

just slip into the charthouse here, will you, and take charge of a bag of bullion? Carry it with you to the port lifeboat, and if you get it safely ashore you shall have 10 per cent as salvage for your pains. Come right in."

I stepped into the charthouse, the door closed behind me, and I found myself face on to a curious sight. The carpenter was sitting on the captain's sofa, and opposite him was one of the deck hands, a fellow who had joined from New Orleans when I did, fingering a nickel plated revolver.

"Hello," said I, "what does this mean?"

"It means," says Blake from behind me, "that you've got to stay right here on this ship, Mac, and be her chief engineer whether you like it or not. Now I've got a knife in my hand this minute"—he laid the cold blade lightly upon the back of my neck for an instant and then whisked it away again—"and it would annoy me very much to kill you. I've no time for long argument. Will you stay alive or will you stay dead?"

"I've got to stay alive," I said. "You're a sensible man, Mac. Just sit beside Chips, on the sofa there, and talk to Mr. Legrand. Oh, I forgot to introduce you. Legrand is the new mate. And now I must be off to see that all the members of this ship's company I don't want go off cruising socially together in the lifeboats."

He went out in the dark, closing the door on his heels, and I found myself sitting beside the carpenter, looking at the big, sallow faced creole who held the revolver.

"Man," I said, "the skipper's gone mad. I've just come from below myself, and I know what it's like. She'll swamp in half an hour. You're just holding us here to drown."

"Shucks!" said he. "That's only part of the game to get the ship to ourselves and to scare off those we didn't want."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, there have been a couple of sea cocks opened, that's all, and if you



"It would annoy me very much to kill you."

want to know who did it, here's the man standing before you. I did another thing too. It was me that smashed the bilge pump."

"And who's going to work the ship when the crew have gone?"

"Oh, we'll have eight of a crew all told, counting in you and me and Chips here and the skipper. Two of them stowed away in the forehold and two signed on as coal trimmers."

"I'm shipmate with some very clever scoundrels," I thought and wished myself far enough away. But as there was no means of getting clear I thought it was best to save my throat by doing as I was bid. Legrand seemed to guess what was passing through my mind.

"Be a sensible man, Mr. McTodd," said he, "and do as we want you and draw your \$30 a month, and then go ashore and spend it when the time comes. About the right and the wrong of the business you have no concern. That lies between us and our consciences. You have been forced into it against your will."

"Well," I said, "Mr. Legrand, you're a very sensible way of putting it. You'll go to hell when the time comes. I shall't, and \$30 a month's a very pleasant wage to finger."

"Bonny Scotland," says Legrand, with a laugh. "Hello, here's the skipper again. Well, sir?"

Blake came into the charthouse, his face glistening with the wet. "They're off," he said, "all in the starboard lifeboat, and they blew out of sight in a dozen minutes. Knowles is steering, and the old chief has manned the tiller. They expect that the balance of us are following them in the port boat to rendezvous at Key West, and as we shan't turn up by tomorrow or the next day, we shall be reported as lost. Nothing could have happened better. That crowd will be ready to swear, all of them, that they saw the Shah founder before they had left her neighborhood, and so the lot of us can start fresh with pursuer's names on a fine new steamboat which hasn't cost us a cent."

"And being without papers," I said, "you won't be able to get into a single port to sell her or to look for freight or to do anything."

"My dear Mac," said Blake, "do give me credit for a child's sense. Of course this ship's got papers, a brand new set of papers, and she's got to be altered to suit them. Her name's the George M. Washington, her engines were built at Liverpool, her port—but you'll hear all that afterward. At present there's work to do, and I guess all hands have got to sweat this night as they've never sweated before. Come out now and bear a hand to get the water out of her."

It was difficult to stand on deck, for every roll sent her down to the rail, and the foredeck was afloat half its time. She lay helpless in the trough, and the water inside her sobbed like crying women. Of course the steam pumps below were useless, but by a mercy she had a hand pump on deck, and we man-

ned that, watch and watch about, for half hour spells and picked the water out of her by gallons to the minute. The sea cocks had been turned off, so we'd no further leak, and we got the trysails and the two topsails on her and shaped a course almost free for the Cuban shore. We hadn't got her clear by daylight or anything like it, for the hand pump had its limits, but we'd pulled the water down below the fire bars of the furnaces and were able to get lit up again and see the steam rise in the gauges.

It was an anxious time then. If any other steamers saw us drifting about there under sail alone, they would come up to offer assistance, find out who we were, and the game would be up. The spot was likely to be crowded, too, because we were in the ship track between the gulf ports and the Florida channel. But the thieves' luck held, and we got her under steam again, kicked out the balance of the water with the bilge pumps and stood across for a lonely bay in Cuba, where we could alter the poor old Shah's appearance undisturbed.

We were at anchor there by early afternoon, and a rough, wild place it was, walled in with tropical trees and closed from all view to seaward. Sea fowl were the only living creatures which met the eye, unless one could count the sharks and the sawfish which cruised around us in the water. As a pirate's harbor no better spot could have been found in all the world, and that is what we were then, just pirates—all, that is, except Chips and myself, who were forced into the business against our will.

The work began at once. Stages were rigged over the side, and the black paint was changed to gray. The names on the boats and the life boats were altered. The funnel was turned from red and white to black and blue. The yards were taken off her foremast, the two topmasts sent down and two ten foot stump topmasts put on end in their place. The Clyde main plates were shifted from the engines, and the wheelhouse was knocked away from the upper bridge. She looked a different ship.

The gray paint and the stump topmasts seemed to make her half as big again as the British steamer Shah that had sailed out of the Mississippi river. I could have sworn that her own builders wouldn't have recognized the ship, even if they had stood beside her on a dock wall.

Well, there was no time lost after that work was done. We were not there for pleasure, any of us, and we upped anchor as soon as we had finished transfiguring her and set out for the Horn and the Chilean coast. Legrand was for putting into a Brazilian port to stay and pick up a few more hands, but Captain Blake said "No." He was not a nervous man, but he was no fool to stand in the way of unnecessary risks. The George M. Washington was to keep out of all human sight till she made her Chilean port, and then no one could connect her with the Shah which had been lost in the Mexican gulf. She was to get a cargo from there to China or else go across in ballast, and in China she was to be sold. That was the programme. He was quite aware it would be desperately hard work for all hands, but the pay was big to match, and they could have free run of all the grub in the ship. Besides, he was not sparing himself.

He was all civility in his talk; he'd a good word for everybody, but Captain Blake was not the man you'd care to be across with. He quite gave you the notion that he'd as soon stick you as look at you if it came to refusing to do exactly what he wished.

CHAPTER III

Now, the end of this pirating business came in a way which no one had quite foreseen, and though the underwriters did not get back the insurance they had paid on the Shah the George M. Washington was never turned into a tangible profit by those who had stolen her.

It seems that Mr. Knowles, the former first mate, had taken the starboard lifeboat safely enough into Key West, had found himself out of a berth, was given the offer of a captaincy on a guano bark then in Panama, whose late master had died of coast fever, and had jumped at the chance. He got a cast down to Aspinwall in a freight steamer, crossed the isthmus by railroad, and left Panama for the south the very day we pulled our anchors out of that bay of Cuba. It was not much of a coincidence that he should be coming into Callao roadstead through the north channel past San Lorenzo island when we were steaming in through the southern.

We were in first and had brought to an anchor, waiting for the health officer. I was half dead with work and heat and had come up out of the engine room and was sitting in a chair under the bridge deck awaiting getting a spell of rest. There was a glare from the water which hurt, so by way of ease I kept my drowsy eyes on a little old bark that was coming in under lower topsails, with just enough breeze to give her steerage-way. She was heading so as to pass within a dozen yards of us, and I watched her with eyes that did not see. Presently the sound of voices came dully to my ears.

"The color of her sides is different, the funnel's different, those stump topmasts are different and the wheelhouse is unshipped from the upper bridge. Still she's remarkably like my old ship of that sort."

"But she's got a starboard lifeboat. It was the starboard you went off in, wasn't it, captain?"

"That's not a lifeboat in those starboard davits. That's a quarter boat they've shifted from aft. And the after davits have been unshipped. Look, you can see the sockets of them. By gum, matey, I believe it is the Shah and no other."

I was beginning to wake up. The conversation went on.

"Can't be, captain. Look at the name all over her—George M. Washington. That's no name for a British ship. I can't say, though, come to look at her,

that she does look like a blazing Yankee."

"Tanked be hanged! Look at these main shrouds. I rattled them down myself in Pensacola, and we put in wire for every third railine."

"Whatever for?"

"Sure I can't say. Some crank the old man had. Perhaps he was off his nut. He died directly after of yellow jack. But wire it was, and if you look there you'll see it for yourself. By gum, it is the Shah, sure as death. She's been run away with, and for a bet it's that mealy mouthed Blake that's done it. However, Blake or whoever it was, I'm going to lay information so soon as ever I get ashore to the custom house. I'd a good berth on that ship, and I don't think much of the man who kicked me from there to come and be skipper of this stinking old dunghill here."

I was awake enough by this time and had recognized Knowles and was beginning to wonder why he had not recognized me. But then I remember that, first of all, I was sitting in deep shadow, and, secondly, I was wearing a five weeks' beard, so I lay still where I was till the guano bark had dragged slowly past over the swells, and then I got up and slipped into the charthouse. There was no need to tell my news. Captain Blake had heard every word that had been said through a port above his bed place.

He looked at me as coolly as though everything was smooth. "It's a beastly nuisance, isn't it, Mac, just when we were so near fingering our dividends too?"

"Then shall I lose my wages?" I asked.

"I guess, Mac, you can earn nothing more out of this cruise at present than a hemp necktie."

"Oh, I'm clear of that, at any rate. Man, do you not remember I was forced into the business against my will?"

"Quite so. Go ashore and tell that to the authorities. They're certain to believe your bare word on the subject."

"Phew!" I whistled. It hadn't struck me that way. Of course I had got no sort of a tale that would be believed when it came to putting it in bare words.

"No, my son," said Blake. "It's a case of all sticking together yet, and with luck we'll not only save our necks, but we'll realize on the ship."

"We've only two days' more coal."

"I know that."

"Then what's your plan, captain?"

"I'll tell it you later. For the present go away right now and make steam again. I guess we've little enough time to waste. There's a cruiser over yonder that can put to sea in two hours, and they'll send word to her directly Knowles gets ashore with his news. Away with you now and make your sweeps hump themselves, or else they'll hang."

There was every inducement for hurry, and every one knew that. Legrand was down helping me, and so was the carpenter. We coaxed the steam up by every means we knew, and when at last Legrand was able to go on the foredeck and leave up it was none too soon. The cruiser astern of us was bustling with life, a naphtha launch was coming to us from the inner harbor as fast as she could pelt, and it was plain that all Callao was alive with Knowles' tidings.

The skipper had got the upper bridge alone and held the steam steering wheel in his own hands. He was heading her for the northern channel between San Lorenzo island and the land, and as usual he was taking matters quite calmly and with a smile on his saintly face. He neither swore nor shouted. He was the most unaccountable shipmaster I ever came across in that way.

But it was the naphtha launch that destroyed us. We started slow, and she nearly boarded, but as steam got up so did our pace improve till at last she could do no more than keep her place. If he could once have shaken her off, I believe Captain Blake would have found some plan for escape, but as it was that was out of the question. There was not a breath of wind. The long Pacific swells came rolling in from the westward, so that when we were in a trough we could not see where they broke in thunder on the beach, and all the time that naphtha launch hung doggedly in our wake.

The hands were making steam for everything they were worth, and all I had to do was to run about my machinery with a hot oil kettle and keep everything lubricated. It said much for my keeping of those engines the way they bucked up to work then. They couldn't have run smoother if ten men with chief's tickets had been tending them every day since they left the shops. I wish the beastly board of trade examiners could have seen me then.

The excitement was too big for me to keep myself below all the time. I just had to pop my head out of the engine room door every now and again to look astern. But for a moment the naphtha launch was out of sight, she'd roll up again high against the horizon over the next swell, and if we dropped her at all it was only for a few fathoms to the hour. Still it wasn't her duty to board. She was only acting as jackal to the bigger craft, and presently the masts and smoke of that showed up against the sea line. Landsmen might have chuckled up the sponge then, but we hung on. Everything was possible in a stern chase at sea. Besides darkness would be down in another hour, and we might slip away under its cover. We felt cramped about the throat, I can tell you, then. It didn't take much imagination to see the galleys ready rigged.

Night came down when the cruiser was five miles astern, but it did not help us. The sky was lit like a theater; the swells were full of speckles of phosphorescence, and where they broke upon the beach you might have thought there was a line of bonfires. The cruiser followed us and came up as though she had a line to our stern and was heaving it in on her winches.

At a mile and a half she began to shoot, and I'll not say her practice was good. I stood outside my engine room

door when I could spare a moment to watch and saw the shots plow gutters in the swells and send fountains of flame far toward the sky.

Then all of a sudden the motion changed, the roll gave way to a steady pitch, and I knew what had happened. Captain Blake had starboarded his helm and was going to put the stolen steamer on the beach. Well, there was a poor enough chance for us there in all that surf. A minute later there was a whistle down the voice tube, and he told me in words what I had guessed already. He said also we'd be on the ground inside a dozen minutes, and we were all to come on deck, so as to get the best chance of reaching shore.

I said, "Aye, aye," and told the hands, and they went willingly enough. But, for myself, I said, I'd got my engines to look after. It was pretty tough work waiting, though. I marked off 12 minutes on the engine room clock and lit my pipe. But I had to fill it twice before time was up. The tobacco seemed to burn quicker than usual somehow.

At last she did it. She took the ground somewhere forward and jarred fit to knock one's teeth out. Then she lifted on a swell and lit the whole of her length on the ground, till you'd have thought the footplate would have risen up through your cap. Then she lifted twice more and began to make a noise like a meat tin does when boys kick it along a paved street.

By that time she had broached to, and she was on her beam ends with the engines racing badly. I shut off the throistles before the poor things rived themselves clear of their bedplates. Then I opened the escape valve to the full and climbed out on deck. The seas were making a clean breach over her by that time, but I did notice that the port lifeboat was gone, and the falls showed she'd been lowered. There was not a living man left in sight, but whether they had been washed overboard or had gone away in the boat I could not tell. I never saw any of them again.

The door I was holding to went with the next sea, and there was I in the surf, 200 yards off the dry beach. I can swim like a rat or a Krooby, and I had to do it then. That Pacific surf is something awful when one of those big ground swells is on.

But I got spewed up by the sea at last, bruised as though I had been beaten with sticks, and there I lay on the sand and watched the surf smash my beautiful engines till they weren't fit to put on the scrap heap. The cruiser had done her work and was steaming back for Callao. The naphtha launch was out of sight; the lifeboat, if she had survived, had slipped far away from view, and the sea lay empty.

Day sprang up over the water, and I got up stiffly and walked north along the coast. A dozen miles brought me to an Indian village, where I must say that, niggers though they were, they treated me like a king. I staid there six months, and might have staid a lifetime, but I was a fool and got restless. The sea always drags me. And I went along to a little port and found a ship. The sea always does drag me like that. It is my luck, I suppose, to be that kind of a fool.

Of course Captain Blake treated me badly, and I worked a long time and very hard without a sixpence of wage, but somehow I don't wish that man evil. I've never come across any one with a nicer knowledge of drugs or a freer hand in giving them out to his engineer officers. Why, I must have taken eight boxes of those Cody's pills at the very least.

THE END.

Impoverished Aristocrats.

When Lord Beaconsfield was premier, he attempted to found some sort of an institution in which persons of rank who had lost all their money would find asylum in sympathy to a certain extent with the position to which they had been born. The idea, however, was received with derision by the public. Some time ago a certain peer was wandering about London almost as an outcast, and for the lack of the necessary pence for a bed in a common lodging house had at times to sleep on a bench in one of the public parks. He is now seeing better days. A future earl is grinding an organ on the streets of London. Some years ago a viscountess was making shirts for a living at sixpence each. She was given a pension of \$250 a year. Lord Rosslyn, who a little time ago related his strange adventures in attempting to obtain a situation as clerk at the humble wage of 30 shillings a week, is at the moment a familiar instance of a badly impoverished noble, and yet he is half brother to the Duchess of Sutherland and connected with almost everybody else in the peerage.—London Correspondent.

Yankee.

The Connecticut Courant and Hartford Weekly Intelligencer of June 12, 1775, thus explained the origin of the word Yankee: "A correspondent has favored us with the following etymology of the word Yankee: When the New England colonies were first settled, the inhabitants were obliged to fight their way against many nations of Indians. They found but little difficulty in subduing them all except one tribe, who were known by the name of Yankoes, which signifies 'invincible.' After the waste of much blood and treasure the Yankoes were at last subdued by the New England men. The remains of this nation, agreeably to the Indian custom, transferred their name to their conquerors. For awhile they were called Yankook, but from corruption common to names in all languages they got, through time, the name of Yankoes, a name which we hope will soon be equal to that of a Roman or an ancient Englishman."

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