island, and to keep afloat they had to throw overboard all their salt beef and seal meat. Most of the other stuff was washed out, and they made a landing in worse plight than before.

With fitful weather they skirted a swampy coast, with nothing to eat but seaweed, until they were chewing the shoes they had sewed together from raw sealskin. It was Christmas day or thereabouts when the yawl was smashed beyond mending by dragging its anchor and driving into the surf. The barge was not large enough to carry all hands, and it was agreed that four of them should be abandoned ashore. There was no obstreperous argument over it. They had become careless of such matters as life and death. Just how these four men were chosen or whether they volunteered is left to conjecture. The story written by Midshipman Byron, which is the most detailed account of the episode, describes it as follows:

> They were all marines, who seemed to have no great objection to the determination made with regard to them, they were so exceedingly disheartened and exhausted with the distress and dangers they had already undergone. Indeed, I believe it would have been a matter of indifference to most of the others whether they should embark or take

their chance. The captain distributed among these poor fellows arms, ammunition, and some other necessaries.

When we parted they stood upon the beach, giving us three cheers and calling out, "*God bless the King!*" We saw them a little after setting out upon their forlorn hope and helping one another over hideous tracts of rocks; but considering the difficulties attending this only mode of travelling left them, for the woods are impenetrable, from their thickness, and the deep swamps everywhere met within them, and considering, too, that the coast is here rendered inhospitable by the heavy seas that are constantly tumbling upon it, it is probable that they all experienced a miserable fate.

The picture of the four marines as they waved their caps and shouted that immortal huzza is apt to suggest the wreck of the *Birkenhead* troop-ship in 1852, when she struck a rock off the Cape of Good Hope and four hundred British soldiers and marines perished. With the ship foundering beneath their feet, they fell in and stood as though on parade, while the women and children were put into the two available boats. As the decks of the *Birkenhead* lurched under the sea, the ranks of the four hundred British soldiers and marines were still splendid and unbroken. The deed rang through England like a trumpet-call, as well it might.

Brothers in arms and kinsmen in spirit were these four hundred men of England's thin, red line to the four humble privates of the Royal Marines whose names are forgotten. And Kipling's tribute may be said to include them also:

To take your chance in the thick of a rush, with firing all about,
Is nothing so bad when you’ve cover to ’and, an’ leave an’ likin’ to
shout;
But to stand an’ be still to the *Birken’ead* drill is a damn tough billet
to chew,
An’ they done it, the Jollies—’Er Majesty’s Jollies—soldier an’
sailor too.

The wretched voyage of the *Wager’s* barge was so delayed by head winds and battering seas and the necessity of landing often in search of food that all hope of reaching a Spanish port was relinquished, and finally they put about and trailed wearily back to the island and the wreck of the *Wager* after two months of futile endeavor. The superstition of the sea perturbed these childish sailormen, who laid their distresses to the fact that one of the crew who was murdered on the island had never been given burial. Therefore the first errand when they tottered ashore at their old camp was to dig a grave and say a prayer.

They were so tormented with famine that they talked, or rather whispered, of choosing one of their number by lot, that dreadful old expedient, and boiling him for a square meal; but the discovery of some rotten beef cast up from the wreck averted this procedure. They existed for a fortnight, and then a party of Indians appeared, among them a chief. He spoke a little Spanish, and an officer of the *Wager* managed to convey to him that they desired guidance to the nearest white settlement. The promise of the barge as a gift persuaded the mercenary Patagonian to lead them out of the wilderness. Thirteen survivors were left of the twenty who had attempted to fare to the northward. The four marines had been left to their heroic fate, and three others had later died of hunger.

The Indian chief had not bound himself to furnish food, and it soon appeared as though the castaways would all perish to a man before they came to the end of the journey. They were trying to pull the barge up a turbulent river with a rapid current, and there occurred an incident or two which illumined the characters of Midshipman Byron and Captain Cheap and showed what very different men they were. I quote the old record:

> Mr. Byron had hitherto steered the boat; but one of the men dropping down, and dying of fatigue, he was obliged to take his oar. While thus engaged, John Bosman, who was considered the stoutest man among them, fell from his seat under the thwarts, complaining that his strength was quite exhausted from want of food and that he should soon expire. While he lay in this manner, he would, every now and then, break out into the most pathetic wishes for some little sustenance, expressing that two or three mouthfuls might be the means of saving his life.
>
> At this time, the captain had a large piece of boiled seal by him and was the only one in possession of anything like a meal. But they were become so hardened to the sufferings of others and so much familiarized to similar scenes of misery that the poor man's dying entreaties were in vain. Mr. Byron sat next him when he dropped, and having about five or six dried shell-fish in his pocket, put one from time to time in his mouth, which only served to prolong his misery. From this, however, death released him soon after his benefactor's little supply was exhausted. For him, and the other man, a grave was made in the sand.
>
> It would have greatly redounded to the tenderness and humanity of Captain Cheap if he had remitted somewhat of that attention which he testified to self-preservation and spared in those exigencies what might have been wanted, consistently with his own necessities. He had better

> opportunities of recruiting his stock than the others, for his rank was an inducement to the Indian guide to supply him when not a bit of anything could be found for the rest. On the evening of the same day, Captain Cheap produced a large piece of boiled seal, of which he permitted no one, excepting the surgeon, to partake. His fellow-sufferers did not expect it, as they had a few small mussels and herbs to eat, but the men could not suppress the greatest indignation at his neglect of the deceased, saying that he deserved to be deserted for such savage conduct.

If one may hazard a personal conjecture, it seems plausible to assume that Captain Cheap was the Jonah of the *Wager* expedition and that the spell might have been lifted if he had been thrown overboard much earlier in the adventure. Be that as it may, the curse was still potent, for as the next mishap six sailors and one of the Indians stole the barge and made off to sea with it. This left the others stranded and bereft of everything that belonged to them. Besides this affliction, the Patagonian chief was disgruntled because the barge was to have been his reward for befriending them. He was for killing them at once as the easiest way to settle the account, but it was Midshipman Byron, of course, who cajoled him out of his mood and pleased him with the gift of a fowling-piece. The six seamen who stole the barge passed into oblivion at the same time, and so were justly punished for their perfidy. They joined the great majority of the *Wager's* company who never saw port again.

Over the rocks and through the swamps panted and staggered the few survivors, hauling and paddling canoes like galley-slaves and abused immoderately by their Indian guides, or captors. They were cold and wet and famished, and at last the surgeon died, and the others were little more than shadows. Captain Cheap grew more selfish and pompous, and

adversity had no power to chasten him. One more picture and we are almost done with him.

> The canoes were taken to pieces and each man and Indian woman of the party, except Captain Cheap, had something to carry. Mr. Byron had a piece of wet heavy canvas to carry for the captain, in which was wrapped a piece of seal which had that morning been given to him by some of the Indians. The way was through a thick wood and quagmire, often taking them up to the knees, and stumps of trees in the water obstructing their progress. Their feet were wounded, besides, with the ruggedness of the ground. Mr. Byron, whose load was equal to what a strong healthy man might have carried, was left behind by two Indians who accompanied him. Alarmed lest the whole should be too far advanced for him to overtake them, he strove to get up; and in his exertions fell off a tree crossing the road in a deep swamp, where he narrowly escaped drowning.
>
> Quite exhausted with the labor of extricating himself, he sat down under a tree and there gave way to melancholy reflections. Sensible that if he indulged them in inactivity, his companions could not be overtaken, he marked a great tree and, depositing his burden, hastened after them. In some hours he came up, and Captain Cheap began asking for his canvas; and on being told the disaster that had befallen Mr. Byron, nothing was heard but grumbling for the loss. Mr. Byron made no answer but, resting himself a little, rose and returned at least five miles to the burden, with which he returned just as the others were embarking to cross a great lake which seemed to wash the foot of the Cordilleras. He was left behind to wait the arrival of some more Indians, without a morsel of food, or even a part of the seal meat that had cost him so much anxiety.

When they were led at last to a small Spanish garrison called Castro, only four of the party had survived the journey, Midshipman Byron, Lieutenant Hamilton of the Royal Marines, Lieutenant Alexander Campbell, and Captain Cheap. Although the English were enemies, the *corregidor* and the Jesuit priests felt pity for these poor victims, and treated them with great kindness. When they had recovered, they were escorted to the larger town of Chaco with a guard of thirty Spanish soldiers. At this seaport of the Chilean coast the governor entertained them handsomely and invited them to travel on his annual tour through the districts of his province. Midshipman Byron was so popular with the ladies that he had to steer a very careful course to avoid entanglements. He was the guest of one doting mother who had two very handsome daughters, and she straightway sent a message to the governor asking that the young Englishman be sent back to spend a month with the family.

This was not so serious as the affair with the niece of the rich and venerable priest, a highly educated damsel

> whose person was good, though she was not a regular beauty. Casting an amorous eye on Mr. Byron, she first proposed to her uncle to convert him and then begged his consent to marry him. The old man's affection for his niece induced his ready acquiescence to her wishes, and on the next visit Mr. Byron was acquainted with the lady's designs. The uncle unlocked many chests and boxes before him, first showing what a number of fine clothes his niece had and then exhibiting his own wardrobe which he said should be Mr. Byron's at his death. Among other things he produced a piece of linen, engaging that it should immediately be made up into shirts for his use. Mr. Byron felt this last article a great temptation, yet he had the resolution to withstand it, and declined the honor intended him, with the best excuses he was able to frame.

> Some time after they had been at Chaco, a ship arrived from Lima which occasioned great joy amongst the inhabitants, as no ship had been there the year before on account of the alarm of Commodore Anson's squadron. The captain of her was an old man, well known upon the island, who had been trading there for thirty years past. He had a remarkably large head and was commonly known by the nick-name of *Cabuco de Toro*, or Bull's-head. Not a week had elapsed after his arrival before he came to the governor with a melancholy countenance, saying that he had not slept a wink since he came into the harbor because the governor was pleased to allow three English prisoners to walk about at liberty, whom he expected every minute would board his vessel and carry her away, although he said he had more than thirty sailors on board. The governor answered that he would be responsible for the behavior of the three Englishmen, but could not help laughing at the old man. Notwithstanding these assurances, Captain Bull's-head used the utmost despatch in disposing of his cargo and put to sea again, not considering himself safe until he lost sight of Chaco.

The officers of the *Wager* were compelled to wait for another of the infrequent trading ships from Lima, and it was therefore in January, 1743, before they made the next stage of their interminable pilgrimage. They were sent ashore at Valparaiso, where the Spanish governor promptly threw them into prison; but he later forwarded them to Santiago, the capital of Chile, where they were handsomely released on parole.

In Santiago at that time were Admiral Pizarro and several officers of the squadron which had been sent out from Spain to intercept Commodore Anson and drive him away from the rich trade routes of the Pacific. It was a powerful force of six men-of-war, with a total of three hundred guns and four thousand sailors, marines, and soldiers. The storms of Cape Horn and

the ravages of disease crippled the expedition, and shipwreck almost wiped it out. The flagship *Asia* found refuge in the River Plate with half her crew dead; the *Esperanza* had only fifty-eight men alive of the four hundred and fifty who had sailed from Spain in her, and of an entire regiment of infantry all but sixty perished. Only two ships survived to return home after four years' absence, and more than three thousand Spanish sailors had found their graves in the sea.

While his flagship was undergoing repairs at Montevideo, Admiral Pizarro made the journey by land across the Andes to Santiago to confer with the Viceroy of Chile. Introduced to the officers of the *Wager*, one of the ships of the enemy's squadron which he had hoped to engage in battle, the Spanish admiral invited them to dine with him and displayed the most perfect courtesy. One of his staff, Don Manuel de Guiros, insisted upon advancing them funds to the amount of two thousand dollars. Midshipman Byron and his companions accepted part of it, giving drafts on Lisbon, and were able to live comfortably and await the next turn of fortune's wheel.

Two weary years they tarried in Santiago, and were treated not as enemies but as castaways. They found great consolation in the friendship of a Scotch physician who was known as Don Patrico Gedd. Midshipman Byron wrote:

> This gentleman had been a long time in the city and was greatly esteemed by the Spaniards, as well for his abilities in his profession as for the humanity of his disposition. He no sooner heard that four English prisoners had arrived in that country than he waited on the president and begged that they might be lodged in his house. This was granted, and had we been his own brothers we could not have met with a more friendly reception; and during two years that we were with him, it was his constant study to make everything as agreeable to us as

> possible. We were greatly distressed to think of the expense he was at upon our account, but it was vain to argue with him about it.

A French ship, bound from Lima to Spain, finally carried them homeward as passengers, and they saw the shores of England in November, 1745, or more than five years after the *Wager* had been lost in the Gulf de Panas on the coast of Patagonia. The boyish midshipman who had behaved so well through all vicissitudes was of gentle blood and breeding, and in England he was known as the Honorable John Byron, second son of the fourth Lord Byron. When he landed at Dover with two of his shipmates his troubles were not quite at an end, and to quote his own words:

> We directly set off for Canterbury upon post-horses, but Captain Cheap was so tired by the time he got there that he could proceed no farther that night. The next morning he still found himself so much fatigued that he could ride no longer; therefore it was agreed that he and Mr. Hamilton should take a post-chaise and that I should ride. But here an unlucky difficulty was started; for upon sharing the little money we had, it was found to be not sufficient to pay the charges to London, and my proportion fell so short that it was, by calculation, bare enough to pay for horses, without a farthing for eating a morsel upon the road or even for the very turnpikes. Thus I was obliged to defraud by riding as hard as I could through the toll-gates, not paying the least regard to the men who called out to stop me. The want of refreshment I bore as well as I could.
>
> When I got to the Borough of London I took a coach and drove to Marlborough Street where my friends lived when I left England but when I came there I found the place shut up. Having been absent so many years, and having, in all that time, never a word from home, I knew not who was dead or who was living or where to go next, or even

how to pay the coachman. I recollected a linen-draper's shop, not far from thence, at which our family used to deal. I therefore drove thither and, making myself known, they paid the coachman. I then inquired after our family and was told that my sister had married Lord Carlisle and was at that time in Soho Square. I immediately walked to the house and knocked at the door. But the porter, not liking my figure which was half French and half Spanish, with the addition of a large pair of boots covered with dirt, was going to shut the door in my face but I prevailed upon him to let me in.

I need not acquaint the reader with what surprise and joy my sister received me. She immediately furnished me with money to appear like the rest of my countrymen. Till that time I could not properly be said to have finished all the extraordinary scenes in which I had been involved by a series of adventures, for the space of five years and upwards.

The Honorable John Byron became a British vice-admiral and was also the grandfather of the poet, who transmuted some of the exploits of the midshipman of the *Wager* into the pages of *Don Juan*. As one of the most famous fighting sailors of his era, Admiral Byron earned the nickname of "Foul Weather Jack," because he contended so constantly with gales and head winds, and it is to this that Lord Byron refers in his "Epistles to Augusta":

A strange doom is thy father's son's, and past
    Recalling as it lies beyond redress,
Reversed for him our grandsire's fate of yore,
    He had no rest at sea, nor I on shore.

You will find that Stevenson mentions him in that same tribute to the English admirals:

> Most men of high destinies have high-sounding names. Pymn and Habakkuk may do pretty well, but they must not think to cope with the Cromwells and Isaiahs. And you could not find a better case in point than that of the English Admirals. Drake and Rooke and Hawke are picked names for men of execution. Frobisher, Rodney, Boscawen, Foul-Weather Jack Byron, are all good to catch the eye in a page of naval history.

CHAPTER XII

THE CRUISE OF THE *WAGER'S* LONG-BOAT

THE story of the man-of-war *Wager* was by no means finished when young Midshipman Byron rode into London and was welcomed as one risen from the dead. It will be recalled that about twenty of the crew persisted in the attempt to sail homeward by way of the Strait of Magellan. They had been at sea only a few days when the cutter, the smaller of their two boats, was knocked to pieces among the rocks, and the survivors were therefore jammed into the long-boat, which had room for no more than half of them. How they managed to stay afloat is a mystery that cannot be fathomed, with the gunwales only a few inches above water and scarcely any space to row or steer or handle sail. They quarreled continually, and "hardly ten testified any anxiety about the welfare of the voyage but rather seemed ripe for mutiny and destruction." Eleven of the company soon preferred to quit this madhouse of a boat and to face a less turbulent death ashore, and at their own request they were landed on the coast of Patagonia.

The long-boat, still overcrowded to a degree that meant incredible discomfort and danger, blundered on her course, with only the sun and stars for guidance. A little flour and some other stores had been taken from the wreck, and now occurred a curious manifestation of human selfishness, of the struggle for survival reduced to the lowest terms. The officers had endeavored to ration the food, share and share alike, but the ugly temper of the men made such prudent precautions impossible, and some obtained

more provisions than others. The situation was described by one of them in these words:

> The people on board began to barter their allowance of provisions for other articles. Flour was valued at twelve shillings a pound, but, before night, it rose to a guinea. Some were now absolutely starving for want—and the day following, George Bateman, a lad of sixteen, expired, being reduced to a perfect skeleton. On the 19th, Thomas Capell, aged twelve years, son of the late Lieutenant Capell, died of want. A person on board had above twenty guineas of his money, along with a watch and a silver cup. The latter the boy wished to sell for flour; but his guardian told him it would buy clothes for him in the Brazils.
>
> "Sir," cried the miserable youth, "I shall never live to see the Brazils, I am now starving—almost starved to death; therefore give me my silver cup, for God's sake, to get me some victuals, or buy some for me yourself."
>
> But all his prayers and entreaties were vain, and Heaven sent death to his relief. Those who have not experienced such hardships will wonder how people can be so inhuman as to witness their fellow creatures starving before their faces without affording them succor, but hunger is void of all compassion.

They actually sailed through the Strait of Magellan and reached the Atlantic after two months of suffering during which twenty men died of famine and disease. Landing wherever possible, they found seal and fish or traded with wandering Indians for dogs and wild geese to eat. Of the survivors no more than fifteen were able to stand or to crawl about the boat. A happier fate was granted them when they coasted along the wilderness of the Argentine and found thousands of wild horses, which kept them

plentifully supplied with meat. At length they came to the Rio Grande and the town of Montevideo, and thirty of them were alive, or half the number that had made the voyage in the long-boat.

Among those who died almost within sight of rescue was Thomas MacLean, the cook, a patriarch of eighty-two years, presumably one of those soldier pensioners who had been snatched from his well-earned repose at Chelsea Hospital. This is one of the most extraordinary facts of the whole story, that this tough old veteran of a red-coat, his age past four score, should have lived all those months, during which the great majority of the younger officers and men of the *Wager* had been blotted out by privations which seemed beyond human endurance.

While the long-boat was standing along the coast, on this last stretch of the journey, there came a time when there was no food or water left. There was no small boat to send ashore, so nine of the strongest men offered to swim to the beach and see what they could find. Over they went, feeble as they were, and all reached shore except one marine, who had so little strength to spare that he sank like a stone. Those in the long-boat let several empty water-casks drift to the land and tied to them some muskets and ammunition wrapped in tarred canvas. A gale blew the long-boat out to sea and disabled her rudder. Tacking back with great difficulty, she found it impossible to lay to and bring off the eight men, and another cask was floated off to them, containing a letter of farewell, and more ammunition, and the boat made sail, and vanished to the northward.

The adventures of this little band of seamen, accidentally marooned in this manner, were most remarkable. They are almost unknown to history, although a century and more ago much was written about the *Wager*. The heroism and manliness of this group of actors go far to redeem many other episodes of the disaster which were profoundly shameful, and they are the

chief reason for recalling the cruise of the long-boat. Said Isaac Morris, one of them:

> We found ourselves on a wild, desolate part of the world, fatigued, sickly, and destitute of provisions. However, we had arms and ammunition and while these lasted we made a tolerable shift for a livelihood. The nearest inhabited place of which we knew was Buenos Ayres, about three hundred miles to the northwest: but we were then miserably reduced by our tedious passage through the Straits of Magellan, and in a poor condition to undertake so hazardous a journey. Nothing remained but to commit ourselves to kind Providence, and make the best of the melancholy situation until our health became recruited.
>
> We were eight in number thus abandoned by our comrades, for whose preservation we had risked our lives by swimming ashore for provisions, and our names Guy Broadwater, Samuel Cooper, Benjamin Smith, John Duck, Joseph Clinch, John Andrews, John Allen, and myself. After deliberating on our unhappy circumstances and comforting each other with imaginary hopes, we came to the resolution of taking up our quarters on the beach where we landed until becoming strong enough to undergo the fatigue of a journey to Buenos Ayres.

There was no senseless chatter about mutiny, no selfish bickering. They were sturdily resolved to stick together and make the best of a bad bargain. For a month they lived in a burrow in the sand, knocking a seal on the head whenever they needed food. As preparation for the journey they made knapsacks of sealskin, filled them with the dried flesh, and used the bladders for water bottles. Muskets on their shoulders, they trudged for sixty miles, when no more fresh water could be found, and they retreated to their camp to await the rainy season. Now they built a sort of hut under the

lee of a cliff and varied the diet of seal by catching armadillos and stewing them in seaweed. Their patience was amazing, and Seaman Isaac Morris wrote of this weary inaction:

> Nothing remarkable happened to us in the course of these three months. Our provision, such as it was, did not cost us much difficulty to procure, and we were supplied with fire-wood from a small coppice about seven miles distant. We seldom failed of bringing home something every night and generally had a hot supper. The time passed as cheerfully as might be with poor fellows in such circumstances as ours.

Again they set out on foot, in the month of May, after burdening their backs with seal and armadillo meat, and traversed a barren, open country until incessant cold rains chilled them to the bone and no supplies of any kind were obtainable. There was prolonged argument, and the majority was for returning once more to the hut they had left behind as the nearest refuge. Back they toiled over the same old trail, cast down, but not disheartened, and still loyal comrades who “bound themselves never to quit each other unless compelled by a superior force.” They had a certain amount of order and discipline, four of them out hunting for food on one day and remaining in camp the next day while the other four ranged the country for deer and the coast for seal. Wild dogs were numerous, and several litters of puppies were adopted until every man had a brace of them as his faithful friends and helpers. Several young pigs were also taken into the family, and they trotted contentedly along with the dogs.

The eight seamen lived in this strangely simple and solitary manner until seven months had passed, and then they concluded to make another attempt to escape from the bondage of circumstances. Not an Indian had been seen, and there was no reason to believe that they had been discovered

or observed. They merited good fortune, did these stanch and courageous castaways, but the curse of the *Wager* had followed them. While they were getting together supplies for another journey toward Buenos Aires, Samuel Cooper, John Andrews, John Duck, and Isaac Morris went some distance along the beach to hunt seals. Late in the day they were returning to the hut when the dogs were seen to be running and barking in much agitation. The four men hurried to the hut, which was empty and plundered of muskets, powder, and ball, sealskin clothes, dried meat—everything they possessed.

Scouting outside, one of the sailors shouted to Morris:

"Aye, Isaac, something much worse has happened, for yonder lie poor Guy Broadwater and Benjamin Smith murdered."

One poor fellow was found with his throat cut, and the other had been stabbed in the breast. Their bodies were still warm, and, afraid the assassins might be somewhere near, the four men ran hard and hid in a rocky bight a mile away until next morning, for they had no firearms left. Of the four who had been overtaken in this tragedy, Joseph Clinch and John Allen had vanished, nor was any trace of them discovered. It was sadly agreed that Indians must have killed two and carried the two others away with them. The four survivors were deprived not only of their comrades, but of their precious muskets and the means of making fire. Never were men left more naked and defenseless in a hostile wilderness. In this plight Samuel Cooper, John Andrews, John Duck, and Isaac Morris trudged off for the third time to look for the mouth of the River Plate and Buenos Aires.

With them trooped sixteen dogs and two pigs, and it must have been an odd caravan to behold. They carried their provender on the hoof this time. By following the sea-coast, they found pools of fresh water among the sand-dunes, where the heavy rains had not yet filtered into the ground, and a dead whale washed up on the beach served for several hearty meals. They got along without great difficulty until ten days of travel found them mired

in endless swamps and bogs, which they could find no way of crossing. Again they retreated to the starting-place at the hut, but the amiable pigs were no longer in the troop. There were not so many dogs, and their number steadily dwindled; for there would have been no bill of fare without them.

Three months more the four unconquerable seamen lingered in their exile, at their wits' ends to plan a way of escape, because the exodus to Buenos Aires had been given up as hopeless. Then they discovered a large trunk of a fallen tree on the beach, and conceived the wild notion of fashioning some kind of boat of it and hoisting a sail of sealskins sewed together with sinews. They had no tools whatever, barring a pocket-knife or two, but this could not discourage the handy mariners. John Duck happened to remember that during the first journey toward Buenos Aires eleven months before, he had thrown away his musket because the lock was broken. It occurred to one of them that the iron of the barrel might be pounded into something like a hatchet, and what did the quartet do but take a little seal meat and water and walk sixty miles to look for that musket. They found it, which was still more wonderful, and beat half the length of the barrel flat, using stones as hammer and anvil, and whetted an edge on the rough rocks.

They were about to attack the project of making a boat when a dozen horses came galloping along the beach, and there were Indians on their backs. They were as astonished as the British seamen, but had no intention of shedding blood, and promptly whisked their prisoners up behind them. At a great pace the Indian horsemen rode several miles inland to a camp where a dozen of them were rounding up wild horses. It affords a glimpse of what the life had been in that hut on the Patagonian coast to hear Isaac Morris say:

“We were treated with great humanity; they killed a horse, kindled a fire, and roasted part of it, which to us who had been eating raw flesh three

months was most delicious entertainment. They also gave each of us a piece of an old blanket to cover our nakedness."

Two hundred miles back into the mountainous interior, where white men had never been seen, the wandering party of horse-hunting Indians carried the four sailors. These were sporting savages with a taste for gambling, and it is chronicled that "in this place we were bought and sold four different times, for a pair of spurs, a brass pan, ostrich feathers and such trifles, which was the low price generally set on each of us; and sometimes we were played away at dice, so that we changed masters several times in a day."

A few weeks later the band of nomad Indians was joined by other parties, and together, with a train of fifteen hundred horses, they moved by easy stages far inland, almost a thousand miles from the coast, and came in four months' time to the capital, or chief town of the tribe, where the king claimed the seamen as his own property. He spoke a little Spanish, and hated the Spaniards so cordially that his friendly regard was offered these wanderers because they had served in an English man-of-war of a squadron sent against the enemy. They were slaves, it is true, but this condition was tempered with kindness, and for eight months they lived and labored among these wild horsemen of South America. When the season of spring arrived, the tribe broke camp for the long pilgrimage to the pampas and the chase of the wild horses which supplied food and raiment.

The customary route to the sea passed within a hundred miles of Buenos Aires, and the sailors persuaded their masters that it was worth while trying to obtain ransom for them. At last there was a tangible hope of extricating themselves, but it brought joy only to three of the four comrades. Poor John Duck happened to be a mulatto born in London, and his brown skin won the fancy of the Indians, who insisted that he was of their own blood. Therefore they refused to part with him and he was sold

for a very high price to another chief in a region even more remote, and this was the last of him. His three shipmates were very sorrowful at leaving him, no doubt, and it must have been an incident deeply moving when they shook hands and went their opposite ways, for they had suffered manifold things together and carried it off magnificently. And in their minds there must have been the memory of that vow they had sworn together "never to quit each other unless compelled by a superior force."

The chief was faithful to his word in sending a messenger to Buenos Aires, where the Spanish governor expressed his willingness to buy three English prisoners at the bargain price of ninety dollars for the lot.

In this manner were Midshipman Morris and Samuel Cooper and John Andrews delivered from their captivity in the wilds of Patagonia, though they were not yet to see the long road home to England. The Spanish governor of Buenos Aires behaved toward them like a very courteous gentleman, but felt it his bounden duty to labor with them for the good of their souls. "He sent for us several times," Midshipman Morris tells us, "and earnestly urged us to turn Catholics and serve the king of Spain; to which we answered that we were Protestants and true Englishmen and hoped to die so. Many tempting offers were made to seduce us but, thank God, we resisted them all."

This obstinacy vexed the conscientious governor, and he sent the three heretics on board of the man-of-war *Asia*, the flag-ship of Admiral Pizarro's squadron, which was then lying at Montevideo. Aboard the *Asia* the three Englishmen were confined more than a year, with sixteen other unlucky seamen of their own race. They complained that they were treated more like galley-slaves than prisoners of war, and it was inevitable that they should try to escape. A sentry was tied and gagged one night, and the Britons swam for the shore, a quarter of a mile away. Most of them were overtaken in a boat, but Isaac Morris and one sailor, naked as the day they were born,

scrambled into the jungle, and had such a piteous time of it that they were glad to surrender to the laborers of the nearest plantation. Taken back to the ship, they were thrust into the stocks, neck and heels, four hours a day for a fortnight as a hint to discourage such rash enterprise.

Admiral Pizarro had journeyed overland to Chile, and in the very leisurely course of time he returned to Buenos Aires to set sail for Spain in his flag-ship, having achieved nothing more than a wild-goose chase in quest of the daring Anson. The towering, ornate *Asia* was refitted as completely as possible, but there was a great lack of seamen. More than half her crew had died of scurvy or deserted during the long voyage and the year at an anchorage. Press-gangs combed the streets and dives of Buenos Aires and Montevideo, but the ship could not find a proper complement, and, as a last resort, eleven Indians were unceremoniously thrown on board. They had been captured while raiding the outposts of the thinly held Spanish settlements, and were of a fighting tribe which preferred death to submission to the cruel and rapacious invader.

One of these eleven Indians was a chief by the name of Orellana and a man to be considered noteworthy even in that age of high adventure. When dragged aboard the Spanish flag-ship, he and his fellows were, of course, handled like dogs,

> being treated with much insolence and barbarity by the Spaniards, the meanest officers among whom were accustomed to beat them on the slightest pretences. Orellana and his followers, though apparently patient and submissive, meditated a severe revenge. He endeavored to converse with such of the English as understood the Spanish language and seemed very desirous of learning how many of them were on board and which they were. But not finding them so precipitate and vindictive as he expected, after distantly sounding them, he proceeded

> no farther in respect to their participation, but resolved to trust his enterprise to himself and his ten faithful followers.

In short, these eleven unarmed Indians were planning an uprising in a sixty-gun ship with a crew of nearly five hundred Spaniards. It was an enterprise so utterly insane that the level-headed English seamen refused to consider it. They regarded Orellana and his ten comrades as poor, misguided wretches who knew no better and who had been driven quite mad by abuse. Of all the tales of mutiny on the high seas this must be set down as unparalleled, and it seems to fit in, as a sort of climax, with the varied and almost endless adventures of the people who were wrecked in the *Wager*.

The eleven Indians first stole a few sailors' knives, which was fairly easy to do, and then they manufactured the singular weapon still in use on the plains of the Argentine and which Midshipman Morris described as follows:

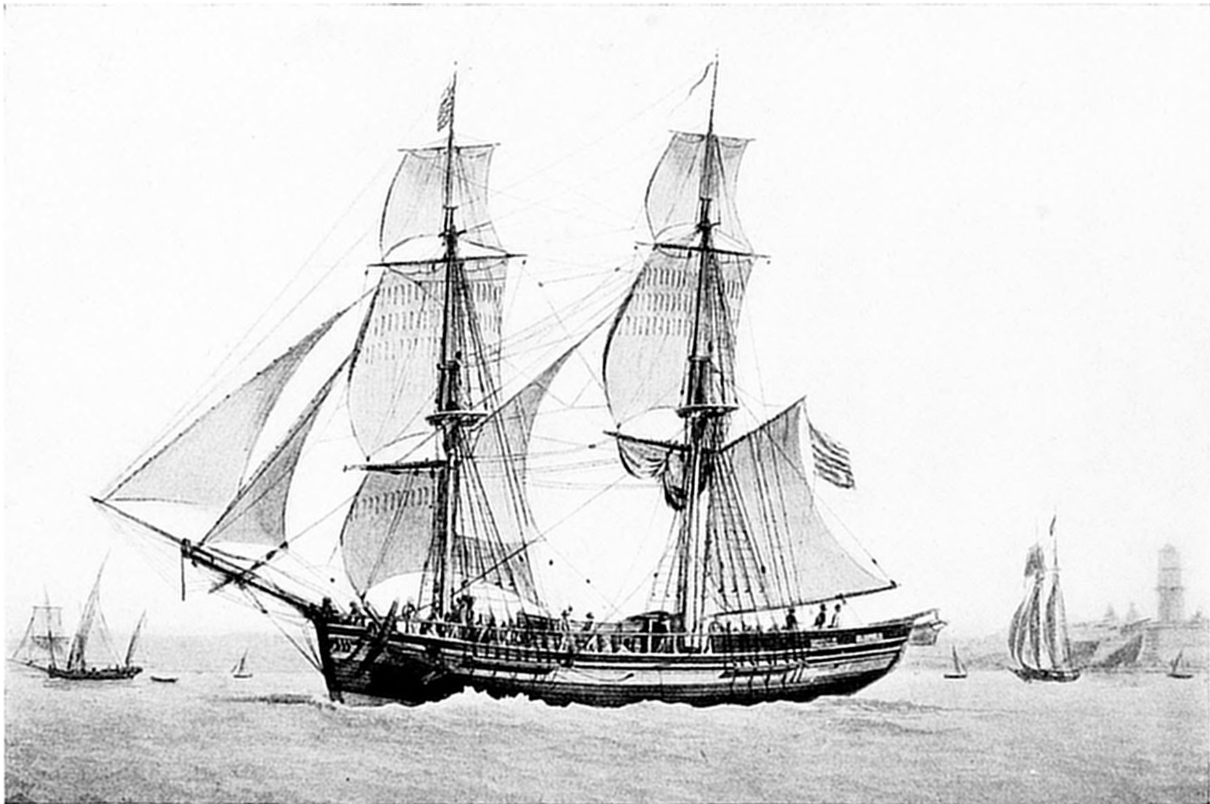
> They were secretly employed in cutting out thongs from raw-hides, to the ends of which they fixed the double-headed shot of the small quarter-deck guns. This, when swung round their heads and let fly, is a dangerous weapon and, as already observed, they are extremely expert with it. An outrage committed on the chief himself, precipitated the execution of his daring enterprise; for one of the officers, a brutal fellow, having ordered him aloft, of which he was incapable of performance, then, under pretence of disobedience, cruelly beat him and left him bleeding on the deck.

It was a day or two after this, in the cool of the evening, when the Spanish officers were strolling upon the poop, that Orellana and his ten companions came toward them and drifted close to the open doors of the

great cabin in which Admiral Pizarro and his staff were lounging, with cigars and wine. The boatswain roughly ordered the Indians away. With a plan of action carefully preconceived, the intruders slowly retreated, but six of them remained together, while two moved to each of the gangways, and so blocked the approaches to the quarter-deck. As soon as they were stationed, Orellana yelled a war whoop, "which is the harshest and most terrific noise that can be imagined."

With knives and with the deadly bolas, or thonged missiles, the eleven Indians made a slaughter-house of the flag-ship's spacious poop. Spanish sentinels of the guard, seamen on watch, boatswain's mates, and the sailors at the steering tackles, sailing masters and dandified officers, were mowed down as by a murderous hurricane before they could find their wits or their arms. In the fury of this first onslaught twenty of the ship's company were laid dead on the spot and as many more were disabled. Those who survived were in no mood to mobilize any resistance. Some tumbled into the great cabin, where they extinguished the candles and barricaded the doors, while others flew into the main-shrouds and took refuge in the tops or in the rigging.

It was sheer panic which spread forward along the decks until it reached the forecastle. The officers were killed or in hiding, and the leaderless sailors assumed that the English prisoners were leading the upheaval. A few of the wounded men scrambled forward in the darkness and told the watch on deck that the after guard had been wiped out and the ship was in the hands of mutineers. Thereupon the Spanish seamen prudently locked themselves in the forecastle or swarmed out on the bowsprit and into the fore rigging. Orellana and his ten Indians were completely in possession of the sixty-gun flag-ship, the admiral, and the crew of almost five hundred Spaniards. For the moment they had achieved the impossible.



BRIG “TOPAZ” OF NEWBURYPORT, BUILT IN 1807

Original in the Marine Room, Peabody Museum, Salem. Painted by Anton Roux, Marseilles

The officers and crew, who had escaped into different parts of the ship, were anxious only for their own safety, and incapable of forming any plan for quelling the insurrection. The yells of the Indians, indeed, the groans of the wounded, and the confused clamors of the crew, all heightened by the obscurity prevailing, greatly magnified the danger at first. The Spanish, likewise, sensible of the disaffection of the impressed men, and at the same time conscious of the barbarity their prisoners had experienced, believed that it was a general conspiracy and that their own destruction was inevitable.

A strange interval of silence fell upon the bloodstained ship as she rolled, without guidance, to the impulses of a gentle sea, while the canvas flapped and the yards creaked as the breeze took her aback. The conquering Indians were vigilant and anxious, unable to leave the quarter-deck, where they held the mastery, the Spanish crew lying low, as it were, and wondering what might happen next. Orellana promptly broke open the arms-chest, which had been conveyed to the poop a few days previously as a safeguard against mutiny. In it he confidently expected to find cutlasses enough to equip his men, and with these weapons they would hew their way into the great cabin and cut down the surviving officers. Alas! for the cleverly contrived plans, the chest contained only muskets and pistols, and the Indians had never learned how to use firearms.

Meanwhile that high and mighty personage Admiral Pizarro was using animated language in the great cabin, and Spanish oaths are beyond all others for crackling eloquence. His guests had begun to compose their scrambled wits, and through the windows and port-holes they were able to talk things over with their friends who were hiding in the gun-room and between decks. From these sources it was learned that those unholy devils, the English prisoners, were not concerned in the hurricane of a rebellion, and that the prodigious affair was solely the work of the eleven rampant Indians. The admiral looked less disconsolate, and his officers breathed easier. It was resolved to storm the quarter-deck before the storm gathered more headway.

There were pistols in the great cabin, but neither powder nor ball, but a bucket was lowered to the gun-room on the deck below, and plenty of ammunition was fished up. Cautiously unbarring the cabin doors, they began to take pot-shots at the Indians, and were lucky enough to shoot Orellana through the head. When his followers saw him fall and discovered that he was dead, to a man these ten heroes leaped over the bulwark and perished in the sea. They knew how to finish in style, and the admiral was

deprived of the pleasure of swinging them to a yard-arm to the flourish of trumpet and drum.

Midshipman Isaac Morris and his two shipmates of the *Wager* witnessed this splendid undertaking, or bits of it, as they paced to and fro under guard in the middle of the ship. It seemed as though they might be granted a quieter life by way of a change, but when the flag-ship reached Spain they were hustled ashore and put into a prison for a fortnight, where they were chained together like common criminals and fed on bread and water. After that they were marched off to an island by a file of musketeers, and held for fourteen weeks in a sort of penal colony among thieves and felons. The longest lane has a turning, and there came at length a royal order providing that the three Englishmen should be sent to Portugal. At Oporto the English consul gave them quarters and a little money, and the end of the story is thus described by Isaac Morris:

> We embarked in the *Charlotte*, scow, on the 18th of April, 1746, and under convoy of the *York* and *Folkstone* men-of-war, arrived at London on the 5th of July following; three only of the eight men left on the coast of Patagonia, Samuel Cooper, John Andrews, and myself, being so happy as once more to see their native country.

The *Wager* had sailed on her fatal voyage on September 18, 1740, and had been lost in May of 1741. These three survivors had therefore spent more than five years in the endeavor to reach home. By devious ways three parties of the *Wager's* people had finally extricated themselves from the toils of misfortune, Midshipman Byron and Captain Cheap, and a few of those who had lived through the cruise in the long-boat, and these three men who had been marooned. Left unfinished were those other tragic stories, shrouded behind the curtain of fate, the four marines and their farewell huzza, the crew of the barge who basely abandoned their

companions, and the eleven people who requested to be set ashore in Patagonia sooner than endure the horrors of the long-boat. The wreck of the *Wager* is a yarn of many strands, an epic of salt water, and still memorable, although the ship was lost almost two hundred years ago.

CHAPTER XIII

THE GRIM TALE OF THE *NOTTINGHAM GALLEY*

WITHIN sight of Portsmouth Harbor, no more than a dozen miles off the coast where Maine and New Hampshire meet, lies Boon Island, small and rock-bound, upon which a tall lighthouse flings its bright message to seaward. It is in the track of the coastwise fleets of fishermen and trading schooners, of yachts and steamers, of the varied traffic which makes those waters populous; but Boon Island was a very lonely place two hundred years ago. And if it is true, as many mariners believe, that the ghosts of dead sailors return from Davy Jones' locker to haunt the scenes of their torments in shipwreck, then Boon Island must be tenanted by some of the crew of the *Nottingham Galley*.

The story survives in the narrative of the disaster as written by the master of the vessel, Captain John Deane. It was printed as a quaint and unusual little book, which is now exceedingly difficult to find, and the fifth edition bears the date of 1762. The tragedy of the *Nottingham Galley* was one of those instances, lamentably frequent, in which men were driven to the dire necessity of eating one another under the awful compulsion of hunger. Such a theme is abhorrent, but to realize how men felt in such circumstances, those who were otherwise kindly and brave, and long-suffering, is to add to one's perspective of human nature and to gain truthful glimpses of what the toilers of the sea have endured. When Captain John Deane took his pen in hand to set down his experience, it was as though his

conscience had driven him to the task, and he expresses this prompting in a solemn preface, which reads:

> As for my own part, I think I have just grounds to venture this small narrative into the American world as an humble acknowledgement to Almighty God for his wonderful preservation of us, and hoping it may be of use to others, should the like unhappy circumstances ever attend them. I had indeed thoughts of perpetuating the memory of our deliverance in a different manner, but my innocent intentions met with an unexpected opposition that induced me to have recourse to this present method; and I hastened the execution in 1727, whilst there were living witnesses in New England to attend the truth of our signal escape from Boon Island.
>
> And now I again recommend it to the serious perusal of all, but especially seafaring men, who of all others are most liable to sudden dangers, through the natural inconstancy of the Elements they converse with in pursuit of their lawful employments; and consequently ought to lead the most considerate, religious lives in order to face death, if it be God's Will, in the most dreadful form, with a Christian resolution. For, as to that set of men who affect to pass for Wits and Bravoes by giving a ludicrous turn to everything grave and solemn; and assuming an air of intrepidity, by horrid oaths and imprecations, before the too near approaches of danger, I have always observed them, first of all others, to sink under despair, upon a prospect of inevitable death; even so as shamefully to desert all the necessary means that offered for a possibility of their deliverance.

The *Nottingham Galley*, a small vessel of one hundred and twenty tons, sailed from London on September 25, 1710, touching at Ireland to take on some butter and cheese besides her cargo of cordage and general

merchandise, which was consigned to Boston. She carried a crew of fourteen men and mounted ten guns as a proper precaution against pirates and privateers. Against the westerly winds of autumn the ship made crawling progress, and it was almost three months later before Captain Deane made a landfall on the snow-covered coast of New England. He did not know where he was and thick weather shut down so that for twelve days longer he was battering about and trying to work a safe distance offshore. The chronometer was then unknown, the “hog-yoke,” or early quadrant, had nothing like the exactitude of the sextant, and most charts were incorrect. There were, of course, no lighthouses on the dangerous New England coast.

Captain Deane groped along with sounding lead and log-line and said his prayers, no doubt, until the *Nottingham Galley* struck on Boon Island in a dark night and almost instantly went to pieces. The crew got ashore after a bitter struggle, and “being assembled together, they with joyful hearts returned their most humble and sincere thanks to Divine Providence for their miraculous deliverance from so imminent a danger.”

They were within sight of the mainland, as daylight disclosed, and the captain identified the nearest shore as Cape Neddick, while vessels could be seen passing in and out of Portsmouth Harbor. It was Christmas week, and the little island was blanketed in snow. The only shelter from the freezing winds was a tent which was made of a torn sail, and there was no fire to warm them. “They fought to procure this blessing by a variety of means,” related Captain Deane, “such as flint, steel, and gunpowder, and afterwards by a drill of very swift motion, but all the materials in their possession naturally susceptible of fire being, on this occasion, thoroughly water-soaked, after eight or ten days’ unsuccessful labor they gave over the fruitless attempt.”

The only food washed ashore from the wreck consisted of three cheeses and some beef bones, which they shared without quarreling, and in fact, the

spirit of these poor mariners was singularly unselfish and manly throughout. By vote it was agreed that Captain Deane should hold the same authority as he exercised on board ship. They felt certain of rescue, because they were within sight of port, and the captain encouraged them

> with hopes of being discovered by fishing shallops or other vessels passing that way, although all the while he was conscious to himself that rarely anything of this kind happened at that unseasonable time of the year; however, he thought it good policy to put the best face on the matter and take this advantage of their ignorance and credulity; since he already too plainly observed their great dejection and frequent relapses into an utter distrust of Divine Providence.

A boat was built after infinite labor, by men who had nothing whatever to eat, and the surf beat it to fragments as soon as it was launched. In this hour of inexpressible disappointment they stood and watched three small sailing vessels pass the island at a distance of a few miles, and they could not kindle a smoke to make a signal. As a last hope, a raft was tied together of two bits of spar only twelve feet long, with a deck of plank four feet wide, a mere chip of a raft with a sail made of two canvas hammocks.

This was the project of a “Swede, a stout, brave fellow that had unhappily lost the use of both his feet from frost since he came upon the rock.” It was his idea that two men might be able to paddle and sail this contrivance to the mainland and so effect a deliverance. At the first endeavor to get the raft clear of the breakers it upset and nearly drowned the Swede and another sailor who had offered to go with him. The latter was dragged out almost dead, but the Swede swam to the rocks and was for righting the raft and setting out again, although the mast and sail had been lost. The incident is worth describing in the words of Captain Deane.

The master then desired the Swede to assist in getting the raft out of the water in order to wait a more favorable opportunity; but the Swede, persisting in his resolution although unable to stand upon his feet, and as he was kneeling on the rock, caught hold on the master's hand and with much vehemency beseeching him to accompany him, said,

"I am sure I must die; however, I have great hopes of being the means of preserving your life, and the rest of the people's. If you will not go with me, I beg your assistance to turn the raft and help me upon it, for I am resolutely bent to venture, even though by myself alone."

The master used farther dissuasives, representing the impossibility of reaching the mainland in twice the time they might have done before they were disarmed of their mast and sail, but the Swede remained inflexible, affirming, "I had rather perish in the sea than continue one day more in this miserable condition." By this time another man, animated by his example and offering to go with him, the master consented and gave them some money that accidentally was in his pocket, fixed them on the raft, and helped them to launch off from the rock, committing them to the mercy of the seas. Their last words at parting were very moving and delivered in a pathetic accent, "Pray, Sir, oblige all the people to join in prayers for us as long as you can see us."

All to a man crept out of the tent at this doleful separation and performed the request with much devotion. About sunset they judged the raft to be half way to land and hoped they might gain the shore by two in the morning, but in the night the wind blew very hard, and two days later the raft was found on the shore of the mainland, about a mile distant from the body of the other man, driven likewise on shore with his paddle still fast to his wrist, but the bold Swede was never seen more.

The ship's carpenter died of hunger at the end of a fortnight, during which rock-weed and mussels had kept the breath of life in them. Inevitably men in their condition were bound to turn to thoughts of preserving their own existence a little longer by eating the body of the carpenter. How they discussed it and with what results is told by the unhappy Captain Deane.

> The master returning to his tent with the most acute sense of the various miseries they were involved in, was ready to expire with faintness and anguish; and placing himself so as to receive some refreshment from sleep, he observed an unusual air of intentness in the countenances of all the people; when, after some pause, Mr. Whitworth, a young gentleman, his mother's darling son, delicately educated, amidst so great an affluence as to despise common food, began in the name of the assembly to court the master's concurrence in converting the human carcass into the matter of their nourishment; and was immediately seconded by a great majority, three only opposing on account of their esteeming it a heinous sin.
>
> This affair had been thus consulted and concluded upon in the master's absence, and the present method concerted of making it known by a gentleman reputed to be much in his favor. The master remained in his former posture, observing an invincible silence, while they were urging their desires with irresistible vehemence; for nothing that ever befell him from the day of his birth, not even the dread and distress of his soul upon quitting the wreck when he did not expect to live a minute, was so amazingly shocking as this unexpected proposal. But after a short interval, he maturely weighed all circumstances and pronounced in favor of the majority, arguing the improbability of its being a sin to eat human flesh in a case of such necessity, providing they were in no ways accessory to the taking away of life.

The body of the carpenter was their sustenance until a shallop, sailing out of Portsmouth, discovered the fragments of a tent among the rocks and snow of Boon Island and a few figures of men feebly crawling out of the shelter. The crew of the *Nottingham Galley* were carried to the little seaport at the mouth of the Piscataqua, and there all of them recovered, although seriously crippled because of frozen hands and feet. At the end of Captain Deane's story is the following note:

> At the first publication of this narrative, Mr. Whitworth and the mate were then living in England, and the master survived until the 19th of August, 1761. And out of sincere regard to the memory of Captain Deane, and that such an instance of Divine Providence should not be buried in oblivion, Mr. Miles Whitworth, son of the above Mr. Whitworth, now republishes this narrative, hoping (with a Divine blessing) that it may prove of service to reclaim the unthinking part of seafaring men trading in and to New England.

The tale of the *Nottingham Galley* suggests other episodes in which living men of a ship's crew were chosen by lot to be sacrificed as food for the others. As dramatic as any of them was the fate of the American sloop *Peggy,* which became waterlogged while homeward bound to New York from the Azores. Food and water gone, there were wine and brandy in the cargo, unluckily, and the sailors got drunk and stayed so much of the time. On Christmas day a sail was sighted, and the ship bore down to speak the drifting hulk of the *Peggy*. For some reason this other vessel, after promising to send bread and beef aboard or to take the people off if they so preferred, filled away and resumed her course. Captain Harrison of the *Peggy* had taken to his bed with rheumatism, but he crawled on deck to watch the faithless ship abandon him while his crew cursed like madmen and shouted their appeals for help.

For sixteen days the people of the *Peggy* lived on candles, whale-oil, and barnacles scraped from the ship's side. Then the crew, led by the mate, invaded Captain Harrison's cabin and told him they could hold out no longer. They had eaten the leather packing of the pump, they had chewed the leather buttons off their jackets, and liquor would not keep them alive. It was now their intention to cast lots for a victim, and the captain was asked to supervise the business. He refused to have anything to do with it, which excited a hubbub of anger, and the mate announced that nobody would be exempted. The captain was to stand his chance with the rest. They tramped out of the cabin, remained a little while in the steerage, and returned to say that the lots had been drawn, and a negro slave who was in the cargo had received the fatal number.

Captain Harrison, bed-ridden as he was, had the courage to tell the men that he suspected them of dealing unfairly with the poor negro, and that he had not been allowed a chance for his life. While they were wrangling, the slave came running into the cabin to beg the captain's protection; but he was dragged out and shot and turned over to the cook and the big copper pots in the galley. For nine days this sufficed to keep the crew alive, while Captain Harrison steadfastly refused to touch the food they offered him. Then the mate and the men trooped into the cabin again and roughly demanded that the skipper take charge of the lottery.

This time he consented in order to be certain of fair play. Painfully raising himself upon his elbow, he tore up strips of paper and wrote numbers on them. In grim silence the six men who were left alive closed their fingers upon the slips of paper, and a seaman named David Flat groaned as he discovered that his was the ticket of death. Otherwise there was no noise in the cabin.

> The shock which this produced was so great that the whole crew remained motionless for a considerable time; and so they might have

continued much longer had not the victim, who appeared perfectly resigned to his fate, expressed himself in these words:

"Dear friends and messmates, all I have to beg of you is to dispatch me as soon as you did the negro, and to put me to as little torture as possible."

David Flat then turned to another seaman, James Doud, who had put the bullet into the slave and said:

"It is my wish that you should shoot me."

Doud was much affected, but consented to attend to the obsequies of unfortunate David Flat, who was the most popular man in the forecastle. The victim then requested a brief respite in which he might prepare his soul to meet its Maker. This was very readily granted, and meanwhile the cook kindled a fire and got the water hot. Friendship was stronger than hunger, however, and there was so much reluctance to execute the sentence that it was determined to grant David Flat a respite until eleven o'clock of the following morning,

trusting that Divine Goodness would in the interval open some other source of relief. At the same time they solicited the captain to read prayers, a task which, collecting the utmost effort of his strength, he was just able to perform.

It was a scene to linger in one's memory, the waterlogged sloop with her sails streaming in useless ribbons from a broken mast, the little cabin with the skipper almost dead in his bunk, and the group of starved and wistful seamen who bowed their heads while he brokenly whispered the words of the prayer-book. As soon as he had finished, they crept out to rejoin David Flat, who had preferred to be absent from his own funeral

service. Through the companionway the captain overheard them talking to him

> with great earnestness and affection, and expressing their hope that God would interpose for his preservation. They assured him also that although they had never yet been able to catch a single fish, they would again put out their hooks and try whether in that manner any relief could be obtained.

There was little comfort for David Flat in this commiseration, and the situation benumbed his mind so that he was in a stupor, which changed to raving madness during the night. At eight o'clock next morning Captain Harrison was thinking of this faithful seaman of his who had only three hours more to live, when two of the others came into the cabin and took hold of his hands. Their agitation was apparent, but they seemed unable to speak and explain themselves, and he surmised that they had concluded to put him to death instead of David Flat. He therefore groped for his pistol, but the sailors snatched it away, and managed to tell him that a sail had been sighted, a large vessel to leeward which had altered her course and was beating up to them as fast as possible.

The men on deck had been similarly affected, losing all power of speech for the moment; but presently they hurried into the cabin, with strength renewed, to shout at the captain that a ship was coming to save them. They tried to make poor David Flat comprehend the tremendous fact, but he was babbling of other things, and his wits were still all astray. During the business of the death-sentence, which had been conducted with such extraordinary dignity, the men had remained sober, keeping clear of the brandy-keg, but now they proposed to celebrate. Captain Harrison succeeded in dissuading all excepting the mate, who filled a can and sat down by himself to liquor up. And so they were making a decent finish of

it, although their nerves were tortured beyond endurance, when the breeze died out, and the other ship lay becalmed two or three miles away. They remembered the dreadful disappointment of Christmas day, when another ship had deserted them after steering close enough to hail the sloop.

This blessed stranger, however, lowered a boat, and the oars flashed on the shining sea until the rescuers were alongside the *Peggy*.

> As the captain was incapable of moving, they lifted him out of the cabin and, lowering him into the boat with ropes, he was followed by his people, among whom was David Flat, still raving. Just when putting off, it was discovered that the mate was missing. He was immediately summoned and, after his can of liquor, had no more than ability to crawl to the gunwale, having forgot everything that had happened. The unfortunate drunken wretch having been got down, the saviors rowed away to their own ship, which they reached in about an hour.
>
> This vessel was the *Susannah* of London, commanded by Captain Thomas Evers, who was engaged in the Virginia trade and was now returning from Virginia to London. He received the *Peggy's* people with all possible tenderness and humanity. The *Susannah* proceeded on her voyage, and though in a very shattered condition and so much reduced in provisions that it was necessary to put her people on short allowance, she reached England early in March. The mate, as also James Doud who shot the negro, and one James Warren, a seaman, died during the passage. Lemuel Ashley, Samuel Wentworth, and David Flat, who was to have been shot for food, all survived. Flat continued raving mad during the voyage, but whether he afterwards recovered is not ascertained. When Captain Harrison came on shore, he made an oath to the truth of the preceding melancholy facts in order that the interests of his insurers might be preserved.

In the case of the English ship *Barrett*, which was wrecked in mid-Atlantic in January, 1821, the method of choosing the man who should die to serve as food was sufficiently novel and ingenious to merit attention. She was a much larger vessel than the *Peggy*, with a crew of sixteen, and had sailed from St. John, New Brunswick, in command of Captain Faragar, with a cargo of timber for Liverpool. Heavy gales blew her canvas away and strained her hull until it filled with water. Rations were reduced to two ounces of bread and a pint of water a day until this was almost gone. Then a sail was descried, and a brig bowled down to pass within hail, the master promising to send aboard what provisions he could spare. Then the wind chopped around to the westward, and, precisely as had happened to the sloop *Peggy*, the brig hauled her braces, sheeted her topsails home, and went driving away on her course.

Mr. MacCloud, the mate of the *Barrett*, was a hardy young Scot with the endurance of iron and the soul of a hero. Day after day the ship wallowed in the wicked winter weather of the Western Ocean, and only the timber in the flooded hold kept her afloat. Cold and hunger laid the crew low until only the mate and three men were able to stand a watch on deck; but he kept a little canvas on her and tended the tiller and somehow jammed her along until they had sailed six hundred miles toward the Irish coast.

> Every eatable was consumed: candles, oil—all were gone, and they passed the long, dreary, stormy nights of sixteen and seventeen hours in utter darkness, huddled together in the steerage, imploring the Almighty to help them, yet feeling reckless of existence. Such was their condition about the middle of January, and no one but the mate paid the slightest attention to the vessel.

Captain Faragar succumbed to the strain, and died with a farewell message to his wife and children. The time came at length when one of the

sailors, more brutalized than the rest, broke out with the words:

> “Here we are, sixteen of us, perishing for food, and what prospect is there before us? Wouldn’t it be better—”
>
> He hesitated, while his companions held their breath and comprehended what was in his mind.
>
> “Damn all ceremony!” was the conclusion which they expected and yet dreaded to hear. “One man must die that the rest may live, and that’s the bloody truth of it.”

They agreed with him, nodding their heads and refusing to look at one another. Then followed a long dispute over the fairest manner of letting chance decide the choice. It was obvious that every man had a natural anxiety to feel assured of no loaded dice or marked cards in this momentous game. There were objections to the traditional lottery of high and low numbers, and finally it was decided that sixteen pieces of rope-yarn should be cut by the mate. Fourteen of these were to be of precisely the same length, one a little shorter, and another shorter still. The sixteen pieces of rope-yarn were to be shoved through a crack in the bulkhead of the steward’s storeroom, the ends all even and just long enough for a man to take one in his fingers and pull it through the crack. The one who pulled out the strand that was a little shorter was to be dished up for his messmates, and the man who drew the strand that was shorter still had the unpleasant duty of acting as butcher.

The mate cut the rope-yarn, as requested, and arranged the sixteen lengths all in a row in the crack of the bulkhead. The men stood waiting the word, very reluctant to pluck out the ends of tarry cord, until Mr. MacCloud exclaimed:

“My lads, let us put it off until to-morrow. We have endured thus far, and a few hours longer cannot make much difference. Who knows what Providence may have in store for us?”

Some consented, while others were for going through with it at once. To-morrow came, and no help was in sight. They shambled into the steward’s storeroom and pulled the rope-yarns through the crack. Presently there was one man less on the muster-roll of the *Barrett*. Two or three days later the ceremony was repeated. Before it became necessary to doom a third man, the mate came below, a spy-glass in his hand, and he was trembling so violently that he clutched the table for support. “A sail,” he stammered, and they followed him on deck, where the winter day was dying into dusk. In desperate need of making some sort of signal, Mr. MacCloud emptied a powder-flask upon the windlass, fired a pistol into it, and a thick column of smoke billowed skyward.

The other ship observed it, and hoisted an ensign. Twelve of the *Barrett’s* company were alive, and they were safely transferred to the *Ann* of New York, bound to Liverpool. The waterlogged *Barrett* drifted on her aimless course, a derelict haunted by fearful memories, and from a crack in the bulkhead of the steward’s storeroom still hung the ends of a row of rope-yarns which had been made ready for the next game of chance.

In 1799 six soldiers of the British artillery garrison at St. Helena concocted a plot to desert and stow themselves away in an American ship, the *Columbia*, which was then in harbor. Their escape was discovered soon after the Yankee crew had smuggled them on board, and they could hear the alarm sounded and could see the lanterns glimmer along the sea-wall. Afraid that the *Columbia* would be searched, the fugitive red-coats stole a whale-boat from another ship, and the sympathetic American skipper gave them a bag of bread, a keg of water, a compass, and a quadrant. It was rather to be expected that a New England mariner who could remember

Bunker Hill and Saratoga would lend a hand to any enterprise which annoyed the British army and diminished its fighting strength.

The six deserters pulled out to sea in the hope of finding the island of Ascension, which lay eight hundred miles to the northwest of St. Helena. Corporal Parr had been a seaman, and he thought he knew how to shoot the sun and figure out his position; but after a week of fine weather it was his uneasy conviction that they must have run past Ascension. With a sail made of their shirts stitched together, they bore away for the coast of South America on the chance of finding Rio Janeiro. Provisions were so short that they limited themselves to one ounce of bread and two mouthfuls of water a day.

After a fortnight at sea they were chewing their leather shoes, and Private John Brown, in a statement prepared after the rescue, explained how they selected one of their number to be used as food for the others.

> Parr, Brighouse, Conway, and myself proposed to scuttle the boat and let her go down, to put us out of our misery, but the other two objected, observing that God, who had made man, always found him something to eat. On the twenty-second day M’Kinnon proposed that it would be better to cast lots for one of us to die in order to save the rest, to which we consented. William Parr, being seized two days before with the spotted fever, was excluded. He wrote the numbers and put them into a hat, and we drew them out blindfolded and put them in our pockets.
>
> Parr then asked whose lot it was to die, none of us knowing what number we had in our pocket, and each praying to God that it might not be his lot. It was agreed that Number 5 should die, and the lots being unfolded, M’Kinnon’s was number 5. We had concluded that he, on whom the lot fell, should bleed himself to death, for which purpose we

> had provided ourselves with sharpened nails which were got from the boat. With one of these M'Kinnon cut himself in three places, in his foot, hand, and wrist and praying God to forgive his sins he died in about a quarter of an hour.

Three of the deserters lived to reach the South American coast, and were taken to Rio in a Portuguese ship. One might think that Private John Brown had suffered enough for his crime of running away from the Royal Artillery, but Captain Elphinstone of H. M. S. *Diamond* had him put in irons and sent to Cape Town. There he was pressed into the navy, but his conscience gave him no rest, and after receiving his discharge he made his way to St. Helena and gave himself up. To the officers who conducted his court martial he explained:

"I was determined to surrender myself at the first opportunity in order to relate my sufferings to the men of this garrison and to deter others from attempting so mad a scheme."

CHAPTER XIV

THE STORM-SWEPT FLEET OF ADMIRAL GRAVES

TO observe what might be called shipwreck on a grand scale, it is necessary to hark back to the days of fleets and convoys under sail, when a hundred or two hundred merchant vessels and men-of-war made a long voyage together. If such an argosy chanced to be caught in a hurricane, the tragedy was apt to be tremendous, surpassing anything of the kind in the hazards of modern seafaring. In April, 1782, Admiral George Rodney, in a great sea-battle whose issue was vital to the British Empire, whipped the French fleet of De Grasse off the island of Dominica, in the West Indies. It was a victory which enabled Rodney to write, “Within two little years, I have taken two Spanish, one French, and one Dutch admirals.” The French ships which struck their flags to him included the huge *Ville de Paris* of 110 guns, which had flown De Grasse’s pennant; the *Glorieux* and *Hector* of seventy-four guns each; the *Ardent*, *Caton*, and *Jason* of sixty-four guns each.

As soon as these prizes could be repaired, they were ordered to sail for England, with several of the British ships of the line as an escort, and with them went more than a hundred merchantmen from the West Indies. In command was Admiral Graves of Rodney’s fleet, a sailor who was to prove himself as noble in misfortune as he had been illustrious in action. His ships were in no condition to encounter heavy weather, for the battle had pounded and shattered both antagonists, and refitting had to be done in makeshift fashion for lack of dock-yards and material. British bluejackets and French

prisoners were blithely willing, however, to run the risk of keeping afloat so long as they were homeward bound. The *Ardent* and the *Jason* came so near to sinking, even in smooth seas, that they had to be ordered back to Jamaica, but the rest of the fleet moved on until a few of the merchant ships parted company to steer for New York, leaving ninety-three sail in all to cross the Atlantic.

The season was September, and strong gales blew from the eastward, which made it weary work thrashing into the head seas. Two more of the crippled French men-of-war signaled that they were in distress, and the admiral told them to bear away for Halifax. At length the wind shifted suddenly to the northward and increased to a roaring storm. Foul weather had been expected, and from his flagship, the *Ramillies,* Admiral Graves warned the scattered fleet to close in and snug down. They came straggling in from the cloudy horizon, upper sails furled, decks streaming, until at sunset the anxious flock was within sight of the shepherd, and the fluttering flags passed the word to make ready for the worst.

The *Ramillies*, a majestic seventy-four-gun ship, was almost overwhelmed before daylight, mainmast gone by the board, all her upper spars splintered, rudder torn away, and the seas washing clean over her. The admiral took it with unruffled courage, although he was flooded out of his cabin, and arrived on deck with one leg in his breeches and his boots in his hand. For all he knew, the ship was about to go to the bottom,

> but he ordered two of the lieutenants to examine into the state of the affairs below, and to keep a sufficient number of people at the pumps, while he himself and the captain kept the deck to encourage the men to clear away the wreckage which, by beating against the sides of the ship, had stripped off the copper sheathing and exposed the seams so much to the sea that the decayed oakum washed out and the whole frame became at once exceedingly porous and leaky.

The situation of the *Ramillies* seemed bad enough, but dawn disclosed other ships which were much worse off. Close to leeward was a large vessel, the *Dutton*, which had been a famous East Indiaman. She was lying flat upon her side, while the crew struggled to cut away the masts. Presently the naval lieutenant in command was seen to jump into the sea, which instantly obliterated him. A few of the crew slid one of the boats off the deck, and were whirled away in the foam and spray which soon engulfed them. Presently the ship dived under and was seen no more, and the last glimpse, as she miserably foundered, was the ensign hoisted union down, which gleamed like a bit of flame. Of the ninety-odd ships which had been seen in the convoy only a dozen hours earlier, no more than twenty could be counted. Some had been whirled away like chips before the storm, while others had gone down during the night and left no trace.

Hull down was descried the *Canada*; the *Centaur* reeled far to windward; and the *Glorieux* was a distant hulk, all three of them dismasted and apparently sinking. Of these stout British men-of-war only the *Canada* survived, and brought her people safely through. The *Ville de Paris* was still afloat and loomed lofty and almost uninjured, but a few hours later she filled and sank, carrying eight hundred men to the bottom with her. Of the merchantmen, not one within sight of the *Ramillies* had all her masts standing. They were almost helpless survivors, still battling for very existence.

Admiral Graves had no intention of losing his flag-ship and his life without fighting in the last ditch. Long lines of sailors passed buckets to assist the laboring pumps, and storm-sails were rigged upon the jagged stumps of the masts. The sturdy old *Ramillies*, with six feet of water in the hold, was somehow brought around before the wind, and ran as fast as the merchant vessels that fled on each side of her. After spending all day in pumping and baling until they were ready to drop in their tracks, the officers, through the captain as spokesman, suggested to the admiral that

some of the guns be thrown overboard in order to lighten the ship. To this he vigorously objected on the ground that a man-of-war was a sorry jest without her battery, but they argued that a man-of-war in Davy Jones' locker was of no use at all, wherefore the admiral consented to heaving over the lighter guns and some of the shot.

After another night of distress and increasing peril, the officers raised the question again, and

> the admiral was prevailed upon, by the renewed and pressing remonstrances, to let six of the forward-most and four of the aftermost guns of the main deck be thrown overboard, together with the remainder of those on the quarterdeck; and the ship still continuing to open very much, he ordered tarred canvas and hides to be nailed fore and aft from under the sills of the ports on the main deck under the fifth plank above, or within the waterways, and the crew, without orders did the same on the lower deck.

The ship was sinking in spite of these endeavors, and the admiral now let them throw all the guns over, which grieved him very much, "and there being eight feet of water in the magazine, every gentleman was compelled to take his turn at the whips or in handling the buckets."

These six hundred British seamen and officers were making a very gallant effort of it, and infusing them with his ardent spirit was the cheery, resourceful Admiral Graves, whose chief virtue was never to know when he was whipped. Under his direction the ship was now *frapped*, and if you would know how ancient was this method of trying to save a ship in the last extremity, please turn to St. Paul's story of his own shipwreck and read as follows:

> And when the ship was caught and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive. And running under a certain island which is called Clauda, we had much work to come by the boat;
>
> Which when they had taken up, they used helps, under-girdling the ship; and fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail and so were driven.

The souls of the jolly, jolly mariners in Kipling's "Last Chantey," plucking at their harps and they plucked unhandily, listened with professional approval when the stout Apostle Paul lifted his voice in turn and sang to them:

> Once we frapped a ship, and she labored woundily,
> There were fourteen score of these,
> And they blessed Thee on their knees,
> When they learned Thy Grace and Glory under
> Malta by the sea!

And so the *Ramillies* was frapped, or under-girdled by passing hempen hawsers under her keel and around the straining hull to hold her timbers together before she literally fell apart. It was a fine feat of seamanship, but unavailing. The admiral had nothing more to say about the crime of tossing overboard his Majesty's valuable guns, munitions, and stores, and the crew fairly gutted the ship of everything weighty, including both bower anchors. As the day wore on toward nightfall, about twenty other ships were still visible, and the officers urged the admiral to shift his pennant to one of them and so save himself; but

this he positively refused to do, deeming it, as he declared, unpardonable of a commander-in-chief to desert his garrison in distress; that his living a few years longer was of very little consequence, but that, by leaving his ship at such a time, he should discourage and slacken the exertions of the people by setting them a very bad example.

When evening came, the spirits of the people began to fail, and they openly expressed the utmost despair, together with the most earnest desire of quitting the ship lest they should founder in her. The admiral hereupon advanced and told them that he and their officers had an equal regard for their own lives, that the officers had no intention of deserting either them or the ship, that, for his part, he was determined to try one more night in her; he therefore hoped and intreated they would do so too, for there was still room to imagine that one fair day, with a moderate sea, might enable them by united exertion to clear and secure the well against the incroaching ballast which washed into it; that if this could be done they might be able to restore the chains to the pumps and use them; and that then hands enough might be spared to raise jury-masts with which they might carry the ship to Ireland; that her appearance alone, while she could swim, would be sufficient to protect the remaining part of her convoy; above all, that as everything that could be thought of had now been done for her relief, it would be but reasonable to wait the effect.

This temperate speech had the desired result. The firmness and confidence with which he spoke, and their reliance on his seamanship and judgment, as well as his constant presence and attention to every accident, had a wonderful effect upon them. Since the first disaster, the admiral had, in fact, scarcely ever quitted the deck. This they had all observed, together with his diligence in personally inspecting every circumstance of distress.

This simple picture of him portrays a fine figure of a man, of the sort who have created and fostered the spirit and traditions both of the British and the American naval services. In a sinking ship which had lost all her guns, he was still mindful of his duty of guarding the merchant convoy, or what was left of it, against any roving French or Spanish war vessels or privateers, and every fiber of him rebelled against deserting his ship as long as her flag flew above water. He was a brother of the sea to Admiral Duncan who, as Stevenson describes it,

> lying off the Texel with his own flagship, the *Venerable*, heard that the whole Dutch fleet was putting to sea. He told Captain Hotham to anchor alongside of him in the narrowest part of the channel and fight his vessel until she sank. “I have taken the depth of the water,” added he, “and when the *Venerable* goes down, my flag will still fly.” And you observe this is no naked Viking in a prehistoric period; but a Scotch member of Parliament, with a smattering of the classics, a telescope, a cocked hat of great size, and flannel underclothing.

At three o’clock in the morning of the next night the pumps of the *Ramillies* were found to be hopelessly out of commission, the water was rushing into the gaping wounds made by the sea, and it seemed as though the timbers were pulling asunder from stern to bow. Sadly the admiral admitted that the game was lost, and he told his captain to abandon ship at daybreak, but there was to be no wild scramble for the boats. The crew was to be informed that the sick and disabled were to be removed, and that all the merchant vessels would be ordered to send boats for this purpose. Confidentially, however, the officers were instructed to fetch ample stores of bread, beef, pork, and flour to the quarterdeck and to arrange for distributing the crew among the boats that were to be called away from the other ships. Such boats of the *Ramillies* as had not been smashed by the

storm were to be ready to launch, and every officer would be held responsible for the men in his own division. As soon as the invalids were safely out of the ship, the whole crew would be embarked in an orderly and deliberate manner.

> Accordingly at dawn, the signal was made for the boats of the merchantmen, but nobody suspected what was to follow until the bread was entirely removed and the sick gone. About six o'clock the rest of the crew were permitted to go off, and between nine and ten, there being nothing farther to direct or regulate, the admiral himself, after shaking hands with every officer, and leaving his barge for their better accommodation and transport, quitted forever the *Ramillies* which had then nine feet of water in her hold. He went into a small leaky boat, loaded with bread, out of which both himself and the surgeon who accompanied him had to bale the water all the way. He was in his boots, with his surtout over his uniform, and his countenance as calm and composed as ever. He had, at going off left behind all his stock, wines, furniture, books, charts, &c. which had cost him upwards of one thousand pounds, being unwilling to employ even a single servant in saving or packing up what belonged to himself alone, in a time of such general calamity, or to appear to fare better in that respect than any of the crew.
>
> The admiral rowed for the *Belle*, Captain Foster, being the first of the trading vessels that had borne up to the *Ramillies* the preceding night, and by his anxious humanity set such an example to his brother traders as had a powerful influence upon them, an influence which was generally followed by sixteen other ships.

Two hours after the six hundred men of the *Ramillies* had been taken off, the weather, which had moderated, became furious again, and during a

whole week after that it would have been impossible to handle boats in the wicked seas. Admiral Graves had managed the weather as handsomely as he did his ship and her men, getting them away at precisely the right moment and making a record for efficiency and resolution which must commend itself to every mariner, whether or not he happens to be a Britisher. On October 10 the *Belle* safely carried the admiral into Cork Harbor, where he hoisted his pennant aboard the frigate *Myrmidon*. The crew reached port in various ships, excepting a few who were bagged by French privateers which swooped seaward at the news that the great West India convoy had been dispersed by a storm.

Of the other British men-of-war which went to the bottom, the story of the *Centaur* was reported by her commander, Captain Inglefield, who was one of the thirteen survivors of a crew of more than four hundred men. Whether or not he should have stayed with his hapless people and suffered the common fate is a difficult problem for a landsman to weigh, but the facts speak for themselves, and they afford opportunity to compare his behavior with that of Admiral Graves of the *Ramillies*. Tried by an Admiralty court martial, Captain Inglefield was honorably acquitted of all blame, and his official record is therefore without a stain.

During the first night of the storm the *Centaur* was thrown on her beam-ends, and was to all appearances a capsized ship. The masts were cut away, and she righted suddenly. Three guns broke adrift on the main-deck, and the heavy round shot spilled out of the smashed lockers. There was a devil’s game of bowls below, with these ponderous objects madly charging to and fro to the violent motion of the ship, such a scene as Victor Hugo painted in a famous chapter of his “Ninety-Three.” The bluejackets scrambled after these infernal guns, which could be subdued only by snaring them with ropes and tackles. They destroyed everything in their path, maiming or slaying the sailors who were not agile enough to dodge the onslaught, reducing bulkheads, stanchions, deck-beams to kindling

wood; but they were captured after a long conflict and before they could batter the oaken sides out of the ship.

There was a glimpse of hope in the early morning when the *Ville de Paris* was sighted two miles to windward. The storm had subsided, a sort of breathing-spell between the outbreaks of terrific weather. The stately three-decker of a Frenchman lifted all her masts against the foaming sky-line and was even setting a topsail. Plunging her long rows of painted gun-ports under, she climbed buoyantly to meet the next gray-backed comber, while the copper glinted almost to her keel as she wildly rolled and staggered. This captured flag-ship in which De Grasse, fresh from the triumph of Cornwallis's surrender at Yorktown, had confidently expected to crush Rodney and so sweep the seas of the New World for France, seemed to have been vouchsafed some peculiar respite by the god of storms. To those who beheld her from the drowning *Centaur* the impression conveyed was the same as that reported by Admiral Graves, that she had miraculously come through unhurt, the only ship of this great fleet whose lofty spars still stood.

Captain Inglefield began firing guns in token of distress, and the *Ville de Paris* bore straight toward him, responding to her helm and handling like a ship which was under complete control. Two merchant vessels passed close enough to hail the *Centaur* and offer help, but Captain Inglefield waved them on their courses, so confident was he that the *Ville de Paris*, now flying the ensign of the British navy, would stand by. Another merchantman passing close aboard, the *Centaur* asked her to take word to Captain Wilkinson of the *Ville de Paris* that he was urgently needed. A little while and, inexplicably, the captured flag-ship passed without making a signal and held on the same tack until she vanished in the mist, passed forever with her eight hundred men just as she had disappeared from the sight of those who gazed and wondered from the decks of the *Ramillies*. The sea holds many an unfinished story, and the tall *Ville de Paris* was one of them.

On board the *Centaur* they pumped and they baled and gulped down the stiff rations of grog and hoped to fetch her through, as is the way of simple sailormen. Captain Inglefield noted that “the people worked without a murmur and indeed with cheerfulness.” In 1782 men-of-war’s-men were singing Didbin’s hearty sea-songs, which held sentiment enough to please a mariner’s heart, and possibly the clattering beat of the chain pumps of the *Centaur* were timed to the chorus of “Blow High, Blow Low,” and the gloomy, reeking main-deck echoed the verses:

> “And on that night when all the crew,
> The memory of their former lives
> O’er flowing cans of flip renew,
> And drink their sweethearts and their wives,
> I’ll heave a sigh and think on thee:
> And, as the ship rolls through the sea,
> The burden of my song shall be
> Blow high, blow low, let tempests tear
> The mainmast by the board.”

The *Centaur* was left on a lonely sea after the assistance of the crippled merchantmen had been courteously declined and the *Ville de Paris* had so unaccountably sailed past. At night the flashes of guns were seen, the farewell messages of foundering ships, but through the long day there was never a sight of a sail. The *Centaur* settled deeper and deeper until her lower decks were awash and it was foolish to pump and bale any longer. What was the use of trying to lift the Atlantic Ocean out of a ship that refused to stay afloat? It was not so much the fear of death as the realization of defeat that caused such a scene as this:

“The people who, till this period, had labored as determined to conquer their difficulties, without a murmur, or without a tear, seeing their efforts useless, many of them burst into tears and wept like children.”

There were boats for only a few of the large company, and such rafts as could be hastily put together would not have survived an hour in the seas that still ran high and menacing. By way of doing something, however, the carpenter’s gang swung out some spars and booms and began to lash them together. Captain Inglefield made mention of the behavior of the crew in this interesting reference,

> Some appeared perfectly resigned, went to their hammocks and desired their messmates to lash them in; others were securing themselves to gratings and small rafts; but the most predominant idea was that of putting on their best and cleanest clothes.

This desire of making a decent appearance when in the presence of death is curiously frequent in the annals of the sea and may be called a characteristic trait of the sailor. At random two instances recur to mind. One of them happened aboard the United States frigate *Essex* in the War of 1812, when Captain David Porter fought his great fight against the *Phoebe* and the *Cherub* and won glory in defeat. The decks of the *Essex* were covered with dead and wounded, and more than half her crew had fallen when the starry ensign was hauled down. Then, as one of them told it when he returned home:

“After the engagement, Benjamin Hazen, having dressed himself in a clean shirt and jerkin, told what messmates of his that were left that he could never submit to be taken as a prisoner by the English and leaped into the sea where he was drowned.”

More than a hundred years later, in the Great War against Germany, an American yacht enrolled in the naval service was hunting submarines and convoying transports in the Bay of Biscay when a hurricane almost tore her to pieces. Deck-houses smashed, hold full of water, the yacht was not expected to survive the night. Then it was that a boatswain’s mate related:

> A guy of my division appeared on deck all dressed up in his liberty blues. The bos’n’s-mate asked him what he meant by turning out all dolled up like that. “Why, Jack,” answered this cheerful gob, “I have a date with a mermaid in Davy Jones’ locker.”

Captain Inglefield of the *Centaur* was about to make one of those momentous decisions which now and then confront a man as he stands at the crossroads of destiny. When he prepared his own case and submitted his defense, in the narrative written after his return to England, he stated it with a certain unconscious art which deserves to be quoted as follows:

> As evening approached, the ship seemed little more than suspended in the water. There was no certainty that she would swim from one minute to another; and the love of life, now began to level all distinctions. It was impossible, indeed, for any man to deceive himself with the hopes of being saved on a raft on such a sea; besides, it was probable that the ship in sinking would carry everything down with her in a vortex.
>
> It was near five o’clock, when coming from my cabin, I observed a number of people gazing very anxiously over the side; and looking myself, I saw that several men had forced the pinnace and that more were attempting to get in. I had thoughts of securing this boat before she might be sunk by numbers; there appeared not a moment for consideration; to remain and perish with the ship’s company to whom I

could no longer be of any use, or seize the opportunity, which seemed the only one of escaping and leave the people with whom, on a variety of occasions I had been so well satisfied that I thought I could give my life to preserve them. This was, indeed, a painful conflict and of which, I believe, no man could form a just idea who had not been placed in a similar situation.

The love of life prevailed. I called to Mr. Rainey, the master, the only officer on deck, and desired him to follow me and we immediately descended into the boat by the after part of the chains. But it was not without great difficulty that we got her clear of the ship, twice the number that she could carry pushing in, and many leaping into the water. Mr. Baylis, a young gentleman of fifteen years of age, leaped from the chains after the boat had got off and was taken in.

Yes, the love of life had prevailed with Captain Inglefield of the *Centaur*, and, no matter how painful his moral conflict, it is obvious that his departure was attended with a kind of skulking ignominy. He ran away from his comrades to save his own skin and left them in the lurch. This is quixotic, perhaps, but are not all questions of honor more or less irrational? The captain's narrative makes no farther mention of the sinking *Centaur*. At five o'clock of a September afternoon in the North Atlantic, two hours of daylight remained even in thick and cloudy weather. The four hundred men aboard the ship could watch the pinnace as she scudded before the wind with a blanket stretched for a sail and her course laid for the Azores. I imagine they damned the soul of their captain in curses that were wrenched from the bottom of their hearts instead of extenuating his conduct and wishing him luck. And presumably Captain Inglefield turned to gaze at the foundering man-of-war with her people clustered on deck or busied with the pitifully futile rafts. Nobody knows how much longer the *Centaur* floated.

The time must have been mercifully brief. When she went under, every man on board was drowned.

The captain expected sympathy, and you may offer him as much as you like when he relates of his voyage in the small boat:

> It was then that I became sensible how little, if anything, our condition was better than that of those who remained in the ship. At least, it seemed to be only the prolongation of a miserable existence. We were altogether twelve in number, in a leaky boat, with one of the gunwales stove, in nearly the middle of the Western Ocean, without compass, quadrant, or sail; wanting great coat or cloak, all very thinly clothed, in a gale of wind and with a great sea running.... On examining what means we had of subsistence, I found a bag of bread, a small ham, a single piece of pork, two quart bottles of water, and a few French cordials.

They were thirteen days adrift and suffered exceedingly, but only one man died of hunger and cold, and the others recovered their strength in the hospitable port of Fayal. These were the captain, the master, a young midshipman, a surgeon's mate, a coxswain, a quartermaster, and five seamen.

CHAPTER XV

THE BRISK YARN OF THE *SPEEDWELL* PRIVATEER

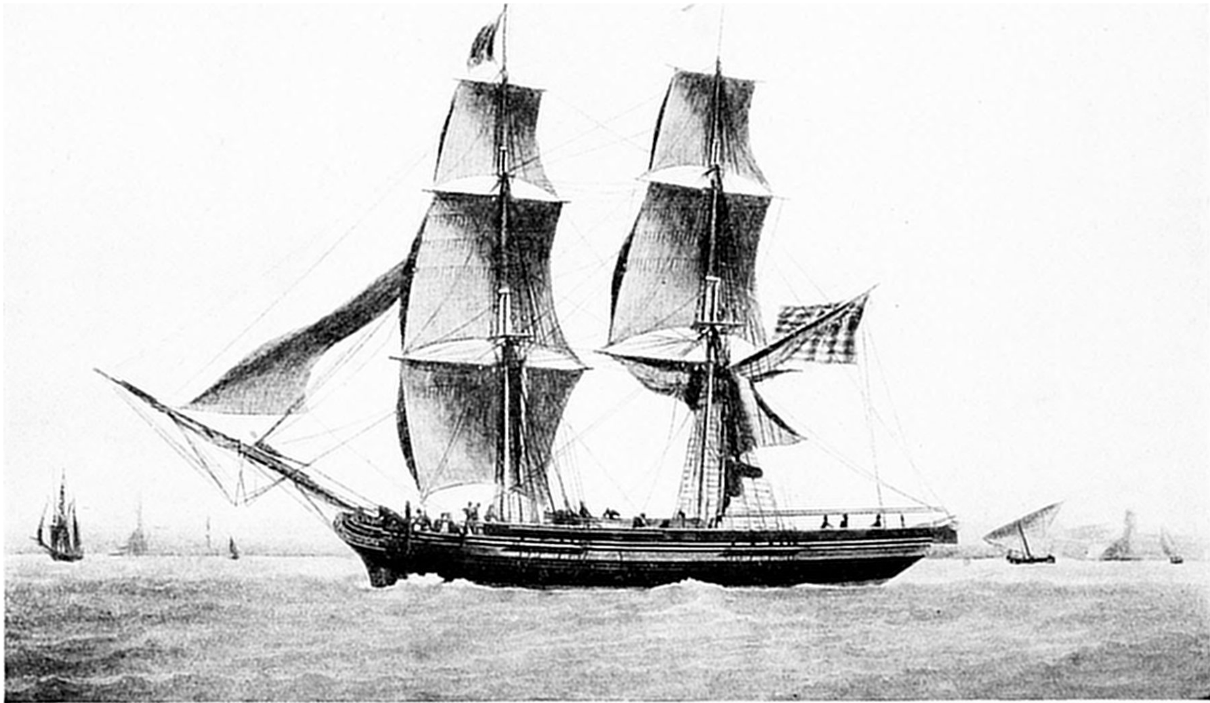
CAPTAIN GEORGE SHELVOCKE was one of many seamen adventurers unknown to fame who sought a quick and bloody road to fortune by laying violent hands on the golden ingots in the Spanish galleons of Mexico and Peru. A state of war made this a lawful pastime for lawless men, and such were those that sailed from Plymouth on February 13, 1720, in the little armed ship *Speedwell*, bound out from England to South America with a privateering commission. She was of two hundred tons burden, and there could have been no room to swing a cat by the tail, what with eighteen six-pounders mounted between-decks, a fourteen-oar launch stowed beneath the hatches, provisions for a long voyage, and a crew of a hundred men. Most of these were landlubbers, wastrels of the taverns and the waterside, who were so terrified by the first gale of wind that seventy of them "were resolved on bearing away for England to make a complaint against the ship. They alleged that she was so very crank that she would never be able to encounter a voyage to the South Seas."

The fact that the seventy objectors were unanimously seasick delayed the mutiny; besides which, Captain Shelvocke talked to them, and he was a persuasive man whenever he used a pair of flint-lock pistols to make his meaning clear. With calmer weather the seventy recalcitrants plucked up spirit to renew the argument, and went so far as to seize the helm and trim the yards on a course toward England. The captain was now seriously

vexed. With a dozen officers behind him, he overruled the majority, tied two of them in the rigging, and ordered them handsomely flogged, and consented to forgive the others on promise of good behavior. “Nevertheless,” remarks a commentator, “it occasioned him great uneasiness to find himself with a ship’s company likely to occasion such trouble and vexation.”

The *Speedwell* almost foundered before she was a fortnight at sea, the pumps going, crew praying, and some of her provisions and gunpowder spoiled by salt water; but Captain George Shelvocke shoved her along for the South Sea, half a world away, and set it down as all in the day’s work. Seafaring in the early eighteenth century was not a vocation for children or weaklings.

Seeking harbor on the coast of Brazil to obtain wood and water, the *Speedwell* fell in with a French man-of-war whose commander and officers were invited aboard the privateer for dinner. The crew was inconsiderate enough to touch off another mutiny, which interrupted the pleasant party; but the French guests gallantly sailed into the ruction, and their swords assisted in restoring order, after which dinner was finished. Captain Shelvocke apologized for the behavior of his crew, and explained that “it was the source of melancholy reflection that he, who had been an officer thirty years in the service should now be continually harassed by the mutiny of turbulent people.” Most of them were for deserting, but he rounded them up ashore and clubbed them into the boats, and the *Speedwell* sailed to dare the Cape Horn passage.



THE BRIG “OLINDA” OF SALEM, BUILT IN 1825

From the original by François Roux of Marseilles, in the Marine Room, Peabody Museum, Salem

For two long months she was beating off Terra del Fuego and fighting her way into the Pacific, spars and rigging sheathed in ice, the landlubbers benumbed and useless, decks swept by the Cape Horn combers; but Captain George Shelvocke had never a thought in his head of putting back and quitting the golden adventure. He finally made the coast of Chile, at the island of Chiloé, and when the Spanish governor of the little settlement refused to sell him provisions, he went ashore and took them. All was fair in the enemy’s waters, and the *Speedwell* began to look for ships to plunder. He snapped up two small ones, and then captured the *Saint Firmin*, a three-hundred-ton merchant vessel with a valuable cargo. A flag of truce came out from the nearest port with proposals of ransom, and a Jesuit priest, as a messenger, begged the captain to restore to him ten great silver candlesticks

which had been left as a legacy to the convent. The bargaining came to naught, and the booty was sold to the crew at an auction “before the mast,” after which the ship was burned.

The *Speedwell* next captured the town of Payta and put the torch to it after the governor had refused to contribute ten thousand pieces of eight. While the crew was ashore, a heavily armed ship came sailing in, and the flag at her yard proclaimed that a Spanish admiral was in command. In the privateer were left only the sailing-master, Mr. Coldsea, and nine men; but they served the guns with so much energy that the admiral cleared for action and reckoned he had met up with a tough antagonist. While they were banging away at each other, Captain Shelvocke was hustling his men into the boats and pulling off from shore; but before they had reached their own ship, the Spanish admiral had ranged within pistol-shot and was letting go his broadside. The situation was ticklish in the extreme, but the narrative explains it quite calmly:

> Captain Shelvocke then cut his cable, when the ship falling the wrong way, he could just clear the admiral; but there was a great damp cast on the spirits of his people, at seeing a ship mounting fifty-six guns, with four hundred and twenty men, opposed to the *Speedwell* which had only twenty then mounted, with seventy-three white men and eleven negroes. Some of them in coming off, were for leaping into the water and swimming ashore, which one actually did.

Drifting under the admiral’s lee, the *Speedwell* was becalmed for an hour, while the powder-smoke obscured them both, the guns flamed, and the round shot splintered the oak timbers. Captain Shelvocke’s ensign was shot away, and the Spanish sailors swarmed upon their high forecastle and cheered as they made ready to board; but another British ensign soared aloft, and then a breeze drew the privateer clear, and she bore for the open

sea. Her rigging was mostly shot away, there was a cannon-ball in the mainmast, the stern had been shattered, guns were dismounted, and the launch had been blown to match-wood by the explosion of a pile of powder-bags; but she clapped on sail somehow and ran away from the Spanish flag-ship, which came lumbering out after her.

The *Speedwell* was chased next day by another man-of-war, but dodged after nightfall by means of the expedient of setting a lighted lantern adrift in a tub and so deluding the enemy. It was the sensible conclusion of Captain Shelvocke that there might be better hunting on the coast of Mexico. South American waters seemed to be rather uncomfortable for gentlemen adventurers.

The privateer stood away for the island of Juan Fernandez to refit and rest her crew. They needed a respite by the time the island was sighted, for they were six weeks on the way, and the ship sprang a leak where a Spanish shot had lodged in her bow, and they pumped until they dropped in their tracks. Eleven years earlier Alexander Selkirk, who was the real Robinson Crusoe, had been rescued from his solitary exile on Juan Fernandez, where Captain Dampier's expedition had marooned him. With his garden and his flock of wild goats and his Holy Bible he had passed four years of an existence so satisfactory

> that he scarce ever had a moment hang heavy on his hands; his nights were untroubled and his days joyous, from the practice of temperance and exercise. It was his custom to use stated hours and places for the exercise of devotion which he performed aloud in order to keep up the faculties of speech.... When his powder failed, he took the goats by speed of foot, for his way of living and continual exercise of walking and running cleared him of all gross humors, so that he ran with wonderful agility, through the woods and up the rocks and hills.

> When he arrived at his full vigor, he could take at full speed the swiftest goat running up a promontory and never failed catching them but on a descent.... The precaution he took against want, in case of sickness and not being able to go abroad, was to lame kids when very young, so that they might recover their health, but never be capable of speed. These he kept in great numbers about his habitation, and taught several of them and his cats, to dance and sometimes, to divert himself he used to sing and dance with them. He also diverted himself with contrivances to vary and increase his stock of tools, and sometimes, in clear evenings, in counting the stars.

So beneficial were the results that it might have improved the morals and the manners of Alexander Selkirk's shipmates if they had been marooned with him. This was the fate, indeed, which happened to the crew of the *Speedwell*. While they were filling the water-casks, a gale drove the ship hard ashore. The disaster came so suddenly that "their surprise at this unexpected event is not to be described; and in a very few minutes the ship was full of water and almost everything destroyed. All the people, however, except one man were saved."

As was to be expected, Captain George Shelvocke proceeded to make the best of it. He managed to raft ashore most of the gunpowder, some bread and beef, the nautical instruments and compasses, and was careful to see that his precious privateering commission was safely in his pocket. It will be inferred from this that he had no intention of letting so small a trifle as a shipwreck interfere with his plans of disturbing the peace of the viceroys of Spain. A little village of tents and huts was promptly built near a stream of fresh water, and when the castaways had sufficiently rested their weary bones, the captain called them together and announced that they would have to build a small vessel if they did not wish to spend the rest of their days on this desolate island. He was not one to be content with

devotional exercises and a household of dancing goats and cats. His crew replied that they were anxious to build some sort of craft if he would show them how, and accordingly they pulled the wreck of the *Speedwell* apart and piled the timbers on the beach.

Keel-blocks were set up, and they began to put together what they called a bark. It was to be only forty feet long, with a depth of seven feet, by no means large enough to hold a hundred men, but material was difficult to obtain and skilled labor scarce. The armorer directed the work, being a man of skill and industry; but after two months of toil the fickle company tired of the job and sought entertainment in mutiny. Captain Shelvocke was a harsh, masterful person, so a conspiracy deposed him from the command, and a new set of articles was drawn up which organized a company of free adventurers who purposed to do things in their own way. They took possession of the muskets and pistols and wandered off inland to waste the ammunition in shooting goats.

The sight of a large Spanish ship in the offing put a check on this nonsense. If captured, they would certainly be hanged; so they flocked in to urge Captain Shelvocke to resume the command and prepare a scheme of defense. As soon as the hostile ship disappeared, however, they were brewing trouble afresh, one party voting to elect the first lieutenant as captain, another standing by Captain Shelvocke, and a third, perhaps a dozen in number, deciding to quit the crew and remain on the island. This group of deserters drifted away and built a camp of their own and were a good riddance. The captain got the upper hand of the rest, and the labor of finishing the tiny bark was taken up again.

When it came to planking the bottom, the only material was what could be ripped off the deck of the wrecked *Speedwell*. The stuff was so old and brittle that it split into small pieces, and great pains were required to fit it to the frames of the bark. Then the seams were calked as tight as possible, and

water poured in to test them. Alas! there were leaks from stem to stern, and the discouraged seamen swore to one another that she was no better than a damned sieve. They were ready to abandon the enterprise, but Captain Shelvocke bullied and coaxed them into picking up their tools again.

They patched and calked and tinkered until it was agreed that the bark might possibly be kept afloat. The cooper made wooden buckets enough for every man to have one to bale with, and one of the ship's pumps was mended and fitted into the hold. Two masts were set up and rigged, canvas patched for sails, and a launching day set to catch the spring tide of October. Meanwhile the cooper was getting casks ready for provisions. These consisted of two thousand conger-eels which had been dried in smoke, seal-oil to fry them in, one cask of beef, five or six of flour, and half a dozen live hogs.

When they tried to launch the bark, the blocks gave way, and she fell upon her side and stuck fast. Again the faint-hearted seamen were for giving up the game as lost, but the competent armorer rigged purchases and tackles and lifted the craft, and she slid into the water on the next tide, Captain Shelvocke duly christening her the *Recovery*. For an anchor and cable they had to use a large stone and a light rope; so before she could drift ashore they stowed themselves aboard, leaving a dozen who preferred to live on Juan Fernandez and several negroes who could shift for themselves. There had been deaths enough to reduce the number of officers and men to fifty as the complement of the forty-foot bark, which ran up the British ensign and wallowed out into the wide Pacific.

> It was then found that one pump constantly working would keep the vessel free. In distributing the provisions, one of the conger eels was allowed to each man in twenty-four hours, which was cooked on a fire made in a half tub filled with earth; and the water was sucked out of a cask by means of a musket barrel. The people on board were all

uncomfortably crowded together and lying on the bundles of eels, and in this manner was the voyage resumed.

The plans of Captain George Shelvocke were direct and simple—to steer for the Bay of Concepción as the nearest port, in the hope of capturing some vessel larger and more comfortable than his own. In a moderate sea the bark "tumbled prodigiously," and all hands were very wet because the only deck above them was a grating covered with a tarpaulin; but the captain refused to bear away and ease her. At some distance from the South American coast a large ship was sighted in the moonlight. The desperate circumstances had worn the line between privateering and piracy very thin, but in the morning it was discovered that the ship was Spanish and therefore a proper prize of war. She did not like the looks of the little bark and its wild crew, and edged away with all canvas set. Captain Shelvocke crowded the *Recovery* in chase of her, and when it fell calm, his men swung at the oars.

The audacious bark had no battery of guns, mind you, for they had been left behind in the wreck of the *Speedwell*. One small cannon had been hoisted aboard, but the men were unable to mount it, and were therefore obliged to let it lie on deck and fire it, jumping clear of the recoil and hitching it fast with hawsers to prevent it from hopping over the side. For ammunition they had two round shot, a few chain-bolts and bolt-heads, the clapper of the *Speedwell's* brass bell, and some bags of stones which had been gathered on the beach. It appeared that they would have to carry the big Spanish ship by boarding her, if they could fetch close enough alongside, though they were also in a very bad way for small arms. A third of the muskets lacked flints, and there were only three cutlasses in the crew.

Captain Shelvocke ignored these odds, and held on after the ship until a four-hour chase brought him within a few hundred feet of her, so near that the Spanish sailors could be heard calling them English dogs and defying

them to come on board. Along with the curses flew a volley of great and small shot, which killed the *Recovery's* gunner and almost carried away her foremast.

So warm a reception staggered many of Captain Shelvocke's men and those who before seemed the most forward now lay upon their oars, insomuch that he had difficulty to make them keep their way. But recovering themselves, they rowed up and engaged the enemy until all their small shot was expended, which done they fell astern to whittle more leaden slugs.

In this manner they made three attempts, all equally unsuccessful; and they found it impossible to board the ship, she was so lofty, especially from the want of pistols and cutlasses which are the only weapons for close fighting. It was calm the whole night during which the people of the *Recovery* were busy making slugs, and having provided a great quantity against morning, they came to the desperate resolution of either carrying the ship or of submitting to her. At daybreak Captain Shelvocke ordered twenty men into the yawl to lay athwart the ship's hawse whilst he boarded in the dark. The people in the boat put off, giving him repeated assurances of their determination; but just at this very juncture of coming to action, a breeze sprung up and the ship gained on them. As the gale freshened, the captain expected the ship would have run him down, which she could have easily done; however, she bore away, probably for some port on the coast, Valparaiso or Coquimbo. The *Recovery* chased her all that day and the following night, and at daylight of the succeeding morning saw her close to the land and she continued her course along shore until out of sight.

With several officers and men wounded, the errant little bark wandered northward, raiding the coast for provisions and riding out one gale after another, until another large ship was encountered. This was the stately merchantman, *St. Francisco Palacio* of seven hundred tons. By way of comparison, Captain Shelvocke estimated his bark as measuring about twenty tons. The *Recovery* rowed up to her in a calm and fought her for six hours, when the sea roughened, and there was no hope of closing in. It was a grievous disappointment, for the *St. Francisco Palacio* was so deeply laden with rich merchandise that as she rolled the water ran through her scuppers across the upper deck, and her poop towered like a wooden castle.

The second failure to take a prize made the unsteady crew discontented, and several of them stole the best boat and ran away with it. Mutiny was forestalled by an encounter with a Spanish vessel called the *Jesus Maria* in the roadstead of Pisco. Preparations were made to carry her by storm, as Captain Shelvocke concluded that she would suit his requirements very nicely and his bark was unfit to keep the sea any longer. The *Recovery* was jammed alongside after one blast of scrap-iron and other junk from the prostrate cannon, and the boarders tumbled over the bulwarks, armed with the three cutlasses and such muskets as could be fired. The Spanish captain and his officers had no stomach to resist such stubborn visitors as these. Doffing their hats, they bowed low and asked for quarter, which Captain Shelvocke was graciously pleased to grant. The *Jesus Maria* was found to be laden with pitch, tar, copper, and plank, and her captain offered to ransom her for sixteen thousand dollars.

Captain Shelvocke needed the ship more than he did the money, so he transferred his crew to the stout *Jesus Maria* and bundled the Spaniards into the *Recovery* and wished them the best of luck. The shipwreck at Juan Fernandez and all the other misfortunes were forgotten. The adventurers were in as good a ship as the lost *Speedwell* and needed only more guns to make a first-class fighting privateer of her. They now carried out the

original intention of cruising to Mexico, and in those waters captured a larger ship, the *Sacra Familia* of six guns and seventy men. Again Captain Shelvocke shifted his flag and left the *Jesus Maria* to his prisoners. On board of his next capture, the *Holy Sacrament*, he placed a prize crew, but the Spanish sailors rose and killed all the Englishmen, and the number of those who had sailed from England in the *Speedwell* was now reduced to twenty-six.

Off the coast of California sickness raged among them until only six or seven sailors were fit for duty. Then Captain Shelvocke did the boldest thing of his career, sailing the *Holy Sacrament* all the way across the Pacific until he reached the China coast and found refuge in the harbor of Macao. Then this short-handed crew worked the battered ship to Canton, where the captains of the East Indiamen expressed their amazement at the ragged sails, the feeble, sea-worn men, and the voyage they had made. Captain George Shelvocke by this feat alone enrolled himself among the great navigators of the eighteenth century. He had found no Spanish galleons to plunder, and his adventure was a failure, but as a master of men and circumstances he had won a singular success.

He saw that his few men were safely embarked in an East Indiaman bound to London, and after a vacation in Canton he, too, went home as a passenger, completing a journey around the globe. Three and a half years had passed since he sailed from Plymouth in the *Speedwell* with a mutinous crew of landlubbers and high hopes of glittering fortune. Almost every officer had died, including the sailing-master, the first lieutenant, the gunner, the armorer, and the carpenter, and of the original company, a hundred strong, no more than a dozen saw England again. Nothing more is known of the seafaring career of Captain Shelvocke, but he was no man to idle on a quay or loaf in a tap-room, and it is safe to say that he lived other stories that would be vastly entertaining.

CHAPTER XVI

LUCKLESS SEAMEN LONG IN EXILE

ROBINSON CRUSOE recoiling from the discovery of the footprint in the sand is what Stevenson calls one of the epoch-making scenes in all romantic literature, to be compared with Achilles shouting over against the Trojans, Ulysses bending the great bow, and *Christian* running with his fingers in his ears. There is, nevertheless, among the true stories of seafaring adventure at least one scene which is not unworthy of mention in the same breath with the culminating moment of *Robinson Crusoe*. This occurred when Peter Serrano encountered the other castaway on a desert island off the coast of Chile.

It was in the early days of Spanish exploration and settlement on the South American coasts when this sailor, Peter Serrano, was wrecked, and saved himself by swimming ashore while the rest of the crew were drowned. He crawled out upon an island so dismally barren that it had neither water, wood, nor grass, and not a bit of wreckage was washed ashore with him, no provisions, no timbers with which to build a boat. In short, Peter Serrano had absolutely none of the resources of the shipwrecks of fiction.

When the huge sea turtles crawled up on the sand he threw them over upon their backs and cut their throats with his sheath-knife. The blood he drank, and the flesh was eaten raw or dried in the blazing sun. Other distressed mariners have thanked God for this same food, and it may explain to the landsman why a ship is said to “turn turtle” when she

capsizes. Peter Serrano, who was cast ashore with only his ready wits and his sheath-knife, scraped out the shells of these great turtles and used them to catch water when the heavy rains fell. He was therefore provided with food and drink, and shelter was the next essential.

There were fragments of plank from ships which had been lost among these shoals, but they were small and rotten and good for nothing but fire-wood. Peter made himself a little roof of turtle-shells large enough to crawl under, but the heat of the sun so tormented him that he had to take a cool dip in the salt water several times a day. However, he had organized himself for the struggle for existence and was now determined to find some method of making fire. How he succeeded was described by his biographer, Garcilasso de la Vega, and translated into English a hundred and fifty years ago.

> Considering on this invention, (for seamen are much more ingenious in all times of extremity than men bred at land) he searched everywhere to find out a couple of hard pebbles, instead of flints, his knife serving in the place of a steel. But the island being covered all over with a dead sand and no stone appearing, he swam into the sea and diving often to the bottom he at length found a couple of stones fit for his purpose which he rubbed together until he got them to an edge, with which being able to strike fire, he drew some threads out of his shirt which he worked so small that it was like cotton, and served for tinder. So that having contrived a means to kindle fire, he gathered a great quantity of sea-weeds thrown up by the waves which, with the shells of fish and the splinters of old ships afforded nourishment for his fuel. And lest sudden showers should extinguish his fire he made a little covering for it, like a small hut, with the shells of the largest turtles, taking great care that his fire should not go out.

Peter Serrano lived alone for three years in this condition and saw several ships pass the island, but none turned in to investigate his signal smoke. It is easy to fancy that “being exposed to all weathers, the hair of his body grew in that manner that he was covered all over with bristles, and the hair of his head and beard reaching to his waist he appeared like some wild savage creature.”

Now for the scene which is extraordinary for its elements of romantic climax. Poor Peter Serrano did not know it, but he was living literature as defined by the masters. It is quaintly told in the original narrative and needs no embroidery of comment.

> At the end of three years, Serrano was strangely surprised with the appearance of a man in his island, whose ship had, the night before, been cast away upon those sands, and who had saved himself on a plank of the vessel. As soon as it was day he espied the smoke and imagining whence it was, he made towards it.
>
> As soon as they saw each other, it is hard to say which was the more amazed. Serrano imagined that it was the devil who had come in the shape of a man to tempt him to despair. The new-comer believed Serrano to be the devil in his own proper shape and figure, being covered all over with hair and beard. In fine, they were both afraid, flying one from the other. Peter Serrano cried out as he ran:
>
> “Jesus, Jesus, deliver me from the devil.”
>
> The other hearing this, took courage and returning again to him, called out:
>
> “Brother, brother, do not fly from me, for I am a Christian, as thou art.”

And because he saw that Serrano still ran from him, he repeated the Credo or Apostles' Creed in words aloud, which, when Serrano heard, he knew it was no devil that would recite those words, and thereupon gave a stop to his flight, and returning with great kindness they embraced each other with sighs and tears, lamenting their sad state, without any hopes of deliverance. Serrano, supposing that his guest wanted refreshment, entertained him with such provisions as his miserable life afforded, and having a little comforted each other they began to recount the manner and occasion of their sad disasters.

For the better government of their way of living, they designed their hours of day and night to certain services; such a time was appointed to kill fish for eating, such hours for gathering weeds, fish-bones, and other matters which the sea threw up, to maintain their constant fire. And especial care had they to observe their watches and relieve each other at certain hours, that so they might be sure their fire went not out.

In this manner they lived amiably together for certain days, but many days did not pass before a quarrel arose between them so high that they were ready to fight. The occasion proceeded from some words that one gave the other, hinting that he took not that care and labor as the extremity of their condition required. This difference so increased, (for to such misery do our passions often betray us) that at length they separated and lived apart one from the other.

However, in a short time having experienced the want of that comfort which mutual society procures, their choler was appeased and they returned to enjoy converse, and the assistance which friendship and company afforded, in which condition they passed *four years*. During this time they saw many ships sail near them, yet none would be so charitable or curious as to be invited by their smoke and flame.

So that being now almost desperate, they expected no other remedy besides death to put an end to their miseries.

However, at length a ship venturing to pass nearer than ordinary, espied the smoke, and rightly judging that it must be made by some shipwrecked persons escaped to those sands, hoisted out their boat to take them in. Serrano and his companion readily ran to the place where they saw the boat coming, but as soon as the mariners approached so near as to distinguish the strange figures and looks of these two men, they were so affrighted that they began to row back.

But the poor men cried out and that they might believe them not to be devils or evil spirits, they rehearsed the creed and called aloud the name of Jesus, with which words the mariners returned, took them into the boat and carried them to the ship, to the great wonder of all present, who with admiration beheld their hairy shapes, not like men but beasts, and with singular pleasure heard them relate the story of their past misfortunes.

The companion died in his voyage to Spain, but Serrano lived to come thither, from whence he travelled into Germany where the Emperor, Charles V, then resided: all which time he nourished his hair and beard to serve as an evidence and proof of his past life. Wheresoever he came the people pressed, as to a sight, to see him for money. Persons of quality, having the same curiosity, gave him sufficient to defray his charges, and his Imperial Majesty, having seen him and heard his discourses, bestowed a rent upon him of four thousand pieces of eight a year, which make forty-eight hundred ducats in Peru. Alas, while going to take possession of this income, Peter Serrano died at Panama and had no farther enjoyment of it.

This Spanish sailor of long ago deserved to enjoy those golden ducats, and it was a most unkindly twist of fate that snuffed his candle out. He was more fortunate, however, than most shipwrecked seamen, who have been thankful to find a shirt to their backs and the chance to sign on for another voyage when they set foot in port again. Seven years on a desert island was a long, long exile for Peter Serrano, but he saw home much sooner than the luckless Dutchmen of the *Sparrow-hawk* who were cast away on an island off the coast of Korea in the year of 1653. Twelve years later a few survivors gazed once more on the quays and docks of Amsterdam, but meanwhile they were making history.

These were the first men who ever carried to Europe a description of the hermit kingdom of Korea and its queer, slipshod people in dirty white clothes, a nation sealed up as tight as a bottle which had drowsed unchanged through a thousand years. Japan was not wholly barred to foreigners even then, for the Dutch East India Company was permitted to send two ships a year to Nagasaki and to maintain a trading post in that harbor. It was a privilege denied all other nations, and for two centuries the Dutch enjoyed this singular commercial monopoly.

The Koreans, however, refused to have any intercourse with the European world, and seamen wrecked on that coast were compelled to spend the rest of their lives there as slaves and captives. This was why the story told by Henry Hamel, the purser of the *Sparrow-hawk*, aroused such a vast amount of interest when he reappeared with seven shipmates after escaping to Japan.

The vessel flew the flag of the Dutch East India Company, and sailed from Batavia with a crew of sixty-four men, under orders to drop a new Dutch governor at the island of Formosa. This castellated ark of a seventeenth-century merchantman safely completed this leg of her voyage and was then sent to Japan to pick up a cargo of copper, silk, camphor,

porcelain, and bronze. The winds drove the *Sparrow-hawk* to and fro, and for a fortnight she still bobbled and rolled within sight of Formosa. Then came a tempest which made a wreck of her, and she piled upon the rocks of the Korean island of Quelpert.

The governor promptly sent soldiers to make prisoners of the thirty-four Dutchmen, who were treated with unexpected kindness. The purser, the pilot, and the surgeon’s mate were given an audience by this island ruler, and the scene included a romantic surprise.

Seated beside the Korean governor of this strange, unknown island was a man of a florid complexion who wore a great red beard. The castaways stared at him and declared that he was a Dutchman, which the governor jestingly denied; but presently the red-bearded one broke his silence, and the tears ran down his cheeks while he told them that his name was Jan Wettevri of the town of Zyp, Holland.

He had been wrecked on the Korean coast in a Dutch frigate in the year of 1626, when he was a young man of thirty-one, and his age was now fifty-eight. Twenty-seven years had he been held in Korea, and no word respecting the fate of his ship had ever gone back to Holland. Two shipmates had been saved with him, Theodore Gerard and Jan Pieters, but they were long since dead. Both had been killed seventeen years before this while fighting in the Korean army against a Tartar invasion.

Often had he besought the King of Korea, sighed this red-bearded sailor, Jan Wettevri, that he might go to Japan and join his countrymen at Nagasaki,

> but all the answer he could get from that prince was an assurance that he should never go excepting he had wings to fly thither; that it was the custom of the country to detain all strangers, but not to suffer them to

> want anything and that they would be supplied with clothing and food during their lives.

Jan Wettevri found difficulty in speaking his own tongue when he attempted to tell his story to these seamen of the *Sparrow-hawk*, for in seventeen years he had heard no other language than Korean.

The friendly governor of Quelpert was succeeded by an unpleasant old tyrant who made life so uncomfortable that the stubborn Dutchmen resolved to escape to Japan, sink or swim. The pilot and six sailors stole a junk, but luck was against them. The rotten mast went over the side as they were sailing out to sea, and so they were carried back for punishment. Their hands were tied to a heavy log of wood, and they had to lie in a row flat upon their stomachs while a sturdy Korean jailer flailed them with a heavy cudgel, twenty-five blows each upon that part of a Dutchman's back where his baggy breeches were the most voluminous. So cruel was this chastisement that several of them lay a month in bed.

So long as they were content to submit to circumstances, the Koreans were inclined to treat them with a certain good humor and toleration. After several months they were conveyed to the mainland and lodged in the capital city, where the king had his palace. He enrolled them in his body-guard, and they received wages of seventy measures of rice per month. Armed with muskets, they drilled under the command of Jan Wettevri. Henry Hamel, the purser, relates:

> Curiosity induced most of the great men belonging to the court to invite them to dinner, that they might enjoy the satisfaction of seeing them perform the military exercises and dance in the Dutch manner. The women and children were still more impatient to see them, a report having been propagated that they were monsters of deformity and that in order to drink they were obliged to fasten their noses behind their

ears. Their astonishment, however, was so much the greater when they saw that they were handsomer and much more stalwart than the natives of the country. The whiteness of their complexion was particularly admired. The crowds that flocked about them were so great that during the first days they could scarcely pass through the streets or enjoy a moment's rest in their huts. At length, the general was obliged to check this curiosity by forbidding any one to approach their lodgings without his permission.

For some reason the Dutch company of musketeers was mustered out of this service after a year or so, and they were more or less turned adrift and scattered, always under the vigilant eyes of provincial governors or other officials. Sometimes they loafed and again they worked for their board or begged their way from one village to another, and were entertained by the peasantry, who never ceased to wonder at them. Once an ugly-tempered governor refused to give them clothing and said they might starve for all he cared; but the account was handsomely squared, for

he held his dignity only four months, and being accused of having condemned to death several persons of different ranks on insufficient grounds, he was sentenced by the king to receive ninety strokes on the shin bones and to be banished for life.

Towards the end of this year a comet appeared. It was followed by two others which were both seen at once for the space of two months, one in the southeast and the other in the southwest, but with their tails opposite to each other. The court was so alarmed by this phenomenon that the king ordered the guard at all the forts and over all the ships to be doubled. He likewise directed that all his fortresses should be well supplied with warlike stores and provisions and that his troops should be exercised every day. Such were his apprehensions of being attacked

> by some neighbor that he prohibited a fire to be made during the night in any house that could be perceived from the sea.
>
> The same phenomena had been seen when the Tartars ravaged the country, and it was recollected that similar signs had been observed previous to the war carried on by the Japanese against Korea. The inhabitants never met the Dutch sailors without asking them what people thought of comets in their country. Comformably to the idea prevalent in Europe, the Dutch replied that comets prognosticated some terrible disaster, as pestilence, war, or famine, and sometimes all three calamities together.

At the end of twelve years of this forlorn exile, eight of the crew of the *Sparrow-hawk* succeeded in stealing away from Korea in a staunch sea-going junk. Eight others of the thirty-six officers and men were still alive, but they had to be left behind. With some rice, a few jars of water, and an iron pot, the fugitives sailed the junk to the coast of Japan, where the fishermen directed them to Nagasaki, where Dutch ships were at anchor in the bay. The eight Dutchmen who remained in Korea were never heard of again, nor was any word received of Jan Wettevri, now seventy years old, and that great red beard well streaked with gray.

When a sailor kissed his wife or sweetheart good-by in those rude, adventurous centuries, the voyage was likely to be darkened by these tragedies of enforced exile, which were ever so much worse than shipwreck. Quite typical of its era was the fate of the crew of the English privateer *Inspector* when foul weather set her ashore near Tangier in the year of 1746. Incidentally, the narrative of the experience of these eighty-seven survivors conveys certain vivid impressions of an Emperor of Morocco, Zin el Abdin, and of his amazing contempt for the Christian powers of Europe and their supine submission to his ruthless dictates. This was in accordance with the attitude of centuries, during which the treatment

of foreign envoys in Morocco was profoundly humiliating, and the gifts they brought were regarded in the light of tribute. Indeed, it was not until 1900 that the custom of mounted sultans under umbrellas receiving ambassadors on foot and bareheaded was abolished.

While from the European point of view the pirates of the Barbary coast were a bloodthirsty set of robbers, in the eyes of the Moors they were religious warriors for the faith who had volunteered to punish the Nazarenes for rejecting Mohammed, and it is difficult to realize the honor in which their memory is held save by comparison with that of the Crusaders, in which the positions were exactly reversed. The varying influences of the different European states could be gaged at first by the prices they were compelled to pay to ransom their captive subjects and later by the annual tribute which they were willing to present to protect their vessels. Some countries continued the payment well into the nineteenth century, although the slavery of Christians in Morocco had been abolished by treaty in 1814.

The privateer *Inspector*, commanded by Captain Richard Veale, sailed from the Downs on a cruise with two hundred and five hands. After taking two prizes she entered the Strait of Gibraltar, where a brisk gale of wind opened her seams, and it was a case of founder or run for the nearest beach. A treaty which had been signed by the Emperor of Morocco and the British Government inspired the hope of a humane reception in Tangier. More than a hundred of the privateersmen were drowned when the *Inspector* drove against the rocky coast, and the rest of them, wounded, half-naked, and exhausted, were discovered by the Moors, who threw them into a loathsome jail of Tangier.

The British consul, Mr. Pettigrew, arrived from Gibraltar in H. M. S. *Phoenix* a few days later, and opened negotiations which resulted in the release of the captain, his three lieutenants, and the officer of marines. As for the others, the consul was tartly informed that they could rot in slavery

until the British Government discharged an old debt claimed by the Emperor of Morocco for captives redeemed seventeen years before.

While in prison the wretched seamen were left without food for three days on end, and to their piteous plea the governor of Tangier sent word:

"If the unbelieving dogs are hungry, let them eat the stones."

When they desperately attempted to escape, iron chains were locked about their necks, and twenty of them were thrown into a black hole of a dungeon where hunger almost drove them to casting lots and eating one of their number. Two sheep were thrown to them, however, which they instantly devoured raw. After five months of this existence, in which they were more dead than alive, an order came to carry them to Bufcoran, two hundred miles distant, where the emperor was encamped.

This haughty potentate rode out to look them over, and it was his pleasure that they should be confined in a castle near by. It pleased them greatly when, after a little while, the same governor of Tangier who had abused them so frightfully was dragged into the castle, along with his household of officials, and they wore iron collars locked about *their* necks. There was such a thing as righteous retribution even in those parlous days. The emperor was building a splendid new castle, and the British privateersmen were set at work with pickaxes to dig the wall foundations. Remorselessly driven until they dropped, twenty of them abjured Christianity to find a respite from their torments.

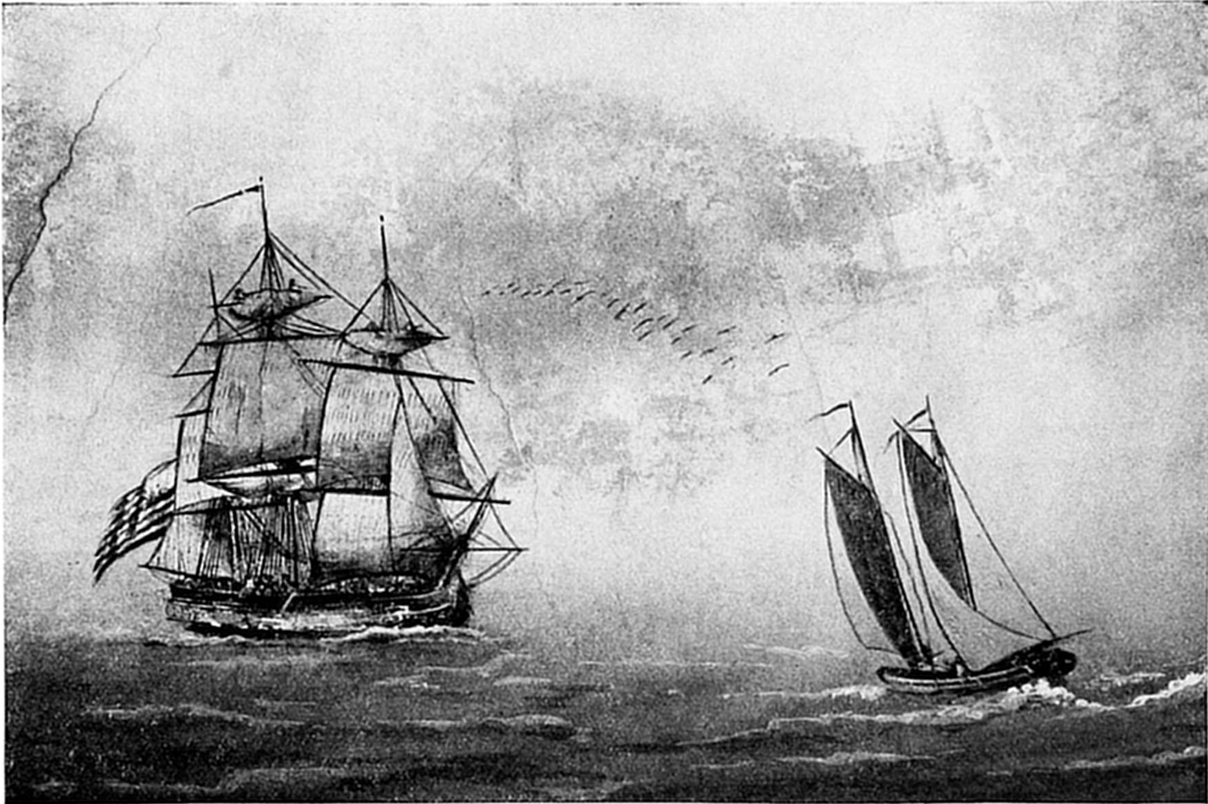
The emperor was not too busy with his new castle to attend to matters of state, such as punishing the disgraced governor of Tangier and sundry other subjects who had misbehaved themselves in one way or another. Sailormen were accustomed to strange sights and wonderful experiences in that age of seafaring, but few of them beheld such a drama as was enacted before the eyes of the survivors of the *Inspector* as they glanced up from

their sweating toil amid the stones and mortar. One of them described it in these words:

> The emperor came to the place where the governor of Tangier and his miserable companions had lain five days in chains on the bare ground without the smallest allowance of provisions. Having viewed these unfortunate wretches, the emperor withdrew about sixty paces from the castle towards his camp where he gave orders that they should all be brought out before him. When they were arranged in the form required, the governor, three sons of the late bashaw, and another principal inhabitant of Tangier were unchained and set apart from the rest.
>
> Then with all possible serenity the emperor desired his armor-bearer to bring him his scimetar. He drew it from the scabbard with a countenance as composed as if he had been going to exercise a body of troops. One of the delinquents was next commanded to be loosened from his chains and brought before him. The unhappy man, aware of his approaching fate, fell prostrate, and with tears implored mercy. All entreaties were vain, for the emperor without regarding them, exclaimed "*In the name of God*," and with one blow struck off his head. This done, he returned his scimetar to the armor-bearer with orders for him and his assistants to follow the same example and retiring a short way off, stood to see his orders executed. In this manner were no less than three hundred and thirty victims massacred to glut his diabolical vengeance.
>
> The governor of Tangier, the three sons of the late bashaw, and the other person, who were freed of their chains to be spectators of the slaughter, were petrified with horror at the sight and full of apprehension that they were reserved for sufferings more severe. At length, the emperor approaching them warned them of the spectacle

they beheld, and advised them to take care that his affairs be properly administered at Tangier in future.

By this means he intended to extort a sum of money from their friends, but as this did not follow according to his expectations he summoned them once more before him and gave orders for their immediate execution. He had previously told them, however, that having promised they should not die by the sword, they should all suffer by the bow-string. Hereupon two of his guards were selected who were employed to strangle them, one after another; which they did with all imaginable deliberation, in obedience to the orders of the emperor to take a moderate time in the executions for the sake of his own enjoyment. And notwithstanding the small number of victims, it occupied two hours.



TAKING ON THE PILOT IN THE 18TH CENTURY

The British sailors confessed that such barbarity made them tremble, and all that sustained their hopes was the rumor of the expected arrival of an ambassador from England. The consul could do nothing for them. Mr. Kilbs, the sailing-master of the *Inspector*, fainted at his work while the emperor was inspecting the building. The despot of Morocco inquired why the overseers permitted such indolence, but when the case was explained and he saw that the mariner was in the agonies of death, he was kind enough to order him carried into the castle, where he soon expired. In this instance there was no touch of the whimsical humor displayed when two superannuated Moorish soldiers toppled over with exhaustion. The emperor cursed them most heartily, at which the two old men in tremulous accents entreated him to pity their infirmities and grant them charity during the few years of life left to them, reminding the emperor of their eighteen years of

service in the army. To this plea their ruler amiably replied that he could perceive their inability to labor any longer and it was therefore his duty to protect them against the evils of old age and poverty. He therefore graciously ordered that they both be shot through the head without more ado.

After a year of captivity, the sailors were taken to Fez to toil on another pretentious fortress. Their keepers abused them without mercy, and a midshipman of the privateer, Mr. Nelson, took his life in his hands and complained to the emperor. Such boldness won the tyrant's favor, and he asked what the grievances were. The midshipman showed a heavy stick of wood with which one of the keepers had beaten the men of the *Inspector* because they sang some songs during the night to keep their spirits up.

"Fetch me four sticks of that same size, and let them be good ones," commanded his Majesty Zin el Adbin. "Also drag that wicked keeper before me."

The whole company of British seamen was also ordered into the royal presence, and four of the most stalwart were selected and told to take the sticks and break them on the keeper's bones. The victim was stretched on the ground, and the incensed mariners flogged him with great enthusiasm while the emperor encouraged them to make a thorough job of it or have their own bones broken. The guards carted away what was left of the keeper, and he died an hour later.

From Fez the captives were carried to Tetuan to await tidings from the British ambassador to Morocco, who was striving to obtain their release. At parting with their black overseer, he made the logical remark:

"Now I have no more to do with you; and if ever you catch me in your country, I expect no better usage than you have had here."

The negotiations moved haltingly while the sailors waited in prison in Tetuan. After a long delay enough money was received from Gibraltar to redeem twenty-five of them, who were selected by the governor of the city, "who dismissed them with wishes for a happy voyage." Three weeks afterward the balance of the cash came to Tetuan, but the emperor put a spoke in the wheel by refusing to let the privateersmen go until that matter of the old debt was canceled. The British ambassador sent a naval officer to England for more money, and there was another delay, which annoyed the Moorish governor of Tetuan. A squadron of British men-of-war, under Commodore Keppel, rode at anchor in the harbor, but their guns were silent while the ambassador was arrested, his property seized, and his secretary thrown into a dungeon pit twenty feet deep, where the playful Moors dropped dead cats and dogs and stones on him. It could scarcely be said that Britannia rules the waves that washed the shores of Morocco.

Commodore Keppel pledged his word that the old account should be squared, although it was well known that the British Government had already paid it once, and the ambassador gave a promissory note for the whole amount. Finally the claims were settled to the satisfaction of the Emperor of Morocco, and the survivors of the privateer were put aboard H. M. S. *Sea-Horse*. "They ran into the water as deep as the waist, each thinking himself happiest that he could get in the boat first."

Fifty-seven of them had lived to gain their freedom after four years of slavery. Their sad story ended more happily than might have been expected, for when they returned to England the king was pleased to give them a bounty of five pounds each.

> The Jews in London supplied them with clothing and showed them many acts of kindness. Mr. Rich, manager of one of the principal theatres, presented each man with five pounds and devoted the proceeds of a night's performance to their use. The proprietor of

another public exhibition did the like, on which occasion they appeared in iron chains and collars such as they had worn in slavery.

The privateersman of the *Inspector* who wrote the narrative of the adventures and miseries in Morocco was a hardy salt, if ever there was one. Unharmed by the experience, this Thomas Troughton lived until 1806, and died at the uncommonly ripe old age of one hundred and fourteen years.

It seems proper that one of these true tales of luckless seamen long in exile should have for its hero a mariner of that rugged New England, the early fortitude and daring of which laid the enduring foundations of this nation. In the year of 1676 Mr. Ephraim How of New Haven found it necessary to undertake a journey to Boston. Express-trains were not then covering the distance between these cities in four hours. In fact, there were not even post-roads or stage-coaches, and the risk of being potted by hostile Indians was by no means negligible. To the Pilgrims and the Puritans of that era the country was still a wilderness almost as soon as they ventured inland beyond the sound of the sea.

As was common enough, Mr. Ephraim How had a vessel of his own to carry the cargoes which, as a merchant, he sold to his neighbors of the New Haven colony. They were a web-footed race of pioneers who traded and farmed and sailed or fished to earn a thrifty dollar. For his business trip to Boston Mr. How sensibly went by sea as an easier and quicker route than by land. With him in his small ketch of seventeen tons went his two sons as sailors, another youth named Caleb Jones, whose father was a magistrate in New Haven, a Mr. Augur, who was a passenger, and a boy, unnamed, who probably cooked the pork and potatoes and scrubbed the pots in the galley. It was in the month of August, and the ketch made a pleasant voyage of it around Cape Cod and into Boston Bay.

Illness, contrary winds, and business delays postponed the return journey until October, and they made sail with every expectation of a good passage. Off Cape Cod one heavy gale after another drove the ketch far offshore. The experience must have been terribly severe, for after eleven days of it the eldest son died, and the other son died soon after. It was too much for young Caleb Jones also, and he followed the others over the side, stitched up in a piece of canvas. Poor Ephraim How had lost his crew as by a visitation of God, and it seems as though some contagious disease must have ravaged the little ketch. The passenger, Mr. Augur, was no sailor at all, and Mr. How lashed himself to the helm for thirty-six hours at a stretch.

In this situation the two men cast lots whether to try to struggle back to the New England coast or to bear away with the wind and hope to reach the West Indies. The gambler's choice decreed New England, but the weather decided otherwise. For more than two months the distressed ketch tossed about and drifted, and was beaten to and fro without a glimpse of landfall. It was late in November when she was wrecked on a ledge of rock, but Ephraim How had not the slightest idea of where it was. He later learned that he had driven as far to the eastward as Nova Scotia, and the ketch had smashed herself upon a desolate island near Cape Sable. For Ephraim How it was a long, long way from Boston to New Haven.

Cape Sable in the winter time is even now a wicked refuge for shipwrecked mariners. Fortunately, there drifted ashore from the ketch the following list of essentials:

"A cask of gunpowder, which received no damage from the water; a barrel of wine, half a barrel of molasses, several useful articles towards building a tent; besides which they had firearms and shot, a pot for boiling, and most probably other things not mentioned."

Ephraim How, Mr. Augur, and the cabin boy prepared to make a winter of it in their flimsy shelter of a canvas tent amid the rocks and snow-drifts.

They shot crows, ravens, and sea-gulls, and warded off starvation with an uncomplaining heroism which expressed itself in these words:

“Once they lived five days without any sustenance but did not feel themselves pinched with hunger at other times, which they esteemed a special favor of heaven unto them.”

The dear friend and companion, Mr. Augur, died after three months of this ordeal, and the cabin boy lived until the middle of February. Thereafter Ephraim How was a solitary castaway. He somehow survived the winter, and notched a stick to keep the tally of the days and weeks as they brought the milder airs of spring. Fishing-vessels may have sighted his signals, but they passed unheeding, afraid of some Indian stratagem to lure them inshore.

Ephraim How had been three months alone, and seven months on this island near Cape Sable, when a trading-brig of Salem stood in to investigate the smoke of his fire, and mercifully rescued him from exile. On the eighteenth of July, 1677, he arrived in Salem port, and then made his way home to New Haven. He had been absent a whole year on that journey to Boston, which the modern traveler makes in a few hours with magical ease and luxury.

CHAPTER XVII

THE NOBLE KING OF THE PELEW ISLANDS

MANY kinds of ships and men have endured the eternal enmity of the sea, as these true tales have depicted, but there is one episode of disaster which might be called the pattern and the proper example for all mariners cast away on unknown shores. It reveals the virtues and not the vices of mankind in time of stress, and saves from oblivion the portrait of a dusky monarch so wise and just and kind that he could teach civilization much more than he could learn from it. No white men had ever set foot in his island realm until he welcomed this shipwrecked crew, and the source of his precepts and ideals was that inner light which had been peculiarly vouchsafed him. Naked and tattooed, he was not only a noble ruler of his people, but also a very perfect gentleman.

The packet *Antelope*, in the service of the East India Company, sailed from Macao in July, 1783, and was driven ashore in a black squall on one of the Pelew Islands three weeks later. All of the people were able to get away from the wreck in the boats, but they made for the beach with the most gloomy forebodings. The Pelews, a westerly group of the Caroline Islands, in the Pacific, had been sighted by the Spanish admiral, Ruy Lopez de Villalobos, as early as 1543, but no ship had ever touched there, and the only report, which was gleaned by hearsay from other islanders, declared that "the natives were unhuman and savage, that both men and women were entirely naked and fed upon human flesh, that the inhabitants of the

Carolines looked on them with horror as the enemies of mankind and with whom they held it dangerous to have any intercourse.”

Captain Henry Wilson of the *Antelope* was an exceptional commander, with a reliable crew which cheerfully obeyed him. While the ship was in the breakers and death seemed imminent, it is recorded that

> they endeavored to console and cheer one another and each was advised to clothe and prepare himself to quit the ship, and herein the utmost good order and regularity was observed, not a man offering to take anything but what truly belonged to himself, nor did any one of them attempt to take a dram or complain of negligence or misconduct against the watch or any particular person.

A raft was built to carry the stores and supplies, and sent off in tow of the pinnace and the jolly-boat. The ship was fast grinding to pieces, but there was no confusion, and the carpenter was so intent on getting his kit of tools together that he would have been left behind if the captain had not searched for him. A landing was made in a sandy cove, and no natives were discovered. Tents were rigged of sail-cloth, fires built, the arms cleaned and dried, and sentries posted for the night. One might have supposed that this efficient ship’s company was in the habit of being shipwrecked.

Two canoes came paddling into the cove next day, and Captain Wilson went down to meet the islanders. Luckily, he had with him a sailor named Tom Rose who could talk one or two Malay dialects, and he managed to struggle along as an interpreter for the reason that a native in one of the canoes could also speak the Malay tongue.

To questions Tom Rose answered that these were unfortunate Englishmen who had lost their ship upon the reef and wished to be friends. Unafraid and cordially disposed, eight islanders left the canoes and

accepted Captain Wilson's invitation to breakfast. Two of the guests were found to be brothers of the king. They tasted tea and biscuit for the first time, and were introduced to the officers, with whom they shook hands, having quickly noted that this was the accepted manner of greeting. These Englishmen, mysterious and unknown, were beings from another world, and the guests displayed lively astonishment, but no uneasiness.

It was agreed that Mr. Matthias Wilson, the captain's brother, should go to the near-by island of Pelew, or Coorooraa, to meet the king in formal audience and solicit his friendship. One canoe and three men remained at the sailors' camp. One of them was the king's brother, Raa Kook, commander of the military forces. These islanders were entirely naked, their brown skins glistening with cocoanut-oil, their long hair neatly done up in a roll behind.

While Mr. Matthias Wilson was absent on his mission, the crew of the *Antelope* went off to the wreck in quest of salvage. It was discovered that natives had rummaged the cabin and sampled the bottles in the medicine-chest. Here one begins to discern the ethical code of these most primitive savages.

> Captain Wilson made this transaction known to Raa Kook, not so much as a matter of complaint as to express to him his uneasiness for the consequences which might arise to the natives from their drinking such a variety of medicines. Raa Kook begged that Captain Wilson would entertain no anxiety whatever on their account; that if they suffered it would be entirely owing to their own misconduct, for which he said he felt himself truly concerned. His countenance fully described the indignation he felt at the treacherous behavior of his own men and he asked why our people did not shoot them? He begged that if they or any others should dare again to attempt to plunder the vessel they

would be shot at once and he should take it upon himself to justify the punishment to the king.

The only ornament worn by Raa Kook was a polished bracelet of bone, which he explained to be a mark of high distinction, conferred by the king upon his own family, officers of state, and military men of commanding rank. It was readily perceived that such a decoration had precisely the same significance as the ribbon of the order of the Bath or the Garter as conferred by English royalty.

All of which is no more extraordinary than the exemplary behavior of the crew of the *Antelope*. Captain Wilson called his officers together and suggested that no more liquor be drunk in camp. It made the men quarrelsome, interfered with their work, and was likely to cause trouble with the natives. The officers approved, and the boatswain called all hands next morning to hear the verdict. The seamen agreed to go without their grog, and offered to go on board the wreck and stave in every cask of spirits that could be found. This they scrupulously did, and it is a fair comment that “circumstanced as these poor fellows were, nothing but a long and well-trained discipline and the real affection they bore their commander could have produced the fortitude and firmness which they testified on this occasion.”

After a few days a canoe returned from Pelew Island with a son of the king as messenger. He brought word that his Majesty Abba Thulle bade the Englishmen welcome to his country, that they had his full permission to build a vessel on the island where they then were, or that they might remove to the island on which he lived and enjoy his personal protection. Mr. Matthias Wilson would soon return to the camp and had greatly enjoyed his visit.

When at length the king himself arrived in state to make the acquaintance of Captain Wilson and his company, he came with squadrons of canoes filled with armed men who blew sonorous salutes on conch-shells. Upon a stage in a larger canoe, or royal barge, sat King Abba Thulle, and the English commander was carried through the surf to meet him. These were two courtiers, the dignified shipmaster and the Micronesian savage, and after expressions of mutual esteem the king explained that this island was held to be sickly and subject to attack by hostile clans. For this reason he felt anxious for the welfare of the visitors. Captain Wilson answered that the shore was admirably suited for building and launching a small vessel and his men were well drilled and armed. And his surgeon would keep an eye on their health.

Landing at the camp, King Abba Thulle was escorted by his chiefs and three hundred bronzed fighting men. He wore no clothing and carried on his shoulder a hatchet which seemed to be a kind of scepter. A man of uncommon force and intelligence, a king in deed as well as name, this was to be read at a glance. It was his surmise that Captain Wilson, attended by his officers and armed sailors, must be a prince in his own country, but this error the modest commander was at pains to correct. Musketry drill and the discharge of the pieces astounded Abba Thulle, as did also the clothing and implements of these strangers, and the narrative of the shipwreck sagaciously comments:

> The king remained awhile pensive and bewildered, and this circumstance impressed on every one the idea that there was every cause to suppose that there had never been a communication between these people and any other nation, that they and their ancestry through ages too remote for human conjecture, might have lived as sovereigns of the world, unconscious that it extended beyond the horizon which bounded them, unconscious also that there were any other inhabitants

> in it than themselves. And in this case, what might not be the sentiments that burst on a mind thus suddenly awakened to a new and more enlarged notion of nature and mankind?

King Abba Thulle was not a man to ask for gifts, but was anxious to bestow favors. He offered to send some of his own craftsmen to help build a vessel and to provide such native food as might lend variety to the ship’s stores. One thing only he desired. He was about to wage war against the rebellious people of an island which had done him grave injury, and it would be of great advantage if Captain Wilson would permit four or five of his men to go along with their muskets. The whole crew volunteered for this sporting adventure, but four young single men were chosen, with the third mate, Mr. Cummings, in charge. Wearing blue jackets and cocked hats with light blue cockades, they sailed blithely away with the army of the king.

Meanwhile the crew had begun work on a small schooner after electing Captain Wilson as their superior officer, the narrative explaining that “as every reader may not be acquainted with maritime proceedings, to such it will not be improper to remark that when a merchant ship is wrecked all authority immediately ceases, and every individual is at full liberty to shift for himself.” It was faithfully promised that in all things the men would obey Captain Wilson as when the *Antelope* had been afloat.

The second officer, Mr. Barker, had been a shipwright in his youth, and he aided the carpenter in laying out the work. The tasks were methodically distributed, Mr. Matthias Wilson, Surgeon Sharp, and Captain Wilson sawing down trees, the boatswain in charge of the blacksmith shop, the gunner acting as chief of police, and a number of Chinese coolie passengers fetching water, hauling timbers, and running a laundry. Most of the sailors were employed in the carpenter’s gang. A stout stockade was built around the little shipyard and two swivel-guns were mounted against a possible attack from seaward. From the wreck of the *Antelope* the boats brought

cordage, oakum, iron, and copper, planking and timbers. It was an orderly bit of Old England transplanted to the remote and barbarous Pelew Island. And of course Captain Wilson read prayers to the assembled crew every Sunday evening.

The schooner's keel had been laid and the stem and stern-post bolted on, with the frames taking shape in the busy yard, when the five bold sailormen came back from the war with a tale of victory won over the forces of the King of Artingall. Their own sovereign, Abba Thulle, and his commander-in-chief, Raa Kook, had mustered a hundred and fifty canoes and a thousand men armed with spears and darts, which they handled with amazing skill. The enemy had fled after a spirited skirmish in which musketry-fire made a complete rout of it. At Pelew the victors had delayed for feasting and dances, and the English seamen volunteers seemed highly pleased with the soldier's life. They cheerfully set about their allotted tasks in the shipyard, however, and doffed the blue jackets and cocked hats.

In token of their service, Abba Thulle formally presented to the English party this island of Oroolong on which they dwelt, and in the native language it was rechristened "Englishman's Land." Captain Wilson thereupon ran up the British ensign, and three volleys of small arms were fired. By way of entertainment, one of the king's brothers came to spend the night "and brought with him all his spirits and gaiety, diverting them wonderfully with the pleasant description of the late engagement and acting with his accustomed humor and gestures the panic which had seized the enemy the instant they heard the report of the English guns."

It was proper that Captain Wilson should journey to the island of Pelew to return the royal visit, and this was done with becoming ceremony on both sides, banquets and music, and the attendance of many chiefs in the thatched village and the unpretentious palace. It was a smiling landscape, very lush and green, with cultivated fields of yams and cocoanuts and a

contented people. The war with the islanders of Artingall was unfinished, it seemed, and they deserved severe chastisement because of several murders committed. Another expedition was therefore planned, and ten of the British sailors took part with Captain Wilson's approval. The details were arranged during this meeting at Pelew.

A naval action was fought, and the strategy of General Raa Kook was so brilliant that it deserves mention. The enemy's squadrons of canoes held a position close under the land and refused to sail out and join battle. Raa Kook thereupon detached one of his own squadrons and concealed it behind a promontory during the night. In the morning the main fleet of canoes closed in, led by King Abba Thulle, and fought at long range. Pretending to be thrown into disorder, he ordered the conch-shells to sound the retreat, and this main fleet fled seaward. In hot pursuit dashed the squadrons of Artingall. No sooner were they well clear of the land than Raa Kook told his hidden squadron to advance and cut the enemy off. The luckless warriors of Artingall were between the devil and the deep sea, attacked ahead and astern, and mercilessly bucketed about until they broke and scattered. Many prisoners were taken, as well as canoes, and this campaign was a closed incident.

The interesting statement is made that Abba Thulle had previously notified the King of Artingall that in a few days he intended to offer him battle, and also that it was a maxim of his never to attack an enemy in the dark or take him unawares. This chivalrous doctrine is not expounded in detail by the narrator who compiled the personal stories of Captain Wilson and his officers, but it finds explicit confirmation in the memoirs of another gallant sailor who visited the Pelew Islands a few years later. This was Captain Amasa Delano, an American shipmaster, who also formed a strong friendship with King Abba Thulle and felt the greatest admiration for him.

Captain Delano was a mariner whose career embraced all the hazards and vicissitudes that could be encountered in that rugged and heroic era of endeavor. In Macao he fell in with Commodore John McClure of the English Navy, who was in command of an expedition setting out to explore a part of the South Seas, including the Pelew Islands, New Guinea, New Holland, and the Spice Islands. The Englishman took a fancy to this resourceful Yankee seaman and offered him the pay and station of a lieutenant. While the ship tarried at the Pelews, the chronic war against the rebels of Artingall had flared up again, and Captain Delano had this to say of Abba Thulle:

> The king, according to his usual generosity, had sent word to the people of Artingall that he should be there in three days for war. Although I was a Christian and in the habit of assuming the Christian peoples to be superior to these pagans in the principles of virtue and benevolence, I could not refrain from remonstrating with the king. I told him that Christian nations considered it as within the acknowledged system of lawful and honorable warfare to use stratagems against enemies and to fall upon them whenever it was possible and take them by surprise. He replied that war was horrid enough when pursued in the most open and magnanimous manner, and that although he thought very highly of the English, still their principles in this respect did not obtain his approbation and he believed his own mode of warfare more politic as well as more just.
>
> He said that if he were to destroy his enemies while they were asleep, others would have good reason to retaliate the same base conduct upon his subjects and thus multiply evils, whereas regular and open warfare might be the means of a speedy peace without barbarity. Should he subdue his rebellious subjects by strategy and surprise, they would hate both him and his measures and would never be faithful and

happy although they might fear his power and unwillingly obey his laws.

Sentiments of this elevated character excited my admiration the more for this excellent pagan and made an impression upon my mind which time will never efface. Christians might learn of Abba Thulle a fair comment upon the best principles of their own religion.

Captain Henry Wilson of the *Antelope* was therefore not alone in his high estimate of the character of this island ruler. The English castaways, industriously framing and planking their trim little schooner, had many evidences of a sentiment both delicate and noble. For instance, the royal canoes came bringing many cocoanuts ready for planting. At the king's desire they were set out to grow and form a wall of green around the cove where the camp stood. It was noticed that while covering each nut with earth, the king's brothers murmured certain words. They were dedicatory, it was explained, meaning that there would be fruit for the captain and his friends whenever they should return to the island, and should other strangers be wrecked on this shore, they would thank the English for their refreshment.

The schooner was finished and launched without mishap and christened the *Ooralong*. The ship's company had been almost four months on the island, and were all fit and strong and happy. The anchors, cables, and other fittings were placed on board, and it remained only to put in the stores and water-casks. Then it was that King Abba Thulle sent word to Captain Wilson that he wished to invest him with the order of the bone bracelet and to knight him as a chief of the highest rank. The ceremony was impressive, a great concourse of natives attending in profound silence, and when the bracelet was slipped on the wrist of Captain Wilson, the king told him that "the emblem should be rubbed bright every day and preserved as a testimony of the rank he held amongst them, that this mark of dignity must

on every occasion be defended valiantly, nor suffered to be torn from his arm but with the loss of life."

At last the schooner *Ooralong*, taut and seaworthy, swung at anchor with sails bent and everything ready for the voyage. To the pleasure and surprise of Captain Wilson, the king announced that he had resolved to send his second son, Lee Boo, to England if this was agreeable to the commander. Although his subjects respected his knowledge, explained Abba Thulle, he felt keenly his own insignificance at seeing the common English seamen exercise talents so far surpassing him. It was certain that his son would learn many things which might greatly benefit his people. And so this young prince of the Pelew Islands sailed on a marvelous voyage to lands unknown. In one of the farewell conversations, the king said to Captain Wilson:

> I would wish you to inform Lee Boo of all things which he ought to know and to make him an Englishman. The distress of parting with my beloved son I have frequently considered. I am well aware that the distant countries he must pass through, differing much from his own, may expose him to dangers, as well as to diseases that are unknown to us here, in consequence of which he may die. I have prepared my thoughts to this. I know that death is to all men inevitable, and whether my son meets this event at Pelew or elsewhere is immaterial. I am satisfied, from what I have observed of the humanity of your character, that if he is sick you will be kind to him. And should that fate happen which your utmost care cannot prevent, let it not hinder you or your brother or your son or any of your countrymen from returning here. I shall receive you or any of your people in friendship and rejoice to see you again.

Abba Thulle promised to cherish and preserve a copper plate affixed to a tree near the cove, upon which was cut the following inscription:

The Honorable
English East India Company’s Ship
The *ANTELOPE*.
HENRY WILSON, Commander,
Was lost upon the reef north of this island
In the night between the 9th and 10th of
August;
Who here built a vessel,
And sailed from hence
The 12th day of November, 1783.

When the little schooner hoisted the union jack and fired a swivel in token of good-by, the king and his young son came aboard from a canoe, to be together until the vessel had passed out through the channel of the reef. A multitude of natives followed in canoes, offering gifts of fruit and flowers, yams and cocoanuts, which could not be accepted for lack of space. Gently they were told this, but each held up a little something, crying: “Only this from me! Only this from me!” Other canoes were sent ahead to pilot the schooner or to buoy the reef. When it came time for the king to summon his own canoe he said farewell to his son, and then embraced Captain Wilson with great tenderness, saying:

“You are happy because you are going home. I am happy to find you are happy, but still very unhappy myself to see you going away.”

In this manner two rare men saw the last of each other. Captain Henry Wilson was far too modest to claim credit to himself, but it is quite obvious that the happy ending of this tragedy of the sea was largely due to his own serene courage, kindliness, and ability as a seaman and a commander. An inferior type of man would have made a sorry mess of the whole affair.

The schooner pluckily made her way through fair weather and foul until she safely reached the roadstead of Macao. There the little vessel was found to be so stanch that she was sold for seven hundred Spanish dollars. Captain Wilson then took passage for England in an East Indiaman, and the young prince Lee Boo went with him. Arrived home, the commander made the guest a member of his own household, and sent him to school at Rotherhite, in London. He was of a bright mind and eager to learn, and his experiences and impressions make most entertaining reading.

Alas! he fell ill with small-pox after less than a year of exile from his distant island, and died in a few days. At the foot of his bed stood honest Tom Rose, the sailor who had served as an interpreter. At the sight of his tears, the boyish prince rebuked him, saying,

“Why should he be crying because Lee Boo die?” The doctor who attended him wrote in a letter to an official of the East India Company:

> He expressed all his feelings to me in the most forcible and pathetic manner, put my head upon his heart, leant his head on my arm, and explained his uneasiness in breathing. But when I was gone he complained no more, showing that he complained with a view to be relieved, not to be pitied. In short, living or dying, he has given me a lesson which I shall never forget and surely for patience and fortitude he was an example worthy the imitation of a Stoic.

Thus died a worthy son of his father, the good king Abba Thulle of the Pelew Islands. Over his grave in England was placed a stone with this inscription:

To the Memory
of PRINCE LEE BOO,
A native of the Pelew, or Palos Islands,

and Son to Abba Thulle, Rupack or King
of the Island Cooroorraa;
Who departed this life on the 27th of December, 1784,
Aged 20 Years.
This Stone is inscribed
by the Honorable United East India Company
as a Testimony of esteem for the humane and kind
Treatment afforded by his Father to the crew of
their ship, the ANTELOPE, Captain WILSON,
which was wrecked off that Island
In the Night of the 9th of August, 1783.

Stop, Reader, stop—let NATURE claim a Tear—A
Prince of Mine, Lee Boo, lies bury'd here.

As a memorial of the *Antelope* packet and the fortunate sojourn of her company in the Pelew Islands, a stately volume was prepared at the direction of the East India Company. This passage is worthy to be quoted in remembrance of King Abba Thulle:

> The night before the schooner sailed, the king asked Captain Wilson how long it might be before his son's return to Pelew. Being told that it would be about thirty moons, or perhaps longer, Abba Thulle drew from his basket a piece of line and after making thirty knots in it, a little distance from each other, left a long space and then adding six other knots carefully put it by.

Thirty months to be counted one by one, and six more in the event of longer delay before the return of Lee Boo! A hundred and forty years have gone since the king of the Pelew Islands and Captain Henry Wilson of the *Antelope* were brothers in spirit, and the curse of civilization has long since blighted the manners and the morals of those simple people of the Pacific;

but this story of a shipwreck survives with a certain noble distinction, and it helps to redeem the failures of weaker men to play the gallant part amid the cruel adversities of the sea.

THE END

Transcriber’s Notes

Punctuation, hyphenation, and spelling were made consistent when a predominant preference was found in the original book; otherwise they were not changed.

Simple typographical errors were corrected; unbalanced quotation marks were remedied when the change was obvious, and otherwise left unbalanced.

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