

A DOOMED SHIP.

Out on the broad blue ocean, not far from the equator, thousands of miles from any land, lying motionless on a calm sea, was a dismantled ship. Nothing remained of her but masts and spars but the mizen mast, the bowsprit and jib and flying jib-booms. From the mizen topmast and cross-jack yards hung a few ragged scraps of canvas, and out at the far ends of the flying jib-boom depended part of the stay and some fragments of a sail, torn and rent, just as it had been after the fierce gale which had rendered this gallant ship so helpless a wreck. Not a breath of wind was stirring in the heavens; not a cloud was in the deep blue sky; not a ripple on the sea, and the sun, almost vertical, was shining on a calm sea almost vertical. All was silent. The sun was pouring down its fierce tropical rays on the blistered deck and on the vast, calm sea. There she lay, a spectral ship upon a silent ocean. There was not a sign of life on board; not a sound of life could be heard, except now and again when a swirl of water made the rudder-chairs rattle and creak, as the wheel moved a few spokes backward and forward, or when an albatross flapped up from the sea, hovering over the ship and then flew away into the distance. The days passed slowly, as many days had passed; the sun began to sink lower and lower in the western sky, and once more, like a cool-red shield, it sat in the bosom of the ocean, leaving behind it a flood of ruddy light, which tinged the sky with its ensanguined hues, and these, reflected in the water beneath, caused the ship to appear as if she was floating in a sea of blood. The crimson faded into orange and pink, and then into gray, and then the shadows of evening stole slowly over the scene; then one by one the stars came out and streaked the whole of the cloudless firmament. Suddenly there came from the cuddy-window a stream of light and a man's face and emaciated person peered out on the deserted deck. A few minutes afterward another gleam of light shot from a small aperture in the door of the forecastle deck house and two eyes—red, reddish-brown eyes—also peered cautiously out. These two men had been for days waiting for each other's death. They were the captain and mate of the vessel, who, when the crew had taken to the boats had refused to desert her. For days and weeks—how many they had no idea, for they had lost all count of time—they had been alone on the pathless deep. At first they had made out their situation, day by day hoping and expecting that succor would come and they should be rescued. They had put themselves on short allowance of both food and water, but now the food was nearly consumed, the water was quite exhausted, so that they had nothing left that was drinkable but a few bottles of wine and brandy. To the torture of hunger and thirst—thirst which neither wine nor brandy would quench, but rather intensify. Anything more horrible than their situation cannot be imagined and the dreadful conviction was being forced upon them that they must die. This was the state of affairs three days previous to the opening of this story. The captain was sitting with his eyes apparently closed, and the mate was watching him with eager, hungry eyes. Up to this point the mate had been the more hopeful of the two, but now he had abandoned himself to despair. No succor could reach them, he knew, while the calm lasted, but this was not the thought that was haunting his mind. "One of them must die—the other one would be the preservation of the other." This was the mental refrain which, as it were, formed the chorus to every other thought. "The death of one would be the preservation of the other." He sat there eyeing the captain with a diabolical leer. He was no longer a man; he was a demon. Suddenly he started up. By a revulsion of feeling, which is not common in such cases, he had passed from helpless dependency into furious delirium. With a hoarse cry he had sprung at the captain, brandishing a long knife in his hand. A fierce struggle ensued; it was sharp and short, and the mate, after being disarmed, was pushed forward and fell violently upon the deck. Captain Dunnett, brandishing a long knife in his hand, and had been so inclined, could have dispatched the mate with ease; but he contented himself with disarming him, threw the knife into the sea, retreated to the cabin and locked the door. The mate after this grew more furious, and after vainly attempting to enter the cabin withdrew to the forecastle and took up his abode there; and for three days he had been waiting and watching for the captain's death. To be buried alive has been thought to be beyond question the most fearful of all deaths; but it is doubtful if the long drawn agonies which were being endured by these two men were not the more painful of the two. "How long how long can this last?" asked Captain Dunnett, as he sat and gazed out into the night. A painful sort of apathy was stealing over him. He had no longer any wish to live. If death were coming his only prayer was that it might come quickly. Slowly, minute by minute, the life was ebbing out of him; and as surely, with a tortoise-like gradualness, the night crept on. The moon had risen, and now in full-orbed splendor, was riding high in the heavens, casting a long waste of silvery light on the placid sea, which danced and flickered rapturously in the distance. The two lights still gleamed on the deck, and the two watchers still watched on. Meanwhile nature had not been idle. Away in the distant horizon great masses of fleecy clouds began to pile themselves one above another, gradually extending themselves across the northern heavens. The cloud-packing went on for more than half an hour, accompanied by the puffs of wind which now and again ruffled the waters. The sky every minute grew darker and the clouds more dense; wild flashes of lightning shot across the sky and there were mutterings of thunder in the distance. The silent watcher in the cuddy saw nothing and heard nothing of this. His head had sunk heavily on his bosom and he slept. Suddenly there was a noise beneath the deck like the scratching of a rat; then slowly and noiselessly the ruddy hatch under the table was lifted and through the aperture a head with curly red hair and fierce eyes appeared. They were those of Jarvis, the mate. After pausing to see that all was clear he stood his hands on the deck and then, with a supreme effort, he silently lifted himself into a sitting posture and again he paused to listen. He could hear the regular breathing of his companion as he sat sleeping peacefully, and a grim smile of satisfaction passed across his wild and haggard face. Silently and stealthily he crawled clear of the table and then stood erect on his feet. His eyes glared wildly and his breath came quick and short as he drew a knife from his bosom and poised himself to strike. All unconscious of his peril, Capt. Dunnett slept on. He had no idea of danger from such a quarter, no idea that the mate had for two days past been laboring with maniacal patience and tenacity to clear an opening through the cargo, and had at

length succeeded in making his way to the cabin hatch. Jarvis stood over his intended victim, his eyes flashing with diabolical delight; the blow was in the act of descending when his arm was arrested. The cabin was suddenly illuminated with a blue electric light, and a pool of thunder, loud as the crack of doom, broke over the ship. The maniac stood with his arm raised, as though he had suddenly been paralyzed. The crash of the thunder awoke Capt. Dunnett from his slumbers and he sprang to his feet. He took in the situation at a glance, and flinging himself on his would-be murderer sought to disarm him. The struggle was for dear life, and the mate fought savagely. But at last the captain's superior skill and strength prevailed, and Jarvis was once more at his mercy. "Strike, man, strike!" cried the mate. "It is your life or mine!" "You are mad, Jarvis," exclaimed the captain. "Yes, I am; but strike, man, strike! Put an end to the torture; I can stand no more of it." "No!" cried the captain, throwing him from him. Then he turned and left the cabin, locking the door behind him. Out on the deck a grand and startling sight met his view. The whole of the northern part of the heavens was enveloped in the blackest darkness, while the southern half was clear and bright. The next instant the northern half was ablaze with the most vivid light. But it was not this that caused such excitement in the breast of Captain Dunnett. The central object in this scene was a large brig, not more than a mile and a half distant, bearing down to their succor, under press of canvas. For a second or two he stood rooted to the spot. Then, in a wild transport of joy he threw up his arms and cried: "Saved! Saved! Thank heaven! Thank heaven!" All thoughts of Jarvis's diabolical attempts on his life vanished and in an instant he had unlocked the cuddy door, and, seizing the mate by the arm, dragged him, half stunned and dazed by his fall, out on to the main deck, and as another flash of lightning disclosed the brig again to their view, cried: "There! There! See what a merciful heaven has sent us!" A second or two afterward a vivid flash of lightning moved over the mizen mast; it ran down the mast, which tottered and with a crash fell over the side. With the first crash of thunder that followed, Jarvis rushed toward the side and was in the act of springing into the sea, when Captain Dunnett, seeing him by the collar and flung him violently back on the deck, where he lay stunned and bleeding. The lightning flashed almost incessantly. The wind came in hot puffs. The brig still held on her course. By this time she was within half a mile of them. But suddenly the hot puffs ceased and she lay motionless in the water. All this while Captain Dunnett and the mate, who had soon recovered his consciousness, stood watching her in the agony of suspense. The gloom was rapidly deepening; the clouds were hurrying on; the moon and the stars had all disappeared, and the sky was one vast pall of inky blackness. Broad sheets of lightning now and then shot up from the bottom of the ocean, illuminating the whole mass of sea and clouds with a blue, spectral light, which made the portentous aspect of the heavens more visible, while the silence, when unbroken by the thunder, was solemn and impressive. But what is that curling up from the open hatch in the cabin? It is smoke! The first it came in small wisps; but now it is pouring out in a great volume. The ship is on fire. The lightning which had shivered the mizenmast had descended into the hold and set fire to the cargo, and the conflagration was spreading rapidly. The two men, when they made the discovery, stood appalled with horror. They knew they were standing, as it were, on a volcano, for in the magazine below was stored a quantity of gunpowder, which might explode at any moment and blow the ship to atoms. The smoke belched forth in large volumes and now and again a bright, flickering flame shot up from the hatchway. In another few minutes the flames were pouring into the cuddy and the whole deck was a scene of infernal conflagration, and in less than ten minutes the whole of the aft part of the ship was on fire, the lurid glare lighting up the superincumbent clouds and producing a scene of surpassing grandeur. And now another danger was threatening them. Away in the distance there was a dull, sobbing moan, which each minute became more distinct; the tornado was fast approaching. The last time they had looked at the brig she was lying becalmed, and they had imagined that at the rate the conflagration was extending there was little chance of succor arriving in time to save them, for now the deck was getting hot under their feet, and the fire had extended to the forecastle deck house, but at that moment they were startled by a sharp cry of "Ship ahoy! ship ahoy!" and, looking in the direction from whence the sound came, they saw before them a vessel, with four guns, pulling rapidly toward them. In another minute the welcome sound of "In bow!" was heard, and the boat was alongside. No time was to be lost. The storm was brewing in the north, and if it hit them before they reached the ship their doom was certain. Again, the powder in the hold might explode at any minute, so they hurriedly leaped themselves into the boat and pushed off. While the second mate was retaining the boat and the first mate was making all preparations for the coming gale, and before the boat had got alongside, the sails had been furled and everything made snug. Captain Dunnett and his mate had been kept up by the excitement of the situation, but the moment they were on board the brig they fainted dead off and were taken below in a state of unconsciousness. This had scarcely been accomplished and the quarterboat hoisted up and made fast when the tornado burst upon them with terrific ferocity. For a few minutes they could neither see nor hear anything but the roaring of the tempestuous waters and the howling and thundering of the wind. At first the brig reeled and bent before it; then she rose up and like a furious steed dashed on fantastically in the wake of the burning wreck. It was a scene of grandeur and horror which it would be difficult to equal, and excited awe in every heart. The force of the wind was tremendous, and the two vessels drove on madly before it. The wreck was now one mass of flames, the red glare of which lit up the foaming sea and the sky above, showing the outline of the brig and the faces of her crew with terrible distinctness. The two vessels were running in parallel lines, and were not more than half a mile apart. Suddenly a towering mass of smoke and flame shot up into the sky. This was followed by a terrific report, and then all was darkness. The powder in the magazine had exploded, and that was the last that was ever seen of that poor doomed ship.—All the Year Round.

PEANUTS ARE SCARCE.

The Crop in Virginia Was Almost a Failure, But This Year's is Good. From the Washington Star. "Peanuts are scarcer than I have ever known them before," said a wholesale jobber in that circus delicacy yesterday. "Ordinarily many hundreds of thousands of bushels are raised every year, but from one year to another for the nuts will keep good almost indefinitely. But this season nearly all on hand will be gone when the time arrives, in October, for the gathering of the new crop. You see, last season was a very bad one for peanuts, and the crop was almost a failure in Virginia. "The country depends for its supplies of peanuts chiefly upon Virginia, does it not?" asked the Star reporter. "I think I may fairly say yes. There are 2,500,000 bushels of them grown in that state annually—more, I reckon, than the entire crop of any other crop put together. Tennessee produces about 500,000 bushels, and North Carolina 750,000 bushels. Michigan, Georgia and California raise peanuts largely, but the Virginia peanuts are the finest of all, and bring the highest price. The business of growing them has really become a vast industry in the lower counties of the state, and the areas of farming land devoted to them is becoming larger every year, as the husbandman learns the profit they can be made to yield. The greatest peanut market of the country is Norfolk, Petersburg, second, and Smithfield third. In these towns there are many big factories employed in the business of rendering marketable the nuts that are sent in by the farmers. They are first thoroughly winnowed and screened to cleanse them, and finally are sorted, the bad ones being picked out by young girls, who stand on either side of revolving belts upon which the nuts are tumbled. Afterward they are packed in bags of 50 or 100 pounds each, and shipped to the jobbers in the cities. "How about the peanut crop this fall?" "Our reports say that it promises admirably, both as to quality and quantity. The few we had from Virginia last year were not so good as usual. Prices are going down a trifle every year. Here are a few. You see they are about one-third the size of ordinary peanuts; confectioners use them mostly, because they are sweet. The red ones are the better ones. Take the red Tennessee nut for instance. It has frequently five or six large kernels in one shell, but the meat is rank. California peanuts are big like everything else grown in the State, and they are not bad; but none have come to this market for many years, so far as I know."

A CLEVER FORGERY.

Depositing Money to His Debtor's Credit in Order to Get Out More. From the Indian Planter's Gazette. Some years ago a merchant engaged a broker to dispose of some stock to meet an urgent demand for ready cash. The stock was sold, but the owner had considerable difficulty in getting the sale proceeds from the broker. At last, driven to desperation, the merchant threatened proceedings. The broker, after making a mental calculation, sat down and drew a check for the amount realized on account of the stock sold, less 2 per cent. broker's commission, and handed it to the merchant with many apologies for the delay. After this both parted good friends. The transaction occurred in the early morning, and, as the merchant wanted the money urgently, he presented the check at the bank without delay. Guess his astonishment when the check was handed back to him with the remark, "Insufficient." The merchant was hurrying away from the bank when he met Reid, the detective, coming after him. He stopped the latter and related how he had been "sold" by the broker. "How much short of the amount of your check stands the credit of the broker at the bank?" asked the detective. "I never asked," replied the merchant. "Very good," said Reid, "go back and ascertain." The merchant did so, and soon returned with the reply, "Two hundred rupees." "And the check is for five thousand?" "Yes," was the reply. "Look here," said Reid, "there are half a dozen checks of the broker, and he has only given you this check knowing it would not be paid in order to gain time. He will draw this money himself before the day is out, and probably bolt from his creditors." "What is to be done?" exclaimed the merchant, in blank despair. "Just this," said Reid, as cool as a cucumber; "take a pen and piece of paper and write a hurried scrawl in my dictation; to the Secretary of the Bank. Dear Sir: I have just accidentally discovered that I have drawn a cheque in favor of the broker, and as the money credit at the bank falls short of the amount by Rs. 200. I have sent this sum per bearer to prevent disappointment, should the check be presented during the day." Reid said Reid, as the merchant finished the note, "the broker's initials." The merchant looked up in astonishment. "Never mind," said the officer, "it's to pay money into the bank to a man's credit, though it would be to draw money out under a forged document." This advice overcame the merchant's scruples, and the broker's initials were duly attached to the letter, and the money dispatched to the bank. It was paid in without a question being asked. The check was afterward presented and paid in full. On going down the stairs the merchant met his friend the broker coming up. The latter, on recognizing the former, stopped suddenly, put his hand to his breast pocket and exclaimed: "Good God, I have forgotten my bank book!" He then turned on his heel, hurried from the bank and entering a tea-garret at the door hurriedly wrote a check to draw from the bank the balance at his credit, but seeing the man he had intended to cheat he was afraid to encounter him, never thinking for a moment that the intended cheat had the in his pocket every penny the broker had at his credit. Of course, the merchant lost 200 rupees over the transaction, but, as Reid explained, it was better to lose 200 than 5,000.

Tanning an Elephant Hide.

From the St. James's Gazette. It weighed about 1,200 pounds, and was about an inch and a third thick. After being put into a reservoir of pure water to green it, it was beaten for one hour every day with an iron and a large anvil. After being ten days in pure water it was left for another ten days in water with about four per cent. of salt. Then it was re-pressed in pure water again for 20 days. During these 40 days it was constantly in soak. The head and feet, weighing about 300 pounds, were then removed, and the skin hung on spikes in the drying room. After hanging one day it was put in a vat containing potash and a small quantity of sulphur of sodium in the fol-

lowing proportions: Water, 1,000 parts; slaked lime, 25 parts; potash, three parts; sulphur of sodium, two parts. After being two days in this bath it was rinsed in pure water of a temperature of 30 degrees, when it was again placed in the drying room. After this double operation was repeated three times the skin was ready to have the hair taken off. This operation occupied about one day's time, and gave about seventy-five pounds of hair. Another day was spent in cleaning and scraping. By this time it lost 30 per cent of its weight. The operation of its preparation lasted two months, and it went through the same course as cowhide, with the difference that each phase of the work took three times as much time. The skin should be stretched in the pit and placed in the middle of cowhide. Six layers of powder are then thrown in: two first, two second, and two third layers. Altogether the tanning takes three years. The partition of time is thus: Becoming green, 40 days; worked, 16 days; preparation, 50 days; repetition, 60 days; first pit (double), 20 days; second pit (double), 30 days; third pit (double), 40 days.

A Mind-Reading Pawnbroker.

A well-dressed gentleman entered an Eighth street pawnbroker's, says the New York Sun, and taking a silver watch from his pocket, said to the proprietor: "I'd like \$2.00." "Can't give but \$1.50 on that," was the reply. "But you gave \$2 before." "That may be, but I'll only give \$1.50 today." The gentleman insisted on \$2, but finally took \$1.50 and went out. "Why didn't you give him \$2?" asked the reporter, who overheard the transaction. "Because I knew he would take \$1.50. The watch is worth \$15. I can sell it for \$20 cash. That is a pretty good profit on \$1.50. The odds are 100 to 1 that he won't take it out. The first time he came I gave him \$2, and would have given him \$5 if he had asked for it. You see, he is new at it, but now, as the ice is broken, he'll not take it out. If he makes a raise he'll buy a new one and let this go. Over two-thirds of the people who 'hook' a watch the second time do not redeem it." "But you say he is new in pawnbroking experience. How do you know that?" "My friend, I haven't been in this business thirty years without learning to read man pretty quick. If I swallowed all the stories told me by impudacious people I'd be in the poor-house in six months. I'm a mind-reader."

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