THE WRECK OF THE CATTLEBOAT.

BY CUTCLIFFE HYNE.

COPYRIGHT, 1900, BY CUTCLIFFE HYNE.

THERE were considerable trouble and risk in bringing the lifeboat up alongside, but it must be granted that she was unhandy. The gale that had blown them out into the Atlantic had moderated, certainly, though there was still a considerable breeze blowing, but the sea was running as high as ever, and all Captain Kettle's skill was required to prevent the boat from being incontinently swamped. McTodd and the two Portuguese bailed incessantly, but the boat was always half waterlogged. In fact, from constitutional defects she had made very wet weather of it all through the blow.

It was the part of the steamer to have borne down and given the lifeboat a lee in which she could have been more readily handled, and three times the larger vessel made an attempt to do this, but without avail. Three times she worked round in a wallowing circle, got to windward and distributed a smell of farmyard over the rugged furrows of ocean and then lost her place again before she could drift down and give the smaller craft shelter. Three times did the crew of the lifeboat, with maritime point and fluency, curse the incompetence of the rust streaked steamer and all her complement.

"By James," said Kettle savagely, after the third attempt, "are they all farmers on that ship? I've had an idiot steward that knew more about handling a vessel."

"She's an English ship," said McTodd, "and delicate. They're nursing her in the engine room. Look at the way they throttle her down when she races."

"The fools on her upper bridge are enough for me to look at," Kettle retorted. "Why didn't they put a sailorman aboard of her before she was kicked out of port? By James, if we'd a week's water and victual with us in the lifeboat here I'd beat back for the Canaries as we are and keep clear of that tin farmyard for bare safety's sake."

"We haven't a crumb or a drink left," said the engineer, "and I'd not recommend this present form of conveyance to the insurance companies."

A wave top came up from the tireless gray sea and slapped green and cold about his neck and shoulders. "Gosh! There comes more of the Atlantic to bale back into place. Mon, this is no' the kind of navigation I admire."

Meanwhile the clumsy tramp steamer had gone round in a jagged circle of a mile's diameter and was climbing back to position again over the hills and dales of ocean. She rolled, and she pitched, and she wallowed among the seas, and to the lay mind she would have seemed helplessness personified. But to the expert eye she showed defects in her handling with every sheer she took among the angry waste of waters.

"Old man and the mates must be staying down below out of the wet," said Kettle contemptuously as he gazed. "Looks as if they've left some sort of a cheap Dutch quartermaster on the upper bridge to run her. Don't tell me there's an officer holding an English ticket in command of that steamer. They aren't going to miss us this time, though, if they know it."

"Looks like as if they were going to soss down slap on top of us," said McTodd and set to taking off his coat and boots.

But the cattle steamer, if not skillfully handled, at any rate this time had more luck. She worked her way to windward again and then fell off into the trough, squattering down almost out of sight one minute, and, in fact, showing little of herself except a couple of stumpy, untidy masts and a brine washed smokestack above the seascape, and, being heaved up clear almost the next second, a picture of rust streaks and yellow spouting scuppers.

Both craft drifted to leeward before the wind, but the steamer offered more surface and moved the quicker, which was the object of the maneuver. It seemed to those in the lifeboat that they were not going to be missed this time, and so they lowered away their sodden canvas, shipped the tholepins and got out their oars. The two Portuguese firemen did not assist at first, preferring to sit in a semidazed condition on the wet floor gratings, but McTodd and Kettle thumped them about the head, after the time honored custom, till they turned to, and so presently the lifeboat, under three straining oars, was holding up toward her would be deliverer.

A man on the cattleboat's upper bridge was exhibiting himself as a very model of nervous incapacity, and two, at any rate, of the castaways in the lifeboat were watching him with grim scorn.

"Keeping them on the dance in the engine room, isn't he?" said McTodd. "He's rung that telegraph bell 15 different ways this last minute."

"That man isn't fit to skipper anything that hasn't got a tow rope made fast ahead," said Kettle contemptuously. "He hasn't the nerve of a pound of putty."

"I'm thinking we shall lose the boat. They'll never get her aboard in one piece."

"If we get among their cow pens with our bare lives we shall be lucky. They're going to heave us a line. Stand by to catch it, quick."

The line was thrown and caught. The cattle steamer surged up, over a huge rolling sea, showing her jagged bilge chocks clear, and then she squelched down again, dragging the lifeboat close in a murderous cuddle, which smashed in one of her sides as though it had been made from eggshell. Other lines were thrown by the hands who stood against the rail above, and the four men in the swamping boat each seized an end. Half climbing, half hoisted from above, they made their way up the rusted plating, and the greedy waves from underneath sucked and clamored at their heels. It was quite a toss up even then whether they would be dragged from their hold, but human muscles can put forth desperate efforts in these moments of desperate stress, and they reached the swaying deck planks, bruised and breathless and gasping, but for the time being safe.

The cattleboat's mate, who had been assisting their arrival, sorted them into castes with ready perception. "Now you two dagoes," he said to the Portuguese, "get away forrard—port side—and bid some of our firemen to give you a bunk. I'll tell the steward to bring you along a bit of rum directly." He slapped a friendly hand on McTodd's shoulder. "Bo's'n," he said, "take this gentleman down to the messroom and pass the word to one of the engineers to come and give him a welcome." And then he turned as to an equal and shook Kettle by the hand. "Very glad to welcome you aboard, old fellow—beg pardon, 'captain,' I should have said; didn't see the lace on your sleeve before. Come below with me, captain, and I'll fix you up with some dry things outside and some wet things in, before we have any further chatter."

"Mr. Mate," said Kettle, "you're very polite, but hadn't I better go up on to the bridge and say 'howdy' to the skipper first?"

The mate of the cattleboat grinned and tucked his arm inside Captain Kettle's and dragged him off with kindly force toward the companionway. "Take a cinch from me, captain, and don't. The old man's in such a mortal fear for the ship that he's fair crying with it. If he'd had his way, I don't fancy he'd have seen your boat at all. He said it was suicide to try to pick you up with such a sea running. But the second mate and I put in some ugly talk, and so he just had to do it. Here's the companion. Step inside, and I'll shut the door."

"Pretty sort of captain to let his mates boss him."

"Quite agree with you, captain, quite agree with you all the way. But that's what's done on this ship, and there's no getting over it. It's not to my liking either. I'm an old Conway boy and was brought up to respect discipline. However, I dare say you'll see for yourself how things run before we dump you back on dry mud again. Now, here we are at the room, and there's a change of clothes in that drawer beneath the bed and underwear below the settee here. You and I are much of a build, and the kit's quite at your service till your own is dry again."

The mate was back again in ten minutes, dripping, cheerful, hospitable. "Holy tailors!" said he. "How you do set off clothes! Those old duds came out of a slop chest once, and I've been ashamed of their shabbiness more years than I care to think about. But you've a way of carrying them that makes them look well fitting and quite new. Well, I tell you I'm pleased to see a spruce man on this ship. Come into the cabin now and peck a bit.

The greedy waves from underneath sucked and clamored at their heels.

I ordered you a meal, and I saw the steward as I came past the door trying to hold it down in the fiddles. The old girl can roll a bit, can't she?"

"I should say your farmyard's getting well churned up."

"You should just go into those cattle decks and see. It's just hades for the poor brutes. We're out of the river Platte, you know, and we've carried bad weather with us ever since we got our anchors. The beasts were badly stowed, and there were too many of them put aboard. The old man grumbled, but the shippers didn't take any notice of him. They'd signed for the whole ship, and they just crammed as many sheep and cows into her as she'd hold."

"You'll have the cruelty to animals people on board of you before you're docked, and then your skipper had better look out."

"He knows that, captain, quite as well as you do, and there isn't a man more sorry for himself in all the western ocean. He'll be fined heavily and have his name dirtied, so sure as ever he sets a foot ashore. Legally, I suppose, he's responsible, but really he's no more to blame than you. He is part of the ship, as the tablespoons are, and the mates, and the whole bag of tricks was let by wire from Liverpool to a South American dago. If he'd talked, he'd have got the straight kickout from the owners, and no further argument. You see they are little bits of owners."

"They're the worst sort."

"It doesn't matter who they are. A skipper's got to do as he's told."

"Yes," said Kettle, with a sigh, "I know that."

"Well," said the mate, "you may thank your best little star that you're only here as a passenger. The grub's beastly, the ship smells to heaven, the cook's a fool, and everything's as uncomfortable as can be. But there's one fine amusement ahead of you, and that's to try to cheer up the other passenger."

"Stowaway?"

"No, bona fide passenger, if you can imagine any one being mug enough to book a room on a foul, cattle loaded tramp like this. But I guess it was because she was hard up. She was a governess, or something of that sort, in Buenos Ayres, lost her berth and wanted to get back again cheap. I guess we could afford to cut rates and make a profit there."

"Poor lady."

"I've not seen much of her myself. The second mate and I are most of the crew of this ship, as the old man objects to our driving the regular deck hands, and when we're not at work we're asleep. I can't stop and introduce you. You must chum on. Her name's Carnegie."

"Miss Carnegie," Kettle repeated. "That sounds familiar. Does she write poetry?"

The mate yawned. "Don't know. Never asked her. But perhaps she does. She looks ill enough."

The mate went off to his room then, turned in all standing and was promptly asleep. Kettle, with memories of the past, refreshed, took paper and a scratchy pen and fell to concocting verse.

He wondered and at the same time he half dreaded whether this was the same Miss Carnegie whom he had known before. In days past she had given him a commission to liberate her lover from the French penal settlement of Cayenne. With infinite danger and difficulty he had wrenched the man free from his warders and then, finding him a worthless fellow, had by force married him to an old Jamaican negress and sent the girl their marriage license as a token of her release. He had no word or sign from her since and was in some dread now lest she might bitterly resent the liberty he had taken in meddling so far in her affairs.

However, like it or not, there was no avoiding the meeting now, and so he went on, somewhat feverishly, with his writing.

The squalid meal entitled tea came on, and he had to move his papers. A grimy steward spread a dirty cloth, wetted it liberally with water and shipped fiddles to try to induce the tableware to keep in place despite the rolling. The steward mentioned that none of the officers would be down, that the two passengers would meal together, and, in fact, did his best to be affable; but Kettle listened with cold inattention, and the steward began to wish him over the side whence he had come.

The laying of the table was ended at last. The steward put on his jacket, clanged a bell in the alleyway and then came back and stood swaying in the middle of the cabin, armed with a large tin teapot, all ready to commence business. So heavy was the roll that at times he had to put his hand on the floor for support.

Captain Kettle watched the door with a haggard face. He was beginning to realize that an emotion was stirred within him that should have had no place in his system. He told himself sternly that he was a married man with a family; that he had a deep affection for both his wife and children; that, in cold fact, he had seen Miss Carnegie in the flesh but once before, but there was no getting over the memory that she made poetry, a craft that he adored, and he could not forget that she had already lived in his mind for more months than he dared count.

His conscience took him by the ear and sighed out the word love. On the instant all his pride of manhood was up in arms, and he rejected the imputation with scorn and then after some thought formulated his liking for the girl in the term interest. But his chest heaved when he thought of her.

Then in the distance he heard her approaching. He wiped the moisture from his face with the mate's pocket handkerchief. Above the din of the seas and the noises from the crowded cattle pens outside he could make out the faint rustle of draperies and the uncertain footsteps of some one painfully making a way along hand over hand against the bulkheads. A bunch of fingers appeared round the jamb of a door, slender white fingers, one of them decked with a queer old ring which he had seen just once before and had pictured a thousand times since. And then the girl herself stepped out into the cabin, swaying to the roll of the ship.

She nodded to him with instant recognition. "It was you they picked up out of the boat? Oh, I am so glad you are safe!"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Monterey, Cal., April 12.—George Q. Cannon slept several hours and is resting easy. Dr. Clift stated that Mr Cannon's condition was truly perplexing, although most critical. In view of the extreme age of the patient his demise could be hourly expected, but he did not care to say that his condition was absolutely hopeless

Victim of Knockout Drops.

St. Louis, April 12.—John P. Smith former mayor of Fort Worth, Tex. died yesterday, the victim of knock out drops administered several days ago by unknown persons in a saloon near the Union station.

CHEW Wetmore's Best

No Premiums! It's all in the quality.

No Premiums! It sells on its merit.

Sold everywhere Made only by M. C. WETMORE TOBACCO CO., St. Louis, Mo. The largest independent Factory in America.

Is Quality Worth Anything?

When it cames to talking Pianos there are things for you to remember, that the cheapest Pianos are put up in highly finished cases, can sell you such for $175, but when it comes to a very thoroughly finished Piano throughout, REMEMBER we have an an instrument with more excellent features than any other Piano on the market, and it is safe to say that when all of those so called high grade Pianos have lost their beautiful rich tone ours will still be full and pure. It's worth your attention. Do not buy until you have seen

E. C. CHAMBERLIN, The Jeweler,

Next Door to Johnson's Book Store, - - Denison, Iowa.

A Good Sarsaparilla

Or blood purifier should be a veritable fountain of health It should contain Sarsaparilla, Yellow Dock, Dandelion, Stillingia, Prickly Ash, Burdock, Iodide of Potassium because the medical profession recommend these drugs for the treatment of impurities of the blood, skin diseases, rheumatism, general debility, etc. For this reason these drugs are found in Sarsaparilla Compound. It is scientifically prepared from pure drugs and is a valuable spring medicine.

Armstrong Drug Co.

..About.. Bradbury's Chocolates

Are without question the finest, best flavors and choicest in Denison. Big sales enable him to keep his stock fresh. A chocolate should never be more than ten days old. Chocolate catering is something of an art and Bradbury is fortunate in having secured the sale of the famous GANEMEDE BRAND. They cost him more than common brands, but there are delicious. Try them

The Palace Bakery, M. M. Bradbury, Proprietor.

Farming is Profitable in Nebraska.

ESPECIALLY IN THESE COUNTIES: Cuming, Stanton, Madison, Pierce, Knox, Boyd, Antelope, Holt, Rock, Colfax, Platte, Boone

CHEAP RATE HOMESEEKERS EXCURSION Tickets on sale via the "North-Western Line"

To Points on FREMONT, ELKHORN & MISSOURI VALLEY R. R.