Bu STEWART EDWARD WHITE And SAMUEL HOPKINS ADAMS

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Synopsis of Preceding Chapters. CHAPTER I.—The officers of the United States ship Wolverine, crulsing in the Pacific, are mystified by a strange radiance which appears suddenly on the face of the sea and vanishes as suddenly. The officers discuss the strange disappearance, two years previously, of the schooner Laughing Lass, chartered by Dr. Schermerhorn, a scientist. CHAPTER IL-The Wolverine picks

up the Laughing Lass, with everything shipshape save that there is no living

CHAPTER III. Ensign Edwards sent aboard the Languing Lass with CHAPTER IV.—The Welverine see

CHAPTER IV.—The Wolverine sees the strange light again. In a volcanic mist the Laughing Lass drifts away and is found again with no one on board and her boats untouched. CHAPTER V.—A second prize crew is sent aboard the schooner. The mysterious light is seen again, and the Wolverine discovers a volcano in full cruption. The Laughing Lass vanishes again.

CHAPTER VI-The Wolverine picks that the Kill have been given by a dory belonging to the Laughing Lass. It contains Ralph Slade, a journalist known to have been with Schermerhorn, and the corpse of the Wolverine's ho's'n's mate, who had gone with Edwards. Slade is in very had condition from fever, thirst and exhaustion

## CHAPTER VII.

the following afternoon Dr. Trendon reported his patient as quite recovered.

"Starved for water," proffered the surgeon. "Tissues fairly dried out. Soaked him up. Fed him broth. Put him to sleep. He's all right. Just wakes up to eat. Then off again like a two-year-old. Wonderful constitu-

"The gentleman wants to know if he can come on deck, sir," saluted an orderly.

"Waked up, eh? Come on, Barnett. Help me boost him on deck." The two officers disappeared to re-

turn in a moment arm in arm with Raiph Slade.

Nearly twenty-four hours' rest and skillful treatment had done wonders. He was still a trifle weak and uncertain, was still a little glad to lean on the arms of his companions, but his eye was bright and alert and his hollow cheeks mounted a slight color. This, with the clothes lent him by Barnett, transformed his appearance and led Captain Parkinson to congratulate himself that he had not obeyed his first impulse to send the castaway forward with the men.

The officers pressed forward.

The chorus of greeting was hearty sigh of relief escaped him.

long ago was that anyway?"

ing for some of our men."

"Then that's the same volcano"-Barnett laughed softly. "Well, they up in this Laughing Lass matter." aren't quite holding a caucus of volcanoes down in this country. One like that is enough."

But Slade brushed the remark aside, "Head for it!" he cried excitedly. on that island"

"A man!" "Another!" "Not Billy Edwards?" "Not some of our boys?" Slade stared at them bewildered. "Hold on," interposed Dr. Trendon

authoritatively. "What's his name?" he inquired of the journalist. "Darrow," replied the latter. "Per-

cy Darrow. Do you know him?" "Who in Kamchatka is Percy Dar-

row?" demanded Forsythe. "Why, he's the assistant. It's a long Slade.

"Of course it's a long story. There's And there's dinner, so we'll adjourn I have fought, and now here I'll prove al years."

Lass for-well, I don't know how long. I never found out?" but it's five days anyway, perhaps more," replied Slade.

They stared at him incredulously. "There were twin dorles on the schooner. The other one's still there, I suppose. Did you find her on the stern'

"Yes." "That's it, then. You see, when I

davits?"

Captain Parkinson's raised hand checked him. "If you will be so good, Mr. Slade, let us have it all at once, after mess,"

keen appreciation.

with all the trimmings, for over two years. Doctor, do you think a little of the real stuff would hurt me? It's a pretty dry yarning."

"no more." "Scotch highball, then," voted Slade 'the higher the better."

"One glass," growled the surgeon,

The steward braught a tall glass with ice, in which the newcomer mixed his drink. Then for quite a minute he sat silent, staring at the table, his fingers almlessly rubbing into spots of wetness the water bends as they gathered on the outside of his glass. Suddenly he looked up.

"I don't know how to begin," he confessed. "It's too confounded improbable. I hardly believe it myself, now that I'm sitting here in human clothes surrounded by human beings. Old Scrubbs and the nigger and Handy Solomon and the professor and the chest and the-well, they were real enough when I was caught in the mess. But I warn you you are not going to believe me, and hanged if I blame you a bit."

"We've seen marvels ourselves in the last few days," encouraged Captain

"Fire ahead, man," advised Barnett impatiently. "Just begin at the beginning and let it go at that."

Slade sipped at his glass reflectively. "Well," said he at length, "the best way to begin is to show you how I appened to be mixed up in it at all." The officers unconsciously relaxed

into attitudes of greater ease. Overhead the lamps swayed gently to the swell. The dull throb of the screw pulsated. Stewards clad in white moved noiselessly, filling the glasses, deferentially striking lights for the smokers, clearing away the last dishes of the renast.

"I'm a reporter by choice and a detective by instinct," began Slade, with startling abruptness, "Furthermore, I'm pretty well off. I'm what they call a free lance, for I have no regular desk on any of the journals. I generally turn my stuff in to the Star be- from a bulk so squat and broad and cause they treat me well. In return it hairy as the silhouette before me that is pretty well understood between us, I almost laughed aloud. that I'm to use my judgment in regard "I guess you've made no mistake on of me for expenses. You see, I've too." been with them quite awhile."

He looked around the circle "Mighty glad to see you out." "Hope though in appeal to the comprehension "Old man, I'm mighty glad we came nodded. Others sipped from their laughed again. glasses or drew at their cigars.

"I loaf around here and there in the enough, but the journalist barely paid world, having a good time traveling. After waiting a moment for somethe courtesy of acknowledgment. His visiting, fooling around. Every once in thing more definite, the falsetto ineve swept the horizon eagerly until it awhile something interests me. The quired rather dryly: rested on the cloud of volcanic smoke thing is a sort of instinct. I run it billowing up across the setting sun. A down. If it's a good story, I send it Who are you anyway?" in. That's all there is to it." He "I am Dr. Schermerhorn," the latter "Where are we?" he asked Barnett. laughed slightly. "You see, I'm a sort answered. "I mean since you picked me up. How of magazine writer in method, but my stuff is newspaper stuff; also the game pers." "Yesterday," replied the navigating suits me. That's why I play it. officer. "We've stood off and on look- That's why I'm here. I have to tell you about myself this way so you will understand how I came to be mixed

"I remember," commented Barnett, "that when you came aboard the North Dakota you had a little trouble making Captain Arnold see it." He "We may be in time! There's a man had all kinds of papers of ancient date, but nothing modern-letter from the we can sit down." Star dated five years back, recommenin Apache campaign, bank identifications and all the rest. 'Maybe you're the Star's correspondent and maybe some haste, "this iss well! Somebody you're not,' said the captain, 'I don't might oferhear." see anything here to prove it.' Slade

The reporter grinned assent. "After the old man had turned him a lot we want to know," interrupted down good Slade fished down in his Captain Parkinson, "Quartermaster, war bag and hauled out an old tatterhead for the voicano yonder. Mr. ed document from an oliskin case. main." Slade, we want to know where you 'Hold on a minute,' said he, 'you old came from, and why you left the shellback. I've proved to you that I be?" schooner and who Percy Darrow is. can write and I've proved to you that "Maybe a few months; maybe seferto the messroom and hear what you to you that I can sail. If writing, fightcan tell us. But there's one thing ing and sailing don't fit me adequately cruise. See here, anything crooked in we're all anxious to know-how came, to report any little disturbances your this?" you in the dory which we found and antiquated washboiler may blunder left on the Laughing Lass later than into I'll go to raising cabbages.' With business of my own." that he presented a master's certifi-"I haven't set eyes on the Laughing cate! Where did you get it anyway? other easily, "only risks is worth pay-

"Passed as 'fresh water' on the great

lakes," replied Slade briefly. "Well, the spunk and the certificate "So much for myself," Slade con- I've dodged 'em before." tinued. "As for the Laughing Lass"-

CHAPTER VIII.

COINCIDENCE got me aboard thoughts as he pondered how much the Laughing Lass. I'll tell he dared ask. dark alley on the Barbary Coast, San when we're going to get back, and be a tour of casual inspection. Once At table the young officers at a sharp Francisco. You know-the water front, them gunboats-how would a hundred he stopped to breathe on the brass hint from Dr. Trendon conversed on where you can hear more tongues than, and twenty-five a month strike you?" binnacle and to rub it bright with the indifferent subjects until the journalist at Port Said, see stranger sights and "Double it up. I want you to do ass dirtiest red bandanna handkerchief I had partaken heartily of what the phy- meet adventure with the joyous cer- I say, and I will also give your crew ever want to see. sician allowed him. Slade ate with tainty of mediaeval times. I'd been double wages. Bud I want goot men down there hunting up a man reported who will stay and who will keep the crepancy between his personal habits "I tell you, that's good," he sighed, by a wharf rat of my acquaintance to mouth shut." when he had finished. "Real, live, have just returned from a two years' "Gosh all fishhooks! They'd go to after dinner coffee too. Why, gentle- whaling voyage. He'd been "shang- hell with you for that!"

was worth nearly a million dollars. could get nobody to believe him nor trust him to the extent of a telegram east. Wharf rat laughed at his yarn, but I believe it was true. Good copy anyway-

Just at the turn of the alley I nearly bumped into two men. On the Barbary Coast you don't pass men in narrow places until you have reconnoitered a little. I pulled up, thanking fortune that they had not seen me. The first words were uttered in a voice I knew well.

You've all heard of Dr. Karl Augustus Schermerhorn. He did some big spoke." things and had in mind still bigger. I'd met him some time before in conless waves theory. It was picturesque recognize me. I'd have given my eye tain. done. He showed me-well, that semicentered, Dr. Schermerhorn was standing at midnight in a dark alley interview with the barkeeper. on the Barbary Coast in San Francisco talking to an individual whose facial outline at least was not ornamental.

My curiosity or professional instinct, whichever you please, was all aroused. of beer. I flattened myself against the wall, The first remark I lost. The reply came to me in a shrill falsetto. So



"I haf been told you might rent her," said the doctor.

to 'stories' and that they'll stand back that. I'm her master and her owner "Well, I haf been told you might

as rent her" said the docto "Rent her!" mimicked the falsetto you've got your plus under you again." tof his audience. Some of the men "Well, that-yes, I'll rent her?" he

> "Doch recht." The doctor was plainly at the end of his practical resources.

"How long? What to? What for?

"Seen pieces about you in the pa-

"How many men haf you in the crew?" "Me and the mate and the cook and

four hands." "And you could go-soon?"

"Soon as you want-if I go." "I wish to leaf tomorrow." "If I can get the crew together I might make it. But say, let's not hang turned to the others with a laugh. "He out here in this run of darkness. Come over to the grog shop yonder, where

dations to everybody on earth except fully aroused - Dr. Schermerhorn's of provisions, supplies, stock, spars, To my relief, for my curlosity was Captain Arnold, certificate of bravery movements are usually productivethis proposal was vetoed. "No, no?" cried the doctor, with

The huge figure stirred into an attiargued an hour. No go. Remember tude of close attention. After a pause how you caught him?" he inquired of the falsetto asked deliberately:

"Where we goin'?" "I brefer not to say." "H'm! How long a cruise?"

"I want to rent your schooner and your crew as long as I please to re-

"H'm! How long's that likely to

"No, no! Not at all! It iss simply "Not that I care," commented the

ing for." "There shall not be risk." "Pearls likely?" hazarded the other, it would be hard to imagine. "Oh, I see!" he burst out suddenly. finished the captain. He was an old "Them Jap gunboats is getting pretty

> "Now as to pay - how mooch your boat worth? I could almost follow the man's

men, I haven't eaten a civilized meal, haied" aboard, and as a matter of fact "Now you can get all you want of such discrepancies seem to indicate ex-1 "Kin I carry th' box for you, boss?"

Adams & Mürsh. Tell them it iss for ceptional characters. As I watched Landed in the city without a cent, me. Brovisions for three years any- him his whole frame stiffened. The how. Be ready to sail tomorrow."

"Tide turns at 8 in the evening." ing."

The master hesitated.

I know it's all right? Maybe by morn- his mate by the shoulder. ing you'll change your mind." "That carnot be. My plans are all"-

thing"-

They moved away, still talking. I distance. did not dare follow them into the light, | "How far is it to the side of the nection with his telepathy and wire- for I feared that the doctor would ship, you bound?" shrieked the capstuff for my purpose, but wasn't in teeth, though, to have gathered the Mumble-surprised-for an answer. It with what the old fellow had really name of the schooner or that of her master. As it was, I hung around un- just two fathom from where you stand.

were sitting at the middle table?" I Captain Selover's vocabulary fairly asked him.

"Know them?" I inquired. "Never laid eyes on 'em before. Old chap looked like a sort of corn doctor; men."

"Thanks," I muttered and dodged you to be lazy!" out again, leaving the beer untouched. | I cursed myself for a blunderer. When I got to the street the two men way. That has nothing to do with it owed the captain to his vessel.

myself on being fairly up to date in "cussing out," to the great Joy of the regard to the plans of those who in- stevedores.

It looked good. the supplies were to be purchased. senfarer too. that of which I was in search.

150 tons burden. I looked her over. | dores. It was all most astounding.

crew of four and the cook, but he did. departed. The deck looked as though it had ped and tarred, the mast new slushed dray laden with boxes and crated afand every foot of running gear coiled down shipshape and Bristol fashion. There was a good deal of brass about her. It shone like gold, and I don't believe she owned an inch of paint that wasn't either fresh or new scrub-

I gazed for some time at this marvel. It's unusual enough anywhere, but aboard a California booker it is little short of miraculous. The crew had all turned up apparently, and a swarm of stevedores were hustling every sort lines and canvas down into the hold. It was a rush job, and that mate was having his hands full. I didn't wonder at his language nor at his looks, both of which were somewhat mussed up. Then almost at my elbow I heard that shrill falsetto squeat and turned just in time to see the captain ascend the

after gangplank. He was probably the most disheveled and untidy man I ever laid my eyes on. His hair and beard were not only long, but tangled and unkempt and grew so far toward each other as barely to expose a strip of dirty brown skin. His shoulders were bowed and enormous. His arms hung like a gorllla's, palms torned slightly outward. "H'm! Unknown port; unknown On his head was jammed a linen boat- Dropped him limp and beaten to the ing hat that had once been white that had once been brown and white. chewing tobacco. A figure more in

The captain mounted the gangplank square rigger himself in the civil war." hard to dodge of late years. However, first suspicion of his having been on a drunk. He glanced aloft, cast a specacross the walst of the ship and ascended to the quarter deck, where the mate stood leaning over the rail and late I was just coming out of a that-don't know where we're going, roamed nimlessly on what seemed to

His actions amused me. The dishis surroundings was exceedingly inferesting. I have often noticed that who ran forward, eager for a tip.

long gorilla arms contracted, the hairy head sunk forward in the tenseness "I will send some effects in the morn- of a serpent ready to strike. He uttered a shrill falsetto shriek that brought to a standstill every stevedore "That's all right, doctor, but how do on the job and sprang forward to seize

Evidently the grasp hurt. I can believe it might from those huge hands. "It's the usual thing to pay some. The man wrenched himself about with an oath of inquiry and pain. I could "Ach, but yes. I haf forgot. Dar- hear one side of what followed. The row told me. I will make you a check, captain's high pitched tones carried Let us go to the table of which you clearly, but the grumble and growl of the mate were indistinguishable at that

"Well, I'll tell you, you swab! It's

doesn't matter. The point is, that til the two had emerged from the cor- Just two fathom! How long would good, stald, self centered, or rather. ner saloon. They paused outside, still it take you to walk there? How long? talking earnestly. I ventured a hasty Just about six seconds! There and back! You"- I won't bother with all "Did you notice the two men who the epithets, although by now I know well. "And you couldn't take' six sec-"Sure!" said he, shoving me my glass onds off to spit over the side! Couldn't walk two fathem! Had to spit on my quarter deck, did you?"

Rumble from the mate. "No, by God, you won't call up any grotesque was the effect of this treble or corner spellbinder. Other was prob- of the crew. You'll get a swab and do ably one of these longshore abalone it yourself! You'll get a hand swab and get down on your knees! I'll teach

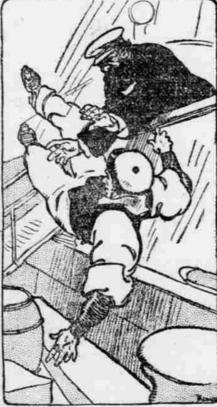
The mate said something again. "It don't matter if we ain't under had disappeared. I should have shad- The quarter deck is clean, if the waist ain't, and nobody but a son of a sea The affair interested me greatly, lawyer would spit on deck anyhow! Apparently Dr. Schermerhorn was From this Captain Selover went on about to go on a long voyage. I prided into a good old fashioned deep sea

terested the public, and the public at | The mate stood it pretty well, but that time was vastly interested in Dr. there comes a time when further talk Schermerhorn. I, in common with the is useless even in regard to a most rest of the world, had imagined him beinous offense. And of course, as you anchored safely in Philadelphia, im- know, the mate could hardly consider mersed in chemical research. Here he himself very seriously at fault. Why, bebbed up at the other end of the con- the ship was not yet at sen and in all finent, making shady bargains with the clutter of charging. He began to obscure shipping captains and paying answer back. In a moment it was a a big premium for absolute secrecy, quarrel. Abruptly it was a fight. The mate marked Sciover beneath the left Accordingly I was out early the next eye. The captain with beautiful simmorning. I had not much to go by, plicity crushed his antagonist in his Schooners are as plentiful as tadpoles gorilla-like squeeze, carried him to the in San Francisco harbor. However, side of the vessel and dropped him I was sure I could easily recognize limp and beaten to the pier. And the that falsetto voice, and I knew where mate was a good stout specimen of a

Adams & Marsh are a large firm and Then the captain rushed below, cautious. I knew better than to make emerging after an instant with a chest direct inquiries or to appear in the which he flung after his subordinate. salesroom. But by hanging around the It was followed a moment later by a superintend the stowing of the sciendoor of the shipping room I soon had stream of small stuff-mingled with tific goods and the personal baggage. track of the large orders to be sent language-projected through an open that day. In this manner I had no porthole. This in turn ceased. The busily, I remembered distinctly one great difficulty in following a truck to captain reappeared with a pail and other instance when Dr. Schermerborn pler 10 nor to identify a consignment brush, scrubbed feverishly at the of- had disappeared. He came back into Captain Ezra Selover as probably fending spot, mopped it dry with that scrutably, but within a week his re-The mate was in charge of the stow- glared about him and abruptly became lie property. I told myself that in the age, so I could not be quite sure. Here, as serene and placid as a noon caim. present instance his lavish use of monhowever, was a schooner-of about He took up the direction of the steve-

You're all acquainted with the Nobody paid any attention to the Laughing Lass and the perfection of mate. He looked toward the ship once he had negotiated for the vessel only her lines. You have not known her or twice, thought better of it and be- the day before setting sail, the imporunder Captain Ezra Selover. She was gan to pick up his effects, muttering tance of personal supervision as proved the cleanest ship I ever saw. Don't savagely. In a moment or so he threw by the fact that he-notoriously imknow how he accomplished it, with a his chest aboard an outgoing truck and practical in practical matters and no-

It was now nearly noon and I was been holystoned every morning by a just in the way of going for something himself instead of delegating it-why, crew of jackies. The stays were whip- to eat when I caught sight of another



pier. Gaping away from his hairy chest was fairs which I recognized as scientific a faded dingy checked cotton shirt apparatus. It was followed in quick succession by three others. Ignorant His blue trousers were spotted and as I was of the requirements of a scisplashed with dusty stains. He was entist, my common sense told me this could be no exploring outfit. I revised contrast to the exquisitely neat vessel my first intention of going to the club and bought a sandwich or two at the corner coffee house. I don't know with a steadiness that disproved my why, but even then the affair seemed big with mystery, with the portent of tragedy. Perhaps the smell of tar ulative eye on the stevedores trooping was in my nostrils and the sea called. It has always possessed for me an extraordinary allurement.

A little after 2 o'clock a cab drove to uttering directed curses from between the after gangplank and stopped. you how it was. One evening "Well, you see, for a proposition like sweat bended lips. There the big man brom it alighted a young man of whom I shall later have occasion to tell you more, followed by Dr. Schermerhorn. The young man carried only a light leather "serviette," such as students use abroad, while the doctor fairly staggered under the weight of a square brass bound chest without handles. The singularity of this unequal and his particularity in the matter of division of labor struck me at once. It struck also one of the dock men,



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e asked, at the same time reaching

The doctor's thin figure seemed fairy to shrink at the idea. "No, no!" he cried. "It is not for on to carry!"

He hastened up the gangplank, lutching the chest close. At the top | fessed surprise at the wages. The capaptain Selover met him. "Hello, doctor," he squealed. "Here in good time. We're busy, you see.

Let me carry your chest for you."

glared. "it's almighty heavy," insisted the captain. "Let me give you a hand." ordered the scientist. "Where iss the

cabin?" He disappeared down the companionway clasping his precious load. The young man remained on deck to got to make some arrangements."

All this time I had been thinking Want any advance money?" same old red bandanna handkerchief, sults on aerial photography were pubey, the elaborate nature of his prep- Uncle Sam"arations, the evident secrecy of the expedition as evidenced by the fact that business - had conducted the affair gentlemen, don't you see that all this was more than enough to wake me up. | cap I felt quite safe from the recognibody and soul? Suddenly I came to definite resolution. Captain Selover had descended to the pier. I approach-

ed him. "You need a mate," said I. He looked me over.

"Perhaps," he admitted. "Where's and pledged to act as second officer our man?" "Right here," said I. His eyes widened a little. Otherwise

he showed no sign of surprise. I cursed my clothes. Fortunately I had my master's certificate with me-I'd passed fresh water on the great lakes-I always carry that sort of document on the chance that it may come handy. It chanced

to have a couple of naval indorsements, results of the late war. "Look here," I said before I gave it to him. "You don't believe in me. My clothes are too good. That's all right. They're all I have that are good. I'm broke. I came down here wondering whether I'd better throw New Discovery is supreme. 56 cents

myself in the drink." "You look like a dude," he squeaked. "Where did you ever ship?"

I handed him my certificate. The indorsements from Admiral Keays and Captain Arnold impressed him. He stared at me again, and a gleam of cunning crept into his eyes. "Nothing crooked about this?" he

breathed softly.

heard the night before his statement of his moral scruples. I said nothing, N but looked knowing. "What was it?" he murmured. "Plain desertion or something worse?"

I had the key to this side of his

I remained inscrutable, "Well," he conceded, "I do need a mate, and a naval man-even if he is wantin' to get out of sight"-

"He won't spit on your decks anyway," I broke in boldly. Captain Selover's hairy face bristled about the mouth. This I subsequently discovered was symptom of a grin.

"You saw that, eh?" he trebled. "Aren't you afraid he'll bring down the police and delay your sailing?" I

He grinned again, with a cunning winkle in his eye.

"You needn't worry. There ain't goin' to be any police. He had his advance money, and he won't risk it by tryin' to come back."

tain guardedly explained that the expedition was secret. "What's our port?" I asked, to test

We came to an agreement. I pro-

"No, no!" Dr. Schermerhorn fairly "Cur papers are made out for Honolulu," he replied. We adjourned to sign articles,

"By the way," said I, "I wish you "You must not touch!" emphatically wouldn't make them out in my own name. 'Eagen' will do." "All right," he laughed, "I sabe,

> Eagen it is." "I'll be aboard at 6," said I. "I've "Wish you could help with the lading," said he, "Still I can get along.

> ed that I was supposed to be broke. "Yes," I amended. He gave me \$10. "I guess von'll show up," he said "Wouldn't do this to everybody. But

"No," I replied. Then I remember-

a naval man-even if he is dodgin'

"I'll be here," I assured him, At that time I were a pointed beard. This I shaved; also I was accustomed to use everlasses. The trouble was merely a slight astigmatism which inspection. I could get along perfecttorionsly disliking anything to do with by well without glasses, so I discarded them. I had my hair cut rather close. When I had put on sea boots, blue trousers and shirt, a pea jacket and a tion of a man like Dr. Schermerhorn. In fact, as you shall see, I hardly spoke to him during all the voyage out. Promptly at 6, then, I returned with

on a little 150 ton schooner.

(To be Continued).

a sea chest, bound I knew not whither,

to be gone I knew not for how long

The Jumping Off Place. "Consumption had me in its grasp; and I had almost reached the jumping off place when I was advised to try Dr. King's New Discovery; and I want to say right now, it saved my life. Improvement began with the first sottle, and after taking one dozen bottles I was a well and happy man again," says George Moore of Grimesland, N. C. As a remedy for coughs and colds and healer of weak, sore ungs and for preventing pneumonia

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