

**MELAUOPE ROMANCE
TOLD BY TOTS**

CAPTAIN WILLS' LITTLE SON AND DAUGHTER TELL A REPORTER ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCES IN THE WRECK OF BRITISH BARK.

The abandonment of the fine British bark Melauope, in the open Pacific, on the morning of the 7th of last December, in which Captain N. K. Wills, his wife their little son and daughter, and the crew of eighteen men figured so fortunately, and her subsequent salvage by the steamer Northland which brought her to this port, are matters of current history all over the coast now. But the fact that Captain Wills and his family are quietly domiciled here, at the Merwyn, he to stand by his stricken ship and await the final issue of the salvage and insurance matters in that relation and the others to recuperate from the fearful stress to which they were subjected in that brief, but fearful, encounter with the sea at its worst, is not so widely known as it might be, and led a reporter of this paper to imagine that the telling of the story of the Melauope by the children themselves might prove of peculiar interest to many. It is not often that such tales are told by little folks and as these children are exceptionally bright and clever, their impressions and experiences suffer nothing in the manner of their telling.

The reporter called at the Merwyn the other day and sent his card in to the children who soon greeted him in the office, and did it without the slightest manifestation of timorousness, other than that inherent in well-bred youngsters meeting an elder for the first time. Their manner was perfect; their language, with all its childish limitations, entirely adequate to the occasion, and their pose just a bit remarkable; so much so that the reporter, himself, was quite quickly at ease and thoroughly en rapport with the pleasant task he had set himself.

Upon inquiry it developed that the children were both born at Penzance, on the island of Cornwall, off the South coast of England, and that the last four years of their lives had been spent upon the Melauope, which, by the way, had been deftly equipped by Captain and Mrs. Wills, with every home comfort, decoration and appurtenance possible, the accessories of the old home in Cornwall, which was sold, having been retained and applied to this end, the education of the children resolving itself into one of the dearest duties of the parents, and with conspicuously happy results.

The little girl, Victoria May, is well in her thirteenth year, and her brother, Nicholas Charles Kolyneck, has just turned his ninth, and they are the most devoted of chums in every conceivable line of pursuit and indulgence. When they found out the nature of the reporter's errand, they were both so kindly eager to contribute to the story that the news-monger was quite at a loss to segregate the different morsels of information supplied by each, and the detail that follows, must be taken by the reader as the composite expression of the youngsters, their separate relations dove-tailing admirably for the purpose. The story as told by them is as follows, and adheres in terms, as nearly as possible, to the language used by them:

"You must know," said the boy, "that we came up the coast from Manzanillo, Mexico. Daddy's orders were to load at Eureka. We were to take lumber from there to Australia, but when we got to the bar at Eureka, on the morning of December 5, a tug came alongside and handed us orders to proceed to Tacoma and load there; but as the water on board was running low and getting bad, Daddy went in to Eureka, anyway, and took on a fresh supply."

"We were in there just twenty-four hours, and sailed the next morning, with a good fresh breeze; but it kept getting fresher all the time and by sundown it was blowing a gale. We did not think much about it, though, until about 8 o'clock that evening, when the ballast began to shift. The mate he told us at dinner there was danger of its shifting, and the men were put to work shoveling it back, but it wouldn't stay, and the first thing we knew she was on her beam ends and lurching awful. I was in bed early and at 8 o'clock Daddy called us all into the mess room and we didn't sleep any more after that, because he said we would have to abandon her as soon as daylight came, so we stayed up all night, and at 4 o'clock in the morning when it was plain she would never right herself, Daddy gave the order to get out the life boat and prepare to abandon ship.

"It took the men until 9 o'clock in the morning to get the boat ready, and the ship was heeling bad. One of her masts had gone by the board and the rigging was all in a snarl over the side, so we used the high side in fixing the boat we were to go out in. All the other boats were smashed in the gale, anyway, there wasn't any we could use but the one. There was a big hole in



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the deck made by the mast when it went over and the sea was pouring in to that, and the water made her list over so much more.

"By and by the boat was ready and she had four men in her to steady her and take things as they were passed down; then they swung Mamma down first, then Vic, and then I was lifted over. No, I wasn't much afraid, except of barnacles, and we had to slide over these, and Vic was cut on her knees, and you know barnacles are poisonous if they cut you. One of our men cut his hand on a barnacle and it swelled up pretty badly I tell you. That was all the fear I felt. Then the men were sent over the side, and Daddy came last, because, you know, a captain is always the last man to leave his ship. When the sailmaker came to go over the side, he had on six suits of clothes, and all his pockets were filled with twine and needles and all his tools, besides two or three pairs of sea-boots, and he took 'em all with him too.

When Daddy got ready he gave the order to "shove off" and we left the Melauope with a big sea running. The boat rode all right, and the men took turns at the oars. After we had been adrift maybe an hour and a half and just as we were on the crest of an awful big wave, Mamma saw the sails of a vessel a few miles away and Vic, who had a towel wrapped around her head and neck to keep the cold wind off, passed it up to Daddy and he used it to signal the schooner.

"It was a schooner called the William H. Smith, and they saw us and we made straight for her, but it was a long pull, and it was nearly 1 o'clock before we got alongside and quite before we were on board. Her captain's name was Hansen and he was very nice and kind to us all. He told Mamma to take full charge of his cabins, and he slept out in the gangway. We were very glad to get help, so soon after leaving our ship and as soon as we were all on board the Smith, the life boat was turned adrift on the sea because that's the rule you know. And say, the sailmaker forgot all his stuff and left it in the boat and it went off with her.

"We were on the William H. Smith from noon on Friday till 4 o'clock the next Monday, when we went into Port Townsend. We met two tugs in the Straits of Fuca, and they both stood by us until we got into port. It was blowing very hard up there. Of course as soon as we got ashore we were all

safe and well, but it took us some days to get into our proper clothing again, because all our things were on the Melauope, you know, and we were just dressed for a rough trip. But Daddy soon fixed all that, and after a while, when he knew the Melauope had been picked up and towed in here, he brought us to Astoria and we've been here ever since.

"Did not your children have some pet dogs on the Melauope?" inquired the reporter.

"Yes, sir; we had three, Queenie and her son Princey; they were pug dogs. And we had another we called Annie, that we got in Honolulu. Annie was a fine ratter, too. Queenie had two litters of puppies since we got her, seven each time; and once Annie had puppies, just two, and when Queenie went to look at them, Annie went pretty nerty crazy and fought her away. We've got two of them back though, and they are on board the ship, but the captain of the Northland has Annie and he wants to keep her, so we don't know whether she will ever come back."

Of course, these bright little people saw things differently from their elders in the course of their dreadful experiences, and overlooked much of the detail that was carefully noted by the grown-ups, and their realizations were not as acute as those of the others to whom little things, at such a juncture, were very important, and besides, their wonderful and beautiful faith in their father and mother, minimized the dangers and horrors that might else have been poignantly plain; but all they told was given with a zest and close adherence to the big essentials, that was as delightful as two honest little hearts could make it.

Captain Wills declares that the family, as such, have had the last of such experiences as were theirs on the Melauope; that they shall not go to sea again, so long as he lives and can maintain them comfortably ashore; and Mrs. Wills echoes the determination fully, as she has no desire, herself, to take any further chances for her little ones as were taken in the brief span of 48 hours at the height of a Pacific tempest last month.

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MARITIME MESSAGES

Roanoke Went to Sea and San Francisco Yesterday.

Santa Maria Leaves Out—Redondo Enters and Goes to Knappton—Aztec on to Portland—River Full of Drift.

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Captain Larkin of the Ondine, reports the river fairly bristling with drift timber, most of it coming from the swollen Willamette. The T. J. Potter did not get away from Portland until late last night, and will be down this morning.

The steamship Roanoke went below at noon yesterday and found a bar she could tackle with safety and went on her way to the lower coast of California.

The steamer J. B. Stetson cleared from this port yesterday with her usual cargo of Oregon lumber and later went on her way to San Francisco.

The steamer Redondo arrived in from San Francisco yesterday and went to the Columbia mills at Knappton for a load of Washington lumber.

The steamer Johan Poulsen came down from the metropolis yesterday morning and went over the bar later in the day, bound for the Bay City.

The Harvest Queen returned to Portland yesterday afternoon, with the barkentine Gardner City and the schooner Prosper on her bows.

The French ship Hoche arrived down from Portland yesterday from the Harvest Queen, and is at anchor in the lower harbor.

The steamer San Gabriel, Captain

Greeney, will leave out this morning for the Umpqua River, where she will load lumber for San Pedro.

The motor schooner Berwick arrived in from Rogar River yesterday afternoon and will probably go on to Portland this morning.

The steamer Tiverton was among the arrivals from California yesterday, and will go to the Tongue Point mills for her outward cargo.

The British bark Bankburn went over the bar yesterday on her way to the West Coast, with her huge cargo of lumber.

The Aztec got away for Portland yesterday evening with a big bunch of south-bound freight in her hold, from this port.

The steamship Santa Maria came down from Portland yesterday and went to sea during the afternoon.

The steamer Yosemite is due down from Portland this afternoon on her way to the Bay City.

The steamship Christine Mikkelson was among the get-aways yesterday from the lower harbor.

E. H. Stone returned yesterday from Portland, where he had spent several days on business. Mrs. Stone, who accompanied him, is still visiting with friends there, but will return shortly.

PERSONAL MENTION.

JOHN G. HARRIS of New York is spending some time in this city. It is reported that he is considering the building of a cold storage plant here.

Herbert Pett came over from Ilwaco to meet his wife who was discharged from the hospital here, and returned with her early yesterday morning on the Nahcotta.

W. A. Graham of Ilwaco is registered at the Merwyn hotel.

Mrs. E. S. McIlroy and Miss Mary Dawson of Warrenton were in this city yesterday.

E. S. Wheeler of Seattle is in Astoria on business.

Levi Mellon and J. A. Pinkerton of Mountain Home, Ida., are in this city attending to business interests.

C. E. Miller of South Bend, Wash., is a guest of the Occident Hotel.

J. Hanson of Ilwaco is a visitor in this city.

J. E. Heller of New York is in Astoria on a brief business trip.

E. F. Wittler, representing the Woodard-Tierman Printing Company of St. Louis, was in Astoria yesterday interviewing the several cannerymen on labels.

Mrs. R. E. Paisley and her little daughter Corinne, are in the city, the guests of their friend, Miss F. S. Baldwin, on Exchange street. Mr. Paisley has been here for several days, and goes to Tillamook on the Alliance when she comes down.