

# The Sargasso Sea

## The Curse of the Love of Margaret Inch and the Voyage of the Ship Aida

By Justus Miles Forman  
(Copyright by The North American Company.)

TO MAKE anything like a proper coherent tale of this extraordinary business I must piece together—as if it were for a patchwork quilt— odds and ends and ill-related fragments that I have got from many sources. Part of the story I had from Sol Saradine, the Jew, who wears gold earrings and was Drury's mate on both voyages; part I had from the log of the Aida; part from Drury's diary, which he called his private log; other parts from certain neighbors of Margaret Inch at Fairford; and the rest I have had to fill in from imagination—though that is but stray bits here and there—connecting links, if you like.

Still, I mean to give you as well as I can, all the essentials, holding back nothing that matters—save one fact: the bearings of that spot, away to the south in the Sargasso Sea, where two bare masts slant up above the heaving weed, and a fortune lies below. The latitude and longitude of that infinitesimal speck upon the waste is known to me, and will never, I think, be forgotten, but I have promised Sol Saradine

to evoke romantic fancies in a maid—a square, middle-aged man, with a square face and a scrubby beard that was beginning to gray. He had no humor at all and, I was going to say, no imagination, but I take that back. Unimaginative men do not go a-seek for Spanish treasure. Also I mind what Sol Saradine said of him, that Drury was a "sleeping dog," and when roused was terrific. I think women scent that sort of thing in men, and like it on the ground that it promises excitement, and generally fulfills its promise.

On the tenth day young Piers Drury turned up in answer to his uncle's summons, and on the fourteenth the Aida set sail for the south. Four days is a brief period of time, but in a far briefer there may be, as Sol Saradine says, "the devil to pay."

AND yet there can never have been a more innocent trouble maker. A big, fair lad young Piers was, with yellow hair and blue eyes—a few freckles across the bridge of his straight nose—the

in a week's time he would be quite himself again. So they came, under Abner Drury's careful guidance (for he had already been there without a diver to make sure), to the spot where the two bare masts of an earlier and unfortunate seeker slanted up above the heaving weed, and they dropped anchor.

THE invalid wasn't strong enough to dive at once, or so his uncle, against young Piers' protests, decided, and they waited three days in the merciless, still heat. Then he went down to explore, found nothing in the dense, under-sea forest, tried again, and on the second day, made out the galleon lying in three fathoms of water and rent asunder by what appeared to have been a dynamite blast. The earlier seekers, whose schooner canted a few yards apart, had made his labor easier for him. He brought up with him in his pouch a handful of doubloons. No, with him in pieces-of-eight—some of them lies before me now as a write—and the work was over for the day.

Sol Saradine says the three of them, who berthed aft, drank champagne with their dinner, and that young Piers, being still pretty weak, got a trifle tipsy. That night Abner Drury saw red.

What occurred I transcribe in his own words from his private log, which he always kept locked away, and which had written on the cover of it: "To be read only after my death."

How in the world a sane man could commit the incredible, fantastic folly of putting such a confession into written words, when he meant to keep it a secret for the remainder of his life, I know no more than you. It is beyond me.

The entry in the private log, which seems to have been made on the day following the event, it begins:

"June 23, '02.  
"Last night, the devil having entered into me, his black angels standing round about me, and God being absent in my prayers, I fancy, for I am a strong man, forty-one years old, and Margaret Inch is in Fairford. But here I shall write about her, and I hereby promise not to complain. So be it Amen."

Sol Saradine says that when he went to the skipper's bunk early the next morning and told him that young Piers could not be found, he had to wake the man from a sleep so sound that it was like a stupor. It was a species of stupor, I fancy, for, in so far as I can learn, he never slept soundly again to the very end of his life.

He was a careful man and did not like to see good oil wasted. They went on board, and Sol Saradine pointed out to the skipper a trail of wet footprints and little pools of water that led across the deck to the cabin companion. It looked as if the boy had been swimming in the harbor before lighting that lamp below.

"I'll take it out of him tomorrow!" Drury said, and they stooped to go under the companion hood. Sol Saradine observed that the steps here were wet too, and cautioned the skipper, who was ahead of him, not to slip. But at the bottom of the companion Cap'n Drury halted suddenly, gave a hoarse cry and flung up one arm over his face, receding so that he lurched heavily against Sol Saradine's knees. The Jew bent down to stare over the other man's shoulder into that little brightly lighted inclosure, and he says that the place was unoccupied, the three bunks (like sepulchral niches in a wall) untouched, the oilcloth-covered table in the cabin bare, save where a piece of parchment parchment treasure chart, which usually never left his person and was guarded like his life, lay open there in an astonishing piece of carelessness. There were tiny pools of water beside it on the oilcloth, as if wet arms had rested there. Sol Saradine saw them quite distinctly in the bright light of the swinging lamp.

THE following nine days of that voyage eastward remain even now, I can see, in Sol Saradine's mind, a sort of nightmare. He does not like to talk about them. It was not that Cap'n Drury was difficult to get on with; he was less difficult than ever before—softer-spoken, more considerate of those about him, almost gentle in his bearing. But in the evening, when the swinging lamp was lighted over the stripped, oilcloth-covered table, then Drury would sit down with the treasure chart before him and talk earnestly for hours to the empty air across the table. Further, the planks were always wet—and cold. Little pools of water stood on the floor and on the table. When I stepped over them they splashed. Sol Saradine bore it to the breaking point, then he slung a hammock between decks under the main hatch, and berthed there. The skipper made no comment on the change, if indeed he ever noticed it for he was very absent-minded of late. However, when the cabin-boy had hysterics and refused to enter that chill, damp place again, Drury awoke from his apathy, fogged the youth soundly, and thereafter, without further complaint, the meals were served, the slops were emptied, and the bunk—yes, two bunks were made.

So on the eighth of April (near that date in mind) they came once more to the dismal, weedy sea, furled their sails, and entered it. Once more they passed the melancholy, dismantled hulks that had been ships and were now roosting-places for pelagic fowl. The wind dropped and the air was heavy with the reek of corruption. Toward the end of the third day they made out the two bare masts, approached them, and anchored there. The sun went down, I am told, in a torn welter of blood, and round the Aida, as dusk came on, the seabirds wailed incessantly.

Sol Saradine, it appears, asked the skipper if he wished the diving gear brought up out of the hold and made ready for use. Drury regarded him with the mild bewilderment latterly characteristic, and said yes; the Jew spent what remained of the daylight over this task and afterward walked the deck in some perturbation of spirit. He took it that the skipper himself meant to go down, since there was no one else on board who had ever so much as tried on a helmet, but he was quite sure Drury was in no state for such difficult and exacting work. The man was about half crazy, Sol Saradine considered, and he wondered if it might not be held justifiable to clap him in irons and make straight for the nearest consular port.

HE SAYS he tramped the deck for some hours, considering these matters, screwing up his courage almost to the point of action and then losing hold of it again, cursing himself for having shipped on board the Aida, for not having demanded a discharge at Galveston. He walked and pondered alone there until late in the night, when the crew were long asleep in their bunks, and the lookout for ward was asleep too, bent over the anchor windlass.

He says he was just about to take himself to his hammock when he saw Drury emerge from the cabin companion and walk aft along the deck in the moonlight. He walked, it seems, in a peculiar fashion—two or three hurried steps, then a halt and a hanging back, as if he went reluctantly. It was, says Sol Saradine, exactly as an unwilling little child is dragged along by the hand—only Drury seemed to be alone.

The Jew, keeping, as well as he might, under cover, followed that fantastically progressing figure down the deck, and once called aloud to it, for he thought the man might be walking in his sleep. Cap'n Drury paid no heed to the hail, but went on in that odd, gliding, stumbling and leaning back with so extraordinary an appearance of being dragged by a force greater than his own that the mate stared and rubbed his eyes, and at last called out again, in a louder voice this time.

THE stumbling figure, with his mate hovering uncertainly behind, came at last to a break in the rail where the dinghy lay at the bottom of a sea-ladder, and halted there with what looked like a violent effort. He was so far, however, silent, though breathing hard and fast, but when he came to that break in the rail quite suddenly he threw up his arms and cried his wife's name.

"Margaret! Margaret!" He seemed to be calling upon her for help in utmost need, and his voice screamed out upon the still night with a shocking clamor—hoarse, dreadful shrieks that seemed to tear their way out of his throat. The awakened waterfowl began to creak too, round about the schooner in the darkness.

Sol Saradine dashed forward with a shout, but before he could reach the spot where the skipper stood the man was gone with a swift, unnatural violence; not—says the Jew—as if he had fallen or leaped from the deck, but as if he had been jerked away by a rope



"It is impossible to acquit the girl of coquetry in some degree"

that no one else shall know them, and no one else ever shall. That I swear.

Those drowned doubloons have done harm enough already.

After an absence of twenty years, during which time he had sailed all the seas of this world, and traded in most of the ports thereof, Abner Drury came back to Fairford, the sleepy fishing village of his birth.

HE CAME standing upon the white deck of the big schooner Aida (but he pronounced it Ada), of which he was master and owner, for he had prospered in these windy waters, and he had in his pocket a chart, hand-drawn on parchment, annotated in different scripts, Spanish and English. It looked very much like other buried treasure charts, even to the age-browned ink and the occasional rusty spots that might have been blood stains; and the bearings set down in one corner of the parchment were the latitude and longitude of a theoretical pin-point in the Sargasso Sea.

Drury came to Fairford like Diogenes, looking for an honest man, only more exigent than the Greek cynic, he wanted two men instead of one. To be plain, there is reason to believe that he expected to find his nephew, young Piers Drury, whom he had never seen, in whose name he had adopted the profession of diver; and, further, he wanted to find a mate who should be at once intelligent, trustworthy, and acquainted with gasoline propulsion—for the Aida was equipped with an auxiliary engine.

thick neck and large arms of a gladiator (a little vain of his strength he seems to have been, and given to showing it off in feats)—a sunny smile for everybody, and the heart of a child. The boy would not conscientiously have hurt an earthworm, but before he had been twelve hours in Fairford he was leaning across Margaret Inch's garden gate. His uncle saw him there, looked black, and passed by.

Now, it is certain that no living soul will ever know exactly what passed between this young woman and these two men during the four days prior to the Aida's departure. That Miss Inch continued to see a good deal of Captain Drury is well established, and it is no secret that young Piers was often in her sweet garden also—but never the two together. It is impossible to acquit the girl of coquetry in some degree, and I shall not try, but that there was any harm in her, or that she realized what she was stirring up with her inexperienced little finger, I, for my part, refuse to believe.

His paragon he discovered almost at once in Sol Saradine, the Jew, who wore gold earrings; but young Piers, wide contrary to his uncle's expectation, did not live in Fairford, but out Gloucester way, was busy about his own work and couldn't turn up for ten days.

On the second day Drury seems to have made an important discovery. A girl child whom he quite possibly may have seen toddling about Fairford twenty years before had grown to womanhood. Drury saw her leaning over the gate of her front garden, stopped to stare, and presently asked one of her neighbors who she was.

I HAVE seen a photograph of Margaret Inch taken by an itinerant artist, which, judging from supplementary verbal description, I believe to have been a ghastly libel. Still not even the best efforts of this wandering criminal could quite disguise the girl's grave beauty. I don't wonder Abner Drury stopped to stare, nor that he was past forty and reckoned a hard man. I know little about his early life, but it is my guess that they never had.

In any case, the middle-aged sailor seems to have been as the phrase goes, "hard hit," and to have made no effort to disguise it.

The girl's part in this suddenly inflamed romance is less easy to reconstruct. She was, they tell me, very gentle and sweet, tender with children, an angel of mercy in the sick room, universally beloved—but incredibly silent about her own thoughts and affairs. She was alone in the world, her father having been lost at sea, long back, and her mother dead these two years. No brothers, no sisters. So, as you see, it is little I know of Miss Inch's feelings toward Abner Drury at this period, save that she certainly allowed him to spend a great deal of his time in her fragrant garden, where the pinks and sweet williams and mimosaes and larkspurs grew, or on the shady porch of the little house, whence, looking down the green hill, you saw the masts of the fishing boats in the harbor, and the Aida among them.

He can hardly have been, I should think, the ag-

That would seem more or less naturally to be the end of Abner Drury's wooing, but it wasn't—not by a good deal. He was a determined man, and from what we already know, I may well say, desperate man. It was his way to get what he wanted (though, to be sure, he failed to bring back the Spanish treasure); it always had been his way. He had returned to Fairford late in August. On the eve of All Souls', or, in other words, the 31st of October—he was married to Margaret Inch, spinster, and the two took up their residence in his wife's home.

SOL SARADINE, who was present at the wedding, says that the bridegroom's face was as white as new sailcloth, and that he had grown noticeably thinner during the past three months, but that his eyes burned like the eyes of a man in high fever. Margaret Inch looked spiritless and ill. The private log is not expansive. The entry for the day says:

"October 31, '02.  
"This day I was married to Margaret Inch at Fairford."  
And that is all.

Yet upon this rather cheerless beginning there followed several months (four, to be exact) of quiet contentment, if not of wild rapture. For that matter, rapture, or at least the expression thereof, would ill have become a middle-aged seafaring man like Drury, and nobody expected ecstatic rhapsodies from his tongue-tied wife. That wouldn't have been like her. The night, however, having passed and the cheeks and more frequent smiles, and, in the man, a higher head and a brighter eye.

SOL SARADINE says that Drury complained to him of sleeplessness, and I know Margaret several times said to her neighbors that her husband slept ill and muttered in his sleep or got up and walked the floor. His general health suffered from it after a time, and he went to the old village doctor, who, with exquisitely unconscious irony, bade him rid his mind of any worries or troubles he might be brooding over.

I wonder what Drury said to that.

It was four months and four days after the wedding when the sword at last smote down between the two, to know the exact date, because the private log chronicles the event very briefly.

"March 5, '03.  
"Last night I talked in my sleep and she knows."  
It seems Drury awoke some two or three hours after midnight in a curious state of inexplicable uneasiness—awake, as it were, with a sense of calamity, and shivering. His wife was gone from his side. He waited a few moments, still shivering without apparent reason, then went to look for her. She was not in the house, but the back door of the kitchen was open and a bitter wind was driving the snow in along the floor. Drury pulled something round his shoulders, went out into the night and found his wife at the bottom of the orchard, crouched upon the ground, with the snow drifting against her body. She was in a state of nervous anxiety that was practically madness, but her moaning speech was all about one fact, and her husband knew that she knew.

HE screamed when he spoke to her and struck at her, even bit and scratched, but somehow he got her into the house and into her bed, where she fell quiet once more, save for continued moaning and screaming when the man tried to touch her. Then she was up and about the next day, though with swollen cheeks and staring eyes. She did her household work and prepared her usual meals, but herself ate nothing. Drury waited steadily for her to

without taking his eyes from the table, Cap'n Drury put one hand behind him as if to thrust his companion away, and the hand was shaking violently. He said in a kind of whisper:

"Go. Leave me alone with him." And at those

SOL SARADINE, who was present at the wedding, says that the bridegroom's face was as white as new sailcloth, and that he had grown noticeably thinner during the past three months, but that his eyes burned like the eyes of a man in high fever. Margaret Inch looked spiritless and ill. The private log is not expansive. The entry for the day says:

SOL SARADINE, who was present at the wedding, says that the bridegroom's face was as white as new sailcloth, and that he had grown noticeably thinner during the past three months, but that his eyes burned like the eyes of a man in high fever. Margaret Inch looked spiritless and ill. The private log is not expansive. The entry for the day says:

"October 31, '02.  
"This day I was married to Margaret Inch at Fairford."  
And that is all.

Yet upon this rather cheerless beginning there followed several months (four, to be exact) of quiet contentment, if not of wild rapture. For that matter, rapture, or at least the expression thereof, would ill have become a middle-aged seafaring man like Drury, and nobody expected ecstatic rhapsodies from his tongue-tied wife. That wouldn't have been like her. The night, however, having passed and the cheeks and more frequent smiles, and, in the man, a higher head and a brighter eye.

SOL SARADINE says that Drury complained to him of sleeplessness, and I know Margaret several times said to her neighbors that her husband slept ill and muttered in his sleep or got up and walked the floor. His general health suffered from it after a time, and he went to the old village doctor, who, with exquisitely unconscious irony, bade him rid his mind of any worries or troubles he might be brooding over.

I wonder what Drury said to that.

It was four months and four days after the wedding when the sword at last smote down between the two, to know the exact date, because the private log chronicles the event very briefly.

"March 5, '03.  
"Last night I talked in my sleep and she knows."  
It seems Drury awoke some two or three hours after midnight in a curious state of inexplicable uneasiness—awake, as it were, with a sense of calamity, and shivering. His wife was gone from his side. He waited a few moments, still shivering without apparent reason, then went to look for her. She was not in the house, but the back door of the kitchen was open and a bitter wind was driving the snow in along the floor. Drury pulled something round his shoulders, went out into the night and found his wife at the bottom of the orchard, crouched upon the ground, with the snow drifting against her body. She was in a state of nervous anxiety that was practically madness, but her moaning speech was all about one fact, and her husband knew that she knew.

HE screamed when he spoke to her and struck at her, even bit and scratched, but somehow he got her into the house and into her bed, where she fell quiet once more, save for continued moaning and screaming when the man tried to touch her. Then she was up and about the next day, though with swollen cheeks and staring eyes. She did her household work and prepared her usual meals, but herself ate nothing. Drury waited steadily for her to



"The Jew bent down to stare over the other man's shoulder"

inexplicable words the Jew says the back of his head turned suddenly cold and he felt his hair beginning to bristle. He cannot explain it, and he cannot see what he was staring at, but he was seized all at once by blind, shivering horror. He turned about, scrambled in mad haste up the steps of the companion, ran across the deck and leaped ashore. Then he ran again until he had reached the friendly lights of the nearest bar, which was also a sailor's lodging-house, and there he spent the remainder of that night.

Some time during the dark hours Drury seems to have written up his private log, for I find inscribed there:

"March 30, '03.  
"This evening young Piers Drury, my nephew, came aboard, that I killed in the Sargasso Sea, and we talked about recovering the Spanish gold."  
In the morning, Sol Saradine, heartily ashamed of his share in ascribing them to the least unnecessary drink of the evening before, went aboard the Aida to make his peace. But the skipper did not seem to realize that he had been absent. Cap'n Drury, looking quite himself, indeed, with a more peaceful face than he had shown in many a month, sent him ashore again to order a quantity of gasoline, saying that he meant to sail before noon, in ballast. The Jew asked where. The skipper smiled upon him—Drury smiled Drury. To the Sargasso Sea."

about his body. There was a great splash at the bottom of the sea-ladder, a final bubbling cry, and then no more.

The lookout, thoroughly awake now, came running aft along the deck, and he and Sol Saradine sprang into the dinghy and pushed off from the schooner's side. They towed round and round, watching the still surface of the sea for half an hour or more, then went back on board. The mate looked at his watch, and it was half-past eleven.

HAT is about all I have to tell. Sol Saradine brought the Aida back to Fairford and turned her over to the authorities there. He kept in his possession the parchment treasure chart which he had found on the floor of the cuddy, but I doubt if he will ever make use of it, for he has retired from the sea now and cultivates his garden; also the very sound of the name Sargasso makes him shiver.

Margaret Drury is dead, and I have a queer thing to tell about that, which I got from old Mrs. Saltonstall. She passed away on the night of the eighth of April. She had been asleep for some hours, and old Mrs. Saltonstall, her volunteer nurse, was nodding in her chair. She says that while the half clock was striking eleven Margaret Drury suddenly awoke, laughed aloud, and died.

Eleven o'clock on the night of April 8

SOL SARADINE, who was present at the wedding, says that the bridegroom's face was as white as new sailcloth, and that he had grown noticeably thinner during the past three months, but that his eyes burned like the eyes of a man in high fever. Margaret Inch looked spiritless and ill. The private log is not expansive. The entry for the day says:

"October 31, '02.  
"This day I was married to Margaret Inch at Fairford."  
And that is all.

Yet upon this rather cheerless beginning there followed several months (four, to be exact) of quiet contentment, if not of wild rapture. For that matter, rapture, or at least the expression thereof, would ill have become a middle-aged seafaring man like Drury, and nobody expected ecstatic rhapsodies from his tongue-tied wife. That wouldn't have been like her. The night, however, having passed and the cheeks and more frequent smiles, and, in the man, a higher head and a brighter eye.

SOL SARADINE says that Drury complained to him of sleeplessness, and I know Margaret several times said to her neighbors that her husband slept ill and muttered in his sleep or got up and walked the floor. His general health suffered from it after a time, and he went to the old village doctor, who, with exquisitely unconscious irony, bade him rid his mind of any worries or troubles he might be brooding over.

I wonder what Drury said to that.

It was four months and four days after the wedding when the sword at last smote down between the two, to know the exact date, because the private log chronicles the event very briefly.

"March 5, '03.  
"Last night I talked in my sleep and she knows."  
It seems Drury awoke some two or three hours after midnight in a curious state of inexplicable uneasiness—awake, as it were, with a sense of calamity, and shivering. His wife was gone from his side. He waited a few moments, still shivering without apparent reason, then went to look for her. She was not in the house, but the back door of the kitchen was open and a bitter wind was driving the snow in along the floor. Drury pulled something round his shoulders, went out into the night and found his wife at the bottom of the orchard, crouched upon the ground, with the snow drifting against her body. She was in a state of nervous anxiety that was practically madness, but her moaning speech was all about one fact, and her husband knew that she knew.

HE screamed when he spoke to her and struck at her, even bit and scratched, but somehow he got her into the house and into her bed, where she fell quiet once more, save for continued moaning and screaming when the man tried to touch her. Then she was up and about the next day, though with swollen cheeks and staring eyes. She did her household work and prepared her usual meals, but herself ate nothing. Drury waited steadily for her to

inexplicable words the Jew says the back of his head turned suddenly cold and he felt his hair beginning to bristle. He cannot explain it, and he cannot see what he was staring at, but he was seized all at once by blind, shivering horror. He turned about, scrambled in mad haste up the steps of the companion, ran across the deck and leaped ashore. Then he ran again until he had reached the friendly lights of the nearest bar, which was also a sailor's lodging-house, and there he spent the remainder of that night.

Some time during the dark hours Drury seems to have written up his private log, for I find inscribed there:

"March 30, '03.  
"This evening young Piers Drury, my nephew, came aboard, that I killed in the Sargasso Sea, and we talked about recovering the Spanish gold."  
In the morning, Sol Saradine, heartily ashamed of his share in ascribing them to the least unnecessary drink of the evening before, went aboard the Aida to make his peace. But the skipper did not seem to realize that he had been absent. Cap'n Drury, looking quite himself, indeed, with a more peaceful face than he had shown in many a month, sent him ashore again to order a quantity of gasoline, saying that he meant to sail before noon, in ballast. The Jew asked where. The skipper smiled upon him—Drury smiled Drury. To the Sargasso Sea."

SOL SARADINE, who was present at the wedding, says that the bridegroom's face was as white as new sailcloth, and that he had grown noticeably thinner during the past three months, but that his eyes burned like the eyes of a man in high fever. Margaret Inch looked spiritless and ill. The private log is not expansive. The entry for the day says:

"October 31, '02.  
"This day I was married to Margaret Inch at Fairford."  
And that is all.

Yet upon this rather cheerless beginning there followed several months (four, to be exact) of quiet contentment, if not of wild rapture. For that matter, rapture, or at least the expression thereof, would ill have become a middle-aged seafaring man like Drury, and nobody expected ecstatic rhapsodies from his tongue-tied wife. That wouldn't have been like her. The night, however, having passed and the cheeks and more frequent smiles, and, in the man, a higher head and a brighter eye.

SOL SARADINE says that Drury complained to him of sleeplessness, and I know Margaret several times said to her neighbors that her husband slept ill and muttered in his sleep or got up and walked the floor. His general health suffered from it after a time, and he went to the old village doctor, who, with exquisitely unconscious irony, bade him rid his mind of any worries or troubles he might be brooding over.

I wonder what Drury said to that.

It was four months and four days after the wedding when the sword at last smote down between the two, to know the exact date, because the private log chronicles the event very briefly.

"March 5, '03.  
"Last night I talked in my sleep and she knows."  
It seems Drury awoke some two or three hours after midnight in a curious state of inexplicable uneasiness—awake, as it were, with a sense of calamity, and shivering. His wife was gone from his side. He waited a few moments, still shivering without apparent reason, then went to look for her. She was not in the house, but the back door of the kitchen was open and a bitter wind was driving the snow in along the floor. Drury pulled something round his shoulders, went out into the night and found his wife at the bottom of the orchard, crouched upon the ground, with the snow drifting against her body. She was in a state of nervous anxiety that was practically madness, but her moaning speech was all about one fact, and her husband knew that she knew.

HE screamed when he spoke to her and struck at her, even bit and scratched, but somehow he got her into the house and into her bed, where she fell quiet once more, save for continued moaning and screaming when the man tried to touch her. Then she was up and about the next day, though with swollen cheeks and staring eyes. She did her household work and prepared her usual meals, but herself ate nothing. Drury waited steadily for her to

SOL SARADINE, who was present at the wedding, says that the bridegroom's face was as white as new sailcloth, and that he had grown noticeably thinner during the past three months, but that his eyes burned like the eyes of a man in high fever. Margaret Inch looked spiritless and ill. The private log is not expansive. The entry for the day says:

"October 31, '02.  
"This day I was married to Margaret Inch at Fairford."  
And that is all.

Yet upon this rather cheerless beginning there followed several months (four, to be exact) of quiet contentment, if not of wild rapture. For that matter, rapture, or at least the expression thereof, would ill have become a middle-aged seafaring man like Drury, and nobody expected ecstatic rhapsodies from his tongue-tied wife. That wouldn't have been like her. The night, however, having passed and the cheeks and more frequent smiles, and, in the man, a higher head and a brighter eye.

SOL SARADINE says that Drury complained to him of sleeplessness, and I know Margaret several times said to her neighbors that her husband slept ill and muttered in his sleep or got up and walked the floor. His general health suffered from it after a time, and he went to the old village doctor, who, with exquisitely unconscious irony, bade him rid his mind of any worries or troubles he might be brooding over.

I wonder what Drury said to that.

It was four months and four days after the wedding when the sword at last smote down between the two, to know the exact date, because the private log chronicles the event very briefly.

"March 5, '03.  
"Last night I talked in my sleep and she knows."  
It seems Drury awoke some two or three hours after midnight in a curious state of inexplicable uneasiness—awake, as it were, with a sense of calamity, and shivering. His wife was gone from his side. He waited a few moments, still shivering without apparent reason, then went to look for her. She was not in the house, but the back door of the kitchen was open and a bitter wind was driving the snow in along the floor. Drury pulled something round his shoulders, went out into the night and found his wife at the bottom of the orchard, crouched upon the ground, with the snow drifting against her body. She was in a state of nervous anxiety that was practically madness, but her moaning speech was all about one fact, and her husband knew that she knew.

HE screamed when he spoke to her and struck at her, even bit and scratched, but somehow he got her into the house and into her bed, where she fell quiet once more, save for continued moaning and screaming when the man tried to touch her. Then she was up and about the next day, though with swollen cheeks and staring eyes. She did her household work and prepared her usual meals, but herself ate nothing. Drury waited steadily for her to

inexplicable words the Jew says the back of his head turned suddenly cold and he felt his hair beginning to bristle. He cannot explain it, and he cannot see what he was staring at, but he was seized all at once by blind, shivering horror. He turned about, scrambled in mad haste up the steps of the companion, ran across the deck and leaped ashore. Then he ran again until he had reached the friendly lights of the nearest bar, which was also a sailor's lodging-house, and there he spent the remainder of that night.

Some time during the dark hours Drury seems to have written up his private log, for I find inscribed there:

"March 30, '03.  
"This evening young Piers Drury, my nephew, came aboard, that I killed in the Sargasso Sea, and we talked about recovering the Spanish gold."  
In the morning, Sol Saradine, heartily ashamed of his share in ascribing them to the least unnecessary drink of the evening before, went aboard the Aida to make his peace. But the skipper did not seem to realize that he had been absent. Cap'n Drury, looking quite himself, indeed, with a more peaceful face than he had shown in many a month, sent him ashore again to order a quantity of gasoline, saying that he meant to sail before noon, in ballast. The Jew asked where. The skipper smiled upon him—Drury smiled Drury. To the Sargasso Sea."

inexplicable words the Jew says the back of his head turned suddenly cold and he felt his hair beginning to bristle. He cannot explain it, and he cannot see what he was staring at, but he was seized all at once by blind, shivering horror. He turned about, scrambled in mad haste up the steps of the companion, ran across the deck and leaped ashore. Then he ran again until he had reached the friendly lights of the nearest bar, which was also a sailor's lodging-house, and there he spent the remainder of that night.

Some time during the dark hours Drury seems to have written up his private log, for I find inscribed there:

"March 30, '03.  
"This evening young Piers Drury, my nephew, came aboard, that I killed in the Sargasso Sea, and we talked about recovering the Spanish gold."  
In the morning, Sol Saradine, heartily ashamed of his share in ascribing them to the least unnecessary drink of the evening before, went aboard the Aida to make his peace. But the skipper did not seem to realize that he had been absent. Cap'n Drury, looking quite himself, indeed, with a more peaceful face than he had shown in many a month, sent him ashore again to order a quantity of gasoline, saying that he meant to sail before noon, in ballast. The Jew asked where. The skipper smiled upon him—Drury smiled Drury. To the Sargasso Sea."

inexplicable words the Jew says the back of his head turned suddenly cold and he felt his hair beginning to bristle. He cannot explain it, and he cannot see what he was staring at, but he was seized all at once by blind, shivering horror. He turned about, scrambled in mad haste up the steps of the companion, ran across the deck and leaped ashore. Then he ran again until he had reached the friendly lights of the nearest bar, which was also a sailor's lodging-house, and there he spent the remainder of that night.

Some time during the dark hours Drury seems to have written up his private log, for I find inscribed there:

"March 30, '03.  
"This evening young Piers Drury, my nephew, came aboard, that I killed in the Sargasso Sea, and we talked about recovering the Spanish gold."  
In the morning, Sol Saradine, heartily ashamed of his share in ascribing them to the least unnecessary drink of the evening before, went aboard the Aida to make his peace. But the skipper did not seem to realize that he had been absent. Cap'n Drury, looking quite himself, indeed, with a more peaceful face than he had shown in many a month, sent him ashore again to order a quantity of gasoline, saying that he meant to sail before noon, in ballast. The Jew asked where. The skipper smiled upon him—Drury smiled Drury. To the Sargasso Sea."