

THE IOLA REGISTER.

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IOLA, KANSAS.

THE SWEDISH WIFE.

In the State House at Augusta, Me., is a bunch of cedar shingles made by a Swedish woman, the wife of one of the earliest settlers of New Sweden...

Against the wall stands the idle wheel, Unfinished the thread upon spindle and reel, The empty cards are crooked; But night to the moon shines the wife, With cleaver and mallet—so brave and blithe, She tears no famine or frost.

Neatly and close are the shingles laid, Bound in a bunch—then, undiscovered, The Swedish wife, who waked in bed, "Be patient, my darling, be patient, my dear, I go to the town and you shall have bread, Ere the day has reached its close."

Eight miles she trudged—'twas a weary way; The road was rough and the sky grew gray; With the wind in the quarter of the north, Bent were her shoulders beneath their load, But high was her heart, for love was the goal That urged her on to the town.

Ere the sun went down was her promise kept, The little ones feasted before they slept; While the Swedish wife, who waked in bed, Prayed softly, with tears and murmurs low, That his household darlings might never know A lack of their daily bread.

—Mrs. H. G. Rowland in Child's Companion.

BEWITCHED IN MID-OCEAN.

"Three the brinded cat hath mowed." Old superstitions, like old religions, take a great deal of killing. About no four-footed creature have men been so tenacious as the cat, from the fine deity of Egypt, and the gaunt grimalkin of the witches, to the tame tabby of our fireplaces.

It is difficult, however, to believe in the quarter of the nineteenth century and among sane Englishmen, pussy should ever be an object of fear and veneration. Yet hear the story of my friend, the Captain of the Seawee, recently come into port after an unusually stormy and strange passage from Baltimore.

We had a capital run for several days. After dropping down the river we gave her sheet across the cold belt of water that lies along the coast, and we wished "into the stream and away along it."

"Jack," says I to the mate, who has sailed with me in the Seawee a many years, "home in thirty days."

"Humph," said Jack, "maybe." Jack was a Scotchman, and cautious about an opinion. Well, on March 14 (I have reason to remember the date), a little after twelve o'clock, in latitude forty-one north and longitude fifty-three west, I had just taken our bearings and remember 'em, I was sweeping around with my glass careless like when I sighted a ship on our starboard bow. I had a good look; she was bark and was flying signals of distress. I called Jack.

"Jack," said I, when he had looked, "what do you think? We must bear down on her, I suppose."

"Humph," said Jack. "Ay, I suppose." We shortened sail and bore down. We came within hail, but nobody answered from the bark. Presently, though, a boat was launched and pulled toward us; but their pulling was too fast for me, and I was gone.

Then a man stood up in the middle of the boat, tugged his coat off and waved it, and sang out "Aho! Aho!" in a half-crazed kind of voice. This was strange, and I tramped up and down, impatient to hear what they wanted.

"We are starving!" That's what the Captain that stood up in the middle said. "We are starving," said he, "I'm a sailor of Plymouth, outward bound for Baltimore."

We got 'em up the side. I took the master into the cabin and sent the men for 'ard. I led to see that man drink and eat. With a delicious eagerness, as you might say, and yet afraid to eat too fast or too much, he kept me to keep in his awful appetite and still it would keep a breaking from him. He told us this story in scraps between they had been provisioned for three months, and that was their last day when they were wrecked.

"There's the weather that has experienced had been most peculiar; sometimes blowing this way, sometimes that, often not blowing at all. I think I was wrecked here before they sighted Cape Henry, and when they did down came a furious, sprawling nor'wester and drove 'em out to sea again. And so they had beaten about in adverse winds of course for their last day, and their last scrap of biscuit went five days ago. Then they came to cooking their boots and sucking the oil from the lamps—even from the binnacle.

"Ay, sir, there be," said Dick Sandys, an old seaman who had been standing by all the while helping to haul up the boat by the davit line and keeping, as I had observed, a sidelong eye on the basket. "There's them aboard this here Seawee, and I'll straight off begin to think the rare luck of this present v'rage is gone. But they'll dread worse luck, sir, if ye throw overboard a brinded cat as has been carried aboard across water."

"Is that so?" asked Jack. "Yes," said I, in a low voice. "I've heard that before. But," said I aloud, and looking at Dick and trying to work off my uneasiness in a joke, "how can you have a 'sea' or any other 'new' without a cat?"

"This cat," said Jack, "scarcely looks as if she would mew again. Just look at her—skin and bone."

My little Maggie had waked her up with stroking, and the wretched creature tried to stand and to walk, rubbing against Maggie's

leg. But she fell over again and again. Jack caught the animal up and sniffed her breath, while she gave an averted look, which to me seemed almost human.

"She'll mow," cried Jack. "If they haven't mowed her, mow, so that she should come here quiet! Did ye ever see a cat like her?"

When Maggie carried the cat into the cabin I tramped up and down the deck, more uneasy I cared to let myself know. It was so (as I told Jack) that I was a believer in those superstitions about cats which many sailors still encourage, but because I knew what desperate work it would be, if anything should happen, to keep a hand a crew that had given themselves up.

It was just getting on in the afternoon, and I was still tramping to and fro, when that cat jumped on deck, with Maggie after it. It pushed its nose over the water, mewed. It leaped back to the deck, and ran along toward the fore-cabin and round the cabin, and stopped and mewed again. It ran back and forth, and looked round and round, mewing a third time; and its mewing was loud and distressful, as if it wanted to be let out or let in.

Maggie followed, calling "Puss, puss! poor puss!" and there was I, and she, and Maggie, and all the crew looking on and wondering at the creature's movements and cries. There were peculiar one-sided glances and head shakes. I saw, exchanged by the men, a look of alarm, and I turned to walk up and down as before, having first lit my pipe. What did that cat do but trot off at my heels, looking up at me with a kind of bitter sneer, as if I were the cause of its misery?

"Catch it, Maggie," I said, "and give it something to eat."

"I've given it something, father," said Maggie, "and it won't eat it. But maybe it's mowed." And she managed to seize and carry it off.

Now, standing still, I noticed that the smoke of my pipe, instead of being blown away, was curling slowly about my head, raising a little fog, and that I had a kind of dizzy feeling, as if I were not quite myself. I did not like these signs. There was a change working round in the weather; of which, let me tell you, the glass had given no warning.

"Your father has thrown her into the sea, missy," said one of the men. "And what'll come of it, God knows."

"How exasperated I was with that man! 'O'd better out for'ard, you men,' was all I said, however. But, before any of us had time to stir, the crest of a wave, like a great white flying mane, flung itself in my arms and drenched me. I was in my arms, and she said nothing, but looked at me in a way that cut to the heart; her gaze was frightened and half turned away. I had no word to say for myself.

I changed my mind, and she turned to her berth. She shivered and shuddered with her head under the bedclothes. For a little she peeped out and said to me: "When you are some day angry with me, will you not bear it?"

"I could not bear it," "O, Maggie, my child, my darling!" I cried, taking her in my arms; "don't talk and look like that. The cat was a bad cat, and brought us ill-luck and bad weather."

"I thought," said Maggie, simply, "it was God made the weather." I was silent. After a pause she cried: "I want my pussy back, father. Get it back. It was not bad, and I liked it."

"I wish, my dear," I said, "I could bring you it back."

Was it a mew I heard, and a scratching, or was it the wind above, and the thud on the water at the port-hole? Maggie had heard it, too; she sat up and her eyes were fixed on the port-hole. With some difficulty I pulled it open and in scrambled the cat!

I was never more delighted by the sight of anything than I was by the return of that poor, half-drowned cat. Such a weight of guilt was lifted off me! I felt almost like a little boy again, there, with my little girl beside me, and I was so glad to see her, that I forgot the poor, outraged creature! I confessed to you truly the tears came to my eyes. Maggie kissed it and cuddled it, all wet and shivering as it was, the brave little swimmer! I went to the cook and ordered all hands to be put to bed, and I prepared a snug little bed for the cabin stove, and poor grateful pussy licked my hand.

"Captain! Captain!" I heard eagerly whispered from the top of the cabin steps, "she's not here, and I've ordered all hands to go—after a glance at Maggie, with a shawl about her, sitting down by her recovered pussy—when the cook stumbled hurriedly down into the cabin, his whispering in terror to me, and to the skipper, and they're mad! They've knocked Dick down for standing up for you, and they're sure, as you threw the cat overboard, the only way to save the ship is to throw you after it! They're coming!"

And before another word could be said, or anything done, they were come. I suppose they at once suspected the cook of being in the wrong; for I had just turned to my berth, and I stood before them with what calmness I had; though I felt my cheek pale and my blood tingling to see all the desperate crew crowded in before me. They were not drunk; they were not angry; they were not mad; they were just the crew of a merchant-ship; their faces were bloodshot and resolute.

"What is the meaning of this, my men?" I asked firmly. "Mutiny?"

At the dreaded word they quailed a little, but they were not to be so easily cowed. I had drowned the cat, and who seemed the ringleader—made a step forward and said he was an ugly sail of a man, with something like a squint, but he could speak to the point: "I'm mutiny, Captain, and I'm mutiny."

"I'm mutiny," said he, "but that cat has the devil in her, as sure as David. But look at her! Bowser, we must just set her adrift again, and rier in this time."

"Now," said I, "I won't allow a hair of that cat to be touched again. And I advise all you men to clear out of this at once, or I'll have you all put in the stocks, and mutiny!" I spoke in a loud, commanding tone, to rouse Jack, who was in his berth close by.

"O, you will, will you?" said Bowser, now smarting under the rebellious spirit manifest to him, and suggestively lowering his head and drawing up his sleeve from his right wrist; I felt sure he had his knife handy. "If it's to be reckoned mutiny, my man, why make me a mutiny?" I asked him, and he came forward. I caught the gleam of the knife; I had no weapon; I threw my cap in his face, and next instant floored him with my fist. At this juncture, as I was about to strike Maggie, she uttered a burst Jack, half-dressed, revolver in hand.

"Hallo! Eh! What's this?" he cried. I took the revolver from his hand and pointed it among the men, who looked some sulky, some bewildered, but none inclined to follow Bowser's initiative.

"Now," said I, "I give you another chance. Be off at once to the fore-cabin, or—I clicked the trigger of the revolver."

"Ay, ay, Captain," they murmured, and tumbled up to the deck as fast as they could. "We didn't mean no harm, sir," pleaded those who were nearest me, and who were forced to linger.

So, the lubbers! no harm! But if Bill Bowser had struck me down with his knife, they would not have moved a finger or a tongue to save me, or to keep themselves from the crimes of mutiny and murder on the high seas. Yes; that's what your merchant-seamen have come to, now-a-days! As for Bill Bowser, he was, of course, put in irons.

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"Well, sir, we ain't a-blanin' nobody. It's our luck and the trick of that Lily that's bound to be our luck wif that there cat aboard; but it's not to be expected as how we'll take a meek and mild. Well, ye see, sir, they say worse luck if ye throw her overboard." Jack so. But now this is what we're thinking: Suppose you set her adrift in an old tub.

This dark suggestion he conveyed in a low voice, with his hand to the side of his mouth, and I glanced round to make sure the cat was not within hearing. Then he looked at me with a steady wistful eye; his mates fidgeted and looked over the ship's sides, as though they felt ashamed of the plot to which they had given their adherence.

I considered a moment. I had, of course, no real belief that getting rid of the cat thus would give us a fair wind; yet still it was

worth trying; it involved only the sacrifice of the cat, and if it did not change the wind, it would at least change the looks of my crew. But what would my little Maggie say? How would she feel at seeing her cat adrift?

"You can try it," said I. "I give you full leave—though, mark you, I don't believe in the nonsense. But get hold of it without my little girl seeing you."

"Ay, ay, sir," they said. "It was a bad night. The wind whistled in ropes and cords, and spars and rigging creaked wearily. The broken water every now and then came swash on our bulwarks, and I believe me, it's better ashore than at sea! The cat was got and put into the tub, and over she went into the darkness and the rush and hiss of the mighty waters with a dreadful mew, that clattered on board."

I was glad I did not see the men's faces. I felt—I don't know what. Then I went aft a step or two till I was close to the wheel and looking astern. I had stood maybe a minute or more, when lo! and behold! I saw just where the mince light fell on the bulwarks the head and the staring eyes of that cat! I dashed forward just on the impulse. It was clambering on board!

"Down, you brute!" I cried, pushing at it. God! how it clawed into the wood! "Down, you wretch! you devil!"

It mewed terribly, and held on with every claw, but—yes, yes! it was furious, half-frenzied hands—I tore it away and flung it out. I had not noticed that the men had come about me. "Ah! save and deliver us, sir!" said Dick at my elbow. "You've done for us now! Lord kink!"

In the feeble light I saw his companions' faces staring on me with a ghastly terror. I felt now like a fool and a criminal. Dick had barely done speaking, and I had just turned round when the white figure appeared. It was my little Maggie.

"Father," she whispered, "where are you? I heard my pussy mew and I can't find her. Where is she? Have you seen my pussy, father?"

"Your father has thrown her into the sea, missy," said one of the men. "And what'll come of it, God knows."

"How exasperated I was with that man! 'O'd better out for'ard, you men,' was all I said, however. But, before any of us had time to stir, the crest of a wave, like a great white flying mane, flung itself in my arms and drenched me. I was in my arms, and she said nothing, but looked at me in a way that cut to the heart; her gaze was frightened and half turned away. I had no word to say for myself.

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Was it a mew I heard, and a scratching, or was it the wind above, and the thud on the water at the port-hole? Maggie had heard it, too; she sat up and her eyes were fixed on the port-hole. With some difficulty I pulled it open and in scrambled the cat!

I was never more delighted by the sight of anything than I was by the return of that poor, half-drowned cat. Such a weight of guilt was lifted off me! I felt almost like a little boy again, there, with my little girl beside me, and I was so glad to see her, that I forgot the poor, outraged creature! I confessed to you truly the tears came to my eyes. Maggie kissed it and cuddled it, all wet and shivering as it was, the brave little swimmer! I went to the cook and ordered all hands to be put to bed, and I prepared a snug little bed for the cabin stove, and poor grateful pussy licked my hand.

"Captain! Captain!" I heard eagerly whispered from the top of the cabin steps, "she's not here, and I've ordered all hands to go—after a glance at Maggie, with a shawl about her, sitting down by her recovered pussy—when the cook stumbled hurriedly down into the cabin, his whispering in terror to me, and to the skipper, and they're mad! They've knocked Dick down for standing up for you, and they're sure, as you threw the cat overboard, the only way to save the ship is to throw you after it! They're coming!"

And before another word could be said, or anything done, they were come. I suppose they at once suspected the cook of being in the wrong; for I had just turned to my berth, and I stood before them with what calmness I had; though I felt my cheek pale and my blood tingling to see all the desperate crew crowded in before me. They were not drunk; they were not angry; they were not mad; they were just the crew of a merchant-ship; their faces were bloodshot and resolute.

SCHOOL AND CHURCH.

—The King of Congo has been immersed, on profession of his faith in the Christian religion.

—Pere Hyacinthe is coming to this country soon, and will give a series of conferences in the chief cities.

—Princeton Theological Seminary has just received \$100,000 from a lady who does not allow her name to be published.

—The will of the widow of ex-President Fillmore leaves public bequests to the amount of \$50,000, among which is \$20,000 to the University of Rochester, N. Y.

—The Claflin University for colored students at Orangeburg, S. C., has had during the past year 388 pupils in its three departments. Tuition is free and the courses are thorough.

—The Shaw Memorial School in Charleston, S. C., transferred to the School Commissioners of Charleston by agreement with the trustees of the Shaw monument fund, has received from the city since the transfer in July, 1874, nearly \$45,000, while Mrs. Shaw has continued her private gifts from time to time.