

IN THIS TALE JACK LONDON'S SEA EXPERIENCE IS USED WITH ALL THE POWER OF HIS VIRILE PEN



THE STORY OF A MAN WHO IN HIS OWN LITTLE WORLD ABOARD SHIP WAS A LAW UNTO HIMSELF

The SEA WOLF
BY JACK LONDON

They shook their heads, and someone made a jocular remark which I did not catch, but which raised a general laugh.

The captain shrugged his shoulders. "Then we'll drop him over without any palvering, unless our clerical-looking castaway has the burial service at sea by heart."

By this time he had swung around and was facing me. "You're a preacher, aren't you?" he asked.

The hunters—there were six of them—to a man, turned and regarded me. I was painfully aware of my likeness to a scarecrow. A laugh went up at my appearance—a laugh that was not lessened or softened by the dead man stretched and grinning on the deck before us; a laugh that was as rough and harsh and frank as the sea itself; that arose out of coarse feelings and blunted sensibilities, from natures that knew neither courtesy nor gentleness.

Wolf Larsen did not laugh, though his gray eyes lighted with a light glint of amusement; and in that moment, having stepped forward quite close to him, I received my first impression of the man himself. The face, the jaw, the chin, the brow, rising to a goodly height and swelling heavily above the eyes—these, while strong in themselves, unusually strong, seemed to speak an immense vigor or virility of spirit that lay behind and beyond and out of sight.

The eyes, wide apart as the true artist's are wide, sheltering under a heavy brow and arched over by thick, black eyebrows, were of baffling, protean gray which was never twice the same; they were eyes that masked the soul with a thousand guises.

But to return. I told him that, unhappily for the burial service, I was not a preacher, when he sharply demanded: "What do you do for a living?"

"Where's that boy? Tell him I want him."

"Yes, sir," and Thomas Muiridge fled swiftly aft and disappeared down another companionway near the wheel. A moment later he emerged, a heavy-set young fellow of eighteen or nine teen, with a glowering, villainous countenance, trailing at his heels.

"What's your name, boy?" "George Leach, sir," came the sullen answer, and the boy's bearing showed clearly that he divined the reason for which he had been summoned.

"Not an Irish name," the captain snapped sharply. "O'Toole or McCarthy would suit your mug a damn sight better."

I saw the young fellow's hands clench and the blood crawl scarlet up his neck. "But let that go," Wolf Larsen continued. "You may have very good reasons for forgetting your name, and I'll like you none the worse for it as long as you toe the mark. Telegraph Hill, of course, is your port of entry. It sticks out all over your mug. Tough as they make them and twice as nasty, I know the kind. Well, you can make up your mind to have it taken out of you on this craft. Under stand? Who shipped you, anyway?"

"McCready and Swanson, sir." "Who got the advance money?" "They did, sir."

"I thought as much. And damned glad you were to let them have it. Couldn't make yourself scarce too quick, with several gentlemen who may have heard of looking for you."

The boy metamorphosed into a savage on the instant. His body bunched together as though for a spring, and his face became as an infuriated beast's as he snarled, "It's a—"

deck alongside the corpse on his head and shoulders, where he lay and writhed about in agony.

"Well?" Larsen asked of me, "have you made up your mind?"

I had glanced occasionally at the approaching schooner, and it was now almost abreast of us and not more than a couple of hundred yards away. It was a very trim and neat little craft. I could see a large, black number on one of its sails, and I had seen pictures of pilot boats.

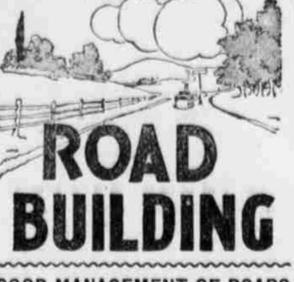
"What vessel is that?" I asked. "The pilot-boat Lady Mine," Wolf Larsen answered grimly. "Got rid of her pilots and running into San Francisco. She'll be there in five or six hours with this wind."

"Will you please signal it, then, so that I may be put ashore?" "Sorry, but I've lost the signal book overboard," he remarked, and the group of hunters grinned.

I debated for a moment, looking him squarely in the eyes. I had seen the frightful treatment of the cabin-boy, and knew that I should very probably receive the same, if not worse. As I said, I debated with myself, and then I did what I consider the bravest act of my life. I ran to the side, waving my arms and shouting:

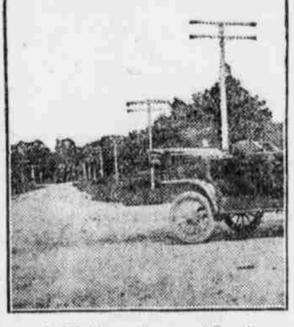
"Lady Mine ahoy! Take me ashore! A thousand dollars if you take me ashore!"

I waited, watching two men who stood by the wheel, one of them steering. The other was lifting a megaphone to his lips. I did not turn my head, though I expected every moment a killing blow from the human brute behind me. At last, after what seemed centuries, unable longer to stand the strain, I looked around. He had not moved. He was standing in the same position, swaying easily to the roll of the ship and lighting a fresh cigar.



ROAD BUILDING
GOOD MANAGEMENT OF ROADS

Road Specialists of Department of Agriculture Place Blame for Defects in Highways.



When a county builds a good road, and soon lets it become rutty, washed out, or uneven, who or what is principally to blame? As a result of a study of conditions in a number of counties, road specialists of the department are inclined to place the responsibility upon the following defects in road management, some or all of which are found in all counties where good roads are not properly repaired and maintained:

1. County boards, although having full administrative authority, appear not to attach to their official action in road matters the importance or legal effect which it should have.

2. County boards do not generally have sufficient accounting control of road funds to know what is available for any particular project, where funds have been or where existing balances are to be expended.

3. Lack of any systematic practice in handling road funds among most counties makes it very difficult to carry out over even a single year any persistent maintenance policy, because funds officially obligated for maintenance purposes are not protected against sporadic and irregular drafts for miscellaneous purposes.

4. Local labor available for maintenance work is made dissatisfied by the constant, unintelligent, and unfavorable criticism of those using the road.

VICTORY
A sense of freedom from all annoying after-eating distress can only be experienced when the digestive system is strong and working harmoniously. Such a condition can be promoted by careful diet and the assistance of

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SURE HE KNEW HER NAME

Betty's Indignant Outburst, However, Came at a Time That Was Most Inopportune.

A Scottish minister was once busy catechizing his young parishioners before the congregation, when he put the usual first question to a girl whose father kept a drinking place.

"What is your name?" "The question having been repeated, the girl replied: 'Name o' your fun, sir; ye ken my name weel enough. D'ye no' say when ye come tae our hoose at night, 'Betty, bring me some toddy?'"

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WHERE LITTLE MEN WIN OUT
As a Rule They Have Much More Assurance Than Their Fellows Who Are Big.

As a rule, big men are shy and lacking in assurance. A daughter of the gods, divinely tall, fills them with something like terror. The woman who appeals to them is usually some sparkling, vivacious, fairylite creature with kittenish ways and roguish glances. The little man, on the contrary, is seldom burdened with humility. He is a being of great aspirations and stupendous ambitions; he believes in himself, which is the reason why he generally can get the woman of his choice to smile upon him. The dainty, veiled, Titianlike woman possesses no charm for him.

"A nice little thing," he says of such a one. "Fall in love with her? Oh, no! She isn't grown up enough to inspire the tender passion."

He likes a woman to be one or two inches his superior and thoroughly mature. He dreads any trace of the bread-and-butter schoolgirl. His ideal resembles the strong, heroic woman Shakespeare has pictured, full-blooded and vital, full of character and spirit, with a fair spice of temper.



I Saw the Young Fellow's Hands Clench.

some task of sewing up the corpse. "Johansen, do you know anything about navigation?" "No, sir."

"Well, never mind; you're mate just the same. Get your traps aft into the mate's berth."

WIDE TIRES IMPROVE ROADS
They Have Same Effect on Country Highways as a Roller on Plowed Field—Wagon Pulls Easier.

The following appeared in a recent issue of "Extension News Service," published by the University of Nebraska.

Wide tires build up roads and save horse labor, according to the department of agricultural engineering at the university farm. They have the same effect upon a country road as a roller on a plowed field. On the other hand, the narrow tire cuts up a road like a disk. It has been found by actual test in this department that the wide-tired wagon pulls easier in nearly all cases than the narrow-tired wagon. In deep mud on a country road the wide-tired wagon pulls 6.2 per cent easier. On the country road with a thin surface of mud or deep dust, however, the narrow tires pull 4.9 per cent easier. In a cornfield the wide tires pull 38.5 per cent easier in a dry alfalfa field 17.7 per cent easier, and on a dry country road 10.2 per cent easier.

Fruit Trees Along Roadside. I. H. Taylor recommends the planting of fruit trees for shade along country roads. He suggests that the owner of a row of maple trees gets no fruit from them, and that he might plant fruit trees in the same spirit, letting travelers have what they desired as they passed along. It is not uncommon to meet with a nice apple, pear or cherry tree now along country roads, but in the vicinity of cities, where boys are numerous, they play havoc with such trees.

CHAPTER III.

Wolf Larsen ceased swearing as suddenly as he had begun. He relighted his cigar and glanced around. His eyes chanced upon the cook.

"Well, Cooky?" he began, with a suaveness that was cold and of the temper of steel.

The Cockney popped out of the galley.

W. N. U., OMAHA, NO. 52-1915.