THE BATTLE FOR THE PACIFIC

THE BATTLE FOR THE PACIFIC

AND OTHER ADVENTURES AT SEA

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ILLUSTRATED

NEW YORK AND LONDON
HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS
MCMVIII

Published April, 1908.

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INTRODUCTION

IN this book the imagination of some of our most fascinating writers has found a wide range in strange adventures of the sea. Once upon a time a book was written called *The Battle of Dorking,* which was read by all England because the invasion of England which it pictured stirred the imaginations of the most peaceable English citizens. Again, the lamented Frank R. Stockton wrote a tale of *The Great War Syndicate,* which proved to be a most amusing fantasy of war. In the present volume several most ingenious dreams of battle are sketched with a vividness and dramatic force which will absorb the interest of readers. They are no more real than the invasion of our earth by the people of Mars. Most fortunately our country is at peace, and since every reasonable American wishes peace to continue, we are not likely to see again the horrors of war.

INTRODUCTION

When we became a great Pacific power, and undertook new responsibilities in acquiring Hawaii and the Philippines, we gained new neighbors. Among them is the gallant nation of Japan, whose bravery in war and mastery of the arts have caused the whole world to wonder. In the middle of the nineteenth century our country introduced Japan to the outer world, and the friendship begun then will, we trust, continue always. Some of the story-tellers in this book have selected Japan as an antagonist in their imaginative pictures of future wars, and others have chosen England. But the fact that an Englishman or Japanese or an American plays a fighting part in a story and comes to grief does not assuredly mean any hostile prediction or expression of ill-will towards his particular country. Quite aside from the dramatic interest of our tales of great naval encounters, some of these ingenious stories lead to results which would quickly put an end to war—a result to be earnestly hoped for.

There are few whose imagination is not stirred by the sea, and the purpose of this book

is to present a series of pictures of exploits and adventures at sea. Throughout there runs the note of human bravery and endurance. The story of the sea is a great book, and in its varied pages may be read many a lesson of patriotism and dauntless courage.

I

THE DREAM OF THE GUNS

THE BATTLE FOR THE PACIFIC

I

SORAKICHI,—PROMETHEUS

"GIVE the butter a fair wind," said the engineer. "It's running free already," growled the navigator.

The wardroom mess of the American cruiser were at breakfast, and the hum of their conversation drifted up through the skylight with the odor of the good things that the naval officer finds for his table in so civilized a port as San Francisco.

The paymaster was in an argumentative mood, which was not unusual for a man who had pronounced views on all things, from the advanced method of polishing brass-work to the latest doctrines of "Empirical Psychol-

ogy," and when he had his talking-tacks aboard his messmates looked for fun.

"Look at the activity in her dock-yards," he was saying, "look at her purchase of transports, look at her mobilization of troops! As sure as this is the twentieth century, Japan wants the Hawaiian Islands and the Philippines, and is going to fight for them!"

"Well, if she does, old man," said Jack Bowers, the senior watch, "we'll simply own a few more Asian archipelagoes."

"I doubt it," replied the paymaster. "If this war comes, we're going to get the only licking we ever had."

A chorus of indignant groans greeted this.

"Oh, it's very well to groan," he went on; "but let me tell you that the Japanese have engines of warfare that you don't even dream of."

"They can certainly fight," said the engineer. "Russia learned that."

"There is no other country on earth with Japan's knowledge of advanced electricity and the higher mechanics," went on the paymaster. "Her mechanical experts are simply marvels. Why, their discoveries and inventions are almost beyond belief.

"When I was in Japan I made a great

friend of a native scientist, who simply laughed at Maxim's aeroplane and Langley's steam-motor when I spoke of our flying-machines. It seems that Sorakichi, a remarkable chemist over there, has devoted the last ten years to inventing new compounds and contrivances for the sole use of the government in war-time. My friend took me on a fifty-mile drive back into the country, and from the hill-top we could see his works ten miles away. A magnificent collection of foundries, smithies, and machine-shops were smoking at a great rate, and we could distinctly hear the roar of the immense forges from where we were standing."

"Why didn't you go in and look around a bit?" asked the junior watch.

"Because, my friend," was the answer, given with some asperity, "there was a scowling little Jap soldier on guard, who poked his snickersnee at us and told us to get out of that."

"I didn't know you understood Japanese," remarked the engineer.

"I didn't have to," said the paymaster.

"Well, what's all that got to do with these high old flying-machines that you were talking up just now?"

"Simply this: Sorakichi has evolved an air-

ship that makes thirty knots against the wind and is perfectly controllable."

"Oh yes," laughed the engineer. "I suppose you proved it by taking a ride in one."

"No; but a great many other people have proved it by observation," answered the paymaster.

"Yes? Where? In Tibet or the Mountains of the Moon?"

"In the United States of America, not long ago. You may remember when it looked as if we might have trouble, reports of mysterious air-ships began coming in, first from various Western towns, and then from different spots in the interior."

"Yes, and a lovely 'fake' they turned out to be," growled the executive.

"Did they?" asked the paymaster. "I was under the impression that the newspapers dropped the subject after being unable to find out anything about them. We do know this, however—the air-ships began to appear shortly after the arrival of the Jap cruiser *Naniwa Kan* at the Golden Gate; they appeared only at night, so that no one could inspect them critically; and they were invariably seen near one of our military depots, modern forts, or masked batteries."

During the chaff over the paymaster's new dogmatism the navigator came in from the deck and took his seat. "Well, old Adams's marine monster is coming down from Vallejo at last," he said.

"What's that?" asked Chisei, the little doctor who had recently joined.

"Thankful Adams — Maine — classmate of Bowers," explained the junior watch, hastily. "Stood first in 'math' and languages, and was 'wooden' in everything else, especially conduct. Resigned and blew out to China. Drifted back two years ago, and been building a monstrosity in a Vallejo dock-yard. Let's go and look at her."

The officers crowded up to the quarter-deck and looked over the brilliant panorama for the approaching stranger. Abeam of the cruiser to port was another still larger; to starboard, the fortlike shape of a battle-ship. Astern, a fleet of massive battle-ships swung ponderously at their moorings, while dead ahead, through a triple line of gunboats, cruisers, and torpedo-boats, a grotesque little craft was threading a fishlike way. Her blunt nose, in the centre of which gleamed a small protruding dead-light, rose from the water-line to a height of fifteen feet. Three fathoms from what would

have been the cut-water in an ordinary vessel a small snaky-looking tube wabbled and flopped with every motion imparted by the waves. Abaft this rose a slender mast with a light signal yard-arm. There was neither deck-house, pilot-house, nor smoke-stack, but her entire after-part, of but two feet freeboard, apparently disconnected from the hull proper, wagged slowly from side to side like the tail of a prehistoric saurian.

The quartermasters on the bridge levelled their glasses at her with rapturous grins, the officer of the deck regarded her with amazement through his binocular, and Jacky, from various perches on the forecastle and forward barbette, relieved his feelings in expressions of unholy joy.

"I kin die happy," said one. "I've seen the sea-serpent."

"De horned beast off de Refelations," murmured a Hebrew coal-heaver, raising his eyes ecstatically to heaven.

"Ah, get out, Jonah!" cried another. "Put on a life-belt. Here comes your whale."

Slowly the little monster threaded her way to the port quarter of the cruiser, where she came to rest. Voluminous bubblings near her nose indicated that she had cast anchor, though

nothing aboard showed her means of doing so.

A water-tight slide opened aft, and a small dingy slid into the water. From the narrow hatchway emerged a civilian and two sailors, who stepped into the little boat, which was pulled swiftly to the starboard gangway. The civilian skipped up the ladder, and was met by a group of officers.

"Well, Adams," said Bowers, stepping forward to meet him, "you *have* done it now!"

"Done what?" asked Adams, looking down at his clothes to see if reference was intended to new paint or greasy brass-work.

"It," answered Bowers. "Why, man, as you came down the bay you threw the compasses out of adjustment on every ship in port, and I saw the old *Chicago* shying like a three-year-old."

"Worse 'n that," said the navigator. "The doctor here says that since you anchored three cases of insanity have developed forward. You ought not to be allowed to go around terrifying seafaring men this way."

"I don't see," began Adams, with preternatural gravity, "why I should have injured any compasses. My ship has very little steel in her, and—"

"Oh, you dear old Tartar," interrupted Bowers, "will you never see a joke? Come down below and look at our steering-gear."

They all went below, and Adams busied himself for a few moments before the ward-room looking-glass, arranging his tie and folding his lapels with mathematical precision.

"By George, you look more Celestial than ever," said Bowers, as his guest surveyed himself with calm approval.

"Ought to," said Adams; "been taken for a Jap by Japs for fifteen years."

In truth, he was a queer type of the "Down-Easter." His hair was black and straight, his complexion sallow to yellowness, his eyes dark, almond, and penetrating, between high Mongolian cheek-bones. In his black string tie and long frock-coat he looked more like an Oriental proselyte than a Yankee sailor.

"Did you happen to run foul of one Sorakichi in any of your Asiatic larks?" asked the junior watch.

"Who? Sorakichi? Oh yes!" said Adams. "He was working in my line; began experiments when I did. Queer beggar; shut himself up in a machine-shop for ten years and guarded his secrets with a private army. Guess

he never made much of a success of things or we'd have heard from him."

"The paymaster's been filling us up with yarns about him," remarked Bowers. "Says he's built air-ships to beat the Dutch."

"He has; but they haven't flown any more than mine have," said Adams. "And if mine had been worth shucks I'd have sold 'em to the Mikado. He's out with a search-light for such things."

"You'd better try him with that apparition you just brought down the harbor," announced the navigator. "He might buy her for a new kind of patent dragon."

"What! the automobile?" asked Adams.

"Automo— Oh, heavens!" exclaimed Bowers. "Call her the automosinker; in the first gale she's liable to become her own anchor. By-the-way, what's her name?"

"I call her the *Franklin*."

"If my classical lore is not at fault," remarked the junior watch, "that's early Saxon for 'farmer.'"

"She's named after a great electrical sharp of the eighteenth century," was the impassive response.

"And he expects her to go 'kiting,'" continued the engineer.

It was three days after this that a fast cruiser came flying into port with the news of Japan's startling seizure of Honolulu and Pearl Harbor. It was too late to carp at the government's policy of leaving the city without the protection of the fleet, but the total destruction of the islands' fine new fortifications on the night of the 17th filled the country with amazement and indignation. There were those who believed that the fortress and the forts had been destroyed by accidental explosions from within, but the general conclusion seemed to be that the Japanese cruiser *Fujiyama,* which was supposed to be armed with improved dynamite guns of great power, had crept up under the darkness to an exact range and shattered the works, one after another, with her stupendous weapons.

The bustle of war preparation began with fury. The fleet was ordered to hold itself in readiness for immediate departure, and three fast cruisers were sent out at once as scouts and patrol-ships to the north, south, and to the westward. As the last vessel was about to get under way, the *Franklin's* gig, with Adams in the stern-sheets, wearing a battered old lieutenant's uniform, pulled over to the gangway. The inventor had a short interview

with the Captain on the flying-bridge, and left that gallant officer smouldering with wrath.

"I told them I wouldn't have any flimsy little torpedo-boats tagging around after me and breaking down in squads, so they've sent that pollywog of an experiment instead."

"What's the matter, sir?" asked Bowers, with a suppressed grin.

"Oh, they've commissioned Adams, and sent that *Flying Dutchman* of his after me for a tender," growled the "Old Man." "He says she can make forty knots. Forty knots! I'll bet last year's pay she don't do ten."

"Anchor's in sight, sir," reported the officer of the deck.

"Very well, sir; get under way."

The indicator sounded, and the splendid vessel forged ahead. On she went through the long lines of parti-colored cruisers, past the picturesque summit of Alcatraz and the crumbling ruins of the quaint old forts. She pointed straight at the setting sun that lingered tenderly on her trailing banner and mellowed the haze about the tawny headlands of the Golden Gate. And just astern of her, with the flexible tube waggling ridiculously—for all the world, as Bowers said, like the horns of a catfish—

the little *Franklin* came flopping comfortably along in her wake.

The cruiser's new engines gave her an easy twenty knots under natural draught, and when she cleared the land and began to push along with accelerated way all eyes were turned curiously toward the *Franklin*. The little craft, however, bore up comfortably enough until early morning on the third day out, when she began to fall astern, and a group of flags fluttered up to her signal yard-arm.

"What is it now?" asked the Captain, pausing in his "constitutional" on the quarter-deck.

"Says his engines is broke down, sir," sang out the signal quartermaster.

"Of course," roared the "Old Man." "But I'll not wait for him. If he thinks I'm a floating patent-office and machine-shop he's mistaken."

"Axes permission to heave to and make repairs, sir," continued the quartermaster, stepping aft.

"He has permission to go to wherever he pleases," growled the skipper, *sotto voce*.

"Says he needs no assistance, and can overtake us in two hours, Captain," said the signal-officer, watching the changing flags astern.

"Very good. Tell him that if he hasn't got

us in sight by noon to return to port. And, by-the-way," added the skipper, with a malicious twinkle, "just give my compliments to the engineer and tell him to fire up."

A rising hum from below told of increased revolutions, and by one bell in the forenoon watch the blank horizon showed no trace of human existence. As the bell struck three, however, a hail came from the lookouts in the forward military tops.

"Smoke O!" they shouted together. "Two p'ints on the starboard bow!"

"Messenger, call the Captain!" sang out Bowers, who had the deck.

"Clear for action!" called the executive, popping out of the wardroom hatch like a jack-in-the-box.

"How's she heading?" asked the Captain two minutes later, as he reached the forward bridge and levelled his glass.

"Right for us, sir," responded one of the lookouts, in a clear tenor.

"Beat to quarters," snapped the skipper, and the bustling multitude on deck melted away and resolved itself into silent groups at the sharp clangor of the gong and the shrilling of the boatswain's pipe.

"Can you make out her colors?"

"Not yet, sir," came a deep bass from aloft.

A brief interval of silence, broken only by an occasional thud as a hastily donned garment was kicked into obscurity.

"Her hellum's a-port," rang out the tenor.

"A ram bow!" sang the bass.

"An' a turret for'a'd!" screamed the tenor.

"An' Japanese colors!" roared the bass.

A smothered cheer rose as the order, "Cast loose and provide!"—was heard coming sepulchrally from between-decks.

The stranger was now in plain sight from the bridge.

"It's the *Fujiyama*, sir," said Bowers, poking his head through the man-hole in the forward turret, where his gun crews were at quarters.

"So I see," said the Captain. "But what does he mean? By George, I believe the beggar's trying to give us the slip! Signal the engine-room to give her all she'll stand."

The enemy had swung completely round to starboard, and the increased volume of black smoke from her funnels showed that she was piling on coal.

"Twelve thousand yards," signalled the range-finders in the tops.

"Try an eight-inch, Bowers," called the Captain.

"Ay, ay, sir," and that officer skipped joyously back into his grimy hole. A flash and a roar followed, and the officers on the bridge watched the projectile fly over its lofty trajectory only to drop far astern of the chase.

"A mile short," said the navigator.

"Easily," answered the Captain. "Tell the engineer to pile on steam; that fellow sha'n't escape!"

But it was soon evident that the *Fujiyama* was not thinking of "escape." She slowed down perceptibly, and from a spot just abaft her military mast a small, dark, elliptical object soared aloft. Another and another followed at intervals of ten seconds. The first one moved rapidly to the south, the second to the north, the third headed directly towards the cruiser. Soon the others turned and approached from either hand.

"Aloft there!" called the Captain. "What do you make out?"

"Balloons, sir," came the bass from the upper top.

"With wings and tails," called the tenor.

"An' men in 'em!" thundered the bass.

The Captain looked perplexed and grieved.

"Get all the elevation you can on the machine-guns," he ordered. "Dismount 'em if necessary, and fire at will."

From the sides and superstructure of the cruiser came a steady crackling blaze as Hotchkiss and Nordenfeldt spouted their streams of fire. The marines in the tops had dismounted their light weapons, and by a clever arrangement of tackle could point them almost perpendicularly. But the air-ships had now reached an elevation of more than a mile, and every shot fell short.

"Cease firing," ordered the skipper, sharply. "Mr. Keelson," to the executive, "crowd the tops with small arms."

"Eight thousand yards," signalled the range-finder.

"May I try her again, sir?" asked Bowers.

"Do so," nodded the Captain.

By this time the first of the air-ships had reached a point almost directly overhead, and the *Fujiyama* was apparently moving under one bell, awaiting developments. Her curiosity cost her dear, however, for while the projectile from Bowers's port gun whizzed harmlessly over her trucks, the sister shot went straight to its mark, and a red flame, a cloud of smoke, and a dull report near her overhanging stern showed

that the shell had landed fair. The small torpedo-launch abaft her superstructure flew shattered from its crane, and a bright blaze crept for a moment along her starboard rail.

"Well done, Number Two!" called the Captain, as a wild cheer burst from his men.

"Look aloft! Look aloft!" cried the signal-officer.

The air-ships were gathering in, and the first one was directly overhead. She stopped, poised herself for a moment, and a round, black object dropped from her side. It fell hissing through the air, and struck the water thirty yards on the starboard beam. There was a terrible rending roar, and a great smoking gulf opened in the water. The officers on the bridge were covered with hot spray dashed violently against them. The cruiser staggered for a moment and lurched violently over on her beam ends. She hung so long that it seemed as if she would never right herself; but at length she shook the water ponderously from her sides and returned to an even keel.

It was more than humanity could endure, and numbers of the men rushed up from between-decks, thinking that the magazine had exploded and the ship was sinking. They had hardly returned below, under the sharp orders from

the bridge, when the second air-ship took position and let fall her bomb. This fell too far away to do damage; but the third came closer, and again the great ship rolled almost to her destruction. Things now looked hopeless; it was apparent that sooner or later one of the dreadful missiles would reach its mark. But, to the surprise of those on deck, the three air-ships circled about and headed back toward the *Fujiyama,* which by this time had drawn out of range of the cruiser's guns.

"Queer manœuvre that," said the Captain.

"They've gone after more ammunition," suggested the executive, levelling his glass.

"We've got to smash the *Fujiyama* before they leave her again," muttered the Captain. "What are we making, Keelson?"

"Twenty-one and a half, sir," answered the executive, with a glance at the indicator.

"Tell the engine-room to use oil."

The cruiser vibrated from stem to stern as the revolutions of her screws increased. Black smoke and fiery tongues of flame trailed astern from her heated funnels. A jet of white spray rose almost to the catheads on either side, and her wake stretched broad and foaming astern; but the enemy kept her distance, and the bow guns could not reach. The air-ships overtook

the *Fujiyama* and settled easily down upon her deck. A brief interval of suspense, and they appeared again, heading as before, one to starboard, one to port, and one directly at the cruiser.

"Muster the crew on deck," ordered the Captain, in a low voice, "and station the band aft."

It was a calm and lovely setting for the final act of an ocean tragedy. The long blue swell of the Pacific was white-flecked here and there by the morning breeze. The sun gleamed through a pale-gold mist over fleecy clouds and tender skies and gleaming sea. All seemed peace from where the *Fujiyama,* her harsh outline softened by distance, sped towards the sharp rim of the western horizon to where the stately bulk of the American ship advanced grandly over the waters. The flags fluttered serenely aloft; the crew stood erect and defiant at their stations, the officers stern and determined at their posts. An increasing rattle and clatter of small arms broke out forward; aft, the band crashed into the opening strains of the "Star-spangled Banner."

And so that Yankee crew sped onward to meet their doom. Their faces were white, but their souls composed; no thought of surrender

was in any heart. And the mysterious foes drew closer.

But now, to break in upon the terrible suspense, a strange sound came from off the cruiser's quarter—a sound of boiling seas and engines gone to chaos. The good ship was making well over her twenty-two knots, but a grotesque gray shape drew up on her beam, forged ahead, and left her behind as though she had been lying idly at a navy-yard dock.

"The *Franklin!*" burst from the lips of the officers on the bridge.

The little craft steered directly towards the nearest of the approaching air-ships. No sign of life was visible on her deck, but the flexible tube forward, which had not ceased its vibrations from the moment of her launching, suddenly became rigidly still, and pointed like a finger of steel toward the birdlike thing aloft.

"Call him back!" cried the Captain. "Tell him to withdraw! He doesn't know—"

No spout of flame slipped from the muzzle of that mysterious finger, no smoke burst from its hidden chamber, but the day was darkened with a shock, and a blinding blue glare went flashing from sea to sky. Far aloft a muffled roar echoed over the heavens like a rattling peal of thunder.

Daylight returned dimly, and the men of

the cruiser raised their dazzled eyes to the blue space where they had seen their nearest foe. Nothing was there save a dull-brown cloud, which drifted peacefully along with the cirrus and cumulus of creamy white.

A cry burst from the awed lips of the quartermaster.

The second air-ship was coming like the wind, but now she stopped, wavered, and careened in mid-air, turned to fly, and vanished, like the first, in the diabolical glare of the *Franklin's* gun.

The third, warned by the fate of her predecessors, and still far from the scene of their disaster, had already dropped her bomb into the sea, since the weight now only impeded her escape, and had flown despairingly back to the shelter of the *Fujiyama.*

But the little *Franklin* had not yet finished her work. She plunged onward with the speed of a hungry shark, and closed rapidly on the enemy's cruiser. When she was five miles ahead of the cruiser, midway between the two men-of-war, she stopped suddenly, and a line of signals climbed to her yard-arm.

"What does she say?" asked the Captain.

"She says—oh, Lor', sir!" exclaimed the quartermaster, skipping after his neglected

signal-book, and turning the pages with a wet and hasty thumb—" she says for him to heave to an' surrender, or she'll sink him."

" And, by jingo, he does it; there go his colors!" exclaimed the Captain, as the Japanese flag dropped sullenly to the deck.

The executive folded his telescope with a snap. " This, sir," he said, gravely, " is the last sea fight of history."

" He's signalling to us now, sir," continued the quartermaster; " he's axin' Mr. Bowers to go an' look in his locker for a letter from Cap'n Adams."

At the implied permission from the Captain, Bowers, accompanied by those officers whose duties permitted their temporary absence from the deck, hastened below to his state-room. And this, scrawled in Adams's unmistakable hieroglyphics, and stowed away in Bowers's room by some sleight-of-hand, is what they found:

" That man Bowers, he thinks I don't know a joke. But he can just order for twelve covers when we get back to 'Frisco. He talks to *me* about Sorakichi and his Japanese flying-machines. But I've got something that 'll just knock 'em silly. Controllable air-ships are all right, but controllable lightning's better. And

I know, my son, because I invented 'em both. What did you think I was doing in Japan all these years? Don't you call me any more Tartars, you dear old wooden section-man! Can't you guess it? *I'm Sorakichi!"*

II

THE BOMBARDMENT OF THE GOLDEN GATE

How the Attack on San Francisco was Repulsed

"A STRANGE fleet is in sight to the westward." This is the startling report of the wireless telegraph from the Farallone Islands, situated twenty-eight miles nearly due west of San Francisco. The General receives the report without a sign of the anxiety he feels, and continues his study of the huge maps before him. He is contemplating the vast amount of work that has been accomplished in the last three months since war had been declared. Then San Francisco had been a defenceless city at the mercy of the most insignificant enemy; now it is as nearly impregnable as human skill and ingenuity can make it.

The General takes a lingering look at the maps on his desk; running over the different forts, he sees with pride that there is nothing left undone.

On Point Lobos, the southern cape of the outer harbor, on high bluffs, are three 16-inch rifles mounted on disappearing carriages, the guns, in the loading position, being behind breastworks of earth and concrete. In this position the guns are sighted, then they rise to the firing position above the earthwork for only a few seconds, and then recoil to their position of safety. On the high land between Point Lobos and Fort Point are two 12-inch and two 10-inch rifles in Grueson turrets, the armor consisting of eighteen inches of Harveyized nickel-steel. The turrets are segments of a sphere, and are manipulated like those on a battle-ship. A little higher up is one of the two formidable pneumatic guns, the explosion of whose shell within twenty yards of a ship would send her to the bottom. At Fort Point, the southern cape of the Golden Gate, in earthworks of old design patched up and strengthened, are four 10-inch rifles with disappearing carriages. On the northern cape of the Gate, Point Bonito, are three 16-inch rifles mounted in a similar way. The second pneumatic terror is also at this point, commanding the entrance to the Gate. Point Diablo is fortified with three 12-inch and two 10-inch rifles on disappearing carriages, and Lime Point

will defend the harbor with four 10-inch rifles mounted in the same way. The outer harbor seaward of Fort Point and Point Diablo has been well mined, making it impossible for a vessel to enter in safety even though she had escaped the tons of steel hurled at her. The cables from the mines are led to a central station on the bluffs back of Fort Point. If by chance the enemy's ships should ride over this hidden explosive, the simple pressure of a key in this station would send them all to destruction.

At the mine station are two observers, who, by an instrument similar to a range-finder, discover from time to time the position of the enemy on this chart. When the unlucky vessel is over a mine the key is pressed.

On Sutro Heights is a heavily armored tower, the inside of which to an inexperienced eye would appear like a central-telephone station. It is the General's headquarters in action. From here he and his staff will direct and control the battle. This is the brain of the intricate fortifications. The nerves run to every battery and central station, making it but the work of a minute to transmit orders to any point. Before another half-hour has slipped away everything is activity within the forts.

The wires from the General's tower are busy with the many orders transmitted.

Actual hostilities began months ago in the Far East, but as yet have not laid their cruel hand on the Pacific slope.

While the army has been making the Golden Gate a fortress, the navy has not been idle. All the fighting ships on the coast have been collected, and the work on the new ones so expedited that a formidable fleet has been massed in the harbor. The flag-ship, cleared for action, the Admiral's blue flag flying at her truck, is lying behind Alcatraz Island; made fast to the different mooring-buoys by slip-ropes is the rest of the Pacific fleet: battle-ships, cruisers, and a coast-defence monitor.

The foreign fleet is now in sight from Sutro Heights. A glance through the powerful telescope tells the General it is the enemy—six first-class battle-ships and eight cruisers, for the belligerent country depends upon the capture of this rich city to defray the heavy expense of the war.

They are approaching in double columns, the battle-ships leading. Nearer and nearer they come. The range-finders at the different batteries show that the range is rapidly diminishing. News has reached San Francisco, and

the high bluffs about the city are thronged with an excited crowd. The blue-coated regulars have gone to their stations, and stand ready at the command to open the greatest battle the West has ever seen. On the ships of the enemy come, majestically cutting the smooth sea, throwing the silvery spray upon their bare forecastles, over which the heavy turret-guns are to soon speak.

"Four miles, sir!" reports one of the General's aides. The batteries at Lobos and Bonito are ordered to open fire. The six big 16-inch rifles thunder forth their challenge almost simultaneously, and nearly three and a half tons of steel go speeding toward the approaching enemy. All eyes are turned seaward, where suddenly columns of water are thrown up close aboard the on-coming ships. Again and again the heavy batteries speak; shot after shot goes on its deadly flight, making havoc on board the silent vessels. The fleet is approaching at nearly fifteen-knot speed; it will take them but eight minutes to reach the range, when tons of gun-cotton will be sent out to meet them both above and below the peaceful sea. They are heading directly for the entrance. What can be their intention? Will they dare attempt to run the forts? Do they suppose

the harbor is clear of mines and they have naught to fear save the guns? The range-finder dials point to 4000 yards from the Gate. All the guns on the forts are blazing forth fire, but the gunners' aims are poor, and the better part of the shots are fruitlessly ploughing up the sea in the vicinity of the enemy. One well-aimed 16-inch shell strikes home on the nearest ship; her armor is pierced, and she has become unmanageable and drops out of the advancing columns. Nearer and nearer comes the fighting. At last the dreaded puffs of smoke dart from the battle-ships' turrets, and the shells are coming screeching ashore, tearing up the earth in the fortifications. With a glass one of the aides is scanning the sea at the entrance to the harbor. An exclamation escapes him as his glass focusses on some object of interest; with a finger trembling with emotion he points out to the General two small red flags, barely distinguishable on the water's surface, midway between Point Lobos and the nearest ship. A glance shows it to be the flags on a controllable torpedo. Out it goes at a terrific speed; nearer and nearer it approaches its intended victim. Harmless enough look these small pieces of bunting, but underneath the water not many feet lurk nearly five hundred pounds of deadly

gun-cotton. It has passed astern of the leading ship. Will it run out its scope and fail? A small column of water is seen to ascend from the flags, and the next moment the second battle-ship is nearly engulfed in a mighty explosion. The first charge tears the torpedo-net; the second makes one less ship to attack the batteries, for she is fast sinking. The gun-cotton has exploded against her steel hull. A cruiser drops out to render assistance.

An explosion that seems like an earthquake to those in the fortifications tells that the first gun-cotton shell has exploded near the enemy. One of the leading battle-ships heels over and slowly sinks beneath the waves; her seams have been opened by the force of the explosion. The enemy now is in irregular formation, more nearly like double *echelon;* they are pouring in a scathing fire on all the batteries. As they approach the torpedo-range, they starboard and stand out to sea, bringing to bear their after-turrets. Some of their shots have worked awful havoc ashore; gun after gun has been dismantled; one of the pneumatic guns has been struck by a shell and is a total wreck. The remaining controllable torpedoes have failed.

The pneumatic gun on Point Bonito is aimed at the nearest ship, but a mile and a half away;

the gauge on the accumulator shows the air-pressure is sufficient. The lever is tripped, and the quarter-ton of gun-cotton, with a whir, is hurled on its errand of destruction. The eye can distinguish the aerial torpedo as it soars to the height of its trajectory, and then majestically and swiftly steals down towards its helpless prey. Will it explode? It strikes the water a few yards from the target, but the looked-for explosion does not follow; the fuse has failed. The next minute every gun of the enemy is trained upon this terrible weapon, knowing that if the shell is again let loose their ships will be like chaff before this tremendous power. The enemy is now confident of victory. Signals go up on the flag-ship, and in a very few minutes the old formation is resumed, and once again they head for the harbor.

The firing becomes hot and furious; broadside after broadside belches forth from the enemy's steel sides; a few shells go wide into the city, and dense columns of black smoke from the buildings set on fire lend a more awesome aspect to the picture depicted.

The observers at the mining-station are nervous with the suppressed excitement within them. Their chart shows that the ships of the enemy are only eight hundred yards away from their

mines. Will it be their fortune to decide the fate of the Golden City? The ships still advance. Soon they will come over the mines. A pressure of the key under the hand will discharge tons of the hidden explosive.

But the enemy has stopped. What does this foretell? Five hundred yards from the mines the ships are nearly motionless in the troubled sea lashed to foam by the ploughing of so much steel.

All the batteries are now doing splendid work. Explosion follows explosion on board the intruding ships. Two cruisers are unmanageable and on fire; they drift onto the rocks almost within a stone's throw of one of the batteries. Suddenly torpedoes shoot from the bow tubes of the leading ships, and a few moments afterwards tremendous columns of water are seen to rise from the bay, and the next second the sound of a mighty discharge reaches the expectant ears of the defenders of the Gate. The officer at the mining-key knows from the spark that jumps across under his hand that the enemy has countermined and the harbor is clear. The struggle has come to such close quarters that the rapid-fire and machine-gun fire lends its sharp cracking report to the dull roar of the heavy guns.

But the foe has stopped too long! The mortar-battery on Lobos has gotten his range. Suddenly, with a whir, a column of smoke rises in the air just over the bay, and a bunch of 16-inch mortar-shells falls upon the decks of the battle-ships. One shell strikes over the boilers of one of the ships, penetrating them a second later, and the explosion rends her asunder. Where this powerful steel-clad had been but a moment before is but the hissing foam of troubled waters.

The General sees the fight has now reached the critical point; the cruisers have dashed ahead and will soon be within the harbor. Many of the batteries have been put out of action by the well-aimed shots of the enemy. The navy is needed, but the telephone connection with the station has been severed; the signal has not been made. Time is precious. A few minutes more, and the whole fleet will be within the Bay of San Francisco, and, without the batteries, will be more than a match for the few United States ships.

An exclamation involuntarily escapes from the General's lips as he sees the American flagship emerge from behind Alcatraz Island, and come rushing down to the fight.

The small fleet was thought too valuable to

hazard against such as the enemy brought. The plan was not to expose it till the signal was made. But the Admiral, behind Alcatraz Island, has been pacing up and down the deck of his battle-ship, tugging at the restraining bonds, growing more and more impatient as the cannonading has become more furious. The crews of the ships feel the inactivity keenly; anything is better than this suspense. Why does not the signal come? The Admiral will wait no longer, but slips his moorings, regardless of consequences, and appears in the nick of time with his fleet to bar the entrance to the bay.

The American vessels engage the two remaining battle-ships. There is no sea-room for manœuvring, and the rapid way in which the Yankee guns are served shows that they are more than a match for their huge enemies. The cruisers have closed in for the death-struggle; every weapon of modern warfare is being employed; two ships of the foe and one of his opponent's have been torpedoed, and in another moment one of ours rams their biggest battle-ship. The General on shore can almost hear the command, "Prepare to ram." It is so quickly and skilfully executed. The forts have now become inactive, fearing to fire lest by chance one of their own ships might be struck.

The enemy suddenly begins to retreat, leaving two of his ships on the rocks, while another is forced to strike the white flag.

Night has come on. The sun has an hour ago gone below the western horizon. The evening fog-bank comes in and mingles with the battle smoke about the silent batteries, which only a short time before were the scene of bloodshed and war. The brave defenders may sleep in peace in their blankets and hammocks. The pride of the enemy has been humbled, and the beautiful city of San Francisco is safe from torch and shell.

III

A FIGHT IN THE FOG

A Hard-won Victory

"ALL hands to muster!" rang out from the harsh throats of the boatswain's mates of the American cruiser, and the crew came tumbling aft to the quarter-deck. They were as fine-looking a set of bluejackets as one would care to see, the cream of the navy and the naval reserve.

The new ship was cruising off the coast of Great Britain for the purpose of intercepting a Japanese war-vessel, which was known to have recently left England, and was on the way to join her sister ships in her own country.

Every one aboard the American ship was wild to meet the enemy, and the crew had no fear of the result.

The lookout had just reported smoke to the eastward, from which direction the enemy was expected. When all hands were "up and aft,"

the Captain addressed his men upon the impending conflict.

"Men," he said, "we are here to fight the most formidable of our enemy's cruisers. She is equal to us in every respect. There are no chances in our favor. The battle will depend upon your coolness and courage.

"Men of the main battery, upon you depends the result of the action. Your target is the armored sides and turrets.

"Men of the secondary battery, your nerve and endurance are to be put to the crucial test. Your guns must be directed at the unarmored gun parts and torpedo tubes.

"Remember, all of you, a lucky shot may turn the tide of battle.

"Officers and men, the reputation of our new ship depends on you."

A few minutes later the Captain and the executive officers are upon the forward bridge, discussing the minor details of the plan of action, and casting keen glances at the low line of black smoke on the eastern horizon.

The former is a fine-looking young officer, who has been rapidly advanced to commanding rank through his zeal and untiring labors to perfect the navy of his country.

Many an article from his pen on the manage-

ment of a ship in battle has been published in the scientific papers of America; but now he must put his theories to test—to learn by experience, bitter or sweet, whether he merited the commendation which his numerous articles on naval science have won for him.

The ship has been cruising about in wait for her prey for over a week. The crew have had incessant drill and sub-calibre target practice. The plan of attack has been discussed so often that it is known by all the officers.

The ship is "cleared for action." Every stanchion and boat-davit has been lashed to the deck. Every movable object on the deck below has been sent to the protective-deck to avoid, as far as possible, the danger from flying splinters.

The smoke on the horizon has approached, until now it is seen from the top to come from two smoke-pipes framed by something that looks suspiciously like two military fighting-masts.

The crew are gathered on the forecastle. The enemy is now in sight, and the Captain's glass is upon her. A careful scrutiny shows her to be a war-vessel similar in appearance to his own. At a sign from him the drummer beats to "quarters." This sound calls every man to some station. The Captain goes to the conning-tower, a small heavily armored turret beneath the

bridge. An aid enters with him to steer the ship by his direction from the wheel within. A small opening near the top gives the occupants a view around the horizon, and numerous speaking-tubes and telephones put them in communication with all the vital parts of the ship. Crews of twelve men each enter the turrets in charge of an officer. Steam is turned on the turret-engines. The guns on the deck below are divided between two divisions of men, each division in charge of a lieutenant, who has an ensign and midshipman as assistants.

The men are stripped to the waist, and their guns are ready for battle; division tubs are filled with water, and the decks are covered with sand. On the berth-deck hatches and scuttles are opened, tackles are hooked, and men are hoisting powder and shell for the battery.

The torpedo-crews are charging their deadly weapons with compressed-air. Below the protective-deck are half-naked men in the magazines and shell-rooms, handling the missiles that are soon to speed towards the approaching enemy.

Down in the depths of the steel hull the firemen feed the mighty furnaces to a white heat. It is all the same to them now as when the monsters are engaged in a death-struggle. The sounds of the discharges, of the explosion of

shells, and the cries of the wounded will be too distant and muffled to give them an idea of what is going on in the world above them. The first news will come when the terrible torpedo explodes against the ship, sending them to a watery grave, or the merciless ram sinks into the sides, or when a heavy shell penetrates one of the huge boilers, dooming all hands in the terriffic explosion that will follow.

The stranger has altered her course and is steaming in the direction of the cruiser. There are her two military masts, but no flag as yet to show her nationality. Suddenly something flutters from her mast-head. It is the flag of England! There is no time now to consider what must be done. The ships are but five miles apart, steaming for each other at twenty-knot speed. One minute more and the cruisers will be within battle-range.

The Captain is a man of quick judgment, and his mind is made up in an instant.

From his point of vantage on the bridge he takes a careful look at the stranger and then at a drawing furnished by the Navy Department. It is the same vessel; yet why should she be cleared for action if a British cruiser?

Starboard!

The ship swings around in answer to her

helm, and is heading perpendicularly to the course of the stranger.

Two midshipmen stationed at the range-finders are pointing the delicate instruments towards the approaching ship. Dials at each gun automatically show that the distance is rapidly diminishing. The marines have taken their rifles to the superstructure-deck, and are crouching behind a breastwork constructed of closely lashed hammocks. The doctors have removed their medicines and instruments to the ward-room, and the long mess-tables are in readiness to receive the dead and wounded. The chief quartermaster stands ready aft with a spare ensign to hoist over the ship should his country's flag be shot away.

When the ranger-finder registers three and a half miles the Captain orders the forward turret to fire at the stranger. The air is rent immediately by the blast of the discharge.

The crew wait breathlessly while the shells reach the height of their trajectories. One strikes the sea short, while the other strikes the stranger and explodes.

The irrevocable step is taken. England's flag has been fired upon.

All hands wait to see what the stranger will do. The range-finder shows three miles.

A brown mist shoots from the stranger's forward turret; at the same time the British flag is hauled down, and the flag of Japan floats defiance in its stead. Two 10-inch shells fall but a few yards short of the cruiser, and a moment later the sound of the discharge reaches the ears of her crew.

Two and a half miles registers the range-finder, and all the officers are directed to open fire. Shot after shot belches forth from the cruiser's broadside and speeds toward the enemy, exploding against her armor and topsides.

As yet the American ship has not been hit, but now the vapor from the enemy's smokeless powder shoots from the muzzles of a score of guns not two thousand yards away, and two tons of steel are launched on their deadly flight.

The havoc aboard the cruiser will never be forgotten. The armor is pierced, the topsides are riddled. The carnage among the unprotected men on the gun-deck and superstructure is awful. But worst of all, many men not wounded by shot and shell are laid insensible by some unseen power.

Skulonite is the word that passes from lip to lip. The poisonous gas is the aftermath of

the explosion of shells loaded with this deadly compound.

The men are carried from compartments filled with the vapor, and the air-tight doors are closed to prevent the spreading of the noxious fumes to the magazines and engine-rooms.

The cruisers are now but fifteen hundred yards apart, steaming in opposite directions. As they circle about one another like mighty birds of prey they are fast approaching within range at which a new weapon will be launched against the other's steel hull, the silent but relentless torpedo. Then the ram will soon crash through one of the cruisers. Which will it be?

The American fire is becoming more desultory as the crew of one gun after another succumbs to the terrible influence of the skulonite.

Suddenly a steel fishlike weapon is seen shooting from the enemy's side. The Captain of the cruiser watches with breathless anxiety the line of bubbles on the water's surface, as the torpedo approaches his ship at a terrific speed. It suddenly swerves, and goes but a few yards clear of her stern.

The cruiser's breast-torpedo is launched at the enemy. With a splash it leaps from her side and speeds on its errand of destruction. The bubbles in its wake show the aim is good.

It must strike. But no, it has gone under the enemy's ram.

What is that hazy line to windward, but half a mile distant? It is a most welcome sight to the brave man in the conning-tower, and he heads his crippled ship for the oncoming mist. Soon she is swallowed up in the dense fog-bank, and shut out from her enemy's view.

The enemy gives chase, as the American commander had expected. He turns the trumpet of his sound-detector in the direction of the pursuing vessel, and from its dial ascertains her course.

The enemy is still firing, but the American guns have ceased to roar, and "silence fore and aft" is commanded of the crew. The fleeing ship goes on until her Captain is sure that his foe has entered the fog, then the helm is put hard over, and the ship swings around until the instrument indicates that the other is dead ahead.

Again the Captain is hopeful of success, as he realizes that the enshrouding mist and the instrument before him turn the advantage in his favor. His eye is fixed on the pointer of the dial, ever responsive to the electric current set up by the sound-waves beating upon the sensitive diaphragm in the trumpet. The ship

"THE RAM BOW OF THE CRUISER ENTERS THE SIDE OF THE ENEMY"

leaps forward until he hears through the earpiece the throb of the enemy's engines. His heart beats fast, but he knows that he must be self-controlled.

The ships are coming together bows on. The American commander causes his ship to swing to starboard a little, so as to point her bow away from the approaching enemy.

The instant for action has come. He starboards his helm in order to lay his ship across the course of the enemy. "Prepare to ram" is telephoned by the aide at his side. The ship swings around. The pointer swerves from the direction of her starboard bow to dead ahead. Has he been too late? Will he pass across her wake, or will he cross her path in time to receive her ram prow in his own broadside? The needle points ahead when the huge side of the enemy looms up through the fog.

In a moment, with a terrific shock, the ram bow of the American cruiser enters the side of the enemy, cleaving armor and deck-plating as though it were wood.

Slowly the victor backs off from her sinking enemy.

The rammed ship commences to deliver death-dealing shots; but she is fast sinking.

She can no longer elevate her guns enough

to strike the American. She has heeled too far. The firing ceases.

All the boats that are not disabled are manned and ready to render assistance to the vanquished.

Not a moment too soon. The ill-fated ship heels to starboard, her stern rising high in the air, her screws thrashing the fog in their upward flight, the flag under which her brave defenders had so well fought still waving at her trucks, and she slowly sinks beneath the waves, sending up columns of water from her hatchways, and engulfing her crew in the mighty suction.

But few survivors were saved of the few hundred that had had victory so nearly in their grasp.

IV

THE BATTLE OFF THE HOOK

How the North Atlantic Squadron Met the Enemy

ON a morning in June, 19—, the North Atlantic Squadron is seen steaming out of New York Harbor. It passes the batteries on Sandy Hook, and stands out to sea. The white paint that was wont to glisten in the summer sunshine has given place to a dull gray that makes the mighty engines of war look even more formidable.

Every ship is cleared for action. Boat davits, awning stanchions, and every movable thing have been removed out of the train of the big guns. But few boats can be seen on their cradles. The first six ships in the column are huge first-class battle-ships, their turrets looming up ominously with their heavy guns. Following this magnificent array of guns and armor are four first-class cruisers, their graceful curves making the battle-ships look all the more for-

midable by comparison. Ten swift-moving torpedo-boats are steaming along by the side of their big sisters, their every move showing their impatience at being kept at so low a pace.

Standing on the superstructure of one of the battle-ships, whose fortunes we will follow, is a young officer. The gold anchor on the collar of his blue service coat shows he is at the foot of that long ladder of rank of which Admiral is the top rung. He is leaning against the hammock-meetings; one hand is resting upon the stock of a rapid-firing gun, and in the other he holds a pair of binocles, through which he has just been looking. What are his thoughts as he gazes wistfully to the eastward, then at the great hull ahead of him, and again at the vessels that follow in his wake? Is he only regretting that the happy life of the great metropolis is to be denied him for a few months, and that now hard work and plenty of drills will take the place of the rounds of gayety incidental to a life in New York? No! His thoughts are upon far more serious subjects; they are of war—cruel, pitiless war, with a nation the equal, if not the superior, in naval prowess of the United States.

But two short hours ago a carrier-pigeon had

fluttered down to its cote on the flag-ship with the thrilling information from one of the scouts that the long-looked-for but unwelcome fleet of the enemy had been sighted, bearing down in force on the greatest and richest city on the American continent.

The forts, with the aid of the ships, were considered strong enough to repulse the onslaught of the enemy's fleet off the entrance to the harbor; but it was deemed better to cripple the antagonists in a great battle at sea. The Admiral felt confident that his force was as powerful as any the enemy could send, and was anxious to test his ships and the courage of his men in a great sea-fight off the Hook.

Over two weeks have passed since the Ambassador of the enemy had been given his passports and had sailed for home; but so far apart were the belligerent countries that no hostilities had taken place.

The news of the sailing of a fleet had flashed across the wires between the two continents, but so secretly had the preparations been made that the agents of the United States had failed to find out the number and force of the expedition. Scouts in the shape of fast cruisers have been scouring the seas along the Atlantic seaboard ever since war had been declared;

their duty was to find out the number and force of the enemy, and to report by carrier-pigeon to the Admiral; but until now nothing has broken the monotony of their patrol. The telegraph flashed the news to Washington and all over the country. The ships at Newport and at Hampton Roads were at once ordered to the scene of the impending conflict. At the first warning that the country might be engulfed in a mighty struggle with a powerful nation all the serviceable ships on foreign station, in so far as was possible, were ordered home with despatch, and now, on the day of the first trial of strength, the United States had amassed a large number of ships on its more important coast, where, on account of the distance from the resources of the enemy, would be the first point of attack.

Smoke on the port bow of the leading ship is soon made out to come from the Newport squadron, hastening to join the New York fleet. By noon the ships from Hampton Roads have added their guns to the others.

Slowly the big fleet moves eastward. Soon a scout is made out bearing down on the advancing column. A torpedo-boat goes out to meet her, returning with a message to the Admiral, telling of the latest movements of the

enemy, the scout returning to its vigil near the intruding fleet.

The smoke of three vessels is made out about sunset to the eastward. The intelligence is soon signalled to the entire fleet. If it is the advance-guard of the enemy, will it force a night engagement? A modern battle under a bright sun is uncertain and horrible enough, but what will it be when the blackness of the night lends more horror to the terrible struggle, and leads to mistaking friend for foe? But an hour dispels any such dread. A fast cruiser is made out, her blistered smoke-stack showing the mighty effort her boilers have made to help her escape the enemy, and but a short distance astern of her are two of the enemy's cruisers just giving up the chase; and none too soon, for two American ships have been signalled to follow the baffled cruisers, and their rams are cutting the water at full speed in obedience to the signal. Night settles down over this powerful display of human handicraft. The crews of all the guns are near their stations, to be on hand at a moment's notice. But few eyes close in sleep. How many could on the brink of such an awful ordeal as a first battle? The squadron has slowed to steerage way, and the torpedo-boats are patrolling for fear one of their foreign

sisters will steal, under cover of the night, upon the almost motionless fleet, and render a good account of its missiles of war. The sentries and lookouts on the big ships are peering through the darkness in dreaded anticipation of seeing a black hull, small but terrible, loom up out of the night but a few hundred yards away. No lights are visible on the ships, and so dark is the night that the huge gray hulls can scarcely be seen from one another. The search-lights are ready to be used at an instant's notice, and the rapid-fire and machine guns are as vigilant as the sentries.

More scouts join the squadron during the night, bringing information as to the movements and strength of the enemy. The pursuing cruisers are the last to join, having been enabled, by their superior speed, to hover about the enemy almost all night. The enemy is reported to be forty miles to the eastward, steaming at the rate of nine knots an hour. Early morn, then, will bring the two fleets within battle-range. Many eyes are now scanning the horizon for the first evidence of the oncoming flotilla. Slowly the thin streak of dawn on the eastern horizon widens and spreads over the sky.

"Sail ho!"

It comes from the foretop of the flag-ship,

and very soon the smoke of the advancing fleet can be seen stretching for a long length over the eastern horizon.

Bright-colored flags are run up on the flagship. It is the signal for general quarters, and the drums throughout the fleet can be heard beating the roll. The decks of the ships are now a scene that would thrill the coldest heart. Men are hurrying here and there, casting off lashings, carrying powder and shell, and making the final preparations for a great battle. In an incredibly short time the crews are standing at their posts, everything is in readiness, buckets of water are at hand at the guns, the fire hose, like a huge serpent, is stretched over the sanded decks.

Inside the turrets, the men are stripped to the waist, their brawny muscles tense in the strain of suspense. The officers are at their posts, in their dark-blue uniforms, sometimes showing the nervousness of suspense, but alert and ready.

In the forward 13-inch turret of the battleship stands our young lieutenant, and by his side his assistant, a young naval cadet, almost fresh from the Academy. Their only duty will be to fight the pair of guns, and hurl the half-ton shells as accurately and as rapidly as possible.

The officers in the magazines are at their

stations on the platforms. During the engagement they will encourage the men and superintend as rapid a supply of ammunition as the gunners will need. The officers and men in the engine and fire room are working earnestly, getting the pressure in the mighty boilers to a limit that has never been reached since their trial trips. The progress of the fight is not their concern. They will work on, seeing nothing but the glare of the white-hot coals as the doors are opened to feed the furnaces, and the wonderfully made engines forcing the propellers at a speed scarcely seen before.

To them the muffled sounds from the world above will be the only indications of the battle that is raging over their heads. In their safety behind armor and below the water-line they will be spared the sight of blood and from seeing the mangled remnants of their friends and shipmates. But still their courage and nerve will be tested severely; they will not know at what moment a torpedo, or the ram of an enemy's ship, or even a well-directed shell, will take them all, like rats in a trap, many fathoms down into the ocean, the ship they have served so faithfully forming an honorable tomb for its brave defenders.

Very soon the smoke sighted is made out to

be from some of the enemy's scouts; they have turned about, and are retiring before the slowly advancing Americans.

The sun is now a half-hour high, hanging like a ball of molten metal only a short distance above the horizon, and its reflection in the placid ocean is as bright as itself.

Providence has thrown a heavy weight into the balance against the defending fleet; its gunners will fight with the sun in their eyes. The American sailors are not long in finding this out, and many a rough voice in turret or behind shield is heard raised in condemnation of their luck.

The sun is scarcely an hour high when the whole of the invading fleet is in sight. A grand spectacle it makes to the American Admiral as, with a face flushed with pride, he gazes on an enemy worthy of his steel.

Very heavy responsibilities will rest upon his shoulders this day. On his judgment will hang the fate of this magnificent fleet. His orders will be obeyed implicitly. No questions will be asked by commanding officers. Their duty will be, like the "six hundred" at Balaklava, "to do or die," and, if his judgment is in error, it may be both.

The opposing fleet is in double line, stretch-

ing nearly two miles along the eastern horizon. The glass reveals the battle-ships, eight monstrous hulls, forming the leading line, while behind them are as many fast armored cruisers, while still farther to the eastward hover a number of smaller cruisers and torpedo-boats.

The American squadron has now formed in *echelon,* and in beautiful order; each ship, keeping her distance as if on drill, is heading for the enemy's fleet. In the line of battle the Admiral has placed his most powerful fighting-ships, and in this it seems the tacticians of both the belligerent countries have agreed. First in the column are the battle-ships, and then follow six armored cruisers, the queens of the sea, with speed enough to refuse battle from any vessel afloat, but with guns powerful enough to penetrate the armor of most battle-ships.

Nearer and nearer the two mighty powers approach the distance when the thunder of ordnance and the destruction by the steel missiles will convert this beautiful sight into a bloody battle-field. The officers in the forward turret of our battle-ship are standing, all expectant, at their guns. The lieutenant is at his station on the platform, reversing-lever in hand, moving it but a little at a time as his ship forges ahead, thus swinging the great turret around

so as to keep one of the enemy in his sights. In his other hand he holds the electric key, the pressure of which will hurl the contents of both guns on their mission of war.

The naval cadet is on the platform on the other side from his superior officer; his duty on the turret floor is over for the present, until the death-dealing shells on the floor of the turret have been sent on their flight toward the enemy, making room for more from the magazine below. They see, through the narrow apertures in the solid steel, the fierce-looking black hulls of the foreign ships steaming rapidly forward as if unconscious that a fleet equally as powerful is directly in front of them, ready to dispute every inch of the watery waste between there and the coveted Hook. A signal is hoisted on the flag-ship and quickly hauled down, and the next minute the formation of the American squadron has been changed to column, and is heading to attack the left flank of the oncoming fleet. The speaking-tube at the side of the younger officer tells him the range — 6000 yards. The minutes drag by. The gap between the belligerents is minutely decreasing. The sight-bars are set at 5500 yards, extreme range, yet no gun speaks to break the monotone of the peaceful scene.

The officers' eyes are glued to the flank ships, momentarily expecting, almost wishing, to see the bright flash followed by the loud roar that will break the strain. Suddenly the enemy's helms are put to port. Each ship changes her course eight points to starboard, and, in two long columns, appears to be running away from the advancing Americans. A cry of surprise and indignation escapes the younger officer as he sees this manœuvre. But the other, who is a keener tactician, quickly sees through the strategic move and tells his aid.

The ruse is to trap the American squadron to at once starboard its helm and follow in chase, thus giving the enemy the advantage of fire.

What will the American Admiral do? There are able tacticians about him to give advice. The long column of dull-gray hulls keeps its course. On it goes, while on the port bow is the retreating enemy. Slowly the bearing of the opposing fleet draws aft. It is now on the beam.

Crash! The leading ship has opened fire. Trembling with the excitement felt by all at the commencement of an engagement, the men in the turret peer through the apertures to see the effect. A large column of water

near the last ship shows that the aim was poor.

Slowly the 13-inch turret of our battle-ship swings about in the direction of the rear ship of the enemy. The target is now near to the line of sight. The key itches in the hands of the lieutenant; a slight pressure will hurl the contents of those two wicked cylinders on their deadly errand. The turret is motionless for a moment. As the ship steams ahead she brings her enemy in the sights; the next moment the turret is filled with the mighty concussion of the discharge, and a ton of steel has crashed through one of the enemy's battle-ships, leaving death and destruction in its path.

Slowly the retreating enemy draws abaft the beam. The two fleets seem to be running away from each other.

Signals are run up on the flag-ship, and the American fleet has, a minute afterwards, turned to port, and, in as beautiful a line as a tactician would wish to see, is steering in chase.

The Admiral has been prompt to take the advantage offered by the manœuvres of the opposing fleet, and the signal to concentrate the fire on the rear vessels of the enemy is quickly made.

The heavy roar of the great guns, and the

quick, sharp reports of the rapid-fire guns, lend additional color to this mighty struggle of skill and strength.

The enemy has formed column, and now executes head of column left turn. One after another the invading ships bring their broadsides to bear on the fast-approaching line.

Shell after shell goes screeching on its way to pierce armor and slaughter human beings in this game called war.

Fast and furious becomes the fire of the enemy, and terrible is the execution on board the American ships.

The foreign Admiral sees he has been checkmated, and it will cost him dear, for the American line will charge through his fleet, leaving destruction in its path. He is powerless to prevent it. All that is left him now is to do as much damage as possible before his column is broken. Nearer and nearer the two fleets come together. Some of the black hulls have headed about and are ready to receive, bows on, the impending charge. Others are fleeing from the scene of the unavoidable catastrophe. Still the two fleets keep up a murderous fire, and an occasional torpedo is fired, as is shown by the line of bubbles, going harmlessly between the approaching gray ships.

"FAST AND FURIOUS BECOMES THE FIRE OF THE ENEMY"

There is no smoke to hide the dreadful scene from the eyes of the remnants of the two fleets. Five of the enemy and two of the Americans have sunk beneath the waves with terrible wounds in their sides. The fight has now become general. The formation of the fleets has been broken. Every ship is fighting for itself. The cruisers and torpedo-boats of each belligerent move up from their stations in the reserve line and join in the engagement, rendering assistance to their disabled ships. Our battle-ship has engaged with a battle-ship of equal armor and armament, and theirs is a bloody struggle. The flag-ship is fighting at close quarters with the enemy's flag-ship. The fight rages on. Now and then a white flag appears on one of the ships, and the firing ceases in that quarter. A number on both sides have been sacrificed by the ram and torpedo. The enemy's flag-ship, in a disabled condition, is steering away from the scene of her defeat. The remaining black ships that have not fallen into the hands of the Americans follow, firing as they withdraw.

The American Admiral has hoisted the signal to retire, and the fleet is heading from the retreating enemy. When night again comes on the fight is a thing of the past. The battle-

scarred gray hulls are at anchor inside the Hook, while one hundred miles to the eastward a fleet is slowly wending its way towards the port it had left with so much confidence only ten days before.

V

HARRY BORDEN'S NAVAL MONSTER

A Ship of the Air

IT was a bright and beautiful morning in June, 1927. The war between Venezuela and England had been in progress just three weeks, and every one was wondering why the big monarchy had not whipped the little republic off the face of the earth. But the resources of the South-American country had been underestimated, and so had the immense difficulties which confronted England in her endeavor to carry on an offensive war at an almost inaccessible distance from her most trustworthy sources of supplies, and in a climate which was formidable to her men. She had succeeded in landing a small force of trained soldiers, fresh from her latest campaign against the Ameer of Afghanistan, who had set up a new boundary-line beyond Herat, and was, conse-

quently, in hot water with both England and Russia.

These trained Indian curry-eaters had penetrated a vast forest in the interior and had never come out, and it was currently reported that half of them had perished in a swamp, and the other half had been destroyed by fevers and cobras.

A strong fleet, under command of Vice-Admiral Sir Wallace Bruce, had been scattered by adverse winds, and two of the ships had fallen in with powerful Venezuelan armor-clads, and had been most impertinently sent to the bottom. Others had sunk three Venezuelan war-ships, but the little republic had three better ones afloat inside of a week, and experts said that they looked very French.

The war had broken out over England's high-handed occupation of an insignificant island off the Venezuelan coast. The Venezuelans had been amazed by the proceeding, but the Marquis of Wintergreen, the Foreign Secretary, had at once declared that the island had been conquered and attached to England by Sir Francis Drake in the course of his first voyage to the West Indies. As Mr. Froude and other English historians had proved that Drake was little better than a pirate, this made every one laugh,

except the Venezuelans, who said they were going to fight; and they did.

As soon as war was declared, the President of the United States, on the advice of the Secretary of State, called an extra session of Congress, and the legislative halls at Washington so rang with patriotic speeches about the Monroe Doctrine that certain New York newspapers got out extras every two hours, day and night, and had illuminated bulletins covering the entire front of the building. Congress at length declared that the United States must act as an ally of Venezuela, whereupon one paper printed itself in red, white, and blue, and another despatched correspondents by special balloon to South America. The President ordered the entire National Guard into the service of the United States, and the various regiments at once repaired to their camps of instruction and began field drills. It was expected that they would be fully equipped and prepared for service at the front in about two months. The naval militia was also ordered out, and immediately began a series of cruises alongshore in open boats, landing and sending signals in every direction every four hours. The officers clamored for coast-defence vessels to man, but there were only four such ships, and they were

all in dry-docks undergoing repairs that would take three months to complete. The Secretary of the Navy issued orders to the Admiral to get the North and South Atlantic squadrons to the Venezuelan coast as quickly as possible, and the Admiral answered that he would be ready to sail by the end of August.

As soon as the action of Congress had been taken, Harry Borden, of Tickle River, went by express train to Washington. In the obscure sea-coast village of Tickle River Harry was called a genius, and it was said that he had invented things which would be worth millions to the government in such an emergency as that which had now arisen. It was to lay before the Secretary of War one of these inventions that the young man had gone to the capital. He had exhibited a small working-model of his contrivance to several wealthy men of his native State, and they had forthwith invested enough money in it to enable the young inventor to build a full-fledged machine, and to go to see the Secretary about its employment in the impending conflict. Harry Borden was a good talker, but he could not talk the government of the United States into prompt action.

"My young friend," said the Secretary, "I am sure that your invention will prove of in-

estimable value to the United States in time of war."

"It's the time of war now, isn't it?" said Harry.

"Yes, yes, to be sure; but this is a matter which must be laid before Congress, and a bill must be introduced regarding it. I should advise you to see the Congressman from your district about that. I will give you a letter to him saying that I heartily approve of your machine."

"But, sir, while all this is going on we are losing valuable time. My machine ought to be down there damaging the enemy."

"But you must allow things to take their course."

"Why can't you give me permission to go ahead on my own hook?"

"Embark in private warfare? Privateering is out of date, my young friend. But, ah—um—I may say that—ah—if you should go down there and succeed in inflicting serious damage on the British fleet, I think—mind, I say only that I think—the government would ignore the irregularity of the proceeding."

"That's enough for me," said Harry, springing to his feet. "If my backers will consent, I'll be there in less than a week; and, mark my

word, sir, you'll hear of my machine down there, sir."

And before the astonished Secretary could say more, Harry Borden had bounded from the room.

The British cruiser *Ajax III.* was steaming at a speed of ten knots through the blue waters of the Caribbean Sea. She had been carrying certain despatches of grave importance from Vice-Admiral Sir Wallace Bruce to the Governor of Jamaica, and was now returning in a leisurely manner, which told of economy in the coal department. The *Ajax III.* was an armored cruiser of about 6000 tons. She carried armor eight inches thick on her sides, and had a steel protective deck four inches thick. Her main battery consisted of four improved Smith-Dodge-Hopkins 8-inch rapid-firing breech-loaders, capable of discharging four of the new steel-iridium conical projectiles every minute, with a point-blank range of two miles, and an initial velocity of 3000 feet per second. Her secondary battery consisted of six 4-inch revolving guns, discharging seventy shells a minute when operated by electricity. The cruiser had the new compound quintuple engines, capable of driving her twenty-six knots an hour

under forced draught. On the whole, she was regarded as a fairly efficient vessel, though some of the leading British critics declared that she belonged to a type that was fast becoming obsolete.

She was moving gently and steadily through the water. The sun was shining brightly, and its gleaming rays made sparkling light along the cruiser's polished brass-work and on the brown chases of her long slender guns. Captain Dudley Fawkes was pacing the after-bridge in conversation with his executive officer, Commander Bilton-Brooks, and Lieutenant Sir Edward Avon was the officer of the watch on the main bridge.

"I don't believe," said Captain Fawkes, "that the United States means seriously to take a hand in this fight."

"I don't know about that," responded Commander Bilton-Brooks. "Congress has taken action, and the President has called out troops."

"True enough," rejoined the Captain, "but that does not necessarily mean anything. You know the navy must be the aggressive force, and we have yet to see an American ship afloat in these waters."

"That is quite true," said the executive officer; "yet, for the life of me, I can't help

feeling that there is mischief of some sort in the air."

The executive officer's words were more nearly correct than even he suspected, for at that very instant the two lookouts in the fore-top were puzzling their eyes and brains to make out a strange object which had appeared on the lee beam. While they were watching it, it dropped from the air, where it had seemed to be floating, and rested on the bosom of the sea, where it presently resolved itself into a cutter-yacht some sixty feet in length.

"It were a bloomin' mirage, Bill," said one lookout to the other, as he lifted his voice and bawled, "Sail ho!"

"Where away?" came the quick demand from the bridge.

"On our lee beam, sir," answered the man. "Looks like a cutter-yacht, sir."

Now in the year 1927 a cutter-yacht was something of a curiosity, for electricity had supplanted sail power for small craft, and vessels propelled by canvas were rare indeed. The cutter-yacht seen from the decks of the *Ajax III.* was on the port tack, close hauled and heading so as to intercept the cruiser's course, provided she had speed enough, which was wholly unlikely. She was under full canvas,

and, though the breeze was very light, she slipped through the smooth water at an amazing speed. This fact dawned on the minds of the Captain and his executive officer at the same time.

"She must have an auxiliary electric screw," said Commander Bilton-Brooks.

"I fancy so," said the Captain. "Owned by some fellow who likes to think he's sailing, but has no patience with light breezes. It's rather curious, though, that he should be cruising in these waters at a time like this, isn't it?"

"It certainly is," answered the executive officer. "I don't see any flag—do you, sir?"

"No. I rather fancy I shall have to overhaul this yacht and make her skipper give an account of her. There's a mysterious air about her that I don't half like."

But it was a good deal easier to talk about overhauling the cutter than it was to do it. The yacht's sails, which were made of some extremely light material, like Chinese silk in appearance, were drawing powerfully, and her electric motor—if it really was electric—was doing astounding work. The yacht flashed through the water like some great fish, and so fine were her lines that she left hardly a bubble in her wake. The Captain of the *Ajax III.* gave orders to in-

crease the speed of the cruiser, and presently the quick throbbing of her engines and the vibrations of her hull told that she was tearing across the long swells at a 25-knot speed. But still the cutter-yacht flew along, and it was evident that she would pass across the cruiser's bow if both held their courses.

"We must stop her," said Captain Dudley Fawkes, and he gave orders to sound the call to quarters. The bugle rang out, and the hearty British tars jumped to their stations.

"Cast loose and provide!" ordered Commander Bilton-Brooks.

The ammunition hoists slipped noiselessly upward bearing the steel-iridium shells for the 8-inch guns, and the electric chains hauled up the 70-pounders for the secondary battery. In forty-five seconds the ship was ready to fight, and the order was given to train all forward guns on the cutter and stand by for orders. Then the Captain and his executive officer turned their glasses once more on the cutter.

"What on earth is she up to now?" exclaimed the Captain.

"Taking in sail—and spars, too!" cried Commander Bilton-Brooks.

It was true. Not only had the strange cutter let all her thin sails run down, but she seemed

to have folded up her mast, boom, gaff, and bowsprit in some strange way and stowed them out of sight.

"Has she shown any flag yet?" asked the Captain.

"None that I have seen," answered the executive officer.

"Then I'll wager a month's pay that she's some Yankee invention," declared Captain Dudley Fawkes.

"What in the world are they doing now?" said the executive officer.

A strange misshapen mass was rising above the bulwarks of the cutter with surprising swiftness.

"It's a balloon!" exclaimed the Captain.

"Hadn't we better open fire on her?" asked the executive officer.

"Not yet. I think we'd better get close enough to hail her first," answered the Captain. "She may not be anything more than a pleasure-craft, you know."

The balloon was inflated by this time, and was tugging at the heavy steel hawsers by which it was attached to the cutter's hull. A cry of surprise broke from the crew of the British cruiser.

"Look! look! She's going up!"

The great balloon, inflated with the newly discovered gas, mercurite, the lightest and most powerful of all known gases, was lifting the cutter bodily into the air. Her curiously shaped hull, modelled after a shark's body, and equipped with a fin-keel for sailing on the wind, was now fully revealed. At the same instant a United States ensign was waved over her stern by a young man.

"Mr. Cortis," called the Captain, who had not thought it necessary yet to enter the conning-tower, "give him a taste of your metal."

"Ay, ay, sir," answered the Lieutenant in command of the forward 8-inch guns.

The next instant there was a terrific concussion, and one of the big shells went screaming toward the cutter; but she was rising so fast that the projectile passed under her and plunged foaming into the sea a mile away.

"More elevation, sir," cried the executive officer.

"Impossible!" answered Lieutenant Cortis; "we're too close to her, and the angle is too high."

"Look at her now!" exclaimed the Captain. "She's rushing towards us!"

"Sailing against the wind with a balloon!" cried Commander Bilton-Brooks.

The shark-bodied cutter, with her fin-keel below and her balloon above, was indeed now moving toward a position above the cruiser.

"Call away the riflemen!" cried the Captain.

The red-coated marines assembled on the superstructures, and began a rapid fire at the balloon, hoping to burst it. But their bullets simply glanced off the fine steel-netting with which it was protected. Now the head of the young man once again appeared above the bulwarks of the strange machine, and he took a rapid glance at the British ship. The next instant a small port in the cutter's side opened, and from it dropped a glass globe about half the size of a football. The globe fell upon the forward deck of the cruiser. There was an appalling explosion, and the whole forecastle of the *Ajax III.* became a hopeless wreck. Another globe was hurled with such fatal accuracy that it fell down one of the smoke-stacks of the now helpless vessel. There was a roar as of thunder away down in her engine-room, and pale-faced men poured on deck.

"We're sinking! The ship's bottom is blown out!" they cried. There was a wild rush to lower away the boats. A few minutes later the *Ajax III.* sank out of sight under the blue waters of the Caribbean Sea, and Harry Bor-

den, with his balloon stowed and his canvas spread again, was sailing away with a few survivors of the ill-fated cruiser in his strange invention in search of more British cruisers. A month later the war was over.

VI

THE CRUISE OF A COMMERCE DESTROYER

How the "Calabria" was Captured

THE officer of the deck is pacing his last hour of a very dull forenoon watch upon the bridge of an American cruiser. The tropical sun beats down with unflinching savageness upon his head; his eyes are restlessly scanning the horizon at every turn, but nothing has disturbed the monotony of its outline, as his sullen pacing bears witness. The sentries and men on lookout are at their stations, and are listlessly walking to and fro on the small patch of deck called their posts. Small knots of men are gathered together here and there on the spar-deck, under the shade of a boat or a gun-shield, spinning yarns or playing at sailor games. Some of the younger officers can be seen aft on the quarter-deck gazing fixedly over the wide expanse of ocean, as if they expected an enemy to rise up

before them from the sea. Some of the more impulsive ones occasionally lift their voices in expostulation at the dull life they are leading, while others are seeing active service on fighting-ships. The great hull of the cruiser is slowly forging ahead in the quiet sea; her huge and powerful engines are barely turning over.

Like a picture in a kinetoscope, all this has changed. Every man on board has awakened from his lethargy. All hands are alert and gazing at the horizon to the eastward. What is the cause of this sudden awakening? Two words from the lookout in the foretop: "Sail ho!" Yes, broad on the port bow can be seen a low line of black smoke that to any but a sailor's eye would appear to be a cloud on the distant horizon. Scarcely a quarter of an hour, and with all speed the cruiser is cutting the sea in the direction of the fast-approaching smoke.

Eager young officers have ascended into the tops to be the first to make out the character of the stranger. In the foretop are two midshipmen, still in their teens, classmates at the Naval Academy, and stanch friends. Scarcely a thought has one the other does not share. With that reckless ambition that is one of the attributes of youth they are both longing for

excitement. Their dreams of battle and glory have toppled like a castle of cards.

As yet the American ship has seen no fighting; she has been doing the work cut out for her without bloodshed. Merchantman after merchantman has been overhauled and captured or ransomed in the last six months, and the cruiser's name has become the terror of the enemy's merchant marine.

Once only, while coming out of a neutral port, she had to run the gauntlet of two of the enemy's cruisers; but with her superior speed two hours sufficed to put the enemy hull down astern, with but slight damage to the commerce-destroyer. Her orders were, on the outbreak of the war, "to capture or destroy the enemy's commerce wherever met; refuse battle," and this order had been faithfully carried out. All hands had grown rich in prize-money; fresh provisions were obtained in abundance.

Coal was the problem. It had been attempted to coal at sea from captured vessels, but this mode could not be relied upon to replenish the bunkers of a ship with such a tremendous expenditure. So a certain amount of risk had to be run in coaling in neutral ports.

This vessel and her two sister ships were the prizes coveted by all the enemy's cruisers.

When the United States was building them other nations laughed at the idea, and put their dock-yards at work building ships of greater armament but less speed. But now they saw the advantage of these beautiful toys, as the foreign press were wont to call them, that could give or refuse battle at pleasure.

Ship after ship of the enemy's navy was in search of these "freebooters," but very few had even had the honor of coming within signal distance. One of these was the *Whistle,* a cruiser of a little heavier armament, but several knots less speed. The American was in the port of St. Thomas, coaling, when this warlike hull hove in sight. Very little time was lost in putting to sea, but not before two or three shots had been exchanged and some very taunting signals had been displayed by the disappointed ship.

All the officers and men would gladly have accepted battle, with but small fear of the result, but each and every one knew what awful odds would be on the *Whistle's* side. America had but a few ships; if these were pitted against the navy of the enemy, they would be overwhelmed, annihilated. No; the quickest way to humble the foe is through her commerce. So the bitter pill had to be swallowed in silence.

But the mere thought of the occurrence brought a hot flush to the cheek of every man aboard.

The stranger has drawn near, and is soon made out to be a merchantman, an ocean liner, one of the greyhounds that had plied between New York and Harborport before the outbreak of hostilities. Large volumes of black smoke from her immense smoke-pipes show she has scented danger and is making all speed to escape.

The young officers in the foretop are thrilled with excitement as their glass shows them the character of the other ship. The younger is a boy of eighteen, his light hair and blue eyes betokening his Saxon ancestry. He is clad in a neat-fitting blue uniform, and his cap set jauntily on the back of his head revealed a mass of light curly locks. With his eyes fairly sparkling, he bears a striking contrast to his companion. Dark and sullen, with lowering eyes and heavy forehead, the other shows not by a single sign that he realizes that in a short time the first and long-cherished battle of his life will be enacted.

The younger lad has dreamed of battles both in his sleep and in his waking moments, in which he has cut his way with his sword to honor and distinction. He has oftentimes pictured his

friends, his mother, and his sweetheart reading of his heroic deeds in the daily papers of his home, and now it seems to his youthful mind his dreams are to be fulfilled.

As his glass scans the stranger, he realizes that in the eyes of naval experts the new comer is nearly equal to the American in fighting qualities. He knows that these fast ships have been subsidized by the hostile government, and are heavily armed and protected. His dreams fairly dance before his eyes. But another picture flashes across his mental vision. He is on the battery-deck; the decks are wet and slippery with blood; the terribly mangled dead and wounded are lying all about him; he sees brave men struck down around. A cold shiver runs through his well-knit frame as he shakes from him the ghastly nightmare.

The other lad is not a dreamer. Morose, almost cynical, he never gives himself up to such reveries. To him everything appears in a less gilded light. He knows that if the stranger has not superior speed his services and his companion's will soon be needed on the deck below.

The two lads scramble down through the hollow mast as the drummers are beating the long roll to quarters. All during the hot, sultry day the chase continues, and when night settles down

on the watery waste the cruiser is still out of gun-shot astern. The night is bright, and when morning dawns the blood-hound is still upon the trail. The crew of the 8-inch breech-loading rifle on the forecastle is called to quarters, and a shell is sent speeding over the water in the direction of the fleeing ship. Slowly the distance diminishes. Suddenly a white cloud of smoke bursts from the liner, and a heavy shell strikes close aboard the American ship.

All hands are soon at their stations, and in a short time all is in readiness for battle. The Stars and Stripes at her trucks flaunt a challenge to the enemy's ensign at the *Calabria's* gaff.

The two ships are now within battle-range, and the thunder of their heavy ordnance breaks the stillness of the ocean.

Shells go speeding through the unarmored sides of the ships, their explosions making terrific havoc among their unprotected crews. The picture before the midshipman's eyes is now a reality. Tirelessly the two lads work; their guns are next to each other. As they give their commands in sharp, decisive voices the contrast seems less striking. A shell comes in the gun-port and strikes down the captain of the younger lad's gun; the lock-string falls from his life-

less hand. Gently laying the dead man aside, he takes the lanyard.

As he stood at his gun before the heat of action, he was seized with an awful trembling, and he feared lest he might show by his actions the white feather to his men. Then came the bursting of shells and the explosion of discharges, and then the shell striking down his gun captain, spluttering his life-blood all about him. At once his fears left him, his eyes brightened, and a terrible anger awoke in him, the like of which he had never known. He fired his gun at the enemy with a fierce exultancy, wondering in a cruel way how many lives the shell had cut down. It seems ages since the battle started. With his eyes always on the enemy, he is spared from seeing his friend, struck by a flying splinter, being carried below to the surgeons. He sees the *Calabria,* her sides ablaze with fire, sweep majestically across his small horizon and then disappear. He is always aware of her awful presence from the never-ceasing bursting of her shells around him. Then again she appears, and is once more in his angle of fire. During this small space of time his gun has done all that could be expected; he has watched shell after shell from it explode aboard the enemy; he can see large rents in her

black hull, and he notices her fire is becoming more desultory; the fight will soon be over. As she disappears again, he musters up courage to look about him. There is but little life on the battery-deck that only a half-hour before was the scene of so much activity. The gun next his is not in action; a shell has completely shattered the breech-plug; nearly its entire crew are lying about on the deck, their dark life-blood staining the white planking. His companion's cap is lying near a dark mass on the deck. Is it his blood? His senses are so paralyzed that he feels his mind must give way. The enemy emerges into view; his hand is upon the lock-string; the elevator and trainer are attentively watching for their orders. They do not come. His thoughts are far away in the midst of a modest New England home. He sees a beautiful motherly woman, her face pale and anxious, and by her side is a young girl in the first blush of womanhood.

He is suddenly conscious of a young seaman standing before him, giving him a message. In a dazed way he relinquishes his lock-string to one of his gunners and is making his way over the reeking deck toward the bridge. He hears a voice, as if in a dream, giving him orders to be ready to board the prize. Then the

enemy has surrendered? His gaze seeks the other ship. But a short distance away he sees her shattered hull rolling in the smooth sea. A huge white flag flutters from her signal-halyards. The boats are ready and alongside. The men are embarking. He takes his place, and they shove off, and are soon scaling the side of the captured vessel. Her decks are almost deserted, scarcely a living man is about, but everywhere death and destruction reign. He hears a well-known voice close to him. Has the last hour been an awful nightmare, or has his mind been shaken at last? He cannot grasp the situation. There is his friend, looking paler than ever, his right arm in splints and his head tied up in a huge bandage. His joy knows no bounds. With a fervent "Thank Heaven!" they embrace. There is no time now for explanations; it is enough to know that his companion is still alive. With orders from his Lieutenant, he is leading, pistol in hand, a gang of tars down into the *Calabria's* bowels. The surprised firemen and stokers are quickly manacled, and ready Americans have taken their places. An engineer officer is giving rapid orders to his men; the huge engines start ahead, slowly at first, then the revolutions increase till the shafts are revolving at a terrific speed.

When he again reaches the deck everything is again calm and peaceful. On the port quarter, but a short distance away, he sees his own ship. Both ships are going at full speed; and astern, just out of gun-shot, he sees the hulls of three more ships. He understands it all now. The *Calabria* had nearly led them into a trap.

A red wig-wag flag is waving on board the white cruiser: "Must reduce speed in order to reach port." Coal is running short. The horribly significant signal can hardly be realized. Will she fall a prey to the enemy's cruisers after such a glorious victory? Foot by foot the hostile ships draw nearer to the commerce-destroyer and her prize. In case they are overtaken, the *Calabria* is to go on and reach Hampton Roads in safety. It is the only thing to do. Why sacrifice another ship unnecessarily? For two days and nights the pursuit continues. Cape Henry light-house is sighted on the port bow. Just within gun-shot astern are the three heavily armored cruisers, using their bow-chasers with great rapidity and precision on the fleeing ships. Large volumes of brown smoke pour from the American cruiser's smoke-pipes. She is making her last spurt for life. Bulkheads, furniture, and all combustible material have been fed to the mighty furnaces.

Slowly they draw away from their pursuers. The light-house is close on the port beam. The heavy guns there are directed against three dark hulls to the eastward. They are the baffled enemy.

II

STRANGE STORIES OF THE SEA

VII

PIRATE OR PRIVATEER?

Fighting for the Flag

"WHAT d'ye see, Mr. Wright?"

"A French xebec, sir—two of 'em."

"Comin' this way?"

"No, sir; due south by the compass, sir. They're standin' away under full sail—looks as if they saw somethin'."

"Maybe they see us."

Captain John Granthan smiled broadly at his grim humor.

"Maybe, sir," answered Wright, the boatswain, without relaxing his features.

"Look ahead of 'em and see if you can't see somethin'. French xebecs ain't chasin' the seas for nuthin'."

The boatswain directed his sea-glasses due south by the compass, and gazed long and silently across the sunlit ocean. Granthan, captain of the privateer *London,* ex-convict and pirate,

seated himself on a coil of rope and glanced critically up at the bellying sails.

"They don't draw well to-day," he muttered to himself.

He was proud of the *London,* and anything wrong with her affected him as a mother with a sick child. She had been a London mail-packet, and she was as fleet as any deer-hound of the ocean.

"Them Frenchmen-of-the-line can't shoot a cannon-ball as fast as we can sail," he was wont to remark contemptuously when chased by the enemy.

"Ah, that's it!" suddenly exclaimed Wright, the boatswain.

"Well, what's it?" grumbled Granthan, as the man relapsed into stolid silence again.

"It's a mail-packet, sir; one of 'em small Falmouth packets, I judge, sir. They're a-chasin' of her."

"Then we'll chase 'em. Crowd on full sail, Mr. Wright, an' keep her course straight. We can get in gun-shot of 'em in five hours, or the *London* ain't what she's cracked up to be."

"Ay, ay, sir! We'll do it."

When the boatswain bawled out the orders, Captain Granthan took the sea-glasses and studied the distant horizon. The two French

xebecs, with their three masts, stood up on the blue sea like a pair of white-winged gulls. Far down below the horizon the topmast of another ship could be seen. None but sharp sea eyes could detect her colors.

"That's a mail-packet," grunted Granthan to himself. "I'd know one a thousand miles away. She's from Falmouth, too; only twenty-eight men and six guns. She's no match for 'em two Frenchmen. A dastardly trick of gov'ment to reduce their armament. Run away an' not fight! What Englishman wants to obey such orders? Surrender an' sink the mails if caught! Humph! What are British seamen comin' to?"

"Did you speak, sir?"

"Yes, Mr. Wright, I spoke to myself. I was just sayin' that it was a crime fur the gov'ment to reduce the armament of them mail-packets at this time. It's the ruination of British seamen. How can you expect to make brave seamen with orders always to run away or surrender to the enemy?"

"It's a shame, sir. I quite agree with you, sir; it's a disgrace to British sailors."

"Them two Frenchmen carry sixteen guns apiece, I'll swear, an' the mail-packet only six."

"Maybe, sir; an' then—"

Granthan turned around and finished his sentence—" they might have more. No, Mr. Wright, there ain't many captains that 'll break the law as I did. It's too risky to smuggle extra guns aboard a mail-packet. The post-office inspectors are too sharp. They don't let us poor fellows make prize-money any more."

" Not unless you take out papers as a privateer, sir, an' take prizes lawfully."

Captain Granthan's face clouded. A troubled expression spread over it and made him look ugly and surly.

" And didn't they refuse to give me my papers?" he asked, gruffly.

" Ay, they did, sir, an' without good cause."

" Just because I smuggled a few extra guns on the packet, an' ran down a French privateer off Calais," he continued, in a louder voice. " They said I'd have to lay off for a year—think of it, a whole year—while these French privateers were flooding the sea! Ain't I a sea-captain, Mr. Wright, bred to it from a youngster up, an' ain't I human? Could I live on the land for a whole year an' hear the guns a-boomin' away at sea? They just took the salt out o' my life, an'—well, I stood it three months, an' then human nature could stand no more. I had to go to sea, an' this packet was

handy in the harbor. I just sailed away with her, an' then picked up you an' the rest of the crew."

"Is that how you came to this life, sir?"

"Yes, Mr. Wright, that's the story. An' then they put a price on my head. The post-office fellows would just like to run me down. But I leave it to you, Mr. Wright, if I haven't always honored the old flag. 'Ain't I always fought with it at the mast-head, an' did I ever touch a ship flyin' it? They can't say that I've disgraced it. If they choose to call me a pirate, they can; but I'll kill the man that says I'm a traitor to that flag."

The eyes of Granthan flashed fire, as he pointed dramatically to the union-jack fluttering over their heads in the breeze.

"I will, too, sir," solemnly replied the boatswain. And the two clasped hands in mutual sympathy.

Across the water the actors in the forthcoming conflict were looming up more clearly. The two French xebecs were gaining on the English mail-packet, but not faster than the *London* was gaining upon the former.

"They don't see us," Captain Granthan said, after a long pause; "they're so intent upon their prize."

"They'll hear us, then, later."

"Yes—and feel us, too. I'll save another packet for the old service, or go down fighting for it."

A sudden boom of a gun rolled in muffled tones across the sea.

"Ah! they're beginning the fun."

A puff of smoke from the leading xebec's fore-deck indicated the cause of the sound. It was immediately followed by another. Then silence reined over the placid sea.

"They can't reach the packet yet," muttered Granthan, watching the ships eagerly through his sea-glasses. "But they'll overhaul her in half an hour."

Thirty minutes ticked away by the Captain's watch before there was any sign of a renewal of hostilities. Then the boom of guns fired in rapid succession told the threatening fate of the fleeing mail-packet.

"They ain't very good marksmen," Granthan reflected. "Them French navy fellows never were; it's only the privateers that can shoot straight. You remember the time we fought one off Dover, Mr. Wright? They handled their guns almost as well as we did. It was only a lucky shot of ours that disabled her. Then that little English brig just scooted an' didn't

stop to thank us. I s'pose the Captain thought I was goin' to overhaul him next; he knew who I was."

"We'd better get ready for action, sir; I think we could reach 'em with our fore-gun."

"Not this time, Mr. Wright. I'm goin' to close in on 'em, an' if things get too hot we'll board 'em. They're two to one, remember, for that packet won't stop to fight if she can slip away. Run away, or surrender and sink the mails!—that's their orders, Mr. Wright."

Granthan's lips curled a little as he uttered these words. The rattle of small and large guns was pretty general now; but still the mail-packet stood on its course uninjured.

"They've slashed her sails a little," Granthan reported, "but they haven't done any great damage yet. She's answerin' back now."

Puffs of smoke from the little packet clouded her stern and sides until half her hull was hidden from view.

"Mr. Wright, I'd like to shake hands with that Captain," Granthan said, with enthusiasm. "He knows how to fight, an' he won't surrender until he's sinkin'. There goes the topmast of the first xebec. What a shot! Ah, that was bad!"

"What is it, sir?"

"The packet's crippled, an'— Say, Mr. Wright, can't we sail faster?"

Granthan lowered his glasses and glanced about at his own trim ship. Every member of the crew was in his place, armed to the teeth and ready for an engagement.

"We're doing fifteen knots an hour, sir."

"Then make it sixteen, an' I'll give you extra prize-money."

"Ay, sir, I will if it's possible."

Granthan walked toward the heavy gun trained over the privateer's bow. The old gunner doffed his hat to him.

"Ready, sir, when the order is given."

"Aim low, Jones, an' see that you cripple her below the water-line. We'll have to sink one and capture the other."

"Ay, sir; I'll sink her in five rounds," responded the old gunner as he readjusted the aim of the gun.

There was suppressed excitement on board the privateer, but Granthan seemed unconcerned.

"Save the men's strength for boardin'," he said, as he passed the first officer of the deck, "an' don't let 'em expose themselves too much. It's better to keep shy of the balls until we're at close quarters. Ah! they've discovered us."

A solid shot whizzed across the sea and splashed in the water a hundred yards from the *London*.

"Now, Jones, sink her!" Granthan shouted to the forward gunner. "Extra prize money for every gunner that hits the mark square."

There was an instant change in the Captain. The firing of the first shot dispelled all his apathy. He was alert, active, dangerous. In person he gave the orders to the gunners. The forward gun of the privateer belched forth its contents.

"Lower, lower, Jones!" Granthan shouted, savagely. "What are you practising for? Hit her, man, an' not the sea! A boy could do better!"

Notwithstanding the fact that the first shot had struck the upper stern-deck of the nearest xebec, the old gunner grumbled at his luck and lowered his piece.

Another solid shot came singing across the open space between the combatants, and cut away some of the rigging of the privateer. Granthan shouted:

"Mr. Wright, up there with your men; they'll cripple us before we can reach 'em!"

A dozen men sprang up the ratlines, and in the very face of the heavy fire repaired the

torn rigging. But another shot struck the railing of the *London,* and sent huge splinters flying in every direction. One man fell, stunned by a blow on the head.

"Bring her about, Mr. Wright, an' give 'em a broadside," the Captain ordered.

They were at close quarters now, and the engagement was pretty general. The *London* poured a deadly broadside into the nearest xebec which made her reel and tremble; but a moment later the response came. There was a rattling of shots and a smashing of wood-work that drowned the moans and cries of the wounded. Orders were flying thick and fast, and Granthan seemed to be everywhere. The tigerish old spirit of the sea-captain was fully aroused. The odds were against him, and he was in his element.

The second xebec had swung around to give assistance to her hard-pressed companion. Little damage was being done to the deck-work of the latter; but the broadsides of the privateer were pouring deadly missiles into her hull —so deadly that she seemed to be sinking.

The men on the *London,* except the gunners, did not like this long-distance duel. They preferred a hand-to-hand combat. But Captain Granthan knew that the odds in such a conflict

were five to one against him, while with his guns he was rapidly reducing this disparity.

"She's sinkin', sir," bawled the boatswain from the stern. "She can't stand any more."

"Then stand off, an' look out for 'em," Granthan answered back. "They're tryin' to close in on us. Here Mr. Wright, bring her around."

But a well-directed shot from the approaching xebec smashed the mainmast and sent it splintering to the deck. Captain Granthan took in the situation instantly.

"Now, Jones, aim at her decks an' cripple her," he ordered. "Don't let her come nearer. We don't want to be boarded yet."

The old gunner made no reply, but his mouthpiece gave effective answer a moment later. The crash of timbers and toppling masts and yards brought a cheer from the throats of the seamen on the *London*. Granthan shouted, sternly:

"Stop your cheerin', an' get ready to fight! They're runnin' down upon us to board. Give 'em another broadside, Mr. Wright, an' then get ready to repel boarders."

The position of the privateer was now critical. Unable to move out of the fog of her own smoke, she was drifting between the guns of the two xebecs. The latter had silenced their

gun and were preparing to grapple with the daring little privateer. Amid the confusion Granthan asked:

"Where is the little packet? Has she escaped?"

No one answered, for the clouds of heavy smoke had settled down over the sea, so that nothing beyond a narrow circle could be discerned. The three ships drifted closer together.

There was a moment of intense silence. Then the guns of the privateer raked the decks of the xebecs. The response from either side was feeble, for most of their guns had been dismantled.

The narrow stream of water between the ships lessened to fifty feet. Then the gunners were called away from their pieces. The Captain had given orders, and Wright had repeated them in a thick, hoarse voice, to prepare to repel boarders, and every man stood ready. There were eighty of them left, forty on a side, lined up to meet overwhelming numbers.

The grizzled and swarthy rows of faces on the opposing ships stared at one another in a minute of deathlike stillness. Then there was a roar like the raging of a cataract. The sharp clang of grappling-irons, the grinding and

"THE TWO XEBECS CLOSED IN ON THE PRIVATEER"

crunching of wooden timbers as the ships bumped together, the ringing orders of officers, and the cheers of the men combined to make a sullen noise that seemed devoid of sense and meaning. Then came the shock of battle, the charge and retreat, the cries and groans, the superhuman endeavor of each to overcome a dozen, and, finally, the long painful lull in the storm when each force tried to calculate the damages wrought by the other.

Captain Granthan stood at the head of his little force, stern, tragic, and vengeful. Every boarder had been repelled on his side.

"How is it with you, Mr. Wright?" he shouted, wheeling around.

"Mr. Wright is wounded, sir; but we're holding 'em back."

It was Jones, the crack gunner of the privateer, who spoke.

"Then stick to it, Jones, an' I'll double your prize-money."

"Ay, ay, sir, we will; and here they come again."

Forming the line of attack, the French made another attempt to board the privateer, flinging themselves against the sides of the ships like wild beasts, some of them often falling over upon the decks of the *London*. But an irre-

sistible human wall met them and hurled back the charging line with sure effect.

Defeated and repulsed the second time, the Frenchmen began to cut loose from the privateer. Captain Granthan, seeing his prizes slipping from him, ran aloft, and before the xebecs could sheer off he had lashed their square-sail yards to the fore-shrouds of the *London*. Then descending to the deck, he shouted, exultantly:

"Jones, we've got our prizes; now make 'em surrender."

A glance up at the entangled shrouds convinced every man of the desperateness of the engagement. There was to be no retreat. It was victory or surrender—or death.

The attacking forces comprehended the situation at the same time; but most of their leaders were gone, and half the men were demoralized and discouraged at the fearful condition that reigned. Nevertheless, they fought like brave seamen — stubborn, fearless, and unyielding. But their efforts were hopeless, and a realization of this worked more harm in their ranks than the swords of the enemy.

Captain Granthan's heroes of many a hard-fought sea contest were inflamed by the act of their hero, and they plunged into the conflict with a surety of victory that they never once

doubted. They hammered away until both xebecs struck their colors and the Frenchmen laid down their arms.

"Sir, they've surrendered."

It was the voice of Jones which announced the victory. Granthan dropped the sword he held aloft over his head, and looked at his surly foe. The latter did likewise.

"Then, Jones, you'll have your prize-money —an'—an'—mine, too."

"Not yours, sir. What's the matter?"

Granthan staggered backward and fell into the powerful arms of the begrimed gunner.

"I'm done for, Jones."

Then opening his eyes wearily, he added, with a smile:

"But it was a glorious victory."

"Ay, ay, sir; it was."

There were tears in the eyes of the gunner as he spoke, and his voice faltered.

A little brandy revived the hero of the day and he opened his eyes again. He glanced around at the circle of faces, then beyond them, where his eyes remained fixed for some time.

"Jones, what ship is that coming? Is—is—it—"

"It's the packet, sir—the mail-packet that you saved."

"Then maybe they want me—me, a pirate; but they're too late."

The man smiled grimly as he spoke. Out of the clouds of smoke the mail-packet was looming, working its way like a crippled horse towards the three interlocked ships. A moment later she struck the stern of the privateer and a score of armed men, led by a British officer, jumped aboard the *London*.

"Have they surrendered?" demanded the officer.

"Ay, sir, they have; but they've killed our Captain."

Granthan looked long and steadily at the man. Was he dreaming, or was his face familiar? He had the features of one who long ago had sternly sentenced him to disgrace. How vividly the scene returned to him — the small, stuffy court-room, the row of stern judges, that one face!

"Are you injured fatally, Captain?"

The face was pressed close to his. Although dying, he still had the strength of an ordinary man. A knife lay close to his hand. With one blow he could repay the old debt. It were better so than to let him escape after sacrificing his own life to save the ship.

His fingers closed softly over the hilt of the

knife. With his half-closed eyes he located the seat of the heart.

"Why, this is Captain Granthan—Captain John Granthan, of Falmouth!"

The officer rose hastily from his kneeling position. Granthan relaxed his clasp on the knife. His opportunity was gone. Well, it were better so; he could die with a clean conscience.

"Yes, it is Captain Granthan, ex-convict an' pirate; an' you—I remember your face—Captain Barker. I—"

"You bear me no ill-will, Captain! It was all in the line of duty. I—"

Granthan waved his hand; he did not wish to reopen the old wound.

"You've triumphed again," the injured man said, huskily. "You can take my body an' get the reward, but you can't take me alive. I'll cheat you out of that."

"Reward, Captain! What do you mean? Is it possible you've not heard?"

Granthan stared blankly at him; he did not understand.

"Captain, there's no reward offered for you," Barker said. "That was long ago withdrawn. When the Admiralty heard of your brave deeds on the ocean they restored you to rank. Didn't you save the bark *Hull* from the French guns,

an' didn't you destroy a French privateer off Liverpool? Why, Captain, you've done more for the flag than any other man in the service! D'you think this had no weight at home? There ain't a man at Falmouth or Liverpool that don't want to shake your hands."

Granthan listened quietly, intently; it was so pleasant to hear these words that he sighed when the man stopped. A pirate no longer!—restored to his rank!—honored at home!

"Reward, Captain!" Barker continued. "Yes, there is a big reward offered, but it is for you an' not for the man who brings you home. You'll be an admiral in the British navy some day if you keep this up."

Then seeing the exhaustion of the wounded man, he stopped, and turned to the surgeon of the mail-packet:

"Here, Wilson, you must save his life. I must take him home alive. Captain, rouse yourself; you must not die now, an' like this!"

Granthan raised himself with difficulty.

"Sir, if what you say is true, I will not die. I'll fight death as I fought these Frenchmen. Tell me if it is true—that you're not lying to me."

There was a feverish energy and determina-

tion in his voice that showed the reserve force in his stalwart frame.

"As Heaven is my witness, Captain, it is all true, an' more, too!"

"Then I will not die!"

And the will power that rang through his words finally restored him to health and to his rank in the British navy.

VIII

THE MUTINY ON THE *SWALLOW*

What a Boy Did to Save Life and Ship

CAPTAIN JOHN TRAVIS, of the bark *Swallow,* 670 tons burden, homeward bound to New York from Port Elizabeth, South Africa, did not like the looks of his first mate, and he liked his manners less. But what could he do? When the bark was ready for sea Frank Watson, the young cabin steward, had come aboard and said:

"Captain, Mr. Brett is very sick, and the owners have sent me down with Mr. Johnson, who is to serve as first mate in his place."

Johnson stood in the cabin door, a tall, sleek, cadaverous man, with an eye as gray and as cold as a November sea. He shifted restlessly from one foot to the other, and frequently glanced back over his shoulder as if suspicion lurked in his shadow. Captain Travis thought he had the look of a deserting soldier, not to

be expected from an honest seaman; but what could he do? The tug was already fussing in towards the bark, and in a quarter of an hour the anchor would be up and the vessel towing away from her berth off Liberty Island.

"Are you an American?" asked the Captain.

"No, sir," replied Johnson, respectfully; "I'm from Nova Scotia."

"You breed good seamen there. Well, Mr. Johnson, have your dunnage stowed and make yourself comfortable."

Captain Travis knew now that he was the only American aboard the bark, except the steward, who was only a boy of seventeen. The second mate was a Portuguese named Menzies, a brown-faced, heavy-browed fellow, with the track of an old knife-scar showing red and white down his left cheek. There were eleven men in the crew—four Belgians, three Italians, one German, one Swede, and two Lascars. The cargo was wool, and was worth $100,000. Captain Travis thought of all that, and for a few minutes his heart played with his ribs as it never had before at the beginning of a voyage. Yet Port Elizabeth was reached and the cargo discharged without a disquieting murmur. The bark was well provisioned and there was not a whole day of heavy weather, so that the

crew had no excuse for dissatisfaction. Nevertheless, the bark's work was done loosely and lazily, and before the port of destination was reached Captain Travis spoke twice to his mates, cautioning them to keep the men up to their tasks. They answered respectfully enough, but the Captain thought he detected an undercurrent of ill-feeling. He wished heartily that his familiar and trusted first mate Brett was with him. He wished still more earnestly that he and the boy were not the only Americans aboard. Yet the *Swallow* flew to Port Elizabeth on the wings of peace.

It was as pretty a day as one could wish to see in those latitudes when she spread her wings for her homeward flight. The sky was cloudless, and glowed from horizon to horizon with a deep, lambent blue which repeated itself in a darker shade in the sea. The breeze was moderate, cool, and steady, and it flowed over the port quarter in a sweet torrent of salt perfume which drove the bark along at a pretty pace of eight knots an hour. The bark herself, plain and severe as she was, without glittering brass-work or hard-wood ornament, was a good picture for a seaman's eye as she plunged forward over the sparkling slopes, garbed in creamy swells of tense canvas up to the very

needle-points of her royal masts. Captain John Travis swung forward and aft along the weather side of the poop-deck, and wondered whether he had been in his senses when he sailed out of New York with a mind full of black forebodings.

Pleasant seas and fair winds followed the bark for several weeks, and everything seemed to promise a speedy voyage home. The *Swallow* was now well towards the latitude of Bermuda, but still some five hundred miles south of that port. The young moon, low in the west, was laying a path of dim silver along the glassy seas when the Captain went on deck in the first mate's watch and, leaning on the taffrail, idly watched the flashing of the milky foam which swirled sternward from under the bark's counter. The first mate saluted him in a somewhat careless manner and walked towards the break of the poop. At that instant, from some place in the shadowy gloom under the weather-rail, the boy Frank Watson slipped swiftly to the Captain's side.

"Come below, sir; come below. I have something to tell you," said the boy, in a whisper.

The next instant he was gone, and the Captain stood half in doubt as to whether he had

heard aright. But the sight of the lean form of his first mate looming in black relief against the pallid swell of the spanker decided him, and with a half-muttered "Good-night" he descended. He found the boy waiting for him in the cabin with a face full of feverish anxiety.

"Well, what is it?" he asked.

"Oh, sir," said the boy, "speak low! They may hear us."

"They? Who?"

"Oh, any of them, sir! I guess they're all in it."

"In what?"

"That's what I want to tell you, sir."

The Captain instinctively braced his nerves for a shock.

"Go ahead," he said.

"You were asleep this afternoon, sir," said the boy, "in the first dog-watch, and I was scouring the telltale compass. It hangs right under the skylight there, sir, and that was open on a crack, and I heard Mr. Johnson and Mr. Menzies talking. They must have been sitting on the after-end of the skylight, and they couldn't see me. I didn't mean to listen to them at first. But after I'd heard a few words by accident, I listened as hard as I could. Mr. Johnson said to Mr. Menzies that a tidy sum of

money could be made by taking the *Swallow* into Bermuda instead of New York. Mr. Menzies wanted to know how, and Mr. Johnson said that they could pretend the bark needed repairs. After getting into harbor they could open the water-pipes and then call for a survey. After the officers were aboard the ship could be pumped out, and in about an hour the pipes could be started again. That would make the surveyors think the bark was leaking, and big repairs could be ordered. Of course, then, the man that had the contract would have to be in with them and tinker around for a time, making believe that he was doing a big job. The next time the pumps were tried they would show that the bark was sound, and so there would be a good sum of money to divide. Mr. Menzies said he didn't like the scheme, because the crew would all have to be let into it. It would be easier, he said, to run the bark ashore somewhere and take chances on what they could get out of the wreck."

"Of course!" exclaimed the Captain. "He's a sweet scoundrel, he is!"

"Don't speak so loud, sir," said the boy, earnestly; "they'd cut our throats if they thought we knew. Mr. Menzies said that you would have to be got out of the way. Mr. John-

son said he'd fix you, and he'd do it so that no one would ever know that you hadn't done it yourself."

Captain Travis stood for a minute silent and motionless. He was almost dumfounded at the revelations, and the horror of his situation, at sea with a mutinous crew and only a faithful boy confronted him in its most appalling colors. But John Travis came of sound stock. His thin lips compressed themselves into a hard line and a cold light gleamed in his blue eyes.

"I'll see this thing through," he said, in a low voice, "and we'll find out whether brains aren't better than brutality. You go on about your work, and don't give the slightest sign that you know there's anything amiss. You understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"Here, put this in your pocket."

The Captain opened a locker and took out two revolvers, one of which he gave to Frank, and the other he kept himself.

"Now," said Captain Travis to himself, "it does not make much difference which of the schemes they undertake. My work is to prevent them from getting rid of me, and also from getting within sight of Bermuda. I'll just doctor the chronometer a little. It's a

lucky thing that Johnson is such a poor navigator. He'll never notice the sudden change of the clock's rate."

A very small change in the reading of a chronometer will make a great difference in the longitude obtained by observation, so when Captain Travis had altered the hands of the chronometer in his room a few minutes, he had prepared a genuine surprise for his mate. It was his purpose to alter the reading of the clock every day a little, so as to make the bark seem to be much farther east than she really was. Thus the conspirators would think she was near Bermuda when, really, she was close to the American coast. By keeping for himself a memorandum of the amount of the alteration he would be able to compute the true position of the vessel.

"There," he muttered, as he screwed down the lid again, "I know something now that you don't, my fine friends. But I've got to keep the breath of life in me, and to do that may not be so easy."

Captain Travis did not sleep well that night, and he was on deck early in the morning. There was not a sign of mutiny. The bark was under everything to her top-gallants, with a brisk breeze just a point forward of her star-

board beam. The sea was fairly smooth, but running in a deep swell. The bark thundered into the black hollows and leaped over the foaming crests at a ten-knot speed, and the big German at the wheel gripped the spokes with strained arms as he stared sullenly into the compass-bowl. Menzies, the second mate, leaned against the railing of the poop and gazed steadily ahead, as if expecting to see Bermuda rise untimely from behind the hardened horizon. The watch sprawled lazily about the forecastle, and a thin haze of blue swirling to leeward from the caboose chimney told that the cook was preparing early coffee. Not a thing could the Captain see that was suspicious, and he was half inclined to think that the story of the previous night had been a bad dream. But Menzies started and glared at him as he ascended the poop ladder, and he was once more on his guard.

All that day Captain Travis walked on a slumbering volcano. But there was no explosion. There was a rumble at noon when the first mate found his dead-reckoning and his position by observation so much apart. But that passed by with a curse upon unknown currents and an oath at shrunk log-lines. The same thing happened on the following day, and on the third day, when the bark was really west-

southwest of Bermuda, while the conspirators thought her a goodly distance southeast of that island.

The afternoon sun fell wan and watery in the wet west, and fitful gusts of petulant wind came out of the southeast. The *Swallow's* wings were clipped to her topsails, but before the growing blast she flew fast. The darkness closed in over a rude and boisterous scene. The fitful gusts had grown to a steady outpour of wind that was swiftly hardening into a gale. The following seas had swelled into towering cliffs of slanting gray and hissing foam that stormed down on the little vessel in a wild and weird race. The *Swallow's* stern swung high in air as her bows crashed down into the gloomy hollows of the underrunning seas, and the secret spaces of her hold were filled with the loud groaning of her strained timbers.

"Keep her as she goes," said Captain Travis, as he went below to supper, "and we'll heave to when it comes to blow harder."

"Ay, ay, sir," said the second mate, sullenly. But the man at the wheel let her yaw off two points, with a curl on his lip as he did it.

Johnson, the first mate, came out of the cabin as the Captain passed in, giving his superior a curt nod. His face was white and his eyes

gleamed like green ice. The young steward came from the caboose with a steaming dish, and took up the coffee-pot to get fresh coffee. Captain Travis ate in chilled silence, as a man would with the shadow of death upon him. But when he had hastily swallowed half a cup of the coffee he set the cup down with a sudden blanching of his face and a wild stare in his eyes.

"They've done it!" he said, in a hoarse whisper.

"Done what, sir?" asked the boy, feverishly.

For answer the Captain sprang up and opened the top drawer in his own room. He drew from it a bottle labelled "Laudanum." It was empty.

"That was in the coffee! Johnson knew I had it; he saw me use some for an aching tooth! Get some sea-water—warm—quick!"

The boy dashed out of the cabin door. The Captain walked the floor with the horrible anxiety of a man who knows there is poison in him and who waits to feel its work begin. The boy seemed to be gone an interminable time. Suddenly the Captain felt himself sway, and was conscious of a dimness in his vision. The drug had begun its work. He struggled against it as one fights death, for it was death. He rushed blindly up and down the cabin, bruising

his face and limbs as he staggered against doors and stanchions in his desperate race against overmastering sleep. His throat burned; stars danced before his eyes; his breath came in sobs; and he was on the brink of a fierce scream of despair when the boy burst into the cabin.

"Here, sir! Drink it, quick! I couldn't get it before. They were watching me. It's out of the lee waterways, sir, but it 'll make you sick."

The Captain seized the pannikin of lukewarm salt-water and drained it at a single draught. Then came a brief spasm of deathly sickness, followed by a few moments of peace.

"Now, Frank," said Captain Travis, "your life and mine depend upon your obeying my orders. Don't let me go to sleep. Shut the skylights so they can't see what we're doing here. Walk me up and down, beat me, kick me, but don't let me go to sleep. If you do, I'll never see daylight again, and neither will you."

For an hour the Captain and the boy fought sleep, the twin brother of death, while the bark went staggering and crashing over the leaping ridges through the fathomless gloom of the wild night. Suddenly there was a wider lurch and

then a heavy roll. The Captain straightened himself up with a mighty effort and gazed at the telltale compass over his head.

"The fools!" he said. "They've headed her due west—for Bermuda, they think. Or, do they hope to wreck her?"

"I think they'll try to get rid of you first, sir."

"They have tried, but I'm here yet, and I'm going to stay. Wait, wait. We're not out of this yet. Let me think—let me think, if I can, with a brain that is swimming and burning at the same time."

"They're sure to come down to see if you're —asleep," said Frank.

"Yes, that's it. I'll beat them, then," said the Captain, rubbing his forehead vigorously. Then he staggered and fell forward.

"Get up! get up!" cried Frank.

The boy seized a heavy strap which lay in a corner, and beat his Captain mercilessly. The man groaned, rolled over, and presently, staggering to his feet, clasped the boy in a hostile embrace.

"You'll murder me, will you, Johnson?" he muttered.

"It's Frank, sir, Frank!" exclaimed the boy, wildly.

The Captain's brain cleared. He clasped the boy in an embrace of love and gratitude.

"I'm ready now," he said. "Come."

He went to his room and arranged the pillows and covering of his bunk so that in the dim light they looked like the form of a man asleep. Then he and the boy concealed themselves behind the cabin table. The swinging-lamp burned low and filled the place with dim, changeful shadows. Half an hour passed, and the cabin door opened and Johnson entered alone. He closed the door very softly, steadying himself against its frame, and stood peering around the cabin with his icy gray eyes. The Captain and the steward did not breathe. Johnson started with the tread of a panther towards the Captain's room. He paused several times and listened—as if one could hear anything but the furious thunder of the mighty seas and the mad howling of the gale! Hours seemed to pass, but at length he reached the Captain's door. He looked into the room and saw what he thought was the Captain's form. A smile of fearful evil distorted his chill features as he slowly drew from the leg of one of his sea-boots a long, keen knife. Frank Watson's breath came in sobs, while the Captain gripped his shoulders with iron fingers. The mate entered the room,

and at the same instant the Captain crept out from behind the table. The mate raised the knife, and felt with his left hand for the Captain's breast. He stopped, bent down, and exclaimed:

"Curse him! It's not him at all!"

He turned swiftly, but at that moment the Captain slammed the door of his room and locked it. Johnson was a prisoner.

"I know your whole scheme," said the Captain at the key-hole.

"Then you know you're no better than a dead man," said Johnson. "You've got Menzies and the crew to deal with yet. Let me out, and I'll spare your life."

"You'll stay where you are," said the Captain, "and in less than three hours you'll be begging me to spare yours."

A muttered curse was the only answer, and the next moment Johnson hurled his lank form violently against the door in a vain attempt to burst it open. Three several times he repeated the attempt. Then the Captain said:

"Back to our hiding-place, Frank. We shall have Menzies down in a few minutes to see if the deed is done."

A silence filled with the shrieking noises of the outer world brooded in the cabin for half

an hour. At the end of that time the door swung open and Menzies, with a glittering knife in his hand, strode in. The sallow pallor of his face and the red glare of his eyes told plainly that he scented danger. He paused for a moment to gaze around him, and then sprang towards the Captain's room.

"Is the fool dead, Johnson?" he called.

"No!"

The Captain's voice rang in his ear and the Captain's hand was at his throat. John Travis had made a mistake. Menzies shook off his grip with the strength of a giant, and at the same instant drove one of his huge fists into the Captain's face, knocking him clear off his feet. At that perilous moment Johnson pried the lock of the Captain's door with his knife and dashed out.

"Kill him! kill him, Menzies!" he shouted, springing towards the still prostrate Captain.

A wild lurch of the reeling bark hurled the mate against his associate in crime, and the Captain, his head ringing and still dizzy from the effects of the blow which he had received, arose to his feet. The two mates, recovering from their collision, dashed at him. At that instant there was a sharp red flash and a report. The second mate staggered, uttered a groaning

execration, and fell in a limp heap across the cabin table. Frank Watson had shot him through the breast.

Johnson, seeing his partner killed and the drawn pistol in the Captain's hand, dropped the knife and threw up his hands.

"Don't shoot!" he exclaimed. "I give in."

"I told you that inside of three hours you would beg me for your life. Now you do exactly as I tell you, or you're a dead man. I'm going to order that boy to open the skylight. You will then call to the man at the wheel and say to him: 'The Captain is all right; he stands in with us. Let her off a point.' You understand?"

Johnson nodded tremulously, and the Captain stepped inside the door of his room, where he could cover the mate with his revolver and be invisible from the skylight, which Frank opened. Johnson shouted his message to the man at the wheel, who answered, with a yell:

"Blamed lucky for him. A point off she goes."

At a sign from the Captain, Frank closed the skylight.

"Now go into your own room," said the Captain to Johnson. The mate very sullenly obeyed, and was locked in.

"Keep guard over that door with your revolver till morning," said the Captain to the boy. "I'm going on deck."

John Travis ascended the poop and nodded to the man at the wheel.

"Mr. Johnson and Mr. Menzies are taking a night in," he shouted in the man's ear. "We'll be in port in the morning."

The man grinned.

"None dis crew ever been in Bermooda," he shouted. "But I t'ink we'll be glad dis time."

The Captain smiled grimly and walked away. Two hours later the gale abated and a light was sighted ahead. The Captain took the wheel himself and brought the ship to her anchorage. When the dawn broke the dazed crew found themselves under the guns of Fort Monroe, with the ensign flying at the spanker-peak, union down. They never knew how it was hoisted, and before they recovered from their amazement a boat was alongside and they were all under arrest. And that was the end of the mutiny on the *Swallow*.

IX

THE SCAPE-GOAT OF *LA JUSTICIA*

The Strange Tale of a "Revolution"

"YES, I'll run your boat down, but I want five hundred dollars for the job. Oh no, you understand English all right, and I want the money paid in gold before I go."

The speaker leaned on the back of his chair, and scanned closely the faces of the three men at the broad table before him. He had expected and hoped for the summons that brought him here before these men, whom he knew were confronted by the perplexing problem of finding an engineer to run the man-of-war *La Justicia* and two hundred troops down to Boca las Animas. Since the revolution had stopped the work on the breakwater the engineer had watched closely the drastic methods of this South-American government to pacify its unruly children. He was well acquainted with the rebel situation in Boca las Animas; he knew

that *La Justicia's* engineers had deserted to the mountains; and he knew that *La Justicia* had to sail that night; the troops were on board. So when the polite summons to the Admiral's presence had come, the engineer straightway set his price. He felt security in his rights and protection as a citizen of these United States; he knew the extremity of the men before him; and while they seemed to consider his demand, the engineer's mind was busy with thoughts of a four-inch pile of twenty-dollar gold-pieces.

Then the small man of the three, the man in gold braid, spoke, and as he talked his southern vehemence grew.

"You," he repeated, fiercely, as he advanced towards the engineer — "you will run that steamer to Boca las Animas, you will serve us well, you will not get a cent for it, and, if you *object, we* will blow your head off."

As the small man stopped talking his gesticulating right-arm was waving over the engineer's shoulder and his angry face was within three inches of the engineer's own.

The engineer's eyes turned to the other men, only to find himself fairly covered with a revolver by one, as the third man reappeared in the doorway, followed by two soldiers.

"Now take him," said the small man.

The soldiers fell in behind, while the other two men took places at his side. The small man stood in front and smiled.

"All right, all right," broke out the engineer, and his voice rose with the anger that mastered him. "You've got me now; but just you wait till my government hears of this. We'll blow this port back into the mountains. We'll—"

The small man leaned forward and his face darkened. "Basta" he hissed — "basta, ó sino."

And a soldier behind, seeing his master's approval, brought the butt end of his pistol down hard on the engineer's skull.

In these troublous times the sight of a prisoner on the streets attracts little attention; men are afraid their interest will excite suspicion. The engineer and his guard passed rapidly down the steep hill from the barracks. It was growing dark, with good promise of a stormy night. Already gusts of rain blew in from the sea and rattled against the sheet-iron windows of the warehouses. In the darkness and rain the men stumbled over the timbers and rocks, scattered as they were on the night when work on the breakwater ceased. In the lee of the first completed stretch of the jetty *La Justicia* rested quietly. To windward the waves flung them-

selves against the solid wall, and the spray mixed with the driving rain, and tasted salt on the lips of the expectant men on the steamer's deck.

In the darkness and wind the man-of-war passed slowly out of the harbor.

La Justicia had been a freighter. She was two hundred odd feet long, and was finishing her days as a transport for this South-American federation. The troops were packed closely in her dimly lit holds. They were pleased to be dry, and they laughed as the vessel rolled till the swinging-lanterns struck the deck-beams. This way was certainly better, they said, than making the trip in coasting schooners and sloops a quarter the size of *La Justicia*.

The lights of El Puerto had been soon lost, and now the vessel, showing no lights, thrashed ahead into the black night.

In the engine-room the engineer sat and smoked. The clanking steel-bars moved and flashed regularly, and the damp air blew in from the lee doors. In the beginning, when orders from the pilot-house came thick and fast and kept the engineer busy, his two armed guards had watched him carefully. One at each door they stood, rifles in their hands. But now that the situation was well understood and ac-

cepted by the engineer, and that he had settled himself to his all-night's vigil, guards and prisoner sat and chatted together, and the rifles were stowed in a rack.

La Justicia rolled and pounded ahead into the night. Aft, by the steady and faint light of a mast-head lantern, a man was unfurling a flag of curious design. He bent it to wet halyards and it flung out into the wind as stiff as a board. Immediately the darkness swallowed it, and in the lantern-light the man heaved long at the tugging halyards.

The engineer had watched and wondered from the lee door of his engine-room. When the wet ceremony was over he turned to his guards for an explanation. At that moment *La Justicia's* course was changed, for she took the seas more on her beam.

"You are no longer running a government boat," said one of his guards; "but what's the odds to you, a foreigner? Government or revolutionists, it must be all one. You'll land in La Vela instead of Boca las Animas, and then your job's over. By to-morrow this vessel and every man in her will be with the rebels; the whole company have deserted to the side where they want to fight, and we are taking the boat with us. And it's been no easy matter

to bring this about; it would have fallen through if the government had not supplied us last night with an engineer. And their ways with you were none too gentle, and we don't think you bear them much ill-will." So the engineer took service with the rebels.

Through the hours of the early morning the engineer watched his machinery while his guards dozed. The troops slept as they could in the crowded holds. Some three hours after the vessel's course had been changed the men on the bridge began to feel uneasy as to their exact position. Certain of the troops, who had often felt their way along this unlighted coast in sloops and schooners, were routed out and questioned. But they had paid no attention to the course, and, being unused to a steamship, they had no correct idea of the distance covered. Their answers were conflicting and uncertain, and served only to increase the apprehension of those in charge. There was nothing but utter blackness ahead of them, and the vessel rolled into it perseveringly. On the bridge there was conflict of authority that boded ill if danger came. At ten minutes past four the engine-room bell clanged, and the engineer jumped to his throttles. There was a commotion in the crowded holds and excited tramping on

deck. The engineer stood by expectant, and stopped and backed as the bells ordered. Then came "full speed ahead," and the engineer opened her wide. She took speed slowly, and lifted her bows high on a big sea. It was her last plunge, for she came down with a crash and a shiver on the hard coral rocks, and they tore through her iron sides and held her fast. She rolled over to port like a wounded bird, and the coral cut her through. She righted, and wrenched out life-boats and davits. The engineer was thrown from his post, and as he arose from the gratings the terrified firemen trampled on him in their mad efforts to reach the deck. From the holds arose a confused din, and at the hatches the officers drove back the frenzied troops with a rain of blows from sheathed swords. Those on deck stumbled and fell in the darkness, and called wildly, till a heavy crash of black water left them gasping for breath.

La Justicia held fast in her coral berth and the waters beat at her till morning. Two brown bodies rolling on the hard sand in the gray light told those on shore that a transport had been wrecked. Daylight showed the exhausted crew a dim line of beach, with palms showing over the hanging mist of the breakers, a mile to lee-

ward. The sea went down. An hour later the white hull of the government tug *Augusto* showed in the offing. She was bearing down on them. Immediately there was much excitement among the officers of the wrecked man-of-war. Here were rescue and safety, but with them came fear of an inquiry into the wrecking and a knowledge of the treason that brought it about. The officers decided that the silence of each and every man on board could alone save them from the punishment for their crime against the state, and each man was given plainly to understand what his end would be should the fateful words come from him. The flag of curious design had been weighted and cast overboard. It only remained to decide upon a method to explain their unexpected position to those on board the *Augusto*. There was much discussion till the last moment, and the engineer watched the proceedings as one apart. He was again in the service of the government. It was decided to make the Captain of *La Justicia* the scape-goat. His was the ignorance that had wrecked the steamer, his carelessness alone had lost to the government their best vessel; and the Captain, securely bound, was the first man taken aboard the *Augusto*.

Three trips sufficed for the *Augusto* to take

La Justicia's crew back to El Puerto, and *La Justicia* was deserted at her last moorings. For months small coasting-craft, like birds of prey, hovered around her and were tied up to the iron carcass of the old freighter. Wrecking parties were fitted out in El Puerto, and fishermen and wharf loafers sailed over for the pickings. Blocks and tackle, rigging, masts, and finer furnishings, were the rewards of the first-comers. Her wooden decks were ripped up, and bolts were unscrewed with infinite labor. Every junk-shop in ports east and west for miles had stock from the old *Justicia.* Her hull became a landmark along the coast; she showed up plainly against the low shore behind her; and no matter how calm the sea, there were always waves to break in white spray against the ever-tossing bows of *La Justicia.*

The engineer spent the following six years in checkered wanderings, until one day he found himself on the beach opposite the old wreck. He hired a fisherman's canoe and, impelled by idle curiosity, paddled over the quiet sea towards the grim old carcass that stood out black against the clear sky. He sought the wreck's lee side for a mooring.

Every now and then the spray poured down on the iron deck from the ceaselessly breaking

waves at her bow. Her port stern was well under water, and great masses of seaweed floated in and out with the green waves that lifted through her gaping bulwarks.

The engineer found an empty canoe at the most avilable mooring. "Some fisherman," said he. He stepped on board, and the blood-red iron crackled and fell in flakes under his feet.

"I was the Captain of *La Justicia* on that last night," the stranger concluded.

"And I was the engineer," said the American.

The Captain looked his surprise, and after a moment's pause, he continued: "And I have been in jail six years for that night's work, and I am only out now because our President is finally in command. It was between you and me that night, and you won."

"How so?" asked the engineer.

"As the *Augusto* approached we decided to lay the blame of the wreck on you—to say that you had disobeyed orders, and lost the vessel to revenge yourself on the government for their harsh treatment," explained the Captain; "but at the last moment we realized it wouldn't do. You as a foreigner had no interest in the revolu-

tion, and to get square with us you would inform the government of our desertion that night. So I took the blame and the imprisonment. But now I'm to be Chief Collector of Customs to the whole republic."

X

CAPTAIN SAMPSON'S QUEER CARGO

How a Tidal-wave Helped the Rebels

WHEN the owners of the *Flying Squad,* of Boston, United States of America, requested Captain Sampson to take a large consignment of rum down to Aricco, the chief city of the smallest republic in South America, and then load up with mahogany for the return journey, he responded, gruffly:

"I ain't goin' into the liquor business, an' I'll be blowed if I'll take any hogsheads of rum on the *Squad.* If you want the mahogany, I'll go an' get that; but you'll have to get another man to take your rum."

Captain Sampson was an earnest Methodist, and his conscience smote him sharply at the mere suggestion of carrying New England rum to the natives; but after his energetic protest he walked out of the office of the Boston firm of ship-owners in an uneasy state of mind. It

was essential that he should make a living, and if he gave up the command of the *Squad* he would be a Captain without a ship, which in those days of close competition meant an indefinite period of idleness.

Consequently, two weeks later, when the three-masted schooner was loaded with the huge hogsheads of rum and ready to sail, Captain Sampson appeared on her deck to command.

"I hate such an un-Christian cargo," he muttered, as he paced the forward deck. "There ain't nothin' to be gained in takin' such a trip, but I can't desert the *Squad* at my age. I must live somehow, an' it wouldn't be livin' on land or on any other ship."

He looked up proudly at the tapering masts of the schooner, and then towards the graceful prow which had cut the foam of many a sea under his management.

"She's old as I be," he said, "but she don't show it. A little paint brightens *her* up smartly, but new clothes don't make *me* look young again."

When the schooner left port, the crew had less objection to the cargo than Captain Sampson; but the latter was a stern disciplinarian at sea, and in his regular Sunday services on

shipboard he alluded frequently to the sin of carrying liquor to the "heathen."

Ten weeks from port the *Squad* sighted the headland of Cape Aricco, which, as one might guess, was close to the city of the same name. The schooner was then brought close up in the wind, and her course steered for the lee side of the cape, where a small bay promised a good anchorage.

Night was drawing on apace when the *Squad* entered the bay. There were no signs of life or human habitation on the coast. The city and its surrounding suburban population were all located on the opposite side of the rocky, precipitous headland.

But just as the anchor chains of the schooner rattled over the sides and tumbled with a splash into the water a small boat, with a torn mutton-leg sail fluttering in the wind, pushed out from the shore. As the queer craft approached, it could be seen that only one man was aboard, and he was a tall, dark, sinuous Ariccan.

When he swung himself up on the deck of the *Squad* by means of the rope-ladder to help him, he coolly inspected the ship from stem to stern, and then said in good English:

"You've had a good voyage, Captain. No ropes or spars broken—nothing lost."

"The *Flying Squad* never carries broken spars an' riggin'," answered Captain Sampson, promptly.

The stranger shrugged his shoulders, and dismissed the subject with that questionable action.

"But your cargo of rum must be all right, then," he remarked, without removing his eyes from the rigging.

Captain Sampson started visibly at these words, and barely controlled his voice as he blurted out:

"Who said we had rum on board?"

"Nobody," the stranger replied, again shrugging his shoulders. "But I judge you have, Captain. Haven't you?"

Captain Sampson was getting red in the face, and his answer indicated the state of his feelings.

"It's nobody's business what I have on board, an' I don't propose to enlighten anybody."

A sudden flash of anger leaped into the stranger's face, but instantly it disappeared.

"It's nobody's business, Captain, except the owners of this ship—and mine. Your cargo is consigned to me—to me—Don Sagua Quesada, of Aricco. Am I not right?"

Captain Sampson was puzzled. He knew his orders were to anchor outside the cape and

to wait for the appearance of Don Sagua, who would give him orders where to land his cargo. The faintest suspicion of fraud entered his mind, but when the stranger presented indisputable credentials that he was the man he pretended to be his mind grew easier.

"Well, where do you want the blamed rum discharged?" he asked. "The sooner I get rid of it the better I'll feel, for it's an un-Christian cargo at the best."

The swarthy Ariccan hesitated a moment and closely scanned the wooded shore.

"I s'pose they won't let me land up at the city?" suggested the Captain, not without signs of curiosity in his voice and manner, for he was not sure but he was a smuggler in trying to run a cargo of rum into Aricco.

"No, they might not—at least, until you paid a heavy duty on it," Don Quesada replied, turning quickly towards the Captain.

"Then I'll be blowed if I'll keep the stuff on board another day!" blurted out Captain Sampson. "I ain't a smuggler, an' I won't have nothin' to do with smuggled goods."

Don Quesada eyed him a moment in silence, and then said:

"No, it wouldn't be safe to go into Aricco. But you can unload here. In twenty-four hours

I will have men and boats to unload your cargo. I have some flat-bottom boats in the cove now which will serve our purpose."

Half an hour later Don Quesada left the *Squad* in his small craft, and just as darkness settled over the water they saw him disappear in the gloom of the woods.

"A queer way to do business," reflected Captain Sampson. "I'd never ship with such a cargo again for nobody. I knew something was wrong about it. The company wanted me to run head foremost into the smuggling business, an' nothin' but my suspicions saved me. Even that Don wouldn't tell me until I guessed it."

Then, thinking of what he would say to the owners of the *Squad* when he returned to Boston, he walked up and down the port side of the schooner with angry strides.

All the next day the *Flying Squad* swung at her anchor in the quiet cove. There was not a sign of life in the neighborhood. A party of sailors rowed ashore to secure some fresh water, and they reported the place lonely and deserted.

On the following morning a small steamer appeared off the cape, moving rapidly towards them. She was flying the flag of the Ariccan republic, and as she drew nearer, Captain Sampson said, truthfully:

"She's an armed cruiser. I wonder what she wants in this cove?"

In a short time it was clear to the crew of the *Squad* that the cruiser was heading for them, and that her guns were trained so as to blow the schooner out of the water if she attempted to run.

"What's up, anyway?" fumed Captain Sampson. "I guess I'm flying the American flag, an' I haven't smuggled anything into their little country yet."

The cruiser came up close to the *Squad,* and then an officer and crew were lowered in a small cutter. When they reached the side of the *Squad,* Don Quesada, dressed in the uniform of a second officer, stepped on board and, in a sharp, brusque voice, said:

"Captain, you are my prisoner."

"Not until I know why!" shouted Captain Sampson. "I'm protected by the American flag, an' the man who touches that will have a big debt to pay."

"I don't want to touch your flag. We want you and your cargo. You're guilty of carrying arms and ammunition to the insurgents, and your vessel is hereby condemned as a filibuster."

"Sir, the man who calls me an' my boat filibusters won't live to see—"

"Gently, gently, Captain, or I might give the word to have you blown out of the water," interposed the Don.

Captain Sampson looked at the frowning guns, and then asked:

"Where are you going to take us?"

"To Aricco."

"Then I'll appeal to the American consul there, an' we'll see if you can outrage an American citizen in this way. You'll have an American man-of-war here in a month to blow your city to pieces."

Don Quesada merely laughed.

Another cutter left the side of the cruiser, carrying with it the end of a long hemp cable. This was fastened to the bow of the *Squad,* and then with a shrill whistle the cruiser started forward with her prize.

They ran far out to sea first to avoid the shoals of the cape, the little cruiser puffing away frantically to make decent headway with her big load. Don Quesada, who was virtually in charge of the schooner, seated himself forward and seemed lost in thought. Captain Sampson leaned against the cabin and vainly tried to fathom the mystery. He was satisfied

now that Don Quesada was a government spy, but why suspicion had been attached to his vessel he could not understand.

When just abreast of the promontory the heavens became overcast with fleecy clouds, and, knowing the nature of the climatic changes in that latitude, Captain Sampson surveyed the threatening sky with some alarm. Don Quesada was also interested in the problem, and he walked uneasily from side to side of the schooner.

"I don't like the looks of the weather, Captain," he said. "Do you know anything about the weather signs of this region?"

"I know enough about 'em to predict that we're goin' to have a hurricane pretty soon," Captain Sampson replied, sharply, "an' I'd like to get ashore before it comes."

The wind was already blowing briskly from the sea. The cruiser, which had been making desperate efforts to reach the harbor, suddenly veered about and headed for the sea.

"She's going to run out to meet the storm," Don Quesada said.

"Yes, an' we'll break loose an' be driven ashore," answered the Captain.

The wind-storm increased so rapidly that in ten minutes a heavy sea was boiling around the

prow of the schooner. The stout rope cable grew so taut that it threatened to part, and, as the cruiser struggled to reach the open sea before the hurricane was upon her, the heavy line trembled and groaned under the strain imposed upon it.

Suddenly the storm rushed down upon the harbor and the two ill-fated vessels with all the violence of a tropical hurricane. The heavens became overcast and darkness seemed to settle over the sea. In the midst of the storm the cruiser was shut out from view.

On board the *Flying Squad* confusion reigned. Several of the crew and sailors from the cruiser were washed overboard by the first wave that swept across the decks. Don Quesada and Captain Sampson clung to whatever stationary object they could find.

The falling rigging threatened to smash the deck and cabins to splinters, but the wind and waves together managed to carry the broken spars and débris overboard, so that the careening vessel could right herself and face the storm. So long as the cable held, the *Squad* had one good chance in five of outriding the storm.

But no one expected the cable to hold, and when it suddenly parted Don Quesada merely remarked:

"There she goes!"

"Yes; an' here we go," replied Captain Sampson, shouting even above the roar of the storm.

His remark was made apparent a moment later when the schooner veered around and nearly capsized in the act. Her bow swung about and plunged deep beneath the waves. Then suddenly she became overwhelmed by a monster wave, but after a momentary struggle she seemed to rise higher and higher into the air. The sensation was peculiar, and Captain Sampson wondered at it.

But Don Quesada knew more of the peculiar phenomena characteristic of the southern tropical waters. During a lull in the terrible upward motion he shouted, aloud:

"A tidal-wave!"

This was, in reality, the cause of the upward and onward impetus suddenly imparted to the *Flying Squad.* Through the intense darkness of the storm the schooner was rushing rapidly on the very crest of a towering tidal-wave towards its doom. Every man held his breath. It was a moment of intense mental strain.

Then out of the darkness, across the stern of the ship rose a great black object. It towered

above them like an ill-fated monster of the sea. Then it swept by them amid the roar and suction of the terrible waters. It was the dark hull of the cruiser caught in the powerful grasp of the resistless tidal-wave.

Then followed a period of confusion that seemed like a blank to the crew and officers of the *Squad.*

Then there was a shock that shook the very foundations of the earth. Timbers and planks were crushed and splintered, and the *Flying Squad* was a hopeless wreck.

When the tidal wave retired, and the storm subsided sufficiently to make a survey of the situation, Captain Sampson found his beloved schooner wrecked in the very centre of a tropical forest. A dozen yards away he could see what looked like a river, and floating quietly on it was the cruiser. But her decks were deserted and she looked as forlorn and helpless as the *Squad.*

Don Quesada, who had been roughly handled by the storm, suddenly stood up and gazed intently at the queer situation of the two boats. Then he broke forth into a laugh.

"This is no time to laugh," Captain Sampson said, roughly. "You've been the means of makin' me all this trouble, an' I won't have

"THE DON SEATED HIMSELF ON THE STUMP OF THE BROKEN MAINMAST"

you make light of it. You're a spy an' a traitor, an' I'll hold you responsible for the loss of my ship."

"How so, Captain? I didn't bring the storm and tidal-wave."

"No, but you betrayed me an took me out to get caught in it. Now your men are dead an' I have the upper hand. You're my prisoner."

The Don raised his hand in protest.

"Listen, Captain; you don't understand. Let me explain."

Again he laughed heartily, and only recovered himself when he saw the threatening look spread over Captain Sampson's face.

"I see you're not in the secret," he began again. "Let me explain, Captain."

"Well, go on if you have anything to explain."

The Don seated himself on the stump of the broken mainmast and began:

"The company should have trusted you more, Captain. I see you can be trusted. Those hogsheads of rum, Captain—did you think we wanted them down here? No, no; but we did want arms and ammunition. We had a revolution here, but we had no chance without arms. So we sent to your country for them. They

agreed to send them down in hogsheads, Captain, invoiced as rum."

Captain Sampson stared incredulously at the speaker.

"Yes, Captain, your hogsheads are all full of small-arms—rifles, swords, bayonets, cartridges, and such things. They were consigned to me. I was to have them unloaded, and then I would leave my position in the navy to join the revolutionists. I knew we would succeed then.

"But they got wind of it somehow, and the cruiser yonder was sent down to capture you. I was second officer on it and I had the pleasure of arresting you. There was no way out of it. It hurt me as much as it did you. But—you can't always tell. See now what has happened—your boat wrecked and the cruiser in the river above the forts. What a stroke of luck!"

"I don't see much luck in that," muttered the Captain. "Here's the *Squad* wrecked, an' somebody's got to pay for her."

"You join me, Captain, and I'll pay for her when we overturn the government," Don Quesada said, blandly. "Everything is working into my hands. Even the elements are aiding me."

He glanced at the cruiser still floating in the river, and then continued:

"I'll explain my plans, Captain. All the country back of us is in revolt—all except the city of Aricco. That's protected from the sea by forts, but it has no protection from heavy guns on this side. This river runs right up to the city. Now we have the only cruiser the government owns in our possession, and it is in the river this side of the forts. That tidal-wave was a godsend, Captain, wasn't it?"

"I don't quite see it in that light yet," Captain Sampson replied, somewhat mollified, but still dubious.

"Well, you will comprehend soon what good luck has befallen us. I need a good captain, and when we capture Aricco I'll make you an officer in the navy with a good salary."

"But the *Squad,* she's wrecked for good, she's broken all to pieces," ruefully remarked the Captain, surveying painfully his pet ship.

"Yes; and if she wasn't wrecked she would be worthless," said Don Quesada. "No man could get her out of this forest."

Then remembering his cargo, Captain Sampson started for the hold, remarking:

"I knew that rum business would bring me bad luck, but I must have a look at it. If them

hogsheads are full of fire-arms I'm a filibuster sure enough."

In the hold of his wrecked schooner a dozen hogsheads were spilling their contents around, and one glance at the motley array satisfied the old Captain that Don Quesada had told the truth. When he returned to the deck he said, quietly:

"I'd just as lief be a revolutionist as a filibuster, an' I'm that, so you can count on me to help in this war. If you want to get that cruiser under way, me an' my men will help you."

Half an hour later the surviving members of the crew were aboard the disabled cruiser, and when the small-arms were transferred from the hogsheads in the hold of the *Squad* to her deck Don Quesada felt that he held the winning trump. They worked her up stream by means of sails, where the revolutionist army greeted them with open arms.

A week later the city of Aricco fell into the hands of the rebels, and the government changed leaders the third time in that year; but in none of the previous revolutions did such a queer chain of circumstances help the insurgents as when Don Quesada and Captain Sampson made their flank attack upon the fortified city with the government's own cruiser.

XI

A WARM CORNER IN SOOLOO

Raiding Oriental Pirates

"THERE, Bill, she's vanished!" was my exclamation as we rounded the bluff headland at last, and I looked vainly for a sign of the vessel we had been chasing since sundown the night before.

"Vanished be blowed!" was Bill's prompt rejoinder, "a-beggin' of yer pardon, sir, for makin' so free. She's on'y took onder the lee o' that theer mess of islands, an', as like as not, come to an anchor, bein' as she's on'y a pirate—and black at that—an' no better weren't to be looked for nohow."

I was the youngest midshipman on board the *Swordfish,* and Bill was acting quartermaster aboard, and was besides our chief authority on the locality, having been shipped on one vessel after another selected for special service against the pirates who find shelter among the islands

between Borneo and the Philippine group. It needed little experience to convince one that Bill's was the only likely explanation of the disappearance of the craft we had been doing our best to overhaul, without much success, for so many hours, and the most interesting question was what steps could now be taken to find out her harbor of refuge and capture her. At this point I was left to my own conjectures, however, for Bill was summoned to give the Captain and First Lieutenant the benefit of his local knowledge on the poop-deck of the brig.

It was a glorious morning, and as we had just come upon the station the scene had all the delight of novelty for me. We had rounded the sharp headland which marked the southern point of one of the larger islands of the Sooloo Archipelago, and had opened a little archipelago of smaller islands that clustered to leeward, glittering in all the wealth of vegetation and color which is nowhere to be found in such profusion as in the island zone of the Eastern seas. The islands were evidently volcanic in origin, and their broken peaks and sharply torn cliffs and ravines were draped—I might almost say loaded—with a covering of trees and shrubs and creepers that glistened and sparkled under the level sunlight. The breeze was so light,

now that we had got under the lee of the larger island, that it did no more than ripple the glassy surface of the water, and, as we forged slowly ahead, every sail and spar and rope in our rigging seemed to sleep on the water alongside. Beyond and below it, too, one seemed to be able to look down and down through the crystal water to an unknown depth, and there to see a thousand strange forms of colored corals growing in forests at the bottom, among which brightly tinted fishes swam in and out, and sparkling jellyfish contracted and expanded with a dozen rainbow colors. When I looked up again Bill was standing looking at me, with a half-smile on his broad face.

"'Well, Bill," I exclaimed, "do you think we'll be able to find her?"

Bill laughed. "Well, sir, I ain't a-sayin' as the Cap'n have exac'ly told me wot he's a-goin' to do, but I shouldn't be noways astonished if he was to order out the boats; an' if so be as he do, we'll find her right enough. Though mind ye, sir," he added, "I ain't a-sayin' as it 'll be a pleasure trip, neither."

"Oh," I said, delighted with the prospect, "of course they'll fight, won't they?"

"Well, sir, in course, they're on'y niggers, arter all, an' most o' them Borneo niggers at

that, wi' a sprinklin' o' Portuguese an' trash o' that sort a-thrown in; but get them in a corner, as ye most times do among them islands, and they'll fight—if I ain't mistook."

Half an hour later I learned that Bill's expectation was about to be realized, as the word was passed round that the boats were to be ordered out as soon as the men had had breakfast. It was all excitement in the midshipmen's berth, and the discussion grew warm as to which of us should have the good-fortune to be included in one or other of the boats, every one urging his own peculiar claims to the distinction. I was no doubt as positive as the others, though in my heart I had only a very slight hope that, as the junior of the party, a place would be found for me. I had all but given up hopes, indeed, when the crews had been told off to the three boats, and the Captain paused for an instant before he named the midshipman who was to go in the last. Possibly an imploring look which I know I cast at him had something to do with it, for he hesitated.

"Can any of you young gentlemen swim well?" he asked, suddenly.

I gasped, for I knew that of us four I was the only one who could claim to swim even

decently well. The faces of the others no doubt told the tale, for he continued, with a laugh:

"I thought as much, and it may be a good lesson. Besides, there may be swimming to do for some of you before you get back. You can go, Maxwell," he added, with a nod to me, which I wasn't slow to obey, and in a second or two more I was seated in the stern-sheets beside Mr. Bates the master.

I should have preferred either of the other boats, as the master was not a popular officer, but I was too much delighted at my good-fortune in forming one of the expedition at all to care very much under which command I sailed. In another moment the three boats were pulling for the nearest of the islands. For a time they kept company, and as we coasted along, looking for a passage suitable for a vessel as big as the schooner we had been chasing, Mr. Parker, who was in the largest boat, repeatedly consulted Bill, who was acting as lookout-man in the bow of ours, and it was easy to see that Mr. Bates didn't like it, though, of course, he couldn't say anything. We had passed several channels before we met with any that seemed worth following up, but at last we came to one that Bill thought a likely one. The boats were brought to, and Mr. Parker

held a consultation with the other officers. Our Third Lieutenant was inclined to agree with Bill that it would be worth while to explore the channel, but Mr. Parker himself was doubtful, and Mr. Bates was dead against it, chiefly—at least, so I thought—because Bill had recommended it. At last Mr. Parker decided to separate the boats, and try several channels at the same time. He gave orders that our boat should row cautiously through this one, while he would take the next, and the Third Lieutenant the third, and whichever boat first discovered the pirates was to send up a rocket to bring the others to its assistance before attempting any attack. I could see that Bill approved of the plan, but it was evident from Mr. Bates's face that he was annoyed at being selected to explore the very channel he had been so positive couldn't be the one chosen by the schooner we were looking for. Of course there was no help for it, however, and after one more caution from Mr. Parker the boats separated.

The men gave way with a will as we turned her head into the channel, and our boat shot in between two precipitous islands that seemed to rise like a wall on each side, every nook and ledge of which was covered with plants and shrubs, while creeping-plants ran over the face

of the rocks and hung in long festoons and streamers to the water's edge. The channel was deep, though we could see the bottom as clearly as if it had been less than a fathom, but as we went on I began to fancy Bill must have been wrong, for it didn't seem possible that a vessel of any size could have come up so narrow a passage. I could see that the master thought so, too, for he looked as black as thunder whenever he glanced at Bill sitting up in the bows keeping a lookout. Our oars were muffled, and we had been careful to obey orders by keeping as quiet as possible, but suddenly Mr. Bates began to whistle, as if to show that he knew there was no reason for caution any longer. I could see the men look at him, and Bill half turned his head, but of course nobody spoke.

We had been rowing up the channel for perhaps a quarter of an hour, and we had just turned into a straighter reach of the passage, when Bill turned round quickly.

Mr. Bates involuntarily stopped whistling.

"I ain't sure but wot I heerd something, sir," Bill said, in a cautious tone.

"Where away?" asked the master, in a careless tone that was loud enough to be heard some distance.

"It seemed to come from the bluff on the right bow, sir."

Mr. Bates threw a quick glance along the wall of rock that rose nearly a hundred feet overhead, then he broke into a short scornful laugh.

"You must have dreamed it, Bill. Keep your eyes open, my man, for I don't reckon much on your ears."

One or two of the sailors laughed.

"Give way, men," he added. "The sooner we get out o' this hole, the better our chance 'll be of dropping across the schooner."

The men lay to their oars, and in spite of the muffling the regular throb of the ten oars we were pulling came back in an echo from the cliffs on each side. We were nearing the upper end of the channel, and it seemed as if the cliff was closing in upon it so much that I began to think it ended there, and didn't form a real channel between the islands after all. I could see that the same idea had occurred to Mr. Bates, for he half rose and looked anxiously ahead.

At that moment I saw Bill suddenly turn round and hold up his hand.

"Hold hard, sir, for Heaven's sake!" he exclaimed. Then, as the master didn't seem to

act on his warning, he added, impressively: "Avast, men! Avast, for yer lives!"

The men instinctively stopped, but Mr. Bates's face flushed crimson as he shouted:

"Confound ye, give way, men! You take your orders from me!"

The oars dipped with a fierce stroke into the water, and the next instant the boat shot into what for the moment looked like open water. The cliff on the right had ended suddenly and opened into a sort of lagoon, partly alongside of the channel and partly running in behind the cliff, and there, lying at anchor just behind the point, was the schooner we were in chase of. It was too late to go back, and, although the channel extended a little way beyond where we were, it looked as if it ended there. I could see the flush fade suddenly from Mr. Bates's face, and his lips close tightly, as if he had made up his mind; then with a sudden motion of the rudder he brought her head around, exclaiming: "Ship your oars, men, and be ready to board her!"

It was too sudden for thinking. With the promptitude that comes of discipline the men's oars were taken on board in a second or two, and yet almost before they lay on the thwarts we were alongside. I hadn't had time to think

what it meant for us, but I had been able to see that the deck of the long low craft was thronged with men in such numbers as made our handful look few indeed. Just as the thought flashed through my mind our bows touched and scraped along the schooner's side. Next moment Mr. Bates, who had sprung to his feet and drawn his cutlass, shouted: "Now, my lads, follow me," and, leaping on the stern-sheets, made a spring at the low bulwark that wasn't higher than his breast as he stood. A scattered but pretty heavy volley was poured at the same moment into the boat, and about half a dozen of our men fell. One of them fell across my legs, just as I was about to follow Mr. Bates, and knocked me into the bottom of the boat. He was a heavy man, and it took me a minute to get free and spring to my feet again. When I did so my first instinct was to glance over the boat. There was only one man sitting up on board of her, and that was Bill.

At the moment I caught sight of him he was seated on a thwart, with the rocket-tube propped up between his knees, while he was deliberately striking a match. Next moment he had lit the fuse, and in another second or so the rocket soared with a hiss into the air. At the same moment Bill picked up his cutlass, which lay

on the thwart beside him, and with a wild shout, "Now for them bloomin' pirates!" sprang at a bound almost over the bulwark beside him. I had done the same at the other end of the boat almost at the same moment, and both Bill and I reached the schooner's deck together.

I staggered and nearly fell over a man who lay close to the bulwark, and if it hadn't been for Bill I suppose it would have been the last of me. The pirates were swarming round us, and were now driving the handful of our boat's crew step by step before them. Bill had taken them on the flank, and for a moment he staggered them. I don't know that he was a great swordsman, but he knew how to use his weapon, and his unusual strength and headlong energy gave him a tremendous advantage over the crowd of miscellaneous blacks who seemed to make up the pirate crew. Few of them were even up to the middle height as we reckon it, and only here and there had any appearance of much strength. What they wanted in strength and size, however, they made up for in ferocity, and a more brutal and ferocious-looking mass of faces it would, I suppose, have been impossible to find anywhere.

I was barely sixteen, and it was my first

fight, so it isn't wonderful that my memory of details is confused. I know that when I stumbled it was Bill's cutlass that warded off a blow aimed at me by an all but naked and nearly black ruffian, who fell backwards with a fearful cut across his face. Then I recovered myself and did my best; but, after all, I can remember very little about it. It was all a confusion of yells and curses; blows from gunstocks and flashes from cutlasses; a changing medley of fierce wild faces and glittering eyes that seemed to move and flicker around like the changing figures in the kaleidoscope. We had fallen back upon the rest of our party, but I did not dare to turn my eyes to see who were left, though I felt certain there were very few, as most of the fighting seemed to fall on Bill and me.

I felt rather than saw that Bill was beside me, and we fell back side by side, cutting, slashing, thrusting at the wild figures that swarmed around us. I had emptied the revolver I had carried, and had nothing left but the cutlass, and already I felt my arm growing benumbed with the unusual exertion. I gave one quick glance around, and saw that Bill and I were left almost alone.

At that moment I heard him say: "Time's

a'most up, sir. Ye can swim, can't ye?" I didn't turn my head to Bill, but I half turned and nodded. He cut a big negro across the forearm, and then he spoke again: "Give back an' drop overboard, an' come up under her starn."

I gave a hasty glance behind me, and saw that we were within six or eight feet of the bows. I just managed to guard a thrust from a cutlass and to spring back out of the way of a blow from a gunstock, but in doing so my heel caught on a ring in the deck, and, before I could do anything to stop myself, I staggered backward and fell over the low bulwark headlong into the water. It was so sudden that, for the moment, I had almost forgotten it was exactly what Bill had advised, but fortunately I remembered just in time, and as I came to the top I dived again and swan under water till I came up under the stern. I had scarcely got my breath when Bill came up alongside of me.

We looked at one another, each of us wondering whether the other was wounded, and then Bill gave a low chuckle. "That ain't bad for a beginner, a-beggin' of your pardon, sir; the on'y thing's, wot's to be did next?" We were both treading water, and Bill proceeded very deliberately to look around. Presently he broke into the same all but soundless chuckle

as before. "Blowed if I 'ain't hit it, sir," he whispered. "D'ye see that theer thunderin' great rock?" he asked, in the same tone, pointing to the cliff, which didn't seem to be more than thirty yards or so from where we had taken shelter. I looked at it, and could see that it descended sheer into the water, but was covered by a perfect net-work of creepers that hung down its face and even trailed in the water. I nodded. "Well, sir, wot we've got for to do is just to get onder them leaves, an' quick at that; fur I ain't a-sayin' but wot I can a'most feel them bloody sharks a-nibblin' at my toes."

I hadn't thought of it till then, but now I seemed to feel them, too. "All right," I whispered; "say when."

"Theer ain't no time like now, sir, I reckon, on'y mind an' swim deep." Bill rose in the water as he spoke and sounded without a splash, and I followed his example. It seemed a long minute before I felt myself come up close to the face of the rock, and I could have sworn that something was biting my toes, but I was delighted to find Bill before me under the shadow of the trailing creepers. It was a strange place in which I found myself, for the rock shelved outward overhead, and the creepers fell like a screen some eight or ten feet

from the wall. There was a flat shelf of rock, on to which Bill scrambled hastily, and I followed his example before a word was exchanged. Before I had time to look round I heard Bill mutter, in a tone of surprise: "Well, I'm blowed! though I might 'a' knowed it, too!"

I looked up, and saw that Bill had already gained his feet and was peering curiously into what seemed to be a natural passage through the rocky promontory, as light was clearly visible at its other end. I too regained my feet, and looked questioningly at my companion.

"Now this here's wot I calls a circumstance," he said. "It were out o' this as the noise come as I heerd when we was a-comin' up the passage, if I ain't mistook." No doubt Bill was right, for the gap in the cliff was a large one, which only escaped notice from either side owing to the dense masses of creepers that fell from the top to the water's edge. We explored the great natural archway, and found it not more than forty feet through from side to side, ending almost at the level of the water on each face. On the outer side, however, the cliff receded a little instead of overhanging, and here Bill discovered a narrow ledge on which rude steps had been cut, by which it looked as if an active man might easily climb to the top

inside the creepers. Bill, indeed, had scrambled up part of the way, when we heard the sound of muffled oars advancing up the passage. "Well, I ain't a-sayin' but wot this here's a stroke o' luck, neither, sir," he exclaimed, as he scrambled down again. "We'll get took off comfortable, arter all, an', as like as not, hev another smack at them niggers."

We listened silently as the throb of oars drew gradually nearer, and when we judged the boats were close at hand we drew aside the creepers sufficiently to enable us to plunge in and swim off to meet them. It was no distance, for Mr. Parker's boat was almost abreast of the place, and they stopped the moment they saw us. In another minute we were hauled on board and I had told my story, breathlessly. By the time I had finished the other boat had come up and lay by to hear the news. Mr. Parker asked Bill and me a lot of questions about the passage through the rock, and how the schooner lay on the inner side. At last he said: "Then it would be no use sending a party through the passage, I suppose, Bill?"

Bill scratched his head thoughtfully for an instant, and then his face lighted up. "No, sir," he said, "I ain't a-sayin' as it would, not wi' cutlasses, leastways. But if so be as ye had

"BILL HAD SCRAMBLED ON SHORE AND DISAPPEARED"

such a thing as a shell o' some sort, I might make shift for to throw it aboard from the mast-head, in a manner o' speakin', w'ich is to say from the upper deck o' this here thunderin' rock."

"But you haven't been up there, Bill?" Mr. Parker said, looking admiringly at Bill's reckless face.

"No, sir, I ain't a-sayin' as I have, exac'ly; but if so be theer's anything to be got by goin', I'll get there, if I ain't mistook."

The Lieutenant looked thoughtfully at the rock and then at Bill. "Well, Bill," he said at last, "it's worth trying. We've got two or three hand-grenades aboard. You can take one and see what you can do. If you find you can manage it, light the fuse and throw it aboard, but first give a long whistle and we'll be ready to board."

In another minute we had run the cutter's bows into the creepers and Bill had scrambled on shore and disappeared. We backed out cautiously, and lay on our oars waiting. Then we pulled gently up to the opening of the lagoon to be ready for a rush, and waited again, every oar just dipping, and each face in a blaze of excitement as we listened. It felt like hours, and we began to think something must have

happened to Bill. Every eye watched Mr. Parker, expecting the order to go ahead, when suddenly a long, shrill whistle echoed and re-echoed through the passage, followed by a hoarse shout, "Take that fur a mess o' bloomin' savages!"

Mr. Parker rose to his feet. "Give way, men! Give way!" he shouted almost at the same moment, while each oar dipped suddenly and both boats shot ahead with a rush. In another moment we had opened the lagoon, and were greeted by a savage yell that came from the crowded deck of the schooner. It had scarcely reached us when there was a sudden flash of crimson light, a great jet of black smoke, and the roar of an explosion which instantly overpowered the shouts. For an instant it seemed as if the schooner had blown up. Everything heaved and rocked; rigging, spars, and masts appeared to be collapsing in the dense clouds of smoke, and the air seemed to be filled with pieces of timber that fell in hail on the water around her.

"Hold hard, men! Back water!" Mr. Parker shouted, and by an effort the boats were stopped before he had got within the radius of the explosion. When we boarded, after a minute or two, there was no opposition.

The deck was burned and blackened; coils of rope, and even the clothing on the bodies of dead and wounded men, were smouldering; part of the bulwarks had been blown away and the rigging was hanging loose and torn. The greater part of the pirate crew had taken refuge below, many of them badly scorched, and they were easily secured by our men. One of the pirate's boats had evidently been lowered since Bill and I had left her, for she was still floating astern. I was looking at her and wondering whether they had intended to look for us, when there was a hail from the foot of the cliff, and Mr. Parker turned to me and said: "That must be our friend Bill. Take a couple of hands and fetch him off; I want to find out how all this happened."

Bill's story was a simple one, and may be told in his own words: "Well, sir, ye see it was this way: I ain't a-sayin' as how that were exac'ly a ladies' staircase, neither, come to look at it close, but in course I goes up. At the top it were all a mess o' bamboos an' sich trash, conseckens o' w'ich I took longer to fetch an anchorage than wot I expected, but w'en I did theer warn't hardly anything for to do. Theer she were, as it might be a-layin' alongside, in a manner o' speakin', the crew on deck an' all

hands ready. Right amidships they had fetched a thunderin' great chest an' filled it chock full o' cartridges fur to be handy. Sez I to myself, theer's yer chance, Bill Jones, fur to be even wi' them bloomin' savages, arter all; an' wi' that I sounds the whistle, accordin' to orders, an' heaves that theer grenade, havin' first lighted the fuse o' the same in course, right aboard. I ain't a-sayin' but wot it were lucky, neither, sir, fur I ain't much o' a shot as a reg'lar thing. An' speakin' o' that, sir, I think as some more o' our boat's crew hev got to shore, an' I ain't a-sayin' but them fellers was a-goin' arter them wi' this here boat if so be as nothin' hadn't happened oncomfortable."

XII

"CAP'N I'S" CLOSEST CALL

A Tale of Fire at Sea

ONE warm moonlit evening, not many months ago, I stood on the bridge of a great south-bound steamship. We were somewhere off the Florida coast, but far from it, and well to the eastward of the Gulf Stream. Consequently, though the season was winter, the air was as balmy as that of a Northern June. The sea was perfectly smooth, and a school of porpoises, darting close to our bows through the phosphorescent waters, gleamed like flashes of liquid silver. The first officer, who was on watch, stood at one end of the bridge, and I leaned on its railing near Captain Ira Carey—or "Cap'n I," as he was always called by his intimates—at the other. My companion was as fine a specimen of a Yankee seaman as ever trod a deck, and had been on the water, boy and man, for nearly forty years. Not one of us had

spoken for many minutes, when the silence was at length broken by "Cap'n I," who, straightening up and speaking half aloud, as though continuing a train of thought, said:

"Yes, it must have been just about here."

"What?" I asked, anxiously, thinking he had spoken to me.

The Captain regarded me in silence for some seconds before he answered: "The closest call of my life. And though I've sailed these same waters a hundred times or more since, I always look for the place, and never leave the deck until I feel certain that we have passed it. Now I am quite sure that we have, so let's go below for a smoke."

A minute later we were seated in the Captain's spacious and handsomely furnished room, where the warm breeze softly rustled the curtains and wafted the fragrance of our cigars through the open doorways.

"Now for it, Captain," I said.

"For what?"

"Your yarn."

"What yarn?"

"Why, the yarn of your closest call, of course."

"Oh, that! It isn't much of a yarn, and I don't know as I can remember the facts very

well, anyhow, it all happened so long ago. But if you must have it, here goes:

"It was more than thirty years ago, and I was only a youngster, in spite of being first mate of the good brig *Rover,* of and from New York, with a general cargo for Mobile. After we'd taken in the bulk of our freight, among which was a lot of what in those days we called 'straw goods,' or carriages knocked down and wrapped in straw, we dropped down to Bedloe's Island and took aboard five tons of powder. It was in canisters, packed in white pine boxes, and I stowed it directly under the main-hatch, where it could be easily got at in case of accident. With this our lading was completed, and, having nothing more to detain us, we towed down to the Hook and put to sea. We stood well to the eastward of south until we were clear of the Gulf, and then laid a course for the Hole in the Wall, down here in the Bahamas.

"For a week nothing special happened, except that we got blown farther to the eastward than we liked, and pretty well out of the usual track of vessels passing through the Hole in the Wall. At length the last day that any of us ever spent aboard the old brig came on, bright and hot, with a fair but light breeze that

allowed us to set everything alow and aloft, and even to put 'stun-sails' on her. When night fell we were not far from where this ship was a couple of hours ago, or about two hundred miles from the northern end of the Bahamas.

"That evening was very much such a one as this, and found us slipping along as smooth as silk, leaving a phosphorescent wake like silver ribbons behind us. The 'old man' and I both turned in at eight bells, leaving the second mate on deck. It seemed uncommon hot and close down below, even for these latitudes; but leaving our doors open for the sake of what air did circulate, the Captain and I kept up the talk we had begun on deck. We occupied the two starboard state-rooms—he the after one, and I the one nearest the bulkhead that separated the cabin from the hold. In this bulkhead was a door.

"Getting started on an old sea-yarn, the Captain kept me awake for more than an hour; but I was getting drowsy at last, and hardly knew what he was saying, when suddenly he sung out: 'Hello, Iry! Don't you smell smoke?' I was wide awake in an instant, and I should say I did smell smoke. It was what had been putting me to sleep, though I had not realized

"'AS I OPENED THE DOOR A BURST OF FLAME GREETED ME'"

it until that moment. I sprang out of my bunk and into the cabin. There was no fire there, but as I opened the door in the bulkhead such a burst of red flames greeted me that I closed it again in a hurry. Then I made one bound up the companionway, yelling to the Captain as I went that we'd no time to lose in getting out of there.

"As I gained the deck the second mate was taking a turn along the weather side as cool and unconcerned as you please, without a suspicion that anything was going wrong. He stared at me as though he thought I was a lunatic when I shouted to him that the brig was on fire, and to lower away the gig that hung from the stern-davits if he valued his life. At the same time I ran forward to call all hands. The tone of my voice must have frightened them, for I never saw a more scared set of men than those that came aft at my summons.

"A couple of them helped me uncover and lift the main-hatch. I thought if the fire hadn't yet got to the powder, we might find time to throw it overboard, and then have a chance of saving the ship. But bless you! the flames were not only *near* the powder, they were all around it, and it is a great wonder we hadn't been blown to eternity long before.

As I caught sight of their red tongues licking those pine boxes, I got the hatch back into place in a hurry and ordered the men into the boat, which by this time was towing astern. All this had happened so quickly that the crew were tumbling over the stern by the time the Captain put his head out of the companion-way. There he stood staring about him like one who is dazed. He had stopped to slip into some clothes, and had a medicine-chest under his arm in place of the chronometer he thought he was saving.

"With all the calmness I could command I reported to him that our powder was liable to explode at any instant, and begged him to drop into the gig, from which the men were already shouting that they were about to cut her adrift. The 'old man' glanced at the boat, and, seeing that it was crowded, ordered me to cut away the starboard quarter-boat, which also hung from davits.

"At this I hesitated. It seemed like deliberate suicide to remain on that brig's deck a moment longer, and I didn't feel any more ready to die then than I do now. At the same time I never had disobeyed an order from a superior officer, and I wasn't inclined to do so for no better cause than cowardice. So I did as I was

told; but while hacking at those falls beside that smouldering volcano my heart was so high in my throat that it came nigh choking me. When the boat fell clear and drifted astern with the Captain, who had jumped into her as she touched the water, yelling to me to follow him, I hadn't the strength to do it. My knees weakened so that I couldn't have lifted my feet to save me. On my hands and knees I crawled aft, and rolled overboard just as the men cut the painter of the gig.

"The instant I touched the water I was all right again, and inside of another minute I had swum to the gig and was standing in its bows watching the brig. She was slipping away from us very quietly, but more swiftly than I had supposed her to be moving, and her towering pyramid of canvas, bleached to a snowy whiteness or barred with black shadows by the moonlight, formed as perfect a picture of marine life as ever a sailor would care to look upon. At that moment I fairly loved the old brig, and wished that I could regain her deck so as to make one effort to save her. There were no flames to be seen, nor even a trace of smoke, and I heard one of the men behind me mutter that he didn't see why we had left her in such a hurry, anyway.

"The words had hardly left his mouth before there came the most blinding glare and deafening crash that mortals ever saw and heard and yet lived to tell of. I was hurled, stunned and blinded, backward into the boat; and before I could in any degree recover my senses the place where I had stood was crushed into a shapeless mass of splinters by the brig's fore-yard that the explosion had sent crashing down on us. A moment later the boat sank and left us eight souls, dazed, bruised, and bleeding from many wounds, instinctively clinging to the great spar that had so nearly destroyed us.

"That, I say, was the closest call of my life. I hadn't left the brig's deck more than a minute before the explosion took place, and the falling yard would have crushed me to jelly had I been sitting instead of standing in the bows of the boat. Indeed, to go back further, if the 'old man' hadn't taken the notion to spin one of his long-winded yarns, and so kept us both awake for some time after we had turned in, every soul on that brig would have been ushered into eternity without a moment's warning, and her unknown fate would have been recorded as one more of the unexplained mysteries of the sea."

"It was indeed a close call," I said, as the

Captain paused to relight his cigar, "and about the very narrowest escape from sudden death that I ever heard of. But how did the brig catch fire? and how were you finally rescued?"

"As to how she caught fire," replied the Captain, "none of us ever knew; but I have always believed that it was through the spontaneous combustion of a lot of oil-skins that formed part of her cargo. As to our rescue, we were taken from the yards by the Captain in the quarter-boat, which had escaped without injury from the shower of heavy débris that fell all around it immediately after the explosion. And that reminds me of another feature of my 'closest call'; for if my instinct of obedience had not been strong enough to force me to cut loose that boat at the Captain's bidding, we should probably have drifted helplessly on that yard until we perished from thirst or could cling to it no longer.

"We had no sail in the boat, and it leaked so badly that one man was kept constantly bailing. Of course we had saved nothing, not even a drop of fresh water or a biscuit. I was in my shirt and drawers, while some of the men had even less clothing. At first we were helplessly bewildered by the suddenness and frightful character of the disaster that had befallen

us. It had all happened within a few minutes, and more than once I rubbed my eyes to see if I were not dreaming. While we were in this state a mass of floating wreckage, that was burning or smoking in every direction about us, surged against our little craft with such force that she was nearly stove. The hint was sufficient, and, taking to the oars, we soon pulled clear of this danger. Then the Captain said that as our nearest land was the Bahamas, less than two hundred miles away, the best thing we could do was to pull in that direction, with a slim chance of making one of the islands, and a better one of falling in with some vessel. As all hands agreed that we could do no better, the 'old man' laid a star course that he thought would fetch us to one of the Abacos, and we set out.

"I was thirsty before we started, and the knowledge that we hadn't a drop of anything to drink made me doubly so. Of course I took my turn at the oars with the rest, and this so increased my thirst that by morning I was well-nigh crazy with the terrible longing for water. I recalled all the cool springs and rippling brooks I had ever known; and with closed eyes I could see the old well at home, with its mossy stones, its tall sweep, and its shadowy depths,

as plainly as I can see you now. I tell you what, there is nothing equal to a raging thirst for stimulating the imagination.

"At length the long night came to an end and the sun rose, red and hot, from a sea unruffled by a breath. With this our sufferings were increased, until finally one of the men threw down his oar and declared he would rather die where he was than pull another stroke. Two others followed his example, and for an hour or so we lay idly drifting up the slopes of the glassy swells and into the hollows beyond.

"All at once the Captain, who was standing up, called out that he saw a sail; and as our boat rose on the next swell we all saw it. An electric shock could not have dispelled our listlessness more completely. The men bent to their oars with such new life that our craft sprang forward as though she were engaged in a race. An hour showed the strange sail to be a schooner and brought her hull in sight. At the end of another we were within half a mile of her. Then a breeze came—only in cat's-paws, to be sure, but enough to move her, and in the wrong direction. She sailed away from us at such a rate that, while we could hold our own with her, we couldn't gain an inch. For

a few minutes we rowed like madmen. Then, as we saw that it was of no use, we began to yell. Singly and all together we shouted until only hoarse whispers came from our blistered throats. The schooner might have been manned by the dead, for all the notice her people took of us. Finally we gave up the hopeless struggle and flung ourselves down in the bottom of our boat, where some of the men cried, while others swore, and still others lay like logs. No one would even look after the retreating schooner, except the Captain, who never took his eyes off her. Suddenly he shouted: 'The breeze has died out again, and her sails are flapping. Now for one more try, men! Remember it's for your lives!' With this he motioned me to the tiller, and took my oar. This time we made it, and I think I was never so grateful for anything in my life, nor so happy, as when we ranged alongside of that little schooner and made fast to her bobstay. Up to this time we had not seen a human being nor a sign of life aboard her. We clambered up over her bows and made a mad rush aft for the scuttle-butt. As we did so I saw a man near the wheel rubbing his eyes and staring at us wildly, as though he had just waked. Then we heard him yell: 'Pirates! All hands on deck! We're boarded

by pirates!' With that the crew came tumbling up from below, where they had been taking advantage of the calm to indulge in a late morning nap.

"The craft was the schooner *Diamond* from Baracoa, with cocoanuts for Boston. She was only about the size of a Gloucester fisherman, but she answered our purpose as well as though she had been a Cunarder. We could have kissed every plank of her deck in our joy at treading them, and at that moment I for one would not have exchanged her scuttle-butt for all the wells in Christendom.

"No one could be kinder than were the *Diamond's* people when they learned of our misfortune. They furnished us with clothing, with food, and with drink to the full extent of their means. Then the schooner was headed for the scene of the explosion, which we reached a few hours later. The sea for miles was covered with the charred wreckage of the brig; but we recovered nothing of value except a few cases of patent medicines and the ship's cat, which, with half her hair singed off, we found floating about on a straw-wrapped carriage-wheel. A week later we were in Boston, with our recent sufferings well-nigh forgotten, and ready to ship for another voyage. They are

very vividly recalled to me, though, by the knowledge that I am in the very waters where they were endured, and by passing the place of my ' closest call,' as we did this evening."

XIII

MY BORROWED TORPEDO-BOAT

Pursued by the Russian Police

"SCRATCH a Russian and you'll find a Tartar underneath." That is a saying which applies to most Russians, perhaps, but not to M. Gremurief. A more gentle soul could scarcely have distinguished any babe in arms, nor could a sweeter disposition easily be found even among the women throughout all the Russias. Since I knew him, it is almost needless to say that he kept a curio-shop, for the chances usually are, in my travels, that it is to the dealers in bric-à-brac that I pay my earliest and most frequent visits. His shop was in St. Petersburg, close to the Moscow railway station. It was a very small one, yet it contained more altar ornaments of real old Russian bronze, more beautiful old ikons, and more ancient oddities in brass and gilt ware than any other shop I had seen.

He and his place offered the unlikeliest material for an adventure, and yet they provided me with the greatest sensation of my life—an adventure which I should not like to pass through again, and yet one which I would not have missed on any account. To state the facts briefly: During one of my visits to M. Gremurief's shop I heard the cough of a third person sounding apparently in the room where only we two were sitting. In itself it startled me sufficiently, though the manifest consternation of the shopkeeper gave me much more to think of after I parted with him. I asked him what the noise was, and it was painful to hear how he stuttered and stammered out a denial that there had been any sound unless, perhaps, he himself had coughed without being aware of having done so. On another occasion, while I was seated in the shop conversing with my acquaintance, a part of the wall behind us shook, and a costly Chinese drug-jar fell on the floor in pieces. Again I was much more disturbed by the frightened, guilty manner of the merchant than by the peculiar occurrence itself. On another day I sought to relieve my lonesomeness with his company. To tell the truth, I was not averse to discovering the mystery that brooded in his shop and gave

rise to the incidents I have mentioned. The door stood half open, and I sprang up the steps and inside with an agility which left no time for the inmates of the place to take warning of my visit. As I entered a man leaped from where he had been standing as if into the wall. I saw his figure distinctly in the gloom of the dusky place, and next I saw that he pulled after him a sort of bureau or set of shelves which I had imagined to be an immovable fixture of the shop.

As if he was fascinated by the sight, or perhaps horror-stricken, M. Gremurief watched the cabinet slide into its place, and I watched his face and its look of alarm. Then we greeted each other and made an effort to converse together. It was impossible. Both of us were too ill at ease.

"I will say good-bye to you," I remarked. "There is evidently something wrong here, and in Russia I have no desire to meddle, or even to intrude, where there is anything dubious or underhand. It is too dangerous."

"In the name of all the saints, don't misjudge me!" he exclaimed. "I live in sufficient terror as it is, without the added alarm it would bring should you go away to harbor a wrong impression of me. I am in your power, but you

are a foreigner and cannot have any interest in ruining me. Come to-night at eight o'clock, when the day's business is over, and I will bare my secret to you."

At that hour I returned and found Gremurief and a second man, a stranger, awaiting me. The shopkeeper was in a high fever of excitement, and plunged into his story almost as soon as I was seated. The stranger sat shyly by in silence, with his eyes on the floor.

The story Gremurief told me was that he had a wild and reckless son who was, what he called, a patriot, or, as we would say, a nihilist. This son, an engineer at work in Moscow, had sent to him the stranger who sat with us, asking that he be concealed until the zeal of the police in searching for him should be dulled and he dared to try to make his way out of Russia. Gremurief disavowed sympathy with the nihilists, and I believe he was pursuing no other interest than affection for his son.

"This man is not merely an outlaw," he said, looking at the fugitive with something more of sternness than I had supposed he had the spirit to command, "he is a bungler and a fool. Twice he aroused your suspicion by the noises he made, and, finally, after repeatedly

risking exposure by coming out of his hiding-place, he allowed you to discover him."

"My feet ached," said the man, with the look of one who knows he is speaking foolishly. "Sometimes I preferred a lifetime in Siberia to even another ten minutes of the pain which so much standing caused me."

"You will not complain of that pain any more," said the shopkeeper. "To-night you go out on your travels. I will not harbor you another day."

Then followed a dialogue of the most moving character. The fugitive pleaded with the shopkeeper to reconsider his cruel decision and allow him to remain. M. Gremurief was firm and almost pitiless. He declared that he had lived in terror long enough and could endure no more of it. The wretched outlaw pleaded and moaned, and even I interceded for him—like a fool. But the shopkeeper was obdurate.

"You hid Nikolavitch for three months," said the nihilist, "and no harm came to you; yet in my case, after only a week, your patience vanishes and you are going to abandon me to the wrath of the Czar."

"I did not hide Nikolavitch," the shopkeeper replied, angry, truthful, and completely off his guard.

"Oh, you did—you surely did," the man insisted. "Every patriot in our circle in Moscow knows that you did."

"No, my poor friend," M. Gremurief replied. "You are the first nihilist who, to my knowledge, has ever entered my premises—except my misguided son, of course."

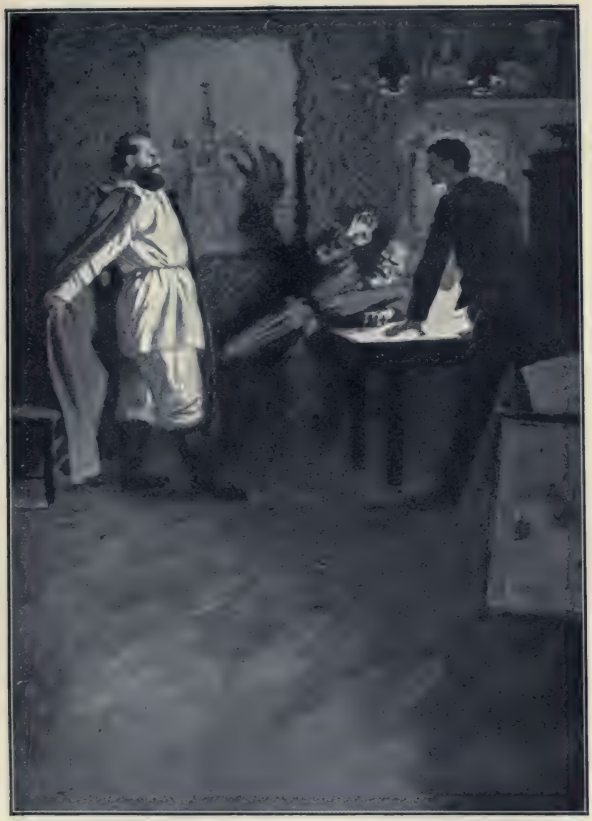
"By whom, then, was Nikolavitch hidden?" the nihilist persisted. "You know it was only your kind heart that saved him. Why do you not only spoil a good deed, but put a lie against yourself on God's books?"

"Fool," said Gremurief, "it was not I, but the Princess Golrouki, who hid Nikolavitch."

"Take me to her, then. At least, tell me where she is. She will not have a heart of marble like you."

"She is at her home in the city," Gremurief answered. "But you shall not go to her, for she has had risk enough. Her hair has been bleached by constant danger for twenty years. Hereafter she shall enjoy the peace she has earned."

At this the man sprang to his feet and, throwing back his head so as to take on the attitude which painters give to a victor in the Roman arena, he almost petrified us both by what he said:



"'I AM DENISOV OF THE POLICE'"

"The Princess shall indeed receive what she has earned. I am Denisov of the police—you know my rank and reputation. I have now all the proof I need against your son, yourself, the Princess, and many others. You cannot escape; you will find the front and back of this house guarded all night. In the morning you will be taken before my superiors. Your American friend may take his leave. I will pay my respects to him later, when he will answer to the authorities for the company he keeps and the republican sentiments I have heard him express during his visits here."

Twenty hours later I sauntered into the hotel at which I was stopping. Nothing had come of the police official's threat, and I could not bring myself to believe that I was in danger. I passed along a side corridor towards my room. Suddenly a man who was walking ahead of me turned right-about face and spoke to me—with a torrent of whispered words.

"The police are waiting for you in your apartment," he said. "They have taken your money and your passport which you left with the landlord. Go to your room, and nothing can save you from continuing until the oblivion of Siberia envelops you. They connect you with some great nihilistic plot, and, though you

are innocent, they will swear your liberty away in order to gain the more credit for zealous work. I am a friend of the Princess Golrouki, who has risked everything, and now has lost everything, for the cause of liberty. She prays for your escape. Turn at once, follow me, but do not speak to me either in this house or in the street unless you wish me harm. I will take you by a back way to the street. Then you must shift for yourself."

In an hour I was aboard the ship *Alexis* as it steamed down the Neva, bound for Stockholm. It was the same boat on which I had come to St. Petersburg, and the Captain and I were friends. In the morning, at breakfast, I sat at the Captain's left hand, and he said, motioning to the opposite seat: "Inspector Denisov, a high official of the police, is on board and will eat with us. He is on a serious errand. A foreign nihilist is among the passengers, it seems, and is to be arrested at Helsingfors if he does not try to get off the ship before we reach there. He is charming—the Inspector, I mean. I will introduce you. By-the-way, you have not yet given me your passport. I must trouble you for it, as our companion at table desires the papers of all the passengers to be submitted to his inspection."

I blushed rose red and stammered something about my papers being in my trunk. For an instant the hope that I could retain possession of the paper lingered in my mind, but I quickly dismissed it. Of what use could it be to postpone events, since it could be but a question of a few hours' time when all my belongings, and my person as well, must pass into the custody of my pursuer.

"It is all right, since I know you," said the Captain. "Give it to me as soon as it is convenient." Then the official came in to breakfast—the only man I feared in all the world. We were introduced, but he did not betray any peculiar interest in me, and thereafter we chatted at our meal-time meetings as if there was nothing whatever, except agreeable acquaintanceship, between us.

At Helsingfors, in Finland, the sun had set, and the night was moonless and cloudy. The darkness soon became intense. When the ship turned to make the harbor, Inspector Denisov touched me upon the shoulder and said:

"You will go ashore here. I have had your luggage put on deck. Though you have no passport, I will answer for you to the police."

I turned and, walking across the ship and then the whole length of it to the stern, sprang

overboard without a notion of what I was going to do if I should have the good-fortune to save myself from drowning. I merely took the precaution to see that no one was looking or was near by. Being an excellent swimmer, I struck out boldly, and directed my strokes towards the dark shore beside the lights of Helsingsfors, many miles away—perhaps farther than a man should try to swim.

"Why so fast?" I heard, in the voice of Denisov, behind me on the water. "Can we not swim together for company's sake?"

I was startled and mortified to find that he was still pursuing me, and in this fashion, so desperate for him as well as for me. I made no reply, nor did I moderate my strokes.

"This is not at all a Russian bath," he called again. "Don't you find it cold?"

I would not answer him. I swam on and on, and hearing no more from him after half an hour had passed, was hopeful—I confess it—that he had taken a cramp and gone down. After several minutes more of sturdy swimming I saw a long black hulk rising above the water before me. I swam to it, found a rope hanging down to the water's edge, and clambered up the steel side of the vessel, to find myself on the deck of a torpedo-boat. When I stood

upright a man in naval uniform came up out of a round hole in the deck and endeavored to talk with me. While he and I were trying to understand each other a cry in Russian, coming from the water beside the vessel, interrupted us. It was Denisov's voice. The man in uniform pulled him up on the deck, and there he and I stood once more face to face—like me and my problem how to escape.

Denisov addressed himself with authority to the naval man, who touched his hat with servility and disappeared between-decks.

"There is only one other man on board," Denisov said to me; "but fortunately this one is an engineer and the other is a stoker or fireman. This is a new vessel on its trial trip. It has not yet been delivered to the government, but I have asserted my authority, since it is a Russian vessel, and we are to be taken to the town. It is better than swimming. Will you go forward to the officers' quarters?"

"I will stay here," I replied.

"As you please," said he. "I think I will follow your example, since there is no one else to steer the boat. I advise you to go below. You will be ill if you do not go out of this raw wind."

"I may as well surrender to you," I said;

and I noticed that as I spoke a tremor ran through the vessel, betokening the beginning of the movement of the engine.

"You are wise," he answered. "I wish I could promise you something more agreeable than Siberia. Still, if you have not seen that country it may be as well to have a look at it."

"You carry too many guns for me, as we say in America," I replied; and I felt the vessel quiver and shake, and heard the screw splashing in the water behind me.

Denisov, put somewhat more at ease by my declaration of helplessness, tugged at his sopping clothes to get at his cigarettes and find whether by any chance one of them was smokable. While he was awkwardly wrenching at his hand to release it from his wet pocket, I leaped forward and, planting both hands upon his shoulders, flung him back into the gulf. At the same instant I ran to the wheel and, putting it hard about, turned the vessel in a sharp curve out to sea and westward towards Sweden —and freedom. The engineer was not putting on the headway that I required, so I ran down the light ladderlike companionway and yelled to him: "Politseiskoi govovite skorei; mukha —poshol skorei," a barbarous effort to say that the police officer bade him hurry, fly, go faster.

"Da, da," said the engineer, and the narrow wedge of a boat leaped ahead almost like a flying-fish, now partly above the little waves, now washing her foremost half in the water she threw up ahead, and all the time throbbing as if she would loosen the plates which sheathed her sides.

Successful as my bold effort for freedom at all hazards had thus far proved, I was far from confident that it could be carried out to the end. I knew that if there was a war-ship at any port on the coast between me and the Baltic, it would be ordered by telegraph to capture me, and considering the powerful search-lights which all such vessels carry, how could I hope to escape? True, my boat could steam faster than a battle-ship, but a well-aimed shot would bring me to terms, if not to the bottom. And then there was the engineer! It would require nearly seven hours of steaming at the highest speed to reach the other side of the sea, and this man was only ordered to go to Helsingfors, close by. In a few minutes he would come up on deck to see why we had not ordered him to slow down or stop. He would find himself at sea. What then? I could not answer that question. I kept my place at the wheel and trusted to luck — or pluck, whichever would serve best.

As I had expected, presently the engineer came on deck. He asked me in pantomime and in Russian where the police officer was. I pointed below. He looked about him at the sea and went back to his engine, puzzled and shaking his head.

"He will come up again," I said to myself, "and I will throw him down and tie him, leaving the engine to run itself. But where shall I get a rope?"

The vessel leaped onward as fast as ever boat ploughed sea on earth, and I stood at the wheel straining my eyes for men-of-war or headlands or moving vessels in our path. I fancied I heard a human cry, but, as it was not repeated, felt certain that I had been mistaken.

In time I thought of the rope by which I had pulled myself aboard the boat. "The very thing I want," thought I, and, opening my pocket-knife to cut it with, I went to look for it, feeling the edge of the boat with one hand as I made my own way on hands and knees. In the inky darkness I could not see two feet before me, yet I did distinguish something of lighter hue than the atmosphere on the edge of the deck. I reached out and felt—a human hand

I passed my own hand over the side and

felt the sleeve of a tautened arm below the hand. Grasping it with both of my hands, and pulling with all my might, I felt the owner of the arm assisting me, and in another moment I had him so that he got a knee on the deck and was saved. I flashed my pocket-lamp in his face. It was Denisov. He tried to stand, but when I pulled him upon his feet he fainted and fell in my arms. I dragged him to the middle of the deck, and, after steadying the vessel's course, crept to the side again and cut off the rope by which he had evidently clung to the vessel ever since we started. Then, long and hard, but wholly in vain, I tried to revive him. As he was warm and breathing, I ran below and fetched up two blankets. After rolling him up in one and using the other as a pillow under his head, there seemed nothing more to be done for him. During the time spent in all this work we passed close beside two sailing-ships, half a mile apart, but were not noticed by the people aboard either one.

An hour must have passed before the engineer came on deck again. This time he was disturbed and vociferous. He signalled to me that Denisov was nowhere below. I flashed my light in the police official's face and made signs that he was asleep. The mere glimpse which

he got of the pallid face of my captive caused the engineer to suspect that he was being deceived. He bent forward to feel the body, but I pushed him back to an upright position and sternly bade him return to his post. He turned sullenly, and as he was lowering his body into the opening in the deck I sprang forward, passed the rope under and around his arms, and pinioned them securely behind his back. Then I assisted him down the ladder by holding the collar of his coat, and, following him to the engine-room, pressed the muzzle of my revolver against his forehead as a hint of what would befall him should he cause me any trouble.

For at least another hour the boat sped on and I kept her to her course without further adventure. Then the engineer called to me and begged me, with much groaning, to untie his arms. I did so, and with an alacrity that impressed me he sprang to the engine and manipulated certain of its levers and faucets. I understood, from the signs and motions he subsequently made, that he desired to impress me with the necessity for his being free to use his hands in running the engine. He promised full obedience and the highest speed the engine could make. Greatly eased in mind, I left him, carrying my rope with me. But on deck

I found Denisov moving restlessly and regaining consciousness.

When I spoke to him he said he was dead.

"Forgive my sins," he groaned; "I was drowned at sea and there was no priest."

It was with great difficulty that I made him understand that he was alive and safe, but that I would not hesitate to throw him overboard again unless he acknowledged that the tables were turned and he had become my prisoner.

"You have saved my life," he said. "I will not put a straw in your way after this. Let me go below and get into bed."

"No," said I, on second thoughts, "I will not trust you. You have your duty to your Czar to perform and that is above everything —even above truth and honor—with you Russians. If you attempt to go below, if you even attempt to get on your feet, I swear I will kill you."

"You are right," he said. "I will be frank with you because you are brave, and I owe you thanks for taking me on board. I would break any oath if I could get a chance to take you back to Russia. Now I will beg one favor. If we are overhauled by a Russian war-ship, promise to tie my hands so that it shall be seen that you overpowered me."

"I will tie them now," said I. "Roll over on your stomach and put your hands behind you."

He obeyed. I pinioned him, as I had done with the engineer—like a fowl made ready for the oven. As I straightened back to an upright posture I drew a long breath and almost shouted. I believed myself sure of regaining my freedom.

On and on, ceaselessly, like a bullet skimming the sea, the arrowlike vessel shot forward, kicking the water behind it with its whirling foot. Hours passed—hours that were like days to me—and still we skimmed along. At what I thought was Hango, but what must have been a port of the Aland Islands, I saw a searchlight flashing, streaming, sweeping the sea in the distance behind me. It never once was turned in my direction, and I believe that the men who manipulated it did not imagine that my boat could have already passed them.

Gray came tingeing the east, and a faint cloudlike wall of distant land was becoming vaguely distinguishable a few miles ahead, when I noticed that the engine was slowing up. The engineer came on deck and, after touching his cap in token of his respect, held out both hands with a gesture of despair. I bade Denisov question him.

"The fuel has run out," said he. "The engine will stop in a few minutes. The engineer says he sees land ahead and asks if it is the Alands."

"It must be," I replied.

"You have done bravely," said Denisov; "but you have lost. I shall have the pleasure of your company all the way back again."

As he spoke my quick ears caught the sound of a steamer's screw in the distance. I ordered the engineer below and scanned the sea. The engine stopped while I was looking and listening, and we began to crawl through the water. We were headed directly for a wooded shore and were not above a mile from it. After looking at it intently for a few moments I turned and saw the black mountainous hulk of a great ship breaking through the morning grayness.

"Go below instantly," I said to Denisov, and, lifting him to his feet, I almost pushed him down the hole in the deck. I was sure that he had heard and seen nothing of the ship which was bearing down on us, and I wanted him out of the way lest we should be hailed in Russian and he should answer in my place.

We crawled on, and the black monster shot ahead and passed us. I hoped we had not been

seen—we were so small and low in the water—but presently I heard a confusion of voices on the great ship's deck, and next I saw her side-lights coming into view. My craft had been discovered and my pursuer was turning to overhaul it.

When I was certain that this was the case I slipped overboard and began to swim for the shore, now not half a mile away. I heard the torpedo-boat hailed while I swam. From the beach I could see a small boat put out from the ship and move towards the torpedo-boat. At the same instant the morning mist thinned around the ship, and I saw that she was a battle-ship flying the French flag.

With fear spurring my heels, I plunged into the woods and ran. It was evening before I came to a town and found that I was in Sweden.

XIV

THE LOST VOICE

In the Depths of the Sea

IT was neither pearls nor treasure-trove that tempted me, but that which sends men to freeze under the arctic sun, to burn in African jungles, to starve on Siberian wastes—the love of science. To add to the sum of the world's knowledge; to make life endurable where before existence only was possible; to strive without certainty of reward; to brave death under a thousand terrors—these are the endeavors and these the hazards of the scientist.

When Morley incredulously asserted it could not be done, I contended as stoutly that it could.

"Only give me three months, Professor Dale," I urged—for I could talk then, like other men; now I can only whisper, and that with much difficulty — "only give me time enough to construct my armor. I will descend

not only five hundred feet, but twice five hundred."

"Descend you may," put in Morley, "but you'll never come up again."

"There you are wrong, my dear Morley," observed the professor, reflectively. "The real difficulty is to get down. Once down, the question of pulling him up is comparatively simple—"

"You mean dead or alive," I suggested, facetiously.

"Quite right," assented the professor; "that is just what I mean—dead or alive."

"But *will* you let me try it, professor?" I pleaded, as the three of us left the restaurant and started towards the Institution.

"I am curious to see what sort of a suit you will contrive for the purpose," mused the professor, gently, sniffing a new material wonder, like the enthusiastic old scientific dog that he was. "We sail in three months; if you can get your apparatus into shape by that time, we will take it along, anyway. I shall have to limit you to about a thousand dollars for getting it up—you know our entire appropriation is not overlarge," said Professor Dale, reverting to the business end of the proposal. "But, Frederic," he continued, relapsing into one of

his gentle rhapsodies, as he gazed mildly at the big white dome of the Capitol ahead, "if you succeed, your name will outlast old Smithson's itself. A thousand feet," he mused, greedily—as most men would muse over "a million dollars"—"a thousand feet. I would rather be the man to walk on the ocean-bed a thousand feet in depth below than be President of these glorious United States."

It was a way the old gentleman had—a way by which he fired us and set us wild to embark in any desperate enterprise which promised fame.

When he spoke I thought as he did. And now? Well—I don't know; but I have at least this consolation: There are many great men alive; but there is only one man living who has counted a thousand feet of sea-water above his head—and I am that man.

Morley said I never would live to tell the tale; and he was right—I never did. But I can hold a pen as well as the next, and so may write the tale I cannot tell.

Morley and I were attachés of the Smithsonian Institution. Professor Dale was the head of our division. No wonder we were enthusiasts. We counted our Institution the most glorious on earth. Any one of the scores of

young men who labored in it would have held his life cheap if by giving it up the name of the Smithsonian might shine brighter in science's domain.

Morley, my chum, a New York boy—he was really no more—was as deeply imbued with this loyalty as anybody. He had, indeed, only one passion besides his love for reptilia—that was for bananas; harmless enough in itself, yet of singularly unhappy consequence to me, as you shall see. Morley, I am persuaded, would have laid down his life for the Smithsonian. Yet had he been obliged to choose between abandoning the Institution or giving up bananas, I fear we should have lost a valuable scientist.

The government had just placed at our disposal a man-of-war—the *Gladiator*—for an expedition to the South Sea islands. Incidentally Professor Dale, detailed in charge, was desirous of investigating deep-sea life in the Pacific, least known and noblest of our oceans. It was in this research that I proposed to aid him by an undertaking so extraordinary that many there were who looked on me as no less than a madman to attempt it. But when did scepticism or ridicule ever deter the true disciple of science?

I believed that I could construct a diving-suit—an armor, in fact—which would enable me to descend to depths of the ocean never before penetrated by man, and thus obtain specimens of organic life hitherto unknown to science. The idea was bold, yet the ablest men whom I consulted did not condemn it as preposterous, as my correspondence still shows; and when Professor Dale gave me leave, I went to work vigorously to make ready for the venture.

The time was short, and my first efforts discouraging. I consulted every builder of diving-suits in the country; but when I told them I required an armor to sustain the terrific pressure of the sea at the depth of a thousand feet they threw up their hands.

In the end I was compelled to construct it myself, and in this endeavor I certainly made marked advances on anything previously attained in the line of diving-suits. One thing alone gave me serious trouble—the glass bull's-eye for my helmet.

I spent nearly a month of my precious three in Pittsburg working on bull's-eyes.

"I must have a glass," I said, "which will withstand the pressure of twenty atmospheres."

One glass-maker alone would talk to me.

"I can make it," he said, quietly, "if you can test it."

"Then go ahead."

"First convince me that you can test it," he rejoined. "How will you do it?"

"With a sledge-hammer."

He paused a moment, but he saw the force of the suggestion; the trial began.

For four weeks skilled workmen turned out lenses of unheard-of strength and tenacity. One after another they were shivered into pieces under my sledge. But stoutly persevering, they made at last a lens which even the blow of an eight-pound hammer could not fracture. In twenty-four hours I was ready, and none too soon. That very night, slipping her anchor, the *Gladiator* steamed down the Potomac for her long cruise.

A good while before we reached our distant destination I had perfected the details of my descent. Every day I went over the points with Professor Dale and my fellow-worker Morley. Into his hands I proposed to commit entire charge of the arrangements for my safety while under the sea. Professor Dale and Morley, it is true, were interested in many things; I in but one. A successful descent in my steel and glass shell would revolutionize deep-sea diving.

The risk, indeed, was tremendous, but the incentive inspiring.

So thoroughly had I gone over my plans that by the time we rounded the Horn I was not only confident of success, but impatient for the fateful day to arrive. The whole crew were interested in my undertaking. What they couldn't understand was, why I was willing to court so strange a death merely to secure a bucketful of ooze from the bottom of the sea. Ooze, it is true—but such ooze! Ooze which the eye of man had never yet seen in appreciable quantities. Ooze teeming with a million forms of life which no microscope had ever yet revealed, which no scientist had ever yet described. The game was appalling, but the stake dazzling.

Towards the end even Morley became infected.

"Hanged if I don't wish I was going down myself," he admitted, when at last the day came.

We lay off the coast of one of the countless smaller islands of the Navigator group. That morning the sea lay outspread like a vast mirror. The sun had barely peeped over the cocoanut-trees to the east of us when I gave Morley my last instructions, bade everybody good-bye,

and stepped into my armor. On the main-deck the Captain had rigged up a pony-engine to supply my air-pump; a small dynamo was belted to it to provide me with light.

Morley had charge of the engine; my last words were to him:

"If you ever expect to see me alive again, my dear Morley, watch the air-supply. I'm ready; close the slide; tell the boys not to pay out too fast—not over a foot a second. Good-bye."

I felt the jerk of the tackle as I was swung over the rail, and perceived almost instantly by the fading of the light that I was descending into the sea. I turned on the electric bulb and realized that I was an awe-inspiring intruder into the submarine world. Strange fishes, reptiles of hideous proportions, and monsters of horrid shape stared in vague and awful silence at me as I gradually sank below them. A colossal shark rubbed fondly against my bull's-eye, as if he fain would know more of the kernel of this strange shell. But I gave the bravo little heed; if he nipped at me he would have aching jaws to nurse for his pains; my armor bristled with steel spikes.

I was fast descending to deeps where no shark could live, because of the mere pressure

of the sea. By the watch which hung suspended in front of my eye, five minutes had passed since the water closed over me. I estimated that I was already 300 feet down—a third deeper than diver had ever before penetrated.

Our previous soundings at this point—chosen with reference to them—had indicated bottom at 170 fathoms. The enormous pressure of 110 pounds to the square inch on the tiny gauge at my eye-piece caused me to realize for the first time the frightful dangers of my position. For an awful instant I would have given the world and my dearest hopes for a sight of the sun once more—much I doubted I should ever again behold it.

Fish and reptile and monster were now far above me. Better than man has ever known I then knew the stillness of the ocean depths. In the silence which oppressed me ghastly creatures—too horrible to live and yet living in this scene of dread—moved sluggishly in their grewsome haunts, heedless of my presence. To my deceiving senses it seemed as if this company of misshapen monsters was ever rising out of a bottomless pit before my startled eyes. It was as if I hung motionless in the midst of an endless procession of horrors. But the deadly pressure on the gauge pushed the pointer

higher on the dial. My watch, tripping now like a steam-hammer, instead of ticking gently its accustomed music, warned me that five minutes more had passed.

I must now be, I calculated, 600 feet below the ocean level.

All at once the sluggish objects about me ceased to rise—in other words, I had ceased to descend. Something had gone wrong above; a sweat dewed my forehead. Carefully I breathed the precious air, fearful of a present stoppage. Narrowly I watched the pressure-gauge; the pointer quivered stationary on the dial.

Mechanically my eyes turned to the watch. How long was it to last? A minute passed; then, to my infinite relief, my grisly companions began once more to rise; I was sinking. With that certainty all nervousness left me. I was now so far below the possibility of human help that peril became to me a matter of indifference. The springing of a single rivet meant instant death; even to that I had grown resigned. One wish, one hope, one resolve, animated me now —to get to the bottom; to fill my steel bucket; to signal an ascent. After that—well, I asked no further.

Of a sudden I was seized with an uncontrol-

lable curiosity to see and know more of what was now around me. My electric bulb threw a hazy light through a radius close about me, but it faded into a darkness which now became a mystical Tantalus to my disordered nerves. Five minutes more had passed; still I breathed —but 900 feet below the keel of the *Gladiator*. I hung in the midst of a slime which I could almost feel through my metal coat. Millions of tiny forms of marine life, jellylike, impalpable, still rose above me. I looked at the pressure-gauge; the pointer stuck fast at the limit —300 pounds to the square inch; but even this made no impression on me. By the comparative slowness of my descent I knew I must be nearing bottom. So enormous was the pressure that it practically held my immense casing of steel in suspension. I floated on the tremendous strength of twenty atmospheres. I stuck immovable in ooze. Was I at the bottom? I could not tell. But bottom or not, I well knew that the time had come to act. The automatic device on the big metal bucket at my feet needed only the pressure of a lever to close it, and with the movement I knew that my treasure of slime and ooze was secure. I was beset with a desire to scream in triumph. But who was there to hear? Again, as childish impulse shifts, I

became suddenly frantic to leap with a single bound into air and sunshine. I tore open the electric circuit—it was my signal to Morley to lift me; then I waited. I waited; but now in darkness. In signalling I had destroyed the light above my head.

It is a serious thing to make a mistake in daylight, but infinitely more awful to make one in the midst of darkness. I no longer had the means of determining whether I was rising or whether I hung motionless. My watch, ticking like a fire-bell in the blackness of my prison, only served to heighten the disorder of my faculties.

Times I felt sure I was moving—strained my ears to catch a sound from without; times again I felt I must be hanging motionless in my living tomb. And was it now my imagination—was my reason going—or was the air about me becoming foul and breathing difficult?

My senses wavered; a prayer died on my lips. My brain seemed to expand with the pressure of an exquisite torture. I choked with a nameless fright; I strove with a madman's fury to burst the steel casing which alone protected me from instant death; I craved it now—death—if only it came dreamless and quick.

My fury spent itself in useless raging; I had

builded too well. But with my declining strength my torture increased. My ear-drums were being irresistibly pushed into my head; my eyes were oppressed with crushing weights; my tongue swelled in my throat; once filled, I could no longer expel the air from my lungs; they seemed distended to bursting. I realized that it was death creeping slowly over me, and with the dumb agony of fading consciousness I beat at the heavy bull's-eye with uncertain blows. A consuming thirst devoured me; I bloated with a parching drouth; my head sank in the stagnation of coma. In a frenzy I strove once more to wrench open the helmet; something burst with a terrific shock; I felt water pouring into my throat. The welcome flood had come, the sickening pain had gone, and with it went consciousness and life.

Can you imagine what had happened? Guess a thousand times, and I think you still would miss it.

I have put the question to a thousand boys, and now I put it to hundreds of thousands; but none will ever guess. What really happened was so trivial, and yet so fatal in its consequences, that it seems a burlesque to explain it.

Morley, I have told you, had charge of the

pony-engine which operated my air-pump on deck. Just at the moment my cable ceased to pay and they knew I had reached bottom, terrific yells were heard under the stern of the *Gladiator*.

While all hands, even to the lookout, were intently watching the progress of affairs on deck, a dozen canoes of savages, paddling out from shore, unobserved, had run directly under our stern, where they set up an unearthly outcry.

Instantly the deck was a scene of confusion; the drummer beat the call to arms; the marines sprang forward to repel boarders. Then it transpired as suddenly that the assault was entirely a peaceable one, and that, far from meditating hostilities, the natives had brought out a supply of bananas to barter for tobacco and trinkets.

Unhappily, as I have intimated, Morley had a weakness for bananas. During the first panic he did not lose his head; he stuck faithfully to his post. But the minute the second cry was raised, Morley, intent on securing a desirable bunch (for us to eat between us, as he sobbed to me long afterwards), rushed aft to make arrangements for securing the pick of the cargo.

That brief interval of absence cost me all the torture I have described, and more. When

he hastened back to his post the air-gauge on my supply-hose indicated the awful pressure of twenty-eight pounds—almost two atmospheres. Morley, sure I was done for, fell down like a dead man. In feverish haste they raised me, and then came the crowning misfortune. In disengaging the heavy bucket of ooze while I swung above the rail, a lubberly marine unluckily dropped it overboard. Professor Dale screamed; it was too late. The fruit of my tremendous endeavor sank like a plumb-bob before his eyes and still rests in the depths of the sea.

Meantime my comrades were working at me. My armor proved to be absolutely intact. They succeeded at length in smashing the visor. I must have been a spectacle, for they were greatly frightened.

It was a long time before the combined efforts of the entire ship's company of surgeons were successful in restoring me to life. For an unknown interval I had sustained an atmospheric pressure so great that at last my windpipe had burst under it. It was as if they had sought to inflate me as one does a toy balloon. The effusion of blood after the rupture of my trachea had seemed like water rushing into my throat. Since that day I have never been able

to speak a loud word. Thanks to careful surgery, I can whisper; but the power to speak is gone.

Ever since then Morley has endeavored to atone for his one moment of thoughtlessness by unremitting devotion to me; but the sight of a bunch of bananas even now throws me into a cold sweat.

Again I am shrouded in the gloom of the ocean depths; again I suffocate with an excess of air; in imagination the pains of strangulation overpower me, and I turn to Morley in a faint.

Professor Dale still bemoans the irreparable loss of the ooze; but personally I have never felt any uncontrollable desire to go down after another sample.

XV

JOE GRIFFIN'S GREAT JUMP

In the Service of Japan

"THE Marshal would give a foot to get the plans of that fort."

"I know it, and I wish we could wipe his eye by getting them for him."

The speakers were Hikoichi Len and Matsada Orita, two junior officers on the Japanese cruiser *Yed-Sin*. For several weeks during the war between China and Japan the vessel had been cruising in the waters off Port Arthur, awaiting the decisive moment when the army was to effect a combination with the navy in an attempt to capture that important stronghold. All that the plans now lacked of completion was the knowledge of the interior arrangements of a certain fort, the most formidable of those which guarded the entrance to the harbor.

The sun was sinking red and threatening, sending long wavering streams of crimson across

the undulating surface of the sea. The crimson rays fell upon the polished brass-work of the *Yed-Sin* and made it gleam like iron in the forge, while they lit up the dark shiny chases of her guns with a fitful glare. The cruiser was rolling uneasily as she slipped slowly along at a four-knot gait. She was waiting within signalling-distance of the shore for a communication from a party that had been sent ashore to try to get a message through to the advance column of the army.

"I fear that the expedition will be a failure," said Len.

"Why?" asked Orita.

"Because that young American is with it."

"Oh, Griffin? Well, he is a little too bold in his ventures, but somehow he has a faculty of landing on his feet."

"Hello! There goes a green rocket. That means that the party is in trouble."

It was true. Away over on the land some miles back of Port Arthur a green rocket had soared into the air. The next instant the engine-room bells clanged and the *Yed-Sin's* propellors turned up to full speed. As the cruiser gathered headway the bugles sounded, "Arm and away for distant service," meaning that a landing party was to be sent out to the

rescue. For several minutes there was a general bustle about the deck as some men went to their stations and others hastened to provide the necessary equipments for the boats. The cruiser, meanwhile, steamed steadily ahead, and in the course of half an hour was within a mile of the shore. Here she came to a stop, and orders were given to lower away the boats. At that instant a red rocket shot up from the beach.

"Avast there!" cried the executive officer. "Keep fast with the boats."

The red rocket meant that the signal party had escaped and was coming off. Rapid firing of small-arms followed the ascent of the rocket, but it ceased in a few minutes, and all was silent, till the puffing of the steam-launch which had taken the party in was heard. Two or three minutes later the party came aboard, and the officer in charge of it reported that all had escaped except the American cadet, Griffin, who had resigned from the United States navy to enter that of Japan.

"We were in a deep ravine, well sheltered by woods," he said, "and were making our way cautiously, when I heard a suspicious sound to our left. I knew that the army column was a long distance away on our right, and so I or-

dered every one to keep the strictest silence. I was endeavoring to select a suitable man to send forward to reconnoitre when I missed Griffin. I remembered, then, that he had always burned for an opportunity for personal distinction, and I was sure that he had slipped away to make observations on his own account. I foresaw the result, and at once gave orders to retreat as quietly as possible to the boat. My conclusion was justified five minutes later, when a shot was heard in our rear and fire was opened on us. If we had remained in the ravine we would have been captured. As for Griffin, I am sure he walked right into the arms of the enemy."

The officer was commended for his judgment and energy. The executive officer frowned when he mentioned Griffin's name and then shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't wonder he shrugs his shoulders," said Len.

"Nor I," responded Orita. "We shall never see the unhappy American boy again."

Joe Griffin, with his hands tied behind his back and a bandage over his eyes, had just come to a similar conclusion. He had, indeed, walked straight into the arms of a party of Chinese scouts sent out to watch the Japanese landing-

party. If he had not left his companions, they might have passed the scouts unnoticed in the darkness. Now the landing expedition had failed, and he was being led over roots and rocks, a prisoner. He had no idea where he was going, but he felt pretty sure that he would never come back, for the Chinese had an unpleasant way of murdering prisoners taken, as he was, on the pretext that they were spies. For two hours the rough march continued, and then Joe heard the challenge of sentries and was aware that they were entering an armed post. Day was breaking, and when the bandage was removed from his eyes he saw in the brief time he had that he was inside of a strong fort. A hasty glance through an embrasure showed him the sea, and, far away upon the horizon, the sharply outlined form of the *Yed-Sin*.

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed, mentally. "I'm in the very fort of which they want the plans so badly!"

He had no further time for thought, for they led him to his prison. It was a simple kind of jail. It was a rude wooden hut built against the wall of the fort on the side farthest from the sea. Joe noted, as he entered it, that it was close to an embrasure through which he could see a large bay.

"I understand," he thought. "This fort stands on the extreme end of the point of entrance to the harbor of Port Arthur. But how on earth am I to profit by that knowledge?"

Once inside the prison, Joe found that there were numerous crevices through which he could see the interior of the fort.

"I wonder how long I have to live?" he reflected. "Anyhow, I'm going to be prepared for any fate."

So saying, he began to rummage through the pockets of his coat.

"Oh dear!" he exclaimed, "I have not a scrap of paper nor a pencil."

Then he went through his trousers pockets.

"Hello! What's this? A box of matches. Oh, I remember; I put them there when I started, thinking we might need them if we camped out. They'll do for pencils; and this is as good as paper."

He stripped himself of his shirt, and tore a small piece out of its light bosom.

"Now let's see what we can see," he murmured, applying his eye to a crack. "That's the south front over there. I've got to make this plan mighty small, haven't I? If I don't, I shall not be able to conceal it in case I do get a chance to escape. They don't seem to be

watching me very closely, either; but it's just like them."

At that instant he heard a noise at the door, and he had barely time to thrust his piece of linen into a crack before a Chinese officer entered, followed by a soldier bearing some food.

"You hungry?" asked the officer, in a dialect known to both parties in the war.

"Yes," answered Joe.

"Good. Eat. To-morrow, sunrise, you head cut off."

Joe looked around nervously.

"No escape," continued the officer. "Three sides of fort water. Fort eighty feet high on rocks—straight down—water very deep. Other side woods—full of our soldiers. No escape."

The officer smiled and, with the soldier, departed.

"Many thanks for your information," said Joe. "So we're eighty feet up on perpendicular rocks, with plenty of water at the bottom, eh? How high did they tell me the *Constellation's* foretopsail-yard was?"

Joe sat in a brown study for some time. Then he suddenly exclaimed:

"I'll try it if I get half a chance."

He set to work again with fresh energy at his plan of the fort, making it as small as

possible. When it was done he folded it up tightly. Next he ripped out the light leather lining of his cap, and, tearing off a small piece, folded it around his little plan. With great patience he now picked a long thread out of one of the seams of his shirt, and with this tied his diminutive package securely.

"Will it go?" he muttered.

He put it in his mouth.

"It goes," he thought, with a smile, "and room to spare. Thanks be to nature for giving me a big mouth."

The day passed very slowly indeed for Joe. As night approached he became more and more anxious. At sundown he discovered that two sentinels were posted outside his hut, and that they began to walk up and down in such a way that they were at opposite ends of their posts at the same time.

"That's good," said Joe, as he set to work at the fastenings of the door.

He had only his knife, but it served his purpose, and by ten o'clock he was ready to make his attempt. But at that hour the sentries were still too wide awake and there were too many persons stirring about the enclosure. So he gritted his teeth, and, gripping his little packet in his hand, walked up and down anxiously.

The hours crawled on leaden feet, but still they did pass, and about one o'clock in the morning Joe decided that the sentinels were sleepy enough for his purpose. He took off his shoes and stockings and his trousers, and stood in his light underclothing.

"I believe the old *Constellation's* tops'l-yard was about sixty, and this is eighty. I don't think twenty feet more will make much difference when it's for life. What's the use of being the champion diver and long-distance swimmer of the Academy if you can't— Well, here goes."

The sentinels were lounging drowsily at the farther ends of their posts. Joe loosed the last slight fastening, swung the door gently back, put his little packet in his mouth, drew two or three long breaths, shut his teeth, and jumped out.

His first bound took him to the corner of the hut. His second carried him into the embrasure beside the muzzle of the big gun. For a single instant he steadied himself; then he jumped straight out into the blackness.

Down, down he went, the air rushing past his ears with a roar like thunder. But he realized that he was holding his balance and falling feet first, and the old thrill of excite-

ment ran through him again as he renewed the sensations of his famous Academy jumps from the foretopsail-yard.

Crash!

He was in the water, shooting towards the bottom at terrific speed. Now he turned the soles of his feet flat against the water and spread out the palms of his hands. Gradually he came to a stop and began to rise. A few downward strokes helped him. But he was almost spent. He could feel the throbbings of his heart and the heavy surging of the blood, while his chest heaved with the convulsive struggles of his lungs to breathe. Stars began to dance before his eyes, and the poor boy was ready to open his mouth and drown when, to his intense joy, his head shot out of the water. He turned on his back and floated for a few moments to rest himself. He listened intently. Yes, there were noises in the air above him.

His escape was discovered. He swam right in to the foot of the cliff, and was fortunate enough to find a projection on which he could rest in the deep shadow. He remained there only a few minutes. He slipped into the water again, and swam around the point to the sea front of the fort. Fortunately there was hardly any sea

on, and he found another projection, on which he rested for a time.

"If they think I'm in the water," he reflected, "they'll search for me on the other side."

The boy took a good rest, made sure that he was not hurt, and then started on his long swim along shore. He finally passed the limit of the rocks, and reached a shelving beach. He went ashore, and was amazed and overjoyed to find a small boat partly concealed in the bushes. In ten minutes he had it in the water, and was bound out to sea.

Just as the light of morning was beginning to make objects at sea discernible the lookout on the cruiser *Yed-Sin* called out:

"Boat ho!"

"Where away?" asked the officer of the deck.

"Right abeam, sir, to windward. It looks like a small boat with one man in it."

The cruiser dropped down towards the boat, and its occupant was ordered to come aboard. A bedraggled, staggering, ghastly figure ascended to the deck.

"Goodness!" exclaimed the officer of the deck, no other than Orita, "it's Griffin."

The swaying boy put his hand to his mouth, and, taking out the little packet, threw it on the deck. "There are the plans of that fort," he said, and then he fainted.

A week later Port Arthur was captured.

THE END