'em. We'd only have to beat up the waterfront—and volunteers they'd come a running, Bud, from every joint and dancehall—enough to run a battleship, in no time, yes, Sir. Why, Bud, even that squash head of a piano player would a come if we'd a-t him."

"H-m-m—you surely think well of people, Baldy."

"No more strain than to think bad of 'em. But what'd be the use? Us two an' old Pete, who's sleepin' aboard, c'n run her, Bud."

And they had put out in the Whist, and now down in the combined engine and fireroom of her were Harty and old Pete toiling to keep steam up. A notorious little craft, the Whist, one of those legacies that sometimes fall to the service,—the department always going to fix her up, and always putting it off until the next appropriation. Her old boilers leaked, and in a seaway her old seams gaped, and, what between keeping steam up and her bilge pumped out, Harty and Pete could hardly find time to brace their feet whenever she attempted, as she did every fifteen seconds, to heave them across the floor.

At the wheel of the Whist was Baldwin, and with every dive of the plunging Whist the spray scattered high above her bows and through the open windows of the pilothouse it came in barrels, and not a spoonful of it, to Baldwin's thinking, that didn't go to his drenching.

"But it's a good thing to get good an' wet at first," he also reflected. "Then you won't be worryin' any more about it."

It was not only wet, but cold. But naturally, too, when you're a wrecking to sea of a cold winter's night you've just got to expect a few little discomforts.

The ancient Whist rolled down, down, down, and jumped up, up, up; but mostly she went down, and while she was down the swooping seas piled over her. However, all right so far: an hour now since she had left the breakwater, and there she was still afloat. No telling always about those wheezy little wrecks of tugs. Baldwin looked out and back toward her stern, almost with pride. Going since the Civil War, she'd been, and still afloat. Must have been some little original virtues in her planks that pleased old Neptune, and so he passed her up. Maybe she'd never been caught in the open seas on a night like this—well, maybe not; but you betcher she wasn't afraid of it.

"That's Him!" Cried Bowen, Then Plunged Overboard.

Straight out from the breakwater Baldwin kept her going,—slow, heavy, pounding work. And now two hours gone, and no lightship yet! He swung her about, a ticklish feat, and paralleled the beach to the north, and just off the beach, after an hour on that course, he spied the distress signals; two, three, yes, and four big torches.

THE countless white-plumed riders were charging by; but straight for the drifting lights, straight down the line of roaring troopers, Baldwin paraded his little Whist. And when he was near enough, "We'll heave you a line!" he hailed. "And in God's name get it; for there mayn't be a chance for a second one afore the breakers'll get you!"

He placed his mouth to the engineroom tube. "Ho-o, Buddy! On deck with your line now!"

"All right, Baldy." Harty turned to his working mate. "So long, Pete; see you later."

"So long, Son, and have a care on that open deck."

Harty climbed the iron ladder to the deck, shouldered his way through the wind-pressed door and on to the deck, and started aft.

It was cold. Under his thin suit of dungaree Harty was rolling in sweat. The winter wind whipped him like a cat-o'-nine-tails. An overcoat or a peajacket would have felt pretty good; but his arm would not then be so free to heave a line. He crept aft, coiled his heaving line, and waited in the stern for the word. She was jumping so that to hold his feet on her open, icy after deck he was compelled to hook one hand to the towing bitts.

"Only time for one try; so don't let nothing go wrong. An' watch out for any of those big fellows comin' aboard, Bud," came Baldwin's last warning.

ON Lightship 67, drifting broad on to the breakers, all hands were perched high in her rigging, safe above any stray seas; all but Nelson and Bowen, who were hanging to her weather rail forward.

Bowen was first to realize what the figure on the after end of the tug meant to them. "Heave for here!" he shouted, and Nelson, also awake to the situation, held up one of the torches for a mark.

Nearer and nearer butted the tug. "Stand by!" they heard the call from the forward end of her. Looking up, they could see the shadow against the pilothouse light. "By!" came the echo, and the man astern stepped on her open quarter and balanced himself to heave.

A note in that answering voice caught Bowen's ear. "Nelson, that's not one of the tug's regular crew?"

"I don't know. I don't t'ink; but he ban a foolish man," replied Nelson. "He should lash himself."

"Stand by with the line!" came again.

"By!" echoed tensely from astern.

"Ready!"

"All ready!"

"When she lifts! Now-w—"

From the top of a sea the line came whistling down to the lightship rail. "I'll take it!" called Bowen, and, loosening his hold of the stay, he reached out and caught the flying line to his breast. "A good throw," he muttered, and hauled it in.

The hawser followed the heaving line, and Nelson and Bowen, with lifelines about them, bent the stubborn end of it around the windlass. It was heavy work, even for two men, on the tumbling, slippery deck, and that done they turned anxiously to see how the man in the stern of the tug was making out. He was there, back to, bending the thick, stubborn bight about the towing bitts with slow, heavy motions. They saw a great sea break over him, and another; but when the seas were past, there he was still working away.

"Won't he never make him fast?" wailed Nelson.

"Give him time," snapped Bowen. "He's doing well. He's got to do it right. If his end came loose, where would we be? Give him time."

Nelson looked significantly shoreward. "Time?"

"How's she coming, Bud?"

"Bud," repeated Bowen to himself, "Bud?"

"Wa-a-tch out!" Even above the ocean's roar they could hear on the lightship the warning from the pilothouse to the man in the stern of the tug. A tremendous sea; and over she went, the little Whist, over—over—over until her sidelights were under. There she held for a moment, started to rise, and then the following sea caught her and overbore her once more. That time she rolled low enough to take salt water down her funnel.

She came back—after a time. Up, up, nobly; but when they again looked from the lightship they could see no figure in her stern. Bowen leaned far over the lightship's rail. Nothing there. He called to Nelson for the torch, and Nelson let it flare out over the water.

Then Bowen saw him. Almost under the bow of the lightship he was, and the big torch was throwing a light like blood on his face.

"It is him!" cried Bowen.

"What iss?" demanded the puzzled Nelson, and then under the light he too saw the face in the tossing waters.

Bowen, with a lifeline under his arms, plunged overboard. But he fell short. He heard a sound as of a man's voice smothering, saw a hand raised and lowered, and then into the tossing blackness the lone figure was swept.

Nelson hauled Bowen aboard. When he found strength to breathe, he said:

"God, Nelson! It was Harty!"

"Harty, wass it? I don't know him; but he was one goot man."

THE big hawser strained and groaned, chocks and bitts crooned their song of stress, the wind whistled its dirge, while out from the breakers the Whist hauled her tow.

At the wheel of the tug, Baldwin glanced ahead and behind, pointed her nose for the breakwater, gave her four bells and the jingle, put his mouth to the tube, and answered, "Yes, Pete, that's right—'twas Bud went. And now it's up to you, Son. Keep steam on her, and if the hawser holds and nothing else happens she oughter to stagger home."

Nothing more happened, and the Whist staggered home. The morning light saw her safe in the navy yard with the lightship moored alongside.

Bowen stepped from the lightship to the tug. Up in the pilothouse he found Baldwin. The sailor was staring through a window out to sea. Bowen waited.

Baldwin turned inboard at last. "I s'pose you're wonderin' how we knew. Well, 'twas Bud passed me the word, and more than that 'twas Bud broke me out of as promisin' a little game as ever a man sat into. Chips? Enough to fill my service cap afore me, and not all white chips either! And he comes along, and just the same as yanks me up by the collar an' says, 'You got to go!' and I had to. And of course where I go Pete goes."

"And a game thing, Baldwin."

"Game nothing! It's our trade—Pete's and mine. But it wasn't Bud's. But he was bound to go. And he went under, and when I woke up to it he was gone. I looked out. The sea was still rolling up to the clouds. I sticks my head out the window to cool it, and to myself I says, 'If there was only somebody else in this watch so I could take five minutes off somewhere and lie down and cry!' That's the way I felt about it. Yes, Sir, if it wasn't for you felluhs behind and good old Pete below, I believe I'd let everything go. Yes, Sir, Government property or no, I'd a let the old Whist roll up on the beach and been glad to roll up with her. And Bud—" Baldwin came suddenly to a full stop, and stared out to sea. After a time he turned to Bowen. "You saw him go?"

"I did. And that time I grabbed for him and he went by me, he half turned and looked at me, and I thought he said 'It's all right!' Just that, when the sea washed over him, and when he came up again it was as though he thought I didn't understand, and he waved one arm. It was like he was saying 'Goodby!' the way he did it. Yes, he was all right—Harty."

"You betcher he was all right—an' more than all right! An' 's f'r that, it's a poor specimen that ain't all right when it comes to a showdown. I've known Bud—I can't remember when I didn't know Bud Harty. And, Bowen, he was a better man than you or me. Bud always let you see the worst of himself; but you had to guess at the best of him. And he sure could hate a man; but, Son, he could like you a lot better than ever he hated you."

The two men sat and looked out to sea in silence. At last Baldwin, with a heavy sigh, stood up, and, reaching into a locker, brought forth a bottle and two glasses. "I s'pose we oughter try to forget it for awhile. This stuff here, it's against regulations havin' it aboard; but lots of things are against regulations that never hurt anybody. It was against regulations our takin' out the Whist last night, and when the Commandant's back I reckon I'll get mine. This here," he laid a forefinger on his rating badge, "and me we've been shipmates for fifteen years; that is, off and on—mostly off. An' I reckon I'm due to be detached again. But let that pass. You don't mind being disrated after you get used to it. But you an' me an' Bud wasn't the best of friends since—well, you know when; but you're goin' to drink for him now the toast he wouldn't drink last night, but the

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