



Frontispiece.

"HIS KNIFE WAS OUT IN AN INSTANT."—Page 57.

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"God bless the men this night at sea."

# "SHIP AHOY!"

*A Yarn in Thirty-six Cable Lengths.*

BEING THE

CHRISTMAS ANNUAL

OF

# ONCE A WEEK.

Illustrated by Wallis Mackay and Frederick Waddy.

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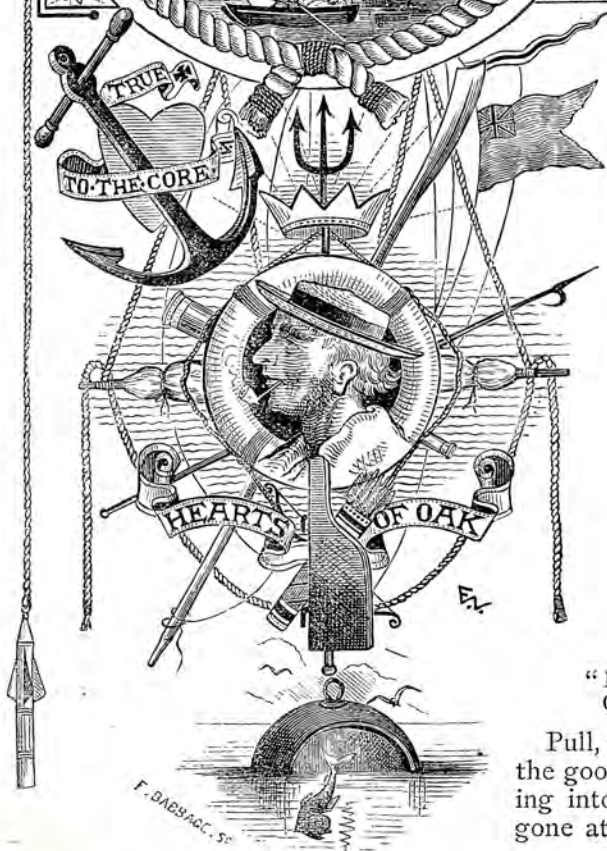
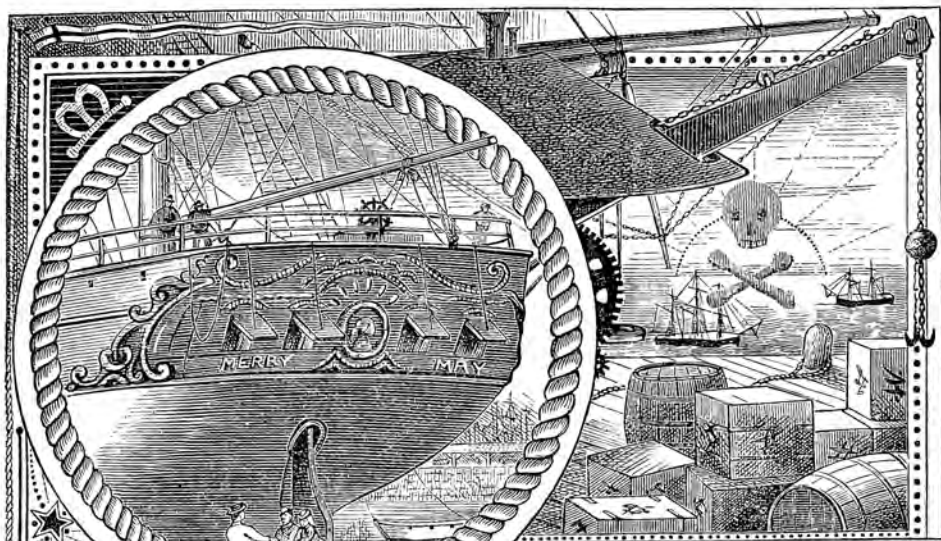
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LONDON:  
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# "Ship Ahoy!"

A YARN IN THIRTY-SIX CABLE LENGTHS.



## FIRST CABLE LENGTH.

HOW THE "MERRY MAY"  
CAME IN.

"Now, my sons, all together!"

"Yo-ho!—hoy-y!"

"Now another!"

"Yo-ho!—a-hoy-y!"

"Now all together, my lads!"

"Ahoy!—hoy! hoy!—yer-hup!"

"Now a good one!"

"Yoy-hoy!—yer-hup!—hoop!"

"Another pull, my sons!"

"Hoy!—yoho!—yo-ho!—hup!"

"Well pulled. Now your song."

"Ho! hauly yo! hoy-y!"

Cheerly, men, ho!—yo-hoy-y!"

Pull, stamp, and haul together, and the good ship, the *Merry May*, working into dock, with her foretopmast gone at the cross-trees, her maintop-

gallant badly sprung, a splice in her spanker-boom, and her sides battered and denuded of paint. Two boats swept away, and a big piece of her bulwarks patched up in a sorry fashion after that great wave pooped her, and cut its way out of the port side as though the bulwarks had been made of bandbox. Worse than all, too, there is about as strange a makeshift of a rudder as was ever seen; for, after a fair voyage from Colombo, in rounding the Cape the sea rose, and the wind blew what old Basalt called a "snorer," and he swore a dozen times—pooh! a thousand times in oaths, but a dozen times in his assertion—that the *May* would go to the bottom.

But she did not; for Captain John Anderson knew his duty as well as any sailor in the merchant service, and fought the storm like a good man and true—beat it like a Briton, when a score of other men would have given up, and gone down on their knees in despair, and prayed to God to save them.

"Like a set of lubbers!" said old Basalt when telling the story at the Jolly Sailors afterwards, over a glass of Mrs. Gurnett's best rum and water.

"But there, Lord bless you! I taught the boy to make his first knot—I made a sailor of him; and a sailor he is, every inch, God bless him!"

Here old Jeremiah Basalt wiped either a tear or a drop of rum and water out of his eye.

"Sink? Not she. We was knocking about for a fortnight, and he never once left the deck. Sails were blown outer the bolt ropes, bulwarks swept away, boats went, and the fellows was ready to give up; but d'ye think he would? Not he. Why, bless yer, he's that much of a true Briton, that if Davy Jones hisself was to come and say to him, 'You're dead, now, as a copper fastener,' he wouldn't believe him. Not he. He says to me, just about the worst of it, when it was blowing the greatest guns as ever did blow, 'Jerry,' he says, 'I undertook to sail this here ship for Mr. Halley,' he says; 'and she's got a cargo in her of tea and silks as is worth a hun-

dred thousand pound,' he says; 'and I mean to run her safe into London Dock afore I've done.'

"He roared them there words—a bit shorter, you know—into my ear as we was holding on to the spokes of the wheel, just in the werry worst on it; for, bless you, he wouldn't trust no one else then. Drenched we was to the skin, and puffing to get a breath now and then—with the wind shrieking in your ears, and the sea spitting in your face, and cutting your very eyes out. 'No, Jerry,' he says, 'while I've breath in my body,' he says, 'I'll never give up.' And then—bang!"

"What?" said Mrs. Gurnett, breathlessly, as, in his excitement, old Basalt swept his half drunk glass of grog on to the floor.

"What? Why—bang!" cried old Basalt, again bringing his fist down upon the table with a blow that made every glass in the snug bar parlour ring again. "Bang! Mrs. Gurnett, bang! The wheel spun round, and sent the cap'n to leeward and me to windward, half stunned, under the bulwarks; and when we come to again, we found the rudder swep' away, and the poor old ship wallering in the trough o' the sea, like a blown porpus in a tideway.

"Ship seas? Ah, we did ship seas; and anybody else 'ud a gone quietly to the bottom 'cep John Anderson my Jo; and if he didn't rig up a rudder out of a boom, and work it with ropes and blocks, and get her afore the wind again, why I ain't here without a drop o' rum and water to wet my throat, dry with all this talking."

But to go back to the dock. There was the good ship *Merry May* in sore plight as to her outward appearance; but tight, and free from water. Her whole cargo was safe, and in port; her captain proud, and talking to his owner, as the men, under old Basalt's orders, cheered, and hauled, and helped the dock men till the vessel was through the great flood-gates, and being warped in amongst the tier of shipping in the inner basin.

An hour after, the riggers were on board, and up aloft, unbending sails; while John Anderson was shaking hands with Mr. Halley, a florid old gentleman, at the gangway.

"At one o'clock, then, to-morrow, Anderson, at Canonbury. Lunch and a glass of wine. And God bless you, my boy, and thank you!"

"Don't say any more, sir, pray."

"But I must say more, Anderson," said the owner. "I don't believe there's another captain who would have brought her into port; and no insurance would

have ever recompensed me for her loss. Good-bye—God bless you!"

"And you too, sir. Good-bye."

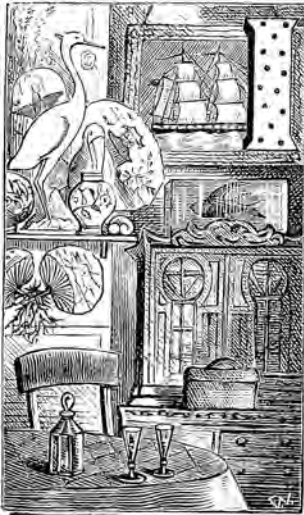
"At one to-morrow," from the wharf.

"At one to-morrow, sir," from the gangway.

Mr. Halley passed out of the dock gates, and took a cab to his offices in Shipping-street; and Captain John Anderson, aged twenty-nine, fair, sunburnt, grey-eyed, and frankly handsome, went home like a good son, as she said he was, to think of some one else, and to kiss his mother.

## SECOND CABLE LENGTH.

HOW MRS. ANDERSON TALKED TO HER SON.



If you can imagine Mary, Queen of Scots, at the age of seventy-two, and wearing a black silk dress, you have before you Mrs. Anderson, standing with her cross-handled stick in one hand, while with the other she

caresses the crisp, brown, Saxon curls of her son's hair. Her fair old face stands out from her stiffly starched ruff-like collar and crimped cap. Her grey hair is suitably arranged over her temples, and every feature seems to speak and say—"This is my son!"

It is a quaint old room where they are; well furnished, but there is a nautical smack about it. You can even smell the sea—the odour being furnished by some bunches of bladder-

wrack hanging from the nail that supports the painting of "The *Flying Betsy* barque passing the Nab Light"—a finely executed work of art, wherein you have every sail set, a series of dots along the deck to represent captain and crew, and the foaming billows rising foam-capped with a regularity that suggests their all having been formed in the same mould. Over the chimney-piece hangs the portrait of the late Captain Anderson père, who appears to have run a good deal to fat. Beneath it is suspended his spy-glass, bearing upon its long tube the flags of all nations. There are cabinets of walnut, too, with curiosities from all parts. A chest from China, a screen from Japan, some New Zealand waddies, and bird skins and feathers from the Cape—collections commenced by the father and continued by the son.

"So, you're going up to Mr. Halley's, John, are you?"

"Yes, to lunch, mother."

"I don't think you ought to go, John—the first day you're home with your poor old mother."

"But it's business, dear—I could not refuse," said Anderson, gently, as he passed his arm round the slight old figure, and kissed the handsome old face.

"May be," said the old lady, enjoying the embrace, but evidently only half satisfied.

"I'll soon be back to you," said the son, smiling; "they won't want me there long."

"I don't know, John, I don't know. I should not so much mind you going, but Mr. Halley has a daughter."

"Yes, of course he has," said John Anderson, starting, and with the blood mounting to his forehead.

"And I do not want her to be laying traps for my boy."

"Why, you dear old goose," cried John, laughing outright, "what a fine fellow this son of yours is, isn't he?"

The old lady bridled up, and knitted her brows.

"Do you think it would be safe for either of the Queen's unmarried daughters to see me?" laughed John. "They might have marriageable ideas."

"They might do worse, John," said the old lady, stiffly, but stroking his hair the while.

"Why, my dear old darling," said John, huskily, as he drew her down upon his sturdy knee, and laid his forehead against her shoulder, "do you for a moment think it possible that a rich shipowner's daughter could ever lower herself to look with the eyes of favour upon a poor ignorant merchant sailor, who has only one idea in his head, and that is the working of a ship?"

"If you don't wish to break your poor old mother's heart, John, say no more," said the old lady, sobbing angrily. "As if there was a nobler, a finer, a handsomer, a cleverer man anywhere in the whole world than—"

"Phew—w—w—w!" whistled Captain Anderson, softly, as he drew the frail old figure closer to him, and kissed the wrinkled forehead reverently, saying to himself—

"Thank God for making mothers!" And then aloud—"There, there, dear, when I am about to sail a fresh ship and want a character, I'll send the owners to you."

"Such nonsense, John! As if it were

ever likely you would want a better ship than the *Merry May*."

"Well spoke, Mrs. Anderson—well spoke," said Jeremiah Basalt, entering the room with two sways and a lurch; "as if it was likely that the captain would ever want to sail any other ship. No, indeed. By the mark seven, as we say, Master Halley knows good biscuit when he sees it, and it'll be a long time afore he parts company with our cap."

"Mr. Basalt, will you take a glass of strong waters?" said Mrs. Anderson, primly, but all the same looking graciously at the rough old salt.

"Thanky, Mrs. Anderson, I will," said Basalt. "Allus water when you has a chance, and then your casks won't run dry."

The old lady trudged softly across the room to a corner cupboard; then after searching amongst the folds of her stiff silk dress she found a pocket-hole, into which she plunged her arm almost to the elbow and brought out a great pincushion, then a housewife, next a bodkin case, a piece of orris root, a pen-knife, and lastly, though not by any means the bottom of her cargo, a shining bunch of keys—one and all rubbed bright and worn with many years of friction. Selecting one key, she opened the quaint cupboard and lifted out a curious old leather-covered case, which her son hastened to take from her hands and place upon the table, while she smiled her thanks, and then brought out two old-fashioned glasses, in the stems of which were quaint opal-lined spirals.

Then another key had to be brought into requisition to open the case, from which three square bottles were drawn.

"Your poor father's own case, John," said the old lady, as she took out a stopper and filled one of the glasses for old Basalt. "Hollands, Mr. Basalt, that he brought himself from Flushing, twenty years ago."

"Is it really?" said the old mate, holding up the greeny fluid to the light, and squinting through the glass before smelling it. "Took a good fire to 'stil



it, anyhow. Why, you can sniff the smoke now."

"Taste it, Mr. Basalt—taste it, and drink my John's health."

"God bless him! that I will," cried the old fellow, rising glass in one hand to slap his other into his captain's open palm, and shake it heartily. "John Anderson, God bless you!"

The grasp was as heartily returned; and then, shutting one eye, Jeremiah Basalt poured the glass of Hollands down his throat; and, grog-hardened even as he was, gave a slight gasp as he put down the glass, and turning to Mrs. Anderson, said solemnly—

"Lor! I wish I'd been a Dutchman."

Mrs. Anderson smiled graciously, and held out her hand to take the emptied glass and refill it, a movement half resented in a sham bashful manner by the old man, who pretended to draw back the glass; but all the same drew it softly to him as soon as it was refilled, to take a sniff at its contents, and then exhale a long breath, after the fashion of a connoisseur learned in the bouquet of wines.

John Anderson drained his glass, filled for him by the old lady, who even then could not resist the temptation to have another stroke at her son's hair. The next minute he rose, saying—

"I am going up to Mr. Halley's now, Basalt, and will come down to the docks afterwards."

"Not much good your coming there," grumbled the old man. "The ship's mucked up with lubbers, and will be till we get her loaded again; and the sooner the better, say I. Mrs. Anderson, my service to you, I drink your very good health this time."

And he poured the second glass of Hollands down his throat, such is the force of education, without so much as a wink.

The next minute, he and his captain were standing side by side in the street.

"No news about the ship, I suppose?" said Anderson, more for the sake of conversation than anything else.

"No," said the mate, "only, as I said, she's full of lubbers—lubbers up aloft, lubbers down below, lubbers hanging over her sides, and lubbers on the wharf taking her cargo."

"Wait a bit—wait a bit," said Anderson, smiling, "and we'll be off again to sea."

"Sooner the better," said Basalt; "for if I stay ashore long, I shall never get away at all. I shall be married and done for, as sure as a gun."

"Stuff!" said Anderson, laughing, and holding out his hand to shake the mate's and part.

"Stop a bit," said Basalt; "there's news of one of Rutherby's ships."

"Good?"

"Damn bad!"

"Not lost?"

"Gone to the bottom of the sea—the sea, the sea, and she's gone to the bottom of the sea," as the old song says."

"Bad job that, Basalt."

"Not it," growled the old fellow. "Heav'ly insured—rotten old hulk—sent out a purpose. Half the men drowned, and the owner turns his eyes up like a gull in thunder, wipes the corners, and then rubs his hands and goes to church. There's lots o' them games carried on, and owners makes fortunes out of it. They say Rutherby's does, Langford and Co.'s does, and some more of 'em."

"Basalt," said Anderson, flushing up, and speaking hotly, "you're a prejudiced old humbug. Do you mean to say that in your heart you believe a shipowner would be such a cold-blooded, hellish scoundrel as to send a crew to sea in a vessel that he knew to be unsafe, and that he had heavily insured?"

"Yes I do—swear to it!" said the old fellow, stoutly.

"It's all confounded rubbish!" was the reply. "Why, a demon would think twice before he did such a thing. Why, it's rank murder."

"To be sure it is," said the old fellow. "Why, I've known it done over and over again. I could show you the men who

have done it, and made money by it. I don't say as their crews was always drowned; but they were sometimes. As to demons, and them sort of chaps, I never know'd one as was in the shipping trade, and don't know whether they make good shippers; but I'll tell you this, and swear to it too, my lad, I've known shippers, and have sailed for 'em, as would have made out-an'-out good

demons. So put that in your next quid, my boy."

Here the old fellow went growling off, and Captain Anderson made his way to the corner by the Bank, to get a Canonbury 'bus, muttering to himself as he went—

"As good an old fellow as ever stepped, but as prejudiced and obstinate as a wooden mule."

## THIRD CABLE LENGTH.

HOW JOHN ANDERSON MADE LOVE.



CANONBURY is not fashionable, but it is comfortable. The old red brick houses look snug and prosperous. There is an air of wealth about the district, and old-fashioned ease. The red walls indicate warmth; and once beyond them and their coating of ivy and

growths amongst the brickwork, and a glorious smell of damp sawdust. *Tlat!* you know in a moment that there are bins there with rare dry natural sherry that has been lying for years, and rich, tawny old port next door, whose beeswing breeds glorious fancies in the mind of him who sips it over the dark, glossy mahogany of its owner. And that is not all, for here and there, too, in Canonbury are bins of that rare, priceless old wine, of glistening topaz hue, rich Madeira, treasured up as a store that can never be replenished.

Your citizens have long favoured Canonbury as a convenient abode; and those who have never cared to migrate westward cling to the old place still, to look down with solid respectability upon the new, semi-detached villa people, who have hemmed them in on every side, but have still left Canonbury in statu quo.

over-shadowing trees, you expect to find solid furniture, good plate, and fine linen.

You are quite right in your expectations—they are all there; and as to ve-neering, it is not known in the older parts. There are cellars to the houses in Canonbury: none of your West-end cellars, under the pavement, with an iron disc in the centre for the admission of coals, but rare old cellars of a hundred years and more, with fine fungous

It was at a quarter to one that Captain John Anderson, with his cheek flushed and heart palpitating, pulled at the bell by the old iron gateway of Brunswick House—that great, red-brick, ivy-covered mansion that faces you as you go down from Upper-street towards the Tower.

He had meant to ring gently; but the bell sent forth a clamorous peal which brought a formal-looking footman in drab to the door, where he stood

for a moment, and then condescended to come down to the iron gate.

"Why didn't you come in—the gate was open?" said the footman, looking his visitor over superciliously—for Samuel had a most profound contempt for Shipping-street, and the bluff, handsome captain savoured to him of the shop.

But Captain Anderson was distrait; and merely saying, "Tell your master I'm here," passed on into the hall, from whence he was shown into the drawing-room, where, as the door closed behind him, he stood with palpitating heart—trembling and nerveless, and with a stifling sensation at his throat in the presence of his fate.

You don't believe it, perhaps, you! Maybe you are not strong, and big, and sturdy, and desperately in love with a sweet-faced, loveable girl, in the first flush of her beauty. You do not believe, perhaps, in a huge Hercules becoming slave to a beautiful Omphale? I am sorry for you: I do; and, what is more, I have history on my side, with hundreds of cases where the strong are really the weak. It is a pity, but all the same it is so; and the bigger, and stronger, and more muscular you are, the greater shall be your thralldom when you are led captive by some such a fair maiden as was May Halley.

Shall I try to paint her? I will, though I have but white paper and black ink. No; upon second thoughts, I will not, lest I fail; and therefore let me say that, without the aid of classic features, she was all that could be desired in a sweet English maiden, whose eyes were grey, cheeks peachy, forehead white, and who upon occasion could flash up into a very Juno.

As Captain Anderson was announced, he became aware of the fact that a tall, fair young man was in the act of bidding a lady good-bye, and bending with great empressement over her hand. Then it seemed that the door was closed, and that the room was all clouds; and he, John Anderson, below them on earth, and May Halley above them in heaven.

Then she spoke—words simple and commonplace, but sufficient to thrill him through and through.

"I am glad to see you safely back, Captain Anderson. Take a seat. Papa will be disengaged very soon."

John Anderson did not make any response, but stood, hat in hand, gazing at the fair girl before him till she flushed scarlet, and half turned away with resentment in her bright eyes.

He could not have spoken then to have saved his life, for a great struggle was going on within him. For a few moments the room seemed to spin round, and he saw Mary Halley through a fiery mist; then two red anger spots began to burn on his cheeks; a dull, dead, aching sense of pain fell upon his heart; and he stood with his hands clenching till the great veins stood out, swollen and knotted, while the dew stood upon his forehead in big drops.

For John Anderson had awakened to the fact that the idol he had worshipped now for years, without ever thinking of speaking of his love, was also the idol of another. He had seen that tall, fair young man—smooth, gentlemanly, with the world's own polish, fashionable of exterior—bending over May's hand, and saying words that must have been of a complimentary nature; for she had smiled pleasantly as she bade him adieu.

Yes, and he had taken that hand in his—his, such a soft, white, well-cared-for hand; while the hand John Anderson clenched, till the nails pressed savagely into his flesh, was brown, hardened, and rugged with toil. There was a great tar mark, too, that had refused to be washed off; and as for a moment the young man's eyes fell, it was to see that black stain there.

That black mark! It was a brand of his toil-spent life; and he shivered as he thought of the house of cards he had been rearing—dreaming, as he had been, of May in the long watches of many a night in the far-off seas, when he had leaned over the bulwarks thinking of home, and the fair girl whom he

had seen at each turn, growing more and more in a beautiful woman.

Yes, he knew it all now: that he had been dreaming; that he was but a rough, coarse sailor, fit only to battle with the sea; while this fair pearl was to be worn upon the heart of a polished gallant, and—

John Anderson started, for May Halley was standing before him with outstretched hand.

"I am very glad to see you back," she said.

In a moment John Anderson had the soft little hand between both his, and in another he would have raised it to his lips, but the thought of what he had witnessed came at that instant like a chill; and, dropping her hand, he half staggered back, and sank into a chair.

"Captain Anderson!—is anything the matter? Are you unwell? Shall I ring for a glass of wine?" exclaimed May, in tones full of concern, every word thrilling the strong man's heart, and making every fibre vibrate.

"Yes—yes!" he exclaimed, half beside himself, as he caught her hand in his—"there is much the matter. I—I—there—I must speak—I am half mad, May—darling, I know I am but a rough sailor—but—since a child—loved you—Oh! for God's sake, don't turn away from me! Tell me—tell me that I am not right—that you do not love that—that man I saw here! I—"

He stopped, for May stood before him with reddened cheek and flashing eye. He heard but three words, but they burned into his brain as she turned away—

"How dare you!"

The next moment she was sobbing in her father's arms, for Mr. Halley had entered unperceived with the visitor of a short time before.

"What does all this mean?"

"Oh, papa," sobbed the girl, "Captain Anderson has insulted me!"

"A confounded cad!" exclaimed the young man, facing Anderson, and laying his hand upon his collar, as if to turn him out of the room; but the next instant—it was like a flash more than anything else—he was lying on the carpet, having crushed in his fall a frail, spider-legged table, and carried with him a vase of flowers, which pleasantly ornamented his white visage as he lay.

The next minute John Anderson was hurrying down the street on his way back to town, seeing nothing, hearing nothing, only feeling that he was mad—that he had acted like a madman—that he had, in one wild moment, demolished the idol that had been his sole thought for years, and that now life was one great burden, and the sooner he was away again at sea the better.

"At sea!"

He said those two words aloud, and stopped short so suddenly that he was rudely jostled by a passer-by.

At sea! Why, after what had passed this morning, he would lose the command of the *Merry May*. Mr. Halley would never allow the presumptuous man who had insulted his daughter with his impertinent pretensions to sail his ship; and he would be without a command!

It was horrible to think of; but the thought would come, and John Anderson gave a groan as he called himself a maniac, and staggered along, feeling that he had lost his love, his ship, self-esteem, and the confidence of his employer. And all for what?

All for love: the love of as sweet a woman as ever was made to give happiness to sinful, erring man.

"Yes," said John Anderson, "I have lost all. And all for what? All for love! What shall I do now?"

He stood again for a moment or two thinking; and then, with a half-mocking, half-tearful smile, he said, simply—

"I'll go home."



## FOURTH CABLE LENGTH.

HOW JEREMIAH BASALT WENT TO SEE THE WIDOW.



NEVER drinks but one glass of grog a day at sea," said old Basalt—"never but one, Mrs. Gurnett. For w h y? 'C a u s e t h e r e ' s d o o t y t o b e d o n e, a n d m a y - b e a w a t c h t o k e e p;

and if your sooperior officers takes more than's good for them, what's to be expected of your men? But now I'm ashore, with nothing to do but amuse myself, I don't care if I do take another."

"And it's welcome you are here to as many as you like, and when you like, Mr. Basalt," said Mrs. Gurnett, rising with alacrity from her side of the fire in her snug bar to mix a fresh glass of steaming compound for her visitor, who took it with a grunt of satisfaction and silently drank the donor's health before setting the glass down, smoking slowly and thoughtfully at his pipe as he stared at the glowing fire and the bright black bars.

A quarter of an hour passed, during which Mrs. Gurnett, who was pleasant and comely in spite of her fifty years, knitted away at a pair of thick grey worsted stockings; and then Jeremiah Basalt spoke, saying, in a surly voice—

"I know I am!"

Mrs. Gurnett, landlady of the com-

fortable old hostelry known as the Jolly Sailors, gave a start.

"Know you are what, Mr. Basalt?"

"Know as I'm welcome, and have been this ten year, or else I shouldn't come."

Mrs. Gurnett sighed, drew at the grey worsted ball far down in her pocket, changed one of her knitting pins, and began a fresh row.

"Who's them for?" said Basalt, pointing at the stocking with the stem of his pipe.

"I was thinking of asking you to accept them before you go on your next voyage, Mr. Basalt—that is, if you are going to sea again."

There was another pause, of quite ten minutes' duration, before Basalt again spoke.

"What should I do ashore?"

"I don't know, I'm sure," said Mrs. Gurnett; "only it seems to me very dangerous going to sea, and you are not so young as you used to be, Mr. Basalt. We none of us are."

"Pooh!" said Basalt. "Fifty-seven—nobbut a boy yet. And as to danger, why, it's a deal safer at sea than it is here, I do know that. Why, if I was to give up the sea, what 'ud become of me? I should always be hanging about here, and then you'd get tired of me."

Mrs. Gurnett sighed, and continued her knitting.

"You're a good soul, though, and I like you, Mrs. Gurnett, better than any other woman I ever see in my life; and if I was a marrying man, instead of a chock of old salt junk, soaked and hardened, and good for nowt but to knock about aboard ship, I'm blessed if I don't think I should say to you some fine day, 'Mrs. Gurnett, will you have me?'"

Mrs. Gurnett sighed again, and looked more attentively at her knitting, while

Basalt smoked himself into the centre of a cloud.

"I think I'd make 'em a little more slack in the leg this time," he said at last. "Them others was so tight that they opened in the back seams, and you can't worry well caulk when you're out at sea."

"You have very fine legs, Mr. Basalt," remarked Mrs. Gurnett, glancing at her visitor's lower extremities approvingly, as she gave another tug at her worsted.

"They do right enough," said the old fellow, disparagingly; "and as long as they keep me going I'm satisfied. But what do you think of our cap's choice—speaking as a woman, now?"

"I did not know that he had made a choice," said Mrs. Gurnett, indifferently; for the conversation was taking a turn in which she felt no interest.

"He has, though," said Basalt; "and as nice a little craft as a man would wish to own—clean run, pretty counter, all taut aloft and aloft, and I should say as good a lass as the ship we sail in, and as bears her name."

Mrs. Gurnett dropped her knitting, and gazed in her visitor's face.

"You don't mean to say—"

"Don't I? but I just do; and what is there surprising in that? Here's Cap. John Anderson, as smart a sailor and as handsome a young fellow as ever stepped, and here's Miss May Halley, as pretty a gal; and if they wouldn't make a nice pair to consort together, and sail these here stormy seas o' life in company, why tell me."

Here old Basalt took a hasty sip of his grog, and stooped to pick up the knitting, which had glided to the floor, as Mrs. Gurnett sat dreamily smoothing one of her pleasant old cheeks with her knitting needle.

"That's dropping stitches wholesale and for export," said Basalt, with a grim smile, as he laid the work upon its owner's lap; but the remark drew forth no response, only Mrs. Gurnett said, in a low, sad tone—

"Dear—dear—dear—dear—dear!"

"What's dear, dear?" said Basalt, gruffly.

"Oh, Mr. Basalt, I'm very, very, very sorry to hear all this."

"What, about the cap?"

"Yes, very grieved indeed."

"Gammon!" said the old sailor. "Why, he loves the very ground she walks on; thinks about her all day and all night too. Many's the time he's walked the deck with me in a dark watch and talked about that gal—when she was a gal, you know, of ten and twelve and fourteen; but since she's been growed a woman, 'No,' says he to hisself—I know just as plain as if he'd told me—'she's too good and beautiful to be talked about to a rough old sailor.' For true love's a thing to be kep' snug in the locker of yer heart like a precious jewel. Look here, Betsy—"

Mrs. Gurney started; for Jeremiah Basalt, in all the years she had known him, had never before addressed her by her Christian name.

"Look here, Betsy," he said, drawing his chair closer, so that he could lay one great horny paw upon the hostess's plump white hand.

"Don't, Mr. Basalt," she said, with a sob, "the customers might see you."

"Blame the customers!" said Basalt, sturdily; "what is it to them if I like to speak out my mind like a man? Look here, my lass, I'm rough but I'm ready; and I aint known you fifteen year come this Christmas without knowing as I'd got a heart in my buzzum. 'That's a good woman, Jerry,' I've said to myself hundreds o' times, 'and if ever you marries, marry she, if she'll have you.' 'I will,' I says, 'I'll ask her some day.' But I aint going to be such a brute to a woman as to ask her to have me, and then keep going away to sea.' There, swab up those tears, my lass," he continued, for the great drops were chasing one another down Mrs. Gurnett's cheeks.

"'No,' I says, 'I aint a-going to be such a brute to a woman as I loves, as to be always a-leaving her; and I aint a-going to be such a brute to myself—as is a man for whom I has a great respect



“RISING, GLASS IN ONE HAND.—Page 7.”

—as to have to be leaving her. No. My 'pinion is that when you tie yourself tight to a woman, you oughtn't to be parting the strands. 'No,' I says, 'taint time yet, but there's the port you hope to reach, Jerry;' and to reach that port I've got eight 'undred and twenty-seven pun' sixteen and sixpence saved up, and it's all safe in a pair o' them stockings as you knitted for me, my lass, one put inside the other so as to be strong. And I says to myself, I says, 'There, Jerry Basalt, there's your cap'n as loves true, and there's you as loves true; and when he asks she to have he, and she marries he, why you shall go and empty that there pair o' stockings in Betsy Gurnett's lap, and you says to her, says you, My lass, you says, I brings this here, not as you cares a ball o' spun yarn about money, but just so as no spiteful 'longshore-going warmint should say as Jerry Basalt wanted to marry you for the sake of the snug business and the few pounds as your master—God rest him!—left you when he give in the number of his mess; and then you says, says you—'

"Oh, Mr. Basalt, Mr. Basalt!" cried the hostess, clapping her apron to her eyes, and sobbing loudly, as she rocked herself to and fro, "then it won't never—never be; for Miss May's promised to be married to somebody else."

"Stow that!" cried the old fellow, excitedly, as he started from his chair, and then stood looking down at the weeping woman. "Don't come no woman's games with a poor fellow as is as innocent as a babby of all 'longshore things, and has spoke out his mind free and handsome."

"Oh, Mr. Basalt, I wouldn't deceive you for the world," said Mrs. Gurnett, turning up her wet eyes to look full in his.

"That you wouldn't," he cried, taking her hand in both his, and sawing it up and down. "You're deep water right away, and there aint a rock or a shoal in you from top to bottom, I'll swear; but I'm took aback, my lass, as much for John Anderson's sake as I am for my

own. Avast there a minute, and let me give a look out ahead."

He walked to the red-curtained window, and stood looking out for a few moments, as if into the stormy night; but really into the dark, empty parlour of the Jolly Sailors. Then he came back to speak seriously, as he stood with one hand resting on the table.

"It looks squally," he said—"very squally, my lass. And," he continued, giving a tug at his collar, "it seems to me weather as may be the wrecking of a fine handsome teak-built ship, A I at Lloyd's, and called the *John Anderson my Jo*; and likewise of a weather-beaten old craft that meant to come well into port, and her name—his name I mean" he added, correcting himself—"his name I won't say nothing about. But, anyhow, you know the bearings of the coast better than I do, so heave ahead. I'll have another glass the whiles, for I'm for all the world as if I'd shipped a heavy sea."

"I've known Miss May from a baby, and nursed her when I was in Mr. Halley's service," said Mrs. Gurnett. "It was from the old house in Canonbury there that James Gurnett married me—being coachman, and having saved a little money."

"I think I remember," said Basalt, huskily.

"And it's been going on now some time," continued Mrs. Gurnett. "There's a gentleman there constant now, and he wants Miss May, and they tell me at the house that she has him there to see her; and they do say that he has some hold on poor old master, which I won't believe, for he's too rich and too high-spirited to be trampled on by any one. Anyhow, he's in the shipping trade, and partner in a big house; and I do think that they are to be married soon."

Jeremiah Basalt filled his pipe slowly, evidently thinking hard the while; then, although there were splints in a holder upon the chimney-piece, he stooped down, picked a glowing cinder from between the bottom bars with his case-hardened finger and thumb, and laid it



upon the pipe bowl, and then sat sucking at it for a few minutes before he spoke—Mrs. Gurnett now sitting drying her eyes and smoothing her hair.

"It'll about break that poor chap's 'art," said Basalt, at last.

Mrs. Gurnett sighed, and then there was another pause. Then Basalt said—

"What's the gent's name?"

"Merritt—Mr. Philip Merritt."

"Never heard it afore," said Basalt, gruffly; "and I wish as I hadn't heard it now. He's got a Co., I s'pose—

all shippers has—Merritt and Co., I s'pose—blame 'em!"

"No," said Mrs. Gurnett, "he belongs to a big house, and his name don't appear. I think he's a Co. himself, instead of having one; for the name up is Rutherford and Co."

"The devil!"

Jeremiah Basalt let fall the glass he was about to raise to his lips, and it was smashed to atoms upon the white hearthstone. Then he started to his feet, for the outer door opened quickly, and a well-known voice said at the bar—

"Is Mr. Basalt here?"

## FIFTH CABLE LENGTH.

HOW THE WIDOW WAS IN TROUBLE.



RS. GURNETT was sitting quite alone, with her eyes still red, and at times swimming with moisture, though no tears now escaped to roll down her cheeks. She had resumed her knitting—that is to say, she had taken it up—and had drawn more and more

grey worsted from the great ball which revolved in her pocket; but the work did not progress. She had drawn the leg out to see how wide it was, and sighed heavily; she had counted the stitches, and made up her mind to increase them in the coming rows; she had stabbed the stocking through and through with

her knitting needle, as if it were an old charm to win its future wearer's love;—but still the work did not progress. She had to lay it down too frequently to wait on customers, who spoke about the weather, and to give change to Tom the potboy, who was busily attending upon a part of the crew of the *Merry May*, sitting in the tap-room enjoying themselves; and again she sighed heavily, for as the tap-room door opened there came the sound of a jovial voice trolling out the words of one of the finest of our old sea songs, and the tears gathered again as she heard—

"And three times round went our gallant ship,  
And three times round went she."

Then the door closed, and Mrs Gurnett sighed again. The next minute she gave quite a sob; for the door was once more opened, and the same voice trolled out, in the peculiar, half-mournful tones of the old song—

"And she sank to the bottom of the sea, the  
sea, the sea,  
And she sank to the bottom of the sea."

Then she held her breath as the chorus came rolling through the house, lustily sung by a dozen voices—

“While the raging seas did roar, and the stormy winds did blow,  
And we jolly sailor boys were up, up, up aloft;  
And the land lubbers lying down below, below,  
below,  
And the land lubbers lying down below.”

Poor Mrs. Gurnett heard not the rattling of pots and glasses upon the table, nor the stamping of feet upon the floor; for she had crossed softly to a corner cupboard of old oak, upon whose top were three goodly china punchbowls, and within various glasses, ladles, spoons, and sugar stirrers. But resting upon the feet of the reversed glasses were two books.

She took out one, the thicker of the two, and it opened naturally at one well-thumbed place; and then, taking out a pair of spectacles, Mrs. Gurnett did not put them on, but held them up reversed to her eyes, and read softly, but in an audible tone—

“And there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy;

“And they came to him, and awoke him, saying Master, Master, we perish. Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water; and they ceased, and there was a calm.

“And he said unto them, Where is your faith?”

Here Mrs. Gurnett closed the Book, and, reverently replacing it, took up the other; and it too fell open at another well-thumbed place, where, if you had been looking over her shoulder, you might have read the words—

“Form of prayer to be used at sea.”

From this, too, she stood reading for a time, and then replaced it, closing the door softly, just as a hasty step sounded on the passage floor, and a voice said—

“Mrs. Gurnett.”

It was only the postman; but Mrs. Gurnett had so few correspondents that a letter was a novelty; and she held it for a few minutes, wondering who might be the sender.

Then she sat down with it still unopened, but lying upon the table before

her; as she this time took out her spectacles, carefully wiped them, and put them on, wondering now what business had brought Captain Anderson to her house for Jeremiah Basalt, and whether the latter had told him about May Halley.

“I suppose I am very foolish—at my time of life, too; but I suppose it comes natural to a woman to want to have something—somebody, I mean—to cling to; and I’ve been all alone for a many, many years now.

“Heigho!” she sighed again as she looked dreamily before her over the table. “He’s a very good man, though; and if I wasn’t so old I’d say I loved him very dearly.

“Poor Captain Anderson!” she sighed soon after. “Such a proper man, too, and so brave! It must be the salt in the water that makes them so, for there’s no men anywhere like sailors. But even they aint perfect; but, poor fellows, who would grudge them a glass when they get ashore?”

“Heigho! I wish people wouldn’t write letters to me,” she said at last, taking up her missive. “Why, it must be from Miss May.”

She turned it over again, and held the neat, ladylike direction up to the light.

Then a customer came in, and she started, hoping it might be old Basalt come back; but no, he was with John Anderson; so she returned to the light, opened the envelope, and exclaimed—

“Why, God bless the child, it *is* from Miss May!”

Then she read the few lines slowly:

“MY DEAR NURSE—I’m in great trouble. Come and see your poor little girl to-morrow afternoon, when I shall be alone. I have plenty of friends, but no mother, and no one to whom I care to turn more than to the kind old nurse who so often kissed me as a child.—Yours very affectionately,

“MAY HALLEY.”

Mrs. Gurnett was very easily moved

to tears that night, and her handkerchief grew rather moist with frequent usage.

"I knew she wouldn't forget me,

though it's little indeed I've seen of her of late. And she grown such a bright, handsome young lady. I wish it was to-morrow.

## SIXTH CABLE LENGTH.

HOW JOHN ANDERSON SOLD HIMSELF.



WANT to have a few words with you, Basalt," said John Anderson, as he entered Mrs. Gurnett's bar; and evidently, to use his own words, "taken aback," the old mate left his seat, broke his pipe as he tried to set it up on

end in the corner, took his old tarpaulin hat and set it on wrong way, had quite a struggle to get into his pea jacket, and lurched about as if his potatoes had been too strong for him. But this was not the case, for Jeremiah Basalt was as sober as a judge; and at last he turned, gave a solemn nod to Mrs. Gurnett, and walked out with his captain.

The streets were wet and muddy, and glistened in the light which streamed from window and gas-lamp. It was getting late now, and wayfarers were few, so that the streets they passed through they had pretty well to themselves. It did not seem as if they were going to any particular place, for in utter silence John Anderson led, or rather indicated, the way, as they passed from street to street, sometimes crossing, sometimes almost returning on their track.

It was nothing, though, to Basalt. The captain wanted him, and here he was. He might have wanted his help in keeping a watch ashore—in fact it seemed so, when at last the aimless tramping over the pavement had ended in a short walk up and down beneath a lamp-post, in a very quiet street.

They must have paced up and down for quite half an hour in silence; for, knowing what he did, Basalt would hardly have spoken first to save his life. It was very evident that his young captain was in trouble, and he respected it.

"When he wants my advice he'll ask for it," said Basalt to himself. "Poor chap, he's found it out, safe! And now what's it all coming to?"

At last John Anderson stopped short beneath the lamp-post, and said, hoarsely, "Basalt, I've given up my ship. There, no—stop: I won't be a humbug. Jerry, I've *lost* my ship."

"Lost be blessed," said Basalt; "why she's safe in dock! But you said you'd give her up. Don't do that, my lad—don't do that. If it's a bit of a tiff with Master Halley, wink at it; don't give up a fine craft like the *May* for the sake of a few hard words. Just think of what we've done in her!—off the Cape, you know; and when we ran side by side with that man-o'-war that thought she could overhaul us. Oh, Master John, don't give up the *May*."

"She's given me up, Jerry," said Captain Anderson, bitterly. "Look here, if you care to read it. Here is Mr. Halley's dismissal."

"Good Lord!" ejaculated Basalt,

leaning against the lamp-post, and staring at the paper his captain held in his hand, but without attempting to read it.

"I thought I'd see you, and tell you; for I may not see much more of you, old fellow, before I start."

"Now, just look here, my lad. You're nobbut a boy to me, so I say 'my lad,' though you are my captain. I'm as thick to-night as a Deal haze; so if you want to make me understand, just speak out, and then perhaps we can get on."

"Well, Basalt," said John Anderson, smiling, "I've got in disgrace with Mr. Halley, and am no longer in his service."

The old man uttered a low, soft whistle.

"It's a bad job, and I'm sorry to give up so fine a ship; but there she is, and some one else will command her. As for me, I wanted to be off again somewhere at once, and——"

"Why, we've only just got back."

"True," said Anderson; "but all the same I can't stop; so I've lost no time, but made an engagement with another firm, and am off next week."

"Where?"

"China."

"All right! It's all the same to me."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, what I say—it's all the same to me."

"But you have received no dismissal, Basalt."

"Oh, yes. Took it myself."

"What do you mean?"

"What do I mean? Why, after sailing together all these years, do you think that I'm going to let you go afloat like a helpless babby, without me to take care of you? No, my lad. I taught you first to make a running bowline, and to coil down a rope, and made you box the compass afore you was fourteen years old; and if you think I'm going to leave you now, why, you're mistaken, that's all."

"But, really, Basalt, I can't think of letting you give up for such reasons."

"I'm ashore now, and won't take no notice of what you say; so I tell you this, that as long as I sail the sea it shall be in your wake, and if you won't have me as mate, I'll go afore the mast along with the lads, who'll ship with you, every man Jack of 'em."

John Anderson, bitter and reckless an hour before, was now too much moved to speak; and after a few final attempts to dismiss his old friend, he wrung his hand tightly, and they walked on again in silence.

"Good craft?" said Basalt at last, to break the silence.

"I've not seen her," was the reply.

"What size?"

"Thousand tons."

"And you want men?"

"Badly."

"They shall come—every man Jack of 'em. But when's she down to sail?"

"Wednesday next."

"We'll be aboard, never fear," said Basalt, with a chuckle, which he instantly suppressed, lest he should seem gay while his captain was steeped in trouble. "But look here. What's the name of the ship?"

"*Victrix*—lying in the south basin, East India Dock."

"Good!" said Basalt. "Owners?"

"Rutherby and Co."

"Who?" cried Basalt, hoarsely.

"Rutherby and Co."

"My God!"

John Anderson stood and gazed at his companion's chapfallen aspect for a few moments; then, thinking he had divined the reason for Basalt's looks, he said—

"There, you can draw back from your promise. You are thinking of the bad character they have had for coffin ships; but, believe me, Basalt, I honestly think these tales are a cruel libel on a firm of gentlemen. No man would be such a cowardly, cruel scoundrel as to risk the lives of his sailors by sending them to sea in an ill-found ship. Here's proof that I don't believe it."

"Taint that," said Basalt, hoarsely.

"What is it, then? I've told you

that you are free to stay, glad as I should have been to have you. Stick to the dear old—stick to the *May*, and keep the men. They won't want to go to sea again till they've spent all their coin. Good night, Basalt—come and see me off."

"'Taint that," said Basalt, more huskily still.

"What is it, then?" said Anderson, bitterly.

"God help me," groaned the old man to himself. "Shall I tell him, or sha'n't I tell him? It's cruel to tell him, and it's cruel to let him go w/out. Here, don't go yet—stop a moment."

"Good night, old fellow," said John Anderson, moving off.

"I will tell him—it's like murder not to, and him half broken-hearted. Here, just a moment. You must give up that ship."

"Jerry Basalt," said Anderson, "you must give up going to the Jolly Sailors. There, shake hands; good night."

"I'm drunk, am I? P'r'aps I am; but it's with hard words and dizzy thoughts—not with strong waters. There, I must tell you. John, my boy, I've looked upon you as a son all these years, and this news, put to what I know, 'most swamps me. You must give up this ship, come what may."

"When I've signed and promised to sail?" said Anderson, mockingly.

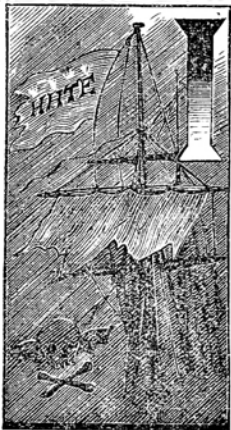
"Yes, my lad, even if you was aboard with your pilot, and the tow-boat casting off to leave you free."

"And why?" asked Anderson, half startled at the other's solemn earnestness.

"Because, my boy," cried Basalt, gripping him tightly by the arm, "you've been and sold yourself to the Devil!"

## SEVENTH CABLE LENGTH.

HOW MR. LONGDALE GAVE PHILIP MERRITT A HINT.



T was about ten o'clock the next morning that John Anderson, closely followed by Jeremiah Basalt, walked slowly down Shipping-street, and turning up one of the narrow courts, entered the offices of Rutherford and Co.

They stood first waiting in the outer office, whose walls were decorated with coloured engravings of various clipper ships in full sail, and with cards bearing the names of vessels about to

journey half round the world. There, too, were *Shipping Gazettes*, telegrams of inward and outward bound craft, at one and all of which Jeremiah Basalt looked with a sidewise, supercilious scrutiny.

At last the pair were shown in to Mr. Longdale, one of the partners, who received them with a most bland smile, and then discoursed with Anderson upon business matters connected with the ship, upon the wish of Basalt to join as second mate, and the necessity for an early start.

"And so you think you can bring ten or a dozen men, do you?" said Mr. Longdale, looking at Basalt "with a smile like a shark"—so the old man expressed it afterwards.

"Can't say yet, sir," replied Basalt. "I aint seen the ship. I'm going myself—'cause why? my old captain's going. That's quite enough for me; but it won't be enough for the men."



"Pooh—pooh! my dear sir, the men are too dense—too animal to care much about what ship they go in. It's all a matter of sentiment with the poor fellows. Tell them a ship's a bad one—ill-found, and not a man will go in her; tell them the ship's a lucky one, and all that could be wished for, or alter her name, and they go in her like a flock of sheep through a gap. Eh? You made some remark?"

"I said the more fools they," said Basalt, gruffly.

"Just so—exactly," said Mr. Longdale, smiling again. "So, of course, you must treat them accordingly. Get a dozen men if you can; and you can speak from authority when I tell you our ships are famous for their qualities. We never spare for anything in expense. You'll find the *Victrix* a perfect clipper in every respect, A 1, and a ship that you may be proud of; well-found, gentlemen, in everything."

"Glad to hear it," said Basalt, gruffly as ever.

"Exactly. I knew you would be. So now, gentlemen, you will take a run down to the basin, and have a look at her—see how matters are going on, you know, and hurry everything possible, so as to be off. Good morning, Captain Anderson. Good morning, Mr. Basalt."

Anderson had said but little, wearing a dull, stunned aspect, save when he was spoken to, when his face lit up for a few moments, but only to subside again into its heavy, listless expression. But as he passed into the outer office his whole appearance changed—his eyes flashed, his nostrils dilated, and he seemed to grow taller, as he stopped short, one foot advanced and hands clenching; for at that moment a fashionably dressed young man alighted from a cab, and stepped daintily into the office, holding an aromatic cigar between two of the fingers of his light kid-gloved hand.

In his turn, he started and turned pale as he confronted Anderson, his eyelids lowered till they were half closed, and slightly turning his head away, he looked swiftly at the young sailor, while a

bitter, mocking smile played round his thin lips, and half hid itself in the fair moustache.

Snuffing mischief, though, Basalt caught John Anderson's arm in his grip, and led him through the glass door out into the fresh air; while—after glancing spitefully after the retreating pair—Philip Merritt's whole aspect changed to one of cruel animosity, and hurrying into Mr. Longdale's room, he exclaimed, in excited tones—

"There's a man named Anderson just gone out from here; do you know who he is?"

"Last captain of your future papa's clipper, the *Merry May*," said Mr. Longdale, laying down the paper.

"Yes, yes, I know that; but what does he do here?"

"He is one of the best captains in the mercantile navy," replied Longdale.

"Well?"

"And his name is sufficient to give confidence to half the consignors in the port of London. We want cargo, my dear boy. Now do you see?"

"But surely," exclaimed Merritt, dashing down his cigar, "you don't mean to say—"

"Now, listen, my dear Merritt, and don't be excitable. You are young yet with us, and you might have a little confidence in your senior partners. Rutherby gives way to my opinion in such matters, for he has tried me for many years—you may do the same."

"Look here, Longdale," said Merritt, savagely; "I've brought money into this firm, which you wanted badly; and though I'm young, I don't mean to be treated as a nonentity. Just please leave off beating about the bush, and tell me why that scoundrel was here."

Mr. Longdale slightly knit his brows, and then said, calmly—

"My dear boy, no one wants to make you a nonentity, and I can assure you that we shall always make a point of consulting you on all important matters. But this piece of business was done while you were away—at Canonbury, I think."

Philip Merritt's hand went unconsciously to his mouth, where he began to move a loose front tooth backwards and forwards, to see if there was any risk of its coming out. The twinge of pain that accompanied the operation brought strongly back John Anderson's blow, and he said—

"Well, go on; why is that fellow here?"

"Because he wanted a ship, and we wanted a captain and a cargo. He could offer us the captain with a good name for trustworthiness, and we could offer him the ship. The bargain was struck, and the cargo comes as a matter of course. In fact, it began to pour in directly I had the announcements made. We shall get men, too, with ease. A good name, my dear boy, is a most valuable commodity in this wicked world. Look here, have a glass of sherry and a biscuit. I have a glass of very fine dry wine here."

He went to a cupboard, and brought out a decanter and glass; while Merritt, who was white with rage, strode up and down the room till a clerk opened the door, and upon him Merritt turned to vent his spleen.

"If you please, sir—" began the clerk.

"Curse you! Don't you see we are engaged? How dare you intrude like this?"

The clerk glanced at the sherry decanter, and was gone in an instant.

"Now, my dear boy," said Longdale, suavely.

"Don't 'dear boy' me, Longdale," cried Merritt, dashing his hand upon the table.

Then, dragging up a chair, he seated himself in front of his partner, who was calmly pouring out a glass of the amber fluid.

"Look here, I came into your firm when your name stank so that you could get neither cargo nor men. I came in, and brought money."

"Very true, my dear boy—your sherry—but you need not raise your voice so that the clerks can hear."

"I came into the firm with money,

and it was a stipulation that, though junior, I should have full voice in all matters."

"Quite true, my dear boy; and so you have. You are deferred to in everything—really senior partner."

"What do you call that, then, engaging that fellow?"

"My dear boy, taste your wine; it really is excellent."

"D——n the wine!" roared Merritt, and he swept the glass off the table in his rage. "I tell you I won't have it. I won't put up with it. The scoundrel's papers shall be cancelled if it costs a thousand pounds."

"Now, my dear Merritt, how was it possible that I could know you had any animus against this man? For aught I knew, you had never even seen him."

"Animus?" shrieked Merritt, white with rage, and tearing off his gloves—literally tearing them off in shreds, and casting them about the room—"I tell you I hate him—curse him! I hate him, I tell you. If I saw him starving—dying—drowning—burning, and by raising a finger I could save his life, I wouldn't do it. I'd snatch away the morsel that his soul craved; drag from him the consolation of religion; take from him the lifebuoy his fingers tried to hold; force him back into the flames. Curse him! curse him!" he hissed, between his teeth. "If I only had him here!"

He stamped the heel of his patent leather boot down upon the floor as he spoke, and made as if he were grinding his enemy's face beneath it.

"Has he dared, then—?" said Longdale, coolly sipping his sherry, and crumbling a biscuit between his fingers, as he curiously watched the working of his partner's face.

"Never mind what he has dared, and what he has not. The scoundrel struck me—curse him!—and I could not strike him again. I don't care, I'll own it," he cried, stammering in his speech, in his rage and excitement. "I was afraid of him; but I'll be even with him yet."

Longdale did not speak, but rose from

his chair, obtained a fresh glass, filled it, pushed it to his partner, and then re-seated himself, just as Merritt snatched up the glass, poured its contents down his throat, and thrust it forward to be refilled.

"That's better," said Longdale, pouring out a fresh glassful.

"I'll have this stopped at once," said Merritt, suddenly changing from his furious excitement to a hard, bitter, business tone of voice. "Ring for one of the clerks."

As he spoke he reached out his hand for the table gong, but Longdale coolly drew it back.

"Stop a minute, Merritt," he said, quietly—"don't be rash."

"Rash? I tell you, I'll have the whole affair cancelled."

"Listen to me. You are a business man—a shrewd man. Have you thought this over?"

"No; it wants no thinking over."

"Yes, it does—quietly. You are with us now, Merritt, and I can speak plainly as to Rutherby. Though I did not know it, it seems that I have been working in your interest."

"Now, look here," cried Merritt, fiercely, "I'm not to be cajoled. Pass me that bell."

"But you are to be spoken to, and shown where you are wrong, when you are wrong. Stop a moment," he said, for Merritt was about to interrupt. "You will own it yourself. You hate this Anderson?"

Merritt sat silent and glaring; his face of a leaden pallor, and his forehead contracted.

"Well, he was engaged to go for us to China."

Merritt did not speak; he was containing himself by a tremendous effort of will.

"It is sometimes a very dangerous voyage, Merritt."

Longdale spoke very slowly, and in a cold, subdued voice: such an utterance as must have come from the serpent when he spoke to our first mother in Paradise. He leaned forward, too,

as he spoke, with his elbows on the table, and his fingers touching his temples, and framing, as it were, his face, which was now in shadow.

Merritt gave a sort of gasp, and sat bolt upright in his chair, staring at his partner.

"You are with me, Merritt?"

The younger man nodded; and a faint smile flickered for a moment round Longdale's lips, as he saw the change from passion to earnest attention come over his partner's face.

"Yes," he said again, more slowly and calmly, "it is sometimes a dangerous voyage to the eastern seas."

Then Philip Merritt sat stiffly upright in his chair, holding on by the arms on either side, the jewelled rings upon his white fingers twinkling and scintillating, showing the nervous tremor that was agitating the man. For fully a minute neither spoke, each trying to read the other's thoughts; but at last Merritt essayed to say something. It was but an essay, though, for only a husky sound came from his throat.

He coughed, though, and cleared his voice; and then said, in a strange tone, that could not be recognized as his own—

"What—what ship does he sail in?"

"The *Victrix*."

"The *Victrix*?"

"Yes. The vessel that has been done up."

There was another pause, for what might have been five minutes, during which the ticking of the clock was plainly audible. But though no word was spoken, the two men sat still, reading each other's thoughts, the pallor of Merritt's face being now painful to witness.

At last he seized the decanter, and filled and emptied his glass three times running, before saying, in husky, subdued tones—

"You changed her name?"

Longdale nodded, without removing his hands.

"What was she before?"



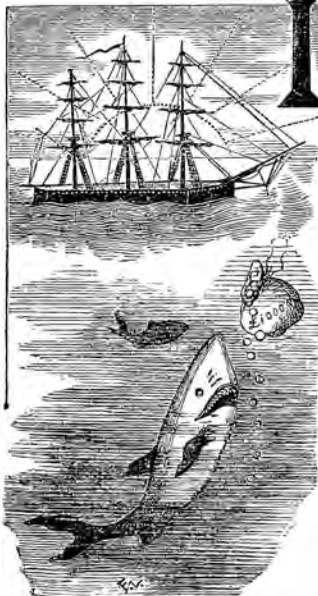
"The *Maid of Greece!*" said Longdale, almost inaudibly.

Philip Merritt sank back in his chair as if nerve, strength, all had passed from him. His lips parted, and his breath came painfully. Then he rose, and felt

about the table for his hat, never removing his eyes from Longdale's till he had half staggered to the door, through which he passed hastily, and out into the street like one walking in his sleep.

## EIGHTH CABLE LENGTH.

HOW JOHN ANDERSON WENT TO SEE A COFFIN SHIP.



IT was for all the world like a dog a-going to shake a cat," said old Basalt as he still held by John Anderson's arm, and walked him down the street. "I don't know which that chap's most like, a cat or a shark; but he'd do for either. But look here, my lad—you must give it up. Now, promise me you will. You can't go on, you know."

John Anderson turned round, and gazed in the old fellow's face before speaking.

"You must give it up, Jerry," he said, quietly. "I have undertaken the job, and I will not turn back."

Jeremiah Basalt let go of his companion's arm; spat savagely at a passing dog, which snarled at him in reply; and then, thrusting his hands into the bottom of his pockets, he drew from one a knife, and from the other a cake of tobacco, off which he hacked a small

square of about an inch across, thrust it into his cheek, and then walked forward towards the station by his captain's side, as stubborn an old sea dog as ever stepped a plank.

The railway soon took them within easy reach of the dock, through whose gates they passed in silence; for John Anderson's mood was anything but a conversational one. He glanced to left and right, at the tiers of shipping lading and discharging cargo, as if in search of the vessel he was to command; but his thoughts were far away. He seemed to avoid by instinct the various obstacles in his path, till he was roused to himself by Basalt exclaiming—

"*Wictrix*—there she lies."

Anderson stood and looked across the basin to where the long three-masted vessel lay close to the wharf, glistening with paint, and looking new, smart, and perfectly seaworthy. A white, statuesque figure of Fame stood out from beneath her bowsprit, holding to its lips a gilded trumpet; and at the stern, decorated with scroll-work and conventional carving, was the name in gold letters.

Men were very busy aloft unbending sails; and wheels and pulleys were creaking as the stevedores busily hoisted in bale, box, and cask, to lower them into the gaping hold.

"Well, what do you think of her?" said Anderson, after a nearer scrutiny.

Basalt stood gazing hard at the ship, and did not answer.

"What do you think of her?" said Anderson again.

"Don't know," was the rough response. "Let's go aboard."

They walked round the end of the basin, and crossed the gangway on to the littered decks, where, in a quiet, methodical manner, the two experienced men looked over the vessel, inspecting her from stem to stern, went up aloft to see the standing and running rigging, climbed over into the chains, went down below, and ended by going ashore and returning to Mrs. Gurnett's without saying a word.

They found the old lady with her bonnet on, apparently about to go out; but she hurried away, and returned to wait upon them in the little parlour, where Basalt was soon busy with a pipe and glass, Anderson refusing all refreshment.

They sat for quite ten minutes alone, each watching the other. The silence was broken by Anderson, who said—

"Well?"

"Ill, you mean," was the reply.

"I'm afraid so, Jerry."

"'Fraid so? Why, the poor old thing seems to me to groan through her paint and patchery. They've stuffed up the wrinkles; but if ever rottenness grinned out of an old vessel, there it is. Why, it's a dressed-up skeleton. You've done wrong, cap'n, you've done wrong. Give it up."

Anderson half turned away his head, and remained silent for a few minutes before he spoke.

"No, Basalt," he said; "I've undertaken to sail her to China and back, and, please God, I'll do it, though it will be a hard task. You shall not go, though."

"Sha'n't I?" said Basalt, gruffly.

"No. It would not be fair to you. You shall give it up."

"What's fair for you's fair for me; and if you go, I go. She's a rotten old hulk, patched up and painted to the nines. But though I say it as shouldn't say it, I will say one thing, and that is, that if a cap'n and a mate as knows their business can sail that there wessel to the Chinee seas, and back, that there

cap'n and mate's a-sitting now in the parlour of the Jolly Sailors, the one drinking his grog and smoking his pipe like a Christian, and the tother a-looking at him. Give it up, and I sails with you in another ship. Stick to your lines, and I goes with you in the *Wic-trix*; but before I'll ask one of my poor lads as I've had afloat with me to go in her, may I be—well, I won't say what in this here house, with a plaster ceiling over my head; but if I was afloat, with plenty of room aloft, I'd say something stiff, and no mistake."

Further conversation was stayed by the entrance of Mrs. Gurnett with a very troubled face.

"If you please, Captain Anderson, here's some of the men want to see you."

John Anderson, from being heavy and dejected, was in a moment all animation now; and, turning to Basalt, he said—

"Mind, not a man of them ships with us."

"No, not with my consent," said the old fellow. "I did think of getting the lot, but not now. They may find their own crew, and good luck to 'em, and bad luck to us."

"Is it really true, then, Captain Anderson," said the old lady, "that you are going directly in one of Rutherby's ships?"

"Yes, it's true enough," said Basalt, speaking for his superior; "and I'm a-going with him."

"Oh, Captain Anderson, don't go—don't go—and don't take him! There are such tales afloat about those ships, and only just now one was lost. Pray, pray don't take him with you."

"Softly, my lass—softly," cried Basalt, crossing to her side, and leading her to the other end of the room. "Don't you know," he whispered, "what the song says—

'There's a sweet little cherub as sits up aloft,  
To keep watch for the life of poor Jack?'

"Basalt," said Anderson, quietly, "I'll go into the tap-room and speak to the

boys. I'll come back here before I go."

He went softly out of the room, leaving Mrs. Gurnett with Basalt, whose arm, for the very first time, now stole round the widow's waist—a movement so far from resented that Mrs. Gurnett's head sank upon his shoulder as she clung to him sobbing.

"Betsy, my dear lass," he whispered, "they say as sailors aint religious, and I suppose they aint; for, as far as I'm consarned, I never goes to church ashore, and I always growls about going afloat when the cap'n has sarvice on the main deck. I don't think as I've read my Bible, either, these forty year; but I do believe this, as God looks after them poor chaps as puts their trust in Him; and I think I do this, after a fashion, along with my dooty."

"Oh, but you musn't, musn't think of going in that ship."

"But, my lass, I must. Now, belay there a minute, and I'll put it to you. Would it be right—would you like me to let that poor chap, as has got his heart half broke, go afloat by himself; or would you have me stand by him faithful—true blue right through?"

Mrs. Gurnett could not answer—she only sobbed bitterly.

"Avast heaving, there!" cried the old man, softly smoothing her grey sprinkled hair, and holding her more tightly to him. "If you're the woman I take you to be, you'll say 'Go with him, and God bless you!' For it stands to reason that you couldn't care to consort with a thundering sneak."

"Oh, I can't say it—I can't say it—indeed I can't!" sobbed Mrs. Gurnett. "I should know no rest, night or day, if you went."

"Oh, I say, now, cheer up and be hearty. Away with melancholy, and be spry! Why should you go on like that? Now look here—wouldn't you like me to be true and hearty to John Anderson?"

"Ah, yes; but—"

"There aint no 'buts' in it, my lass. A sailor's a picked-out sorter man, dif-

ferent altogether to your long-shore lubbers. A sailor's got his dooty to do, while your long-shore lubber aint got no dooty at all. Here we are, then. My dooty says, 'Stand by your captain like a man!' and I must stand by him. Why, don't it say in the Book as a sparrer sha'n't fall to the ground, and aint I something more than a sparrer?"

"Oh, yes—yes; but—"

"There you are again with your 'buts.' Now, be my own true blue woman, and say, 'Go, Jerry, and God bless you; and when you come back—'"

"Oh, but I can't say all that," sobbed Mrs. Gurnett—"only God bless you!"

"Then think the rest," said Basalt; "and when I come back— There, there's the cap'n coming."

He kissed the sobbing woman softly and reverently; then he gently unclasped her clinging hands from round his neck, and seated her in a chair, just as John Anderson entered the room.

"I've said good-bye to them, Basalt, and promised that they shall sail with me in my next ship, if ever I command another; for I could not let them go in this."

"They volunteered, then?" said Basalt.

"To a man," said Anderson, huskily.

"Oh, and don't let him go neither, Captain Anderson," sobbed Mrs. Gurnett, running forward to catch John Anderson's hand in hers.

"My lass!" said Basalt, reproachfully.

"Oh, I didn't know what I was saying," sobbed the poor woman; "only bring him back to me safe—oh, please, please do, or it will break my heart!"

"Hooray!" cried Basalt, excitedly—"hooray! There's for you, cap'n—that's all for love of this here old battered salt! Bring me back, my lass?—why, of course he will; for, as I said afore, if there's any two men as knows how to sail a ship—a boat—there, a plank, if you like—the name o' them two men's Jerry—I mean Cap'n John Anderson and Jeremiah Basalt. Cap'n, I'm

in your wake—helm hard up—haul on your main sheet, and away we go!"

"Yes, Jerry, go, and God bless you; and I'll pray for you night and day," sobbed Mrs. Gurnett.

"Go it is!" cried Basalt, excitedly; "and come back safe and sound it is, my lass; and then—"

"Yes," sobbed Mrs. Gurnett; "and then—"

"Then it is," cried Basalt; "and blame me if ever I go afloat again!"

The next minute John Anderson and his mate were in the street, and Mrs. Gurnett was upon her knees.

## NINTH CABLE LENGTH.

HOW MAY HALLEY KNEW SHE HAD A HEART.



**OUR** MRS. GURNETT! her heart was as fresh, and fair, and sound as it had been twenty years before. She rose from her knees at the end of five minutes, went upstairs and bathed her face, put on her bonnet and shawl, and set off for Canonbury, where she was received with great dignity by the drab footman, who condescended to let the plump old lady wait in the hall while he finished arranging some part of his work in the dining-room, after which he sent word up by the lady's-maid, that "a person" wanted to see Miss May; and was horribly scandalised at the maid fetching the stout, common woman up to Miss May's bedroom.

Such a nest! It was more like a

boudoir than a bed-room, with its light paper of white and gold, floral chintz hangings, and water-colour paintings, the work of her own hand. There was a bird too in the window, that rippled forth the sweetest trills of song, as it held its head from side to side, ruffled the feathers of its throat, and sang at its mistress. It was into this room that Mrs. Gurnett was shown, to stand just inside the door, and drop a formal curtsy to the tall, handsome girl who advanced to meet her.

"Oh, nurse, dear, I'm so glad you're come!" said May, taking her hands, and kissing her on both cheeks. "What a time it is since I've seen you! Why have you not been to me?"

"Because, my dear," said Mrs. Gurnett, rather stiffly, "it was a little, tiny girl I used to know, and not a young lady."

"But," said May, softly, as she drew the old lady, very prim and demure now, to a sofa, where she sat down by her side, and held one hand—"but, nurse, do you know that sometimes, though I know that I am grown into a woman, and that people"—here she glanced at the tall cheval glass opposite to her—"that people say all sorts of nonsense about me—"

"They say, I suppose," said Mrs. Gurnett, who had seen the glance, "that you are very handsome?"

"Oh! all sorts of nonsense," said May, blushing; "but I don't take any

notice of it; for what does it matter? After all, I sometimes feel just as I did years and years ago, nurse, when you used to lay my head upon my little pillow, and kiss me, and say 'Good night—'

"God bless you!" interpolated Mrs. Gurnett, softly.

"Yes, to be sure," said May, smiling. "And oh, nurse, it seems such a little while ago; and sometimes, as I lie down to sleep, I get thinking of all the old times, and almost wish that—that I was as young as I was when you were with me."

"Ah, my dear," said Mrs. Gurnett, "it's growing old enough you are to find out that there are greater troubles in life than a broken doll or a dirty pinafore."

And then, in spite of all her efforts, the poor old lady broke down, took out her handkerchief, and began to sob bitterly.

"Why, nurse, nurse, what is it?" said May, anxiously, as she drew nearer to the weeping woman. "Are you in trouble?"

"Oh, yes, yes, my dear," she said, at last, after choking again and again in the effort to speak.

"But I sent for you to get you to try and comfort me," said May, softly. "What is the matter?"

"Oh, my dear!" sobbed Mrs. Gurnett, "I'm finding out that after fighting for life years and years, and thinking I was strong, and steady, and sensible, I'm only a silly, weak old woman, with a heart as soft as that of a girl of eighteen."

May blushed, looked at her wonderingly, and more wonderingly as, thoroughly wound up to give vent to her feelings, and, womanlike, glad to have a sympathetic woman's breast into which she could empty the urn of her affliction, Mrs. Gurnett told all her trouble from beginning to end, stopping now and then to upbraid herself as "a silly old woman, who ought to know better;" but, made selfish in the extreme by her distress, forgetting all but her own affairs as she proceeded with her tale.

May flushed scarlet as Anderson's name was mentioned. Then she turned deadly pale as the narrative went on. Then she flushed again; but only for the blush to give place to a greater pallor, as step by step Mrs. Gurnett told of her dread—of the bad name owned by the firm of Rutherby, and her horror that Basalt should sail in one of their vessels.

"And I've told him he might go," sobbed the poor woman; "and I've sent him to his death; for sail he will in the floating coffin, and I shall never see him more."

She sat sobbing for a time, and then went on, heedless of May Halley's plainly displayed emotion—

"And him so faithful and true to Captain Anderson—as brave, and true, and handsome a man as ever stepped; and, oh, Miss May—"

Mrs. Gurnett stopped short, for it had just flashed across her mind that in her utter selfishness she had absolutely forgotten that which she knew concerning the young captain and his employer's daughter.

She sat up, handkerchief in hand, gazing at May, who was as white as marble, but who did not flinch from the old lady's look, only returned her gaze with one that was stony and dull.

"They are going to sail in the *Vic-trix*," said Mrs. Gurnett.

There was no reply.

"They are going to sail directly, and I can't believe that they will ever return."

Still May made no response; and Mrs. Gurnett, wiping her eyes, said, apologetically—

"My dear, you sent for me because you were in trouble, and I've been telling you all of mine. It was very thoughtless of me; but I seldom see any one to whom I care to talk, and when you seemed so gentle with me I was obliged to speak."

"I am very, very glad to see you, nurse, and to talk with you," said May, in a strange, cold voice.

"But, my dear, you wanted to tell me all your troubles."

"Did I, nurse? Oh, it was nothing! I was a little upset. I had nothing much to say. It was a mere trifle, and I did not know you were so worried, or I would not have sent."

"But, my dear, it was very silly and childish of me, and I'm sure that you will laugh at me when I am gone."

"Oh, no, no, nurse; don't think that," said May, lapsing for an instant from her cold, stern demeanour. No woman could despise another for displaying that which is waiting to bud in her own breast.

"But what was the matter, my dear? Was it anything I could talk to you about? I should have been here sooner, but for my own trouble."

"It was nothing, nurse—nothing at all—only I—"

She made a brave effort to curb down the feelings that were struggling for exit, but they proved too strong for her. They burst forth like a flood, as she exclaimed—

"Oh, nurse, nurse! I've sent him away like that, and—and—indeed—indeed, I did not know!"

## TENTH CABLE LENGTH.

HOW MR. HALLEY TALKED TO HIS DAUGHTER.



PEOPLE as a rule used to respect Mr. Halley, the shipowner, of Quarterdeck-court—Halley, Edwards, and Company was the name of the firm; but Edwards had been dead twenty years, and the Company had been bought out one by one by Mr. Halley, till he was the sole

owner of the line of ships trading to the East, and managed his business per Mr. Tudge, of whom anon. People used to say that Mr. Halley would cut up well when he died; and City men would make calculations as to his warmth, of course alluding to the ruddy glow of his gold.

He was a quaint, old-fashioned looking

man, who always persisted in ignoring customs of the present day.

"Fashion!" he would say; "what has fashion to do with me? Fashion ought to be what I choose to wear."

The consequence was that he wore the garments that had been in vogue forty years before—to wit, a blue coat, with a stiff velvet collar and treble gilt buttons, nankeen trousers, and a buff waistcoat. He did not powder his hair, for he could not have made it more white if he had; but he did wear it gathered together, and tied behind with a piece of black ribbon, which used to bob about the collar of his coat, to the great amusement of the street boys who saw him pass.

Of course, he had a right to dress as he pleased; but it was a source of great unpleasantry to his footman, who looked upon the left-off garments with ineffable contempt.

Mr. Halley had just finished his breakfast, laid down his paper, and was playing with his gold eyeglasses, while May, who sat behind the urn, looked pale and distraite.

Mr. Halley coughed—a short, forced cough—and looked disturbed.

May started.

This was the opening for which Mr. Halley had been waiting. He was fond of authority and ruling, but he was fonder of his child; and of late a feeling had been creeping over him that he was not satisfied with the course that domestic matters had taken.

"What's the matter, my dear?" he said.

"Nothing, papa."

"Yes—ahem—yes, there is, my dear. I have noticed—er—er—noticed lately—"

Here Mr. Halley's voice grew husky, and he had to cough two or three times to clear it, while May's face became scarlet.

"There—er—er—is something the matter, and I have noticed lately that you have been very strange and—er—er—not what you should be. Merritt came to me yesterday."

He paused, as if expecting May to speak; but she sat perfectly silent.

"I said Merritt came to me yesterday, my dear; and he wanted to know if he had given any offence."

May still silent.

"I told him no—nothing of the kind. He said he was afraid somebody had been trying to poison your ears against him, and he hoped that you did not take any notice of the absurd reports spread about the shipping house to which he belongs."

"Do you think, papa, that those reports are absurd?" said May, so suddenly that the old man started.

"Absurd? Of course, my dear; unless you think that the gentleman to whom you are engaged is about as black a scoundrel and murderer as ever stepped. May, I'm angry with you; I am, indeed. I can't think what has come over you of late. It is really too bad—it is, indeed. I've been wanting to talk to you about it; and really, you know, the way in which you treated his partner, Mr. Longdale, last night, was quite insulting."

"Papa!" cried May, passionately, "I can't make friends with a slimy snake."

"Now, my dear child," cried the old

man, petulantly, "this—this is absurd; it's—it's—it's cruel; it's—it's so like your poor mother—bursting out in the most unreasonable way against a man whom you do not fancy."

"Fancy? Oh, papa!" cried May, "did you ever shake hands with him?"

"Why, of course, my dear. Shake hands, indeed!"

"It was dreadful; so cold and dank, and—and—and fishy," said May.

"Now, my darling child, I must beg of you not to be absurd. Longdale is a man of position, and Merritt's partner. Longdale and Merritt are really the men, for poor old Rutherby is quite a nonentity. And here, last night, you treated Longdale as if he were—were—were—"

"A nasty, cold, twining, slimy snake," said May, impetuously. "Ugh!"

"Tut, tut, tut!" ejaculated the old man, peevishly; "really, May!"

"Do you think, papa, there is any truth in what has been said about Rutherby's ships?"

"Why—why—why—what do you know about Rutherby's ships, child?" cried the old man, uneasily.

"I've heard the reports, papa, about their unseaworthy state," said May, excitedly; "and it seems to me so dreadful, so horrible, that it makes me shudder."

"It's all a cruel, atrocious lie. I'm sure of it, my dear," said the old man, dabbing his forehead as he spoke. "If I—I—I for a moment thought that they could be such—There, it's nonsense—absurd! Men couldn't do it."

"But people say they do, papa," said May.

"People say any cruel thing of others who are more prosperous than themselves. Why they even say that—that I—but there, I am not prosperous, my dear, only comfortably off. But there, don't you take any notice of what people say."

"But it sounds so horrible, papa."

"What, that they send men to sea in rotten ships? Yes, of course it sounds horrible; but it isn't true—it can't be true. Why, my dear, I should have

been a very, very rich man now if it had not been for the expense I've been put to in keeping my ships in good condition; and as to what they say of Rutherby's—pooh!"

The door opened, and the footman appeared.

"Lady wants to see you, sir, on business," said the man.

"Who is it? What business? Why doesn't she go to the offices?"

"Said I wasn't to say, sir," said the man, reluctantly. "She's in the library."

The old gentleman fixed him with his eye, and the footman, with a shilling in his mind, half whimpered—

"If you please, sir, I couldn't help it. She says, sir, please, sir, 'Show me into a private room, and tell your master a lady wants to see him on business.'"

"Who is the lady?" said Mr. Halley.

"Mrs. Anderson, sir—Captain Anderson's mother."

May gave vent to a little cry, half sob, half catch of the breath; and then sat silent and intent upon what followed.

"Tell her, I can't see her," cried the old man, angrily; "tell her I won't see her; tell her—there, what the devil does she want here? She's come to beg that I will reinstate her son. It's too bad, May—it really is too bad; and I won't be bothered like this. I won't see her. Here, stop, sir. How dare you go away without orders?"

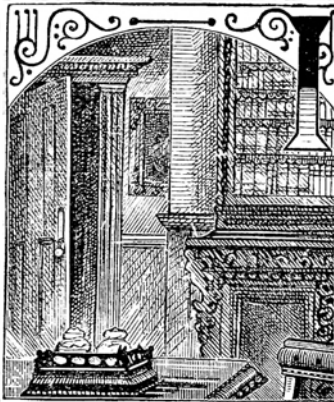
"Please, sir, you said—"

"Confound you, sir! I didn't said at all," cried the old man, angrily. "Here, stop, I'll—I'll—yes, I'll see her in the library."

"Yes, sir, she is there," said the footman, hurrying to open the door obsequiously for Mr. Halley, nervous and evidently dreading the interview; while May sat with her face changing colour each moment, and listening attentively till she heard the library door closed, when she hurried up to her own room, to throw herself into a chair, and place one hand upon her side, as if to stay with it the heavy throbbings of her heart.

## ELEVENTH CABLE LENGTH.

HOW MRS. ANDERSON CAME TO SPEAK ABOUT HER SON.



Canonbury, was Queen paramount there, and that Mr. Halley, the old shipowner, approached her as a suppliant; for she remained sitting—a stiff old figure, in

her rustling, great folded silk—while he stood before her, evidently ill at ease.

"Mr. Halley," she said, sternly, "I have come to speak to you about my son."

"I must beg, madam—" he began, nervously.

"Have the goodness to listen to me first, Mr. Halley."

The old gentleman coughed, glanced at the door, and then remained silent; while his visitor drew off a black kid glove, held up a thin white finger threateningly at him, and said, slowly—

"Mr. Halley, you have murdered my son!"

The old gentleman started at the tremendous charge, and was about to speak; but Mrs. Anderson interrupted him.



"Yes—murdered him; for you have deprived him of the command of the ship he loved, and sent him afloat in one that bears an ill name."

"I—I—I did nothing of the sort, Mrs. Anderson; I—I—really, this is a most scandalous charge."

"But it is quite true, Mr. Halley, and you know it. And why was this?"

"Why, ma'am, why?" cried the old gentleman, angrily, glad to have an opportunity to speak, "because he was presumptuous; but, stop—mind this, I am only speaking of my breaking connection with him. I have nothing to do with his shipping with another firm."

"Yes, you have," said Mrs. Anderson, sternly.

"Nonsense!—absurd! 'I will not have it," cried the old man. "Do you know how this man, your son, behaved here—here in my house, madam?"

"No, not quite," said Mrs. Anderson, quietly; "but I am quite sure that my son would behave like a gentleman."

"A gentleman!" said Mr. Halley. "Why, he struck one of my visitors, and insulted my daughter."

"If he struck one of your guests, Mr. Halley," said the old lady, speaking haughtily as a tragedy queen, "he must have been a villain and deserved it. But my son would never insult your daughter."

"But—but I tell you, ma'am, he did—he did. Forgot his position altogether as one of my servants, and—and—there, it is too absurd! He actually had the impertinence to propose—to—to make love to her."

"And pray, Mr. Halley, was that insulting her?"

"Of course."

Mrs. Anderson rose from her chair, and stood menacingly before the old gentleman.

"Insult—proposed! Mr. Halley, I consider that my son conferred an honour upon her."

"Honour?"

"Yes, sir, an honour. I won't say anything about his birth, only that the Andersons have been Scotch gentlemen

for many generations, while the Halleys— Do you remember coming to borrow a sovereign of my husband, Mr. Halley, when you were a struggling man?"

"I—I—I—there!—No; yes, yes, I won't deny it, Mrs. Anderson. I did bor—but I paid it again!"

"Yes, you paid it again," said the old lady. "You always were an honest man, James Halley; but because you have made money in shipowning, I can't see that my son would be offering any insult to your child."

"Mrs. Anderson, I am not going to—I can't argue with you about that matter. Your son is not connected with me now, and I had nothing to do with his engaging himself to other owners."

"But it was through you, Mr. Halley, it was through you that the poor lad went; and if evil come to him you are to blame."

"Mrs. Anderson, if you were not—but I won't be angry. I won't say hard things to you. You are an old lady, and in trouble about your son, and therefore speak more plainly than you should."

"No, Mr. Halley, not more plainly than I should. It is true that it is about my poor boy; but I would speak as plainly if it were about any other woman's son, for it is the duty of every one to speak when evil is being done, and no steps taken to avert it. James Halley, you know the kind of ship my son has gone in, and what they say about it."

"I know what they say about it, Mrs. Anderson," said Mr. Halley, angrily; "but I don't believe it—I won't believe it's true."

"No, that's it—you won't believe it's true."

"I can't, I tell you," said Mr. Halley. "Why, I never sent a ship to sea until it had been thoroughly overhauled and made trim."

"That makes me believe you, James Halley," said the old lady, eagerly; and she caught his hand and pressed it between her own. "I know you never

did—my John has told me so a dozen times; and I see now that you can't believe it in others. I did think though, when I came here, that you knew of it all, and winked at it that you might get well rid of my son."

"If I thought—no, if I found out, and could believe that Rutherbys could be such scoundrels, they should never darken my doors again; and as for—"

He stopped short, and looked curiously at the old lady, who leaned forward, and peered searchingly in his eyes.

"Say what you were going to say to me, James Halley. Don't triumph over me because I come as a suitor now. You came as a suitor to me once—forty years ago now, James Halley—and I would not listen to you; but you are too much of a man to bear me malice for that."

"Bear malice!" said the old gentleman, warmly; "not I. Well, I'll say it. No, I won't."

"Then I'll say it for you," said Mrs. Anderson. "You were going to say that if you found out that Philip Merritt knew of the state of the ship in which my son sailed, he should never wed daughter of yours. Say it, James Halley, and I shall go away happier."

"No," said the old gentleman, shak-

ing his head, angrily, and striding up and down the room—"no, I won't say it. There's no need. It isn't true. And you've come here, on your son's behalf, to try and set me against that young man, and I'll hear no more of it. As for the young man, I like him, and May likes him, and—but there, I won't—I won't enter any more into the matter. Mrs. Anderson, good morning."

"Stop one moment, Mr. Halley," cried the old lady. "We are very old acquaintances. You love your girl, perhaps, as well as I love my boy. That he hoped to have won May Halley was his misfortune and mine. But I don't come on his behalf; for, poor lad, he will never return—I know it well. I should like, though, to know that this engagement was broken off; for I tell you it will bring with it misery. The money Philip Merritt brings to his home will be fouled with the despairing curses of the dying sailors he has sent to their grave; and every jewel he gives his wife will be glistening with the tears of the wives and mothers whose loved ones have sailed in his rotten ships. I tell you, James Halley, that you will go to your grave a wretched and despairing man if you marry your child to—"

"Mr. Philip Merritt," said the footman, suddenly opening the door.



## TWELFTH GABLE LENGTH.

HOW PHILIP MERRITT ASKED IF HE LOOKED LIKE A SCOUNDREL.



OR a few moments no one spoke, during which short space the closing of the door by the footman and his retreating steps across the hall were plainly heard. Then Merritt somewhat recovered from his surprise; for he had expected May to be with her father, and instead he found

the Almighty to crush you ere your misdoings become more. I only say, for John Anderson and myself, may God forgive you!"

Before Philip Merritt could recover himself from the shock her words had occasioned, the door had closed, and he was alone with Mr. Halley, his face blanched, and the perspiration standing in beads upon his temples.

"Why, what a dreadful old woman!" he exclaimed at last, using his scented handkerchief freely upon his forehead and damp hands. "I declare she has made me feel quite uncomfortable. And who is the strange old being?"

"John Anderson's mother," said Mr. Halley, sinking back into a seat, with clouded brow.

"Well, do you know, I half guessed it. But is she—a little—touched?"

He tapped his forehead significantly.

"Sane as you or I," said Mr. Halley, shortly.

"Oh!" said Merritt.

And there was an uncomfortable silence for a few moments.

"Look here, Merritt," exclaimed Mr. Halley, suddenly; "I'm a plain-spoken old man, and very frank. I take to myself the credit of being honest and straightforward, so I will speak what is on my mind at once. There are strange reports afloat."

"Indeed," said Merritt, calmly; "what about?"

"About you, Merritt—about you."

"About me?" said Merritt, with an amused smile. "Why, what have I been doing? Has a little bird whispered that I was seen at the Casino last night; or tipsy in the Haymarket, knocking off policemen's hats; and is my future papa angry about it, and going to give me a lecture?"

"Just listen to me seriously, Philip,"

himself confronted by the threatening, angry countenance of Mrs. Anderson.

"I—I beg pardon," he stammered, changing colour in spite of himself. "I'll go into the next room."

"No!" cried the old lady, fiercely, as she took a step forward; then, pointing at him with her stick, she turned to Mr. Halley. "Look at him, James Halley—look at him, and think of what I said. It will bring a curse, I tell you—a curse!"

She went slowly towards the door, and turned once more as she took the handle, to gaze sternly upon Merritt.

"The tears of mothers and sweethearts, the bitter wails of wives and children, and the stifled curses and cries to Heaven for vengeance of drowning sailors, will be the dowry you bring to your wife, Philip Merritt. I, as the mother of one whom you have sent to his death, will not add my curse. I will not spit upon the ground where you stand, and call down maledictions from

said Mr. Halley, leaning forward, and speaking very earnestly. "I keep hearing on all sides evil whisperings about Rutherby's vessels."

"Of course, yes—evil whisperings," said Merritt, with a contemptuous "Pish!"

"They say your ships go out unseaworthy and heavily insured."

"Our ships? Well, yes, they are ours now; but I am a very young partner, you know."

"And if this is the case, Philip Merritt, it is wholesale murder."

Merritt grew a trifle paler, but the amused smile never left his lips.

"A firm—a man who would countenance such things ought to be hung as high as Haman," said the old man, excitedly. "He ought to be—there, there, I don't know a punishment hard enough for such a demon. It makes my blood boil to think of it."

"Then why think of it?" said Merritt, who was, however, blessed with a face that was as tell-tale as a girl's, and now showed of a deathly pallor—"why think of it?" he said coolly. "You must know that it is all pure invention."

"But I don't know," cried the old man. "I want to know—want you to tell me."

"Want me to tell you!" said Merritt. "Well, really, my dear sir, if it were any one else I should rise and leave the room. You ask me, so to speak, if it is true that I am, according to your own showing, as great a ruffian, scoundrel, and murderer as ever stepped—that I, the accepted suitor of your daughter, am a wholesale destroyer of life, and make money by swindling the marine insurance companies. Mr. Halley, it is monstrous!"

"It is—it is, Merritt," exclaimed the old man.

"I ask you a question," continued Merritt, rising with an aspect of injured innocence; "do I look like the scoundrel you have painted?"

"No, my boy—no," cried the old man, catching Merritt's hands in his, and shaking them heartily. "It is mon-

strous. Indeed, I don't believe a word of it—not a word."

"Thank you, sir—thank you," said Merritt, warmly returning the shake. "It is one of the evils of prosperity that it must be backbitten by every slandering scoundrel who has not been fortunate."

"Quite true, Merritt—quite true."

"And because we have lost a ship or two, they set it down to our own fault; when I can assure you, Mr. Halley, that no expense is spared to make our vessels all that could be wished."

"I am sure of it, Merritt—quite sure. Depend upon it, some jealous scoundrel is at the bottom of all this, for his own ends."

"I fancy it comes from the underwriting fraternity," said Merritt; "and I'm glad you take my view, that it is set afloat by some interested party; for that is really what I feel about it. An underwriter's dodge to set a certain number against our ships, so that they may arrange per centage just as they please."

"Very likely—very likely," said Mr. Halley. "There's a deal of wickedness in this world, my boy."

"Depend upon it, sir," said Merritt, "that any roguery or false dealing in commerce is sure to come upon the head of its inventor."

"I am sure of it, my boy—quite sure of it."

"Why, even you know, Mr. Halley, how hard it is to go on, even carrying things along in the even, straightforward way in which you have done business."

"True, my boy—quite true. I have had very heavy losses in my time, though none so bad that I have not been able to stand against them."

"Then, I think we may change the conversation, sir," said Merritt.

"Ye-e-es," said the old man, "we will directly; but I will say this—I don't suspect you now, my boy, not at all—but I'll say this all the same. If I felt that any one who wanted to be related to me—wanted to have that little pearl of mine to wear for his own through

life—if I had the slightest suspicion that he was in any way connected with such goings on, I'd turn my back upon him at once."

"But, my dear sir," exclaimed Merritt, "that looks as if you were not quite satisfied even yet."

"Not at all, my boy, not at all—so there, shake hands upon it. Are you coming into the City with me, or are you going to see May? Oh, of course—well, you must excuse me. Give me a look in as you go by the office."

The old gentleman left the room, after a very warm shake of the hand; and Philip Merritt, after waiting for a few minutes, made his way into the drawing-room, where he expected to find May. The room, however, was empty; and after looking at a few books, he rang the bell.

"Tell Miss May I am here," he said to the man.

"I'll send word up, sir," said the man; "she's in her own room."

Merritt waited a few minutes, full of impatience; and then he heard the closing of a door, and May's voice on the stairs. A minute later, and listening attentively, he heard a step in the hall, when, throwing open the door, he stepped hastily out, open-handed, but

found himself confronting the stiff, stern old figure of Mrs. Anderson.

For a few moments he stood as if paralyzed, with the old lady's flashing eyes gazing straight into his, till he cowered and blenched, and fell back a step. Then relief came; for the footman approached, and the old lady pointed with her stick to the door.

So fixed was her stern look, that Philip Merritt shivered as he obeyed her sign and slowly opened the door, through which she passed, gazing at him to the last.

"What an idiot I am!" he said to himself, as the door was closed; "and before that fellow, too! Here," he cried, wiping his damp hands, "did you send word to Miss May that I was here?"

"Yes, sir," said the footman.

"And what did she say?"

"I—oh, here's her maid, sir," was the reply.

At this moment a smart little domestic came tripping down the stairs.

"If you please, sir, Miss May's compliments, and she's too poorly to leave her room."

"D——n," muttered Merritt, catching up his hat and stick. Then as soon as he was outside, "This is all the doing of that cursed woman."



## THIRTEENTH CABLE LENGTH.

HOW MRS. ANDERSON WENT TO CURSE MAY HALLEY.



HALLEY had no idea that he left Mrs. Anderson closely closeted with his daughter when he started for the City; for, in place of going away, she had desired the servant to tell Miss May that she wished to see her.

May, thinking it was Mrs. Gurnett, eagerly sent word

down for her to be shown up, running forward to meet her as the door was opened, and then stopping short, surprised and confused, as she found herself confronted by the prim old dame, who was frowning at her from beneath her grey eyebrows.

"You don't know me," the old lady said, after a pause, during which May stood blushing beneath the stern gaze.

"No," said May; and then the thought flashed across her mind that this might be Mrs. Anderson, of whom she had heard, but whom she had never before seen.

"Yes," said the old lady, taking her hand, and leading her to the window to scrutinize her more narrowly. "I am not surprised—you are very pretty."

She said this half to herself; but May heard every word, and looked more than ever conscious, with the ruddy hue suffusing neck and temples.

"Yes," continued the old lady, "you

are very pretty, and I am not surprised."

"If you please," said May, quaintly, and with a half-amused smile upon her face. "I can't help it."

"No," said the old lady, more to herself than May, "you can't help it; and yet what misery and wretchedness a pretty face can cause! Why should your pretty doll's face come between me and my son, to wean his heart—no, I won't say that—but to make his life a burden to him: so great a one that he has thrown it away?"

"No, no—not so bad as that," cried May.

"Not so bad!" retorted the old lady. "It is worse. Did you know he loved you?"

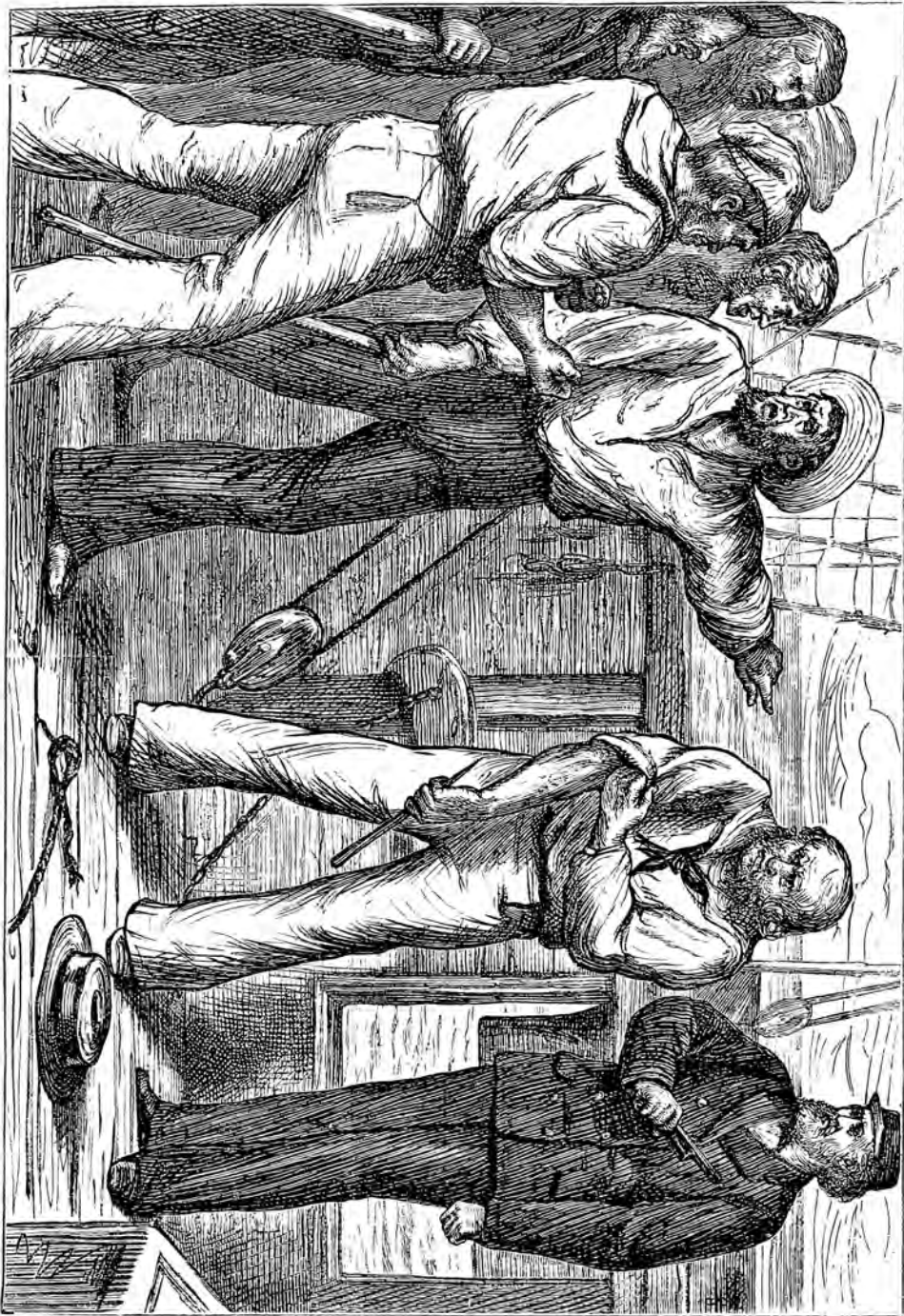
May's colour rose once more at this sharp questioning, and she drew herself up.

"Pride!" exclaimed the old lady. "Pride and coquetry! Shame on you, girl. I can see it all, as plainly as if I had watched it throughout. To gratify your girlish love of admiration, you have led on and wrecked the heart of as true a man as ever stepped. You! Are you listening? Do you know how unworthy of him you are—how brave and good he is? Why, a queen might have been proud to own his love; while you—what do you do, girl? You spurn him—send him away maddened, to throw away his life—to let himself be trapped into taking charge of a wretched, rotten ship, that will hold together till the first rough sea, and then sink, to help pave the bottom of the sea with good men's bones."

"Oh, but tell me," cried May—"you are exaggerating. It is not so bad as this?"

"So bad, girl!" cried the old lady, excitedly—"it is worse; for do you know

"THE BOATS—THE BOATS!" SHOUTED THE MEN.—Page 50.



in whose ship he has gone? No. I'll tell you. In his rival's."

"You are speaking without reason, Mrs. Anderson. Your son had no rival, for he was not acknowledged."

"No," said the old lady—"he was not acknowledged, my son was not. He was but a poor merchant captain, and no meet mate for his owner's daughter. Oh, that a few pounds of gold should make so wide a gap between people. But there—he could not see it, poor boy! You are to marry, I suppose, that man below—the man who has murdered my son?"

"Mrs. Anderson!"

"Well, girl, what do you call it, if not murder? He owns a ship, and engages men to sail it to some far distant land. What ought he to do? Ought he not to make that vessel safe?"

"Oh, yes," exclaimed May. "Papa—"

"Your father is an obstinate, proud man, May Halley; but he is honest and true, and always did his duty by his men."

"I am sure he did," said May, with animation.

"Yes, my son has told me so a score of times. But this firm—these Rutherbys—what do they do? I'll tell you, girl—but come and sit down here by this window, for I am an old woman, and weak."

May hesitated for a moment, then suffered herself to be led to a chair, as if she were the visitor, and the old lady mistress of the place.

"There," said the latter, on seeing the hesitation, "you need not be afraid, child—hard words break no bones; and I have a right to speak to you—the right of age—the right of an old woman to a motherless girl."

May glanced up at her quickly, for the old lady's face had wonderfully softened, and she leaned forward to softly stroke the girl's peachy cheek.

"Yes, May Halley, I ought to be very bitter and angry with you; but I cannot, for when I think, it seems to me that I might perhaps have been your mother."

"My mother!"

"Yes, your mother, child; for in the days gone by your father would have made me his wife. But that matters nothing now. I came to tell you of your cruelty to my poor boy, who has gone to his death."

"But, Mrs. Anderson," exclaimed May, "it cannot be as bad as you say."

"Child, it is worse, I tell you. These men buy wretched old ships, patch and paint them up, engage good sailors to man them, and send them to sea—to their death."

"Oh, impossible!" cried May.

"Impossible? It is done, I tell you, and known to many, but no one interferes; and when one more bold than the cowardly people who look on at the wholesale murder interferes, and cries boldly to the country, 'This should not be,' he is told that it is impossible; he is cried down as an enthusiast, charged with interference with that which he does not understand, and kept back when he calls for proper inquiry."

"But are you sure that this is true?" cried May, earnestly.

"My son has told me, and he never lied," said the old lady, in a stately way.

"It is too dreadful!"

"Too dreadful, child, perhaps; but, none the less, true. I give you my son's words—the words of the dead, for he will never return. I read his thoughts when he said good-bye. He knew only too well the character of the ship in which he had madly engaged to sail."

"But why did he go?" cried May.

"Because you drove him to it," cried the old lady; "because you made him mad by your coldness. But he did not know when he engaged himself that it was in one of Mr. Philip Merritt's ships that he was to sail unto his death."

"But, stop a moment," said May; "are you sure of this?"

"Did I not tell you that my son told me?" retorted the old lady. "Sure? What became of three of Rutherby's ships last year? You never heard?"



No, nor any one else : they sailed from port, and were never heard of more. And do you know what that means, child? No, you could never have painted it in its right colours, or you would not have engaged yourself to a man who could join in such atrocities. Yes, you may well cry," she continued, as May half-turned away her streaming eyes—"you weep at the thought of it; but what must have been the agony of those watching mothers and wives who saw those they loved set sail? Poor common people, my child; but they have the same feelings as you have, and perhaps suffer more sharply, for they have not the wealth that plasters so many sores. They watch and wait, and watch and wait, till every hope is crushed out; and then at last their poor few shillings go in what might have been bought at first—a piece of crape."

There was silence for a few minutes, broken only by a sob from May.

"See here, my child," continued the old lady, more gently, as she held one of May's hands in hers, and softly stroked it, after pointing to her weeds—"see here, I have no need to go buy mourning, for I wear it now. This was for my poor husband, who sailed away, happy and light-hearted, to battle with the treacherous sea. He had all that good owners could supply—a stout, new vessel, and good crew; but he never came back. What then can I expect for my son, who has gone with all as bad as bad can be? Oh, my child, my child, you've broken his mother's heart!"

In a moment, the cold, almost harsh, dignity of the old lady had passed away, and she was on her knees by May, sobbing over the hand she tightly clasped.

The tears fell fast, too, now from May's eyes, as she rested her other hand upon the thin, bent shoulders of her visitor, whom she raised at last and led to a couch, seating herself beside her, and trying to whisper comfort; as with hot, wet cheek bearing witness to her

emotion, she whispered, in broken words—

"Indeed, you wrong me. I never treated Captain Anderson as you seem to think. I always met him as a friend and visitor. He took me by surprise—I did not know—"

Mrs. Anderson sat up, and pushed back the loose white hair that had escaped from beneath her cap.

"My child," she said, "I came here ready to curse you for your cruelty to my poor boy, and you make me feel as if I could do nought but bless. I was angry and very bitter against you; but think how a mother must have felt. I do not wonder now at his despair. But, tell me, child," she half whispered, as she drew May towards her, and kissed her cheek—"do you think, if it were possible that my boy could come back, you could—"

May started from her, the colour once more flashing to her forehead.

"Mrs. Anderson, you must not ask me that. Only believe this of me, that I never intentionally hurt the feelings of—of your son. Please leave me now, for I am—I am not well. You have told me much that I did not know. Papa could not know it either."

"He knows it, child; but he will not believe it. But I'll go now—back to my lonely home, to pray for his safe return; or if he come not back, that He may take me where I may see him once again, for I shall have nought to live for then."

She rose to go, then stooped to pick up a bow of crape which had become detached from her breast. May stooped first, and held it in her hand, while the old lady gazed searchingly in her face.

"Good-bye, child," she said at last, as she laid her hands upon May's shoulders. "Had he lived, I do not think, after all, you would have been half good enough for John; but I'll kiss you, and say God bless you!"

The tears sprang to May Halley's eyes; and, putting her arms round the old lady's neck, she warmly returned the kiss.

Mrs. Anderson trembled as she turned to go, saying once more—

"I'll go and pray for his return; and if, child—if you could—"

"Yes," said May, simply, as she divined the wish but half expressed—"yes, I'll join my prayers to yours."

"For him?" said the old lady.

"For him and all his crew—for all poor sailors on the sea; and pray that God may bring them safely home. No," she added, sadly, as Mrs. Anderson held out her hand for the bow of crape—"no, not now. I'll keep this, and send it to you when your son comes back."

"And if he should not?"

"If he should not!" repeated May.

"Yes, child; and if he come not back?"

The colour once more suffused May Halley's cheeks, as her eyelids drooped, and she whispered, softly—

"I'll wear it for his sake!"

The next minute Mrs. Anderson was descending the stairs, muttering to herself—

"And I came to curse her with a mother's curse!"

Her worn old face looked very soft and sweet, years seemed to have rolled away as the soft light of love suffused it; but the next minute it was bitter, hard, and stern, and her eyes, yet wet with emotion, flashed fiercely as she slowly swept by Philip Merritt in the hall.

## FOURTEENTH CABLE LENGTH.

HOW JEREMIAH BASALT TALKED OF WALKING HOME.



ASN'T it Shakespeare as said 'Ignorance is bliss,' Master John? But, there, it don't matter who said it, ignorance *is* bliss. Just look at our chaps, as rough as scratch crew as was ever got together, sailing in this old tub without so much as a grumble!"

"Don't speak ill of the bridge that carries you well over, Jerry," said John Anderson, smiling. "We've walked over it safely into Hong Kong here, and landed our cargo dry and sound—what more would you have?"

"What more'd I have? A good deal. I'd like to go to my hammock feeling safe. If you was ashore now, would you take lodgings over a powder magazine? Not you! And by the same token, I don't like sailing in a ship that may go down at any moment."

"There, don't croak, Jerry," said Anderson, trying to assume a cheerful aspect; but it was a failure, for disappointment and the anxiety of his voyage had made him age so, that thin threads of white were beginning to appear at his temples. "Don't croak, old fellow—we've got here safely."

"Got here safely! Why, we couldn't help getting here safely. Look at the weather we've had. Why, I could ha' sailed one o' them old Thames barges here, with a boy for crew. Yes, we've got here safe, and no thanks to nobody but the clerk of the weather."

"And we shall get back safely, Jerry," said John Anderson, leaning over the taffrail, and looking down into the water of the harbour.

"I don't know so much about that,"

growled the old man. "If it warn't for you, burn me if I wouldn't buy a good, stout bamboo stick, tuck up my trousers and walk home."

"Do what?"

"Walk home! There, you needn't laugh; 'taint such a very long way, if you make up your mind to do it; and what's more, the country chaps—the Chinesees and Tartarees, and others, would give you a lift now and then. I'd find my way, if I made up my mind."

John Anderson, for the first time for months, laughed aloud, to his mate's great annoyance.

"I don't care," he growled; "all you've got to do is to steer doo west, and you must come right sooner or later."

"There, never mind thinking about that," said Anderson. "All being well, we'll sail the *Victrix* up the Thames a few months hence."

He turned round, and went down below; while Basalt, to show his disgust, spat about the deck in all directions.

"An old beast!" he growled. "She's too bad for a breaker's yard. Look at that," he grunted, "and that, and that."

As he spoke, he gave a kick here and a kick there, at cordage, anchor, chains, bulwarks—anything that came within his reach.

"As for them Rutherbys, hanging's too good for 'em. I know what I'd do with the beggars, I'd set 'em afloat in their own ships, and if they came back safe I'd forgive 'em."

It was as Basalt had said, the weather had been glorious; and from the time that the *Victrix* had left the Downs till she entered Hong Kong harbour they had had nothing but favourable breezes to waft them to their destination. Certainly the vessel did not look so perky and span as when they left the Thames; for the sun and wind had played havoc with the bright paint, which had peeled off, leaving the old ship in a state which exposed the patching and plastering she had received.

A week passed, during which much had been done, and John Anderson was looking anxiously forward to the time

when he could start again, and get well on his return voyage; for somehow of late the old despairing feeling had grown weaker, and hope had done something towards restoring the tone of his mind.

"It was my own fault," he told himself, again and again. "Here am I admitted into the presence of a gently born and nurtured girl, and I behave—how? Like a savage," he said, bitterly.

"Well, and how are things your way?" said Anderson, one day, after a general overhaul of rigging, standing and running, previous to the start for the voyage home.

Jeremiah Basalt thrust his hands deeply into his pockets, walked to the side of the vessel, and began to sprinkle the water with tobacco juice. After, which he walked, or rather rolled, slowly back to his commander, stared him in the face, and began to whistle.

Anderson waited for him to speak; but as no answer came, he repeated his question.

Basalt stared all the harder, if it were possible, and whistled a little louder. At last he spoke—

"How's things your way?"

John Anderson looked at the dry, screwed-up visage before him for a few moments; and then he, too, began to whistle softly, turned on his heel, and walked away.

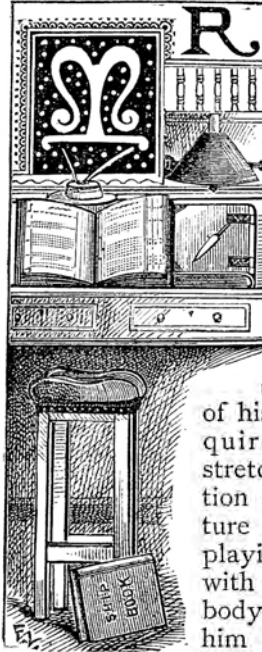
He glanced round once, though, to see what caused a sudden noise; but it was only Basalt, heavily slapping his thigh, as he muttered to himself—

"Had him there! Hadn't a word to say for himself. How's things, indeed! Why, they couldn't be worse. There aint a bit of new rope that aint spliced on to a bit of old; and what's the consequences? why—as the Scriptor says about the new wine in the old bottles—it'll all go to smash. My stars, I wish I was safe home alongside the missus."

John Anderson had expected no good news; but he had found everything he had examined so bad that one word of encouragement would have been a blessing.

## FIFTEENTH CABLE LENGTH.

HOW MR. HALLEY WAS BULLIED.



**R**TUDGE sat on the hollowed top of his stool in Halley's office, with his mouth pursed up and his face looking very fierce. He was a little round man was Mr. Tudge, and as he sat upon the top of his high stool, it required very little stretch of the imagination to fancy that nature had just been playing at cup-and-ball with his little round body and had caught him in the cup. He was a very estimable little fellow; but his grizzly hair would stick up like bristles on the top of his head, and he would have himself shaved so dreadfully clean all over the sides of his face and under his chin, that, every evening regularly, he looked as if he had had the lights and shadows of his countenance stippled in with little dots by an engraver.

Mr. Tudge had been clerk at Halley's from the very commencement of that business, and had grown clerkly in the extreme. He was very wise in business matters, but most ignorant respecting himself. For instance, if unable—being only five feet two inches high—to reach a paper or book from a shelf, he would salute a six-foot clerk with, "Are you any taller than I am? If so, try and reach that down." He hardly seemed to conceive, either, that he was any older than he had been forty years

before; and certainly never for a moment doubted that when he grew old he should retire from his duties and take to gardening at Barnes. Being so clerkly, the interest Mr. Tudge took in other people was either compound or shipping interest, and he always spoke of matters from a shipping point of view.

Mr. Tudge was sitting at his desk, frowning and angry, awaiting the coming of his principal. He held a heavy ruler in one hand, as if prepared to knock some one down, and with the other he stabbed the desk with a penknife. He evidently felt that such a thing was possible, for he had curbed himself by sticking a pen across his mouth. But he flushed very angrily as he glanced from clerk to clerk, one and all of whom scribbled away furiously.

He had not long to wait before Mr. Halley came in, looking rather worn and anxious; and his coming was greeted with a stab of the penknife in the desk, and an imaginary blow given with the ruler at some person or persons unknown.

In a few minutes there was the sound of a bell. A clerk answered it, and then came to summon Mr. Tudge to his principal's room.

"Well," said Mr. Halley, "what news this morning?"

"Bad."

"How bad?"

"You ought to have been here yesterday."

"Well, I know that," said Mr. Halley, peevishly; "but I am poorly and worried, Tudge, and I stayed at home."

"You heard about the *Victrix*, I suppose?"

"What, Rutherby's ship? No; good God!—what?"

"Gone where she was expected to go," said Tudge, quietly.

"Ah, to China," said Mr. Halley, apparently relieved. "Arrival noted, or spoken?"

"Gone to the bottom," said Mr. Tudge, bringing his ruler down bang upon the table.

Mr. Halley sat looking at his clerk for a few moments in silence—a cold, clammy dew making itself felt the while upon his forehead.

"It's—it's very dreadful, Tudge."

"It's—it's damnable, sir!" said Tudge, angrily. "And do you know who's gone down in her? Why, of course you do—Jack Anderson, the lad I loved like a son, sir; and it's all your doing, for letting him go."

Mr. Tudge made no scruple about rubbing a tear out of each eye, as he snatched a chair forward and sat down.

"Don't talk like that, Tudge," said Mr. Halley, huskily. "It was a bad job, certainly; but the young man was presumptuous, and worked his own ruin."

"I'm not going to quarrel about that," said Mr. Tudge, hotly; "but I know what I know, poor lad! But hark here—here it is per telegram: '*Queen* steamship—picked up boat's crew of *Victrix* of London—men in the last stage of starvation—left captain and mate on board—ship couldn't float an hour."

"Then, she may not have gone down, Tudge," cried Mr. Halley, anxiously.

"Not gone down!" echoed his clerk. "Hark here, sir. 'Loss of the ship *Victrix*. The *White Swan*, Bombay to Alexandria, reports passing a quantity of loose spars and timber, with portions of the cargo floating, in long.—lat.—many of the bales being marked *Victrix*. The next day a boat was picked up stove in, with '*Victrix*, London' on her stern.' There you are—there's no doubt about it. Three thousand pounds' worth of teas consigned to you. You would give the order."

"Yes, Tudge," said Mr. Halley, mildly, "I would give the order."

"But, I told you."

"And I wouldn't believe it."

"And you don't now."

"And I don't now."

"But it's true, I tell you, sir," insisted Tudge; "it's the common talk everywhere."

"I won't listen to common talk, Tudge. Common talk is slander, and I won't hear people's characters taken away. The goods are lost; but they were well insured, and it will be paid."

"Yes," said Tudge, "it will be paid; but I tell you what, sir, if you don't drop all connection with those people your name will smell as bad as theirs. The underwriters are setting dead against you."

"Let them," said Mr. Halley.

"They won't look at the *Emperor* and the *Laura*."

"Very well," said Mr. Halley; "they can do as they please."

"And you'll have to underwrite them yourself, same as you did the *Merry May*."

"Very good," said Mr. Halley, smiling in an awkward fashion; "then I'll insure my own ships."

"And send 'em to sea with poor captains, same as you did the *Merry May*."

"Mr. Simmons is a very good seaman," said Mr. Halley.

"Bah!" exclaimed Tudge; "he'll sink her or run her ashore. She'll never come back. I dreamed she wouldn't, last night."

"Hold your tongue, Tudge! I won't be bullied this morning. I'm not well."

"If I hadn't bullied you any time these thirty years, James Halley, you'd have ruined yourself, and so I tell you."

"Well, well, Tudge—we won't argue that. What else is there?"

"Isn't that enough for one morning?" said the old clerk, plaintively. "Three thousand pounds lost in those people's ship!"

"But well insured."

"Yes," said Tudge; "and that fellow Longdale advised me to insure for four thousand. He knew she'd go down, I'll swear."

"Don't say any more about it. We

insured for the proper value, did we not?"

"Yes, of course," said Tudge, stoutly, "and always have. But poor Anderson wasn't insured, and you can't replace him. He wasn't Manchester goods, nor Brummagem neither, poor lad. If ever there was a bit of true steel, it was he."

Mr. Halley turned uneasily in his chair.

"You never ought to have parted from him, Mr. Halley—never. He'd have sailed the *Merry May* to good fortune; while now, now—I know it as well as if it was all over—she'll never come back. A hundred thousand pounds, that means, of our hard-scraped-together money, and all, James Halley, because you will be proud, and obstinate, and won't listen to those who know what things are."

"Tudge, you'll make me angry directly," exclaimed Mr. Halley, peevishly.

"I can't help it, Master James, I must talk this morning; and who's a better right to talk to you, when he sees things going wrong, than your old clerk, who has helped you for forty years to build up your house? Mark my words, James Halley, if the *Merry May* is lost—as I'm sure she will be—we're ruined, absolutely ruined; for your credit will be gone, and how can we get on without a good name?"

"Tudge, you'll drive me mad," exclaimed his exasperated employer.

"No, I won't; but I will give you the spur," said Tudge. "I don't want to drive you mad—I want to bring you to your senses. Only fancy our house ruined, and all through connection with the Rutherbys. Oh, Master James, do—pray do be warned in time! They've got a bad name; but they won't stick at trifles, and so make money."

"It's all a lie, Tudge."

"It's all true, Master James; but people daren't speak for fear of being called up for libel. You can't get on with a bad name—it's ruin to you; because we're a good, upright house, and wouldn't do a shabby thing or send out a ship short-handed. A good,

honourable house like ours, with its great expenses for good things, can only live with its name brightly polished. If there's a speck of mud thrown at it, it's all loss."

"But there is no speck of mud on it, Tudge."

"I tell you there is, sir," said Tudge; "and not a speck, but a big dab of mud; and the underwriters see it, and they hold back—all but the speculative ones, and they want great premiums. I tell you, sir, the brokers are beginning to whisper; and if you don't mind, that whisper will become a shout, a yell, a howl, a chorus of shrieks that will kill us."

"Don't, don't, don't, Tudge!" cried the old man. "What is the good of running half-way to meet troubles that may never come?"

"Run half-way, indeed! why, they're all close here," exclaimed Tudge, bringing down his ruler upon the table. "It'll be ruin, James Halley—ruin; and if it does come to it, there's my five thousand pounds I've got in houses at Barnes—you can have that; but it will only be like a drop of water in a pail, compared to what you want."

"My dear Tudge," exclaimed Mr. Halley, reaching across the table to shake his clerk's hand warmly, "I know what a good old friend you are; but you are imagining all sorts of unnecessary troubles this morning."

"Not I," said Tudge, sadly. "All my hopes have been in this house, and I feel as strongly about it as if it were my own. It aint the money I care for—what's money, after all? It don't matter how much you have, you can't wear more clothes at once, nor eat more mutton, nor drink more sherry than if you have just enough to live on. Having money don't keep the doctor away."

"No, Tudge, nor yet trouble."

"No, nor yet trouble," said the old clerk, gloomily. "Mr. Halley, sir, if that ship, the *Merry May*, don't come back again, I shall—"

"What, Tudge?" said Mr. Halley, smiling.

"I shall go home per cab," said Mr. Tudge, solemnly, "make out an invoice of my effects, which will be disposed of and the money given to the poor; then I shall have a last glass of grog, and smoke a last pipe."

"Last ones, Tudge?" said Mr. Halley, smiling.

"Yes, last ones," said Tudge, wiping his eyes; "for I shall have nothing to live for, Jack Anderson's dead, and the business ruined; and there 'll be nothing more for me to do but say my prayers, and hang myself with my braces."

"Don't talk in that way, Tudge," said Mr. Halley; "it is wrong, even in jest."

"But I'm not jesting," said Tudge.

"What do you think May would say to you, if she heard you?"

"Ah, what indeed!" said Tudge; "but I should be obliged to do it. But I say, sir, surely you never mean to marry that dear girl to that young scoundrel, Merritt?"

"Tudge!" exclaimed Mr. Halley, angrily, "I will not have Mr. Merritt spoken of like that. Why, confound it, sir, may not I marry my daughter to whom I like?"

"No," said Tudge, stoutly, "you mayn't. You've no right to let her be made miserable for life."

"Pish!" ejaculated Mr. Halley.

"Taint pish! nor pshaw! nor pooh! nor tut! nor any of them," exclaimed Tudge.

"Have you nearly done bullying, Tudge?"

"No, sir, I have not; though perhaps I shall never bully you again. Look here, you know, sir. You're such a fine, honest, upright man that you won't believe any one you know to be a scoundrel."

"No, of course not," said Mr. Halley, good-humouredly. "Now, look here, Tudge. Suppose some one was to come forward and to say to me, 'Look here, Mr. Halley, there's that fellow, Tudge, feathering his nest at your expense. He's embezzling thousands.' What should you think of that?"

"Well—well—" said Tudge, taken aback, "I don't know."

"You wouldn't like me to believe it?"

"No, of course not."

"Then why should I believe ill of somebody else?"

"Ah, come now, look here," cried Tudge, recovering himself; "you're an eel, that's what you are—a slimy, slippery eel. You're trying to wriggle yourself out of a difficulty; but you see, I just give you one crack over the tail, and there you are done for." And he brought down the ruler again, bang. "Suppose somebody did say I was swindling you. What would you do, or what ought you to do, eh? Why, come and examine my books thoroughly; and when you'd done, you'd say, 'That man's a liar and a scoundrel. That man ought to be transported who tries to take away another man's character. Why, the books are square to a farthing.'"

"To be sure," said Mr. Halley. "Then how about Mr. Merritt's character and Rutherby's? You're condemning yourself out of your own mouth."

"Mr. Halley, you're eeling again," said Tudge. "You're coming the slippery, slimy eel, and you've got over that crack on the tail I gave you; but it won't do. Here's another for you." Bang went the ruler. "There's some one—ah, a lot of some ones tell you that Rutherbys are rotten, and that Philip Merritt is a scoundrel."

"Tudge, I won't have it!" said Mr. Halley, angrily.

"They say—Rutherby's—is—rotten, and—Philip—Merritt—a—scoundrel," said Tudge again, in measured tones, and enforcing each word with a bang from the ruler upon the table; "and what do you do?"

"Say they're a set of slanderous rascals," cried Mr. Halley, excitedly.

"To be sure you do," acquiesced Tudge; "instead of going and metaphorically examining their books—seeing into their characters! James Halley, you're a blind mole, and a deaf beetle, and an obstinate mule, as well as

an eel; and I won't stand by and see you ruin the finest old shipping trade in the port of London—the trade we made; and I won't stand by and see that dear girl thrown away, without raising a voice against it. I don't care, I will speak—I'm up now; and I'd talk now to anybody, because I've got right on my side. I know I should have liked to see John Anderson have her, and I'd have left them my bit of money; but that's all over now. You'll want that, and you shall have it when you like; but speak I will, and tell you to your face that you've murdered a lad that I looked upon almost as my own boy; and now you're going to ruin the business, sell your own child into slavery, and make me hang myself in my braces!"

During the first part of this speech Mr. Halley had been angry; next he grew puzzled; and lastly his face wore

a half-amused expression, as he rose, with a sigh and a weary look upon his face to say—

"There, there, Tudge, let it rest now; we've had enough for one day. I'm not angry."

"But I am," said Tudge, sticking the ruler under his arm, and making the most of his height.

"Well, perhaps so; but we are too old friends to quarrel. Hush, here's one of the clerks!"

"Mr. Longdale and Mr. Merritt wish to see you, sir," said the man.

"In a minute, Smith," and the man disappeared.

"Take care—pray take care, Mr. Halley, sir. The wolf and the fox come together—pray—"

"Tudge, you're going too far," said the old man, angrily, and he rang the bell for the admission of the two members of Rutherby's ship-owning firm.

## SIXTEENTH CABLE LENGTH.

HOW THE "VICTRIX" BEHAVED IN A GALE.



COMPLETE, crew aboard, the last coolie out of the ship, and the sound of Pigeon-English heard no more.

"Confound their jabber!" cried old Basalt, "I'm sick of it. It's for

all the world as if you took a bucketful of English and a bucketful of Chinese, and poured 'em into a cask, stirred 'em up with a capstan bar, and then

swallowed it by spoonfuls. I gets that savage when I hear them jabbering and chattering, and smiling out of their crooked eyes at you, that I could cut their tails off, and stuff 'em down their throats. And yet, I dunno, they're about the innocentest-looking chaps I ever see. I don't think I could hit one on 'em werry hard."

John Anderson's spirits rose as the soft winds wafted them homewards, with studding sails set alow and aloft. Hope was evidently very busy with him, and Despair, with her lowering, black wings, farther and farther away. When he reasoned with himself, and told himself that his aspirations were mad, and that which he wished impossible—that he had had his final dismissal, he owned that it was so, that there was not the most faint prospect in life for the realization of his desires;



but he hoped all the same, and walked his deck with a step daily growing more elastic.

"There, Jerry," he said, one evening, after they had made a tremendous run through the bright, creamy waves, that softly foamed under the favouring gale—"there, Jerry! what do you think of things now? Will you come for another voyage in the *Victrix*?"

Basalt screwed his face round, so as to look at his captain, without moving his body.

"We aint finished this here yet."

"No; but see how we are getting on."

"Now, look here," said Basalt, slowly. "Do you for a moment think as this here sort o' weather's going to continue?"

"Well, no," said Anderson, smiling, "I can't say I do."

"Nor I, my lad; and when the foul comes, then look out."

Another week passed, and still the winds favoured their return; and the *Victrix*, heavily laden though she was, rose over the long swells, and forced her way homeward, like some huge bird eager to gain its nest.

"Home, home, sweet—sweet home," hummed Anderson, as he leaned over the side, and thought of the parlour where that pleasant old face would be bending over some piece of work, to be every now and then raised in a far-off look, as its owner wondered where "my son" might be, and breathed a prayer for his safety.

A smile played round John Anderson's lips, but there was a moisture in his eye. Soon, though, a troubled look swept over his frank face, like a cloud; for the memory of the scene at Canonbury came back, and with it the recollection of whose was the ship he sailed, and its state.

"And if I do get back in safety," he muttered, "if I don't expose this scandalous state of affairs, I'm no true man. I wouldn't have believed it, that human beings who call themselves men—gentlemen, would send their fellow-

creatures afloat in such a sieve as this, just to make money. Good God! it's frightful!"

He took a few steps up and down, and then went on. So engrossed was he with his feelings, that he did not notice Basalt, who was peering anxiously ahead.

"I can hardly believe it, at times," continued Anderson; "and if it were not that we are having weather in which the frailest craft might live—"

"Below there! Pipe up, boatswain," roared Basalt through his hands; and, directly after, the shrill whistle was heard.

"We'll have a bit of this canvas off her at once," continued Basalt, coming up to the captain. "Look there, and there."

John Anderson saw immediately the necessity for executing the order; and, all hands being called up, the stunsails were had in, then the royals were lowered, and by the time they were taken in a complete change had come over the sea, which, from being bright and glorious, now looked leaden and murky. Instead of the pleasant, full breeze, the wind came in puffs—hot, as if from a furnace door.

Orders were given quickly, and the top-gallant sails were soon down; but before the mainsail could be taken off the ship, a squall struck her, and split it to ribbons, while the vessel heeled over, and her fate seemed sealed.

It was but for a minute, though; the squall passed over, and an ominous calm ensued. The ship righted; and now, for the first time, Anderson felt how short-handed he was. He knew that at any minute now, another and a fiercer squall might strike them; and, if so, what would become of the ship? Sending Basalt to the helm, though, he seized a speaking-trumpet, and shouted his commands to such effect that, ere the next squall came, topsails and stormjib only were set, the former reefed; and the sails left unfurled were let go, to flap and beat about in the wind.

"Look out, there!" roared Basalt.

"Send me another man here to the wheel."

Before Anderson—who ran himself—could reach him, down came the storm with a shriek and a roar, laying the *Victrix* on her beam-ends. The wheel flew round, hurling Basalt to one side; but he was up again in an instant, and clinging to the spokes. Anderson reached him, too; and as the ship righted, she answered her helm, and, paying off, literally flew before the wind, with her loose sails splitting into ribbons.

"There's too much on her by a mile," roared Basalt in Anderson's ear; but the words had hardly passed his lips before the main-topsail split with a crash, heard above the din of the tempest, and two minutes after was literally ripped from the yards, and blown away.

It relieved the vessel, though, which had been running, nose down, shipping sea after sea, which swept the decks, carrying all before them.

The noise was deafening; but, more by signs than by voice, Anderson issued one or two more orders, whose effect was to throw reefs into the other sails, beneath which the vessel forced her way through the murky sea.

Half an hour before it was broad daylight—now they seemed sailing through

a thick fog of spray, swept from the summits of the boiling waves; while as far as the eye could reach, all was one field of lurid foam.

Crash! A wave leapt over the quarter, swept along the deck, and cut its way out through the rotten bulwarks, followed by another and another: casks, hencoops, and the jolly boat went with them, while on the vessel flew.

"Stick to her!" shouted Basalt to Anderson, as they fought with the sea for who should maintain the mastery of the helm. "We shall soon know what she's made of now."

It was a struggle for life—men clinging to belaying pins, or lashing themselves under the shelter of the bulwarks, that might at any moment be swept away. As to the sail, any anxiety that the young captain might have felt about that, the storm relieved him of, ripping one-half the canvas away as if it had been tinder.

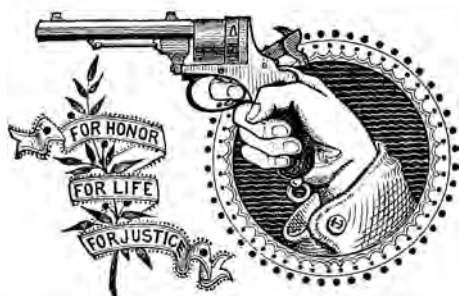
Shriek—roar—howl! how the tempest raged! There was no time for fear in the excitement, the men seeming for the most part to be stunned.

But the storm was brief as it was violent—sweeping, as it were, over the vessel; and in an hour a dead calm had fallen upon them, with the *Victrix* almost a wreck.



## SEVENTEENTH CABLE LENGTH.

HOW JOHN ANDERSON USED HIS REVOLVER.



**I**T was a change that was almost startling—dramatic even; for it was as though so much canvas, storm-painted, had been drawn aside to display a calm. But though the foam had to a great extent disappeared, there was a heavy swell on the water; and the state of the ship, as the men crept from their shelter, was pitiable: sails in rags, cordage hanging broken from mast and yard, and bulwarks splintered.

"Now, my lads, up aloft!" cried Anderson, cheerily. "Knot and splice there, while we get up the spare sails."

About half the men, with their knives ready, ran at once up the shrouds, where they began to cut adrift the ragged canvas; while the others set to knotting snapped cordage, and arranging the deck lumber that had broken loose.

"Go below yourself, and sound the well," whispered Anderson to Basalt.

The words were meant for his ear alone; but they were heard by one of the sailors, who followed him closely, with a strange, suspicious look.

Basalt was not gone many minutes. He came back very slowly and quietly; and before he was half-way to Anderson he stopped short, and putting his hands to his mouth he shouted—

"Aho! there, you at the maintop-gallant. We'll have that spar down and fish it. I can see it's sprung from down here." Then he continued his way to

where Anderson was anxiously waiting him, and whispered hastily—"Ten foot o' water—gaining fast—leaking like a sieve."

The words were hardly out of his lips before the man who had overheard Anderson's order, and had been below on his own account, came on deck and shouted, in a panic-breeding yell—

"Boats out, lads—she's sinking fast!"

Then a half-smothered cry of terror ran through the men, as from all parts they made for the deck, running down, sliding down stay and sheet, and each aiming for one or other of the boats. Some saw to the oars, some sought for water; and some, again, made for the cabin, to get biscuit and spirits.

"Stop, there!" cried John Anderson, in a voice of thunder. "Every man stand aside!"

There was a low, ominous growl; but not a man ceased his busy work about the boats.

"Do you hear?" cried Anderson, furiously. "Leave those boats, and all hands to the pumps!"

Not a man stirred; and, in his rage, Anderson seized the nearest, and dashed him against his fellows. But it had no effect: a panic had seized the men, and they still busied themselves about the boats.

"Basalt, my revolver," cried Anderson, fiercely. "Am I captain of the ship, or not?"

"To be sure you are, so long as she is a ship," cried a man, tauntingly; "but there won't be a plank soon."

The next moment he was rolling on the deck, struck down by one tremendous blow. Anderson forced himself to the nearest davit, and seized the tackle.

"Back, men—to the pumps!" he cried. "The ship shall not be forsaken."

"Go and pump yourself," cried another man. "Come on, lads. She's sinking, and our only chance is the boats."

The men uttered a howl of rage, and pressed on Anderson, so that in another minute he would have been helpless, when, with a blow from a marlinspike, right and left, Jeremiah Basalt opened a way for himself, and the next moment John Anderson was facing the men, with a revolver presented at the nearest mutineer's head.

The men involuntarily fell back, leaving captain and mate side by side by the ragged bulwarks.

"Look here, my lads," said Anderson; "I am captain here. I have charge of this ship and her valuable cargo, and she shall be stuck to as long as a couple of planks hold together. So every man to his post. There is a lot of water in the hold; but we'll pump her dry, and then go on again."

"She'll sink in half an hour," cried a voice—that of the man who had sounded the well on his own account.

"Cowards!" cried Anderson. "Can you not trust your captain?"

"No," cried the same voice. "Down with him, lads; he trapped us into this old sieve."

"Get out the boats," cried another.

"Stand aside," cried others.

And the men pressed upon the pair; but with a flourish of his marlinspike Basalt drove them back.

"Look here, my lads," cried Anderson, "we're wasting time. Get to the pumps and work; and I tell you once for all that as soon as there's danger we'll take to the boats: but like men, not like a set of cowardly, beaten hounds!"

"The boats—the boats!" shouted the men.

"Back, scoundrels!" roared Anderson. "I tell you there is no danger yet. Do you think we don't value our lives as well as you do yours? This ship, with a valuable cargo, is in my charge, and I will not have her left without an effort to save her."

"The boats—the boats—rush him!" shrieked the men, half insane with their coward fears.

Basalt made an effort to beat them back; but they knocked him down, and

were rushing at Anderson, when, by an adroit leap, he reached the boat swinging from the iron davits, and presented his revolver.

"Back, you scoundrels!" he roared. "Every man to his duty. By the God who made me, I'll send a bullet through the first man who touches the falls!"

"Come on, lads—he daren't," cried the sailor. "He helped to decoy us into the rotten old tub, and he don't stay us now."

The man stepped forward.

"Another step, and I fire!" cried Anderson.

"He daren't. Come on, lads; it's for life!" cried the sailor.

He dashed at the ropes, and the others gave a cheer, and followed his example.

Crash!

There was a flash of flame from John Anderson's pistol, as he stood there in the boat; a wild shriek; the sailor who had been ringleader in the mutiny leaped up in the air, and fell with a groan upon the deck, where he lay motionless, with his comrades looking on aghast.

"One shot!" said Anderson. "I have five more, and they shall all tell!"

The men shrank back shivering from the deadly weapon without a word, and Anderson leaped from the boat.

"Now to the pumps, every man!" he cried.

And the fellows cheered, and ran to the handles, which were the next minute clanking furiously, and flooding the deck with water, which streamed down the scuppers.

"Is he much hurt?" said Anderson, anxiously.

"Thigh broke," said Basalt, quietly.

Then he ran down to the cabin, and brought up a pillow, which he laid under the man's head. After which, Anderson and Basalt bound and bandaged the poor wretch's leg, before superintending the pumping, now going on briskly.

Keeping watch on deck, Anderson now sent Basalt below again, but he returned with the ominous words—

"Eleven foot. Making water fast!"

## EIGHTEENTH CABLE LENGTH.

HOW THE BOATS WERE PUT OUT.



MAKING water fast!"

Jeremiah Basalt said the words in a low tone of voice, but without moving a muscle. As far as his face was concerned, the news might have been of the simplest nature.

John Anderson did not

speak for a moment; he only stooped and held a flask to the wounded man's lips, for the poor wretch was faint. Then he rose, and said—

"Go down again, and see if you can make anything out—whether a plank has started, or the seams opened."

Basalt was busy hewing a piece of tobacco from his cake; this he finished, before nodding and going again below.

He was not down long, and returned to the deck to find Anderson, with sleeves rolled up, pumping with the men, and cheering them on.

He crossed to where Basalt stood.

"Well?"

"Plank started, and you can hear the water pouring in."

"Two men here!" cried Anderson. "Now, Basalt, look alive with that spare mainsail."

In less time than could have been supposed, the four men had hauled on deck the great spare canvas—not to find it of new, clean material, but old, patched, and rotten.

Anderson's brow knit more closely

as, dragging at the sail, the rotten canvas gave way, making a large rent at the side; but there were no other holes, and it bade fair to answer the purpose for which it was intended.

"Pump away there!" shouted Anderson. "We'll soon ease you."

The men cheered again, and the water poured faster than ever from the scuppers, as captain and mate fastened on ropes to the four corners, and made ready for what seemed their only hope. At first the men had looked on wonderingly; but now they saw the object in view, they cheered more heartily than ever, for John Anderson, climbing over the side and making his way forward, passed the ropes that held the lower corners of the sail under the bobstay, and then, partly aided by the ship's progress through the water, they hauled and hauled till the great sheet of canvas was drawn down below the water, and applied like a great plaster to the ship's side where the plank was started—the pressure of the water holding it against the hull.

"Now," said Anderson, as he stood making fast the last rope, "down below, and see how matters are."

Basalt was gone longer this time, to return and say, in a loud voice—

"Can't hear it pouring in now." Then he added, in a tone only meant to reach the captain, "Making water fast as ever."

"Pump away, my lads," cried Anderson, cheerily, and he handed the revolver to Basalt—"I'll bring you some grog."

The men cheered again; and in a few minutes Anderson returned with some spirits, which he made one of the men serve out while he took his place at the pump. Then, while the men were pumping away with full energy, he went down below himself, to find that, though the sail had to some extent checked the inrush of the water, yet it was still steadily rising, flowing in through the seams

which had opened with the heavy working of the vessel; and before he had been below five minutes he knew that it was impossible to save her.

"Well," said Basalt, drily, as he returned the revolver, "what do you think now of Rutherby's?"

"Don't speak to me now, please," said Anderson, in a choking voice. "I've joined in as murderous and cruel a deed as ever was perpetrated, and look at that poor fellow there."

"Deserved it," said Basalt, laconically. "Served him right. I only wish it had been one of the partners."

"Basalt," said Anderson, in a low voice, "if it comes to the worst you must forgive me for this."

"There, get out; don't talk like that. It aint come to the worst yet."

The momentary gloom that had come over Anderson now seemed to have passed away, and he was all life again, as he shouted to the men, so as to be heard over the clanking of the pumps—

"Look here, my lads; while there's a chance of saving the ship we'll stick to her like men."

"Hear, hear!" roared some of the fellows who had been most forward in trying to get away.

"While the weather holds good we can keep the water down, and we are right in the track of ships to get help."

"Hooray!" roared the men again.

"But, look here," continued Anderson, "I want you to act like men, and do your duty by your owners; but I don't want you to run any risks; so while you stick to the pumps, we two will get water, compass, and stores in the boats, so that we can go at a moment's notice."

"Hooray!" cheered the men again, and the water bubbled and flashed from the ship's sides; though all the same it rose darkly, silently, and surely in the hold, as Basalt found when he once more sounded the well.

Anderson was down on one knee, arranging the pillow of the wounded man, when Basalt whispered his bad news.

The moment before the sailor had

lain still, with eyes closed and pallid face, apparently insensible, while Anderson wore an aspect of sad commiseration; but the man heard Basalt's announcement, and opening his eyes wide, with horror in every feature, he uttered a wild yell, and shrieked out—

"Run for the boats, lads—she's going down!"

At the same moment, he turned on one side, and struck at Anderson with an open knife, which he had held ready in his jersey sleeve.

Anderson's quick action saved him; for leaping up to meet the effect that he knew the words would produce upon the men, the knife, instead of being buried to the haft in his side, made a long, ugly gash down his leg, from which the blood spurted to stream down upon the white deck at every step he took.

"Curse you! If you warn't hurt—" roared Basalt, as he wrested the knife from the treacherous scoundrel's hand, hurling it overboard almost with the same movement, and making as if to dash his closed fist in the man's face. "Why, it oughter ha' been eighteen inches higher with you, that it ought."

Then he turned to help Anderson, who had started forward to confront the men, pistol in hand, once more. For at the cry of the wounded man they had left the pumps, and rushed once more for the boats, but only to back slowly, as Anderson literally drove them to their work with the pointed revolver.

"I told you, when there was danger of her going down we'd take to the boats," he said, sternly, through his clenched teeth; and he pressed them back, leaving a track in blood upon the deck as he did so, till once more "clank—clank, clank—clank!" the pumps were going again, and the water foaming and flashing down into the sea.

"Quick—tie my handkerchief tightly round there," said Anderson; and Basalt bound up the wound, but with his own handkerchief, which he held ready.

"Now for some biscuit, and a breaker of water in each boat."

Basalt worked with a will; but of the

two boats left, one was so hopelessly stove in that it was useless to think of getting her afloat. He directed all his efforts, then, to the other, and worked alone; for John Anderson stood sentry with his revolver, pale as ashes, and evidently faint with his wound.

Water, biscuit, compass, some pork, the sail, a coil of small rope, and, lastly, some fishing lines—all were stowed in a quiet, methodical way in the boat by Basalt, who stood thinking for a moment.

"More water," he said, gruffly; and proceeded to get another small breaker, which he stowed forward before coming back to think again.

"Chart," he said next, in the same tone; and fetched one from the cabin, to roll it tightly, and place it in a tin case.

Then he had another thoughtful survey of his preparations.

"'Nother bag o' biscuit," he said; and this he stowed away.

At last all seemed ready, and he stood slowly counting the men pumping, and then making calculations apparently about the boat.

"What is it, Basalt?" said Anderson, at last; for the old man stood growling and grumbling at his side.

"Why, I've reckoned up every way I can, and two 'll have to stop aboard!"

## NINETEENTH CABLE LENGTH.

HOW JOHN ANDERSON WAS LEFT BEHIND.



WAS no mistaking the effect of the sail hauled down beneath the vessel's bows, but that only stayed one place.

"Lor' bless you!" said Basalt, "she's pitted all over with a regular small-pox of holes,

and the water's coming in at every seam. It's no more'n I 'spected, my lad. She only wanted a bit of a shaking, same as our storm give us, to make her open all over like a sieve, fill and sink; and that's just what the owners wanted."

"No, no, Basalt," said Anderson, sadly.

"Ah! you may say no, no, my lad; but you think yes, yes. Yah! it's all plain enough. If they'd wanted her to be anything better than a coffin for the poor helpless sailors as navigated her,

why didn't they see that she had ropes that weren't rotten, sails that weren't tinder, seams that weren't like doors, and timbers that weren't worm-eaten? Why, she's as full of devils as them there pigs that ran down the steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters. Why, my lad, half the bolts in her hull are sham ones—devils, as the shipbuilders call 'em—just running an inch or two into the plank, instead of right through to hold her together. Copper-fastened, A I at Lloyd's! Lord's truth! I wouldn't mind a pin if it warn't for one thing."

"What's that?" said Anderson.

"Why, them there beautiful owners aint aboard," said Basalt, savagely. "There, my lad, I do think, if that smooth-tongued vagabond who wanted me to get our old *Merry May* lads aboard the rotten old hulk, cuss him! was only here, I could just take a fresh bit of 'bacco and go to the bottom like a man. No, I couldn't," he added, quickly—"I could a time back; but now, my lad, there's a something that seems to draw me towards where there's the best woman in all the world, down on her knees in her own room a-praying of God to bring some one safe back again, and that some one's me. Now, my

lad, it's a nice thing to feel—that somebody wants you back home again; it curls round your heart and makes you say, 'No, blame me if I do, I won't die a bit.'"

And all this time the pumps went on "clank, clank, clank," till it seemed that they had obtained the mastery over the water. The vessel was low down; but the water did not rise now, and Anderson let half the men lie down, and eat and drink, while the others pumped on.

It was a weary time, though. They had to watch, Anderson and Basalt, revolver ready; for they could not trust the men, and they knew that if they could once get the upper hand, discipline was gone for ever.

One, two, three weary days passed, with the sea a dead calm. Not a breath of air ruffled the surface of the long, low swell that softly heaved and lowered the *Victrix*; and all that time John Anderson knew that he had done his best, and that the case of the ship was hopeless. But still he clung to her: she was entrusted to him as captain, and he had his duty to do. That the owners were scoundrels, and held in no more account the lives of her crew than that of the rats that swarmed in the hold, was nothing to him: he had engaged to navigate the ship, and do it he would to the very end.

At last a breeze sprang up, and John Anderson felt that the end had come. The men were wearied out with pumping, and could do no more. There was no more sail on the vessel than was absolutely necessary for making her obey her helm; and yet as she heaved, and began to roll, the water rose rapidly, and the men dropped the pump handles in despair.

"It aint no good, sir," they said, in chorus; "we've done our best now, and it's time to take to the boat."

"Yes, she's going down now," cried one of the men. Then in an agony of dread, he shrieked out, "No, no—don't shoot, sir, don't shoot!"

"I'm not going to shoot, my lad," said Anderson, quietly. "I wanted you

all to do your duty to the owners, and I've made you do it. Now the game's up, and we must save ourselves."

"Hooray! yes, the boat!" shouted the men, with a cheer.

"Stop!" roared Anderson. "Don't spoil all now. She'll float for an hour yet; so don't rush in that mad fashion."

The men had been running to secure places, with poor fallen man's selfishness uppermost; but, though no pistol was displayed, they listened to the voice that had so often enforced discipline, and quietly took their posts in the boat as it was lowered, Basalt going first on being told, and ordering each man to his place till the boat was full, and there was no one left on deck but John Anderson and the wounded sailor.

It was just sunset as the last man passed over the side, and the boat, kept off by a hitcher, rose and fell with the increasing sea.

As the last man slid down a rope and dropped in, he was greeted with a murmur, for the boat was already overloaded to danger pitch.

"We can't take no more," growled the men. "Come on, captain."

"Stop, make room there," shouted Anderson; "here's Morris."

And he made ready to haul on the rope which was to lower the wounded man into the boat.

"No, no, no, no!" roared the crew. "We can't have him; he's sure to die. Come on, captain, and leave him."

John Anderson's answer was to haul at the rope, and the next moment he was lowering down, by means of a block and fall, the man who had made an attempt upon his life.

"Well," roared one of the men, "you can see for yourself. If you lower him down there won't be room for you too."

"I know it," said Anderson softly to himself.

"Look here, my lads," said the same voice; "we can't leave the cap. He's a tartar; but he didn't do more than his dooty."

"But we can't take him and this chap too," cried the others.



The sun set as if at one bound, and night was already stealing fast over the waters. Great soft puffs of wind came, as if to announce, like stragglers that they were, that a breeze was coming on in force, and the sea began to leap and foam beneath the ship's counter.

"Look here, cap'n," shouted the same voice again—"haul on again, and have him out, and come down. We can't hold on much longer."

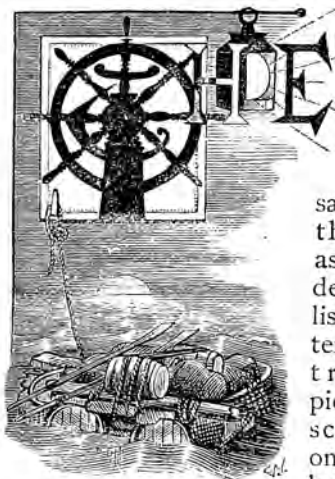
John Anderson did not answer; but it was a bitter struggle. Spite of all, the love of life was strong within him, and it required a tremendous effort to stay himself from leaping down into the boat—barely seen in the fast gather-

ing darkness; for in spite of the difficulty one man still held on to the chains with a boat-hook.

It was evident that there were two parties in the boat—one for pulling off as they were, and the other for getting the captain aboard; and at last the dispute rose high. Then darkness fell; the breeze sprang up as if by magic, and as the *Victrix* rolled heavily, and then surged through the water, the boat fell off, and John Anderson felt that he was in the midst of the wide sea, standing upon a floating coffin, that before long—perhaps in a minute's time—would sink beneath his feet: and then?

## TWENTIETH CABLE LENGTH.

HOW JEREMIAH BASALT TURNED UP A TRUMP.



NIGHT had fallen black as pitch, and the wind sang through the cordage, as John Anderson stood listening attentively, and trying to pierce the obscurity for one more last look at the

boat; but though he peered through his hands, held telescope fashion, he could see nothing, and he turned away at last, to utter aloud the one word—

"Gone!"

"Well, and what could you expect?" said a gruff voice at his elbow.

"Basalt!"

"My lad!"

Choking with emotion, John Anderson caught the rugged old salt by both hands, too much moved to speak.

"I know what you thought," growled the old fellow, but very huskily; "you thought I'd gone wi' 'em. Just like you! But I hadn't."

John Anderson could not speak, for he was weak with loss of blood and anxiety. He sank down on the deck, and sat there in silence, holding Basalt's hand in his; while the wind sang above them, the water hissed and gurgled, and washed round the vessel's bows, and at last the stars peeped out one by one, as if looking down upon the perils of those two true-hearted men, brave as any of the heroes of old, sitting upon the deck and waiting for the hour when their last hold on life should sink from beneath their feet.

The breeze blew freshly as the night advanced, and at times a wave leaped over the sides, to deluge the deck; for the ship was very low now, and as she heeled over, the water could be heard rushing from side to side, and threatening each moment to burst up the deck.

Quite two hours must have passed, and still the two occupants of the ship sat as if stunned with their misfortune.

At last a fair-sized wave rose slowly by the side of the rolling vessel, and,

without effort, seemed to heave itself aboard, sweeping coops, ropes, all before it, till it rushed out of the opening in the bulwarks left by the storm.

This was too much for Basalt, and seemed to rouse him from his lethargy.

"Look ye here," he growled; "if we are to die, we may as well die ship-shape, with the wind well abeam, and not go down yawing about, and rolling in the hollow of the sea, without a man at the wheel."

Anderson did not speak; but rose slowly and painfully, to lean with one arm upon the bulwark.

"Let's have a look at that wovnd," said Basalt. "Ugly cut!" he muttered, as, in the dim starlight, he stooped down and rebound it—tenderly as might a woman—before helping his companion up by the wheel, where he spread a tarpaulin for him to lie upon, before taking hold of the spokes in a quiet, matter-of-fact way, and bringing the rudder to bear with such effect that in a few moments, water-logged as she was, the ship slowly answered her helm, the rolling motion ceased, and heeling over a little under the three sails set, she moved gently through the water.

"You see," said Basalt, after a pause, "I thought we should have been at the bottom before this, or else I should have been here sooner. Anyhow, we'll go down now like sailors, and that will be some relief."

Another hour passed almost in silence, with the vessel slowly making way. Basalt managed the helm so that, low as the *Victrix* was in the water, the waves ceased to leap aboard, and only seemed to lick the sides as if in anticipation of the coming feast.

"Well, you know," cried Basalt at last, in a pettish, impatient voice, "I can't stand much more of this, for it's neither one thing nor the other. If we're going down, let's go down; and if not, let's float."

"Don't murmur, Jerry," said Anderson, quietly. "We ought to be thankful that we have been spared so long."

"But I hate being humbugged," cried

the old man. "Here, I come aboard thinking we were going to sink with all colours flying—romantic-like, after the fashion as you reads of in books. I thought we were going down directly, and that's hours ago. Only that I thought as it was all over, I should have tried to dodge something to get us clear. I waited patiently like a man; but now I sha'n't wait no longer, for it's just come to me like, that one aint no call to die till one's reg'lar obliged. So here goes."

These words seemed to rouse Anderson.

"Let me try to hold the wheel," he said, getting up and taking the spokes.

"Good for you," cried Basalt. "That's cheery. Keep her just steady like that, and she may hold out till morning."

Then, with the greatest of alacrity, the old fellow set to work.

First he brought some biscuit and rum to Anderson, and stood over him, holding the wheel while he took some refreshment.

"That's right," he said, "you'll hold out better. Keep her steady; for if another sea comes aboard, it'll be the last."

The next minute he was gone; and soon Anderson saw him moving about with a lantern, which he set down now here, now there, in different parts of the deck. Then there was the rolling about of casks, the dragging here and there of hencoops and gratings. Then Basalt would trot to the wheel, to have a few words with Anderson, begging him every time to "handle her softly;" for as each hour glided slowly by, the desire for life grew stronger in both men, stunned and ready for death as they had been the evening before.

At last there was a broad belt of light in the east, then a flash of orange shafts, and a few minutes after the sun rolled up above the purple water, turning the vessel into gold, and showing Jeremiah Basalt, with the sweat pouring off his face, lashing and binding spars and coops to four empty casks, and improvising a raft that bade fair to float for an unlimited time in any calm sea.

"Handle her softly!" he cried to Anderson. "If she'll only keep up another hour I'll be ready for her."

He spoke as he ran to and fro—his last effort being to drag a couple of gratings on to the top of his raft, and secure them there with lashings.

There were oars and a spare boat-hook, mast and sail, coils of small sheets already on the raft; and, by almost superhuman efforts, he had built up in the centre an edifice composed of a couple of breakers, or small fresh-water casks, a pork cask, and some bags of biscuit.

The next hour was spent in adding security to the rough affair by means of fresh lashings, which Basalt added wherever he thought they would have good effect.

"There!" he cried, at last. "That's as rough an attempt at a craft as ever Robinson Crusoe made; and if I could have three wishes now, the first would be for his uninhabited island to heave in sight."

As he spoke he shaded his eyes with his rough hand, and swept the offing. Then, as if he had not ceased speaking, he continued—

"But, as it don't seem disposed so to do, why, here goes for a launch."

Armed with a bit of rope, he ran to Anderson, and then, with a few dexterous twists, he lashed the helm fast, and then handed the rum bottle.

"Take one swig, my lad—it'll give you strength. That's right. Now a taste for Number One. And now come and haul a pound with me."

A few strokes from an axe cleared away the rough projecting fragments of the bulwark, where the sea had beaten them out, leaving a broad opening just opposite the raft, and the water was not above five feet below.

"Now then, with a will," said Basalt, handing a capstan bar to Anderson to use for a lever.

And between them they prised and prised, till they had the raft partly hanging over the side.

"Let's make fast a painter," said Basalt.

This he did, and then stood thinking a moment.

"'Bacco and grog!" he cried, and ran down to the captain's cabin, to return in a minute with a case of spirits and a couple of boxes of cigars.

These he had no sooner stowed in a cask than he seized the capstan bar again.

"Quick, my lad—quick—heave."

It was time, for a loud hissing sound of escaping air told them that the water was rushing faster into the vessel.

"Heave—heave!" cried Basalt again.

And they forced the raft a few inches farther over the side, where it seemed to catch against something and stick.

"My God, we shall go down with her!"

Another heave, and another, and then Anderson's bar snapped in two, just as the ship gave a lurch, and the confined air below shrieked again. But Anderson stooped down, thrust his hands below the raft, and lifted with what little remaining strength he had.

That little lift did it; and the unwieldy mass overbalanced, and fell into the sea with a heavy splash; was half-submerged, but righted again; and at one and the same moment the confined air, forced into a smaller and smaller compass below by the rushing water, literally blew up the deck of the vessel with a loud crash.

"Over with you!" roared Basalt. "Jump."

And together the men leaped on to the frail raft, which rocked and threatened to capsize with the sudden weight thrown upon it. But it righted slowly, and floated bravely, although those who freighted it thought not of this, but of their peril; for, though launched upon their raft, they were close alongside of the sinking ship, and Basalt had let fall his knife between the spars beneath his feet.

A few seconds would have decided their fate; but John Anderson saw the danger. His knife was out in an instant, and the rope that held them to the ship was divided. The cut had also set free a couple of oars lashed to the side for safety; and with these they

paddled and rowed with all their might to get the raft beyond the vortex of the sinking ship.

"Pull—for God's sake, pull!" shrieked Basalt. "We can't die now—we can't die now!"

But all seemed vain; for the great

vessel, close to which they lay, now seemed to give a shudder as she rolled over, first on one side and then on the other, preparatory to making a plunge which would cause such a whirlpool as must suck down the raft beyond all possibility of redemption.

## TWENTY-FIRST CABLE LENGTH.

HOW SERPENTS CRAWL.



PHILIP MERRITT came regularly to sit and talk, nominally with Mr. Halley; but necessarily his encounters with May were very frequent, and he probably, from reasons of policy, forbore to make any ostentatious display of his claims. It was an understood thing that he was engaged to her, otherwise he might have been an ordinary visitor.

"Wait a bit, my scornful beauty," he muttered to himself more than once, as he left the house—"I'll bring you to your senses yet."

For he found poor May very bad company; in fact, she had hard work to keep from broaching the subject that lay next her heart. Young and generous, she found it hard to believe the tales she had heard of her betrothed's dealings, for they seemed more associated with the character of the ruffian than with that of the polished gentleman.

It was the evening of the long discussion between Mr. Halley and his clerk, and the former had returned to Canonbury, looking pale and anxious. He had had a long business interview

with Merritt and Mr. Longdale, and had invited the two gentlemen to dine with him, sending up word by a messenger.

May was dressed and waiting when he came, ready to question him about his troubled aspect; but he put aside her queries, went up to dress, and on descending gave a slight start as he caught sight of his child's attire. For May was dressed in white, and in place of flowers wore at her breast a black crape bow, which stood out marked and singular.

For a moment the eyes of father and daughter met, and a slight shiver passed through the former as he placed his own interpretation upon the mark; but no word was uttered, and a moment after Philip Merritt was announced, to come forward subdued and gentlemanly. He saluted May in a quiet, unobtrusive way; started visibly as he caught sight of the crape; and then, after a few remarks on current topics, turned to talk with Mr. Halley, just as Mr. Longdale was announced, to enter bland and smiling, exhibiting so much smooth surface that it seemed as if all the genuine man had been polished away.

The dinner was announced, and Mr. Longdale took down May. He, too, glanced at the crape bow; and, urged at length by curiosity beyond his customary caution, he hazarded the question—

"I trust, Miss Halley, that you have sustained no family bereavement? I had not heard—"

Merritt and Mr. Halley, who were deep in conversation, paused on the instant, and there was utter silence for

a few moments, till May said, in a low, deep voice—

"I wear it, Mr. Longdale, according to promise, in memory of a brave man."

Longdale bowed and was silent; while Merritt, white almost as the cloth before him, hurriedly resumed the conversation with Mr. Halley, but in an inconsequent manner that was so broken as to enable him to jealously listen for each utterance of the others.

Longdale, though, talked upon indifferent topics for a while. Then he said suddenly, with a deep sigh—

"Yes, Miss Halley, there are awful changes in this life. Did you read the announcement of our sad loss?"

"I did," said May, coldly.

"Is it not awful?" said Longdale, ignoring a kick which he received from Merritt below the table. "'They who go down to the sea in ships,' you know the rest."

May bowed her head; but Longdale could not read the disgust written in her countenance, and went on—

"So sad! A fine ship—one of the finest in the service; a valuable cargo and some of her best men lost, swallowed up."

May had not meant to reply, but the words escaped in spite of her—

"You seem to place the losses in order according to their value," she said, satirically, but with a heavy sense of pain at her heart; and as Merritt looked, he saw, with jealous rage, her hand pressed upon the crape bow—all unconsciously, though, for she was only seeking to control the heaving of her breast.

"Exactly," said Longdale, who was too cunning of verbal fence to be hit by such a barbed lunge—"exactly so, Miss Halley. I place our poor ship first and least; then the cargo of our merchants; and last and best, the brave men who have been snatched away from us. It is one of the great drawbacks to a shipowner's profession, having these awful losses: they cause many a sleepless night."

May was checked. In her guileless heart, much as she disliked the speaker,

she could not believe that he could assume so much. It would have been a blasphemous hypocrisy, she reasoned; and after vainly trying to fathom the depths of his cold grey eyes, she said—

"And is it certain to be true, Mr. Longdale? Is there no hope of the others being saved?"

"I will not say that," he said, sadly. "It is too much to hope for, I fear; but who can despair when rescues that are almost miraculous continually meet our notice?"

May Halley was confounded, and sat in silence during the remaining few minutes that she stayed at the table. What did it mean? What was she to think? Were people wild, bitter, and extravagant in their charges against these men? It must be so; for it was impossible, utterly impossible, that this quiet, courtly gentleman could sit and talk to her so sadly of a loss that he had almost, if not quite, helped to compass for his own vile ends.

It was cruel work, and her breast was torn by a dozen contending emotions. To whom could she fly for advice in such a strait? She knew not; though she felt that she could not trust herself. Thought after thought, how they flashed through her mind!—till she rose at last to leave the party to their wine.

Philip Merritt hurried to open the door for her; and as she swept by, there was such an appealing look in his eyes as they met hers—such a look of honesty and love—that in spite of all she had heard, her pulses quickened, and the look she gave him in return was softer and less full of doubt; while he returned to his chair, smiling and triumphant, knowing that Longdale had helped his suit more than a month's wooing of his own.

As he returned to his seat, it was to find that his partner had at once resumed the subject of the business upon which they had been to Mr. Halley's offices in the morning.

"You see, Mr. Halley," he was saying, "Merritt has placed all his available capital in our hands; but it is not,

as I explained, sufficient for the extension we propose. Certainly the insurance money for that wretched *Victrix* will help; but we should have another thirty thousand, which I hope you will determine to advance."

Mr. Halley sat tapping the table with his fingers as Longdale filled his glass and pushed the claret jug towards Merritt.

"And, by the way," he continued, "you must not give Philip here the credit of proposing you as our banker; for certainly it would, I must own, have been in bad taste. It was my suggestion, Merritt, try this claret, it is exquisite."

The two partners exchanged glances, for Mr. Halley still sat thoughtful and silent.

"That was very sad news about the *Victrix*, gentlemen," he said at last.

"Frightful!" replied Merritt; while Longdale merely bowed and raised his eyebrows slightly.

"They have been talking over it a great deal in the City to-day."

"Yes, I suppose so," said Longdale, calmly; while Merritt shifted uneasily in his chair. "It hits the underwriters a little; but then they calculate for these contingencies, and make money all the same. Where would be their use if they did not meet with losses?"

"Where, indeed!" said Merritt, uneasily.

"The loss is looked upon very seriously," continued Mr. Halley.

"Of course," said Longdale, applying himself once more to the claret jug. "It is a very, very serious loss. I am afraid, though, that we made a great mistake in entrusting her to that Anderson; but there, poor fellow, he's no more! You cast him off for some incompetency, I believe?"

"No, by Heaven!" exclaimed Mr. Halley, impetuously, "for a finer sailor never trod a deck. Gentlemen, you know the old proverb, 'De mortuis nil nisi bonum'? I can use it here, and say it with all sincerity; for a braver, truer-hearted man was never trusted with the care of property and the lives of men."

"I am very glad to hear your advocacy," said Longdale, who was ever ready to catch each current as it set; "you relieve me of one anxiety which preyed upon my mind. You can hardly tell, Mr. Halley, how these responsibilities tell on me. I was really afraid that we had made a false step in engaging with poor Anderson, and had not done our duty to the crew."

"If seamanship could have saved your vessel, it would have been now afloat," said Mr. Halley. "I grieve much for the loss of John Anderson; and would gladly give half I possess to shake him once more by the hand."

"But we are bearing away from our subject," said Merritt, who was anxious to go to the drawing-room and join May.

"Yes," said Mr. Halley, "I was talking about the loss of the *Victrix*."

Longdale's face gave an angry twitch, for this was not the subject he wished to discuss.

"They have been saying very ugly things about her loss," said Mr. Halley, slowly.

"Ugly things? About her loss? Good heavens, Mr. Halley, what do you mean?" exclaimed Longdale, turning in his chair.

"They say that Rutherby's sent out the ship ill-found, and heavily insured, and did not expect to see her back."

Crash!

Longdale's clenched hand came down upon the table with a heavy blow that made every glass dance.

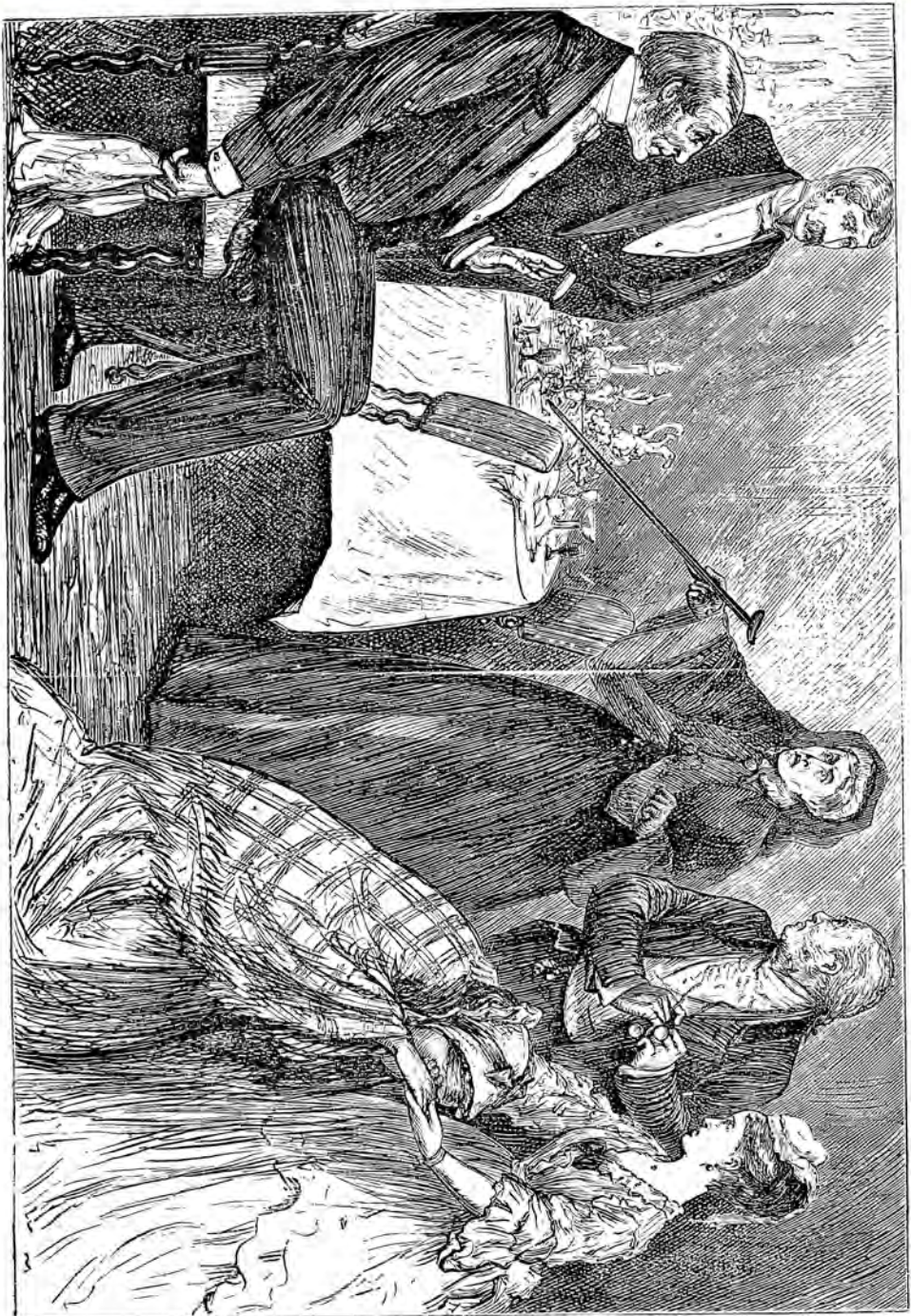
"Some cursed, contemptible rascal of an underwriter, who has fifty or a hundred pounds in the insurance! But who is it, Mr. Halley, who is it?"

"Yes, sir," exclaimed Merritt, "who is it? If we could find out the villain, we'd ruin him. We would, wouldn't we, Longdale?"

"We would, as sure as there's a law for libel. Some anonymous, skulking scoundrel, who is never happy without he is blacking some one's character. Who was it? Give us his name, Mr. Halley."

"That I cannot do, gentlemen," said

"WHERE IS MY SON?"—Page 63.



Mr. Halley, quietly. "It would be dishonourable in me. I should be betraying a trust. But these losses are very awful, and, I must say, incomprehensible to me. I never had them."

"Mr. Halley," said Longdale, rising stiffly, "your language is rather strange. Surely, sir, you, as a shipowner, must know enough of the risks of ocean traffic to see that we have been rather more unfortunate than is common. You

do not, surely, for a moment, impute to us, your guests, any—"

"If you please, sir, here's an old lady—one of those who came to see Miss May—wants to see Mr. Longdale and Mr. Merritt, and won't take no for an answer."

"It's only me, gentlemen," exclaimed a pitiful voice; and before she could be prevented, Mrs. Gurnett had forced her way into the dining room.

## TWENTY-SECOND CABLE LENGTH.

HOW MR. LONGDALE WAS CALLED TO ACCOUNT.



YOUR pardon, gentlemen," said Mrs. Gurnett;

"I know it's rude and wrong of me, but it's life and death to me, gentlemen, and I've been up to both your houses,

and found you were here; and I knew that my dear old master there wouldn't be so cruel as to stand in my way, and keep me from seeing you, so I came—Mrs. Gurnett, gentlemen, landlady of the Jolly Sailors, gentlemen, and Mr. Basalt, Jeremiah Basalt, sailed in your ship—mate in the *Victrix*—Captain John Anderson—and I saw only an hour ago, in the evening papers, that—Oh, oh, it can't be, it can't be! Pray, pray tell me it isn't true!"

The poor woman had been speaking with an effort, and now she staggered and would have fallen, had not Mr. Halley caught her and helped her to a chair.

"Wine here, Merritt," he said; and then angrily, to the gaping footman, "Go, and shut that door."

"No, no—no wine—water," gasped Mrs. Gurnett, pushing back the glass, and looking appealingly at Mr. Halley as she spoke to the two partners.

"We are old people, gentlemen; but we loved each other in our poor simple way, and we were to marry when he came back. I felt he would be lost, and begged him to stay."

"But, my good woman," interposed Longdale, in deprecatory tones.

"It's too bad, you know," said Merritt.

"Let her speak," said Mr. Halley, sternly.

"Thank you, dear master," said the poor woman, simply. "I begged him to stay; for I knew what Rutherby's ships were."

"Confusion!" exclaimed Merritt. "I cannot stand this."

"Be quiet, my dear boy," said Longdale, blandly; "you have nothing to fear."

"But—but," sobbed Mrs. Gurnett, "he was that loyal and true to his captain, that go he would; and he made me—for he had such influence over me that I could have died for him if he had told me—he made me—say—'Go, and God bless you;' and I said it, and sent him to his death."

"But we are not sure yet, Mrs. Gurnett," said Mr. Halley, soothingly.

"Sure, dear master? oh, yes, we are sure! Why did you send him away from



his own old ship, that he seemed to be a part of, and while I knew he was with it I felt almost that he was safe? But, oh, gentlemen, it was you I came to see. How could you—oh, how could you send those poor brave men in that rotten ship?"

"Confound it, woman, how dare you makesuch a charge?" exclaimed Merritt, savagely; "you're mad—a lunatic—you ought to be put in an asy——"

He stopped short; for he suddenly became aware that, with face white as her dress, May Halley was standing in the doorway. How long she had been there he could not tell.

Longdale saw her at the same moment, and speaking blandly, he said, in his soft, kid-gloved tones—

"My dear Merritt, do not be hard upon the poor woman, who is half beside herself with grief. Think of what she suffers, and make allowances."

"What is it, nurse?" said May, advancing into the room.

"Oh, Miss May, my own darling, are you there?" cried the weeping woman, starting up to fling herself at the young girl's feet. "Oh, my darling, they've drowned him—they've murdered him! Oh, no, no, no—what am I saying? Please don't notice me," she cried, appealingly. "I say more than I mean; for it is so hard to bear. Mr. Halley, sir—dear old master—you were always kind to me; ask them for me—speak to them for me; they'll answer you. But pray, pray don't deceive me—don't say cruel falsehoods to comfort me and get me away quietly, as if I was a child. Only tell me, gentlemen, please, is what I have read in the paper true, that the ship, the *Victrix* went down, and that my poor Basalt and the captain went down with her?"

"It's as true as that their murderers stand there," said a harsh voice from the doorway; and all started to see the stern old face of Mrs. Anderson at the door.

"Yes, you may shrink back and cower, you *gentlemen*," she cried, bitterly. "And you, James Halley, how dare you consort with such villains?"

"My good woman," exclaimed Longdale —

"Good woman!" exclaimed the stern old dame, pointing at him with her stick. "How dare you speak to me, you cringing, smooth-tongued hypocrite? Do you think I do not know you, Reuben Longdale? Yes. You have crawled up and up the ladder of life to be a shipowner, and every step has been the dead body of a better man. Yes, you will deny it, and quote Scripture, and subscribe to missions, and give to new churches; but when at the last day the great God who made us all of one blood shall say to you—'What of those men I trusted to your care?' what then, coward—murderer—unprofitable servant—what then?"

"This is too much," exclaimed Merritt; while May bent shivering over the kneeling form of Mrs. Gurnett.

"Silence, boy!" exclaimed Mrs. Anderson. "You are young yet in such villainy. Run from it while you have time—run ere hell gapes for you more widely. How dare you speak, when I ask that man what he has to say that I should not impeach him of the murder of my son—of my son, a man so brave and true that it seems horrible to me that God could have let him be the slave of that cringing reptile. Yes; wipe your wet brow, and shiver, murderer! Where is my son? Where is the crew of the *Tiber*? Drowned! Where is the crew of the *Great Planet*? Drowned! Where is the crew of the *Grey Dawn*? Drowned! Where are the crews of twenty other ships of which you have been part owner—ships that were rotten—ships that were bought and patched—ships that were made by cheap contractors with bad materials—ships built to sink? James Halley, if you in your career had lost a tithe of them, you would have been a beggar; while this man—look at the well-fed, smooth, sleek serpent, and see how he has thriven!

"But it will not last," continued the old woman, fiercely, in her denunciation, and seeming, as she stood there,

like some prophetic of old—"it will not last! The Lord shall hear the cries of the widow, the fatherless, the bereft; and a day of vengeance shall arrive for such as you."

She stopped, and turned to May, and laid a trembling hand upon her fair head.

"Be very pitiful to me, my child. God bless you. You knew it, then?" she cried, as she saw the crape bow. And now her voice was weak and feeble, as she clung to the trembling girl. "Yes," she said, gently; "be very pitiful to me, and think of me in your prayers. Ah, my child, he loved you with all a strong man's love—my son, my dear first-born, whom I worshipped so, that God has taken him away as a punishment for my vain idolatry. But he loved you, my child; and if I see you no more, think of me gently; for though once I felt hard and cruel, and jealous of you, I could have loved you dearly, with all a mother's love. And now—now he is gone! He died for you—for your sake, in his despair!

"Come," she added, after a few moments, and she laid her hand upon the younger woman—"come, Mrs. Gurnett, let us go; we have no place here. Mr. Halley," she said, with a sweet, calm dignity, "forgive me this. If it had been your ship that had been lost, with my poor boy on board, I could have come and wept pitifully at your feet, and asked for comfort; but as for these men—"

She said no more; but holding Mrs. Gurnett's hand, and looking fixedly at Longdale, led her to the door, where she was followed by May and Mr. Halley to the cab that was in waiting.

Then, without comment, Mr. Halley

led May, weeping bitterly and quite unstrung, to her room.

When he returned to the dining-room it was empty.

"Where is Mr. Merritt? Has Mr. Longdale gone?"

"They said, sir, as they thought they would not stop, but would see you to-morrow," said Samuel.

"Thank God!" muttered Mr. Halley, throwing himself into a chair, while the partners were walking slowly back towards town, heedless of the rain that was falling heavily, and that they were in evening dress.

"I've had enough of this," said Merritt at last.

"Don't be a fool!" was the abrupt reply.

"No, I won't," said Merritt, angrily; "I'll drop it at once. That old woman made my blood run cold. It is worse than D.T. Another such scene as that, and I shall lose May Halley."

"Nonsense!" said Longdale, abruptly.

"Nonsense! I tell you I couldn't stand it; but I'll have no more of it."

"No more of what?" said Longdale, in a fierce tone that made his companion start, and stand listening beneath the wall of an old house.

"This ship-owning—I can't stand it."

"What! now that all has gone as you wished—now that success has attended the plans at which you connived—now that your rival is removed from your path? Philip Merritt, you are in with us, and must stay."

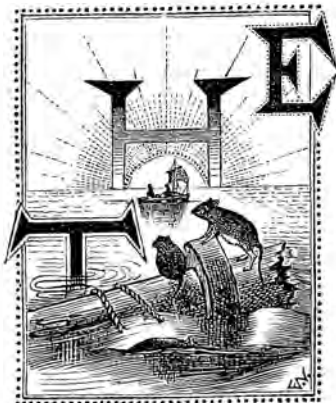
"Must?" said Merritt, roused to indignation by his partner's language.

"Yes, must; or leave with us every penny you possess."



## TWENTY-THIRD CABLE LENGTH.

HOW THE "VICTRIX" SANK.



BREEZE saved them—the brisk breeze, coming down in a brief cat's-paw for a few moments, did it. For as the poor ship shuddered and

rolled from side to side, as if struggling hard to keep afloat, the well-filled sails bore her on a few yards farther from the raft.

John Anderson, too, had answered Basalt's appeal, and tugged at his oar with all his might.

But it was cruel work; for the unshapely raft hardly answered to their efforts, and seemed to hang back as if drawn by some horrible magnetic attraction to the ship. To the men struggling for dear life, it was like some fearful nightmare, as they tugged and gazed with starting eyeballs at their fate. A few hours before, they could have gone down without a struggle; but the efforts for safety had begotten new hopes, and death would have been hardly met now.

Drag, drag, drag—till the ash blades bent and threatened to snap, and still they scarcely moved away; while the ship seemed animated with life, which burst forth from her tortured bowels in strange shrieks and cries. Rats by the hundred swarmed up on to the bulwarks and climbed about on to the shrouds; and again and again there were sharp, crashing reports, as other parts of the deck blew up.

Such a few yards distant, even now; and there was a strange creeping sensation in Basalt's hair, as if a cold skeleton hand were stirring it. His face was ghastly; but he did not for an instant cease his efforts, dragging furiously at his oar, though a shiver passed through him that almost seemed to rob him of all nerve when the *Victrix*—*Victrix* no longer—sank back for an instant, throwing up her bows, and then gave one slow, solemn plunge head first, and disappeared in a vast eddy of hissing, foaming water.

It was an awful sight; and in spite of themselves, Anderson and Basalt ceased rowing as the hull disappeared, and the masts and rigging slowly followed—the sails seeming to hang for a moment on the waves as they filled with air, and then split with a loud report. But before the maintop-gallant yard had sunk below the surface, they were rowing hard against the dreadful current that sucked them towards where floated a quantity of deck lumber, whirling round and round before disappearing after the ship.

"For dear life!" cried Basalt, huskily,—"pull, my lad, pull!"

Words were not needed; but in spite of every effort the raft floated slowly towards where the water foamed and boiled, and their fate seemed sealed.

Another drag, though, and another; and either the rate of progress was checked by their efforts, or the whirlpool had less force. They saw it, and dragged again and again, throwing their last remaining strength into the efforts. And not without avail; for a minute after John Anderson had fallen back exhausted upon the raft, while Basalt half lay half sat upon the cask, with the raft slowly rising and falling amid the waves of the great Indian Ocean,

alone and helpless, a thousand miles from land!

It was a long time before either spoke, and then it was Basalt, who said, as if to himself—

"That's about the highest touch yet. Talk of Davy Jones's locker!—one almost heard the lid snap down."

Then turning his back to Anderson, he went down softly on his knees, and remained so for some time, to rise up, though, at last, muttering the only words which reached his companion's ears, and they were—

"World without end, amen!"

The next minute he was bright and cheery. Thoughts of their possible fate did not seem to trouble him, as, in a rough, fatherly way, he leaned over Anderson, placing spirit and biscuit to his lips, and then proceeded to rebandage the wound upon his leg.

"Cheer up, my lad," he said; "it'll all come right. We have got a craft under us as won't sink; but as for that *Wictrix*—"

His sentence was more forcible in its incompleteness than ever it could have been had he said all he thought; but he mentally uttered no blessing on the heads of Rutherby and Co.

"First thing to be done is for half the watch to go below," he said; "and that's your half, cap'n. There aint much stowage room, but get a sleep if you can."

John Anderson was too much exhausted to do more than thank the old man with a grateful look, as his head fell back upon a tarpaulin; and in another minute he was sleeping heavily.

"And that's what I could do," muttered Basalt, "only I can't yet. I'll do the next best thing, though; for it's been short commons lately."

Then, in a cool, matter-of-fact way, just as if the narrow escape from a terri-

ble death had not been shared by him, he filled a tin pannikin with water, gave it a good dash of rum, and then fished out a couple of biscuits and a lump of pork, which he set to, knife in hand, to devour, sitting the while cross-legged upon one of the gratings which formed the quarter-deck of the raft, and thinking sadly of Mrs. Gurnett and the snug bar parlour at the Jolly Sailors.

The sun had risen to the meridian, and slowly sunk to within an hour of his setting, before John Anderson awoke, to find that a rough awning of sail cloth had been stretched between him and the ardent heat. A pleasant breeze rippled the water, and filled out the little lug sail that Basalt had managed to hoist.

For a few minutes the young man lay thinking—wondering whether this were the end of a horrible dream that he had had. He felt rested and refreshed; the breeze, too, played pleasantly in his hair; a soft languor seemed to pervade his every sense; and it was only by an effort that he prevented himself from lying there silently thinking—always of home, of the perils he had passed through, and of May.

He roused himself with a sigh; and looking up, a pleasant smile irradiated the rugged face of old Basalt, as he shouted—

"Ship ahoy! What cheer?"

"Better, much better," was the reply. "Now let me take the watch, and you lie down."

"That will I, with a will," said Basalt. "You'll find the stores there, ready to hand. Eat well, my lad; for it'll give you strength to weather the next gale."

A minute after, while Anderson was making a frugal meal off biscuit and water, Basalt, heedless of all perils and dangers, was sleeping soundly upon the raft.



## TWENTY-FOURTH CABLE LENGTH.

HOW THEY FARED ON THE RAFT.



AN you imagine for yourselves the position? Far away from land, upon a few rough spars, lashed with ropes to a cask or two; with the

whole fabric rising slowly up the side of each wave to plunge down the other into the deep trough of the sea, groaning and creaking as the loose fragments rub and grind against each other, fraying the ropes that hold them together, and threatening to fall asunder at any moment. John Anderson sat thinking, with his head upon his hand; while his rough old companion in misfortune slept heavily. One by one the stars came out, till the whole heavens were one blaze of splendour, reflected a thousandfold from the glassy surface of the long swell. The breeze had almost died away as darkness set in, and the little sail flapped idly against the mast.

If the weather kept calm, they might exist for weeks, for they had food and water enough; but he knew well that, strive to strengthen it as they might, the first rough sea must knock the raft to pieces or wash them off.

Educated by his long sea-going to wake at certain hours, Basalt rose up about midnight; and there was something almost comical in the manner in which he treated their frail platform, which was half submerged at every step on the side, even as if it were a well-found ship, with full crew.

"Anything to report, sir?" he said.

"No, all is just as you left it, Jerry."

"And a good state of things, too," said the old man, beginning to whistle. "I suppose we must drift now till the wind rises again."

Drift was the word—drift, hour after hour, in the same monotonous fashion.

Drift, the next day and the next, with the sun growing each hour more powerful, till it seemed to scorch the very brains within their heads; and, in spite of their thirst, every drop of water having to be measured out to the exact allowance upon which they had placed themselves, so as to hold out as long as possible. The afternoon sun at times seemed unbearable, in spite of the awning they contrived with a small sail; and more than once the question occurred to each—was it worth while to live and endure such tortures?

Four days, a week, a fortnight passed slowly on, during which time there had been nothing more than the faintest breezes, and the raft had held together still.

For the first few days Basalt fought hard to keep up a cheerful aspect, and succeeded well; but the awful loneliness told at last upon him, so that hours and hours would pass, during which neither spoke, but sat wrapped in thought apparently, though really with their energies paralyzed—every aspiration frozen into dull apathy.

It was on the fifteenth day that, early in the morning, while serving out the provisions, Basalt dropped his biscuit to exclaim, with a hysterical sob—"Ship ahoy!"

And then turned, with outstretched hands, gazing at a white speck glistening in the sun upon the far-off horizon.

It was a sail, sure enough; and, with straining eyes, Anderson stood by his side, watching, and reading, as it were, written upon that white speck—life, hope, love, home.

"Hoist a signal," he cried, and at the same moment went himself to the mast, where he cast loose the sheet that held the little sail, hauled it to the top, and let it fly in the soft morning breeze.

"They'll see us, sir—they'll see us," cried Basalt, cheerfully, the whole man changing with the hope within him. "Cheerily, cheerily, my lad! That means home, sweet home; and confound all bad shipowners! How's the wovnd, my lad—how's the wovnd?"

The wound was fast on the way to heal, and had ceased to trouble Anderson, who did not reply, so interested was he in the distant sail.

"Isn't she lower down, Basalt?" he said.

"Not she," cried the old man, gazing through his hands. "She'll see us, safe!"

The old man stooped down and slapped his knees, a broad smile coming over his face, as he said to himself—

"Hurray for the old stocking, and success to the Jolly Sailors!"

John Anderson did not speak, but stood intently gazing at the sail, till his experience told him that there could be no question about it—they were not seen, and the vessel was certainly more distant than when they had first sighted her.

Another half-hour passed, and then it became plain to Basalt, though he

would not own it as yet, but stood up on the top of one of the water-casks, cheering and waving his hat.

At last he stopped short, and remained gazing after the departing ship, which sank lower and lower, till she was the merest speck, when he descended slowly, and proceeded to serve out the biscuit and water—a process interrupted by the sight of the ship.

"A bit and sup, my lad," he said to Anderson. "Never despair! Better luck coming. It's a bit of a disappointment; but I don't mind it a bit, for my part. In fact, it's good; for it shows us as we're in the track of ships."

Another day, and another, and another; and now the water began to run short. They had drunk as sparingly as they could; but the intense heat had at last begotten a thirst that would not be denied, and they had been compelled to drink. There were symptoms, too, of a change in the weather; the breeze grew stronger, and the sail forced the raft through the water. But though they pressed on, it was so slowly that it could do them no good. The nearest land was the Cape; but at their rate of progress, with favouring breezes, it would take them months to reach port, and they knew that their only hope was a sail.

## TWENTY-FIFTH CABLE LENGTH.

HOW MR. TUDGE WAS TEMPTED.



**R**TUDGE, miss." "Show him in, Samuel," said May.

There was a great deal of shoe rubbing on the mat outside, and then entered Mr. Tudge, very spruce, his hair curled—he had

spent an hour at a hairdresser's on his way; his tail-coat, of peculiar cut, buttoned very tightly across his chest; and a general gala aspect about him, largely increased by his carrying an immense bouquet in his hand.

"How are you, Mr. Tudge?" said May, advancing, with a sad smile, to shake hands.

"Like a man coming into sunshine, my darling," said Tudge, taking her hand and kissing it. "Ah, my dear, once upon a time, when you were little, it usen't to be your hand."

"And it need not now, dear Mr.

Tudge," said May, offering her cheek to the old man, who kissed it fondly, and then sat down on the couch beside her, retaining her hand, and, after laying down the bouquet carefully by his side, patting and stroking it tenderly.

"Bless you, my dear," he said, with tears in his eyes—"God bless you! And you grown such a beautiful young woman, too. But I always said you would; didn't I now, my dear—didn't I always say you would?"

"You always spoiled me, Mr. Tudge," said May, laughing.

"Not I," said Tudge, stoutly. "But May, my dear, what feasts we used to have! Don't you remember the cheese-cakes, the almond-rock, and the plums?"

"Oh, yes," said May, smiling sadly. "I remember it all, Mr. Tudge."

"To be sure you do, my sweet; and I always said you'd grow up a beauty. But, you see, I'm a rum old fogey of a fellow; but I know what's what. See here—there's a posy for you!"

May took the flowers he held out with such pride—for he had gone to get a simple bunch of roses, and ended by purchasing the choicest bouquet of exotics he could find.

"It was very kind of you, Mr. Tudge, and they are very sweet."

"Not so sweet as her they're meant for," said Tudge, beaming all over his plump face. "And look how I've neglected to send you anything lately, my dear! All business, though," he added, gloomily—"all business!"

"That's what I asked you to come for, dear Mr. Tudge. You've often told me you looked upon me as a daughter."

"To be sure—to be sure. Why, didn't you use to laugh and call me old Uncle Tudge in the old days, eh? To be sure you did; and ah! what fun we used to have?" His face was all smiles; and leaning over her, he softly stroked down, on each side, her bright glossy hair. "But stop," he said, seriously—"business. Why did you send for me?"

"To talk to you about papa and the business, Mr. Tudge."

The old man faced round, serious as a judge, with his mouth pursed, and one finger held up impressively.

"I never bring the business outside the office."

"But it is for poor papa's good I want to know," said May; "and you are in his confidence?"

"Confidence, my darling," said Tudge, "why, he's offered me to be partner six times—six times, think of that! Said I'd made half the business, and deserved to be."

"And why were you not, Mr. Tudge?"

"Why not, my dear? Why should I have been? I was right where I was. Who was to have taken my place if I had been partner? No; so long as I could save a few hundreds, and go on my own way, I didn't want to change. But if I'd known what I know now, I would have been."

"Why?" said May, anxiously.

"Why? To skid the wheel going downhill—to act as a check and stop him. Where is he to-night?"

"Gone to dine at Mr. Longdale's."

"Damn Mr. Longdale!" cried the old man, starting up, and stamping about the room—forgetting, too, in his wrath, his reticence about the office. "I beg your pardon, my child—I know it's very wicked; but as soon as I hear his name or—his name," he exclaimed, checking himself, "I get mad about the way the business is going to the dev—old Harry."

"Then, things are very wrong, Mr. Tudge?" exclaimed May.

"Wrong, my darling, they're—"

Slap!

Mr. Tudge administered a smart tap to his mouth to close it, and then took a good sniff at May's bouquet.

"If you only knew how anxious I am about poor papa," said May, pleadingly, "I'm sure you'd tell me."

"Can't," said Tudge. "No business out of the office."

"But I'm so anxious," said May.

"So am I," said Tudge.

"And I do so long to know."

"Can't help it, my dear."

"Do tell me," said May, tearfully.

"Would if I could—if I can't, how can I?" said Tudge, sternly.

"Do tell—for dear papa's sake!"

"Now, don't tempt me, my dear,"

"Pray tell me, dear Uncle Tudge," said May, laying her cheek against his shiny bald forehead.

"I never believed about saints being tempted before now," said the old man, addressing the coal-scuttle; "but I do believe it, and give in. What do you want to know?"

"About dear papa's affairs, and why he is so dispirited."

"Well, I'll tell you," he said, tenderly, as May nestled up to him—"I'll tell you, darling, for you're his own flesh and blood, and I don't know that I'm doing wrong, after all."

"Are things so bad, then?" said May, alarmed at his serious aspect.

"Very, very, very bad, my darling," said the old man, sadly. "But don't you be alarmed, my pretty. You sha'n't hurt. I've saved five thousand pounds—nearly six—and it's all for you now, though I did mean it to help him. You sha'n't come to poverty, my darling, while Tudge has a pound to the good."

"But why, why would you not let papa have it if he wanted it?" said May.

"Why, my dear?—because he's losing himself. He's forsaking my advice, which never failed him, and going by what that Longdale says."

"But Mr. Longdale advises him well."

"To lose every penny he has, and to make his name stink like carrion!" cried Tudge, angrily. "Mr. Longdale ought to be hung—I—I—I—there, I believe I'd do it myself—I'd hang him."

"Oh, Mr. Tudge."

"Well, don't he deserve it? And as for his partner—that Merritt—"

"Oh!"

"Just like me. I might have known that I should do it. Serve me right, for talking of business matters before people, and out of office."

"It was nothing," said May, recovering herself; "but please, Mr. Tudge, don't say anything about Mr. Merritt.

You forget that I am engaged to be married to him."

"Oh, no, no, my precious, don't—don't say that. I did hope that was all off."

"Papa wishes it," said May, sadly.

"But you—you never fell in love with him," said Tudge, earnestly.

May shook her head sadly.

"Then you sha'n't marry him," said Tudge.

"Papa wishes it," said May; "and he tells me these reports are false about Mr. Merritt."

"Ah, my child," said the old man, "I did hope things would have turned out different to this. I did hope to have lived to see you and John Anderson man and wife, and to have kissed and blessed your little ones before I cast up my last accounts, and gave in my balance-sheet to the God who made me, and said, 'That's the best I could make of it, and I wish the returns were better.' But now all seems to be going wrong; and if you marry that Merritt—There, my pretty one, don't," he cried, excitedly. "I'll go down on my knees and beg you not to, if you like—don't marry him; be an old bachelor like me—no, I don't mean that, I mean an old, old—dear, dear, the account's muddled—I mean be an old maid—anything but Philip Merritt's wife."

"Dear Mr. Tudge," said May, sadly, "papa believes in Mr. Merritt. He has promised him, and we have been long engaged. I must marry him. And, besides, he assures me that there is no truth in those reports."

"And Mr. Longdale backs him up," said Tudge.

"Yes," said May, simply.

"God help you, my child!" said Tudge, fervently; and without any attempt at concealment, he drew out a great handkerchief and wiped his eyes. "I don't know, though," he added, "that I need much mind; for there was but one man in the world, and he's"—gulp—"dead."

There was a pause of a few moments' duration, and then May said, softly—

"Are papa's affairs in a very bad state?"

"Horrible!" said Tudge, ruefully.



"It's heart-breaking, my dear. Loss after loss. The poor *May* gone—your namesake; and he so infatuated that he's making advances to these people, Rutherbys. And he won't see that the money loss isn't all, but his name is being so mixed up with Rutherby's that he's gone—blown on with Lloyd's. Our house was the finest name in the City last year, and now—It's very weak of me, my child," said the old man, wiping his eyes; "but it's heart-breaking to see one's life's labour spoiled by villains."

"And—if it is true—has Mr. Longdale much influence with papa?"

"My dear, it's come to this: he's twined himself slowly round him like a snake, and fascinated him; and your poor father can't shake him off. There, I won't say no more."

May pressed him to stay and have some tea, but he refused; and though she asked him other questions, the old man would not break his word—he would say no more, and soon after he took his leave.

## TWENTY-SIXTH CABLE LENGTH.

HOW MAY HALLEY PROMISED TO SAY "YES."



DO you really wish it, papa?" said May, laying her hand on his arm.

"Yes—yes, my dear, I do indeed. Poor Philip has been begging very hard, and I promised him that I would do all I could."

"Do you think it possible that the *Victrix* or the other men have been saved?"

"Now, my dear child, why rake that up? You know she was lost, and poor Anderson with her. It's too bad of you," he added, weakly—"it is, indeed, knowing as you do how I am mixed up now with Rutherby's, to go raking up those wretched stories about the ships."

"I was not raking up old stories, papa," said May. "I only wanted to feel sure that—that the *Victrix* had sunk."

"Sunk, yes," said the old man, bitterly; "and so did the *Merry May*. It's horrible how unlucky I've been of late! But we are going to do wonders,

my dear—wonders. You shall have such a fortune, my child. Mr. Longdale tells me that we shall."

"Dear papa, do you think Mr. Longdale is to be trusted?"

"Now, my dear child, how can you be so wilful, so absurd? What can be more nonsensical than for you to meddle with shipping matters—with City affairs! It's childish in the extreme."

May was silent.

"But about this wedding. Merritt wants it to come off at Christmas. What do you say?"

May sat silent and dreamy.

"My dear, this wedding. What do you say?"

Again there was a pause, and then May laid her hands upon the old man's shoulders, and looked into his dim eyes, his livid face; and shivered as she saw the alteration made in a few months.

"Papa, dear," she said, "suppose I were to tell Mr. Merritt that I would not marry him?"

"What?"

"Suppose," repeated May, in a clear, cold, cutting voice, "I were to tell Mr. Merritt that I would not marry him—what then!"

"May—May!" gasped the old man, trembling with anxiety and passion, "you've been plotting with somebody. That scoundrel Tudge has been here, I

know he has. I heard so, and he has urged you to this disobedience. I—"

"No one has had any influence on me, papa, in this," said May, calmly. "I only ask you, before I give my consent to marry Mr. Merritt, what effect it would have upon you if I were to refuse."

"I should be bankrupt."

"Bankrupt?"

"Yes, ruined. I can't help it, my child, but I've gone wrong somehow; and this will set me right. In spite of all that has been said, I believe Merritt and Longdale to be honourable gentlemen, and I would not believe to the contrary unless some one came back from the dead to tell me they were not."

"Do you say, papa," said May, in a hard, cold voice, "that my wedding would save you from ruin?"

"Yes, my child. It must be you or the other *May*. But one is lost, and the other remains. May, my darling, would you see your old father dishonoured?"

"No," said May, kissing him gently on the forehead.

"And I may tell Philip that he may come?"

"Yes," said May, sadly; and she laid her hand upon a bow of crape at her bosom.

"And it shall be at Christmas?"

"Yes, father," said May, in a cold, stony way.

"Bless you, my child—bless you!" mumbled the old man, folding her in his arms, and kissing her tenderly.

"Stop," said May, suddenly. "No! I will give you my answer to-morrow."

"But, my child—"

"I will give you my answer to-morrow, papa. I ask only for twenty-four hours' grace."

The old man muttered some objection, and then left for the City; while May, as soon as he was gone, had a cab fetched, and went to Mrs. Gurnett's.

She stayed with her an hour, and then went on to Mrs. Anderson, to find the old lady sitting, very calm and stern, in a corner of her room; and here too she stayed an hour.

Dinner was just over at Canonbury, and May had risen to go to the drawing-room.

"May, my child," said Mr. Halley, "you will not trifle with me? I have told Mr. Merritt that he shall have your answer to-morrow."

"Mr. Merritt could have had it to-night, papa," she said, sadly, as she bent down and kissed his forehead.

"And—and—"

"And the answer would be this—I have no one to care for now."

"My child—May—what are you thinking of?"

"Of Captain John Anderson, father—of the brave, true man whom I have learned to love with my whole heart—of the dead, father. And now Mr. Philip Merritt shall have his wish. Father, you tell me that it is necessary for your peace of mind that I should marry this man?"

"Yes, my darling—yes, indeed it is. I may tell him, then? He will make you a good, loving husband."

May recalled the denunciation of Mrs. Anderson, and shuddered.

"Oh, papa, papa! is there no hope?"

"For me, none," said the old man, sadly. "And Merritt is to be here to-morrow. What shall I say?"

"Say?" said May, mournfully. "Say?—say yes."



## TWENTY-SEVENTH CABLE LENGTH.

HOW MR. TUDGE JUMPED ON HIS MASTER.



**A**ND DID you promise, my dear?"

said Tudge, who had come up to Canonbury with a private ledger in a black bag.

"Yes," said May, sadly.

"Then you shall have your promise back, or I'll know the reason why. But tell me this, little

one—do you care for him at all?"

May shook her head.

"That's enough," said Tudge. "I see my way clearly enough now."

"But about papa's affairs," said May—"how are they now?"

"Bad as bad," said Tudge, bitterly; "going to rack and ruin. Loss after loss. Two ships gone to the bad since the *May*, and the insurance nowhere; for since he's been mixed up with Rutherbys, the underwriters have fought shy of him; and he's so proud, that he won't stir an inch to meet people."

"Yes, poor papa is proud," said May.

"Why, my dear, if he'd only do as other men would, he'd set to and clear himself of these people, and start fair again with a clean bill of lading."

"But, papa would not do that."

"Not he; he says he's promised these people, and he never breaks his word. But stop a bit—let me have my innings, and something may turn up yet."

Tudge kissed May affectionately, looked at her as he held her at arm's length; and then, catching up his black bag, he hurried up to Mr. Halley's room, that gentleman having been too unwell

to rise and go to the office, and having sent for his confidential clerk.

Tudge was shocked to see the expression of anxiety and care in his old employer's face. As soon as Tudge entered the room, Mr. Halley pointed to a chair and table by the bedside.

"Come and sit down, Tudge. You have brought the private ledger?"

"Yes."

"And made up to the last entries?"

"Up to last night at closing."

"Well, and how do we stand?"

"Bad as we can."

Mr. Halley uttered a sigh that was almost a groan, as he lay back helplessly, and gazed at his clerk in dismay.

"Here, let me look," he said at last; and sitting up in bed once more, he eagerly scanned the open page of the little ledger held out to him by Tudge, tried to cast up the columns, to check the amounts, and failed, closed his eyes for a few minutes, and then gazed once more at the array of figures. "And all this change within a few months," he murmured, sadly.

"Yes, all in a few months," said Tudge, sternly.

"Don't jump on me, Tudge, when I'm down," said Mr. Halley, feebly. "Everything has gone wrong with me so far—don't you go wrong with me too."

"Wrong sort," said Tudge, stoutly. "I'm like poor Jack Anderson—I stick to my ship to the last."

"Don't talk about *last*, Tudge," said Mr. Halley, pettishly. "We shall be all right in a few weeks. Wait till the *Emperor* has done her voyage."

Tudge remained perfectly silent; but with one hand in the tail pocket of his coat, he gently rustled a piece of paper.

"Tudge—Tudge!" gasped the old man, rising on one arm, and looking aghast at his clerk. "What do you mean? Why did you rustle that newspaper in your pocket?"

Still Tudge remained silent.

"Don't tell me that the *Emperor* has gone, Tudge," he gasped, pitifully.

Tudge remained silent.

"Give—give me the paper," gasped the old man. "Oh, it's killing work!"

The old clerk handed him the ready-folded newspaper; and Mr. Halley, whose hands quivered, took the sheet and tried to read.

"Where—where is it?" he cried.

And Tudge pointed out the spot. Then the old man had to get his glasses from beneath the pillow, though he had done without them over the ledger.

But no glasses would enable him to see clearly in his present state of excitement; and after a minute he handed the paper back to Tudge.

"Read it—read it," he said, hurriedly.

And the old clerk read, in a trembling voice, one of the too familiar paragraphs of loss at sea.

"Supposed to have foundered in the late gales," said Mr. Halley, in quivering tones, as he repeated the last words that his clerk had read. "The poor *Emperor!* Ruin, ruin, ruin!"

"Cheer up. Don't be cast down," said Tudge, laying his hand tenderly on his master's.

"Oh, Tudge, I'm broken," groaned the old man, pitifully; "and they'll say things of me—cursed things! But, so help me God, Tudge, there wasn't a thing left undone in that ship. Everything that money could do was got for her to make her perfect, and she was nearly new from truck to keel."

"What for the devil are you going on like that for?" cried Tudge, indignantly. "Whoever said she wasn't a well-found ship?"

"Oh, nobody, Tudge—but they will."

"Yes, I s'pose they will," said Tudge, sternly. "They'll say, safe enough, now that you're so linked in with Rutherby's, that you're trying their games."

"Don't hit me, Tudge, pray," said Mr. Halley, pitifully—"don't hit me when I'm down."

"I must," said Tudge, "I can't help it. It's all for your good, too; for you would

do it. Didn't I advise you—beg of you—pray of you not?"

"Yes, yes, Tudge—you did," said Mr. Halley, humbly.

"And you would do it," cried Tudge. "Ah, I wish I had my ruler here."

It was merely to bang down on the bed, not to punish the old shipowner; and Tudge rolled up the newspaper, and gesticulated and struck the bed with that.

"Yes, Tudge," sighed the old man, with a last despairing glance for comfort at the figures in the ledger, but finding none—"yes, Tudge, I was very obstinate; and now I am more cursed than Job."

"No, you're not," said Tudge. "Job had his children killed, while you are trying to kill your one."

"Silence, Tudge!" cried Mr. Halley, angrily; and Tudge turned to the book.

"I will not, though I am down, have my domestic arrangements called into question. Let people talk: all the same Merritt is a fine young fellow, and Longdale a gentleman. And now about meeting those engagements for them. When are they due?"

"Eighteenth and twentieth," said Tudge, shortly.

"Let them be met," said Mr. Halley.

"But it will leave us without a hundred pounds to go on with."

"Never mind," said Mr. Halley, "let them be met. I promised, and I'll keep my word."

Tudge grumbled as he made an entry in a memorandum-book, and then sat back in his chair.

"Anything more?" he said.

"There's no hope, I suppose, about the poor *Emperor*, Tudge?"

Tudge shook his head sadly.

"Good heavens! how dreadful!" groaned the old man. "Tudge," he exclaimed, "I can't bear to see any one belonging to the crew. I couldn't bear it, in my present state."

"You used to face it out like a man, Mr. Halley," said Tudge. "Think what people will say if you don't."

"But four vessels in nine months, Tudge—it's fearful! It will make them think horrible things."

"You never used to have such fancies as that, Mr. Halley," said Tudge. "See what comes of mixing with Rutherby's."

"But I don't believe anything of the kind of them," cried Mr. Halley, sharply. "You're turning against me, Tudge, in my trouble. I didn't think it of you. But, there—go, and let me be ruined."

"There, I won't be savage with you," said Tudge. "You don't mean what you say."

"Yes, yes, I do," cried Mr. Halley, passionately as a child.

"No, you don't," said Tudge; "so I won't hit out at you. Just as if I should leave you when you're like this!"

"No, you won't, Tudge, will you?" cried the old man, pitifully.

"But I shall make stipulations," said Tudge, stoutly.

"Oh," groaned Mr. Halley.

"You shall give me full powers to pull you through."

"Yes, yes; only I will have all engagements met."

"Well, yes, that's right. Rutherby's bills shall be met—we must do that.

Halley's always meets its engagements," said Tudge, proudly.

Mr. Halley groaned.

"Then I'll be off," said Tudge, "and do the best I can; but, old friend, you'll come out of this a very poor man."

"Tudge," said Mr. Halley, clinging to his old clerk's hand, with the tears running down his cheeks, "I'm ill and weak, and this affair is killing me. Pay everybody, and if I have a pittance I shall be satisfied. May is provided for. Merritt will take care of her, and I believe in him. But I've done wrong, Tudge, in listening to Longdale; and the slanders that attach to him have come on me too. I didn't see that before."

"Always told you," said Tudge.

"You're hitting me again, now I'm down," said Mr. Halley, pitifully.

"Well, I won't say any more," said Tudge.

"Don't," replied Mr. Halley, shaking hands with him earnestly; "and come up often."

Tudge nodded shortly, gathered up his papers, closed his bag with a snap, and went off without a word.

## TWENTY-EIGHTH CABLE LENGTH.

HOW MR. TUDGE SOLILOQUIZED, AND HAD TWO VISITORS.



N hour after, Mr. Tudge was in his private room flourishing his ruler as he thought over matters.

"Merritt will take care of May, will he?—of my darling!" he said to himself. "He won't—no, he won't! That will work by

itself, I'll swear, without a word from me. But if it don't, I think I can manage it. Let me see: trumps led. Master Phil Merritt, Jack; my darling, queen—my partner, you know. Mr. Halley—Merritt's partner—plays the king. Last player—name of Tudge, cunning old fox in his way—holds the ace. Where are we now?"

Bang went the ruler on the desk.

"Now about money matters. Awful, four fine vessels going like that. It would cripple any house if the loss fell on them as it does on us; but things will cut up better than he expects, even when those scoundrels have got their bills met. Of course they'll pay up again! Don't we wish we may get it!"

Bang went the ruler again.

"No; I won't give him a true state of the affairs—nor anybody else, not yet. Not honest? Yes, it is. He's not fit to attend to his affairs, and he's deputed them to me, and I'm working for him and my darling. Shady? Perhaps it is; but if you've got shady customers to deal with, why you must fight 'em with their own weapons.

"Now, let me see; what comes next? Well, it strikes me that Rutherby's comes next; and if they aint here soon, I'll hang myself in my braces."

Mr. Tudge's face became all over lines now, as he plunged into a tangle of accounts, and looked as if it had been ruled in every possible direction; but he had not been at work ten minutes before a clerk announced Mr. Longdale.

"Ah, Mr. Tudge," he said, smiling, as he took a chair—"hard at work as usual. I wish we had you, Mr. Tudge, or some one like you."

"Ah!" said Tudge, nodding, "I wish you had."

"Thought I'd drop in as I came by, to ask about Mr. Halley. We heard a rumour that he was poorly. Merritt said he'd send up and ask at Canonbury; but as I was passing I thought I'd call."

"Well, yes, he is out of sorts a bit," said Tudge; "nothing much, though."

"Weather?"

"Well, yes," said Tudge, eating the end of his quill—"I suppose weather has something to do with it."

"Well, I won't detain you, Mr. Tudge," said Mr. Longdale, smiling. "Glad to hear it's nothing serious." And he rose to go, shaking hands most affectionately with the old clerk. "Oh, by the way," he said, "of course I shouldn't mention this to you if you were not entirely in Mr. Halley's confidence; but there are two little matters of bills that fall due directly. We drew on Mr. Halley. The first batch come to twenty thou', the second to ten thou'. I suppose they will have been provided for?"

"Halley's always meets its payments, Mr. Longdale, sir," said Tudge, stiffly.

"Oh, of course, of course," said Longdale. "And that rumour—I didn't like

to mention it before—about the *Emporor*; false, of course?"

"True, Mr. Longdale, sir, as far as I can hear, every word of it."

"Bless my soul! How sad!" exclaimed Longdale. "How things do vary, to be sure. Four vessels in nine months! Why, Mr. Tudge, you'll have those cowardly slanderers attacking your house next—same as they have ours—about ill-found ships, and that sort of thing."

"Yes," said Tudge, shortly. "No doubt."

"Pray tell Mr. Halley how sorry I am, if you see him before I do; but I shall call directly. By the way, Tudge, come and dine with me some evening—friendly, you know—just ourselves. I've a glass of a curious old wine I should like you to taste. And, by the way, don't say I was little enough to say anything about those bills. Good-bye, Tudge, good-bye. We shall be having you with us one of these days."

Mr. Longdale had no sooner been shown out than the clerks started, for Mr. Tudge's ruler came down upon his table with the fiercest bang ever heard by his subordinates.

"My word, the old chap's in a wax!" said one.

"Yes," said another, "and well he may be."

Meanwhile, Mr. Longdale walked hurriedly into Cornhill, and made his way into one of the chop-houses, where Merritt was waiting his arrival.

"Well?" said Merritt.

"Game's up there, I think," said Longdale. "Baited for the old fellow with a half-promise that we should be glad to have his services, and he rose at the fly."

"But about those bills?"

"They'll be met. The old fellow will pay every one to the last shilling; and when that is done, I should think—"

He stopped short, and sat tapping the table, without a word.

"Well, why the deuce don't you go on? What are you thinking about?"

"Oh, I beg your pardon!" said Long-

dale, with a fictitious start of surprise. "I was thinking."

"Well, I know you were; but what about?"

"Miss May Halley."

"I'm much obliged, but perhaps you'll let me do all the thinking about her!"

"I was wondering whether, under her altered circumstances, her swain will prove constant; and if he does not, whether she would smile on an adorer who does not want her money."

Philip Merritt leaped up angrily, scowled at his partner for a moment, and then hurried into the street, and made his way to where he was expected—namely, to Mr. Tudge's private room; for he was this day ignoring his ordinary desk.

"Mr. Merritt, sir," said the clerk.

"Show him in," said Tudge; and the next minute the old and the young man were face to face.

"How do, Tudge?" said Merritt, without offering to shake hands or remove his hat, as he sat down upon some loose papers at one corner of the table, where he began to swing about one leg.

"S'pose I move those papers?" said Tudge, gruffly.

"Oh, not in my way in the least," said Merritt; "I want—"

"Let me move those papers," said Tudge, and he dragged them from beneath the sitter.

"Bother the papers!" exclaimed Merritt. "Look here, Tudge. About this *Emperor*?"

Tudge made a poke with the ruler indicative of the vessel having gone into the waste-paper basket.

"That makes four, then, in nine months. I say, Tudge, you're going it! How much shall you sack by all these transactions?"

"How much shall we sack?" said Tudge, impassively, though there was a hitching in one leg as if he wanted to kick, and had hard work to keep down the inclination. "How much shall we sack? Well, Mr. Merritt, sir, I tell you, you know, because you're like Mr. Halley's son—though, of course, it's in

complete confidence—we shall pay twenty shillings in the pound, sir."

"Yes, of course," said Merritt, uneasily; "but after that?"

"Workus!"

"What!" said Merritt.

"Workus, sir, workus! General clear up—eligible mansion, superior household furniture, plate, and wine—going, going, gone!"

Bang went the ruler.

"Phew!" whistled Philip Merritt. "Why, I thought—"

"Thought the governor was rich? Of course you did, and so he was; but you come to have four pulls of eighty or ninety thousand on you in nine months, and see where you would be."

Mr. Merritt whistled, and looked very blank; while Tudge sat stern as a judge, but with his eyes twinkling merrily.

"It's very odd, sir; but do you know I was thinking of you just before you came in," said Tudge, after a pause, during which Merritt sat scowling at the pattern of the carpet. "I was just thinking that, one way and another, things in this world are regularly balanced."

Here Mr. Tudge held out the office penknife in one hand and balanced his ruler upon its keen edge, adjusting it till it was exact.

"Yes, sir, balanced," said Tudge. "Here's Mr. Halley been laying up riches all his life for the sake of Miss May."

Merritt pricked up his ears and became attentive; though Tudge did not appear to notice it.

"Well, sir, everything's swept away by misfortune, except the thirty thousand as goes to meet your bills, and which of course comes back again. Well, all that loss is the evil on one side of the balance; while on the other, just at the time of misfortune, here's poor Mr. Halley has the pleasure of thinking that his dear child's provided for, with a rich, dashing young spark for a husband, who will take her and provide for her, and make her happy. As for what I said about workus, that was metaphorical, you know, for master will have that thirty thousand; while Miss May—"

"Yes," said Merritt, anxiously, "Miss May's fortune?"

"Miss May's fortune, Mr. Merritt, sir, was the *Merry May* and the *Emperor*, and they've gone—"

Here the ruler was taken from the edge of the penknife and pointed down once more at the waste-paper basket.

"But do you mean to tell me, Tudge, that all—everything will be swept away?" said Merritt, in a confidential whisper.

"Every penny, sir," said Tudge, in the same tone; "but never you mind that, sir—you're well off. You marry Miss May at once. She's a treasure, sir, that girl is, without a penny. You take her, and provide for the old man, too. Lord bless you, think what a fine thing it will be in after-life to feel that you did it! See how independent you will be! Ah, Mr. Merritt, sir, you'll be a happy man."

Philip Merritt sat in silence for another five minutes, tapping one of his patent leather boots with his cane—brows knit, hat pushed back over his ears. Then he drew out his cigar case, lit a vesuvian, puffed slowly at his cigar, and rose to go.

"Bye-bye, Tudge," he said, nodding to him condescendingly; and then he lounged lazily through the outer offices, smoking the while.

"Told you so," said one of the clerks to the other. "The game's up. Fancy that fellow lighting a cigar in old Tudge's private room, and then smoking all through our offices! Why, a month ago it would have been high treason."

"What's he up to now?" said his fellow-clerk. "Listen! Tudge is going mad!"

They did listen, and heard five or six heavy blows, given evidently with the ruler. For no sooner had Merritt left Quarterdeck-court than Mr. Tudge hopped from his seat, and began lunging and cutting about furiously with his ruler, every now and then striking some piece of furniture as if it were an inimical head.

"You cowardly—(lunge)—sneaking—(bang)—hypocritical—(bang)—infamous—(bang)—scoundrel—(lunge)—cold-blooded—(bang)—villain—(bang)—mean—(lunge)—dirty—(bang)—wretched—heartless—lump of dirt—(bang)."

Mr. Tudge threw himself perspiring into a chair, and panted and blew out his cheeks, as he tucked his ruler under his arm, and mopped his face with his bandanna.

"Marry my darling to you—you piece of thin tissue paper—you plaster image—you—you beast!" he puffed. And then, evidently relieved, he sat back and chuckled.

"Ha, ha!—ha, ha!—to see him! Worships her, don't he? Worship the golden calf, that's what he'd have done if he'd been born a Jew; and he'd have boned it and melted it down first chance. No, my pretty, you're safe enough there. The money's gone, but it would take a deal more than we've lost to balance your happiness."

Ruler on the penknife edge again, where it refused to keep itself in equipoise.

"You're safe enough, my pretty. He'll back out of it all now, as sure as my name's Tudge; and I'm as hungry as a hunter."

Bang went the ruler on the table, and "ting" the gong, when the clerk who entered found Mr. Tudge, far from being in low spirits, in high glee.

"Here, Smith—quick. I sha'n't go out to-day. Run round the corner, and tell 'em to send me a juicy steak, just pink inside, and half a pint of the old brown sherry."

"Yes, sir."

"No; stop a minute, my lad. Not half a pint to-day—I'll have a pint."

And he did, and smacked his old lips over it half a dozen times as he said, with a smile on those lips, but a dewy look of love in his eye—

"May, my darling, your health!"

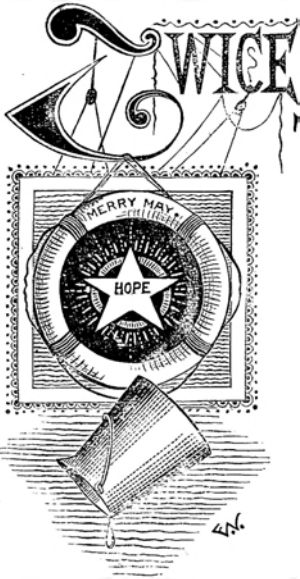
Then he drank, put down the glass, drew a long breath, and added—

"And happiness!"



## TWENTY-NINTH CABLE LENGTH.

HOW THE SHIPWRECKED MEN MADE A FIND.



MORE did hope seem to come to the despairing men clinging to that raft, and twice over did the sails that bore in sight fade slowly away from their aching eyes. Utter listlessness had come upon them; and, reduced now to a beg-

garly pittance of water, they lay upon the raft with parched lips, waiting once more for death.

It had been a scorching day, without a breath of air stirring; and as evening came on the two men lay prone, without attempting to stir, till, as if mechanically, Anderson moved slowly to the cask, and soaked up the few remaining drops of water with a piece of canvas. This he squeezed into the pannikin, and held it to Basalt, who seized it greedily—staying, though, at half, and handing the pannikin back to Anderson, covering his eyes the while that he might not see him drink, lest he should be tempted to snatch the vessel back and drain it to the last drop. The very sound of it gurgling down another's throat was maddening, and at last the two men gazed in each other's blood-shot eyes, as if to ask, "What next?"

"It was the last," said Anderson, solemnly.

"Then we should have saved it," was the hoarse reply.

"To be licked up by the sun?" said Anderson. "There would not have been a drop left by another day."

Then he took the piece of wet canvas with which he had soaked up the drops in the cask, and divided it in two with his knife, handing half to Basalt and retaining the other.

These two wet fragments they sat and chewed till they seemed to turn hot and dry in their parched mouths.

Suddenly Basalt raised his eyes, and gave the signal he had given thrice before—

"Ship ahoy!"

The evening was nearing fast, and in a very short time darkness would fall; but there, plainly to be seen, about three miles to windward, was a full-rigged ship, evidently sailing directly for them.

The two men staggered to their feet, and as long as the light lasted frantically made signals by waving jackets and handkerchiefs. This was not for long, though. Very soon the ship seemed to fade away, for the darkness set in like a black pall, covering sea and sky; but no blacker than was the cloud of despair that again came upon the two sufferers.

"She'll pass us in the night," groaned Anderson.

"And we without a light for a signal—not even a barrel to make a flare," said Basalt.

And then, with starting eyeballs, they stood there watching in the direction where they had last seen the ship, and discussing in husky tones the probabilities of the look-out on board the vessel having seen them.

"If so, they'll lie-to, or make a signal," said Anderson, sadly; for he hoped nothing now—expected nothing but death. And soon they found that they had not been seen; for no signal-lamp was hung out by the vessel. In fact, they felt that she never came near enough for them to see her sailing lights

during the night; and at last, worn out with watching, they sank upon the raft, nerveless now, and stunned into the acceptance of their fate.

How that night passed neither could have afterwards told, save that it was like one long nightmare of hideous dreams. Morning came, though, at last; and, in a dull, despairing way, Anderson rose to see if the ship were still visible.

His cry of joy roused Basalt, who was on his knees by his side directly after, gazing at the ship, still in sight. She had passed them, indeed, during the night; but only to drift about a mile to leeward, where she lay, with her sails hanging motionless from the yards.

Not a soul was to be seen on deck to whom they could signal. There was no wind, fortunately, for it would have wafted the ship away. So, weak as they were, they put out two oars, and rowed with all their might for the vessel.

Enfeebled by privation, though, they could hardly move the cumbersome raft, and it was fully two hours

before they were close alongside of the great ship, and shouting for help—to get, however, no response; and they soon awakened to the fact that the vessel was deserted.

“Ship ahoy!” shouted Basalt; again and again; but it brought no answer, even when they forced the raft against the vessel, and looked aloft, along her side, and then at each other—for the same thought had struck them both.

New life seemed to have come to John Anderson; for he forced the raft, now aft, right under her stern.

But they came not there to look at rudder or cabin window, but to set aside a doubt that their thoughts might not be true.

They were true, though, inexplicable as it seemed to them; and the next minute they had both climbed to the deck, and were looking round for the boats—all missing but one. For the name they had read from the raft, painted upon the vessel's stern, was one known to them both so well, and that name was the *Merry May*.

## THIRTIETH CABLE LENGTH.

HOW JEREMIAH BASALT FOUND HIS FATE.



**I** DON'T care. You may say what you like, my lad; but I sha'n't believe you none the more for it. I says this, and what I says I sticks to, as the fellow said: it aint true. It's all a sorter solid dream, come of lying out there in the sun so

long, till your brain's got turned. You can see it, of course, just the same as I do."

"See it?" cried Anderson, excitedly. "Yes."

"Toe be sure you can. Same raft, same food, same water, same sufferings, same fright brings same dreams; and here we are both a-dreaming as we're aboard our old ship, the *May*."

"And so we are," said Anderson, smiling.

"We aint, I tell you," cried the old man, testily; "it's all a dream, and we shall wake again directly, to find it's all a fog. Perhaps we sha'n't wake at all any more—'cause why? Maybe, though we don't know it, we're dead; and this here's our fate, being seafaring men, to find a phantom ship like our old one that we was so fond on; and our to be

—to be, you know—is to go on for ever and ever, amen, so be it, sailing over the wide seas of eternity, like Flying Dutchmen. That's it, safe! I aint a bit surprised; and all I've got to say, my lad, is—take your fate like a true British sailor, and sail away. Might have been a deal worse, you know."

"Come and have a look below, Jerry," said Anderson, quietly; "perhaps we may find some tea."

"Tea!" said the old fellow, "what do we want with tea now, in this here t'other world? You see it's all just as I've wondered about often when I was alive. It didn't seem nat'ral to me, that if ever, when I died, I should get up aloft, I should set to singing, you know, or make anything of an angel, not having the stuff in me for that sort o' thing. You see, this looks a deal more like what I should expect. It's all right, my lad; here we are passed into the t'other life quietly, and going to navigate the great ocean. There's one thing as puzzles me."

"What's that, Jerry?" said Anderson.

"Why, it's this here, my lad. Seeing as we're dead and condemned—no, I won't say that, but set—set to sail this here ship as aforesaid, I want to know what good it's going to do? Frightening people, and so on?"

"What good?" inquired Anderson, smiling.

"Don't you be irrev'rent, my lad," said Basalt, solemnly, helping himself to a bit more pig-tail. "I aint a religious man—I mean I *warn't* a religious man when I was alive;—but this here aint nothing to laugh at. I want to know what good it's going to be. You see it can't be a punishment, or else we should have been left to go about on that raft, instead of being set on this here fine ship; and by the same token, it can't be a pleasure—"

"Why?" said Anderson, humouring his conceit, for the old man had stopped.

"Why, my lad? 'Cause so. If we go on sailing this ship short-handed for ever and ever, amen, so be it, without fetching port, it stands to reason that we must get a bit tired of it some day."

"Yes, I think we should," said Anderson, gazing thoughtfully round.

"I have it," said the old man, brightening up. "Didn't you never hear about the ancients being rowed across a river by an old chap in a boat when they died?"

"What, Charon and the Styx?"

"Styx? that warn't the name of the craft; but, anyhow, let that be. Their world was little, and they were landlubbers; so it was a boat and a river for them. We're sailors, and accustomed to big things; so it's a ship with us, and the ocean."

"Well," said Anderson, "dead or alive, let's overhaul the craft."

"Overhaul it is," said Basalt; "and dead it is. Don't be a-clinging so to the world, my lad, now you've gone out of it. What's the good of holding out? There, if you will keep doubting as we're dead, hit me a buster here."

As he held forward his chest, Anderson struck him a sharp, back-handed blow which made him stagger.

"Now, then, are you dead?" he said, laughing at the old man's perplexed face.

"Dead as dead lights," was the reply.

"But, you felt that?"

"Oh, yes," growled the old fellow; "I felt it; but, after all, that don't prove nothing. Sensations and all them sort o' things is just the same here as they was there, and why not? Anyhow, we'll overhaul the craft."

Going first round the deck, they found that the ship had evidently been in a gale; for she was a bit knocked about, though there was no material damage.

"And she's as tight as tight, I'll swear," said Basalt. "See how high she floats."

The boats, as they had seen before, were all gone but one; and that, on examination, proved to have been stove in. Then, after a glance aloft, they walked slowly to the captain's cabin so familiar to Anderson.

Here there were manifestations of haste—papers, bottles, and tins tossed about; but no sign of life. The cot

was empty, and it was the same in all the other cabins—traces of a hasty desertion, nothing more.

"Don't look much like death," said Anderson, drily.

"Don't look much like life," growled Basalt, "does it? Why, there aint no much as a tom-cat aboard."

They walked forward, and descended to the quarters of the crew, and found matters there precisely the same. The men had evidently snatched up a few things, and hurried away to the boats, urged by some panic.

"It's a mystery," said Anderson, when they stood once more on the deck.

"Yes, my lad—death is a solemn mystery," said Basalt.

"A deep mystery," said Anderson again, thoughtfully. "Look here, Jerry; what's your opinion?"

"What about?" said the old fellow. "Death?"

"No, life. What made them desert the ship?"

"It warn't never deserted."

"Jerry, your brain's turned. Come, old fellow, it's plain enough—the ship was forsaken, you can see that."

The old man shook his head.

"Look here, my lad," he said, laying his hand affectionately on Anderson's shoulder, "why can't you take it like a man? This here looks and feels like a derelick, and is to us like the old *May*; but, bless you, it aint no ship at all, no more than we're living corpusses. If a real craft was to come along, she'd go right through us, and never do us no harm."

"Very well, old fellow," said Anderson, smiling; "then let's go below, and seem to eat, and have what I've longed for—a good wash in soft water."

When they came once more on deck, refreshed and revived to a wonderful extent, Anderson was smoking a cigar, and Basalt hewing a chump off a fresh cake of tobacco.

"I should like to fathom it if I could," Anderson said, looking round in search of something to indicate the cause for the ship's desertion. "I can't

make it out at all, why so good a ship, in such capital trim, was forsaken."

"She wasn't forsaken," growled Jerry; but he did not speak in quite such tones of conviction—perhaps the glass of grog below had placed body as well as spirit in him.

"Well, what we have to do is to make the nearest port if we can, and get men and take her home. Jerry, old fellow, if ever two poor wretches had cause to thank God, we are those men."

Jerry nodded shortly, and seemed obstinate enough to be alive.

"There's a little wind coming," said Anderson, after another look round. "We're a small crew, Jerry, but we must make the best of it," he continued, smiling. "Let's try and make the Cape; what do you say?"

The old man nodded shortly, and felt his legs slowly all down; after which he began to peel a bit of ragged skin, the remains of a sun-blister, from his nose, but in doing so he continued the decortivating process with the sound skin, and made his nose smart and bleed to such an extent that he stamped his foot upon the deck, and rapped out a fine, full-bodied, salt-water oath.

Anderson burst out laughing.

"I don't care," growled the old fellow, who divined the cause of the other's mirth. "I said before, and I stick to it, we're both dead, and this here's a phantom ship. Because I feel a bit o' pain when I bark my nose, does that prove otherwise? Not it. Feeling is the same in the world or out of it."

"Never mind," said Anderson. "Do you think we can set the fore-topsail?"

"To be sure we can; but lash the wheel first."

They went together to the wheel—Anderson to the spokes, and Basalt ready with a piece of rope.

At the first touch the spokes flew round, and the mystery of the ship's desertion was explained—the rudder had been swept away by the waves, leaving the vessel helpless for the time.

"Punishment it is!" cried Basalt, triumphantly.

"What?" exclaimed Anderson, startled at his companion's earnestness.

"Punishment!" roared the old fellow, slapping his thigh. "What we've got to do is this—go on sailing a ship without a helm for ever and ever, amen, so be it."

"Perhaps," said Anderson. "But first of all, we'll set to and contrive a rudder to help us into port."

"Should we?" said Basalt, rather discomfited.

"Yes," said Anderson, smartly; for rest, refreshment, and the knowledge that he had a good ship beneath his feet had wrought wonders in an incredibly short time.

"What, and go in for salvage?" said Basalt, manifesting a disposition to come back to life.

"Yes," said Anderson, brightening up as he thought what form he should like his salvage to take.

"I wonder how Betsy is," said Basalt to himself.

"Jerry, my boy, bear a hand," said Anderson, with flashing eyes; "we are

only two *live* men; but we have the spirit of fifty such curs as deserted the dear old *May*. Let's ask God's help on our undertaking, and sail the dear old vessel safely home with her cargo, which I'll vow is a valuable one. Let's do it, my lad, and show these rascally shipowners that British sailors are made of too good stuff to be drowned like rats in their cursed rotten hulks. Bear a hand there with the axe, and cast loose those spare spars—if you've life enough left in you," he added, looking him through and through.

The old fellow's face\* assumed a comical expression of hesitation; and then, hauling at his waistband, and giving a kick out behind, he slapped his thigh, sent a jet of tobacco juice over the side, and shouted—

"Ship ahoy, there! Jolly Sailors, ahoy! Bear a hand there, you lubbers, and we'll make port before you know where you are. The *Flying Dutchman's* come back from his cruise, and Jeremiah Basalt's alive and kicking."

## THIRTY-FIRST CABLE LENGTH.

HOW JOHN ANDERSON SAILED THE "MERRY MAY."



It was not the easiest task in the world to undertake this navigating of a rudderless vessel, deserted by her full crew, to a haven of safety; and more than once John Anderson felt disposed to give up in despair. But the spirit in him forbade that,

and, well seconded by Basalt, he worked on.

"Lord love you! There's some pleasure in working now," said the old man, who had thoroughly set aside his ideas of the future time. "Here we have stout timbers, and the rigging of a well-found ship. Cape!—sail to the Cape? Why, I'd undertake to navigate her right round the world."

"Without a rudder?" said Anderson, quietly.

The old man's answer was to hail a shower of blows down upon the spar with the hatchet he held, making the chips fly in all directions.

For this was the first task to achieve, if they hoped to reach port—the scheming of something in the shape of steering apparatus before the wind rose,

otherwise they would be at its mercy, rolling in the trough of the sea.

It was a strange machine they contrived, by lashing short pieces of spar together, and then bolting stays on to the sides to keep them in their places; and, as Basalt said, the waves would have to handle it very gently if it was to help them to port. And when it was made, there was still another difficulty—that of getting it over the side. But they accomplished this, and floated it astern, while the sea was as calm as a mill-pond.

Yet again another difficulty—to get it shipped after a fashion, and rigged with ropes that would enable them to steer.

"It took a deal of trying," Basalt said; but they meant to do it, and do it they did; so that, clumsy as the construction was, it roughly answered the purpose.

"Only think of the salvage," said Basalt, "let alone the saving of one's precious life! I've been down below, and had a look—tea, my lad, and cochineal, and silk. Only get her home, and we're made men for good."

"It would be ruin to Mr. Halley to lose such a ship," said Anderson.

"I don't know about that," was the next remark. "What with insuring and underwriting, it strikes me as owners don't want their cargoes run."

"Don't speak in that way of Mr. Halley," said Anderson, sternly. "He, at least, is an honourable man."

"So you said of Rutherby and Co.," said Basalt, gruffly. "It strikes me that they're all tarred with the same brush."

Anderson did not answer, but went aloft to hoist a staysail, with the effect of making the fine ship yield softly to the breeze, and begin to forge slowly through the water.

For awhile all went well with them. They had provisions in plenty, and fine weather; so calm, indeed, that they were able to rest in turn, and thoroughly recoup their exhausted strength.

Anderson's wound was pretty well healed, and every day saw them a little nearer to port.

But neither Anderson nor Basalt felt unmixed satisfaction; for their thoughts kept recurring to the missing crew and their probable fate.

"Can't say much for their chance," said Basalt, shaking his head. "I won't say serve them right; but I do say as they ought to have stuck to their ship."

"When she was sinking?" said Anderson, quietly.

"Well, no, I won't say that," said the old man. "But we aint no time for talking. Here's a breeze springing up, and no hands to shorten sail. I thought things was too bright to last."

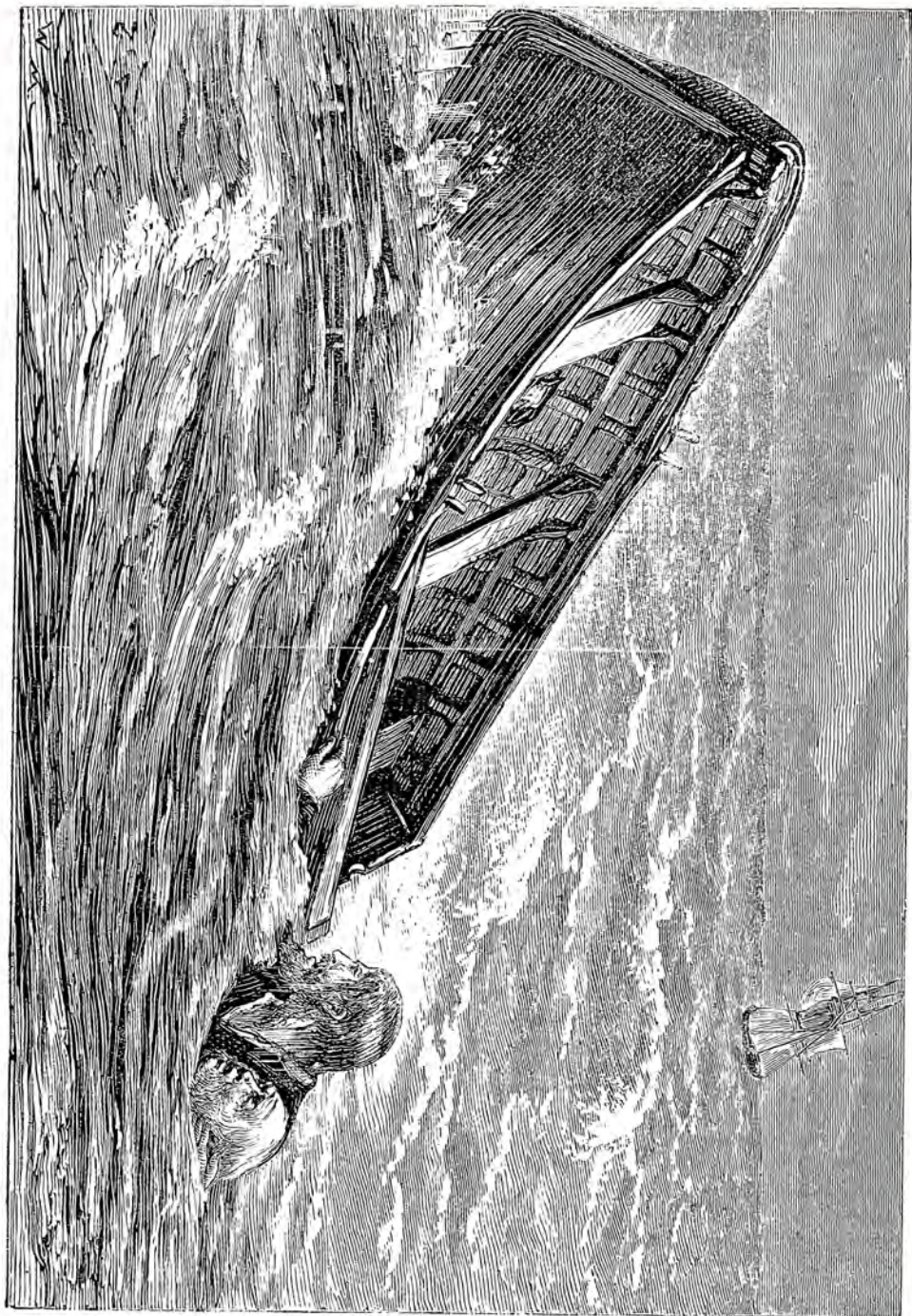
Basalt was right; a stiff breeze was coming up, and a glance in the wind's eye appeared to threaten something worse. Lulled to something like a sense of security by the soft gales that had wafted them along, they had, by degrees, shaken out sail after sail, till they now had more upon the ship than it seemed likely they could get in before the wind was too much for them.

There was no time for consideration. John Anderson's orders were short and sharp. The wheel was lashed, the sheets of the topsails cast loose, and the two men left to flap and fly, while the two men set to work to try and get in the foresail.

The wind, though, increased rapidly; and before many minutes had elapsed, Basalt aloft on one side of the yard looked along at Anderson on the other.

"Yes," said Anderson's eyes, in answer to the interrogation; and Basalt hurried along the stirrup to his side, when, heaving with all their might, the two men strove to gather in the stiff, flapping folds of the great sail. Now they mastered it a little, and made some way; but the next minute, puff! the canvas bellied out like a balloon, and was dragged from their hands.

"Try again," said Basalt; and they tried again and again, but always with the same result. Two men could not perform the work of seven or eight; and as they grew weaker with their exertions, so did the sail become more masterful; flapping, snapping, and beating



"HE GOT ONE ARM OVER."—Page 89.

about in the wind, till it threatened to tear them from the yard.

"Never say die!" shouted Basalt, cheerily; and then, "heave, my lad. Now then, with a will."

The great sail flew up, curled over, and enveloped Basalt; and, as breathlessly, Anderson clung to the yard for his life, his companion was snatched from his side; then, as the vessel heeled over, thrown into the sea to leeward, with the ship dashing fast through the water.

For a few horrified moments, Anderson clung there, aghast and desponding; but the sight of Basalt's face turned appealingly up, as it rapidly glided astern, roused him to make an effort.

In an instant more he had seized one of the sheets, swung himself clear, and slid to the deck. In another instant, he was running to the poop, opening his clasp-knife as he did so, and with two cuts he had set free the life-buoy, which he held aloft in both hands for a moment or two, that Basalt might see what he was about, and then he hurled it astern with all his might.

He groaned as he did so; for the vessel was flying ahead with the sail she still had on, and it seemed to him that he was to be robbed of the companionship of his faithful old friend.

It was no time, though, for groaning; and running to the wheel, he cast loose the lashings, put the helm hard up, and then looked anxiously for the result.

Bad as were his appliances, though,

the ship slowly answered to the call made upon her, rounding to and making head in the opposite direction to that in which she had been going.

It was a forlorn hope; and on this tack, for want of proper sail trimming, the ship sailed horribly, labouring against the seas that seemed to resent her approach.

Lashing the helm once more, Anderson now ran to the side to see if he could make out Basalt; and for an instant he sighted him, as he rose far away upon a wave, but only to disappear the next moment.

Anderson ran back to the wheel, unlashd it, and tried to send the ship's head in the direction of the drowning man.

For a minute he was successful, and the ship seemed to make a leap in the required course—the waves foaming by her as she leaped to meet them. It was but a minute, though, and then Anderson knew that he had been overtaking his work; for suddenly, just as he felt most hopeful, and knew that he was nearing Basalt, the wheel suddenly gave way, sending him heavily upon the deck; the ship heeled over gradually, settled into the trough of the sea, and, as Anderson slowly gathered himself up, half stunned by his fall, a great hill of water seemed to rise slowly, to make a bound, and deluge the deck fore and aft.

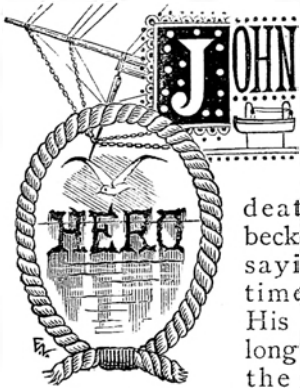
The temporary rudder had given way.





## THIRTY-SECOND CABLE LENGTH.

HOW JOHN ANDERSON SWAM FOR TWO LIVES.



ANDERSON knew that a sailor must never despair; even though death stood by beckoning him, and saying that his time had come. His life was one long struggle with the grim shade; and had he been

of a cowardly, weak nature, he might, again and again, have given way to despair. But certainly, now, matters seemed at their blackest. Basalt was drowning; the ship was rudderless, and lay helpless and rolling, with the waves breaking over her.

What could he do?

The answer came at once: he must risk all, and lower down the boat, if he could, trusting to Providence for the chance of regaining the ship.

Fortunately they had patched up the hole stove in her, and she now hung at the davits ready for use.

Jumping into her, and holding the falls in his hands, he lowered away till she kissed the wave that rose to meet her. Another instant, and as she lifted he had cast off one fall, and almost by a miracle the other unhooked itself.

To seize an oar was the work of another moment; and, pushing off, he had it directly over the stern, and was sculling away in the direction in which he hoped Basalt to be.

He knew that the old man was a good swimmer, and there was just a chance that he might have reached the life-buoy. It was a thread-like chance to cling to, though; and as he rose upon each wave, and looked around, his heart sank lower minute by minute;

for he was receding fast from the ship; the sea was getting higher, and not a glimpse of the swimmer could be seen.

He altered his course, sculling with all his might—his standing position giving him a chance of seeing in all directions, as the frail boat rose to the crests of the waves.

Again he changed his course, sculling almost at random; for the minutes sped on, and not a sign of the drowning man could be seen. Then, suddenly, Anderson uttered a cry of joy, loosed his hold of the oar, darted forward, and, as the boat slid down the side of a hill of green water, he leaned over and caught the life-buoy.

He sank back, mute and despairing; for he had drawn the light cork ring into the boat, and it had no despairing, dying clutch upon it.

But what was that?—faint almost as a whisper.

A weak, gurgling, appealing cry, borne on the wind to reach his ears—

"My God!"

The dying, appealing cry of a drowning wretch to his Maker; and, as it passed away, Anderson was again at the stern of the boat, sculling away with all his might in the direction from which the sound had seemed to come.

Water—water!—great, green waves, with silvery, foaming crests; but no Basalt, no agonized face, no outstretched hands. Good heavens! had he been so near to him, and yet not been able to save?

In his agony, John Anderson so plied his oar that the stout ash blade bent again, while with starting eyes he gazed here, there; and then, uttering a cry of joy, gave a leap that sent the boat rocking back through the water as he parted the waves, disappeared for a few moments, and then reappeared, swimming boldly and bravely towards that which had caught his eye for an instant

amid the foam of a breaking wave—one crook-fingered hand making its last despairing catch at life.

It was a bold dash, and one that needed nerve and strength; for as he swam on, with the salt spray at his lips, it was with the waves seeking to buffet him back, and bear him helplessly away to his death. No help at hand—nothing to depend on but his own stout arms, and his trust in God.

And what had he set himself to do, there in mid-ocean, with miles of water below him? To save the drowning man, to bear him to the boat, to get him on board, and then once more to reach the ship!

For an instant, as the thought of all this flashed through John Anderson's brain, a cold feeling of despair, like the hand of Death clutching him, seemed to pass through his veins, unnerving him, and making him for the instant helpless. His limbs felt numbed, and a wave broke in his face so that the briny water gurgled, strangling in his nostrils. But with a cry that was almost a shriek, he uttered the words—

“May, dear May!”

And on the instant his strength came back as the strength of a lion. He rose in the water, shaking the salt spray from his eyes and hair, and struck out again bravely; rose again on the summit of a wave, and then bending over, he turned, and, as he descended, plunged down head first beneath the coming wave, driving through it, to make the next moment a superhuman effort, and clutch, when it was almost too late, the rough hair of Jeremiah Basalt.

There was no danger, no risk of being grappled by the drowning man; for as Anderson clutched the hair, he drew towards him a stiff, apparently inanimate body, which yielded to his motions as he turned and struck out for the boat.

Twice came the cold chill upon Anderson again as he swam on, like two whispers from the unseen world. First, it was as if to tell him that he had come too late; and next, that he would never

regain the boat. It was cruel work then, for the thoughts seemed to paralyze him; but, fighting against them, he swam on, sighting the boat as he rose on the waves, losing it as he descended into the hollows.

Slow—slow—slow!—a heavy, long drag, with the boat always, as he rose, seeming to be the same distance off. And now it seemed to the swimmer that he was being encased in a suit of lead, which was making his limbs cold and heavy, so that he swam as he had never swum before—with a slow, heavy, and weary stroke, which did not raise his chin above the water. That inert mass too, that he had turned over, and was dragging by one hand—how it kept him back!

For one brief instant he felt that he could not reach the boat, and drag Basalt there as well; and the temptation came upon him strongly to leave him.

It was but to open that one left hand. The body would sink; and it was but a dead body, something seemed to whisper him. But John Anderson's life had been one of struggles against temptations; and this was but one more of a long list to conquer. He set his teeth, and drove the cowardly thought behind him, as, giving another glance in the direction of the boat, he threw himself upon his back, and striking out fiercely with his feet, he changed hands, and, holding Basalt's hair with his right, he brought the half-numbed left into play, and with it forced the water behind him.

It was no simple floating in calm water, but a dire struggle for life; and, in spite of his brave efforts, Anderson felt that he was nearly spent. The water was bubbling about his nostrils, singing in his ears, and foaming over his eyes as he struck out; and that boat, like a phantom, seemed to elude him, for he could not reach its side.

“All over! May! Mother!” Was he to die like this? The boat!—where was it? “Thank God!”

It was time, for he had not another stroke in his enfeebled arms, when one

hand struck her side, and with a despairing effort he got one arm over—hooking himself on to the gunwale, as it were—and hung there panting, when, to his intense delight, Basalt made a feeble effort to clutch the side as Anderson held his head above water.

The feeble hand glided over the side; but after waiting for a few moments, Anderson made an effort to raise him, and the old man also got an arm over and hung there, with his head back and eyes dull and filmy, insensible apparently, but clinging instinctively for life to the tilted boat.

The rest and sense of security brought strength back in great strides to John Anderson; and after a while he made an effort, and hoisted himself over the stern into the boat. Then, after another five minutes' rest, he placed his arms under those of Basalt, and dragged him in, to lie helpless at the bottom of the

boat, with his head upon one of the thwarts.

Then, weak and panting still, with his breath coming slowly and hoarsely from his chest, he picked up the oar, and put it over the stern, to turn the boat's head; and a cold chill fell upon him as he saw how distant they were from the ship.

"We shall never reach her," he groaned aloud.

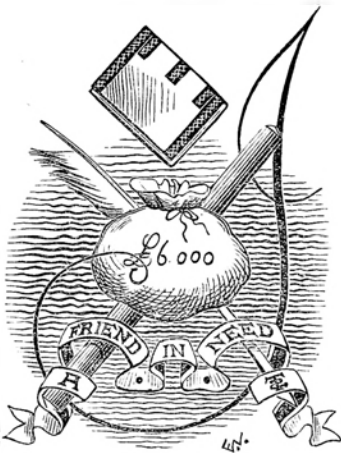
"Three cheers for the *Merry May!*" said a faint voice, and Anderson started with joy.

"Thank Heaven, Basalt, you are saved!"

The old man's eyes rolled slowly towards him, and seemed to fix his for a moment, but in a dull, sleepy fashion, which seemed to indicate that he did not realize his position. Then he closed his eyes, heaved a heavy sigh, and said, softly—"Never say die!"

## THIRTY-THIRD CABLE LENGTH.

HOW MR. TUDGE TOLD AN UNPLEASANT TALE.



It was a busy time for Mr. Tudge. Hewas always backwards and forwards at Canonbury; for Mr. Halley

kept seriously ill, and leaned on him more and more for help, while May nursed her father night and day.

The dates came, and Rutherby's first bills were met.

"Thank goodness," sighed Mr. Hal-

ley that evening, when Tudge pointed out the entry. "Mr. Longdale has been very kind in his inquiries about my health."

"And Mr. Merritt?" said Tudge.

"Most attentive—here every day," said Mr. Halley.

Tudge looked anxious; but only muttered to himself, "Wait a bit," and went on with his statements of payments.

Time went on, and Rutherby's other bills came due, and were met.

"Thank goodness!" said Mr. Halley, "that's done, Tudge."

"Yes," said Tudge, "that's done." And he wanted to ask a question, but he forbore.

The next day he was up again at Canonbury, and May was in the room, looking very pale, but perfectly calm.

"Ah, Tudge!" said Mr. Halley; "the doctor says I'm better to-day, and I feel that I am."

"Thank God for that!" said Tudge,

ferently; and May's soft, white hand glided into his.

"Hasn't Longdale sent to-day either, May?" said the invalid, pettishly.

"Not yet, papa," said May, quietly; and she glanced wonderingly at Tudge, who, hidden behind the curtain, was looking radiant.

"Ah! he sent yesterday morning, but he always sent in the evening too. What had Philip to say last night?"

"He did not come last night, papa," said May, quietly.

"Not come last night? Well, this morning, then?"

"Perhaps he is out of town, papa," said May, rising to leave the room.

"Ah, perhaps so," said Mr. Halley; and then he lay back muttering to himself. After this he sat up, and the accounts were gone into.

The next day Tudge had better news, but he was very sparing of it. Mr. Halley was to be a few hundreds to the good, instead of to the bad; but Mr. Halley was very much out of temper: Longdale had not sent to ask after his health, and Philip Merritt had not been near the house for some days.

"And I can get no explanation from May, Tudge," said Mr. Halley. "I'm so anxious about it, for her sake."

"Ah, let it rest now till you get stronger," said Tudge, quietly. "Lovers' tiff, perhaps."

"Ah, perhaps so," said Mr. Halley; "but she must be careful. I'll tell her so; for it's important now that she should not trifle with so good a match."

A month glided by, and Mr. Halley was able to leave his bed, and had made up his mind to seek out and have an explanation with Merritt; for he could learn nothing from May—only that she had parted from him kindly upon the last evening of his visit.

"But she don't seem to mind it a bit, Tudge—not a bit," said Mr. Halley; "in fact, poor girl, I half think she would like to give the matter up."

"Do you, really?" said Tudge, looking up innocently.

"Yes, for she looks so well and happy now."

"So she does," said Tudge, wiping his glasses, and looking comically at his employer.

"Well, Tudge, I think that will do for to-day," said Mr. Halley, at last. Then, with a sigh—"I think we must now begin to think of a sale, and to take a smaller house."

"Time enough for that in a month," said Tudge. "I wouldn't hurry about that till affairs are square at the office; we must have time, and you need not worry yourself till I tell you."

"Tudge," said Mr. Halley, as that gentleman rose to go, and he spoke with tears in his eyes—"you've been like a brother to me."

"Nonsense," said Tudge, shaking the proffered hand very, very warmly. "Nothing to what I mean to be, James Halley. Men were meant to be brothers, and to help one another—God made us on purpose; only the devil's always coaxing us to fall out. There, there, there—you often offered to take me in as partner. Now I'll come, and we'll start fair and clean again in a small way; that we will, and all shall go well."

"God bless you, Tudge—God bless you!" said Mr. Halley, in a broken voice; and he clung still to the other's hand. "One doesn't know one's best friends till tribulation comes."

"Then hooray for tribulation!" said Tudge, with the tears trickling down his nose—"leastwise, a little of it. And now, my dear friend—partner, eh?"

"Ah, Tudge, Tudge, I should be taking a mean advantage of you," said Mr. Halley. "I am a beggar, and I shall never be a business man again."

"Partners it is," said Tudge. "You trust me for taking care of myself, and driving a bargain. I'm all right—got the best of you. But I bring in six thousand, mind, all but ten pounds, and that I'll make up afterwards."

Mr. Halley did not speak, but sat down, and covered his eyes with one hand.

"Now, my dear old friend and partner, I think you have every trust and confidence in me and my words—brains, if you like?"

"Yes, yes, Tudge; and if I had listened to you sooner—"

"There, there—never mind that. But, look here; you must be prepared for what you will call a disappointment, but which is for some one a blessing in disguise."

"What do you mean, Tudge?" said Mr. Halley, wearily.

"You wanted to know why you have heard nothing of certain people lately."

"Yes, yes," said Mr. Halley, anxiously.

"Shall I tell you why?"

Mr. Halley knew what was coming, and his eyes alone said "Yes."

"You remember the last time they sent or called?"

"Yes."

"It was the day that the last bill was met."

## THIRTY-FOURTH CABLE LENGTH.

HOW MR. TUDGE TALKED TO THE PARTNERS.



SEE Philip Merritt, my dear,"

said Mr. Halley, as soon as his doctor had given him leave to go out, "and demand an explanation. I—I'm afraid it's as Tudge

says; but, after all, it's only the same old story that we've had ever since the world began. But for your sake, my dear, I'll see him, and try to bring him to his senses."

"Papa dear," said May, clinging to his arm, and looking up in his face, "I could never marry a man who could treat us like this."

"But, my darling, think of your position—see what you are giving up. You know we shall have to leave this house—soon, too, now. I shall be almost a beggar, my darling."

"Well, papa, and do you think I wish to be well off while you are poor? I'm

afraid you don't love me so very much, after all," she said, archly.

"And why?" he said, patting her soft cheek.

"Because you are in such a hurry to get me away from you—married, and belonging to somebody else."

"Now, my darling—"

"Hear me first, papa dear," whispered May; and she coloured up, and her eyes flashed as she spoke. "Mr. Philip Merritt persevered here till he gained my consent; then he heard of our misfortunes, and left me as coolly as if I had been a cast-off glove. Do you think, papa, I could ever listen to him again? No; treat him with the contempt he deserves, and let us be thankful that we have found out his true character before it was too late."

"It was for your sake, my darling," said the old man, querulously.

"I know, dear," she said, fondly and sadly; "but let matters be as they are. I would rather stay by your side."

"He deserves an action to be brought against him," said the old man; "and I don't like giving it up, my dear; but he'll repent it yet—he'll repent it yet. Why, here he is!—that's his voice in the hall. I knew he'd come again."

"Let me go, papa," exclaimed May, turning pallid.

But it was too late; the door was

thrown open, and Philip Merritt, eager and bright-eyed, hurried into the room.

"My dear Mr. Halley, so glad to see you up again. Haven't you wondered where I was? Ah, May, my love, I've been half mad at being detained. Why, what's this?"

He had possessed himself of Mr. Halley's hand, and shaken it most cordially, taking the old gentleman quite by surprise; then, turning to May with outstretched arms, he had made as though to embrace her, but stopped half-way, as she encountered him with a look that would have chilled a braver man than he.

"Will you allow me to pass, sir, if you please?" she said, coldly, all her outraged womanhood flashing from her eyes.

She was white almost to her lips; but her eyes never flinched for an instant as she swept by him, and passed from the room.

"Whatever does all this mean, Mr. Halley?" exclaimed Merritt, pitifully. "Surely I am not to be punished for what I cannot help? Where's Longdale? He promised to meet me here this morning, and help me explain. Been to Liverpool, and only came back last night."

"Then it must have been your ghost I saw in Quarterdeck-street yesterday morning," said Mr. Tudge, who had entered unperceived. "I thought you wouldn't be long before you turned up now, Mr. Merritt."

"If you'll allow me to tell you so, Mr. Tudge," said Merritt, pronouncing the word with an aspect of extreme disgust, "you are a most impertinent fellow."

"Then, Mr. Philip Merritt, I won't allow you to tell me so, nor any other man, sir, without my pulling his nose, sir," and the little man swelled up, and came ominously near the elaborately got-up swell.

"Do you allow such insolence as this from a clerk, Mr. Halley?" said Merritt, scornfully.

"No, sir, he don't," said Tudge; "but

he allows his old friend and partner, Mr. Samuel Tudge—Halley, Edwards, Tudge, and Company—to speak up for him, when he is just recovering from his illness, and an impertinent jackanapes has forced his way into the house on the strength of some news he has heard."

"My dear Tudge, pray," exclaimed Mr. Halley—"pray be calm."

"I won't," said Tudge—"I can't afford to be. This fellow raises my bile. Do you know why he's here to-day? No, of course you don't. Ah, Mr. Longdale, you here too. Delighted to see you again, I'm sure. Mr. Halley is better, sir—much better, sir," exclaimed Tudge to the sleek partner of the Rutherby firm who now came smiling into the room.

"Glad of it, I'm sure," said Mr. Longdale, glancing from one to the other, smiling but uneasy.

"Where the deuce is my ruler?" muttered Tudge, picking up a piece of music from May's stand, and rolling it up. "Ah, that's better," he said, giving the roll a flourish, and then bringing it down bang upon the table.

"Is he mad?" said Merritt, in an audible undertone to Longdale, who raised his eyebrows and shrugged his shoulders.

"Not a bit of it," said Tudge, with another flourish of his make-shift ruler. "Sane as you are, wide awake as either of you. So you've come to congratulate Mr. Halley—us, I ought to say—about this morning's news?"

"News, my good sir?—I don't know what you mean."

"He's drunk," said Merritt, savagely.

"Am I?" said Tudge. "Well, it would be excusable if I was, when a hundred thousand pounds turns up into one's firm unexpectedly."

"Good heavens, Tudge!" exclaimed Mr. Halley, trembling with agitation, "what does it mean?"

"What does it mean?" cried Tudge, exultingly. "Of course they did not know, either of 'em: been to Liverpool—in London; never read shipping

news, ne. saw the telegrams posted this morning at Lloyd's and through the City. Come here innocent as two doves. Bless you, Mr. Halley, they didn't know, bless you, that the *Merry May* was telegraphed up as having passed the Lizard this morning, and is on her way up the Channel."

"Thank—"

The poor old man said no more. He was weak yet with his long illness, and he tottered into a chair, and fainted away.

"Too much for him," said Tudge, running to his side. "Here, you, ring that bell," he cried to Longdale.

"Mr. Tudge, I'm sure I congratulate you," said Longdale, smiling, with one hand on the bell.

Samuel was in the room in a very short space of time, just as Merritt was about to offer assistance.

"Stand back, sir," said Tudge, with dignity, "you are not wanted here; your game's up as far as this house is concerned. Hold his head up, my dear, and order some wine," he added, aside to May, who ran affrighted into the room, alarmed by the loud ringing of the bell. — "That's it; we'll give him some wine directly we've got rid of these two scoundrels."

"Sir," snarled Longdale, showing his teeth like a cat.

"May, as your father is prostrate," exclaimed Merritt, furiously, "do you allow this man to insult us like that?"

"How dare you, sir," cried Tudge, bouncing at him—"how dare you insult that lady by calling her by her Christian name? Samuel, show these fellows out, and never admit them again, on any pretence. And look here, you two,

recollect this: you don't owe Mr. James Halley thirty thousand pounds, but you owe it to *us*—to me and Mr. Halley, and by Jove we'll have it paid!"

"This is insufferable—the fellow is mad or drunk," said Longdale.

"Both—a beast!" cried Merritt.

Mr. Tudge faced them, at the other end of the room, in a moment.

"If it wasn't for the lady, I'd— There, I won't quarrel with you. Samuel, show these men out."

Samuel evidently enjoyed it, and felt a most profound respect for the man who was his master's confidant and manager; and without doubt he would have assisted the visitors' steps, had they not made a dignified show of going. And Canonbury knew them no more.

"Is this true, Tudge?" said Mr. Halley, who was sitting up, with his head supported on May's breast.

"True as telegrams," said Tudge; "but I don't think there's a doubt about it. Mind you; it's a case of salvage—derelict picked up, and so on; but it will set you upon your legs again, James Halley, and we'll dissolve partnership to-morrow."

"No," exclaimed Mr. Halley, "never as long as I live."

"Nonsense—absurd!" said Tudge; "you're all right again, and I'll go back to my old style, and good luck to us! But I think I ought to stop in till those fellows have paid up—confound 'em! But you won't believe in them again, eh?"

Mr. Tudge read his answer in the eyes of both; and promising more news as soon as he could get it, he hurried back to the City.



## THIRTY-FIFTH CABLE LENGTH.

HOW THE "MERRY MAY" AGAIN REACHED PORT.



M E S -  
S A G E S that evening and all the next day were confirmatory of the good news; and the brightness came back to Mr. Halley's eyes as he felt how he could hold up his

head once more in the City. On the following morning, May was pouring out the coffee, when there was the noise of wheels, the shuffling of feet, then the door flew open, and Mr. Tudge danced in, waving his hat frantically. He ran at May and hugged her, shook hands with Mr. Halley, and then stood in the middle of the room, and putting his hands to his mouth, he shouted out, in stentorian tones—

"Ship ahoy!"

"In dock?" exclaimed Mr. Halley, almost as excited.

"In dock, and her captain's in the hall—captain and mate that picked her up, floating in mid ocean, and brought her home."

"Not Simmons?"

"Simmons!" cried Tudge, in a tone of disgust. "There was only one man who could have done it, and his name's—"

"Anderson!" cried May, half hysterically, as she started forward.

Her voice did it; for as she uttered his name, John Anderson—brown, flushed and excited, rugged and worn, with his long beard rusty with exposure—half rushed into the room, and clasped May's hands in his; till, trembling, with her face burning, she shrank away, to

give place to her father, who took Anderson's hand eagerly, and spoke in broken accents—

"It's coals of fire on my head, John Anderson; but I'm humbled now—the old pride's gone, and you've rewarded me with good for my evil. To think, though, that you should save my ship; and we had mourned you for dead!"

"Mourned, sir?" said Anderson, huskily, and his eyes rested upon the crape bow which May still wore at her breast.

It was but for a moment, though; for the colour mounted to the girl's temples as she snatched it off, and threw it upon the floor.

"May I take this, sir?" said Anderson, stooping and picking up the bow, while May turned away panting.

"Take it—take what you will, Anderson," cried Mr. Halley; "only tell me first that you've forgiven me my insults."

"Another word, sir, and you drive me away," said Anderson. "I did say that I'd never darken your door again; but man proposes—"

"And God disposes," said a gruff voice, which drew attention to Basalt, with whom Mr. Halley and May shook hands most heartily.

"It's all right, sir—don't say anything about it; only that you didn't oughter have separated the *May* from the on'y cap'n as could sail her."

"I do say it, my man, most heartily," said Mr. Halley; and he shook hands once more.

"And not to come to me first, John!" said a piping old voice, as Mrs. Anderson entered directly after, and was clasped in the strong man's arms.

"I wouldn't let him till he'd done his business," cried Tudge; "but, you wicked old woman, didn't I send a cab for you to come here, where he's only



been five minutes? And for you, too, Mrs. Gurnett?"

"For which thankye, I says," said old Basalt, smiling down upon the comely face streaming with tears. "Didn't I tell you, my lass, as it would be all right? Sweet little cherub up aloft, eh? And here we are, safe back again."

Did Desdemona listen with such glowing cheek to the battle tales of the Moor as did May Halley that day, when in plain, unvarnished Saxon John Anderson told to all of their perils by sea, speaking often, with solemn voice, of how they had been preserved time after time from what seemed imminent death? Surely not. But it was a hard task; for Jeremiah Basalt would keep interrupting with choice bits of his own that Anderson would have left out; and these bits were always of some piece of seamanship or daring, while the triumphant bit of all was that when Basalt sprang up and waved his arm about like a semaphore, and told of how Anderson had saved his life.

"Saved my life—not as it was mine, but belonging to Mrs. Gurnett here," he said; "for which, my dear, you ought to give him thanks."

Basalt nodded approvingly, as he saw Mrs. Gurnett go tearfully up to Anderson, and kiss the hands he held out to her; and then he started up, and John Anderson started too, as May Halley stood by Basalt's side, and thanked him, for her father's sake, she said, for what he had done.

It was an uneventful narrative, that latter part, which told of how, nearly by a miracle, John Anderson got his boat back, with its almost lifeless burden, to the *Merry May*; and then of how they reached the Mauritius, refitted, engaged

about half a crew, and slowly sailed the vessel home.

"Which not another man in England could have done," cried Tudge, as he waved an extemporized ruler round his head, and brought it down bang upon the table.

"But what's the good of a cap'n without a well-found craft?" cried Basalt.

"And what ought to be done to the scoundrels who would send men helplessly to drown?" cried Tudge.

"They need no punishment," said Mr. Halley; "for sooner or later it returns upon themselves."

There was silence then, and John Anderson spoke with all eyes fixed upon him, as upon one who had returned from the dead.

"Mr. Halley has spoken rightly," he said. "No punishment that man could invent could equal those conscience cries that must at times be felt by the most hardened of those who have to answer for the lives of men. I tell you this," he said, and his eyes flashed as he looked round—"I who have stood again and again face to face with death—I tell you that at the most awful of those moments, when I was standing ready to meet Him who sent me upon this earth, I swear to you, by His holy name, that I would not have changed places with one of those men at home at ease who have to answer for the life of the father, the lover, and the son who have sailed in their rotten hulks. Punishment! My God! they have the cry of the bereaved maiden, the widow's moan, and the bitter wailings of the starving child of him whose bones lie fathoms low in the great deep. They need no punishment—they make their own."

And a sweet voice said, below its breath, heard by its utterer alone—

"Amen!"



## THIRTY-SIXTH CABLE LENGTH.

THE LAST KNOTS, AND HOW JEREMIAH BASALT CRIED "SHIP AHOY!"



COLD day for a wedding—Christmas? That is a matter of opinion. But, there, what need is there to tell? Of course it followed—they followed; for John Anderson and Basalt were married upon the same day, and Tudge gave away the widow, grudgingly, he said; for if it hadn't been for Basalt—Then, too, he half threatened to hang himself in his braces.

But only half; for he made the punch a month later at Canonbury, and helped to drink it, sipping slowly while Mrs. Anderson related to him John Anderson's adventures from the age of six weeks, including his battle with the croup, fight with the measles, and dire encounter with the thrush.

"But after all," she said, "fine man as John was, he would never be equal to his father."

The Basalts wanted to get out of coming to that dinner, but Mr. Halley would not hear of it, for he said that Jeremiah was one of his best friends; and Basalt blushed, really and rosily, as did his wife, who sat and worshipped him with all her might.

It was a bright and manly speech

that Mr. Halley made, and so was the response of John Anderson as he rose from beside his blushing wife.

It was a happy party that night, even though it was what Philip Merritt called "disgustingly low;" but then, the previous day, he had taken a receipt from Mr. Tudge for a heavy sum of money borrowed fourteen months before, and which he had been compelled to refund. But low or not, there was happiness within those walls, and mirth and brightness, till John Anderson, captain, gave a toast, drunk by all standing and in silence—a toast that we will drink with all our hearts—

"God bless the men this night at sea!"

And then came the parting.

Mr. Basalt was only merry when he shouted along the hall to his captain, as he stood with his wife upon his arm—

"What cheer there with the *Merry May*?"

And again, as he was ensconced within the cab, and Samuel had closed the door, grinning with all his might, Basalt thrust out his head, and with lusty lungs roared out, as the cab was moving off—

"SHIP AHOY!"



## APPENDIX.

### OVERLOADING.

IN case you should think that the state of things indicated in this story is at all overdrawn, the following two or three cases, well established by competent witnesses, are added for your information.

The following is from the finding of the Court of Inquiry, held in Aberdeen, in October, 1873, into the loss of the *Benachie* (steamer), which foundered, as the Court says, in "comparatively calm weather, in August last." . . .

"The evidence of the manager of the firm which built the vessel is to the effect that had she been intended for the carriage of iron ore (the article which she was only employed to bring home), she should have been especially strengthened for that purpose; and the captain of the vessel represented to one of the superintendents employed by the owners, after the ship had made a few voyages, that if she were to be continued in the iron ore trade, she would require to be strengthened. . . . After an anxious and careful review of the whole evidence, we can arrive at no other conclusion than that the ship had been, generally on her homeward voyages, overladen. The cargoes of iron ore were much in excess of the cargoes which she took out, and being stowed as they were, must have brought great strain on every part of the ship. The result of our investigation is to leave no doubt upon our minds that the cause of the vessel foundering was . . . the excessive weight of cargo which the ship had to carry. . . .

"Some of the witnesses declared that they observed the boiler moving, although they differed as to the amount of the movement. Others observed the fore-castle head twisting, and the master stated that there was more vibration in the *Benachie* than in any other steamer in which he had sailed. The carpenter told us that he and a former chief officer often spoke of the straining of the vessel, attributing it to the heavy cargo, and deposed that it was matter of common conversation among the crew. . . .

"The firemen, on rough nights, were frightened to go from the engine-room to their berths in the fore-castle, and preferred to stay in the engine-room during the time they were entitled to be in bed; while the owners' superintendent admits that he on several occasions heard the crew, after the return of the vessel to this country, talking to each other about the straining of the ship, in a manner which seemed to him intended to attract his attention. . . .

"It is proper to say that . . . to sail with so low a freeboard as 2 ft. 9 in. was unquestionably hazardous. The owners have been at pains to prove that such a freeboard is common in the trade. That is probably quite true; but it only makes it the more imperative upon us to give no uncertain sound on the subject, but to declare emphatically that . . . to sail a vessel of the construction and with the cargo of the *Benachie*, with so low a freeboard, is dangerous in the extreme. . . .

"Their superintendent actually stated his opinion to be that 2 ft. of clear side was quite sufficient for safety. The absurdity of such an opinion, and the probably disastrous consequences of giving practical effect to it, must be apparent to all. To send a ship, with over 1,200 tons of iron ore, having only 2 ft. of clear side, to encounter the heavy seas of the Bay of Biscay, which are frequently as high as 20 ft., appears to us to be little short of either wickedness or folly.

. . . The baneful custom of overloading, which it is manifest to us, from the evidence to which we have listened, has become prevalent, at least in the north of England ports; but of

which we desire, with the perfect concurrence of the assessors, to express our unqualified condemnation. The sum of the whole matter is this—the *Benachie* was run to death by carrying too heavy cargoes at too high a rate of speed."

The Court consisted of the Sheriff, Comrie Thomson, Esq., and Colonel Cadenhead, assisted by two nautical assessors.

The crew would all have been lost had not one of H.M. ships of war picked them up.

Another Court of Inquiry into the loss of a steamer, held at Newcastle, conclude their finding by saying, "That they could not dismiss this painful case without respectfully urging upon the Government the necessity of instituting some inspection to prevent a system of overloading, *which had become so notorious in vessels leaving the Tyne;*" and

Mr. Stephenson, the Secretary to Lloyd's, read before the Royal Commissioners the following letter from the mate of a ship to his sweetheart (see Minutes of Evidence, p. 249):—

(Copy.)

"DEAR LIZZIE—We sail to-night, and I wish she was going without me; for I don't like the look of her, she is so deep in the water. But I won't show the white feather to any one. I she can carry a captain, she can carry a mate too. But it's a great pity that the Board of Trade doesn't appoint some universal load water-mark, and surveyors to see that ships are not sent to sea to become coffins for their crews. But don't torment yourself about me. I dare say I shall get through it as well as anybody else. Hoping that you may continue well—I remain, yours fondly,  
"TOM."

The ship went to the bottom with all hands. "That," said the witness, "was an instance of a vessel going to sea with competent persons on board, who knew she was going to the bottom. He had received many letters of this kind."

So far as to overloading. Cases might be added indefinitely; indeed, in at least two cases known to the writer (one a young man of twenty, and one the second mate of a ship), both men went home and put on old suits of clothing, that the sister in one case, and the wife in the other, might have the better clothing to sell in case they were lost, which they knew to be inevitable unless they had calm weather all the way. In both cases, the ships and all the men were lost.

#### UNSEAWORTHINESS.

Many good people find it hard to believe that men can be found so wicked as knowingly to send a ship to sea in an unseaworthy state. They not only do so, but, if the men show any reluctance to be drowned for their profit, they try and too often succeed in sending them to gaol for their reluctance.

In September last, five seamen were brought before the magistrates at Dover for refusing to go to sea. By desire of the bench, a surveyor was directed to examine the vessel (let us be thankful for that now, it was not always so); and his report stated that there was a great insufficiency of ropes, spare sails, and the necessary gear, *and the vessel was unseaworthy.*

In the same month (September, 1873), four men were brought before the Hull magistrates on a similar charge. A survey was ordered, and Mr. Snowden, surveyor, reported "that there was sufficient to justify the prisoners in not proceeding in the vessel. The deck wants caulking, and certain timbers are rotten; and it is quite possible that the masts might roll out of her, and make her at the mercy

of the sea. Water also came through the deck on to the men in the fore-castle." Asked, if he were a sailor would he go to sea in her, he answered, "I would not do so."

In the same month it was attempted to send six seamen to gaol for refusing to go to sea in a ship of which (a survey having been ordered) two surveyors reported:—

"We find as follows:—Bobstay slack, jib and flying jibstay decayed, hawse pipes both dangerously started, jib and flying jibguys look bad, part of cutwater started; fid of maintopmast rotten, and topmast sagged two or three inches, and slung with chains from lower masthead; lower deck beams rotten, many lodging knees also rotten, breast hooks rent and rotten, ceiling rotten in several places, riders started and bolts loose and apparently broken; cathead beam very rotten, and breast beams rotten. Certainly, in her present state, we consider that she is unfit to proceed to sea."

In the evidence given before the Royal Commissioners (see Minutes of Evidence, p. 207), a Liverpool shipowner, called William James Fernie, says, in reply to questions, that he gave £3,500 for a ship registered at 2,800 tons. The same witness, in answer to a question as to what a good ship would cost per ton, answered, "£13 or £14;" and he was also asked by another Commissioner—

"Do you think you have a right to expect to obtain a perfectly sound vessel at £1 per ton?"

As to the sort of ship she really was, another Commissioner, as it happened, was able to tell his fellow-Commissioners that he himself had surveyed her, and had reported to the Salvage Association as follows—*inter alia*:—

"She was trussed with transverse bars of iron, screwed up amidships, like an old barn or church, before she started on this last voyage. That is to say, that the whole of the fastenings at the beam ends and knees were so rotten, that there was no junction on the sides of the ship, and this mode of fastening was introduced, and the only way of fastening the ship together was to introduce these enormous amounts of iron." (Inventive genius of the British shipbuilder!) (Report of Royal Commissioners, p. 3.) This, bear in mind, is the evidence of one of the Commissioners themselves. This man also admitted that he had lost *nineteen* ships in the last ten years only (he has been a shipowner twenty-five years), with the following ascertained loss of life:—

In the <i>General Simpson</i>	...	Eight lives lost.
<i>Dawn of Hope</i>	...	Twenty-eight.
<i>Royal Victoria</i>	...	Fourteen.
<i>Royal Albert</i> ...	...	All hands, number not known.
<i>Great Northern</i>	..	Sixteen lives lost.
<i>Windsor Castle</i>	...	Twenty.
<i>Golden Fleece</i> ...	...	One.
<i>Royal Adelaide</i>	...	Seven.
<i>Florine</i> ...	...	All hands lost.
<i>Malvern</i> ...	...	Not stated.
<i>Denmark</i> ...	...	Not stated.
<i>Henry Fernie</i> ...	...	Not stated.
<i>Dunkeld</i> ...	...	Not stated.

(See Minutes of Evidence, p. 207.)

This witness stated that in 1866 he formed the Merchants' Trading Company, to which his ships were transferred, and of which he is the managing director; and he admitted that nine thousand nine hundred and ninety shares (out of the ten thousand) were held by his brother-in-law, in trust for his wife and family, and the other ten shares were held by himself and his dependents. (See *id.*)

The Board of Trade have issued their Annual Report for 1872, and say in it that "forty ships have foundered from *unseaworthiness* in that year."

Extract of a letter from David MacIver, Esq., one of the managing partners in the firm which owns the Cunard steamers at Liverpool, published in the *Liverpool Mercury*:—

"Wanlass How, Ambleside, Oct. 20, 1873.

"DEAR SIR—

\* \* \* \* \*

"Far more vessels are lost than ought to be, and many of these have been new, or nearly new steamers. I do not say Liverpool steamers; but I *do* say that their loss is as easily accounted for as the loss of a few 56 lb. weights would be if you put them into an old basket, or sent them afloat in a tin pan of inferior material or workmanship.—Yours very sincerely,

"DAVID MACIVER."

Extract from a letter, written by Mr. R. Knight, Secretary of the Iron Shipbuilders' (operatives) Society, and published in the *Liverpool Daily Courier*, Oct., 1873:—

\* \* \* \* \*

"The facts of the case are as follows—viz., the screw steamer *Brighton*, built in 1872, by Blumer and Co., of Sunderland, for the Commercial Steamship Company, London, registered number 68,364, went only one voyage to Gibraltar, and when she returned to this port the owners or agents were compelled to put her in the Herculaneum Dock about February last for repairs, and she remained there nearly seven weeks. The keel rivets were all loose, and had to be taken out, and others put in; also a large number in the stem and stern. I went and examined the vessel, and saw that she was very badly built; any one could pass a mechanic's rule between the frames and the shell plates in many places, also between the strips, as the work was never properly closed. As the men put in the new rivets and closed the work, the old rivets projected about 3-16ths of an inch; and had the men continued to close the work as it should have been done when the vessel was built, they would have been compelled to rivet her all over. The foreman and inspectors seeing this, requested the men to use light hammers, about 2 lbs. (the usual hammers for that kind of work are about 5 lbs.), so as to nobble the end of the rivet in the hole, and not close the plates to the frames. This was done, and she was made watertight; but she would not keep so very long, as the straining of the vessel would very soon loosen the rivets, through the work not being closed; and where the plates met, the joints were so open that they had caulked her with oakum."

Are men sent to gaol for refusing to go to sea in such ships? Let the following tables reply.

Particulars of seamen committed to gaol for refusing to go to sea in vessels alleged by them to be unseaworthy, so far as has been ascertained:—

	1870.	1871.	1872.
England ... ..	294	281	420
Wales ... ..	107	90	150
Scotland ... ..	23	41	45
Ireland ... ..	55	79	43
	<u>479</u>	<u>471</u>	<u>658</u>

## ENGLAND.

COUNTY.	Prison.	Men Committed.			
		1870.	1871.	1872.	Total.
CHESTER ... ..	County Prison ... ..	8	5	—	13
CORNWALL ... ..	Bodmin ... ..	32	24	32	88
DEVONSHIRE ... ..	Exeter ... ..	17	4	5	26
” ... ..	Plymouth ... ..	5	3	1	9
DORSETSHIRE ... ..	Dorchester ... ..	2	6	51	59
DURHAM ... ..	Durham ... ..	48	56	71	175
ESSEX ... ..	Springfield... ..	6	2	1	9
GLOUCESTER ... ..	Bristol ... ..	—	—	15	15
KENT ... ..	Maidstone ... ..	9	7	17	33
” ... ..	Canterbury... ..	7	7	7	21
” ... ..	Dover ... ..	1	—	4	5
” ... ..	Sandwich ... ..	40	26	45	111
LANCASHIRE ... ..	Preston ... ..	—	—	2	2
” ... ..	Liverpool ... ..	52	82	68	202
LINCOLNSHIRE ... ..	Lindsey ... ..	—	—	13	13
MIDDLESEX ... ..	Coldbath Fields ... ..	—	—	7	7
” ... ..	Holloway ... ..	5	1	5	11
MONMOUTHSHIRE ... ..	Usk... ..	22	7	14	43
NORFOLK ... ..	Great Yarmouth ... ..	2	6	5	13
NORTHUMBERLAND... ..	Morpeth ... ..	1	5	1	7
” ... ..	Newcastle ... ..	1	5	—	6
SOUTHAMPTON ... ..	Winchester ... ..	24	—	16	40
” ... ..	Southampton ... ..	—	—	2	2
SUFFOLK ... ..	Ipswich ... ..	4	18	16	38
YORKSHIRE ... ..	Northallerton ... ..	8	4	11	23
” ... ..	Wakefield ... ..	—	1	2	3
” ... ..	Kingston-upon-Hull ... ..	—	6	4	10
” ... ..	Scarborough ... ..	—	6	5	11
		294	281	420	995

## ABSTRACT.

Men Committed in 1870 ... ..	294
” 1871 ... ..	281
” 1872 ... ..	420
Total ... ..	995

## WALES.

COUNTY.	Town.	Men Committed.			
		1870.	1871.	1872.	Total.
ANGLESEY ... ..	Beaumaris ... ..	4	3	13	20
CARMARTHEN ... ..	Carmarthen ... ..	—	2	5	7
CARNARVON ... ..	Carnarvon ... ..	—	—	1	1
GLAMORGAN ... ..	Cardiff ... ..	77	51	80	208
” ... ..	Swansea ... ..	26	32	27	85
PEMBROKE ... ..	Haverfordwest ... ..	—	2	24	26
		107	90	150	347

## ABSTRACT.

Men Committed in 1870	...	...	...	...	...	...	107
” 1871	...	...	...	...	...	...	90
” 1872	...	...	...	...	...	...	150
							—
Total	...	...	...	...	...	...	347

## SCOTLAND.

COUNTY.	Town.	Cases Tried.			Number of Men Committed.	Men Committed.			
		1870.	1871.	1872.		1870.	1871.	1872.	Total.
ABERDEEN ...	Aberdeen ...	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	3
”	Fraserburgh	1	—	1	2	1	—	1	2
AYR ... ..	Ardrossan ...	—	1	—	1	—	1	—	1
”	Troon ...	1	1	2	16	7	1	8	16
CLACKMANNAN	Alloa ...	—	—	1	3	—	—	3	3
EDINBURGH ...	Leith ...	—	1	—	6	—	6	—	6
”	Granton ...	—	—	1	4	—	—	4	4
FORFAR ...	Dundee ...	—	—	1	1	—	—	1	1
LANARK ...	Glasgow ...	5	5	5	20	7	6	7	20
RENFREW ...	Greenock ...	—	4	2	20	—	10	10	20
ROSS ... ..	Stornoway ...	1	3	1	25	7	16	2	25
SHETLAND ...	Lerwick ...	—	—	1	8	—	—	8	8
		9	16	16	109	23	41	45	109

## ABSTRACT.

Number of Cases	...	1870	...	9	...	Men Committed	...	23
”	...	1871	...	16	...	”	...	41
”	...	1872	...	16	...	”	...	45
				—				—
Total	...	...	...	41	...	Total	...	109



## IRELAND.

COUNTY.	Town.	Men Committed.			
		1870.	1871.	1872.	Total.
ANTRIM ... ..	Belfast ... ..	11	5	13	29
CORK ... ..	Cork ... ..	21	70	27	118
DONEGAL ... ..	Lifford ... ..	17	—	—	17
LOUTH ... ..	Dundalk ... ..	4	—	—	4
SLIGO ... ..	Sligo ... ..	2	—	—	2
WATERFORD ... ..	Waterford ... ..	—	4	3	7
		55	79	43	177

## ABSTRACT.

Number of Men Committed	...	...	1870	...	...	55
"	...	...	1871	...	...	79
"	...	...	1872	...	...	43
			Total	...	...	177

A statement sent to me by certain seamen, showing the treatment of sailors charged with refusing to go to sea.

Sometimes (very rarely) they escape, and this is how they fare:—

(Copy.)

“TO SAMUEL PLIMSOLL, ESQ., M.P.

“Hull, 1st October, 1873.

“SIR—We, the undersigned, beg to hand you the following statement, being an account of the treatment which we (together with a seaman named John Williams) have experienced on our refusal to go to sea in an unseaworthy ship.

“On the 11th day of September, 1873, we shipped on board the brig *Expert*, belonging to Mr. Stephen Heaton Lennard, of Hull, which was bound in ballast for Norway, to fetch a cargo of ice.

“On proceeding on board with our clothes the same evening, we saw that the ship was unseaworthy, and refused to sail in her. On the following morning (12th September) we were given into the custody of the Board of Trade constable (by Mr. Lennard, the owner), and taken by him before the magistrates, sitting at the police court of this borough, and charged with refusing to proceed to sea.

“We were asked by the magistrates why we refused to do so, and we told them that the vessel was unseaworthy, and requested that a survey might be held on the vessel by the proper authorities.

[The power to demand a survey was only confirmed last year, and few seamen know of it. They also have to pay all expenses if it is shown that they are mistaken.—S. P.]

“In answer to this request we were told that we should have to deposit the sum of two guineas for the survey. This sum we could not at the time deposit; but we stated that we would be all jointly answerable for the amount, if, on survey, she was found to be in a fit state to go to sea.

“We were, however, then remanded to the gaol of this borough, not being able to find bail, and were taken there in the prison van.

“One of us (namely, Mundy) being in a very delicate state of health, suffering from a severe

cold and affection of the chest, for which he had remained on shore for about five months; and he had with him some medicine, and also an extra flannel on his chest as a protection.

"On arriving at the gaol, we were marched in single file by a warder to the remand part of the prison, when we were at once placed in separate, small, dark cells, and ordered to strip off the whole of our clothes for a bath.

"We did so, and waited for upwards of twenty minutes in these cold cells without a particle of clothing upon us, expecting every minute to be called out for a bath.

"Mundy was shaking with cold, owing to his bad health and the removal of his warm clothing, and we were all more or less affected by the cold by taking off all our flannel garments which we, as mariners, usually wear. After waiting for about twenty minutes we were removed from these cells, but not taken to a bath as previously ordered, but were marched a distance of about forty yards entirely naked, through a cold, stone passage, to the clothing room, where prison raiment was given to us, consisting only of a rough cotton shirt, a rough singlet, with a pair of stockings; and with only this clothing on we were marched back again through the passage, along which we had previously gone naked, and were then placed in separate cells, and ordered to bed.

"A short time afterwards we were supplied with a tin containing skilly, and a piece of black bread, which we refused to eat.

"What few provisions we had taken in with us we were refused permission to eat, they being all taken away from us, as well as the medicine and breast flannel belonging to Mundy. We remained in these cold cells until the following morning, when we were again offered the same kind of skilly and black bread for breakfast as had been supplied to us the previous night, and which we again refused to eat. We were then ordered to the bath-room, and were taken along the cold stone passage in the cotton shirt, singlet, and stockings, and placed into a warm bath; and after having a bath, we were taken back naked through this stone passage to be measured, and when this was done we were taken to the cells where we had been confined for the night, and our own clothes were then given to us, which we put on.

"About ten o'clock the same morning we were removed in the prison van to the cells of the police court, and in the afternoon we were taken before the magistrates (Messrs. Jameson, Fountain, and Palmer), who, upon hearing the evidence of Mr. Snowden, senior surveyor to the Board of Trade (who proved that the ship was unseaworthy), we were discharged, and the following remarks were at the same time made by Mr. Palmer—namely, 'That he considered that the Board of Trade surveyor had given his evidence in a clear, straightforward manner, and was the right man in the right place, and that he should never dream of punishing us. That we had exercised a sound judgment in not going to sea in this vessel, and advised us in future to look at vessels before signing articles to go to sea in them, especially if they were to have ice in them.

"We were, however, discharged without any recompense for our false imprisonment, and the indignities we suffered during our incarceration, and through which Mundy considers his life was endangered.

"We therefore wish you to lay this matter before the proper authorities, so that we may obtain justice and reparation, and that the seamen of England may not be treated in the gaols of this country in the way we have described (before being convicted of an offence), for simply refusing to risk their lives in rotten ships.—We are, Sir, yours obediently,

"(Signed)	WILLIAM MUNDY.
(Signed)	WILLIAM RIVIS (his X mark).
(Signed)	GABRIEL (his X mark) GUSLAF.

"P.S.—Mundy is still under medical care, and is now much worse from the imprisonment.

"Signed in the presence of GEO. BARKER, Clerk to Messrs. Oliver and Botterell, Solicitors Sunderland."

#### LETTER FROM THE GOVERNOR OF ONE OF HER MAJESTY'S PRISONS.

"SIR—I beg to enclose you an account of a representative case just given me by the writer it, who, with another of his shipmates, is a prisoner here. They are both, to all appearances, honest sailors and most respectable young men. It thus appears that there is no alternative for the unsuspecting seaman who, in good faith, enters on board a spongy-bottomed vessel, between drowning and imprisonment. Their late ship has gone to sea with their clothes and certificates

and this young man is writing in the greatest grief to his parents, dreading the shock upon them when they hear that he is in prison. Sandwich Island kidnapping is not more iniquitous than a case such as this.

\* \* \* \* \*

I may add, *in confidence*, that one of the committing magistrates is a merchant, and that the merchants are much interested in supporting shipowners against their seamen; for if they do not do so, and if they allow shipowners to think that their crews are not well looked after by the authorities, it is feared that shipowners will not allow their vessels to touch at —, and consequently business will decline.

\* \* \* \* \*

"They (the seamen) state that they were engaged at Liverpool, upon the assertion that the ship was going on 'a nice little voyage to — only,' and that it was only on their arrival at — that they were informed that the old, leaky vessel was to go round the Horn to Callao. Also, that when they were had up before the magistrates, they pointed out that they had taken no 'advance,' which showed clearly that, when they shipped, it was their own *bona fide* intention to go to sea in the ship, according to their engagement, if she had been seaworthy.

\* \* \* \* \*

"The two prisoners have, of course, neither seen nor spoken to one another since they have been here. I have examined them separately, and there is not the shadow of a doubt about the absolute truth of their story—only, as the ship has sailed, there seems no probability of proving it. Seamen are the worst men possible to make out a good case for themselves when had up in court. They look upon themselves as doomed at once—that 'it's no use saying anything.' The prosecutor makes an audacious harangue, the seamen chew their quids with energy, and look as though they would like to chew him. Sentence is pronounced by a magistrate whom they know knows no more about ships than they do of the mysteries of marine insurance. They feel that they have been infamously hounded, but that 'it's all a muddle,' and that it's better to go to prison than to be drowned, and so they are hustled out of the dock. Other dupes, half-drunk, perhaps, are shipped in their place; the manager or agent remains until the ship is out of sight, and returns to his owners to expatiate on his success. We have a splendid specimen of a seaman here now, who has been *wrecked three times* in the last few months, with the loss of everything on each occasion. I could not help thinking of them and of you yesterday, when in the morning's Psalms we read, 'Let the sorrowful sighing of the prisoner come before Thee;' and thought that you were the instrument of the Lord, raised up to do His work, to show that there is a God that judgeth the earth, that in this God-governed world there is no such thing as permanently-successful villainy either for Napoleons or Gradgrinds; and I pray that those who have been grinding the face of the poor with such impunity hitherto, may find that 'the day of the Lord' is not merely 'at hand,' which they have disbelieved, but that it has come upon them and upon their evil houses.

\* \* \* \* \*

"I discharged yesterday, two prisoners on expiry of sentence, whose case was somewhat similar to the present one—joining a ship out in a roadstead upon glowing representations—on getting out to her finding her to be a rotten coffin, and on demand to be put on shore again, sent to prison on a summary conviction. They served out their imprisonment with the patience of oxen; and until the law is framed to protect them as it does children and minors, they will, with the simplicity of children, fall again into the first trap that is laid for them."

#### THE WRECK REGISTER AND CHART FOR 1872.

"Of the 439 total losses from causes other than collisions, on and near the coasts of the United Kingdom, in 1872, 56 arose from defects in the ship or in her equipments, and of these 56 no less than 40 appear to have foundered from *unseaworthiness*."

#### LETTER FROM THE FRENCH CONSUL AT IRISH PORT.

"DEAR SIR—Every humane person must wish you success in the courageous campaign you have begun against an internal set of scoundrels; and I think every one, whatever is his nationality is bound to give all assistance in his power. You will be glad to hear from me that so far you have been successful, that some of the *notorious shipowners* are trying to put their rotten ships

under foreign flags, keeping the ownership of them at the same time, and being in hope, by so doing, of evading whatever law Parliament might enact. Yesterday, one of those notorious ship-owners applied to me to authorise a French subject to purchase one of his ships, and to request me to give a provisional French nationality to this ship. Knowing the party by reputation, and the character of his ships, I was doubly on my guard; and, after inquiry, was satisfied that this was not a *bonâ fide* transaction, and was made to evade the British law, and, I strongly suspect, to avoid an examination by the surveyor of the Board of Trade. I formally refused to grant the request made to me in this instance, and have officially informed my Government of my reasons for giving such refusal. I must say I am rather afraid of your law of libel: this is my reason for putting 'private' on the top of this letter, and giving no name for the present. However, if you thought the name might keep your case, if it is asked from me by the Commissioners, I shall give it willingly. I have not yet had time to read your book, but I saw a number of extracts from it and, after having seen them, all I say is, God help you in your good work."

## LETTER FROM THE SOLICITOR TO THE BOARD OF TRADE.

"Custom House, February 24th, 1873.

"MY DEAR SIR—You have made a move in the cause of humanity for which you deserve immortal credit. I have not seen your book; but I read a review of it in the *Times* with the deepest interest. When you, some years ago, referred to me as having, on the occasion of a Board of Trade inquiry, described the conduct of a shipowner as 'homicidal,' you were well justified in doing so. I might have used the more felonious term, because cases have occurred where delinquents have been executed for murder who deserved the gallows less than the moneyed barbarians who have sent overladen ships to sea. I send you enclosed an illustration of the justice of my statement. But, to judge accurately of the disgraceful case, you should read the evidence on the inquiry. It was proved that the decks were so laden with bales of cotton that the crew had to stand and walk on the top of them so as to manage the ship; and Mr. Pearson, a shipowner, examined for the defence, swore that the higher the bales were piled the more it conduced to the safety of the ship, as, if the ship went down, the crew and passengers would have a better chance of escaping.

"I am, my dear Sir, &c.,

"JAMES O'DOWD."

## LETTER FROM A LONDON MERCHANT.

"Great Tower-street, London, February 26, 1873.

"DEAR SIR—I have read, with very great interest, of your efforts to better the position of the mercantile marine; and believing that every little information is of use to you, I have taken the liberty of addressing you. I was brought up at a seaport town, and was twelve years in a ship-building and repairing yard; six years of the time I acted as outside superintendent, so that I had abundant opportunity of noticing the sort of 'coffins' in which sailors are often sent to sea. Belfast being a depôt for the north of Ireland, there are two important trades carried on—viz, coal and wood. The coal trade—at least, three years ago (when I left)—was principally carried on by small merchants. They employed schooners, brigantines, and brigs to carry coal from the Scotch and English ports. Very few of these vessels were classed, and the majority were equipped in the most miserable way. *One merchant whom I could name lost two or three vessels every year, and generally all hands with the vessels.* He has often been known to send his vessels to sea without proper ground-gear, in order that the captain would have to beat a passage, and not take an intermediate port. I have seen dozens of such vessels that could not be properly caulked, the planks being so rotten that pieces of wood had to be driven in the seams; and if a piece of plank was taken out, no timber or frames could be found to fasten it to, a plate of iron having to be laid on the ceiling, or inside skin, for this purpose. Then, again, the running gear, as a rule was perfectly rotten—rotten masts, spars, and sails—and miserable cabins and forecastles. These vessels would make a passage across the Channel in the middle of winter, with perhaps 18 inches of side above water. The timber ships are employed running to North America; many of these vessels have no character or class, and their hulls are just as bad as the coal schooners. I have been told that all over the seaports of Ireland such vessels are employed. The timber ships have generally to bring home heavy deck-loads, and you are well aware of the

number of such vessels that are lost annually. Belfast being a very handy place for wind-bound and distressed vessels, I had many chances of seeing vessels which had put into the port leaky carrying all sorts of cargoes—salt, pig-iron, rails, &c. These cargoes are very severe on old ships. Often the crew have mutinied, or, more properly speaking, refused to proceed in the ships, having regard for their own safety; *very often they were imprisoned for doing so*. I may add that I have no interest, at least pecuniary, in this matter now, as I am in quite a different trade; but I know that you are right, although you may encounter a great deal of opposition. I am sure my old master, Mr. —, of Belfast, who is still a ship-builder and repairer, would give you every information he could in a private way. I have written this letter on the impulse of the moment.”

SCHEDULE OF SHIPS POSTED AT LLOYD'S TO JUNE 30TH THIS YEAR AS MISSING!! NEVER HEARD OF MORE! (EXCLUDING ALL OTHER FATAL WRECKS AND CASUALTIES.)

Year.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June
1872 ...	5 ...	15 ...	15 ...	6 ...	9 ...	5
1873 ...	17 ...	18 ...	27 ...	23 ...	24 ...	19

Though desirous to avoid all comments in compiling this Appendix, I think it right to say here, that this terrible increase of loss was foreseen by me—and by me alone. One correspondent at Liverpool, in February last, expressed great fear that unless the Government helped me promptly with a temporary measure, that whilst the prospect of overhauling would cause a great deal of repairing of ships and care in loading amongst many, in some it *would create so great anxiety in certain quarters to get rid of ships anyhow—which would not bear examination—that a large temporary increase of losses was greatly to be feared*. This was why I was so anxious—almost frantically anxious—to get a temporary measure passed.

My firm conviction is, that had the Government helped me, instead of doing their utmost to thwart my efforts, many, many hundreds of brave men now at the bottom of the sea would have been alive at this moment.

The total number of lives lost in 92 of these ships—where the number of the crews is known—is 1,328. Supposing the remaining 36 to have carried a similar number of men, then the total is 1,747 in six months!—although this year has been unusually free from stormy weather, and the year 1872 was an “unusually disastrous year!” What will the whole year give? and what will other weeks add to this number? These are missing ships only. May God forgive us for our murderous neglect of our fellow-men at sea!

I deeply regret that the time available to me to write this Appendix is too limited to enable me to take proper pains with it. I only heard by accident of the intention to dedicate the Christmas number of ONCE A WEEK to this subject; and instantly asked for permission to write this Appendix, to enable me to do which, the publication was suspended. Editors of newspapers are earnestly entreated to copy this Appendix or such parts of it as they may deem suitable to their columns.

GRAIN-LADEN SHIPS MISSING TO SEPTEMBER 30TH IN EACH OF THE FOLLOWING YEARS:—

1872 ... 26 ... .. 1873 ... 50

COAL-LADEN SHIPS MISSING TO SEPTEMBER 30TH IN EACH OF THE FOLLOWING YEARS:—

1872 ... 11 ... .. 1873 ... 40

TIMBER-LADEN SHIPS MISSING TO SEPTEMBER 30TH IN EACH OF THE FOLLOWING YEARS:—

1872 ... 6 ... .. 1873 ... 17

FRAGMENTS OF EVIDENCE GIVEN BEFORE THE ROYAL COMMISSIONERS.

Mr. M. Wawn, examined by the Chairman: "You are a surveyor under the Board of Trade?"—"Yes."

"Have you known many ships broken up on account of their age; because we have been told that in the case of colliers they are hardly ever broken up, but that they go on till they sink?"—"I cannot say that I know of any cases where they have been broken up."

"What becomes of these old vessels—do they go on till they are lost?"—"I suppose so. (Minutes of Evidence, p. 123.)

Mr. S. Robins, examined by the Chairman (Minutes of Evidence, p. 117): "Are you a licensed shipping agent under the Board of Trade?"—"I have been so up to the present year. For between eleven years and twelve years I was a licensed agent under the Board of Trade."

"Can you state to whom the *Satellite* belonged?"—"I cannot say. She belonged to a Liverpool firm."

"Was she laden with coal?"—"Yes."

"What was her destination?"—"I believe it was Rio."

"Did you consider that ship not seaworthy?"—"I did."

"Then, in the first instance, when you got a part of the crew for *Ler*, did you consider her to be a safe and seaworthy vessel?" (Minutes of Evidence, p. 118.)—"No; I considered her a very old vessel, and I had heard reports concerning her from shipmasters, and I considered in some respects that she was a bad class of vessel, and *not fit for the voyage upon which she was going*. . . . *I considered her an old trap*."

"Did the sailors object?"—"I had a great deal of trouble in getting them aboard."

"When you considered the vessel to be a bad vessel, did you still endeavour to get them on board?"—"Yes; it was more than I dared do to attempt to back a man out."

"You considered that the sailors, having engaged themselves to go, were obliged to?"—"Yes, or else refuse on the pier to go in her; and if they refused, *there were police officers to take them in charge*." . . .

"What happened to this ship?"—"She was lost!"

"I thought that you engaged for her?" "A part of them on the first occasion. I had not then seen the vessel; and, after engaging the men, it was my duty to see them again aboard at the time of sailing, and that was when I first saw the vessel."

If these facts do not stir the hearts of my fellow-countrymen, no words of mine will; but, in that case, England will have become false to all her history, and all faith in her destiny will have died out of my heart.

I leave it to God.

SAMUEL PLIMSOLL.