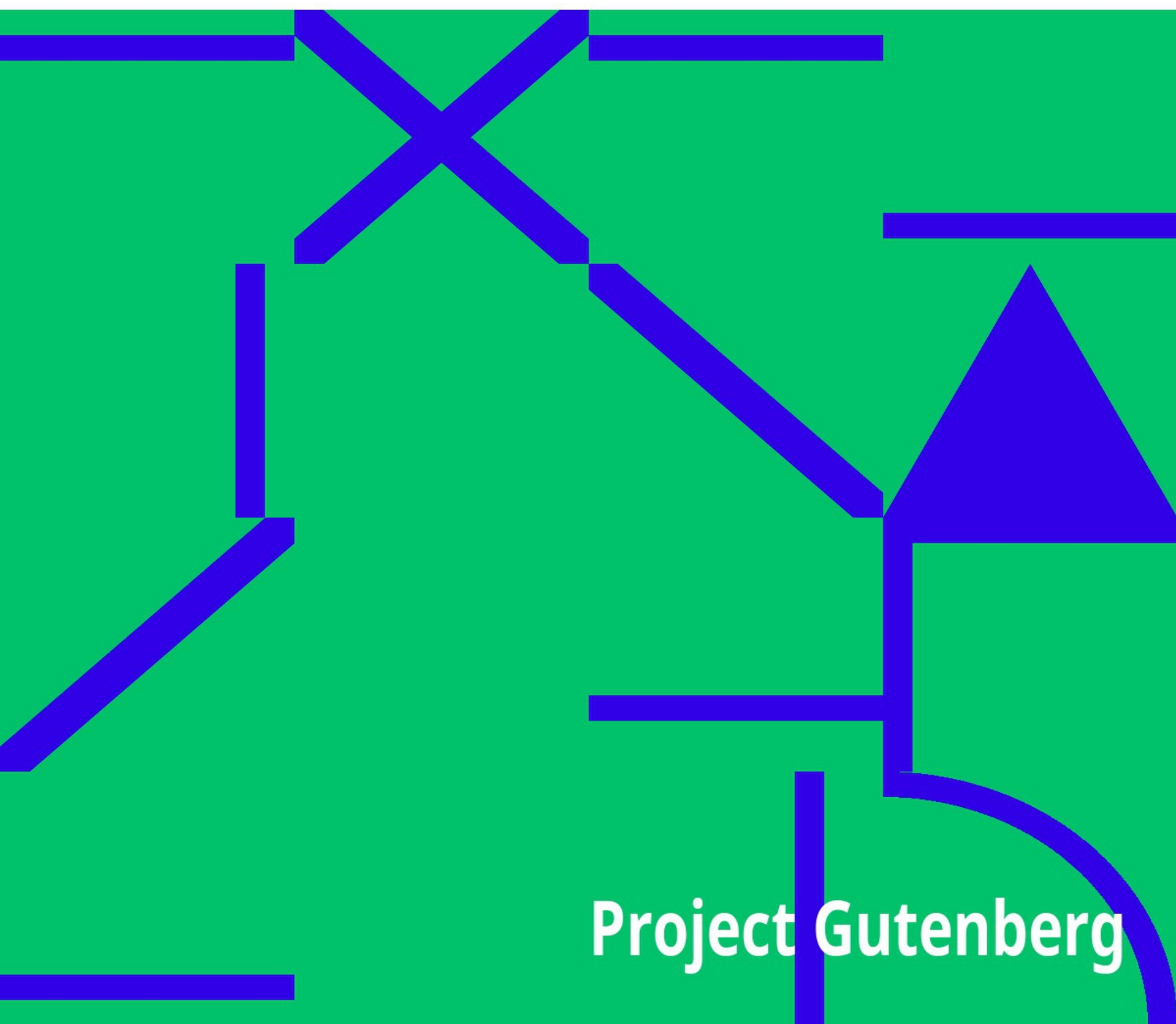


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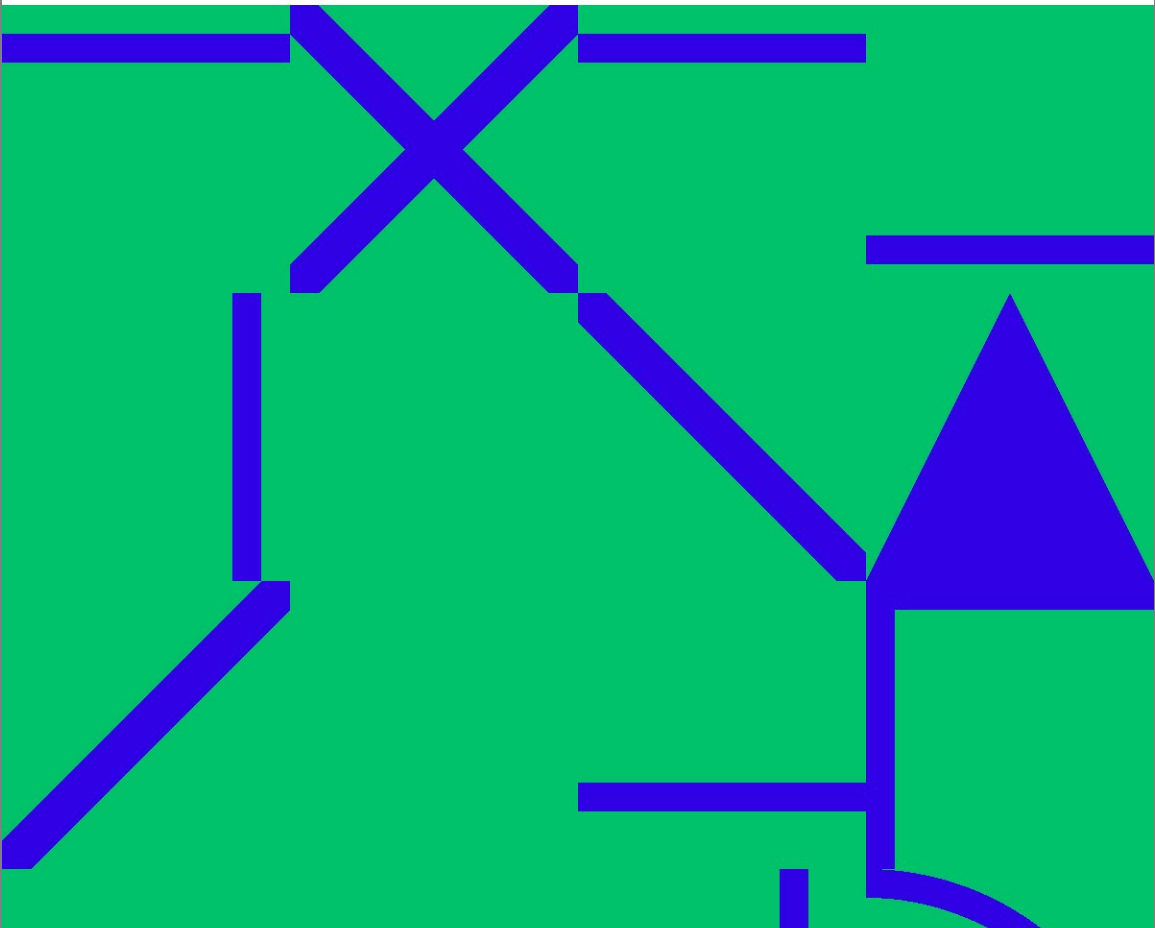
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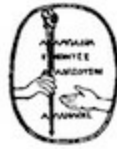
SHE WAS PROMISED TO SLOW JIM TOOL

EVERY MAN FOR HIMSELF

BY
NORMAN DUNCAN

AUTHOR OF
"THE CRUISE OF THE *SHINING LIGHT*"

“DOCTOR LUKE OF THE *LABRADOR*”
ETC. ETC



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EVERY MAN FOR HIMSELF

I—THE WAYFARER

The harbor lights were out; all the world of sea and sky and barren rock was black. It was Saturday—long after night, the first snow flying in the dark. Half a gale from the north ran whimpering through the rigging, by turns wrathful and plaintive—a restless wind: it would not leave the night at ease. The trader *Good Samaritan* lay at anchor in Poor Man's Harbor on the Newfoundland coast: this on her last voyage of that season for the shore fish. We had given the schooner her Saturday night bath; she was white and trim in every part: the fish stowed, the decks swabbed, the litter of goods in the cabin restored to the hooks and shelves. The crew was in the forecabin—a lolling, snoozy lot, now desperately yawning for lack of diversion. Tumm, the clerk, had survived the moods of brooding and light irony, and was still wide awake, musing quietly in the seclusion of a cloud of tobacco smoke. By all the signs, the inevitable was at hand; and presently, as we had foreseen, the pregnant silence fell.

With one blast—a swishing exhalation breaking from the depths of his gigantic chest, in its passage fluttering his unkempt mustache—Tumm dissipated the enveloping cloud; and having thus emerged from seclusion he moved his glance from eye to eye until the crew sat in uneasy expectancy.

“If a lad's mother tells un he've got a soul,” he began, “it don't do no wonderful harm; but if a man finds it out for hisself—”

The pause was for effect; so, too, the pointed finger, the lifted nostrils, the deep, inclusive glance.

“—it plays the devil!”

The ship's boy, a cadaverous, pasty, red-eyed, drooping-jawed youngster

from the Cove o' First Cousins, gasped in a painful way. He came closer to the forecandle table—a fascinated rabbit.

“Billy Ill,” said Tumm, “you better turn in.”

“I isn't sleepy, sir.”

“I 'low you better *had*,” Tumm warned. “It ain't fit for such as you t' hear.”

The boy's voice dropped to an awed whisper. “I wants t' hear,” he said.

“Hear?”

“Ay, sir. I wants t' hear about souls—an' the devil.”

Tumm sighed. “Ah, well, lad,” said he, “I 'low you was born t' be troubled by fears. God help us all!”

We waited.

“He come,” Tumm began, “from Jug Cove—bein’,” he added, indulgently, after a significant pause, “born there—an' that by sheer ill luck of a windy night in the fall o' the year, when the ol' woman o' Tart Harbor, which used t' be handy thereabouts, was workin' double watches at Whale Run t' save the life of a trader's wife o' the name o' Tiddle. I 'low,” he continued, “that 'tis the only excuse a man *could* have for hailin' from Jug Cove; for,” he elucidated, “'tis a mean place t' the westward o' Fog Island, a bit below the Black Gravestones, where the *Soldier o' the Cross* was picked up by Satan's Tail in the nor'easter o' last fall. You opens the Cove when you rounds Greedy Head o' the Henan'-Chickens an' lays a course for Gentleman Tickle t' other side o' the Bay. 'Tis there that Jug Cove lies; an' whatever,” he proceeded, being now well under way, with all sail drawing in a snoring breeze, “'tis where the poor devil had the ill luck t' hail from. We was drove there in the *Quick as Wink* in the southerly gale o' the Year o' the Big Shore Catch; an' we lied three dirty days in the lee o' the Pillar o' Cloud, waitin' for civil weather; for we was fished t' the scupper-holes, an' had no heart t' shake hands with the sea that was runnin'. 'Tis a mean place t' be wind-bound—this Jug Cove: tight an' dismal as chokee, with walls o' black rock, an' as nasty a front yard o' sea as ever I knowed.

“‘Ecod!’ thinks I, ‘I'll just take a run ashore t' see how bad a mess really was made o' Jug Cove.’

“Which bein’ done, I crossed courses for the first time with Abraham Botch—Botch by name, an’ botch, accordin’ t’ my poor lights, by nature: Abraham Botch, God help un! o’ Jug Cove. ’Twas a foggy day—a cold, wet time: ecod! the day felt like the corpse of a drowned cook. The moss was soggy; the cliffs an’ rocks was all a-drip; the spruce was soaked t’ the skin—the earth all wettish an’ sticky an’ cold. The southerly gale ramped over the sea; an’ the sea got so mad at the wind that it fair frothed at the mouth. I ’low the sea was tired o’ foolin’, an’ wanted t’ go t’ sleep; but the wind kep’ teasin’ it—kep’ slappin’ an’ pokin’ an’ pushin’—till the sea couldn’t stand it no more, an’ just got mad. Off shore, in the front yard o’ Jug Cove, ’twas all white with breakin’ rocks—as dirty a sea for fishin’ punts as a man could sail in nightmares. From the Pillar o’ Cloud I could see, down below, the seventeen houses o’ Jug Cove, an’ the sweet little *Quick as Wink*; the water was black, an’ the hills was black, but the ship an’ the mean little houses was gray in the mist. T’ sea they was nothin’—just fog an’ breakers an’ black waves. T’ land-ward, likewise—black hills in the mist. A dirty sea an’ a lean shore!

“‘Tumm,’ thinks I, ‘’tis more by luck than good conduct that you wasn’t born here. You’d thank God, Tumm,’ thinks I, ‘if you didn’t feel so dismal scurvy about bein’ the Teacher’s pet.’

“An’ then—

“‘Good-even,’ says Abraham Botch.

“There he lied—on the blue, spongy caribou-moss, at the edge o’ the cliff, with the black-an’—white sea below, an’ the mist in the sky an’ on the hills t’ leeward. Ecod! but he was lean an’ ragged: this fellow sprawlin’ there, with his face t’ the sky an’ his legs an’ leaky boots scattered over the moss. Skinny legs he had, an’ a chest as thin as paper; but aloft he carried more sail ’n the law allows—sky-scraper, star-gazer, an’, ay! even the curse-o’-God-over-all. That was Botch—mostly head, an’ a sight more forehead than face, God help un! He’d a long, girlish face, a bit thin at the cheeks an’ skimped at the chin; an’ they wasn’t beard enough anywheres t’ start a bird’s nest. Ah, but the eyes o’ that botch! Them round, deep eyes, with the still waters an’ clean shores! I ’low I can’t tell you no more—but only this: that they was somehow like the sea, blue an’ deep an’ full o’ change an’ sadness. Ay, there lied Botch in the fog-drip—poor Botch o’ Jug Cove: eyes in his head; his dirty, lean body clothed in patched moleskin an’ rotten leather.

“An’—

“‘Good-even, yourself,’ says I.

“‘My name’s Botch,’ says he. ‘Isn’t you from the *Quick as Wink*?’

“‘I is,’ says I; ‘an’ they calls me Tumm.’

“‘That’s a very queer name,’ says he.

“‘Oh no!’ says I. ‘They isn’t nothin’ queer about the name o’ Tumm.’

“He laughed a bit—an’ rubbed his feet together: just like a tickled youngster. ‘Ay,’ says he; ‘that’s a wonderful queer name. Hark!’ says he. ‘You just listen, an’ I’ll *show* you. Tumm,’ says he, ‘Tumm, Tumm, Tumm.... Tumm, Tumm, Tumm.... Tumm—’

“‘Don’t,’ says I, for it give me the fidgets. ‘Don’t say it so often.’

“‘Why not?’ says he.

“‘I don’t like it,’ says I.

“‘Tumm,’ says he, with a little cackle, ‘Tumm, Tumm, Tumm—’

“‘Don’t you do that no more,’ says I. ‘I won’t have it. When you says it that way, I ’low I don’t know whether my name is Tumm or Tump. ’Tis a very queer name. I wisht,’ says I, ‘that I’d been called Smith.’

“‘’Twouldn’t make no difference,’ says he. ‘All names is queer if you stops t’ think. Every word you ever spoke is queer. Everything is queer. It’s *all* queer—once you stops t’ think about it.’

“‘Then I don’t think I’ll stop,’ says I, ‘for I don’t *like* things t’ be queer.’

“Then Botch had a little spell o’ thinkin’.”

Tumm leaned over the forecastle table.

“Now,” said he, forefinger lifted, “accordin’ t’ my lights, it ain’t nice t’ see *any* man thinkin’: for a real man ain’t got no call t’ think, an’ can’t afford the time on the coast o’ Newf’un’land, where they’s too much fog an’ wind an’ rock t’ ’low it. For me, I’d rather see a man in a ’leptic fit: for fits is more or less natural an’ can’t be helped. But Botch! When Botch *thunk*—when he got hard at it—’twould give you the shivers. He sort o’drawed away—got into nothin’. They wasn’t no sea nor shore for Botch no more; they wasn’t no earth, no heavens. He got rid o’ all that, as though it hindered the work he was

at, an' didn't matter anyhow. They wasn't nothin' left o'things but botch— an' the nothin' about un. Botch *in* nothin'. Accordin' t' my lights, 'tis a sinful thing t'do; an' when I first seed Botch at it, I 'lowed he was lackin' in religious opinions. 'Twas just as if his soul had pulled down the blinds, an' locked the front door, an' gone out for a walk, without leavin' word when 'twould be home. An', accordin' t' my lights, it ain't right, nor wise, for a man's soul t' do no such thing. A man's soul 'ain't got no common-sense; it 'ain't got no caution, no manners, no nothin' that it needs in a wicked world like this. When it gets loose, 't is liable t' wander far, an' get lost, an' miss its supper. Accordin' t' my lights, it ought t' be kep' in, an' fed an' washed regular, an' put t' bed at nine o'clock. But Botch! well, there lied his body in the wet, like an unloved child, while his soul went cavortin' over the Milky Way.

"He come to all of a sudden. 'Tumm,' says he, 'you is.'

"'Ay,' says I, 'Tumm I is. 'Tis the name I was born with.'

"'You don't find me,' says he. 'I says you *is*.'

"'Is what?'

"'Just—*is*!'

"'With that, I took un. 'Twas all t' oncet. He was tellin' me that I *was*. Well, I *is*. Damme! 'twasn't anything I didn't *know* if I'd stopped t' think. But they wasn't nobody ever called my notice to it afore, an' I'd been too busy about the fish t' mind it. So I was sort o'—s'prised. It don't matter, look you! t' *be*; but 'tis mixin' t' the mind an' fearsome t' stop t' *think* about it. An' it come t' me all t' oncet; an' I was s'prised, an' I was scared.

"'Now, Tumm,' says he, with his finger p'intin', 'where was you?'

"'Fishin' off the Shark's Fin,' says I. 'We just come up loaded, an'—'

"'You don't find me,' says he. 'I says, where was you afore you was is?'

"'Is you gone mad?' says I.

"'Not at all, Tumm,' says he. 'Not at all! 'Tis a plain question. You *is*, isn't you? Well, then, you must have been *was*. Now, then, Tumm, where *was* you?'

"'Afore I was born?'

“‘Ay—afore you was is.’

“‘God knows!’ says I. ‘I ’low *I* don’t. An’ look you, Botch,’ says I, ‘this talk ain’t right. You isn’t a infidel, is you?’

“‘Oh no!’ says he.

“‘Then,’ says I, for I was mad, ‘where in hell did you think up all this ghostly tomfoolery?’

“‘On the grounds,’ says he.

“‘On the grounds?’ Lads,” said Tumm to the crew, his voice falling, “*you* knows what that means, doesn’t you?”

The Jug Cove fishing-grounds lie off Breakheart Head. They are beset with peril and all the mysteries of the earth. They are fished from little punts, which the men of Jug Cove cleverly make with their own hands, every man his own punt, having been taught to this by their fathers, who learned of the fathers before them, out of the knowledge which ancient contention with the wiles of the wind and of the sea had disclosed. The timber is from the wilderness, taken at leisure; the iron and hemp are from the far-off southern world, which is to the men of the place like a grandmother’s tale, loved and incredible. Off the Head the sea is spread with rock and shallow. It is a sea of wondrously changing colors—blue, red as blood, gray, black with the night. It is a sea of changing moods: of swift, unprovoked wrath; of unsought and surprising gentlenesses. It is not to be understood. There is no mastery of it to be won. It gives no accounting to men. It has no feeling. The shore is bare and stolid. Black cliffs rise from the water; they are forever white at the base with the fret of the sea. Inland, the blue-black hills lift their heads; they are unknown to the folk—hills of fear, remote and cruel. Seaward, fogs and winds are bred; the misty distances are vast and mysterious, wherein are the great cliffs of the world’s edge. Winds and fogs and ice are loose and passionate upon the waters. Overhead is the high, wide sky, its appalling immensity revealed from the rim to the rim. Clouds, white and black, crimson and gold, fluffy, torn to shreds, wing restlessly from nowhere to nowhere. It is a vast, silent, restless place. At night its infinite spaces are alight with the dread marvel of stars. The universe is voiceless and indifferent. It has no purpose—save to follow its inscrutable will. Sea and wind are aimless. The

land is dumb, self-centred; it has neither message nor care for its children. And from dawn to dark the punts of Jug Cove float in the midst of these terrors.

“Eh?” Tumm resumed. “*You* knows what it is, lads. ’Tis bad enough t’ think in company, when a man can peep into a human eye an’ steady his old hulk; but t’ think alone—an’ at the fishin’! I ’low Botch ought to have knowed better; for they’s too many men gone t’ the mad-house t’ St. John’s already from this here coast along o’ thinkin’. But Botch thought at will. ‘Tumm,’ says he, ‘I done a power o’ thinkin’ in my life—out there on the grounds, between Breakheart Head an’ the Tombstone, that breakin’ rock t’ the east’ard. I’ve thunk o’ wind an’ sea, o’ sky an’ soil, o’ tears an’ laughter an’ crooked backs, o’ love an’ death, rags an’ robbery, of all the things of earth an’ in the hearts o’ men; an’ I don’t know nothin’! My God! after all, I don’t know nothin’! The more I’ve thunk, the less I’ve knowed. ’Tis all come down t’ this, now, Tumm: that I *is*. An’ if I *is*, I *was* an’ *will be*. But sometimes I misdoubt the *was*; an’ if I loses my grip on the *was*, Tumm, my God! what’ll become o’ the *will be*? Can you tell me that, Tumm? Is I got t’ come down t’ the *is*? Can’t I build nothin’ on that? Can’t I go no further than the *is*? An’ will I lose even that? Is I got t’ come down t’ knowin’ nothin’ at all?’

“‘Look you! Botch,’ says I, ‘don’t you know the price o’ fish?’

“‘No,’ says he. ‘But it ain’t nothin’ t’ know. It ain’t worth knowin’. It—it—it don’t matter!’

“‘I ’low,’ says I, ‘your wife don’t think likewise. You got a wife, isn’t you?’

“‘Ay,’ says he.

“‘An’ a kid?’

“‘I don’t know,’ says he.

“‘You *what*!’ says I.

“‘I don’t know,’ says he. ‘She was engaged at it when I come up on the Head. They was a lot o’ women in the house, an’ a wonderful lot o’ fuss an’ muss. You’d be *s’prised*, Tumm,’ says he, ‘t’ know how much fuss a thing like this can *make*. So,’ says he, ‘I ’lowed I’d come up on the Pillar o’ Cloud an’ think a spell in peace.’

“‘An’ what?’ says I.

“‘Have a little spurt at thinkin’.’

“‘O’ she?’

“‘Oh no, Tumm,’ says he; ‘*that* ain’t nothin’ t’ *think* about. But,’ says he, ‘I s’pose I might as well go down now, an’ see what’s happened. I hopes ’tis a boy,’ says he, ‘for somehow girls don’t seem t’ have much show.’

“‘An’ with that,” drawled Tumm, “down the Pillar o’ Cloud goes Abraham Botch.”

He paused to laugh; and ’twas a soft, sad little laugh—dwelling upon things long past.

“‘An’ by-and-by,” he continued, “I took the goat-path t’ the water-side; an’ I went aboard the *Quick as Wink* in a fog o’ dreams an’ questions. The crew was weighin’ anchor, then; an’ ’twas good for the soul t’ feel the deck-planks underfoot, an’ t’ hear the clank o’ solid iron, an’ t’ join the work-song o’ men that had muscles an’ bowels. ‘Skipper Zeb,’ says I, when we had the old craft coaxed out o’ the Tickle, ‘leave me have a spell at the wheel. For the love o’ man,’ says I, ‘let me get a grip of it! I wants t’ get hold o’ something with my hands—something real an’ solid; something I knows about; something that *means* something!’ For all this talk o’ the *is* an’ *was*, an’ all these thoughts o’ the *why*, an’ all the crybaby ‘My Gods!’ o’ Abraham Botch, an’ the mystery o’ the wee new soul, had made me dizzy in the head an’ a bit sick at the stomach. So I took the wheel, an’ felt the leap an’ quiver o’ the ship, an’ got my eye screwed on the old Giant’s Thumb, loomin’ out o’ the east’ard fog, an’ kep’ her wilful head up, an’ wheedled her along in the white tumble, with the spray o’ the sea cool an’ wet on my face; an’ I was better t’ oncet. The Boilin’-Pot Shallows was dead ahead; below the fog I could see the manes o’ the big white horses flung t’ the gale. An’ I ’lowed that oncet I got the *Quick as Wink* in them waters, deep with fish as she was, I’d have enough of a real man’s troubles t’ sink the woes o’ the soul out o’ all remembrance.

“‘I won’t care a squid,’ thinks I, ‘for the *why* nor the *wherefore* o’ nothin’!’

“‘N neither I did.”

The skipper of the *Good Samaritan* yawned. “Isn’t they nothin’ about fish in this here yarn?” he asked.

“Nor tradin’,” snapped Tumm.

“Nothin’ about love?”

“Botch never *knowed* about love.”

“If you’ll ’scuse me,” said the skipper, “I’ll turn in. I got enough.”

But the clammy, red-eyed lad from the Cove o’ First Cousins hitched closer to the table, and put his chin in his hands. He was now in a shower of yellow light from the forecastle lamp. His nostrils were working; his eyes were wide and restless and hot. He had bitten at a chapped underlip until the blood came.

“About that *will be*” he whispered, timidly. “Did Botch never say—*where*?”

“You better turn in,” Tumm answered.

“But I wants t’ know!”

Tumm averted his face. “Ill,” he commanded, quietly, “you better turn in.”

The boy was obedient.

“In March, ’long about two year after,” Tumm resumed, “I shipped for the ice aboard the *Neptune*. We got a scattered swile [seal] off the Horse Islands; but ol’ Cap’n Lane ’lowed the killin’ was so mean that he’d move t’ sea an’ come up with the ice on the outside, for the wind had been in the nor’west for a likely spell. We cotched the body o’ ice t’ the nor’east o’ the Funks; an’ the swiles was sure there—hoods an’ harps an’ whitecoats an’ all. They was three St. John’s steamers there, an’ they’d been killin’ for a day an’ a half; so the ol’ man turned our crew loose on the ice without waitin’ t’ wink, though ’twas afternoon, with a wicked gray look t’ the sky in the west, which was where the wind was jumpin’ from. An’ we had a red time—ay, now, believe me: a soppo red time of it among the swiles that day! They was men from Green Bay, an’ Bonavist’, an’ the Exploits, an’ the South Coast, an’ a swarm o’ Irish from St. John’s; they was so many men on the pack, ecod! that you couldn’t call their names. An’ we killed an’ sculped till dusk. An’ then the weather broke with snow; an’ afore we knowed it we was lost from the ships in the cloud an’ wind—three hundred men, ecod! smothered an’ blinded by snow: howlin’ for salvation like souls in a frozen hell.

“‘Tumm,’ thinks I, ‘you better get aboard o’ something the sea won’t break over. This pack,’ thinks I, ‘will certain go abroad when the big wind gets at

it.”

“So I got aboard a bit of a berg; an’ when I found the lee side I sot down in the dark an’ thunk hard about different things—sunshine an’ supper an’ the like o’ that; for they wasn’t no use thinkin’ about what was goin’ for’ard on the pack near by. An’ there, on the side o’ the little berg, sits I till mornin’; an’ in the mornin’, out o’ the blizzard t’ win’ward, along comes Abraham Botch o’ Jug Cove, marooned on a flat pan o’ ice. ’Twas comin’ down the wind—clippin’ it toward my overgrown lump of a craft like a racin’ yacht. When I sighted Botch, roundin’ a point o’ the berg, I ’lowed I’d have no more’n twenty minutes t’ yarn with un afore he was out o’ hail an’ sight in the snow t’ leeward. He was squatted on his haunches, with his chin on his knees, white with thin ice, an’ fringed an’ decked with icicles; an’ it ’peared t’ me, from the way he was took up with the nothin’ about un, that he was still thinkin’. The pack was gone abroad, then—scattered t’ the four winds: they wasn’t another pan t’ be seed on the black water. An’ the sea was runnin’ high—a fussy wind-lop over a swell that broke in big whitecaps, which went swishin’ away with the wind. A scattered sea broke over Botch’s pan; ’twould fall aboard, an’ break, an’ curl past un, risin’ to his waist. But the poor devil didn’t seem t’ take much notice. He’d shake the water off, an’ cough it out of his throat; an’ then he’d go on takin’ observations in the nothin’ dead ahead.

“‘Ahoy, Botch!’ sings I.

“‘He knowed me t’ oncet. ‘Tumm!’ he sings out. ‘Well, well! That *you*?’

“‘The same,’ says I. ‘You got a bad berth there, Botch. I wish you was aboard the berg with me.’

“‘Oh,’ says he, ‘the pan’ll *do*. I gets a bit choked with spray when I opens my mouth; but they isn’t no good reason why I shouldn’t keep it shut. A man ought t’ breathe through his nose, anyhow. That’s what it’s *for*.’

“‘Twas a bad day—a late dawn in a hellish temper. They wasn’t much of it t’ see—just a space o’ troubled water, an’ the big unfeelin’ cloud. An’, God! how cold it was! The wind was thick with dry snow, an’ it come whirlin’ out o’ the west as if it wanted t’ do damage, an’ meant t’ have its way. ’Twould grab the crests o’ the seas an’ fling un off like handfuls o’ white dust. An’ in the midst o’ this was poor Botch o’ Jug Cove!

“‘This wind,’ says I, ‘will work up a wonderful big sea, Botch. You’ll be swep’ off afore nightfall.’

“‘No,’ says he; ‘for by good luck, Tumm, I’m froze tight t’ the pan.’

“‘But the seas’ll drown you.’

“‘I don’t know,’ says he. ‘I keeps breakin’ the ice ’round my neck,’ says he, ‘an’ if I can on’y keep my neck clear an’ limber I’ll be able t’ duck most o’ the big seas.’

“‘It wasn’t nice t’ see the gentle wretch squattin’ there on his haunches. It made me feel bad. I wisht he was home t’ Jug Cove thinkin’ of his soul.

“‘Botch,’ says I, ‘I *wisht* you was somewheres else!’

“‘Now, don’t you trouble about that, Tumm,’ says he. ‘Please don’t! The ice is all on the outside. I’m perfectly comfortable inside.’

“‘He took it all so gracious that somehow or other I begun t’ forget that he was froze t’ the pan an’ bound out t’ sea. He was ’longside, now; an’ I seed un smile. So I sort o’ got his feelin’; an’ I didn’t fret for un no more.

“‘An’, Tumm,’ says he, ‘I’ve had a wonderful grand night. I’ll never forget it so long as I lives.’

“‘A what?’ says I. ‘Wasn’t you cold?’

“‘I—I—I don’t know,’ says he, puzzled. ‘I was too busy t’ notice much.’

“‘Isn’t you hungry?’

“‘Why, Tumm,’ says he, in s’prise, ‘I believes I is, now that you mentions it. I believes I’d *like* a biscuit.’

“‘I wisht I had one t’ shy,’ says I.

“‘Don’t you be troubled,’ says he. ‘My arms is stuck. I couldn’t cotch it, anyhow.’

“‘Anyhow,’ says I, ‘I wisht I had one.’

“‘A grand night!’ says he. ‘For I got a idea, Tumm. They wasn’t nothin’ t’ disturb me all night long. I been all alone—an’ I been quiet. An’ I got a idea. I’ve gone an’ found out, Tumm,’ says he, ‘a law o’ life! Look you! Tumm,’ says he, ‘what you aboard that berg for? ’Tis because you had sense enough t’ get there. An’ why isn’t I aboard that berg? ’Tis because I didn’t have none

o' the on'y kind o' sense that was needed in the mess last night. You'll be picked up by the fleet,' says he, 'when the weather clears; an' I'm bound out t' sea on a speck o' flat ice. This coast ain't kind,' says he. 'No coast is kind. Men lives because they're able for it; not because they're coaxed to. An' the on'y kind o' men this coast lets live an' breed is the kind she wants. The kind o' men this coast puts up with ain't weak, an' they ain't timid, an' they don't think. Them kind dies—just the way I 'low *I* got t' die. They don't live, Tumm, an' they don't breed.'

“‘What about you?’ says I.

“‘About me?’ says he.

“‘Ay—that day on the Pillar o' Cloud.'

“‘Oh!' says he. 'You mean about *she*. Well, it didn't come t' nothin', Tumm. The women folk wasn't able t' find me, an' they didn't know which I wanted sove, the mother or the child; so, somehow or other, both went an' died afore I got there. But that isn't got nothin' t' do with *this*.'

“‘He was drifted a few fathoms past. Just then a big sea fell atop of un. He ducked real skilful, an' come out of it smilin', if sputterin'.

“‘Now, Tumm,' says he, 'if we was t' the s'uth'ard, where they says 'tis warm an' different, an' lives isn't lived the same, maybe you'd be on the pan o' ice, an' I'd be aboard the berg; maybe you'd be like t' starve, an' I'd get so much as forty cents a day the year round. They's a great waste in life,' says he; 'I don't know why, but there 'tis. An' I 'low I'm gone t' waste on this here coast. I been born out o' place, that's all. But they's a place somewheres for such as me—somewheres for the likes o' me. T' the s'uth'ard, now, maybe, they'd *be* a place; t' the s'uth'ard, maybe, the folk would want t' know about the things I thinks out—ay, maybe they'd even *pay* for the labor I'm put to! But *here*, you lives, an' I dies. Don't you see, Tumm? 'Tis the law! 'Tis why a Newf'un'lander ain't a nigger. More'n that, 'tis why a dog's a dog on land an' a swile in the water; 'tis why a dog haves legs an' a swile haves flippers. Don't you see? 'Tis the law!'

“‘I don't quite find you,' says I.

“‘Poor Botch shook his head. 'They isn't enough words in langwitch,' says he, 't' 'splain things. Men ought t' get t' work an' make more.'

“‘But tell me,’ says I.

“Then, by Botch’s regular ill luck, under he went, an’ it took un quite a spell t’ cough his voice into workin’ order.

“‘Excuse me,’ says he. ‘I’m sorry. It come too suddent t’ be ducked.’

“‘Sure!’ says I. ‘I don’t mind.’

“‘Tumm,’ says he, ‘it all comes down t’ this: *The thing that lives is the kind o’ thing that’s best fit t’ live in the place it lives in.* That’s a law o’ life! An’ nobody but *me*, Tumm,’ says he, ‘ever knowed it afore!’

“‘It don’t amount t’ nothin’,’ says I.

“‘Tis a law o’ life!’

“‘But it don’t *mean* nothin’.’

“‘Tumm,’ says he, discouraged, ‘I can’t talk t’ you no more. I’m too busy. I ’lowed when I seed you there on the berg that you’d tell somebody what I thunk out last night if you got clear o’ this mess. An’ I *wanted* everybody t’ know. I did so *want* un t’ know—an’t’ know that Abraham Botch o’ Jug Cove did the thinkin’ all by hisself! But you don’t seem able. An’, anyhow,’ says he, ‘I’m too busy t’ talk no more. They’s a deal more hangin’ on that law ’n I told you. The beasts o’ the field is born under it, an’ the trees o’ the forest, an’ all that lives. They’s a bigger law behind; an’ I got t’ think that out afore the sea works up. I’m sorry, Tumm; but if you don’t mind, I’ll just go on thinkin’. You *won’t* mind, will you, Tumm? I wouldn’t like you t’ feel bad.’

“‘Lord, no!’ says I. ‘I won’t mind.’

“‘Thank you, Tumm,’ says he. ‘For I’m greatly took by thinkin’.’

“An’ so Botch sputtered an’ thunk an’ kep’ his neck limber ’til he drifted out o’ sight in the snow.”

But that was not the last of the Jug Cove philosopher.

“Next time I seed Botch,” Tumm resumed, “we was both shipped by chance for the Labrador from Twillingate. ’Twas aboard the dirty little *Three Sisters*—a thirty-ton, fore-an’-aft green-fish catcher, skippered by Mad Bill Likely o’ Yellow Tail Tickle. An’ poor Botch didn’t look healthful. He was blue an’ wan an’ wonderful thin. An’ he didn’t look at all *right*. Poor Botch—ah, poor

old Botch! They wasn't no more o' them fuddlin' questions; they wasn't no more o' that cock-sure, tickled little cackle. Them big, deep eyes o' his, which used t' be clean an' fearless an' sad an' nice, was all misty an' red, like a nasty sunset, an' most unpleasant shifty. I 'lowed I'd take a look in, an' sort o' fathom what was up; but they was too quick for me—they got away every time; an' I never seed more'n a shadow. An' he kep' lookin' over his shoulder, an' cockin' his ears, an' givin' suddent starts, like a poor wee child on a dark road. They wasn't no more o' that sinful gettin' into nothin'—no more o' that puttin' away o' the rock an' sea an' the great big sky. I 'lowed, by the Lord! that he couldn't *do* it no more. All them big things had un scared t' death. He didn't dast forget they was there. He couldn't get into nothin' no more. An' so I knowed he wouldn't be happy aboard the *Three Sisters* with that devil of a Mad Bill Likely o' Yellow Tail Tickle for skipper.

“‘Botch,’ says I, when we was off Mother Burke, ‘how is you, b’y?’

“‘Oh, farin’ along,’ says he.

“‘Ay,’ says I; ‘but how *is* you, b’y?’

“‘Farin’ along,’ says he.

“‘It ain’t a answer,’ says I. ‘I’m askin’ a plain question, Botch.’

“‘Well, Tumm,’ says he, ‘the fac’ is, Tumm, I’m—sort o’—jus’—farin’ along.’

“We crossed the Straits of a moonlight night. The wind was fair an’ light. Mad Bill was t’ the wheel: for he ’lowed he wasn’t goin’ t’ have no chances took with a Lally Line steamer, havin’ been sunk oncet by the same. ’Twas a kind an’ peaceful night. I’ve never knowed the world t’ be more t’ rest an’ kinder t’ the sons o’ men. The wind was from the s’uth’ard, a point or two east: a soft wind an’ sort o’ dawdlin’ careless an’ happy toward the Labrador. The sea was sound asleep; an’ the schooner cuddled up, an’ dreamed, an’ snored, an’ sighed, an’ rolled along, as easy as a ship could be. Moonlight was over all the world—so soft an’ sweet an’ playful an’ white; it said, ‘Hush!’ an’, ‘Go t’ sleep!’ All the stars that ever shone was wide awake an’ winkin’. A playful crew—them little stars! Wink! wink! ‘Go t’sleep!’ says they. ‘’Tis our watch,’ says they. ‘*We’ll* take care o’ *you*.’ An’ t’ win’ward—far off—black an’ low—was Cape Norman o’ Newf’un’land. Newf’un’land! Ah, we’re all mad with love o’ she! Good-night!’ says she. ‘Fair v’y’ge,’ says

she; ‘an’ may you come home loaded!’ Sleep? Ay; men could sleep that night. They wasn’t no fear at sea. Sleep? Ay; they wasn’t no fear in all the moonlit world.

“An’ then up from the forecastle comes Botch o’ Jug Cove.

“‘Tumm,’ says he, ‘you isn’t turned in.’

“‘No, Botch,’ says I. ‘It isn’t my watch; but I ’lowed I’d lie here on this cod-trap an’ wink back at the stars.’

“‘I can’t sleep,’ says he. ‘Oh, Tumm, I *can*’t!’

“‘’Tis a wonderful fine night,’ says I.

“‘Ay,’ says he; ‘but—’

“‘But what?’ says I.

“‘You never can tell,’ says he

“‘Never can tell what?’

“‘What’s goin’ t’ happen.’

“I took one look—just one look into them shiverin’ eyes—an’ shook my head. ‘Do you ’low,’ says I, ‘that we can hit that berg off the port bow?’

“‘You never can tell,’ says he.

“‘Good Lord!’ says I. ‘With Mad Bill Likely o’ Yellow Tail Tickle at the wheel? Botch,’ says I, ‘you’re gone mad. What’s *come* along o’ you? Where’s the *is* an’ the *was* an’ the *will be*? What’s come o’ that law o’ life?’

“‘Hist!’ says he.

“‘Not me!’ says I. ‘I’ll hush for no man. What’s come o’ the law o’ life? What’s come o’ all the thinkin’?’

“‘Tumm,’ says he, ‘I don’t think no more. An’ the laws o’ life,’ says he, ‘is foolishness. The fac’ is, Tumm,’ says he, ‘things look wonderful different t’ me now. I isn’t the same as I used t’ be in them old days.’

“‘You isn’t had a fever, Botch?’ says I.

“‘Well,’ says he, ‘I got religion.’

“‘Oh!’ says I. ‘What kind?’

“‘Vi’lent,’ says he.

“‘I see,’ says I.

“‘I isn’t converted just this minute,’ says he. ‘I ’low you might say, an’ be near the truth, that I’m a damned backslider. But I *been* converted, an’ I may be again. Fac’ is, Tumm,’ says he, ‘when I gets up in the mornin’ I never knows which I’m in, a state o’ grace or a state o’ sin. It usual takes till after breakfast t’ find out.’

“‘Botch, b’y,’ says I, for it made me feel awful bad, ‘don’t you go an’ trouble about that.’

“‘You don’t know about hell,’ says he.

“‘I *does* know about hell,’ says I. ‘My mother told me.’

“‘Ay,’ says he; ‘she told you. But you doesn’t *know*.’

“‘Botch,’ says I, ‘twould s’prise me if she left anything out.’

“‘He wasn’t happy—Botch wasn’t. He begun t’ kick his heels, an’ scratch his whisps o’ beard, an’ chaw his finger-nails. It made me feel bad. I didn’t like t’ see Botch took that way. I’d rather see un crawl into nuthin’ an’ think, ecod! than chaw his nails an’ look like a scared idjit from the mad-house t’ St. John’s.

“‘You got a soul, Tumm,’ says he.

“‘I knows that,’ says I.

“‘How?’ says he.

“‘My mother told me.’

“‘Botch took a look at the stars. An’ so I, too, took a look at the funny little things. An’ the stars is so many, an’ so wonderful far off, an’ so wee an’ queer an’ perfeckly solemn an’ knowin’, that I ’lowed I didn’t know much about heaven an’ hell, after all, an’ begun t’ feel shaky.

“‘I got converted,’ says Botch, ‘by means of a red-headed parson from the Cove o’ the Easterly Winds. *He* knowed everything. They wasn’t no *why* he wasn’t able t’ answer. “The glory o’ God,” says he; an’ there was an end to it. An’ bein’ converted of a suddent,’ says Botch, without givin’ much thought t’ what might come after, I ’lowed the parson had the rights of it. Anyhow, I

wasn't in no mood t' set up my word against a real parson in a black coat, with a Book right under his arm. I 'lowed I wouldn't stay very long in a state o' grace if I done *that*. The fac' is, he *told* me so. "Whatever," thinks I, "the glory o' God does well enough, if a man only *will* believe; an' the tears an' crooked backs an' hunger o' this here world," thinks I, "which the parson lays t' Him, fits in very well with the reefs an' easterly gales He made." So I 'lowed I'd better take my religion an' ask no questions; an' the parson said 'twas very wise, for I was only an ignorant man, an' I'd reach a state o' sanctification if I kep' on in the straight an' narrow way. So I went no more t' the grounds. For what was the *use* o' goin' there? 'Peared t' me that heaven was my home. What's the use o' botherin' about the fish for the little time we're here? I couldn't get my *mind* on the fish. "Heaven is my home," thinks I, "an' I'm tired, an' I wants t' get there, an' I don't want t' trouble about the world." 'Twas an immortal soul I had t' look out for. So I didn't think no more about laws o' life. 'Tis a sin t' pry into the mysteries o' God; an' 'tis a sinful waste o' time, anyhow, t' moon about the heads, thinkin' about laws o' life when you got a immortal soul on your hands. I wanted t' save that soul! *An I wants t' save it now!*

"Well," says I, 'ain't it sove?'

"No," says he; 'for I couldn't help thinkin'. An' when I thunk, Tumm—whenever I fell from grace an' thunk real hard—I couldn't believe some o' the things the red-headed parson said I *had* t' believe if I wanted t' save my soul from hell.'

"Botch," says I, 'leave your soul be.'

"I can't," says he. 'I can't! I got a immortal soul, Tumm. What's t' become o' that there soul?'

"Don't you trouble it," says I. 'Leave it be. 'Tis too tender t' trifle with. An', anyhow,' says I, 'a man's belly is all he can handle without strainin'.'

"But 'tis *mine*—my soul!'

"Leave it be," says I. 'It'll get t' heaven.'

"Then Botch gritted his teeth, an' clinched his hands, an' lifted his fists t' heaven. There he stood, Botch o' Jug Cove, on the for'ard deck o' the *Three Sisters*, which was built by the hands o' men, slippin' across the Straits t' the Labrador, in the light o' the old, old moon—there stood Botch like a man in

tarture!

“‘I isn’t sure, Tumm,’ says he, ‘that I wants t’ go t’ heaven. For I’d be all the time foolin’ about the gates o’ hell, peepin’ in,’ says he; ‘an’ if the devils suffered in the fire—if they moaned an’ begged for the mercy o’ God—I’d be wantin’ t’ go in, Tumm, with a jug o’ water an’ a pa’m-leaf fan!’

“‘You’d get pretty well singed, Botch,’ says I.

“‘I’d *want* t’ be singed!’ says he.

“‘Well, Botch,’ says I, ‘I don’t know where you’d best lay your course for, heaven or hell. But I knows, my b’y,’ says I, ‘that you better give your soul a rest, or you’ll be sorry.’

“‘I can’t,’ says he.

“‘It’ll get t’ one place or t’other,’ says I, ‘if you on’y bides your time.’

“‘How do you know?’ says he.

“‘Why,’ says I, ‘any parson’ll *tell* you so!’

“‘But how do *you* know?’ says he.

“‘Damme, Botch!’ says I, ‘my mother told me so.’

“‘That’s it!’ says he.

“‘What’s it?’

“‘Your mother,’ says he. ‘’Tis all hearsay with you an’ me. But I wants t’ know for myself. Heaven or hell, damnation or salvation, God or nothin’!’ says he. ‘I wouldn’t care if I on’y *knowed*. But I don’t know, an’ can’t find out. I’m tired o’ hearsay an’ guessin’, Tumm. I wants t’ know. Dear God of all men,’ says he, with his fists in the air, ‘I *wants t’ know!*’

“‘Easy,’ says I. ‘Easy there! Don’t you say no more. ’Tis mixin’ t’ the mind. So,’ says I, ‘I ’low I’ll turn in for the night.’

“Down I goes. But I didn’t turn in. I couldn’t—not just then. I raked around in the bottom o’ my old nunny-bag for the Bible my dear mother put there when first I sot out for the Labrador in the Fear of the Lord. ‘I wants a message,’ thinks I; ‘an’ I wants it bad, an’ I wants it almighty quick!’ An’ I spread the Book on the forecandle table, an’ I put my finger down on the page, an’ I got all my nerves t’gether—*an’ I looked!* Then I closed the Book. They

wasn't much of a message; it *done*, t' be sure, but 'twasn't much: for that there yarn o' Jonah an' the whale is harsh readin' for us poor fishermen. But I closed the Book, an' wrapped it up again in my mother's cotton, an' put it back in the bottom o' my nunny-bag, an' sighed, an' went on deck. An' I cotched poor Botch by the throat; an', 'Botch,' says I, 'don't you never say no more about souls t' me. Men,' says I, 'is all hangin' on off a lee shore in a big gale from the open; an' they isn't no mercy in that wind. I got my anchor down,' says I. 'My fathers forged it, hook-an'-chain, an' *they* weathered it out, without fear or favor. 'Tis the on'y anchor I got, anyhow, an' I don't want it t' part. For if it do, the broken bones o' my soul will lie slimy an' rotten on the reefs t' leeward through all eternity. You leave me be,' says I. 'Don't you never say soul t' me no more!'

"I 'low," Tumm sighed, while he picked at a knot in the table with his clasp-knife, "that if I could 'a' done more'n just what mother teachd me, I'd sure have prayed for poor Abraham Botch that night!"

He sighed again.

"We fished the Farm Yard," Tumm continued, "an' Indian Harbor, an' beat south into Domino Run; but we didn't get no chance t' use a pound o' salt for all that. They didn't seem t' be no sign o' fish anywheres on the s'uth'ard or middle coast o' the Labrador. We run here,' an' we beat there, an' we fluttered around like a half-shot gull; but we didn't come up with no fish. Down went the trap, an' up she come: not even a lumpfish or a lobser t' grace the labor. Winds in the east, lop on the sea, fog in the sky, ice in the water, colds on the chest, boils on the wrists; but nar' a fish in the hold! It drove Mad Bill Likely stark. 'Lads,' says he, 'the fish is north o' Mugford. I'm goin' down,' says he, 'if we haves t' winter at Chidley on swile-fat an' seaweed. For,' says he, 'Butt o' Twillingate, which owns this craft, an' has outfitted every man o' this crew, is on his last legs, an' I'd rather face the Lord in a black shroud o' sin than tie up t' the old man's wharf with a empty hold. For the Lord is used to it,' says he, 'an' wouldn't mind; but Old Man Butt would cry.' So we 'lowed we'd stand by, whatever come of it; an' down north we went, late in the season, with a rippin' wind astern. An' we found the fish 'long about Kidalick; an' we went at it, night an' day, an' loaded in a fortnight. 'An' now, lads,' says Mad Bill Likely, when the decks was awash, 'you can all go t' sleep, an' be jiggered t' you!' An' down I dropped on the last stack o' green cod, an' slep' for more hours than I dast tell you.

“Then we started south.

“‘Tumm,’ says Botch, when we was well underway, ‘we’re deep. We’re awful deep.’

“‘But it ain’t salt,’ says I; ‘’tis fish.’

“‘Ay,’ says he; ‘but ’tis all the same t’ the schooner. We’ll have wind, an’ she’ll complain.’

“We coaxed her from harbor t’ harbor so far as Indian Tickle. Then we got a fair wind, an’ Mad Bill Likely ’lowed he’d make a run for it t’ the northern ports o’ the French Shore. We was well out an’ doin’ well when the wind switched t’ the sou’east. ’Twas a beat, then; an’ the poor old *Three Sisters* didn’t like it, an’ got tired, an’ wanted t’ give up. By dawn the seas was comin’ over the bow at will. The old girl simply couldn’t keep her head up. She’d dive, an’ nose in, an’ get smothered; an’ she shook her head so pitiful that Mad Bill Likely ’lowed he’d ease her for’ard, an’ see how she’d like it. ’Twas broad day when he sent me an’ Abraham Botch o’ Jug Cove out t’ stow the stays’l. They wasn’t no fog on the face o’ the sea; but the sky was gray an’ troubled, an’ the sea was a wrathful black-an’-white, an’ the rain, whippin’ past, stung what it touched, an’ froze t’ the deck an’ riggin’. I knowed she’d put her nose into the big white seas, an’ I knowed Botch an’ me would go under, an’ I knowed the foothold was slippery with ice; so I called the fac’s t’ Botch’s attention, an’ asked un not t’ think too much.

“‘I’ve give that up,’ says he.

“‘Well,’ says I, ‘you might get another attackt.’

“‘No fear,’ says he; ‘’tis foolishness t’ think. It don’t come t’ nothin’.’

“‘But you *might*,’ says I.

“‘Not in a moment o’ grace,’ says he. ‘An’, Tumm,’ says he, ‘at this instant, my condition,’ says he, ‘is one o’ salvation.’

“‘Then,’ says I, ‘you follow me, an’ we’ll do a tidy job with that there stays’l.’

“An’ out on the jib-boom we went. We’d pretty near finished the job when the *Three Sisters* stuck her nose into a thundering sea. When she shook that off, I yelled t’ Botch t’ look out for two more. If he heard, he didn’t say so; he was too busy spittin’ salt water. We was still there when the second sea

broke. But when the third fell, an' my eyes was shut, an' I was grippin' the boom for dear life, I felt a clutch on my ankle; an' the next thing I knowed I was draggin' in the water, with a grip on the bobstay, an' something tuggin' at my leg like a whale on a fish-line. I knowed 'twas Botch, without lookin', for it couldn't be nothin' else. An' when I looked, I seed un lyin' in the foam at the schooner's bow, bobbin' under an' up. His head was on a pillow o' froth, an' his legs was swingin' in a green, bubblish swirl beyond.

“‘Hold fast!’ I yelled.

“The hiss an' swish o' the seas was hellish. Botch spat water an' spoke, but I couldn't hear. I 'lowed, though, that 'twas whether I could keep my grip a bit longer.

“‘Hold fast!’ says I.

“He nodded a most agreeable thank you. ‘I wants t' think a minute,’ says he.

“‘Take both hands!’ says I.

“On deck they hadn't missed us yet. The rain was thick an' sharp-edged, an' the schooner's bow was forever in a mist o' spray.

“‘Tumm!’ says Botch.

“‘Hold fast!’ says I.

“He'd hauled his head out o' the froth. They wasn't no trouble in his eyes no more. His eyes was clear an' deep—with a little laugh lyin' far down in the depths.

“‘Tumm,’ says he, ‘I——’

“‘I don't hear,’ says I.

“‘I can't wait no longer,’ says he. ‘I wants t' know. An' I'm so near, now,’ says he, ‘that I 'low I'll just find out.’

“‘Hold fast, you fool!’ says I.

“I swear by the God that made me,” Tumm declared, “that he was smilin' the last I seed of his face in the foam! He wanted t' know—an' he found out! But I wasn't quite so curious,” Tumm added, “an' I hauled my hulk out o' the water, an' climbed aboard. An' I run aft; but they wasn't nothin' t' be seed but the big, black sea, an' the froth o' the schooner's wake and o' the wild

white horses.”

The story was ended.

A tense silence was broken by a gentle snore from the skipper of the *Good Samaritan*. I turned. The head of the lad from the Cove o’ First Cousins protruded from his bunk. It was withdrawn on the instant. But I had caught sight of the drooping eyes and of the wide, flaring nostrils.

“See that, sir?” Tumm asked, with a backward nod toward the boy’s bunk.

I nodded.

“Same old thing,” he laughed, sadly. “Goes on t’ the end o’ the world.”

We all know that.

II—A MATTER OF EXPEDIENCY

Sure enough, old man Jowl came aboard the *Good Samaritan* at Mad Tom's Harbor to trade his fish—a lean, leathery old fellow in white moleskin, with skin boots, tied below the knees, and a cloth cap set decorously on a bushy head. The whole was as clean as a clothes-pin; and the punt was well kept, and the fish white and dry and sweet to smell, as all Newfoundland cod should be. Tumm's prediction that he would not smile came true; his long countenance had no variation of expression—tough, brown, delicately wrinkled skin lying upon immobile flesh. His face was glum of cast—drawn at the brows, thin-lipped, still; but yet with an abundant and incongruously benignant white beard which might have adorned a prophet. For Jim Bull's widow he made way; she, said he, must have his turn at the scales and in the cabin, for she had a baby to nurse, and was pressed for opportunity. This was tenderness beyond example—generous and acute. A clean, pious, gentle old fellow: he was all that, it may be; but he had eyes to disquiet the sanctified, who are not easily disturbed. They were not blue, but black with a blue film, like the eyes of an old wolf—cold, bold, patient, watchful—calculating; having no sympathy, but a large intent to profit, ultimately, whatever the cost. Tumm had bade me look Jowl in the eye; and to this day I have not forgotten....

The *Good Samaritan* was out of Mad Tom's Harbor, bound across the bay, after dark, to trade the ports of the shore. It was a quiet night—starlit: the wind light and fair. The clerk and the skipper and I had the forecastle of the schooner to ourselves.

"I 'low," Tumm mused, "*I wouldn't want t' grow old.*"

The skipper grinned.

“Not,” Tumm added, “on this coast.”

“Ah, well, Tumm,” the skipper jeered, “maybe you won’t!”

“I’d be ashamed,” said Tumm.

“You dunderhead!” snapped the skipper, who was old, “on this coast an old man’s a man! He’ve lived through enough,” he growled, “t’ show it.”

“’Tis accordin’,” said Tumm.

“To what?” I asked.

“T’ how you looks at it. In a mess, now—you take it in a nasty mess, when ’tis every man for hisself an’ the devil take the hindmost—in a mess like that, I ’low, the devil often gets the *man* o’ the party, an’ the swine goes free. But ’tis all just accordin’ t’ how you looks at it; an’ as for *my* taste, I’d be ashamed t’ come through fifty year o’ life on this coast alive.”

“Ay, b’y?” the skipper inquired, with a curl of the lip.

“It wouldn’t *look* right,” drawled Tumm.

The skipper laughed good-naturedly.

“Now,” said Tumm, “you take the case o’ old man Jowl o’ Mad Tom’s Harbor—”

“Excuse me, Tumm b’y,” the skipper interrupted. “If you’re goin’ t’ crack off, just bide a spell till I gets on deck.”

Presently we heard his footsteps going aft....

“A wonderful long time ago, sir,” Tumm began, “when Jowl was in his prime an’ I was a lad, we was shipped for the Labrador aboard the *Wings o’ the Mornin’*. She was a thirty-ton fore-an’-after, o’ Tuggleby’s build—Tuggleby o’ Dog Harbor—hailin’ from Witch Cove, an’ bound down t’ the Wayward Tickles, with a fair intention o’ takin’ a look-in at Run-by-Guess an’ Ships’ Graveyard, t’ the nor’ard o’ Mugford, if the Tickles was bare. Two days out from Witch Cove, somewheres off Gull Island, an’ a bit t’ the sou’west, we was cotched in a switch o’ weather. ’Twas a nor’east blow, mixed with rain an’ hail; an’ in the brewin’ it kep’ us guessin’ what ’twould accomplish afore

it got tired, it looked so lusty an' devilish. The skipper 'lowed 'twould trouble some stomachs, whatever else, afore we got out of it, for 'twas the first v'y'ge o' that season for every man Jack o' the crew. An' she blowed, an' afore mornin' she'd tear your hair out by the roots if you took off your cap, an' the sea was white an' the day was black. The *Wings o' the Mornin'* done well enough for forty-eight hours, an' then she lost her grit an' quit. Three seas an' a gust o' wind crumpled her up. She come out of it a wreck—topmast gone, spars shivered, gear in a tangle, an' deck swep' clean. Still an' all, she behaved like a lady; she kep' her head up, so well as she was able, till a big sea snatched her rudder; an' then she breathed her last, an' begun t' roll under our feet, dead as a log. So we went below t' have a cup o' tea.

“Don't spare the rations, cook,” says the skipper. “Might as well go with full bellies.”

“The cook got sick t' oncet.

“You lie down, cook,” says the skipper, “an' leave me do the cookin’”. Will you drown where you is, cook,” says he, “or on deck?”

“On deck, sir,” says the cook.

“I'll call you, b'y,” says the skipper.

“Afore long the first hand give up an' got in his berth. He was wonderful sad when he got tucked away. 'Lowed somebody might hear of it.

“You want t' be called, Billy?” says the skipper.

“Ay, sir; please, sir,” says the first hand.

“All right, Billy,” says the skipper. “But you won't care enough t' get out.”

“The skipper was next.

“*You goin', too!*” says Jowl.

“You'll have t' eat it raw, lads,” says the skipper, with a white little grin at hisself. “An' don't rouse me,” says he, “for I'm as good as dead already.”

“The second hand come down an' 'lowed we'd better get the pumps goin’.

“She's sprung a leak somewheres aft,” says he.

Jowl an' me an' the second hand went on deck t' keep her afloat. The second hand 'lowed she'd founder, anyhow, if she was give time, but he'd like t' see

what would come o' pumpin', just for devilment. So we lashed ourselves handy an' pumped away—me an' the second hand on one side an' Jowl on the other. The *Wings o' the Mornin'* wobbled an' dived an' shook herself like a wet dog; all she wanted was a little more water in her hold an' then she'd make an end of it, whenever she happened t' take the notion.

“‘I'm give out,' says the second hand, afore night.

“‘Them men in the forecastle isn't treatin' us right,' says Jowl. ‘They ought t' lend a hand.’

“The second hand bawled down t' the crew; but nar a man would come on deck.

“‘Jowl,' says he, ‘you have a try.’

“Jowl went down an' complained; but it didn't do no good. They was all so sick they wouldn't answer. So the second hand 'lowed he'd go down an' argue, which he foolishly done—an' never come back. An' when I went below t' rout un out of it, he was stowed away in his bunk, all out o' sorts an' wonderful melancholy. ‘Isn't no use, Tumm,' says he. ‘*It* isn't no use.’

“‘Get out o' this!' says the cook. ‘You woke me up!’

“I 'lowed the forecastle air wouldn't be long about persuadin' me to the first hand's sinful way o' thinkin'. An' when I got on deck the gale tasted sweet.

“‘They isn't *treatin'* us right,' says Jowl.

“‘I 'low you're right,' says I, ‘but what you goin' t' do?’

“‘What you think?’ says he.

“‘Pump,' says I.

“‘Might's well,' says he. ‘She's fillin' up.’

“We kep' pumpin' away, steady enough, till dawn, which fagged us wonderful. The way she rolled an' pitched, an' the way the big white, sticky, frosty seas broke over us, an' the way the wind pelted us with rain an' hail, an' the blackness o' the sky, was *mean*—just almighty careless an' mean. An' pumpin' didn't seem t' do no good; for why? *we* couldn't save the hulk—not us two. As it turned out, if the crew had been fitted out with men's stomachs we might have weathered it out, an' gone down the Labrador, an' got a load; for every vessel that got there that season come home fished t' the

gunwales. But we didn't know it then. Jowl growled all night to hisself about the way we was treated. The wind carried most o' the blasphemy out t' sea, where they wasn't no lad t' corrupt, an' at scattered times a big sea would make Jowl splutter, but I heared enough t' make me smell the devil, an' when I seed Jowl's face by the first light I 'lowed his angry feelin's had riz to a ridiculous extent, so that they was something more'n the weather gone wild in my whereabouts.

“‘What's gone along o' you?’ says I.

“‘The swine!’ says he. ‘Come below, Tumm,’ says he, ‘an’ we’ll give un a dose o’ fists an’ feet.’

“So down we went, an’ we had the whole crew in a heap on the forecastle floor afore they woke up. Ecod! what a mess o’ green faces! A per-feck-ly limp job lot o’ humanity! Not a backbone among un. An’ all on account o’ their stomachs! It made me sick an’ mad t’ see un. The cook was the worst of un; said we’d gone an’ woke un up, just when he’d got t’ sleep an’ forgot it all. Good Lord! ‘You gone an’ made me remember!’ says he. At that, Jowl let un have it; but the cook only yelped an’ crawled back in his bunk, wipin’ the blood from his chin. For twenty minutes an’ more we labored with them seasick sailors, with fists an’ feet, as Jowl had prescribed. They wasn’t no mercy begged nor showed. We hit what we seen, pickin’ the tender places with care, an’ they grunted an’ crawled back like rats; an’ out they come again, head foremost or feet, as happened. I never seed the like of it. You could treat un most scandalous, an’ they’d do nothin’ but whine an’ crawl away. ’Twas enough t’ disgust you with your own flesh an’ bones! Jowl ’lowed he’d cure the skipper, whatever come of it, an’ laid his head open with a birch billet. The skipper didn’t whimper no more, but just fell back in the bunk, an’ lied still. Jowl said he’d be cured when he come to. Maybe he was; but ’tis my own opinion that Jowl killed un, then an’ there, an’ that he never *did* come to. Whatever, ’twas all lost labor; we didn’t work a single cure, an’ we had t’ make a run for the deck, all of a sudden, t’ make peace with our own stomachs.

“‘The swine!’ says Jowl. ‘Let un drown!’

“I ’lowed we’d better pump; but Jowl wouldn’t hear to it. Not he! No sir! He’d see the whole herd o’ pigs sunk afore he’d turn a finger!

“‘*Me* pump!’ says he.

“‘You better,’ says I.

“‘For what?’

“‘For your life,’ says I.

“‘An’ save them swine in the forecastle?’ says he. ‘Not *me!*’

“I ’lowed it didn’t matter, anyhow, for ’twas only a question o’ keepin’ the *Wings o’ the Mornin’* out o’ the grave for a spell longer than she might have stayed of her own notion. But, thinks I, I’ll pump, whatever, t’ pass time; an’ so I set to, an’ kep’ at it. The wind was real vicious, an’ the seas was breakin’ over us, fore an’ aft an’ port an’ starboard, t’ suit their fancy, an’ the wreck o’ the *Wings o’ the Mornin’* wriggled an’ bounced in a way t’ s’prise the righteous, an’ the black sky was pourin’ buckets o’ rain an’ hail on all the world, an’ the wind was makin’ knotted whips o’ both. It wasn’t agreeable, an’ by-an’-by my poor brains was fair riled t’ see the able-bodied Jowl with nothin’ t’ do but dodge the seas an’ keep hisself from bein’ pitched overboard. ’Twas a easy berth *he* had! But *I* was busy.

“‘Look you, Jowl,’ sings I, ‘you better take a spell at the pump.’

“‘Me?’ says he.

“‘Yes, *you!*’

“‘Oh no!’ says he.

“‘You think I’m goin’ t’ do all this labor single-handed?’ says I.

“‘’Tis your own notion,’ says he.

“‘I’ll see you sunk, Jowl!’ says I, ‘afore I pumps another stroke. If you wants t’ drown afore night I’ll not hinder. Oh no, Mister Jowl!’ says I. ‘I’ll not be standin’ in your light.’

“‘Tumm,’ says he, ‘I got a idea.’

“‘Dear man!’ says I.

“‘The wind’s moderatin’,’ says he, ‘an’ it won’t be long afore the sea gets civil. But the *Wings o’ the Mornin’* won’t float overlong. She’ve been settlin’ hasty for the last hour. Still an’ all, I ’low I got time t’ make a raft, which I’ll do.’

“‘Look!’ says I.

“Off near where the sun was settin’ the clouds broke. ’Twas but a slit, but it let loose a flood o’ red light. ’Twas a bloody sky an’ sea—red as shed blood, but full o’ the promise o’ peace which follows storm, as the good God directs.

“‘I ’low,’ says he, ‘the wind will go down with the sun.’

“The vessel was makin’ heavy labor of it. ‘I bets you,’ says I, ‘the *Wings o’ the Mornin’* beats un both.’

“‘Time’ll tell,’ says he.

“I give un a hand with the raft. An’ hard work ’twas; never knowed no harder, before nor since, with the seas comin’ overside, an’ the deck pitchin’ like mad, an’ the night droppin’ down. Ecod! but I isn’t able t’ tell you. I forgets what we done in the red light o’ that day. ’Twas labor for giants an’ devils! But we had the raft in the water afore dark, ridin’ in the lee, off the hulk. It didn’t look healthy, an’ was by no means invitin’; but the *Wings o’ the Mornin’* was about t’ bow an’ retire, if the signs spoke true, an’ the raft was the only hope in all the brutal world. I took kindly t’ the crazy thing—I ’low I did!

“‘Tumm,’ says Jowl, ‘I ’low you thinks you got some rights in that raft.’

“‘I do,’ says I.

“‘But you isn’t,’ says he. ‘You isn’t, Tumm, because I’m a sight bigger ’n you, an’ could put you off. It isn’t in my mind t’ do it—but I *could*. I wants company, Tumm, for it looks like a long v’y’ge, an’ I’m ’lowin’ t’ have you.’

“‘What about the crew?’ says I.

“‘They isn’t room for more’n two on that raft,’ says he.

“‘Dear God! Jowl,’ says I, ‘what you goin’ t’ do?’

“‘I’m goin’ t’ try my level best,’ says he, ‘t’ get home t’ my wife an’ kid; for they’d be wonderful disappointed if I didn’t turn up.’

“‘But the crew’s got wives an’ kids!’ says I.

“‘An’ bad stomachs,’ says he.

“‘Jowl,’ says I, ‘she’s sinkin’ fast.’

“‘Then I ’low we better make haste.’

“I started for’ard.

“‘Tumm,’ says he, ‘don’t you go another step. If them swine in the forecastle knowed they was a raft ’longside, they’d steal it. It won’t *hold* un, Tumm. It won’t hold more’n two, an’, ecod!’ says he, with a look at the raft, ‘I’m doubtin’ that she’s able for *that*!’

“It made me shiver.

“‘No, sir!’ says he. ‘I ’low she won’t hold more’n one.’

“‘Oh yes, she will, Jowl!’ says I. ‘Dear man! yes; she’s able for two.’

“‘Maybe,’ says he.

“‘Handy!’ says I. ‘Oh, handy, man!’

“‘We’ll try,’ says he, ‘whatever comes of it. An’ if she makes bad weather, why, you can—’

“He stopped.

“‘Why don’t you say the rest?’ says I.

“‘I hates to.’

“‘What do you mean?’ says I.

“‘Why, damme! Tumm,’ says he, ‘I mean that you can get *off*. What *else* would I mean?’

“‘Lord! I didn’t know!’

“‘Well?’ says he.

“‘It ain’t very kind,’ says I.

“‘What would *you* do,’ says he, ‘if *you* was me?’

“‘I give un a look that told un, an’ ’twas against my will I done it.

“‘Well,’ says he, ‘you can’t blame me, then.’

“No more I could.

“‘Now I’ll get the grub from the forecastle, lad,’ says he, ‘an’ we’ll cast off. The *Wings o’ the Mornin’* isn’t good for more’n half an hour more. You bide on deck, Tumm, an’ leave the swine t’ me.’

Then he went below.

“‘All right,’ says he, when he come on deck. ‘Haul in the line.’ We lashed a water-cask an’ a grub-box t’ the raft. ‘Now, Tumm,’ says he, ‘we can take it easy. We won’t be in no haste t’ leave, for I ’low ’tis more comfortable here. Looks t’ me like more moderate weather. I feels pretty good, Tumm, with all the work done, an’ nothin’ t’ do but get aboard.’ He sung the long-metre doxology. ‘Look how the wind’s dropped!’ says he. ‘Why, lad, we might have saved the *Wings o’ the Mornin’* if them pigs had done their dooty last night. But ’tis too late now—an’ it’s *been* too late all day long. We’ll have a spell o’ quiet,’ says he, ‘when the sea goes down. Looks t’ me like the v’y’ge might be pleasant, once we gets through the night. I ’low the stars’ll be peepin’ afore mornin’. It’ll be a comfort t’ see the little mites. I loves t’ know they’re winkin’ overhead. They makes me think o’ God. You isn’t got a top-coat, is you, lad?’ says he. ‘Well, you better get it, then. I’ll trust you in the fore-castle, Tumm, for I knows you wouldn’t wrong me, an’ you’ll need that top-coat bad afore we’re picked up. An’ if you got your mother’s Bible in your nunny-bag, or anything like that you wants t’ save, you better fetch it,’ says he. ‘I ’low we’ll get out o’ this mess, an’ we don’t want t’ have anything t’ regret.’

“I got my mother’s Bible.

“‘Think we better cast off?’ says he.

“I did. The *Wings o’ the Mornin’* was ridin’ too low an’ easy for me t’ rest; an’ the wind had fell to a soft breeze, an’ they wasn’t no more rain, an’ no more dusty spray, an’ no more breakin’ waves. They was a shade on the sea—the first shadow o’ the night—t’ hide what we’d leave behind.

“‘We better leave her,’ says I.

“‘Then all aboard!’ says he.

“An’ we got aboard, an’ cut the cable, an’ slipped away on a soft, black sea, far into the night.... An’ no man ever seed the *Wings o’ the Mornin’* again.... An’ me an Jowl was picked up, half dead o’ thirst an’ starvation, twelve days later, by ol’ Cap’n Loop, o’ the Black Bay mail-boat, as she come around Toad Point, bound t’ Burnt Harbor....

“Jowl an’ me,” Tumm resumed, “fished the Holy Terror Tickles o’ the Labrador in the *Got It* nex’ season. He was a wonderful kind man, Jowl was

—so pious, an' soft t' speak, an' honest, an' willin' for his labor. At midsummer I got a bad hand, along of a cut with the splittin'-knife, an' nothin' would do Jowl but he'd lance it, an' wash it, an' bind it, like a woman, an' do so much o' my labor as he was able for, like a man. I fair got t' *like* that lad o' his—though 'twas but a young feller t' home, at the time—for Jowl was forever talkin' o' Toby this an' Toby that—not boastful gabble, but just tender an' nice t' hear. An' a fine lad, by all accounts: a dutiful lad, brave an' strong, if given overmuch t' yieldin' the road t' save trouble, as Jowl said. I 'lowed, one night, when the *Got It* was bound home, with all the load the salt would give her, that I'd sort o' like t' know the lad that Jowl had.

“‘Why don't you fetch un down the Labrador?’ says I.

“‘His schoolin’,’ says Jowl.

“‘Oh!’ says I.

“‘Ay,’ says he; ‘his mother’s wonderful particular about the schoolin’.’

“‘Anyhow,’ says I, ‘the schoolin’ won’t go on for all time.’

“‘No,’ says Jowl, ‘it won’t. An’ I’m ’lowin’ t’ harden Toby up a bit nex’ spring.’

“‘T’ the ice?’ says I.

“‘Ay,’ says he; ‘if I can overcome his mother.’

“‘’Tis a rough way t’ break a lad,’ says I.

“‘So much the better,’ says he. ‘It don’t take so long. Nothin’ like a sealin’ v’y’ge,’ says he, ‘t’ harden a lad. An’ if you comes along, Tumm,’ says he, ‘why, I won’t complain. I’m ’lowin’ t’ ship with Skipper Tommy Jump o’ the *Second t’ None*. She’s a tight schooner, o’ the Tiddle build, an’ I ’low Tommy Jump will get a load o’ fat, whatever comes of it. You better join, Tumm,’ says he, ‘an’ we’ll all be t’gether. I’m wantin’ you t’ get acquainted with Toby, an’ lend a hand with his education, which you can do t’ the queen’s taste, bein’ near of his age.’

“‘I’ll do it, Jowl,’ says I.

“‘An’ I done it; an’ afore we was through, I wisht I hadn’t.”

Tumm paused.

“An’ I done it—nex’ March—shipped along o’ Tommy Jump o’ the *Second t’ None*, with Jowl an’ his lad aboard,” he proceeded.

“‘You overcame the wife,’ says I, ‘didn’t you?’

“‘‘Twas a tough job,’ says he. ‘She ’lowed the boy might come t’ harm, an’ wouldn’t give un up; but me an’ Toby pulled t’gether, an’ managed her, the day afore sailin’. She cried a wonderful lot; but, Lord! that’s only the way o’ women.’

“A likely lad o’ sixteen, this Toby—blue-eyed an’ fair, with curly hair an’ a face full o’ blushes. Polite as a girl, which is much too polite for safety at the ice. He’d make way for them that blustered; but he done it with such an air that we wasn’t no more’n off the Goggles afore the whole crew was all makin’ way for he. So I ’lowed he’d *do*—that he’d be took care of, just for love. But Jowl wasn’t o’ my mind.

“‘No,’ says he; ‘the lad’s too soft. He’ve got t’ be hardened.’

“‘Maybe,’ says I.

“‘If anything happened,’ says he, ‘Toby wouldn’t stand a show. The men is kind to un now,’ says he, ‘for they doesn’t lose nothin’ by it. If they stood t’ lose their lives, Tumm, they’d push un out o’ the way, an’ he’d go ’ithout a whimper. I got t’ talk t’ that lad for his own good.’

“Which he done.

“‘Toby,’ says he, ‘you is much too soft. Don’t you go an’ feel bad, now, lad, just because your father tells you so; for ’tis not much more’n a child you are, an’ your father’s old, an’ knows all about life. You got t’ get hard if you wants t’ hold your own. You’re too polite. You gives way too easy. *Don’t* give way—don’t give way under no circumstances. In this life,’ says he, ‘’tis every man for hisself. I don’t know why God made it that way,’ says he, ‘but He done it, an’ we got t’ stand by. You’re young,’ says he, ‘an’ thinks the world is what you’d have it be if you made it; but I’m old, an’ I knows that a man can’t be polite an’ live to his prime on this coast. Now, lad,’ says he, ‘we isn’t struck the ice yet, but I ’low I smell it; an’ once we gets the *Second t’ None* in the midst, ’most anything is likely t’ happen. If so be that Tommy Jump gets the schooner in a mess you look out for yourself; don’t think o’ nobody else, for you can’t *afford* to.’

“‘Yes, sir,’ says the boy.

“‘Mark me well, lad! I’m tellin’ you this for your own good. You won’t get no mercy showed you; so don’t you show mercy t’ nobody else. If it comes t’ your life or the other man’s, you put *him* out o’ the way afore he has time t’ put *you*. Don’t let un give battle. Hit un so quick as you’re able. It’ll be harder if you waits. You don’t have t’ be *fair*. ’Tisn’t expected. Nobody’s fair. An’—ah, now, Toby!’ says he, puttin’ his arm over the boy’s shoulder, ‘if you feels like givin’ way, an’ lettin’ the other man have your chance, an’ if you *can’t* think o’ yourself, just you think o’ your mother. Ah, lad,’ says he, ‘she’d go an’ cry her eyes out if anything happened t’ you. Why, Toby—oh, my! now, lad—why, *think* o’ the way she’d sit in her rockin’-chair, an’ put her pinny to her eyes, an’ cry, an’ cry! You’re the only one she’ve got, an’ she couldn’t, lad, she *couldn’t* get along ’ithout you! Ah, she’d cry, an’ cry, an’ cry; an’ they wouldn’t be nothin’ in all the world t’ give her comfort! So don’t you go an’ grieve her, Toby,’ says he, ‘by bein’ tender-hearted. Ah, now, Toby!’ says he, ‘don’t you go an’ make your poor mother cry!’

“‘No, sir,’ says the lad. ‘I’ll not, sir!’

“‘That’s a good boy, Toby,’ says Jowl. ‘I ’low you’ll be a man when you grow up, if your mother doesn’t make a parson o’ you.’”

Tumm made a wry face.

“Well,” he continued, “Tommy Jump kep’ the *Second t’ None* beatin’ hither an’ yon off the Horse Islands for two days, expectin’ ice with the nor’east wind. ’Twas in the days afore the sealin’ was done in steamships from St. John’s, an’ they was a cloud o’ sail at the selsame thing. An’ we all put into White Bay, in the mornin’ in chase o’ the floe, an’ done a day’s work on the swiles [seals] afore night. But nex’ day we was jammed by the ice—the fleet o’ seventeen schooners, cotched in the bottom o’ the bay, an’ like t’ crack our hulls if the wind held. Whatever, the wind fell, an’ there come a time o’ calm an’ cold, an’ we was all froze in, beyond help, an’ could do nothin’ but wait for the ice t’ drive out an’ go abroad, an’ leave us t’ sink or sail, as might chance. Tommy Jump ’lowed the *Second t’ None* would sink; said her timbers was sprung, an’ she’d leak like a basket, an’ crush like a eggshell, once the ice begun t’ drive an’ grind an’ rafter—leastwise, he *thunk* so, admittin’ ’twas open t’ argument; an’ he wouldn’t go so far as t’ pledge the word of a gentleman that she *would* sink.

“‘Whatever,’ says he, ‘we’ll stick to her an’ find out.’

“The change o’ wind come at dusk—a big blow from the sou’west. ’Twas beyond doubt the ice would go t’ sea; so I tipped the wink t’ young Toby Jowl an’ told un the time was come.

“‘I’ll save my life, Tumm,’ says he, ‘if I’m able.’

“’Twas a pity! Ecod! t’ this day I ’low ’twas a pity; ’Twas a fine, sweet lad, that Toby; but he looked like a wolf, that night, in the light o’ the forecastle lamp, when his eyes flashed an his upper lip stretched thin over his teeth!

“‘You better get some grub in your pocket,’ says I.

“‘I got it,’ says he.

“‘Well,’ says I, ‘I ’low *you*’ve learned! Where’d you get it?’

“‘Stole it from the cook,’ says he.

“‘Any chance for me?’

“‘If you’re lively,’ says he. ‘The cook’s a fool.... Will it come soon, Tumm?’ says he, with a grip on my wrist. ‘How long will it be, eh, Tumm, afore ’tis every man for hisself?’

“Soon enough, God knowed! By midnight the edge o’ the floe was rubbin’ Pa’tridge P’int, an’ the ice was troubled an’ angry. In an hour the pack had the bottom scrunched out o’ the *Second t’ None*; an’ she was kep’ above water—listed an’ dead—only by the jam o’ little pans ’longside. Tommy Jump ’lowed we’d strike the big billows o’ the open afore dawn an’ the pack would go abroad an’ leave us t’ fill an’ sink; said *he* couldn’t do no more, an’ the crew could take care o’ their own lives, which was what *he* would do, whatever come of it. ’Twas blowin’ big guns then—rippin’ in straight lines right off from Sop’s Arm an’ all them harbors for starved bodies an’ souls t’ the foot o’ the bay. An’ snow come with the wind; the heavens emptied theirselves; the air was thick an’ heavy. Seemed t’ me the wrath o’ sea an’ sky broke loose upon us—wind an’ ice an’ snow an’ big waves an’ cold—all the earth contains o’ hate for men! Skipper Tommy Jump ’lowed we’d better stick t’ the ship so long as we was able; which was merely his opinion, an’ if the hands had a mind t’ choose their pans while they was plenty, they was welcome t’ do it, an’ he wouldn’t see no man called a fool if his fists was big enough t’ stop it. But no man took t’ the ice at that time. An’ the *Second t’*

None ran on with the floe, out t' sea, with the wind an' snow playin' the devil for their own amusement, an' the ice groanin' its own complaint....

“Then we struck the open.”



“I SEED THE SHAPE OF A MAN LEAP FOR MY PLACE”

“‘Now, lads,’ yells Tommy Jump, when he got all hands amidships, ‘you better quit the ship. The best time,’ says he, ‘will be when you sees *me* go overside. But don’t get in my way. You get your own pans. God help the man that gets in my way!’

“Tommy Jump went overside when the ice opened an’ the *Second t’ None* begun t’ go down an’ the sea was spread with small pans, floatin’ free. ’Twas near dawn then. Things was gray; an’ the shapes o’ things was strange an’ big—out o’ size, fearsome. Dawn shot over the sea, a wide, flat beam from the

east, an' the shadows was big, an' the light dim, an' the air full o' whirlin' snow; an' men's eyes was too wide an' red an' frightened t' look with sure sight upon the world. An' all the ice was in a tumble o' black water.... An' the *Second t' None* went down.... An' I 'lowed they wasn't no room on my pan for nobody but me. But I seed the shape of a man leap for my place. An' I cursed un, an' bade un go farther, or I'd drown un. An' he leaped for the pan that lied next, where Jowl was afloat, with no room t' spare. An' Jowl hit quick an' hard. He was waitin', with his fists closed, when the black shape landed; an' he hit quick an' hard without lookin'.... An' I seed the face in the water.... An', oh, I knowed who 'twas!

“Dear God!’ says I.

“Jowl was now but a shape in the snow. ‘That you, Tumm?’ says he. ‘What you sayin’?’

“‘Why didn’t you take time t’ *look*?’ says I. ‘Oh, Jowl! *why* didn’t you take time?’

“‘T’ look?’ says he.

“Dear God!’

“‘What you sayin’ that for, Tumm?’ says he. ‘What you mean, Tumm? ... My God!’ says he, ‘what is I gone an’ done? Who *was* that, Tumm? My God! Tell me! What is I done?’

“I couldn’t find no words t’ tell un.

“‘Oh, make haste,’ says he, ‘afore I drifts away!’

“Dear God!’ says I, ‘’twas Toby!’

“An’ he fell flat on the ice....An’ I didn’t see Jowl no more for four year. He was settled at Mad Tom’s Harbor then, where you seed un t’-day; an’ his wife was dead, an’ he didn’t go no more t’ the Labrador, nor t’ the ice, but fished the Mad Tom grounds with hook-an’-line on quiet days, an’ was turned timid, they said, with fear o’ the sea....”

The *Good Samaritan* ran softly through the slow, sleepy sea, bound across the bay to trade the ports of the shore.

“I tells you, sir,” Tumm burst out, “’tis hell. *Life* is! Maybe not where you

hails from, sir; but 'tis on this coast. I 'low where you comes from they don't take lives t' save their own?"

"Not to save their own," said I.

He did not understand.

III—THE MINSTREL

Salim Awad, poet, was the son of Tanous—that orator. Having now lost at love, he lay disconsolate on his pallet in the tenement overlooking the soap factory. He would not answer any voice; nor would he heed the gentle tap and call of old Khalil Khayyat, the tutor of his muse; nor would he yield his sorrow to the music of Nageeb Fiani, called the greatest player in all the world. For three hours Fiani, in the wail and sigh of his violin, had expressed the woe of love through the key-hole; but Salim Awad was not moved. No; the poet continued in desolation through the darkness of that night, and through the slow, grimy, unfeeling hours of day. He dwelt upon Haleema, Khouri's daughter—she (as he thought) of the tresses of night, the beautiful one. Salim was in despair because this Haleema had chosen to wed Jimmie Brady, the truckman. She loved strength more than the uplifted spirit; and this maidens may do, as Salim knew, without reproach or injury.

When the dusk of the second day was gathered in his room, Salim looked up, eased by the tender obscurity. In the cobble-stoned street below the clatter of traffic had subsided; there were the shuffle and patter of feet of the low-born of his people, the murmur of voices, soft laughter, the plaintive cries of children—the dolorous medley of a summer night. Beyond the fire-escape, far past the roof of the soap factory, lifted high above the restless Western world, was the starlit sky; and Salim Awad, searching its uttermost depths, remembered the words of Antar, crying in his heart: *“I pass the night regarding the stars of night in my distraction. Ask the night of me, and it will tell thee that I am the ally of sorrow and of anguish. I live desolate; there is no one like me. I am the friend of grief and of desire.”*

The band was playing in Battery Park; the weird music of it, harsh,

incomprehensible, an alien love-song—

“Hello, mah baby,
Hello, mah honey,
Hello, mah rag-time girl!”

drifted in at the open window with a breeze from the sea. But by this unmeaning tumult the soul of Salim Awad, being far removed, was not troubled; he remembered, again, the words of Antar, addressed to his beloved, repeating: *“In thy forehead is my guide to truth; and in the night of thy tresses I wander astray. Thy bosom is created as an enchantment. O may God protect it ever in that perfection! Will fortune ever, O daughter of Malik, ever bless me with thy embrace? That would cure my heart of the sorrows of love.”*

And again the music of the band in Battery Park drifted up the murmuring street,

“*Just one girl,
Only just one girl!*
There are others, I know, but they’re *not* my pearl.
*Just one girl,
Only just one girl!*
I’d be happy forever with *just one girl!*”

and came in at the open window with the idle breeze; and Salim heard nothing of the noise, but was grateful for the cool fingers of the wind softly lifting the hair from his damp brow.

It must be told—and herein is a mystery—that this same Salim, who had lost at love, now from the darkness of his tenement room contemplating the familiar stars, wise, remote, set in the uttermost heights of heaven beyond the soap factory, was by the magic of this great passion inspired to extol the graces of his beloved Haleema, Khouri’s daughter, star of the world, and to celebrate his own despair, the love-woe of Salim, the noble-born, the poet, the lover, the brokenhearted. Without meditation, as he has said, without brooding or design, as should occur, but rather, taking from the starlit infinitude beyond the soap factory, seizing from the mist of his vision and from the blood of agony dripping from his lacerated heart, he fashioned a

love-song so exquisite and frail, so shy of contact with unfeeling souls, that he trembled in the presence of this beauty, for the moment forgetting his desolation, and conceived himself an instrument made of men, wrought of mortal hands, unworthy, which the fingers of angels had touched in alleviation of the sorrows of love.

Thereupon Salim Awad arose, and he made haste to Khalil Khayyat to tell him of this thing....

This same Khalil Khayyat, lover of children, that poet and mighty editor, the tutor of the young muse of this Salim—this patient gardener of the souls of men, wherein he sowed seeds of the flowers of the spirit—this same Khalil, poet, whose delight was in the tender bloom of sorrow and despair—this old Khayyat, friend of Salim, the youth, the noble-born, sat alone in the little back room of Nageeb Fiani, the pastry-cook and greatest player in all the world. And his narghile was glowing; the coal was live and red, showing as yet no gray ash, and the water bubbled by fits and starts, and the alien room, tawdry in its imitation of the Eastern splendor, dirty, flaring and sputtering with gas, was clouded with the sweet-smelling smoke. To the coffee, perfume rising with the steam from the delicate vessel, nor to the rattle of dice and boisterous shouts from the outer room, was this Khalil attending; for he had the evening dejection to nurse. He leaned over the green baize table, one long, lean brown hand lying upon *Kawkab Elhorriah* of that day, as if in affectionate pity, and his lean brown face was lifted in a rapture of anguish to the grimy ceiling; for the dream of the writing had failed, as all visions of beauty must fail in the reality of them, and there had been no divine spark in the labor of the day to set the world aflame against Abdul-Hamid, Sultan, slaughterer.

To him, then, at this moment of inevitable reaction, the love-lorn Salim, entering in haste.

“Once more, Salim,” said Khalil Khayyat, sadly, “I have failed.”

Salim softly closed the door.

“I am yet young, Salim,” the editor added, with an absent smile, in which was no bitterness at all, but the sweetness of long suffering. “I am yet young,” he repeated, “for in the beginning of my labor I hope.”

Salim turned the key.

“I am but a child,” Khalil Khayyat declared, his voice, now lifted, betraying despair. “I dream in letters of fire: I write in shadows. In my heart is a flame: from the point of my pen flows darkness. I proclaim a revolution: I hear loud laughter and the noise of dice. Salim,” he cried, “I am but a little child: when night falls upon the labor of my day I remember the morning!”

“Khalil!”

Khalil Khayyat was thrilled by the quality of this invocation.

“Khalil of the exalted mission, friend, poet, teacher of the aspiring,” Salim Awad whispered, leaning close to the ear of Khalil Khayyat, “a great thing has come to pass.”

Khayyat commanded his ecstatic perturbation.

“Hist!” Salim ejaculated. “Is there not one listening at the door?”

“There is no one, Salim; it is the feet of Nageeb the coffee-boy, passing to the table of Abosamara, the merchant.”

Salim hearkened.

“There is no one, Salim.”

“There is a breathing at the key-hole, Khalil,” Salim protested. “This great thing must not be known.”

“There is no one, Salim,” said Khalil Khayyat. “I have heard Abosamara call these seven times. Being rich, he is brutal to such as serve. The sound is of the feet of the little Intelligent One. He bears coffee to the impatient merchant. His feet are soft, by my training; they pass like a whisper.... Salim, what is this great thing?”

“Nay, but, Khalil, I hesitate: the thing must not be heard.”

“Even so,” said Khalil Khayyat, contemptuously, being still a poet; “the people are of the muck of the world; they are common, they are not of our blood and learning. How shall they understand that which they hear?”

“Khalil,” Salim Awad answered, reassured, “I have known a great moment!”

“A great moment?” said Khalil Khayyat, being both old and wise. “Then it is because of agony. There has issued from this great pain,” said he, edging, in his artistic excitement, toward the victim of the muse, “a divine poem of

love?”

Salim Awad sighed.

“Is it not so, Salim?”

Salim Awad flung himself upon the green baize table; and so great was his despair that the coffee-cup of Khalil Khayyat jumped in its saucer. “I have suffered: I have lost at love,” he answered. “I have been wounded; I bleed copiously. I lie alone in a desert. My passion is hunger and thirst and a gaping wound. From fever and the night I cry out. Whence is my healing and satisfaction? Nay, but, Khalil, devoted friend,” he groaned, looking up, “I have known the ultimate sorrow. Haleema!” cried he, rising, hands clasped and uplifted, eyes looking far beyond the alien, cobwebbed, blackened ceiling of the little back room of Nageeb Fiani, the pastry-cook and greatest player in all the world. “Haleema!” he cried, as it may meanly be translated. “Haleema—my sleep and waking, night and day of my desiring soul, my thought and heart-throb! Haleema—gone forever from me, the poet, the unworthy, fled to the arms of the strong, the knowing, the manager of horses, the one powerful and controlling! Haleema—beautiful one, fashioned of God, star of the night of the sons of men, glory of the universe, appealing, of the soft arms, of the bosom of sleep! Haleema—of the finger-tips of healing, of the warm touch of solace, of the bed of rest! Haleema, beautiful one, beloved, lost to me!... Haleema!... Haleema!...”

“God!” Khalil Khayyat ejaculated; “but this is indeed great poetry!”

Salim Awad collapsed.

“And from this,” asked Khalil Khayyat, cruel servant of art, being hopeful concerning the issue, “there has come a great poem? There *must*,” he muttered, “have come a love-song, a heart’s cry in comfort of such as have lost at love.”

Salim Awad looked up from the table.

“A cry of patient anguish,” said Khalil Khayyat.

“Khalil,” said Salim Awad, solemnly, “the strings of my soul have been touched by the hand of the Spirit.”

“By the Spirit?”

“The fingers of Infinite Woe.”

To this Khalil Khayyat made no reply, nor moved one muscle—save that his hand trembled a little, and his eyes, which had been steadfastly averted, suddenly searched the soul of Salim Awad. It was very still in the little back room. There was the sputtering of the gas, the tread of soft feet passing in haste to the kitchen, the clamor from the outer room, where common folk were gathered for their pleasure, but no sound, not so much as the drawing of breath, in the little room where these poets sat, and continued in this silence, until presently Khalil Khayyat drew very close to Salim Awad.

“Salim,” he whispered, “reveal this poem.”

“It cannot be uttered,” said Salim Awad.

Khalil Khayyat was by this amazed. “Is it then so great?” he asked. “Then, Salim,” said he, “let it be as a jewel held in common by us of all the world.”

“I am tempted!”

“I plead, Salim—I, Khalil Khayyat, the poet, the philosopher—I plead!”

“I may not share this great poem, Khalil,” said Salim Awad, commanding himself, “save with such as have suffered as I have suffered.”

“Then,” answered Khalil Khayyat, triumphantly, “the half is mine!”

“Is yours, Khalil?”

“The very half, Salim, is the inheritance of my woe!”

“Khalil,” answered Salim Awad, rising, “attend!” He smiled, in the way of youth upon the aged, and put an affectionate hand on the old man’s shoulder. “My song,” said he, passionately, “may not be uttered; for in all the world—since of these accidents God first made grief—there has been no love-sorrow like my despair!”

Then, indeed, Khalil Khayyat knew that this same Salim Awad was a worthy poet. And he was content; for he had known a young man to take of the woe from his own heart and fashion a love-song too sublime for revelation to the unfeeling world—which was surely poetry sufficient to the day. He asked no more concerning the song, but took counsel with Salim Awad upon his journey to Newfoundland, whither the young poet was going, there in trade and travel to ease the sorrows of love. And he told him many things about money and a pack, and how that, though engaged in trade, a man might still journey with poetry; the one being of place and time and necessity, and the

other of the free and infinite soul. Concerning the words spoken that night in farewell by these poets, not so much as one word is known, though many men have greatly desired to know, believing the moment to have been propitious for high speaking; but not a word is to be written, not so much as a sigh to be described, for the door was closed, and, as it strangely chanced, there was no ear at the key-hole. But Nageeb Fiani, the greatest player in all the world, entering upon the departure of Salim Awad, was addressed by Khalil Khayyat.

“Nageeb,” said this great poet, “I have seen a minstrel go forth upon his wandering.”

“Upon what journey does the singer go, Khalil?”

“To the north, Nageeb.”

“What song, Khalil, does the man sing by the way?”

“The song is in his heart,” said Khalil Khayyat.

Abosamara, the merchant, being only rich, had intruded from his own province. “Come!” cried he, in the way of the rich who are only rich. “Come!” cried he, “how shall a man sing with his heart?”

Khalil Khayyat was indignant.

“Come!” Abosamara demanded, “how shall this folly be accomplished?”

“How shall the deaf understand these things?” answered Khalil Khayyat.

And this became a saying....

Hapless Harbor, of the Newfoundland French shore, gray, dispirited, chilled to its ribs of rock—circumscribed by black sea and impenetrable walls of mist. There was a raw wind swaggering out of the northeast upon it: a mean, cold, wet wind—swaggering down the complaining sea through the fog. It had the grounds in a frothy turmoil, the shore rocks smothered in broken water, the spruce of the heads shivering, the world of bleak hill and wooded valley all clammy to the touch; and—chiefest triumph of its heartlessness—it had the little children of the place driven into the kitchens to restore their blue noses and warm their cracked hands. Hapless Harbor, then, in a nor’east blow, and a dirty day—uncivil weather; an ugly sea, a high wind, fog as thick as cheese, and, to top off with, a scowling glass. Still early spring—snow in the gullies, dripping in rivulets to the harbor water; ice at sea, driving with

the variable, evil-spirited winds; perilous sailing and a wretched voyage of it upon that coast. A mean season, a dirty day—a time to be in harbor. A time most foul in feeling and intention, an hour to lie snug in the lee of some great rock.

The punt of Salim Awad, double-reefed in unwilling deference to the weather, had rounded Greedy Head soon after dawn, blown like a brown leaf, Salim being bound in from Catch-as-Catch-Can with the favoring wind. It was the third year of his wandering in quest of that ease of the sorrows of love; and as he came into quiet water from the toss and spray of the open, rather than a hymn in praise of the Almighty who had delivered him from the grasping reach of the sea, from its cold fingers, its green, dark, swaying grave—rather than this weakness—rather than this Newfoundland habit of worship, he muttered, as Antar, that great lover and warrior, had long ago cried from his soul: *“Under thy veil is the rosebud of my life, and thine eyes are guarded with a multitude of arrows; round thy tent is a lion-warrior, the sword’s edge, and the spear’s point”*—which had nothing to do, indeed, with a nor’east gale and the flying, biting, salty spray of a northern sea. But this Salim had come in, having put out from Catch-as-Catch-Can when gray light first broke upon the black, tumultuous world, being anxious to make Hapless Harbor as soon as might be, as he had promised a child in the fall of the year.

This Salim, poet, maker of the song that could not be uttered, tied up at the stage-head of Sam Swuth, who knew the sail of that small craft, and had lumbered down the hill to meet him.

“Pup of a day,” says Sam Swuth.

By this vulgarity Salim was appalled.

“Eh?” says Sam Swuth.

Salim’s pack, stowed amidships, was neatly and efficiently bound with tarpaulin, the infinite mystery of which he had mastered; but his punt, from stem to stern, swam deeply with water gathered on the way from Catch-as-Catch-Can.

“Pup of a day,” says Sam Swuth.

“Oh my, no!” cried Salim Awad, shocked by this inharmony with his mood. “Ver’ bad weather.”

“Pup of a day,” Sam Swuth insisted.

“Ver’ bad day,” said Salim Awad. “Ver’ beeg wind for thee punt.”

The pack was hoisted from the boat.

“An the glass don’t lie,” Sam Swuth promised, “they’s a sight dirtier comin’.”

Salim lifted the pack to his back. “Ver’ beeg sea,” said he. “Ver’ bad blow.”

“Ghost Rock breakin’?”

“Ver’ bad in thee Parlor of thee Devil,” Salim answered. “Ver’ long, black hands thee sea have. Ver’ white finger-nail,” he laughed. “Eh? Ver’ hong-ree hands. They reach for thee punt. But I am have escape,” he added, with a proud little grin. “I am have escape. I—Salim! Ver’ good sailor. Thee sea have not cotch *me*, you bet!”

“Ye’ll be lyin’ the night in Hapless?”

“Oh my, no! Ver’ poor business. I am mus’ go to thee Chain Teekle.”

Salim Awad went the round of mean white houses, exerting himself in trade, according to the cure prescribed for the mortal malady of which he suffered; but as he passed from door to door, light-hearted, dreaming of Haleema, she of the tresses of night, wherein the souls of men wandered astray, he still kept sharp lookout for Jamie Tuft, the young son of Skipper Jim, whom he had come through the wind to serve. Salim was shy—shy as a child; more shy than ever when bent upon some gentle deed; and Jamie was shy, shy as lads are shy; thus no meeting chanced until, when in the afternoon the wind had freshened, these two blundered together in the lee of Bishop’s Rock, where Jamie was hiding his humiliation, grief, and small body, but devoutly hoping, all the while, to be discovered and relieved. It was dry in that place, and sheltered from the wind; but between the Tickle heads, whence the harbor opened to the sea, the gale was to be observed at work upon the run.

Salim stopped dead. Jamie grinned painfully and kicked at the road.

“Hello!” cried Salim.

“’Lo, Joe!” growled Jamie.

Salim sighed. He wondered concerning the amount Jamie had managed to gather. Would it be sufficient to ease his conscience through the transaction?

The sum was fixed. Jamie must have the money or go wanting. Salim feared to ask the question.

“I isn’t got it, Joe,” said Jamie.

“Oh my! Too bad!” Salim groaned.

“Not all of un,” added Jamie.

Salim took heart; he leaned close, whispering, in suspense: “How much have you thee got?”

“Two twenty—an’ a penny.”

“Ver’ good!” cried Salim Awad, radiant. “Ver’, ver’ good! Look!” said he: “you have wait three year for thee watch. Ver’ much you have want thee watch. ‘Ha!’ I theenk; ‘ver’ good boy, this—I mus’ geeve thee watch to heem. No, no!’ I theenk; ‘ver’ bad for thee boy. I mus’ not spoil thee ver’ good boy. Make thee mon-ee,’ I say; ‘catch thee feesh, catch thee swile, then thee watch have be to you!’ Ver’ good. What happen? Second year, I have ask about the mon-ee. Ver’ good. ‘I have got one eighteen,’ you say. Oh my —no good! The watch have be three dollar. Oh my! Then I theenk: ‘I have geeve the good boy thee watch for one eighteen. Oh no, I mus’ not!’ I theenk; ‘ver’ bad for thee boy, an’ mos’ ver’ awful bad trade.’ Then I say, ‘I keep thee watch for one year more.’ Ver’ good. Thee third year I am have come. Ver’ good. What you say?’ ‘I have thee two twenty-one,’ you say. Ver’, ver’ good. Thee price of thee watch have be three dollar? No! Not this year. Thee price have *not* be three dollar.”

Jamie looked up in hope.

“Why not?” Salim Awad continued, in delight. “Have thee watch be spoil? No, thee watch have be ver’ good watch. Have thee price go down? No; thee price have not.”

Jamie waited in intense anxiety, while Salim paused to enjoy the mystery.

“Have I then become to spoil thee boy?” Salim demanded. “No? Ver’ good. How then can thee price of thee watch have be two twenty?”

Jamie could not answer.

“Ver’ good!” cried the delighted Salim. “Ver’, ver’ good! I am have tell you. Hist!” he whispered.

Jamie cocked his ear.

“Hist!” said Salim Awad again.

They were alone—upon a bleak hill-side, in a wet, driving wind.

“I have be to New York,” Salim whispered, in a vast excitement of secrecy and delight. “I am theenk: ‘Thee boy want thee watch. How thee boy have thee watch? Thee good boy *mus*’ have thee watch. Oh, mygod! how?’ I theenk. I theenk, an’ I theenk, an’ I theenk. Thee boy mus’ pay fair price for thee watch. Ha! Thee Salim ver’ clever. He feex thee price of thee watch, you bet! Eh! Ver’ good. How?”

Jamie was tapped on the breast; he looked into the Syrian’s wide, delighted, mocking brown eyes—but could not fathom the mystery.

“How?” cried Salim. “Eh? How can the price come down?”

Jamie shook his head.

“*I have smuggle thee watch!*” Salim whispered.

“Whew!” Jamie whistled. “That’s sinful!”

“Thee watch it have be to you,” answered Salim, gently. “Thee sin,” he added, bowing courteously, a hand on his heart, “it have be all my own!”

For a long time after Salim Awad’s departure, Jamie Tuft sat in the lee of Bishop’s Rock—until indeed, the dark alien’s punt had fluttered out to sea on the perilous run to Chain Tickle. It began to rain in great drops; the sullen mood of the day was about to break in some wrathful outrage upon the coast. Gusts of wind swung in and down upon the boy—a cold rain, a bitter, rising wind. But Jamie still sat oblivious in the lee of the rock. It was hard for him, unused to gifts, through all his days unknown to favorable changes of fortune, to overcome his astonishment—to enter into the reality of this possession. The like had never happened before: never before had joy followed all in a flash upon months of mournful expectation. He sat as still as the passionless rock lifted behind him. It was a tragedy of delight. Two dirty, cracked, toil-distorted hands—two young hands, aged and stained and malformed by labor beyond their measure of strength and years to do—two hands and the shining treasure within them: to these his world was, for the time, reduced—the rest, the harsh world of rock and rising sea and harsher

toil and deprivation, was turned to mist; it was like a circle of fog.

Jamie looked up.

“By damn!” he thought, savagely, “’tis—’tis—*mine!*”

The character of the exclamation is to be condoned; this sense of ownership had come like a vision.

“Why, I *got* she!” thought Jamie.

Herein was expressed more of agonized dread, more of the terror that accompanies great possessions, than of delight.

“Ecod!” he muttered, ecstatically; “she’s mine—she’s mine!”

The watch was clutched in a capable fist. It was not to be dropped, you may be sure! Jamie looked up and down the road. There was no highwayman, no menacing apparition of any sort, but the fear of some ghostly ravager had been real enough. Presently the boy laughed, arose, moved into the path, stood close to the verge of the steep, which fell abruptly to the harbor water.

“I got t’ tell mamma,” he thought.

On the way to Jamie’s pocket went the watch.

“She’ll be that glad,” the boy thought, gleefully, “that she—she—she’ll jus’ fair cry!”

There was some difficulty with the pocket.

“Yes, sir,” thought Jamie, grinning; “mamma’ll jus’ cry!”

The watch slipped from Jamie’s overcautious hand, struck the rock at his feet, bounded down the steep, splashed into the harbor water, and vanished forever....

A bad time at sea: a rising wind, spray on the wing, sheets of cold rain—and the gray light of day departing. Salim Awad looked back upon the coast; he saw no waste of restless water between, no weight and frown of cloud above, but only the great black gates of Hapless Harbor, beyond which, by the favor of God, he had been privileged to leave a pearl of delight. With the wind abeam he ran on through the sudsy sea, muttering, within his heart, as that great Antar long ago had cried: “*Were I to say thy face is like the full moon of*

heaven, wherein that full moon is the eye of the antelope? Were I to say thy shape is like the branch of the erak tree, oh, thou shamest it in the grace of thy form! In thy forehead is my guide to truth, and in the night of thy tresses I wander astray!"

And presently, having won Chain Tickle, he pulled slowly to Aunt Amelia's wharf, where he moored the punt, dreaming all the while of Haleema, Khouri's daughter, star of the world. Before he climbed the hill to the little cottage, ghostly in the dusk and rain, he turned again to Hapless Harbor. The fog had been blown away; beyond the heads of the Tickle—far across the angry run—the lights of Hapless were shining cheerily.

"Ver' good sailor—me!" thought Salim. "Ver' good hand, you bet!"

A gust of wind swept down the Tickle and went bounding up the hill.

"He not get me!" muttered Salim between bared teeth.

A second gust showered the peddler with water snatched from the harbor.

"Ver' glad to be in," thought Salim, with a shudder, turning now from the black, tumultuous prospect. "Ver' mos' awful glad to be in!"



THE DARK, SMILING SALIM, WITH HIS MAGIC PACK, WAS WELCOME

It was cosy in Aunt Amelia's hospitable kitchen. The dark, smiling Salim, with his magic pack, was welcome. The wares displayed—no more for purchase than for the delight of inspection—Salim stowed them away, sat himself by the fire, gave himself to ease and comfort, to the delight of a cigarette, and to the pleasure of Aunt Amelia's genial chattering. The wind beat upon the cottage—went on, wailing, sighing, calling—and in the lulls the breaking of the sea interrupted the silence. An hour—two hours, it may be—and there was the tramp of late-comers stumbling up the hill. A loud knocking, then entered for entertainment three gigantic dripping figures—men of Catch-as-Catch-Can, bound down to Wreckers' Cove for a doctor, but now put in for shelter, having abandoned hope of winning farther through the gale that night. Need o' haste? Ay; but what could men do? No time t' take a

skiff t' Wreckers' Cove in a wind like this! 'Twould blow your hair off beyond the Tickle heads. Hard enough crossin' the run from Hapless Harbor. An' was there a cup o' tea an' a bed for the crew o' them? They'd be under way by dawn if the wind fell. Ol' Tom Luther had t' have a doctor *somehow*, whatever come of it!

"Hello, Joe!" cried the one.

Salim rose and bowed.

"Heard tell 't Hapless Harbor you was hereabouts."

"Much 'bliged," Salim responded, courteously, bowing again. "Ver' much 'bliged."

"Heard tell you sold a watch t' Jim Tuft's young one?"

"Ver' good watch," said Salim.

"Maybe," was the response.

Salim blew a puff of smoke with light grace toward the white rafters. He was quite serene; he anticipated, now, a compliment, and was fashioning, of his inadequate English, a dignified sentence of acknowledgment.

"Anyhow," drawled the man from Catch-as-Catch-Can, "she won't go no more."

Salim looked up bewildered.

"Overboard," the big man explained.

"W'at!" cried Salim.

"Dropped her."

Salim trembled. "He have—drop thee—watch?" he demanded. "No, no!" he cried. "The boy have not drop thee watch!"

"Twelve fathoms o' water."

"Oh, mygod! Oh, dear me!" groaned Salim Awad. He began to pace the floor, wringing his hands. They watched him in amazement. "Oh, mygod! Oh, gracious! He have drop thee watch!" he continued. "Oh, thee poor broke heart of thee boy! Oh, my! He have work three year for thee watch. He have want thee watch so ver' much. Oh, thee great grief of thee poor boy! I am mus' go," said he, with resolution. "I am mus' go to thee Hapless at thee

once. I am mus' cure thee broke heart of thee poor boy. Oh, mygod! Oh, dear!" They scorned the intention, for the recklessness of it; they bade him listen to the wind, the rain on the roof, the growl and thud of the breakers; they called him a loon for his folly. "Oh, mygod!" he replied; "you have not understand. Thee broke heart of thee child! Eh? W'at you know? Oh, thee ver' awful pain of thee broke heart. Eh? I know. I am have thee broke heart. I am have bear thee ver' awful bad pain."

Aunt Amelia put a hand on Salim's arm.

"I am mus' go," said the Syrian, defiantly.

"Ye'll not!" the woman declared.

"I am mus' go to thee child."

"Ye'll not lose your life, will ye?"

The men of Catch-as-Catch-Can were incapable of a word; they were amazed beyond speech. 'Twas a new thing in their experience. They had put out in a gale to fetch the doctor, all as a matter of course; but this risk to ease mere woe—and that of a child! They were astounded.

"Oh yes!" Salim answered. "For thee child."

"Ye fool!"

Salim looked helplessly about. He was nonplussed. There was no encouragement anywhere to be descried. Moreover, he was bewildered that they should not understand!

"For thee child—yes," he repeated.

They did but stare.

"Thee broke heart," he cried, "of thee li'l child!"

No response was elicited.

"Oh, dear me!" groaned the poet. "You *mus'* see. It is a child!"

A gust was the only answer.

"Oh, mygod!" cried Salim Awad, poet, who had wandered astray in the tresses of night. "Oh, dear me! Oh, gee!"

Without more persuasion, he prepared himself for this high mission in

salvation of the heart of a child; and being no longer deterred, he put out upon it—having no fear of the seething water, but a great pity for the incomprehension of such as knew it best. It was a wild night; the wind was a vicious wind, the rain a blinding mist, the night thick and unkind, the sea such in turmoil as no punt could live through save by grace. Beyond Chain Tickle, Salim Awad entered the thick of that gale, but was not perturbed; for he remembered, rather than recognized the menace of the water, the words of that great lover, Antar, warrior and lover, who, from the sands of isolation, sang to Abba, his beloved: *“The sun as it sets turns toward her and says, Darkness obscures the land, do thou arise in my absence. And the brilliant moon calls out to her, Come forth, for thy face is like me when I am at the full and in all my glory.”*

The hand upon the steering-oar of this punt, cast into an ill-tempered, cold, dreary, evil-intentioned northern sea, was without agitation, the hand upon the halyard was perceiving and sure, the eye of intelligence was detached from romance; but still the heart remembered: *“The tamarisk-trees complain of her in the morn and in the eve, and say, Away, thou waning beauty, thou form of the laurel! She turns away abashed, and throws aside her veil, and the roses are scattered from her soft, fresh cheeks. Graceful is every limb, slender her waist, love-beaming are her glances, waving is her form. The lustre of day sparkles from her forehead, and by the dark shades of her curling ringlets night itself is driven away.”*

The lights of Hapless Harbor dwindled; one by one they went out, a last message of wariness; but still there shone, bright and promising continuance, a lamp of Greedy Head, whereon the cottage of Skipper Jim Tuft, the father of Jamie, was builded.

“I will have come safe,” thought Salim, “if thee light of Jamie have burn on.”

It continued to burn.

“It is because of thee broke heart,” thought Salim.

The light was not put out: Salim Awad—this child of sand and heat and poetry—made harbor in the rocky north; and he was delighted with the achievement. But how? I do not know. ’Twas a marvellous thing—thus to flaunt through three miles of wind-swept, grasping sea. A gale of wind was blowing—a gale to compel schooners to reef—ay, and to double reef, and to hunt shelter like a rabbit pursued: this I have been told, and for myself know,

because I was abroad, Cape Norman way. No Newfoundlander could have crossed the run from Chain Tickle to Hapless Harbor at that time; the thing is beyond dispute; 'twas a feat impossible—with wind and lop and rain and pelting spray to fight. But this poet, desert born and bred, won through, despite the antagonism of all alien enemies, cold and wet and vigorous wind: this poet won through, led by Antar, who said: *“Thy bosom is created as an enchantment. Oh, may God protect it ever in that perfection,”* and by his great wish to ease the pain of a child, and by his knowledge of wind and sea, gained by three years of seeking for the relief of the sorrows of love.

“Ver’ good sailor,” thought Salim Awad, as he tied up at Sam Swuth’s wharf. ’Twas a proper estimate. “Ver’ good,” he repeated. “Ver’ beeg good.”

Then this Salim, who had lost at love, made haste to the cottage of Skipper Jim Tuft, wherein was the child Jamie, who had lost the watch. He entered abruptly from the gale—recognizing no ceremony of knocking, as why should he? There was discovered to him a dismal group: Skipper Jim, Jamie’s mother, Jamie—all in the uttermost depths. “I am come!” cried he. “I—Salim Awad—I am come from thee sea! I am come from thee black night—I am come wet from thee rain—I am escape thee hands of thee sea! I am come—I, Salim Awad, broke of thee heart!” ’Twas a surprising thing to the inmates of that mean, hopeless place. “I am come,” Salim repeated, posing dramatically —“I, Salim—I am come!” ’Twas no more than amazement he confronted. “To thee help of thee child,” he repeated. “Eh? To thee cure of thee broke heart.” There was no instant response. Salim drew a new watch from his pocket. “I have come from thee ver’ mos’ awful sea with thee new watch. Eh? Ver’ good. I am fetch thee cure of thee broke heart to thee poor child.” There was no doubt about the efficacy of the cure. ’Twas a thing evident and delightful. Salim was wet, cold, disheartened by the night and weather; but the response restored him. “Thee watch an’ thee li’l’ chain, Jamie,” said he, with a bow most polite, “it is to you.”

Jamie grabbed the watch.

“Ver’ much ’bliged,” said Salim.

“Thanks,” said Jamie.

And in this cheap and simple way Salim Awad restored the soul of Jamie Tuft and brought happiness to all that household.

And now, when the news of this feat came to the ears of Khalil Khayyat, the editor, as all news must come, he sought the little back room of Nageeb Fiani, the greatest player in all the world, with the letter in his hand. Presently he got his narghile going, and a cup of perfumed coffee before him on the round, green baize table; and he was very happy—what with the narghile and the coffee and the letter from the north. There was hot weather, the sweat and complaint of the tenements; there was the intermittent roar and shriek of the Elevated trains rounding the curve to South Ferry; there was the street murmur and gasp, the noise of boisterous voices and the click of dice in the outer room; but by these Khalil Khayyat was not disturbed. Indeed not; there was a matter of the poetry of reality occupying his attention. He called Nageeb, the little Intelligent One, who came with soft feet; and he bade the little one summon to his presence Nageeb Fiani, the artist, the greatest player in all the world, who came, deferentially, wondering concerning this important message from the poet.

“Nageeb,” said Khalil Khayyat, “there has come a letter from the north.”

Nageeb assented.

“It concerns Salim,” said Khayyat.

“What has this Salim accomplished,” asked Nageeb Fiani, “in alleviation of the sorrows of love?”

Khayyat would not answer.

“Tell me,” Nageeb pleaded.

“This Salim,” said Khalil Khayyat, “made a song that could not be uttered. It is well,” said Khalil Khayyat. “You remember?”

Nageeb remembered.

“Then know this,” said Khalil Khayyat, abruptly, “the song he could not utter he sings in gentle deeds. It is a great song; it is too great for singing—it must be lived. This Salim,” he added, “is the greatest poet that ever lived. He expresses his sublime and perfect compositions in dear deeds. He is, indeed, a great poet.”

Nageeb Fiani thought it great argument for poetry; so, too, Khalil Khayyat.

IV—THE SQUALL

TUMM of the *Good Samaritan* kicked the cabin stove into a sputter and roar of flame so lusty that the black weather of Jump Harbor was instantly reduced from arrogant and disquieting menace to an impression of contrast grateful to the heart. “Not bein’ a parson,” said he, roused now from a brooding silence by this radiant inspiration, “I isn’t much of a hand at accountin’ for the mysteries o’ God; an’ never havin’ made a world, I isn’t no critic o’ creation. Still an’ all,” he persisted, in a flash of complaint, “it did seem t’ me, somehow, accordin’ t’ my lights, which wasn’t trimmed at no theological college, that the Maker o’ Archibald Shott o’ Jump Harbor hadn’t been quite kind t’ Arch.” The man shifted his feet in impatient disdain, then laughed—a gently contemptuous shaft, directed at his insolence: perhaps, too, at his ignorance. It fell to a sigh, however, which continued expression, presently, in a glance of poignant bewilderment. “Take un by an’ all,” he pursued, “I was wonderful sorry for Arch. Seemed t’ me, sir, though he bore the sign o’ the Lord’s own hand, as do us all, that he’d but a mean lookout for gracious livin’, after all.

“Poor Archibald Shott!

“‘Arch, b’y,’ says I, ‘you got the disposition of a snake.’

“‘Is I?’ says he. ‘Maybe you’re right, Tumm. I never knowed a snake in a intimate way.’

“‘You got the soul,’ said I, ‘of a ill-born squid.’

“‘Don’t know,’ said he; ‘never *seed* a squid’s soul.’

“‘Your tongue,’ says I, ‘is a flame o’ fire; ’tis a wonder t’ me she haven’t blistered your lips long afore this.’

“‘Isn’t *my* fault,’ says he.

“‘No?’ says I. ‘Then who’s t’ blame?’

“‘Well,’ says he, ‘God made me.’

“‘Anyhow,’ said I, ‘you’ve took t’ the devil’s alterations an’ improvements like a imp t’ hell fire.’”

Tumm dropped into an angry muse....

We had put in from the sea off the Harborless Shore, balked by a screaming Newfoundland northwester, allied with fog and falling night, from rounding Taunt Head, beyond which lay the snug harbor and waiting fish of Candlestick Cove. It had been labor enough, enough of cold, of sleety wind and anxious watching, to send the crew to berth in sleepy confusion when the teacups were emptied. Tumm and I sat in the companionable seclusion of the trader’s cabin, the schooner lying at ease in the shelter of Jump Harbor. In the pause, led by the wind from this warmth and peace and light to the reaches of frothy coast, I recalled the cliffs of Black Bight, upon which, as I had been told in the gray gale of that day, the inevitable had overtaken Archibald Shott. They sprang clear from the breakers, an expanse of black rock, barren as a bone, as it seemed in the sullen light, rising to a veil of fog, which, floating higher than our foremast, kept their topmost places in forbidding mystery. We had come about within stone’s-throw, so that the bleak walls, echoing upon us, doubled the thunder of the sea. They inclined from the water: I bore this impression away as the schooner darted from their proximity—an impression, too, of ledges, crevices, broken surfaces. In that tumultuous commotion, perhaps, flung then against my senses, I had small power to observe; but I fancied, I recall, that a nimble man, pursued by fear, might scale the Black Bight cliffs. There was imperative need, however, of knowing the way, else there might be neither advance nor turning back....

“Seemed t’ be made jus’ o’ leavin’s, Arch did,” Tumm resumed, with a little twitch of scorn: “jus’ knocked t’gether,” said he, “with scraps an’ odds an’ ends from the loft an’ floor. But whatever, an a man had no harsh feelin’ again’ a body patched up out o’ the shavin’s o’ bigger folk, a lean, long-legged, rickety sort o’ carcass, like t’ break in the grip of a real man,” he continued, “nor bore no grudge again’ high cheek-bones, skimped lips, a

ape's forehead, an' pale-green eyes, sot close to a nose like a axe an' pushed a bit too far back, why, then," he concluded, with a largely generous wave, "they wasn't a deal o' fault t' be found with the looks o' Archibald Shott. Wasn't no reason ever *I* seed why Arch shouldn't o' wed any maid o' nineteen harbors an' lived a sober, righteous, an' fatherly life till the sea cotched un. But it seemed, somehow, that Arch must fall in love with the maid o' Jump Harbor that was promised t' Slow Jim Tool—a lovely lass, sir, believe *me*: a dimpled, rosy, towheaded, ripplin' sort o' maid, as soft as feathers an' as plump as a oyster, with a disposition like sunshine an'—an'—well, *flowers*. She was a wonderful dear an' tender lass, quick t' smile, sir, quick as the sea in a sunlit southerly wind, an' quick t' cry, too, God bless her! in sympathy with the woes o' folk.

"‘Arch,’ says I, wind-bound in the *Curly Head* at Jump Harbor, ‘don’t you *do* it.’

"‘Love,’ says he, ‘is queer.’

"‘Maybe,’ says I; ‘but keep off. You go,’ says I, ‘an’ get a maid o’ your own.’

"‘*Wonderful* queer,’ says he. ‘‘Twouldn’t s’prise me, Tumm,’ says he, ‘if a man failed in love with a fish-hook.’

"‘Well,’ says I, ‘Lizabeth All isn’t no fish-hook. She’ve red cheeks an’ blue eyes an’ as soft an’ round a body as a man ever clapped eyes on. Her hair,’ says I, ‘is a glory; an’, Arch,’ says I, ‘why, she *pities*!’

"‘True,’ says he; ‘but it falls far short.’

"‘How far?’ says I.

"‘Well,’ says he, ‘you left out her muscles.’

"‘Look you, Arch!’ says I; ‘you isn’t nothin’ but a mean man. They isn’t nothin’ that’s low an’ cruel an’ irreligious that you can’t be comfortable shipmates with. Understand me? They isn’t nothin’ that can’t be spoke of in the presence o’ women an’ children that isn’t as good as a Sunday-school treat t’ you. It doesn’t scare you t’ know that the things o’ your delight would ruin God’s own world an’ they had their way. Understand me?’ says I, bein’ bound, now, to make it plain. ‘An’ now,’ says I, ‘what you got t’ give, anyhow, for the heart an’ sweet looks o’ this maid? Is you thinkin’,’ says I,

‘that she’ve a hankerin’ after your dried beef body an’ pill of a soul?’

“‘Never you mind,’ says he.

“‘Speak up!’ says I. ‘What you got t’ *trade*?’

“‘Well,’ says he, ‘I’m clever.’

“‘’Tis small cleverness t’ think,’ says I, ‘that in these parts a ounce o’ brains is as good as a hundredweight o’ chest an’ shoulders.’

“‘You jus’ wait an’ see,’ says he.

“Seems that Jim Tool was a big man with a curly head an’ a maid’s gray eyes. He was wonderful solemn an’ soft an’ slow—so slow, believe *me*, sir, that he wouldn’t quite know till to-morrow what he found out yesterday. If you spat in his face to-day, sir, he might drop in any time toward the end o’ next week an’ knock you down; but if he put it off for a fortnight, why, ’twouldn’t be so wonderful s’prisin’. I ’low he was troubled a deal by the world. ’Twas all a mystery to un. He went about, sir, with his brows drawed down an’ a look o’ wonder an’ s’prise an’ pity on his big, kind, pink-an’-white face. He was *always* s’prised; never seemed t’ *expect* nothin’—never seemed t’ be ready. I ’low it shocked un t’ pull a fish over the side. ‘Dear man!’ says he. ‘Well, well!’ What he done when ’Lizabeth All first kissed un ’tis past me t’ tell. I ’low that shootin’ wouldn’t o’ shocked un more. An’ how long it took un t’ wake up an’ really feel that kiss—how many days o’ wonder an’ s’prise an’ doubt—’twould take a parson t’ reckon. Anyhow, she loved un: I knows she did—she loved un, sir, because he was big an’ kind an’ curly-headed, which was enough for ’Lizabeth All, I ’low, an’ might be enough for any likely maid o’ Newf’un’land.”

I dropped a birch billet in the stove.

“Anyhow,” said Tumm, moodily, “it didn’t last long.”

The fire crackled a genial accompaniment to the tale of Slow Jim Tool....

“Well, now,” Tumm continued, “Slow Jim Tool an’ Archibald Shott o’ Jump Harbor was cast away in the *Dimple* at Creep Head o’ the Labrador. Bein’ wrecked seamen, they come up in the mail-boat; an’ it so happened, sir, that ’long about Run-by-Guess, with the fog thick, an’ dusk near come, Archibald Short managed t’ steal a Yankee’s gold watch an’ sink un in the pocket o’

Slow Jim Tool. 'Twas s'prisin' t' Jim. Fact is, when they cotched un with the prope'ty, sir, Jim 'lowed he never knowed when he done it—never knowed he *could* do it. 'Ecod!' says he; 'now that s'prises *me*. I mus' o' stole that there watch in my sleep. Well, well!' S'prised un a deal more, they says, when a brass-buttoned constable come aboard at Tilt Cove' an' took un in charge in the Queen's name. '*In the Queen's name!*' says Jim. 'What's that? In the Queen's name? Dear man!' says he; 'but this is awful! An' I never knows when I done it!' 'Twas more s'prisin' still when they haled un past Jump Harbor. 'Why,' says he, 'I wants t' go home an' see 'Lizabeth All. Why,' says he, 'I got t' talk it over with 'Lizabeth!' 'You can't,' says the constable. 'But,' says Jim, 'I *got* t'. Why,' says he, 'I always *have*.' 'Now,' says the constable, 'don't you make no trouble.' So Jim was s'prised again; but when the judge give un a year t' repent an' make brooms in chokee t' St. John's he was so s'prised, they says, that he never come to his senses till he landed back at Jump Harbor an' was kissed seven times by 'Lizabeth All in the sight o' the folk o' that place. An' even after that, I'm told—ay, through a season's fishin'—he pondered a deal more'n was good for un. Ashore an' afloat, 'twas all the same. 'Well, well!' says he. 'Dear man! I wonders how I done it. Arch,' says he, 'you was aboard; can't *you* throw no light?' Arch 'lowed he might an he but tried, but wouldn't. 'Might interfere,' says he, 'atween you an' 'Lizabeth.' 'But,' says Jim, 'as a friend?'

“Well,' says Arch, 'riginal sin.'

“'Riginal sin!' says Jim. 'Dear man! but I mus' have got my share!'

“You is,' says Arch. 'Tis plain in your face. You looks low and vicious. 'Riginal sin, Jim,' says he, 'marks a man.'

“Think so?' says Jim. 'I'm sorry I got it.'

“An' look you!' says Arch; 'you better be wonderful careful about unshippin' wickedness on 'Lizabeth.'

“On 'Lizabeth?' says Jim. 'What you mean? God knows,' says he, 'I'd not hurt 'Lizabeth.'

“Then ponder,' says Arch. 'Riginal sin is made you a thief an' a jailbird. Ponder, Jim—ponder!'

“Now,” cries Tumm, in an outburst of feeling, “what you think 'Lizabeth All done?”

I was confused by the question.

“Why,” Tumm answered, “it didn’t make no difference t’ she!”

I was not surprised.

“Not s’prised!” cries Tumm. “No,” he snapped, indignantly, “nor neither was Slow Jim Tool.”

Of course not!

“Nobody knows nothin’ about a woman,” said Tumm; “least of all, the woman. An’, anyhow,” he resumed, “’Lizabeth All didn’t care. Why, God save you, sir!” he burst out, “she loved the shoulders an’ soul o’ Slow Jim Tool too much t’ care. ’Tis a woman’s way; an’ a woman’s true love so passes the knowledge o’ men that faith in God is a lesson in A B C beside it. Well,” he continued, “sailin’ the *Give an’ Take* that fall, I was cotched in the early freeze-up, an’ us put the winter in at Jump Harbor, with a hold full o’ fish an’ every married man o’ the crew in a righteous rage. An’ as for ’Lizabeth, why, when us cleared the school-room, when ol’ Bill Bump fiddled up with the accordion ‘Money Musk’ an’ ‘Pop Goes the Weasel,’ when he sung out, ‘Balance!’ an’ ‘H’ist her, lad!’ when the jackets was throwed aside an’ the boots was cast off, why, ’Lizabeth All jus’ fair *clinged* t’ that there big, gray-eyed, pink-an’-white Slow Jim Tool! ’Twas a pretty sight t’ watch her, sir, plump an’ winsome an’ yellow-haired, float like a sea-gull over the school-room floor—t’ see her blushes an’ smiles an’ eyes o’ love. It done me good. I ’lowed I wished I was young again—an’ big an’ slow an’ kind an’ curly-headed. But lookin’ about, sir, it seemed t’ me, as best I could understand, that a regiment o’ little devils was stickin’ red-hot fish-forks into the vitals o’ Archibald Shott; an’ then I ’lowed, somehow, that maybe I was jus’ as well off as I was. I got a look in his eyes, sir, afore the night was done; an’ it jus’ seemed t’ me that the Lord had give me a peep into hell.

“’Twas more’n Archibald Shott could carry. ‘Tumm,’ says he, nex’ day, ‘I ’low I’ll move.’

“‘Where to?’ says I.

“‘Low I’ll jack my house down t’ the ice,’ says he, ‘an’ haul she over t’ Deep Cove. I’ve growed tired,’ says he, ‘o’ fishin’ Jump Harbor.’

“Well, now, they wasn’t no prayer-meetin’ held t’ keep Archibald Shott t’ Jump Harbor. The lads o’ the place an’ the crew o’ the *Give an’ Take* turned to an’ jerked that house across the bay t’ Deep Cove like a gale o’ wind. They wasn’t nothin’ left o’ Archibald Shott at Jump Harbor but the bare spot on the rocks where the house used t’ be. When ’twas all over with, Arch come back t’ say good-bye; an’ he took Slow Jim Tool t’ the hills, an’, ‘Jim,’ says he, ‘you knows where my house used t’ be? Hist!’ says he, ‘I wants t’ tell you: is you able t’ hold a secret? Well,’ says he, ‘I wouldn’t go pokin’ ’round in the dirt there. You leave that place be. They isn’t nothin’ there that you’d like t’ have. Understand? *Don’t go pokin’ ’round in the dirt where my ol’ house was.* But if you does,’ says he, ‘an’ if you finds anything you wants, why, you can keep it, and not be obliged t’ me.’ So Jim begun pokin’ ’round; being human, he jus’ couldn’t help it. He poked an’ poked, till they wasn’t no sense in pokin’ no more; an’ then he ’lowed he’d give ’Lizabeth a wonderful s’prise in the spring, no matter what it cost. ‘Archibald Shott,’ says he, ‘is a kind man. You jus’ wait, ’Lizabeth, an’ see.’ And in the spring, sure enough, off he sot for Chain Tickle, where ol’ Jonas Williams have a shop an’ a store, t’ fetch ’Lizabeth a pink ostrich feather she’d seed in Jonas’s trader two year afore. She ’lowed that ’twas a wonderful sight o’ money t’ lay out on a feather, when he got back; but he says: ‘Oh no, ’Lizabeth; the money wasn’t no trouble t’ get.’

“‘No trouble?’ says she.

“‘Why, no,’ says he; ‘no trouble t’ speak of. I jus’ sort o’ poked around an’ picked it up.’

“About a week after ’Lizabeth All had first wore that pink feather t’ meetin’ a constable come ashore from the mail-boat an’ tapped Slow Jim Tool on the shoulder.

“‘What you do that for?’ says Jim.

“‘In the Queen’s name!’ says the constable.

“‘My God!’ says Jim. ‘What is I been doin’?’

“‘Counterfeitin’,’ says the constable.

“‘Counter-fittin’!’ says Jim. ‘What’s that?’

“They says,” Tumm sighed, “that poor Jim Tool was wonderful s’prised t’ be

give two year in chokee t' St. John's for passin' lead shillin's; for look you! Jim didn't *know* they was lead."

"And Elizabeth?" I ventured.

"Up an' died," he drawled....

"Well, now," Tumm proceeded, "'twas three year later that Jim Tool an' Archibald Shott an' me was shipped from Twillingate aboard the *Billy Boy* t' fish the Labrador below Mugford along o' Skipper Alex Tuttle. Jim Tool was more slow an' solemn an' puzzled 'n ever I knowed un t' be afore; an' he was so wonderful shy o' Archibald Shott that Arch 'lowed he'd have the superstitious shudders if it kep' up much longer. 'If he'd only talk,' says Arch, 'an' not creep about this here schooner like a deaf an' dumb ghost!' But Jim said nar a word; he just' kep' a gray eye on Arch till Arch lost a deal more sleep 'n he got. 'He *irks* me!' says Arch. "'Tisn't a thing a religious man would practise; an' I'll *do* something,' says he, 't' stop it!' Howbeit, things was easy till the *Billy Boy* slipped past Mother Burke in fair weather an' run into a dirty gale from the north off the upper French shore. The wind jus' seemed t' sweep up all the ice they was on the Labrador an' jam it again' the coast at Black Bight. There's where we was, sir, when things cleaned up; gripped in the ice a hundred fathom off the Black Bight cliffs. An' there we stayed, lifted from the pack, lyin' at fearsome list, till the wind turned westerly an' began t' loosen up the ice.

"'Twas after noon of a gray day when the *Billy Boy* dropped back in the water. They was a bank o' blue-black cloud hangin' high beyond the cliffs; an' I 'lowed t' the skipper, when I seed it, that 'twould blow with snow afore the day was out.

"'Ay,' says the skipper; 'an' 'twon't be long about it.'

"Jus' then Slow Jim Tool knocked Archibald Shott flat on his back. Lord, what a thump! Looked t' me as if Archibald Shott might be damaged.

"'Ecod! Jim,' says I, 'what you go an' do that for?'

"'Why,' says Jim, 'he said a bad word again' the name o' 'Lizabeth.'

"'Never done nothin' o' the kind,' says Arch. 'I was jus' 'bidin' here amidships lookin' at the weather.'

“‘Yes, you did, Arch,’ says Jim; ‘you done it in the forecastle—las’ Wednesday. I heared you as I come down the ladder.’

“‘Don’t you knock me down again,’ says Arch. ‘That *hurt!*’

“‘Well,’ says Jim, ‘you keep your tongue off poor ’Lizabeth.’



“YOU KEEP YOUR TONGUE OFF POOR ’LIZABETH”

“By this time, sir, the lads was all come up from the forecandle. We wasn’t much hands at fightin’, in them days, on the Labrador craft, bein’ all friends t’gether; an’ a little turn up on deck sort o’ scared the crew. Made un shy, too; they hanged about, backin’ an’ shufflin’, like kids in a parlor, fair itchin’ along o’ awkwardness, grinnin’ a deal wider’n was called for, but sayin’ nothin’ for fear o’ drawin’ more attention ’n they could well dodge. Skipper Alex he laughed; then I cackled a bit—an’ then off went the crew in a big he-haw. I seed Archibald Shott turn white an’ twitch-lipped, an’ I minds me now, sir, that he fidgeded somewhat about his hip; but bein’ all friends aboard, sir, shipped from near-by harbors, why, it jus’ didn’t jump into my mind that he was up t’ anything more deadly than givin’ a hitch to his

trousers. How should it? We wasn't *used* t' brawls aboard the *Billy Boy*. But whatever, Archibald Shott crep' for'ard a bit, till he was close 'longside, an' then bended down t' do up the lashin' of his shoe: which he kep' at, sir, fumblin' like a baby, till Jim looked off t' the clouds risin' over the Black Bight cliffs an' 'lowed 'twould snow like wool afore the hour was over. Then, 'Will she?' says Arch; an' with that he drawed his splittin'-knife an' leaped like a lynx on Slow Jim Tool. I seed the knife in the air, sir—seed un come down point foremost on Jim's big chest—an' heared a frosty tinkle when the broken blade struck the deck. It didn't seem natural, sir; not on the deck o' the *Billy Boy*, where we was all friends aboard, raised in near-by harbors.

"Anyhow, Slow Jim squealed like a pig an' clapped a hand to his heart; an' Arch jumped back t' the rail, where he stood with muscles drawed an' arms open for a grapple, fair drillin' holes in Jim with his little green eyes.

"Ouch!' says Jim; 'that wasn't *fair*, Arch!'

"Arch's lips jus' lifted away from his teeth in a ghastly sort o' grin.

"Eh?' says Jim. 'What you want t' do a dirty trick like that for?'

"Arch didn't seem t' have no answer ready: jus' stood there eyin' Jim, stock still as a wooden figger-head, 'cept that he shivered an' gulped an' licked his blue lips with a tongue that I 'lowed t' be as dry as sand-paper. Seemed t' me, sir, when his muscles begun t' slack an' his eyes t' shift, that he was more scared 'n any decent man ought ever t' get. But he didn't say nothin'; nor no more did nobody else. Wasn't nothin' t' say. There we was, all friends aboard, reared in near-by harbors. Didn't seem natural t' be stewin' in a mess o' hate like that. Look you! we *knowed* Archibald Shott an' Slow Jim Tool: knowed un, stripped an' clothed, body an' soul, an' *had*, sir, since they begun t' toddle the roads o' Jump Harbor. Knowed un? Why, down along afore the *Lads' Hope* went ashore on the Barnyard Islands, I slep' along o' Jim Tool an' *poulticed Archibald Shaft's boils*! Didn't seem t' me, sir, when Jim took off his jacket an' opened his shirt that they was anything more'n sorrow for Arch's temper brewin' in his heart. Murder? Never thunk o' murder; wasn't used enough t' murder. I 'lowed, though, that Jim didn't like the sight o' the cut where the knife had broke on a rib; an' I 'lowed he liked the feel of his blood still less, for he got white an' stupid an' disgusted when his fingers touched it, jus' as if he might be sea-sick any minute, an' he shook hissself an'

coughed, sir, jus' like a dog eatin' grass.

“‘Tumm,’ says he, ‘you got a knife?’

“‘Don’t ’low no one,’ says I, ‘t’ clean a pipe ’ith my knife.’

“‘No,’ says he; ‘a sheath-knife?’

“‘Left un below,’ says I. ‘What you want un for?’

“‘Jus’ a little job,’ says he.

“‘What *kind* of a job?’ says I.

“‘Oh,’ says he, ‘jus’ a little job I got t’ do!’

“‘Seemed nobody had a knife, so Jim Tool fetched his own from below.

“‘Find un?’ says I.

“‘Not my bes’ one,’ says he. ‘Jus’ my second bes’.’

“Skipper Alex ’lowed ’twould snow like goose feathers afore half an hour was out, but, somehow, sir, nobody cared, though the wind was breakin’ off shore in saucy puff’s an’ the ice pack was goin’ abroad.

“Jim Tool feeled the edge of his knife. ‘Isn’t my bes’ one,’ says he. ‘I got a new one somewheres.’

“I ’lowed he was a bit out o’ temper with the knife; an’ it *did* look sort o’ foul sir, along o’ overuse an’ neglect.

“‘Greasy,’ says he, wipin’ the blade on his boot; ‘wonderful greasy! Isn’t much use no more. Wisht I had my bes’ one. This here,’ says he, ‘is got three big nicks. But, anyhow, Arch,’ says he, ‘I won’t hurt you no more’n I can help!’

“Then, sir, knife in hand an’ murder hot in his heart, he bore down on Archibald Shott. ’Twas all over in a flash: Arch, lean an’ nimble as a imp, leaped the rail an’ put off over the ice toward the Black Bight cliffs, with Slow Jim in chase. Skipper Alex whistled ‘Whew!’ an’ looked perfectly stupid along o’ s’prise; whereon, sir, havin’ come to his senses of a sudden, he let out a whoop like a siren whistle an’ vaulted overside. Then me, sir; then the whole bally crew! In jus’ a wink ’twas follow my leader over the pans t’ save Archibald Shott from slaughter: scramble an’ leap, sir, slip an’ splash—across the pans an’ over the pools an’ lanes o’ water.

“I ’low the skipper might o’ overhauled Jim an he hadn’t missed his leap an’ gone overhead ’longside. As for me, sir, wind an’ legs denied me.

“‘Hol’ on, Jim!’ sings I. ‘Wait for *me!*’

“But Jim wasn’t heedin’ what was behind; I ’low, sir, what with hate an’ the rage o’ years, he wasn’t thinkin’ o’ nothin’ ’cept t’ get a knife in the vitals o’ Archibald Shott so deep an’ soon as he was able. Seemed he’d do it, too, in quick time, for jus’ that minute Archibald slipped; his legs sailed up in the air, an’ he landed on his shoulders an’ rolled off into the water. But God bein’ on the watch jus’ then, sir, Jim leaped short hisself from the pan he was on, an’ afore he could crawl from the sea Arch was out an’ lopin’ like a hare over better goin’. Jim was too quick for me t’ nab; I was fetched up all standin’ by the lane he’d leaped—while he sailed on in chase o’ Arch. An’ meantime the crew was scattered north an’ south, every man Jack makin’ over the ice for the Black Bight cliffs by the course that looked best, so that Arch was drove in on the rocks. I ’lowed ’twould be over in a trice if somebody didn’t leap on the back o’ Slow Jim Tool; but in this I was mistook: for Archibald Shott, bein’ hunted an’ scared an’ nimble, didn’t wait at the foot o’ the cliff for Jim Tool’s greasy knife. He shinned on up—up an’ up an’ up—higher an’ higher—with his legs an’ arms sprawled out an’ workin’ like a spider. Nor neither did Jim stop short. No, sir! He slipped his knife in his belt—an’ up shinned *he!*

“‘*Jim*, you fool!’ sings I, when I come below, ‘you come down out o’ that!’

“But Jim jus’ kep’ mountin’.

“‘Jim!’ says I. ‘You want t’ fall an’ get hurted?’

“Up comes the skipper in a proper state o’ wrath an’ salt water. ‘Look you, Jim Tool!’ sings he; ‘you want t’ break your neck?’

“I ’lowed maybe Jim was too high up t’ hear.

“‘Tumm,’ says the skipper, ‘that fool will split Archibald Shott once he gets un. You go ’round by Tatter Brook,’ says he, ‘an’ climb the hill from behind. This foolishness is got t’ be stopped. Goin’ easy,’ says he, ‘you’ll beat Shott t’ the top o’ the cliff. He’ll be over first; let un go. But when Tool comes,’ says he, ‘why, you got a pair o’ arms there that can clinch a argument.’

“‘Ay,’ says I; ‘but what’ll come o’ Archibald?’

“‘Well,’ says the skipper, ‘it looks t’ me as if he’d be content jus’ t’ keep on goin’.’

“In this way, sir, I come t’ the top o’ the cliff. They was signs o’ weather—a black sky, puffs o’ wind jumpin’ out, scattered flakes o’ snow—but they wasn’t no sign o’ Archibald Shott. They was quite a reach o’ brink, sir, high enough from the shore ice t’ make a stomach squirm; an’ it took a deal o’ peepin’ an’ stretchin’ t’ spy out Arch an’ Jim. Then I ’lowed that Arch never *would* get over; for I seed, sir—lyin’ there on the edge o’ the cliff, with more head an’ shoulders stickin’ out in space than I cares t’ dream about o’ these quiet nights—I seed that Archibald Shott was cotched an’ could get no further. There he was, sir, stickin’ like plaster t’ the face o’ the cliff, some thirty feet below, finger-nails an’ feet dug into the rock, his face like a year-old corpse. I sung out a hearty word—though, God knows! my heart was empty o’ cheer—an’ I heard some words rattle in Shott’s dry throat, but couldn’t understand; an’ then, sir, overcome by space an’ that face o’ fear, I rolled back on the frozen moss, sick an’ limp. When I looked again I seed, so far below that they looked like fat swile on the ice, the skipper an’ the crew o’ the *Billy Boy*, starin’ up, with the floe an’ black sea beyond, lyin’ like a steep hill under the gray sky. Midway, swarmin’ up with cautious hands an’ feet, come Slow Jim Tool, his face as white an’ cold as the ice below, thin-lipped, wolf-eyed, his heart as cruel now, sir, his slow mind as keen, his muscles as tense an’ eager, as a brute’s on the hunt.

“‘Jim!’ says I. ‘Oh, Jim!’

“Jim jus’ come on up.

“‘Jim!’ says I. ‘Is that *you*?’

“Seemed, sir, it jus’ *couldn’t* be. Not *Jim*! Why, I *nursed* Jim! I tossed Jimmie Tool t’ the ceilin’ when he was a mushy infant too young t’ do any more’n jus’ gurgle. Why, at that minute, sir, like a dream in the gray space below, I could see Jimmie Tool’s yellow head an’ fat white legs an’ calico dresses, jus’ as they used t’ be.

“‘Jim,’ says I, ‘it can’t be you. Not you, Jim,’ says I; ‘not *you*!’

“‘Tumm,’ says he, ‘is he stuck? Can’t he get no farther?’

“Jim!

“‘If he can’t,’ says he, ‘I got un! I’ll knife un, Tumm,’ says he, ‘jus’ in a minute.’

“‘Don’t try it,’ says I.

“‘Don’t you fret, Tumm,’ says he. ‘Isn’t no fear o’ *me* fallin’. *I’m* all right.’

“An’ this was Jimmie Tool! Why, sir, I knowed Jimmie Tool when he was a lad o’ twelve. A hearty lad, sir, towheaded an’ stout an’ strong an’ lively, with freckles on his nose, an’ a warm, kind, white-toothed little grin for such as put a hand on his shoulder. Wasn’t nobody ever, man, woman, or child, that touched Jimmie Tool in kindness ’ithout bein’ loved. He jus’ couldn’t help it. You jus’ be good t’ Jimmie Tool, you jus’ put a hand on his head an’ smile, an’ Jimmie ’lowed they was no man like you. ‘You got a awful kind heart, lad,’ says I, when he was twelve; ‘an’ when you grows up,’ says I, ‘I ’low the folk o’ this coast will be glad you was born.’ An’ here was Jimmie Tool, swarmin’ up the Black Bight cliffs, bent on the splittin’ o’ Archibald Shott, which same Archibald I had took t’ Sunday-school, by the wee, soft hand of un, many a time, when he was a flabby-fleshed, chatterin’ rollypolly o’ four! Bein’ jus’ a ol’ fool, sir—bein’ jus’ a soft ol’ fool hangin’ over the Black Bight cliffs—I wisht, somehow, that little Jimmie Tool had never needed t’ grow up.

“‘Jimmie,’ says I, ‘what you *really* goin’ t’ do?’

“‘Well,’ says he, ‘jus’ a minute.’

“‘Very well,’ says I; ‘but you better leave poor Arch alone.’

“‘How’s his grip?’ says he.

“‘None too good,’ says I; ‘a touch would dislodge un.’

“‘If I cotched un by the ankle, then,’ says he, ‘I ’low I could jerk un loose.’

“‘You hadn’t better *try*,’ says Arch.

“‘Jim,’ says I, ‘does you know how high up you really is?’

“Jim jus’ reached as quick as a snake for Archibald Shott’s foot, but come somewhat short of a grip. ‘Shoot it!’ says he, ‘I can on’y touch un with my finger. I’ll have t’ climb higher.’

“Up he come a inch or so.

“‘You try that again, Jim,’ says Arch, ‘an’ I’ll kick you in the head.’

“‘You can’t,’ says Jim; ‘you dassn’t move a foot from that ledge.’

“‘Try an’ see,’ says Arch.

“‘I can see very well, Arch, b’y,’ says Jim. ‘If you wriggles a toe, you’ll fall.’

“Then, sir, I cotched ear o’ the skipper singin’ out from below. Seemed so far down when my eyes dropped that my fingers digged theirselves deep in the moss and clawed around for better grip. They isn’t no beach below, sir, nor broken rock, as you knows; the cliffs rise from deep water. Skipper and crew was on the ice; an’ I seed that the wind had blowed the pans off shore. Wind was up now: blowin’ clean t’ sea, with flakes o’ snow swirlin’ in the lee o’ the cliff. It fair scraped the moss I was lyin’ on. Seemed t’ me, sir, that if it blowed much higher I’d need my toes for hangin’ on. A gust cotched off my cap an’ swep’ it over the sea. Lord! it made me shiver t’ watch the course o’ that ol’ cloth cap! Blow? Oh, ay—blowin’! An’ I ’lowed that the skipper was nervous in the wind. He sung out again, waved his arms, pointed t’ the sea, an’ then ducked his head, tucked in his elbows, an’ put off for the schooner, with the crew scurryin’ like weak-flipperd swile in his wake. Sort o’ made me laugh, sir; they looked so round an’ squat an’ short-legged, ’way down below, sprawlin’ over the ice in mad haste t’ board the *Billy Boy* afore she drifted off in the gale. Laugh? Ay, sir! I laughed. Didn’t seem t’ me, sir, that Jim Tool really *meant* t’ kill Archibald Shott. Jus’ seemed, somehow, like a rough game, with somebody like t’ get hurted if they kep’ it up. So I laughed; but I gulped that laugh back t’ my stomach, sir, when I slapped eyes again on Archibald Shott!

“‘Don’t do that, Arch,’ says I. ‘You’ll *fall*!’

“‘Well,’ says he, ‘Jim says I can’t kick un in the head.’

“‘No more you can,’ says Jim; ‘an’ you dassn’t try.’

“Arch was belly foremost t’ the cliff—toes on a ledge an’ hands gripped aloft. He was able t’ look up, but made poor work o’ lookin’ down over his shoulder; an’ I ’lowed, him not bein’ able t’ see Jim, that the minute he reached out a foot he’d be cotched an’ ripped from his hold, if Jim really wanted t’ do it. Anyhow, he got his fingers in a lower crack. ’Twas a wonderful strain t’ put on any man’s hands an’ arms: I could see his forearms shake along of it. But safe at this, he loosed one foot from the ledge, let his

body sink, an' begun t' kick out after Jim, jus' feelin' about like a blind man, with his face jammed again' the rock. Jus' in a minute Jim reached for that foot. Cotched it, too; but no sooner did Arch feel them fingers closin' in than he kicked out for life an' got loose. The wrench near overset Jim. He made a quick grab for the rock an' got a hand there jus' in time. Jim laughed. It may be that he thunk Arch would be satisfied an' draw up t' rest. But Arch 'lowed for one more kick; an' this, sir, cotched Slow Jim Tool fair on the cheek when poor Jim wasn't lookin'. Must o' hurt Jim. When his head fell back, his face was all screwed up, jus' like a child's in pain. I seed, too, that his muscles was slack, his knees givin' way, an' that his right hand, with the fingers spread out crooked, was clawin' for a hold, ecod! out in the air, where they wasn't nothin' but thin wind t' grasp. Then I didn't see no more, but jus' lied flat on the moss, my eyes fallen shut, limp an' sweaty o' body, waitin' t' come to, as from the grip o' the Old Hag.

"When I looked again, sir, Archibald Shott had both feet toed back on the ledge, an' Slow Jim Tool, below, was still stickin' like a barnacle t' the cliff.

"'Jim,' says I, 'if you don't stop this foolishness I'll drop a rock on you.'

"'This won't do,' says he.

"'No,' says I; 'it *won't!*'

"'I 'low, Tumm,' says he, 'that I better swarm above an' come down.'

"'What for?' says I.

"'Step on his fingers,' says he.

"Then, sir, the squall broke; a rush an' howl o' northerly wind! Come like a pack o' mad ghosts: a break from the spruce forest—a flight over the barren—a great leap into space. Blue-black clouds, low an' thick, rushin' over the cliff, spilt dusk an' snow below. 'Twas as though the Lord had cast a black blanket o' night in haste an' anger upon the sea. An' I never knowed the snow so thick afore; 'twas jus' emptied out on the world like bags o' flour. Dusty, frosty snow; it got in my eyes an' nose an' throat. 'Twasn't a minute afore sea an' shore was wiped from sight an' Jim Tool an' Archibald Shott was turned t' black splotches in a mist. I crabbed away from the brink. Wasn't no sense, sir, in lyin' there in the push an' tug o' the wind. An' I sot me down t' wait; an' by-an'-by I heard a cry, a dog's bark o' terror, from deep in the throat, sir, that wasn't no scream o' the gale. So I crawled for'ard,

on hands an' knees that bore me ill, t' peer below, but seed no form o' flesh an' blood, nor got a human answer t' my hail. I turned again t' wait; an' I faced inland, where was the solemn forest, far off an' hid in a swirl o' snow, with but the passion of a gale t' bear. An' there I stood, sir, turned away from the rage o' hearts that beat in breasts like ours, until the squall failed, an' the snow thinned t' playful flakes, an' the gray clouds, broken above the wilderness, soaked crimson from the sun like blood.

“’Twas Jim Tool that roused me.

“‘That you, Jim?’ says I.

“‘Ay,’ says he; ‘you been waitin’ here for me, Tumm?’

“‘Ay,’ says I; ‘been waitin’.’

“‘Tired?’ says he.

“‘No,’ says I; ‘not tired.’

“There come then, sir, a sort o’ smile upon him—fond an’ grateful an’ childlike. I seed it glow in the pits where his eyes was. ‘It was kind,’ says he, ‘t’ wait. You always was kind t’ me, Tumm.’

“‘Oh no,’ says I; ‘not kind.’

“‘Tumm,’ says he, kickin’ at a rock in the snow, ‘I done it,’ says he, ‘by the ankle.’

“‘Then,’ says I, ‘God help you, Jim!’

“He come close t’ me, sir, jus’ like he used t’ do, when he was a lad, in trouble.

“‘Keep off, Jim!’ says I.

“‘Why so?’ says he. ‘Isn’t you goin’ t’ be friends ’ith me any more?’

“I was afraid. ‘Keep clear!’ says I.

“‘Oh, why so?’ says he.

“‘I—I—don’t know!’ says I. ‘God help us all, I don’t *know*!’

“Then he falled prone, sir, an’ rolled over on his back, with his arms flung out, as if now he seed the blood on his hands; an’ he squirmed in the snow, sir, like a worm on a hook. ‘I wisht I hadn’t done it! Oh, dear God,’ says he,

‘I wisht I hadn’t done it!’

“Ah, poor little Jimmie Tool!

“I looked away, sir, west’ard, t’ where the sky had broken wide its gates. Ah, the sun had washed the crimson blood-drip from the clouds! ’Twas a flood o’ golden light. Colors o’ heaven streamin’ through upon the world! But yet so far away—beyond the forest, and, ay, beyond the farther sea! Maybe, sir, while my eyes searched the far-off sunlit spaces, that my heart fled back t’ fields o’ time more distant still. I remembered the lad that was Jimmie Tool. Warm-hearted, sir, aglow with tender wishes for the joy o’ folk; towheaded an’ stout an’ strong, straight o’ body an’ soul, with a heart lifted high, it seemed t’ me, from the reachin’ fingers o’ sin. Wasn’t nobody ever, sir, that touched Jimmie Tool in kindness ’ithout bein’ loved. ‘Ah, Jimmie,’ says I, when I looked in his clear gray eyes, ‘the world’ll be glad, some day, that you was born. Wisht I was a lad like you,’ says I, ‘an’ not a man like me.’ An’ he’d cotch hold o’ my hand, sir, an’ say: ‘Tumm, you is wonderful good t’ me. I ’low I’m a lucky lad,’ says he, ‘t’ have a friend like you.’ So now, sir, come back t’ the bleak cliffs o’ Black Bight, straight returned from the days of his childhood, with the golden dust o’ that time fresh upon my feet, the rosy light of it in my eyes, the breath o’ God in my heart, I kneeled in the snow beside Jim Tool an’ put a hand on his shoulder.

“‘Jimmie!’ says I.

“He would not take his hands from his eyes.

“‘Hush!’ says I, for I had forgot that he was no more a child. ‘Don’t cry!’

“He cotched my hand, sir, jus’ like he used t’ do.

“‘T’ me,’ says I, ‘you’ll always be the same little lad you used t’ be.’

“It eased un: poor little Jimmie Tool!”

Tumm’s face had not relaxed. ’Twas grim as ever. But I saw—and turned away—that tears were upon the seamed, bronzed cheeks. I listened to the wind blowing over Jump Harbor, and felt the oppression of the dark night, which lay thick upon the roads once known to the feet of this gray-eyed Jimmie Tool. My faith was turned gray by the tale. “Ecod!” Tumm burst in upon my musing, misled, perhaps, by this ancient sorrow, “I’m glad *I* didn’t

make this damned world! An', anyhow," he continued, with a snap of indignation, "what happened after that was all done as *among men*. Wasn't no cryin'—least of all by Jim Tool. When the *Billy Boy* beat back t' pick us up, all hands turned out t' fish Archibald Shott from the breakers, an' then we stowed un away in a little place by Tatter Brook, jus' where the water tumbles down the hill. Jim 'lowed he might as well be took back an' hanged in short order. The sooner, he says, the better it would suit. 'Lizabeth was dead, an' Arch was dead, an' he might as well go, too. Anyhow, says he, he *ought* to. But Skipper Alex wouldn't hear to it. Wasn't no time, says he; the crew couldn't afford to lose the v'y'ge; an', anyhow, says he, Jim wasn't in no position t' ask favors. So 'twas late in the fall, sir, afore Jim was give into the hands o' the Tilt Cove constable. Then Jim an' me an' the skipper an' some o' the crew put out for St. John's, where Jim had what they called his trial. An' Jim 'lowed that if the jury could do so 'ithout drivin' theirselves, an' would jus' order un hanged as soon as convenient, why, he'd be 'bliged. An'—"

Tumm paused.

"Well?" I interrogated.

"The jury," Tumm answered, "*jus' wouldn't do it!*"

"And Jimmie?"

"Jus' fishin'."

Poor little Jimmie Tool!

V—THE FOOL OF SKELETON TICKLE

When the wheezy little mail-boat rounded the Liar's Tombstone—that gray, immobile head, forever dwelling upon its forgotten tragedy—she “opened” Skeleton Tickle; and this was where the fool was born, and where he lived his life, such as it was, and, in the end, gave it up in uttermost disgust. It was a wretched Newfoundland settlement of the remoter parts, isolated on a stretch of naked coast, itself lying unappreciatively snug beside sheltered water: being but a congregation of stark white cottages and turf huts, builded at haphazard, each aloof from its despairing neighbor, all sticking like lean incrustations to the bare brown hills—habitations of men, to be sure, which elsewhere had surely relieved the besetting dreariness with the grace and color of life, but in this place did not move the gray, unsmiling prospect of rock and water. The day was clammy: a thin, pervasive fog had drenched the whole world, now damp to the touch, dripping to the sight; the wind, out of temper with itself, blew cold and viciously, fretting the sea to a swishing lop, in which the harbor punts, anchored for the day's fishing in the shallows over Lost Men grounds, were tossed and flung about in a fashion vastly nauseating to the beholder.... Poor devils of men and boys! Toil for them, dawn to dark; with every reward of labor—love and all the delights of life—changed by the unhappy lot: turned sordid, cheerless, bestial....

“Ha!” interrupted my chance acquaintance, leaning upon the rail with me. “I am ver’ good business man. Eh? You not theenk?” There was a saucy challenge in this; it left no escape by way of bored credulity; no man of proper feeling could accept the boast of this ingratiating, frowsy, yellow-eyed Syrian peddler. “Ha!” he proceeded. “You not theenk, eh? But I have tell you—I—myself! I am thee bes’ business man in Newf’un’lan’.” He threw back

his head; regarded me with pride and mystery, eyes half closed. “No? Come, I tell you! I am thee *mos’ bes’* business man in Newf’un’lan’. Eh? Not so? Ay, I am thee ver’ *mos’ bes’* business man in all thee worl’. I—Tanous Shiva—I—I!” He struck his breast. “I have be thee man. An’ thee *mos’ fool*—thee *mos’ beeg fool*—thee *mos’ fearful beeg fool* in all thee worl’ leeve there. Ay, zur; he have leeve there—dead ahead—t’ Skeleton Teekle. You not theenk? Ha! I tell you—I tell you now—a *mos’ won-dair-ful fun-ee t’ing*. You hark? Ver’ well. Ha!” he exclaimed, clasping his hands in an ecstasy of delight. “How you will have laugh w’en I tell!” He sobered. “I am now,” he said, solemnly, “*be-geen*. You hark?”

I nodded.

“First,” he continued, gravely important, as one who discloses a mystery, “I am tell you thee name of thee beeg fool. James All—his name. Ol’ bach. Ver’ ol’ bach. Ver’ rich man. Ho! *mos’ rich*. You not theenk? Ver’ well. I am once hear tell he have seven lobster-tin full of gold. Mygod! I am *mos’ put crazy*. Lobster-tin—seven! An’ he have half-bushel of silver dollar. How he get it? Ver’ well. His gran’-father work ver’ hard; his father work ver’ hard; all thee gold come to this man, an’ *he* work ver’, ver’ hard. They work fearful—in thee gale, in thee cold; they work, work, work, for thee gold. Many, many year ago, long time past, thee gold be-geen to have save. It be-geen to have save many year afore I am born. Eh? Fun-ee t’ing! They work, work, work; but *I* am not work. Oh no! I am leetle baby. They save, save, save; but *I* am not save. Oh no! I am foolsh boy, in Damascus. Ver’ well. By-’n’-by I am thee growed man, an’ they have fill thee seven lobster-tin with thee gold. For what? Eh? I am tell you what for. Ha! I am show you I am ver’ good business man. I am thee ver’ *mos’ bes’* business man in Newf’un’lan’.”

My glance, quick, suspicious, was not of the kindest, and it caught his eye.

“You theenk I have get thee gold?” he asked, archly. “You theenk I have get thee seven lobster-tin?... Mygod!” he cried, throwing up his hands in genuine horror. “You theenk I have *steal* thee gold? No, no! I am ver’ *hones’* business man. I say my prayer all thee nights. I geeve nine dollar fifty to thee Orth’dox Church in Washin’ton Street in one year. I am thee *mos’ hones’* business man in Newf’un’lan’—an’” (significantly), “I am *ver’ good* business man.”

His eyes were guileless....

A punt slipped past, bound out, staggering over a rough course to Lost Men

grounds. The spray, rising like white dust, drenched the crew. An old man held the sheet and steering-oar. In the bow a scrawny boy bailed the shipped water—both listless, both misshapen and ill clad. Bitter, toilsome, precarious work, this, done by folk impoverished in all things. Seven lobster-tins of gold coin! Three generations of labor and cruel adventure, in gales and frosts and famines, had been consumed in gathering it. How much of weariness? How much of pain? How much of evil? How much of peril, despair, deprivation? And it was true: this alien peddler, the on-looker, had the while been unborn, a babe, a boy, laboring not at all; but by chance, in the end, he had come, covetous and sly, within reach of all the fruit of this malforming toil....

“Look!”

I followed the lean, brown finger to a spot on a bare hill—a sombre splash of black.

“You see? Ver’ well. One time he leeve there—this grea’ beeg fool. His house it have be burn down. How? Ver’ well. I tell you. All people want thee gold. All people—all—all! ‘Ha!’ theenk a boy. ‘I mus’ have thee seven lobster-tin of gold. I am want buy thee parasol for ‘Liza Hull nex’ time thee trader come. I *mus*’ have thee gold of ol’ Skip’ Jim. If I not, then Sam Tom will have buy thee parasol from Tanous Shiva. ‘Liza Hull will have love him an’ not me. I *mus*’ have ‘Liza Hull love me. Oh,’ theenk he, ‘I *mus*’ have ‘Liza Hull love me! I am not can leeve ‘ithout that beeg ‘Liza Hull with thee red cheek an’ blue eye!’ (Ver’ poor taste thee men have for thee girl in Newf’un’lan’.) ‘Ha!’ theenk he. ‘I mus’ have thee gold. I am burn thee house an’ get thee gold. Then I have buy thee peenk parasol from Tom Shiva.’ Fool! Ver’ beeg fool—that boy. Burn thee house? Ver’ poor business. Mos’ poor. Burn thee house of ol’ Skip’ Jim? Pooh!”

It seemed to me, too—so did the sly fellow bristle and puff with contempt—that the wretched lad’s directness of method was most reprehensible; but I came to my senses later, and I have ever since known that the highwayman was in some sort a worthy fellow.

“Ver’ well. For two year I know ‘bout thee seven lobster-tin of gold, an’ for two year I make thee great frien’ along o’ Skip’ Jim—thee greates’ frien’; thee ver’ greates’ frien’—for I am want thee gold. Aie! I am all thee time stop with Skip’ Jim. I am go thee church with Skip’ Jim. I am kneel thee prayer with Skip’ Jim. (I am ver’ good man about thee prayer—ver’ good business

man.) Skip' Jim he theenk me thee Jew. Pooh! I am not care. I say, 'Oh yess, Skip' Jim; I am mos' sad about what thee Jews done. Bad Jew done that.' 'You good Jew, Tom,' he say; 'I am not hol' you to thee 'count. Oh no, Tom; you good Jew,' he say. 'You would not do what thee bad Jews done.' 'Oh no, Skip' Jim,' I say, 'I am ver' good man—ver', ver' good man.'"

The peddler was gravely silent for a space.

"I am hones' man," he continued. "I am thee mos' hones' business man in Newf'un'lan'. So I mus' have wait for thee gold. Ah," he sighed, "it have be *mos'* hard to wait. I am almos' break thee heart. But I am hones' man—ver', ver' hones' man—an' I *mus'* have wait. Now I tell you what have happen: I am come ashore one night, an' it is thee nex' night after thee boy have burn thee house of Skip' Jim for the peenk parasol.

"Where Skip' Jim house?' I say.

"Burn down,' they say.

"Burn down!' I say. 'Oh, my! 'Tis sad. Have thee seven lobster-tin of gold be los'?"

"All spoil,' they say.

"I am not theenk what they mean. 'Oh, dear!' I say. 'Where Skip' Jim?"

"You fin' Skip' Jim at thee Skip' Bill Tissol's house.'

"Oh, my!' I say. 'I am mos' sad. I am go geeve thee pit-ee to poor Skip' Jim.'"

The fog was fast thickening. We had come close to Skeleton Tickle; but the downcast cottages were more remote than they had been—ininitely more isolated.

"Ver' well. I am fin' Skip' Jim. He sit in thee bes' room of thee Skip' Bill Tissol's house. All thee 'lone. God is good! Nobody there. What have I see? Gold! Gold! The heap of gold! The beeg, beeg heap of gold! I am not can tell you!"

The man was breathing in gasps; in the pause his jaw dropped, his yellow eyes were distended.

"Ha!" he ejaculated. "So I am thank thee dear, good God I am not come thee too late. Gold! Gold! The heap of gold! I am pray ver' hard to be good

business man. I am close thee eye an' pray thee good God I am be ver' good business man for one hour. 'Jus' one hour, O my God!' I pray. 'Leave me be ver', ver' good business man for jus' one leet-tle ver' small hour. I am geeve one hun'red fifty to thee Orth'dox Church in Washin'ton Street, O my God,' I pray, 'if I be mos' ver' good business man for thee one hour!' An' I shake thee head an' look at thee rich ol' Skip' Jim with thee ver' mos' awful sad look I am can.

“‘Oh, Skip' Jim!’ I say. ‘Fear-r-ful! How have your house cotch thee fire?’

“‘Thee boy of Skip' Elisha,’ he say.

“‘Oh, Skip' Jim,’ I say, ‘what have you do by thee wicked boy?’

“‘What have I do?’ he say. ‘He cannot have mend thee bad business. What have I do? I am not wish thee hurt to thee poor, poor boy.’

“‘There sit thee beeg fool—thee ver' beeg fool—thee mos' fearful fool in all thee worl'. Ol' Skip' Jim All—thee beeg fool! There he sit, by thee 'lone; an' the heap of good gold is on thee table; an' the candle is burnin'; an' the beeg white wheesk-air is ver' white an' mos' awful long; an' thee beeg han's is on thee gold, an' thee salt-sores from thee feeshin' is on thee han's; an' thee tear is in thee ol' eyes of ol' Skip' Jim All. So once more I pray thee good God to be made ver' good business man for thee one hour; an' I close thee door ver' tight.

“‘Oh, Tom Shiva,’ he says, ‘I am ruin’!’

“‘Ver' sad,’ I say. ‘Oh, dear!’

“‘I am ruin’—ruin’!’ he say. ‘Oh, I am ruin’! What have I do?’

“‘Ver', ver' sad,’ I say. ‘Oh, Skip' Jim,’ I say, ‘tis ver' sad!’

“‘Ruin’!’ he say. ‘I am not be rich no more. I am ver' poor man, Tom Shiva. I am once be rich; but I am not be rich no more.’

“‘I am not know what he mean. ‘Not be rich no more?’ I say. ‘Not be rich no more?’

“‘Look!’ he say. ‘Look, Tom Shiva! Thee gold! Thee seven lobster-tin of gold!’

“‘I am see, Skip' Jim,’ I say.

“‘Ah,’ he say, in thee mos’ awful, thee ver’ mos’ awful, speak, ‘it is all spoil’! It is all spoil’! I am ruin’!’

“Then I am pray mos’ fearful hard to be ver’ good business man for thee one hour. Ver’ well. I look at thee gold. Do I know what he have mean? God is good! I do. Ver’ well. Thee gold is come out of the fire. What happen? Oh, ver’ well! It have be melt. What ver’ beeg fool is he! It have be melt. All? No! Thee gold steek together; thee gold melt in two; thee gold be in thee beeg lump; thee gold be damage’. What this fool theenk? Ah! Pooh! This fool theenk thee gold have be all spoil’. Good gold? No, spoil’ gold! No good no more. Ruin’? I am ver’ good business man. I see what he have mean. Ah, my heart! It jump, it swell, it choke me, it tumble into the belly, it stop; it hurt me mos’ awful. I am theenk I die. Thee good God have answer thee prayer. ‘O my God,’ I pray once more, ‘this man is ver’ beeg fool. Make Tanous Shiva good business man. It have be ver’, ver’ easy t’ing to do, O God!’

“‘Spoil’, Skip’ Jim?’ I say.

“‘All spoil’, Tom Shiva,’ he say. ‘Thee gold no good.’

“‘Ver’ sad to be ruin’,’ I say. ‘Oh, Skip’ Jim, ver’ sad to be ruin’. I am ver’, ver’ sad to see you ruin’.’

“‘Tom Shiva,’ he say, ‘you ver’ good man.’

“‘Skip’ Jim,’ I say, ‘I have love you ver’ much.’

“‘Oh, Tom Shiva,’ thee beeg fool say, ‘I am thank you ver’ hard.’

“‘Oh yess, Skip’ Jim,’ I say, ‘I am love you ver’, ver’ much.’

“He shake my han’.

“‘I am love you ver’ much, Skip’ Jim,’ I say, ‘an’ I am ver’ good man.’

“My han’ it pinch me ver’ sore, Skip’ Jim shake it so hard with thee beeg, black han’ he have. Thee han’ of thee feesherman is ver’, ver’ beeg, ver’ strong. Thee ver’ hard work make it ver’ beeg an’ strong.

“‘Skip’ Jim,’ I say, ‘I am poor man. But not ver’ poor. I am have leet-tle money. I am wish thee help to you. I am *buy* thee spoil’ gold.’

“‘Buy thee gold?’ he say. ‘Oh, Tom Shiva. All spoil’. Look! All melt. Thee gold no good no more.’

“‘I am buy thee gold from you,’ I say, ‘Skip’ Jim, my friend.’

“‘Ver’ good friend, you, Tom Shiva,’ he say; ‘ver’ good friend to me.’

“‘I am look at him ver’ close. I am theenk what he will take. ‘I am geeve you,’ I say, ‘I am geeve you,’ Skip’ Jim,’ I say—

“‘Then I stop.

“‘What you geeve me for thee spoil’ gold?’ he say.

“‘I am geeve you,’ I say, ‘for thee spoil’ gold an’ for thee half-bushel of spoil’ silver,’ I say, ‘I am geeve you seventy-five dollar.’

“‘Then *he* get ver’ good business man in the eye.

“‘Oh no!’ he say. ‘I am want one hundred dollar.’

“‘I shake my head. ‘Oh, Skip’ Jim!’ I say. ‘Shame to have treat thee friend so! I am great friend to you, Skip’ Jim,’ I say. ‘But,’ I say, ‘business is business. Skip’ Jim,’ I say, ‘let us have pray.’

“‘What you theenk? What you theenk this ver’ beeg fool do? How I laugh inside! ‘Let us have pray, Skip’ Jim,’ I say. What you theenk he do? Eh? Not pray? Ver’ religious man, Skip’ Jim—ver’, ver’ religious. Pray? Oh, I know *him*. Pray? You bet he pray! You ask Skip’ Jim to pray, an’ he pray—oh, he pray, you bet! ‘O God,’ he pray, ‘I am ver’ much ’blige’ for Tom Shiva. I am ver’ much ’blige’ he come to Skeleton Teekle. I am ver’ much ’blige’ he have thee soft heart. I am ver’ much ’blige’ you fix thee heart to help poor ol’ Skip’ Jim. He good Jew, O God.’ (Pooh! I am Syrian man—not Jew. But I am not tell, for I am ver’ good business man). ‘Forgive this poor Tom Shiva, O my dear God!’

“‘I get ver’ tired with thee prayin’. I am ver’ good business man. I am want thee gold.

“‘Skip’ Jim!’ I whis-pair. ‘Oh, Skip’ Jim!’ I say. ‘Thee bargain! Fix thee bargain with thee dear God.’ My heart is ver’ mad with thee fear. ‘Fix thee bargain with thee good God,’ I say. ‘Oh, Skip’ Jim!’ I whis-pair. ‘Queek! I am offer seventy-five dollar.’

“‘Then he get up from thee knee. Ver’ obstinate man—ver’, ver’ obstinate man, this ol’ Skip’ Jim. He get up from thee knee. What he theenk? Eh? He theenk he ver’ good business man. He theenk he beat Tom Shiva by thee sin.

Want God? Oh no! Not want God to know, you bet!

“‘I am want one hundred dollar,’ he say, ver’ cross, ‘for thee heap of spoil’ gold an’ silver. Thee God is bus-ee. I am do this business by thee ’lone. Thee dear God is ver’, ver’ bus-ee jus’ now. I am not bother him no more.’

“‘Ver’ well,’ I say. ‘I am geeve you eighty.’

“‘Come,’ he say; ‘ninety will have do.’

“‘Ver’ well,’ I say. ‘You are my friend. I geeve you eighty-five.’

“‘Ver’ well,’ he say. ‘I am love you ver’ much, Tom Shiva. I take it. Ver’ kind of you, Tom Shiva, to buy all thee spoil’ gold an’ silver. I am hope you have not lose thee money.’

“‘I am ver’ hones’ business man. Eh? What I say? I say I lose thee money? No, no! I am thee ver’ mos’ hones’ business man in Newf’un’lan’. I am too hones’ to say thee lie.

“‘I am take thee risk,’ I say. ‘You are my friend, Skip’ Jim,’ I say. ‘I am take thee risk. I am geeve you eighty-five dollar for all the spoil’ gold an’ silver—half cash, half trade.... I am have mos’ wonderful suit clothes for ver’ cheap....’”

And the fool of Skeleton Tickle was left with a suit of shoddy tweed and fifty-seven dollars in unspoiled gold and silver coin, believing that he had overreached the peddler from Damascus and New York, piously thanking God for the opportunity, ascribing glory to him for the success, content that it should be so.... And Tanous Shiva departed by the mail-boat, as he had come, with the seven lobster-tins of gold and the half-bushel of silver which three generations had labored to accumulate; and he went south to St. John’s, where he converted the spoiled coin into a bank credit of ten thousand dollars, content that it should be so. And thereupon he set out again to trade....

The mail-boat was now riding at anchor within the harbor of Skeleton Tickle. Rain was falling—thin, penetrating, cold, driven by the wind. On the bleak, wet hills, the cottages, vague in the mist, cowered in dumb wretchedness, like men of sodden patience who wait without hope. A punt put out from shore—

came listlessly toward the steamer for the mail.

“Ho! Tom Timms!” the Syrian shouted. “That you, Tom Timms? How Skip’ Jim All? How my ol’, good friend Skip’ Jim All?”

The boat was under the quarter. Tom Timms shipped his oars, wiped the rain from his whiskers, then looked up—without feeling.

“Dead,” he said.

“Dead!” The man turned to me. “I am thank thee good God,” he whispered, reverently, “that I am get thee gold in time.” He shuddered. “O, my God!” he muttered. “What if I have come thee too late!”

“Ay, dead,” Tom Timms repeated. “He sort o’ went an’ jus’ died.”

“Oh, dear! How have he come to die? Oh, my poor friend, ol’ Skip’ Jim! How have he come by thee death?”

“Hanged hisself.”

“Hanged hisself! Oh, dear! Why have thee ol’ Skip’ Jim be so fearful wicked?”

It was an unhappy question.

“Well,” Tom Timms answered, in a colorless drawl, “he got a trap-leader when he found out what you done. He just sort o’ went an’ got a trap-leader an’ hanged hisself in the fish-stage—when he found out what you done.”

The Syrian glanced at me. I glanced at him. Our eyes met; his were steady, innocent, pitiful; my own shifted to the closing bank of gray fog.

“Business,” he sighed, “is business.”

The words repeated themselves interminably—a monotonous dirge. Business is business.... Business is business.... Business is business....

VI—A COMEDY OF CANDLESTICK COVE

It was windy weather: and had been—for an exasperating tale of dusks and dawns. It was not the weather of variable gales, which blow here and there, forever to the advantage of some Newfoundland folk; it was the weather of ill easterly winds, in gloomy conjunction bringing fog, rain, breaking seas, drift-ice, dispiriting cold. From Nanny's Old Head the outlook was perturbing: the sky was hid, with its familiar warnings and promises; gigantic breakers fell with swish and thud upon the black rocks below, flinging lustreless white froth into the gray mist; and the grounds, where the men of Candlestick Cove must cast lines and haul traps, were in an ill-tempered, white-capped tumble—black waves rolling out of a melancholy fog, hanging low, which curtained the sea beyond.

The hands of the men of Candlestick Cove were raw with salt-water sores; all charms against the affliction of toil in easterly gales had failed—brass bracelets and incantations alike. And the eyes of the men of Candlestick Cove were alert with apprehensive caution: tense, quick to move, clear and hard under drawn brows. With a high sea perversely continuing beyond the harbor tickle, there was no place in the eyes of men for the light of humor or love, which thrive in security. Windy weather, indeed! 'Twas a time for men to *be* men!

"I 'low I never seed nothin' *like* it," Jonathan Stock complained.

The sea, breaking upon the Rock o' Wishes, and the wind, roaring past, confused old Tom Lull.

"What say?" he shouted.

"Nothin' *like* it," said Jonathan Stock.

They had come in from the sea with empty punts, and they were now pulling

up the harbor, side by side, toward the stage-heads, which were lost in the misty dusk. Old Tom had hung in the lee of the Rock o' Wishes until Jonathan Stock came flying over the tickle breaker in a cloud of spray. The wind had been in the east beyond the experience of eighty years; it was in his aged mind to exchange opinions upon the marvel.

"Me neither," said he.

They were drawing near Herring Point, within the harbor, where the noise of wind and sea, in an easterly gale, diminishes.

"I 'low I *never* seed nothin' like it," said Jonathan Stock.

"Me neither, Skipper Jonathan."

"Never *seed* nothin' like it."

They pulled on in silence—until the froth of Puppy Rock was well astern.

"Me neither," said Tom.

"*I* never seed nothin' like it," Jonathan grumbled.

Old Tom wagged his head.

"No, sir!" Jonathan declared. "Never seed *nothin'* like it."

"Me neither."

"Not like *this*," said Jonathan, testily.

"Me neither," old Tom agreed. "Not like this. No, sir; me neither, b'y!"

'Twas a grand, companionable exchange of ideas! A gush of talk! A whirlwind of opinion! Both enjoyed it—were relieved by it: rid of the gathered thought of long hours alone on the grounds. Jonathan Stock had expressed himself freely and at length; so, too, old Tom Lull. 'Twas heartening—this easy sociability. Tom Lull was glad that he had waited in the lee of the Rock o' Wishes; he had felt the need of conversation, and was now gratified; so, too, Jonathan Stock. But now, quite exhausted of ideas, they proceeded in silence, pulling mechanically through the dripping mist. From time to time old Tom Lull wagged his head and darkly muttered; but the words invariably got lost in his mouth.

Presently both punts came to Jonathan Stock's stage.

"I 'low," Jonathan exclaimed, in parting, "I never seed nothin' like it!"

Old Tom lifted his oars. He drew his hand over his wet beard. A moment he reflected—frowning at the mist: deep in philosophical labor. Then he turned quickly to Jonathan Stock: turned in delight, his gray old face clear of bewilderment—turned as if about to deliver himself of some vast original conception, which might leave nothing more to be said.

“Me neither!” he chuckled, as his oars struck the water and his punt moved off into the mist.

Windy weather! Moreover, it was a lean year—the leanest of three lean years. The flakes were idle, unkempt, dripping the fog; the stages were empty, the bins full of salt; the splitting-knives were rusted: this though men and punts and nets were worn out with toil. There was no fish: wherefore, the feeling men of Candlestick Cove kept clear of the merchant of the place, who had outfitted them all in the spring of the year, and was now contemplating the reckoning at St. John’s with much terror and some ill-humor.

It was a lean year—a time of uneasy dread. From Cape Norman to the Funks and beyond, the clergy, acutely aware of the prospect, and perceiving the opportunity to be even more useful, preached from comforting texts. “The Lord will provide” was the theme of gentle Parson Grey of Doubled Arm; and the discourse culminated in a passionate allusion to “Yet have I never seen the seed of the righteous begging bread.” Parson Stump of Burnt Harbor—a timid little man with tender gray eyes—treated “Your Heavenly Father feedeth them” with inspiring faith.

By all this the apprehension of the folk was lulled; it was admitted even by the unrighteous that there were times when ’twas better to be with than without the clergy. At Little Harbor Shallow, old Skipper Job Sutler, a man lacking in understanding, put out no more to the grounds off Devil-may-Care.

“Skipper Job,” the mail-boat captain warned, “you better get out t’ the grounds in civil weather.”

“Oh,” quoth Job, “the Lard’ll take care o’ we!”

The captain was doubtful.

“An’, anyhow,” says Job, “if the Lard don’t, the gov’men’t’s got to!”

His youngest child died in the famine months of the winter. But that was his fault....

Skipper Jonathan Stock was alone with the trader in the shop of Candlestick Cove. The squat, whitewashed building gripped a weather-beaten point of harbor shore. It was night—a black night, the wind blowing high, rain pattering fretfully upon the roof. The worried little trader—spare, gimlet-eyed, thin-whiskered, now perched on the counter—slapped his calf with a yardstick; the easterly gale was fast aggravating his temper beyond control. It was bright and warm in the shop; the birch billets spluttered and snored in the stove, and a great lamp suspended from the main rafter showered the shelves and counter and greasy floor with light. Skipper Jonathan's clothes of moleskin steamed with the rain and spray of the day's toil.

“No, John,” said the trader, sharply; “she can't have un—it can't be done.”

Jonathan slowly examined his wrist; the bandage had got loose. “No?” he asked, gently, his eyes still fixed on the salt-water sore.

“No, sir.”

Jonathan drew a great hand over his narrow brow, where the rain still lay in the furrows. It passed over his beard—a gigantic beard, bushy and flaming red. He shook the rain-drops from his hand.

“No, Mister Totley,” he repeated, in a patient drawl. “No—oh no.”

Totley hummed the opening bars of “Wrecked on the Devil's Finger.” He broke off impatiently—and sighed.

“She *can't*,” Jonathan mused. “No—*she* can't.”

The trader began to whistle, but there was no heart in the diversion; and there was much poignant distress in the way he drummed on the counter.

“I wouldn't be carin' so much,” Jonathan softly persisted—“no, not so *much*, if 'twasn't their birthday. She told un three year ago they could have un—when they was twelve. An', dear man! they'll be twelve two weeks come Toosday. Dear man!” he exclaimed again, with a fleeting little smile, “*how* the young ones grows!”

The trader slapped his lean thigh and turned his eyes from Jonathan's simple face to the rafters. Jonathan bungled with the bandage on his wrist; but his fingers were stiff and large, and he could not manage the thread. A gust of wind made the roof ring with the rain.

“An’ the other little thing?” Jonathan inquired. “Was you ’lowin’ my woman could have—the other little thing? She’ve her heart sort o’ sot on *that*. Sort o’ sot on havin’—that there little thing.”

“Can’t do it, Jonathan.”

“Ay,” Jonathan repeated, blankly. “She was sayin’ the day ’twas sort o’ giddy of her; but she was ’lowin’ her heart was sort o’ sot on havin’—that little thing.”

Totley shook his head.

“Her heart,” Jonathan sighed.

“Can’t do it, John.”

“Mm-m-m! No,” Jonathan muttered, scratching his head in helplessness and bewilderment; “he can’t give that little thing t’ the woman, neither. Can’t give she *that*.”

Totley shook his head. It was not an agreeable duty thus to deny Jonathan Stock of Candlestick Cove. It pinched the trader’s heart. “But a must is a must!” thought he. The wind was in the east, with no sign of change, and ’twas late in the season; and there was no fish—*no fish*, God help us all! There would be famine at Candlestick Cove—*famine*, God help us all! The folk of Candlestick Cove—Totley’s folk—must be fed; there must be no starvation. And the creditors at St. John’s—Totley’s creditors—were wanting fish insistently. *Wanting fish*, God help us! when there was no fish. There was a great gale of ruin blowing up; there would be an accounting to his creditors for the goods they had given him in faith—there must be no waste of stock, no indulgence of whims. He must stand well. The creditors at St. John’s must be so dealt with that the folk of Candlestick Cove—Totley’s folk—could be fed through the winter. ’Twas all-important that the folk should be fed—just fed with bread and molasses and tea: nothing more than that. Nothing more than that, by the Lord! would go out of the store.

Jonathan pushed back his dripping cloth cap and sighed. “’Tis fallin’ out wonderful,” he ventured.

Totley whistled to keep his spirits up.

“Awful!” said Jonathan.

The tune continued.

“She ’lows,” Jonathan went on, “that if it keeps on at this rate she won’t have none left by spring. That’s what *she* ’lows will happen.”

Totley proceeded to the chorus.

“No, sir,” Jonathan pleaded; “she’ll have nar a one!”

The trader avoided his eye.

“An’ it makes her *feel* sort o’ bad,” Jonathan protested. “I tells her that with or without she won’t be no different t’ me. Not t’ *me*. But she sort o’ feels bad just the same. You sees, sir,” he stammered, abashed, “she—she—she’s only a woman!”

Totley jumped from the counter. “Look you Jonathan!” said he, decisively, “she can *have* it.”

Jonathan beamed.

“She can have what she wants for herself, look you! but she can’t have no oil-skins for the twins, though ’tis their birthday. ’Tis hard times, Jonathan, with the wind glued t’ the east; an’ the twins is got t’ go wet. What kind she want? Eh? I got two kinds in the case. I don’t recommend neither o’ them.”

Jonathan scratched his head.

“Well, then,” said the trader, “you better find out. If she’s goin’ t’ have it at all, she better have the kind she hankers for.”

Jonathan agreed.

“Skipper Jonathan,” said the trader, much distressed, “we’re so poor at Candlestick Cove that we ought t’ be eatin’ moss. I’ll have trouble enough, this fall, gettin’ flour from St. John’s t’ go ’round. Skipper Jonathan, if you could get your allowance o’ flour down t’ five barrels instead o’ six, I’d thank you. The young ones is growin’, I knows; but—well, I’d thank you, Jonathan, I’d thank you!”

“Mister Totley, sir,” Jonathan Stock replied, solemnly, “I *will* get that flour down t’ five. Don’t you fret no more about feedin’ my little crew,” he pleaded. “’Tis kind o’ you; an’ I’m sorry you’ve t’ fret.”

“Thank you, Jonathan.”

“An’ ... you wouldn’t mind lashin’ this bit o’ cotton on my wrist, would you,

sir? The sleeve o' my jacket sort o' chafes the sore."

"A bad hand, Jonathan!"

"No—oh no; *it* ain't bad. I've had scores of un in my time. It don't amount t' nothin'. Oh no—it ain't what you might call *bad*!"

The wrist was bound anew. Jonathan stumbled down the dark steps to the water-side, glad that his wife was to have that which she so much desired. He pushed out in the punt. She was only a woman, he thought, with an indulgent smile, but she *did* want—that little thing. The wind was high—the rain sweeping out of the east. He turned the bow of the punt toward a point of light shining cheerily far off in the dark, tumultuous night.

Jonathan Stock had no more than got off his soggy boots, and washed his hands, and combed his hair, and drawn close to the kitchen fire—while his wife clattered over the bare floor about the business of his comfort—when Parson Jaunt tapped and entered: and folded his umbrella, and wiped his face with a white handkerchief, and jovially rubbed his hands together. This was a hearty, stout little man, with a double chin and a round, rosy face; with twinkling eyes; with the jolliest little paunch in the world; dressed all in black cloth, threadbare and shiny, powdered with dandruff upon the shoulders; and wearing a gigantic yellow chain hanging from pocket to pocket of the waistcoat, and wilted collar and cuffs, and patent-leather shoes, which were muddy and cracked and turned up at the toes. A hearty welcome he got; and he had them all laughing at once—twins and all. Even the chickens in the coop under the settee clucked, and the kid behind the stove rapturously bleated, and the last baby chuckled, and the dog yawned and shook his hind quarters, joyfully awake.

'Twas always comforting to have Parson Jaunt drop in. Wherever he went among the folk of Candlestick Cove, in wet weather or dry, poor times or bad, there was a revival of jollity. His rippling person, smiling face, quick laugh, amiable intimacy, his quips and questions, his way with children—these made him beloved. Ay, there was always a welcome for Parson Jaunt!

"Ha, ha! Yes," the parson proceeded, "the brethren will be here on the next mail-boat for the district meeting. Ha, ha! Well, well, now! And how's the baby getting along, Aunt Tibbie? Hut! you little toad; don't you laugh at

me!”

But the baby would.

“Ha-a-a, you rat! You *will* laugh, will you? He’s a fine child, that.... And I was thinking, Skipper Jonathan, that you and Aunt Tibbie might manage Parson All of Satan’s Trap. Times are hard, of course; but it’s the Lord’s work, you know.... Eh? Get out, you squid! Stop that laughing!”

The baby could not.

“Stop it, I say!”

The baby doubled up, and squirmed, and wiggled his toes, and gasped with glee.

“Yes,” the parson continued, “that you might manage Parson All of Satan’s Trap.”

“T’ be sure!” cried Skipper Jonathan. “We’ll manage un, an’ be glad!”

Aunt Tibbie’s face fell.

“That’s good,” said the parson. “Now, that *is* good news. ’Tis most kind of you, too,” he added, earnestly, “in these hard times. And it ends my anxiety. The brethren are now all provided for.... Hey, you wriggler! Come out of that! Ha, ha! Well, well!” He took the baby from the cradle. “Gi’ me a kiss, now. Hut! You won’t? Oh, you *will*, will you?” He kissed the baby with real delight. “I thought so. Ha! I thought so.” He put the baby back. “You little slobbery squid!” said he, with a last poke. “Ha! you little squid!”

Aunt Tibbie’s face was beaming. Anxiety and weariness were for the moment both forgot. ’Twas good, indeed, to have Parson Jaunt drop in!

“Eh, woman?” Jonathan inquired.

“Oh, ay!” she answered. “We’ve always a pillow an’ a bite t’ eat for the Lard’s anointed.”

“The Lord’s anointed!” the parson repeated, quickly. “Ah, that’s it, sister,” said he, the twinkle gone from his upturned eyes. “I’ve a notion to take that up next Sunday. And Parson All,” he continued, “is a saintly fellow. Yes, indeed! Converted at the age of seven. He’s served the Lord these forty years. Ah, dear me! what a profitable season you’ll be having with him! A time of uplifting, a time of—of—yes, indeed!—uplifting.” The parson was not

clever; he was somewhat limited as to ideas, as to words; indeed, 'twas said he stuttered overmuch in preaching and was given to repetition. But he was sincere in the practise of his profession, conceiving it a holy calling; and he did the best he could, than which no man can do more. "A time," he repeated, "of—of—yes—of uplifting."

Aunt Tibbie was taken by an anxious thought. "What do he fancy," she asked, "for feedin'?"

"Ha, ha!" the parson exploded, in his delightfully jocular way. "That's the woman of it. Well, well, now! Yes, indeed! There speaks the good housewife. Eh, Skipper Jonathan? *You're* well looked after, I'll warrant. That's rather good, you know, coming from you, Aunt Tibbie. Ha, ha! Why, Aunt Tibbie, he eats anything. Anything at all! You'll want very little extra—very, very little extra. But he'll tell you when he comes. Don't worry about that. Just what you have for yourselves, you know. If it doesn't agree with him, he'll ask for what he desires."

"Sure, sir!" said Skipper Jonathan, heartily. "Just let un ask for it."

"Ay," Aunt Tibbie echoed, blankly; "just let un ask for it. Sure, he can speak for hisself."

"Of *course!*" cried the parson, jovially. "Why, to be sure! *That's* the hospitality for me! Nothing formal about that. That's just what makes us Newfoundlanders famous for hospitality. That's what I *like*. 'Just let un ask.'"

The clock struck. Skipper Jonathan turned patiently to the dial. He must be at sea by dawn. The gale, still blowing high, promised heavy labor at the oars. He was depressed by the roar and patter of the night. There came, then, an angry gust of rain—out of harmony with the parson's jovial spirit: sweeping in from the black sea where Jonathan must toil at dawn.

"Ay," he sighed, indifferently.

Aunt Tibbie gave him an anxious glance.

"Yes, indeed! Ha, ha!" the parson laughed. "Let me see, now," he rattled. "To-morrow. Yes, yes; to-morrow *is* Tuesday. Well, now, let me see; yes—mm-m-m, of course, that's right—you will have the privilege of entertaining Brother All for four days. I wish it was more. I wish for your sake," he

repeated, honestly, being unaware of the true situation in this case, “that it *could* be more. But it can’t. I assure you, it can’t. He *must* get the mail-boat north. Pity,” he continued, “the brethren can’t linger. These district meetings are so helpful, so inspiring, so refreshing. Yes, indeed! And then the social aspect—the relaxation, the flow of soul! We parsons are busy men—cooped up in a study, you know; delving in books. Our brains get tired. Yes, indeed! They need rest.” Parson Jaunt was quite sincere. Do not misunderstand him. ’Twould be unkind, even, to laugh at him. He was not clever; that is all. “Brain labor, Skipper Jonathan,” he concluded, with an odd touch of pomposity, “is hard labor.”

“Ay,” said Skipper Jonathan, sympathetically; “you parsons have wonderful hard lines. I Wouldn’t like t’ *be* one. No, sir; not me!”

In this—in the opinion and feeling—Skipper Jonathan was sincere. He most properly loved Parson Jaunt, and was sorry for him, and he must not be laughed at.

“But,” the parson argued, “we have the district meetings—times of refreshing: when brain meets brain, you know, and wit meets wit, and the sparks fly. Ha, ha! Yes, indeed! The social aspect is not to be neglected. Dear me, no! Now, for illustration, Mrs. Jaunt is to entertain the clergy at the parsonage on Thursday evening. Yes, indeed! She’s planned the refreshments already.” The parson gave Aunt Tibbie a sly, sly glance, and burst out laughing. “Ha, ha!” he roared. “I know what you want. You want to know what she’s going to have, don’t you? Woman’s curiosity, eh? Ha, ha! Oh, you women!” Aunt Tibbie smiled. “Well,” said the parson, importantly, “I’ll tell you. But it’s a secret, mind you! Don’t you tell Brother All!” Aunt Tibbie beamed. “Well,” the parson continued, his voice falling to a whisper, “she’s going to have a jelly-cake, and an angel-cake, and a tin of beef.” The twins sat up, wide-eyed with attention. “Eh? Ha, ha!” the parson laughed. “You got that? And she’s going to have something more.” Aunt Tibbie leaned forward—agape, her eyes staring. The twins were already overcome. “Yes, indeed!” said the parson. “*She’s got a dozen bananas from St. John’s!* Eh? Ha, ha! And she’s going to slice ’em and put ’em in a custard. Ha, ha!”

The twins gasped.

“Ha, ha!” the parson roared.

They were all delighted—parson, skipper, housewife, and twins. Nor in

providing this hospitality for the Black Bay clergy was the parson in thought or deed a selfish shepherd. It would be unkind—it would be most unfair—to think it. He was an honest, earnest servant of the Master he acknowledged, doing good at Candlestick Cove, in fair and foul weather. He lived his life as best he could—earnestly, diligently, with pure, high purpose. But he was not clever: that is all. 'Twould be an evil thing for more brilliant folk (and possibly less kindly) to scorn him.

“Yes, indeed!” the parson laughed. “And look here, now—why, I must be off! Where’s my umbrella? Here it is.... *Will* you look at that baby, Aunt Tibbie? He’s staring at me yet. Get out, you squid! Stop that laughing. Got a kiss for me? Oh, you *have*, have you? Then give it to me.... A fine baby that; yes, indeed! A fine baby.... Get out, you wriggler! Leave your toes be. Ha-a-a! I’ll catch you—yes, I will!... What a night it is! How the wind blows and the rain comes down! And no sign of fish, Skipper Jonathan? Ah, well, the Lord will provide. Good-night. God bless you!”

“You’ll get wonderful wet, sir,” said Aunt Tibbie, with a little frown of anxiety.

“I don’t mind it in the least,” cried the parson. “Not at all. I’m used to it.”

Skipper Jonathan shut the door against the wind.

“Will it never stop blowin’!” Aunt Tibbie complained.

Outside, wind and rain had their way with the world. Aunt Tibbie and Skipper Jonathan exchanged glances. They were thinking of the dawn.

“I’m wantin’ t’ go t’ bed, Tibbie,” Jonathan sighed, “for I’m wonderful tired.”

“An’ I’m tired, too, dear,” said Aunt Tibbie, softly. “Leave us all go t’ bed.”

They were soon sound asleep....

Parson All turned out to be a mild little old man with spectacles. His eyes were blue—faded, watery, shy: wherein were many flashes of humor and kindness. His face was smooth and colorless—almost as white as his hair, which was also long and thin and straight. When Jonathan came in from the sea after dark—from the night and wet and vast confusion of that place—Parson All was placidly rocking by the kitchen fire, his hands neatly folded,

his trousers drawn up, so that his ankles and calves might warm; and the kitchen was in a joyous tumult, with which the little old man from Satan's Trap was in benevolent sympathy. Jonathan had thought to find the house solemn, the wife in a fluster, the twins painfully washed and brushed, the able seamen of the little crew glued to their stools; but no! the baby was crowing in the cradle, the twins tousled and grinning, the wife beaming, the little crew rolling on the floor—the whole kitchen, indeed, in a gratefully familiar condition of chaos and glee.

At once they sat down to supper.

"I'm glad t' have you, parson," said Jonathan, his broad, hairy face shining with soap and delight. "That I is. I'm *glad* t' have you."

The parson's smile was winning.

"Jonathan haves a wonderful taste for company," Aunt Tibbie explained.

The man defended himself. "I isn't able t' help it," said he. "I loves t' feed folk. An' I isn't able, an' I never was able, an' I never will be able t' help it. Here's your brewis, sir. Eat hearty of it. Don't spare it."

"They's more in the pot," Aunt Tibbie put in.

The parson's gentle eye searched the table—as our eyes have often done. A bit of hopeful curiosity—nothing more: a thing common to us all, saints and sinners alike. We have all been hungry and we have all hoped; but few of us, I fancy, being faint of hunger—and dyspeptic—have sat down to a bowl of brewis. 'Tis no sin, in parson or layman, to wish for more; for the Lord endowed them both with hunger, and cursed many, indiscriminately, with indigestion. Small blame, then, to the parson, who was desperately hungry; small blame to Jonathan, who had no more to give. There is no fault anywhere to be descried. Ah, well! the parson's roving eye was disappointed, but twinkled just the same; it did not darken—nor show ill-humor. There was a great bowl of brewis—a mountain of it. 'Twas eyed by the twins with delight. But there was nothing more. The parson's eye—the shy, blue, twinkling eye—slyly sought the stove; but the stove was bare. And still the mild eyes continued full of benevolence and satisfaction. He was a *man*—that parson!

"Windy weather," said he, with an engaging smile.

“Never seed nothin’ *like* it!” Jonathan declared.

The twins were by this time busy with their forks, their eyes darting little glances at the parson, at the parson’s overloaded plate, at the ruin of the mountain.

“Wind in the east,” the parson remarked.

Jonathan was perturbed. “You isn’t very hearty the night,” said he.

“Oh, dear me, yes!” the parson protested. “I was just about to begin.”

The faces of the twins were by this overcast.

“Don’t spare it, parson.”

The parson gulped a mouthful with a wry face—an obstinately wry face; he could *not* manage to control it. He smiled at once—a quick, sweet comprehensive little smile. It was heroic—he was sure that it was! And it *was*! He could do no more. ’Twas impossible to take the brewis. A melancholy—ay, and perilous—situation for a hungry man: an old man, and a dyspeptic. Conceive it, if you can!

“*That* ain’t hearty,” Aunt Tibbie complained.

“To be frank,” said the parson, in great humiliation—“to be perfectly frank, I like brewis, but—”

The happiness faded from Aunt Tibbie’s eyes.

“—I don’t find it inspiring,” the parson concluded, in shame.

The twins promptly took advantage of the opportunity to pass their plates for more.

“Dyspepsey?” Aunt Tibbie inquired.

“It might be called that,” Parson All replied, sweeping the board with a smile, but yet with a flush of guilt and shame, “by a physician.”

“Poor man!” Aunt Tibbie signed.

There was a brief silence—expectant, but not selfishly so, on the part of the parson; somewhat despairing on the part of the hosts.

“Well, parson,” Skipper Jonathan said, doggedly, “all you got t’ do is *ask* for what you wants.”

“No, no!”

“That’s all you got t’ do,” Jonathan persisted.

“Most kind of you, sir! But—no, no!”

“Please do!” Aunt Tibbie begged.

But the parson was not to be persuaded. Not Parson All of Satan’s Trap—a kindly, sensitive soul! He was very hungry, to be sure, and must go hungry to bed (it seemed); but he would not ask for what he wanted. To-morrow? Well, *something* had to be done. He would yield—he *must* yield to the flesh—a little. This he did timidly: with shame for the weakness of the flesh. He resented the peculiarity of brewis in his particular case. Indeed, he came near to rebellion against the Lord—no, not rebellion: merely rebellious questionings. But he is to be forgiven, surely; for he wished most earnestly that he might eat brewis and live—just as you and I might have done.

“Now, Parson All,” Jonathan demanded, “you just *got t’* tell.”

And, well, the parson admitted that a little bread and a tin of beef—to be taken sparingly—would be a grateful diet.

“But we’ve none!” cried Aunt Tibbie. “An’ this night you’ll starve!”

“To-night,” said the parson, gently, “my stomach—is a bit out—anyhow.”

Presently he was shown to his bed....

“I ’low,” said Aunt Tibbie, when the parson was stowed away and she had caught Skipper Jonathan’s wavering eye, “he’d better have more’n that.”

“He—he—he’ve just *got t’* have more.”

“He’ve a weak stomach,” Aunt Tibbie apologized. “Poor man!”

“I tells you, Tibbie,” Jonathan declared, “them parsons haves wonderful hard times. They isn’t able t’ get out in the air enough. Too much book-study. Too much brain labor. I wouldn’t change places with a parson, woman, for all the world!”

Aunt Tibbie nodded absently.

“I ’low,” said Jonathan, “I’d better be gettin’ under way for the shop.”

The man drew on his boots and got into his oil-skins, and had his wrists bandaged and went out. It was a long pull to the shop; but his mind was too full of wonder and sly devising to perceive the labor of the way.... And the trader was silting alone in the shop, perched on the counter, slapping his lean calf with a yardstick, while the rain pattered on the roof and the wind went screaming past.

“You got a parson, Jonathan,” said he, accusingly. “Yes, you is.”

“Ay,” Jonathan admitted, “I got one.”

“An’ that’s what brings you here.”

“It be,” Jonathan replied, defiantly.

The silence was disquieting.

“I’m ’lowin’,” Jonathan stammered, “t’—t’-t’ sort o’ get four tins o’ beef.”

The trader beat his calf.

“An’ six pound o’ butter,” said Jonathan, “an’ some pickles.”

“Anything else?” the trader snapped.

“Ay,” said Jonathan, “they is.”

The trader sniffed.

“The parson haven’t said nothin’, but Tibbie’s got a notion that he’s wonderful fond o’ canned peaches,” Jonathan ventured, diffidently. “She ’lows they’ll keep his food sweet.”

“Anything else?”

“No—oh no!” Jonathan sighed. “I ’low you wouldn’t give me three pound o’ cheese?” he asked. “Not that the parson *mentioned* cheese, but Tibbie ’lows he’d find it healthful.” The trader nodded. “About four cans o’ peaches,” said Jonathan.

“I see,” said the trader.

Jonathan drew a great hand over his narrow brow, where the rain still lay in the furrows. It passed over his red whiskers. He shook the rain-drops from his hand.

“Oh, dear!” he sighed.

“Jonathan,” said the trader, sharply, “you’re a fool. I’ve long knowed it. But I loves a fool; an’ you’re the biggest dunderhead I ever knowed. You can *have* the cheese; you can *have* the beef; you can *have* the peaches. You can have un all. *But*—you got t’ pay.”

“Oh, ay,” said Jonathan, freely. “I’ll pay!”

“You’ll go without sweetness in your tea,” the trader burst out, “all next winter. Understand? No sweetness in your tea. *That’s* how you’ll pay. If you takes these things, mark you, Jonathan!—an’ hearken well—if you takes these things for your parson, there’ll be no molasses measured out for *you*. You’ll take your tea straight. Do you understand me, Jonathan Stock?”

“’Tis well,” said Jonathan.

“An’—”

“The other?” Jonathan interrupted, anxiously. “You wasn’t ’lowin’ t’ have the woman give up that, was you? ’Tis such a little thing.”

The trader was out of temper.

“Not that!” Jonathan pleaded.

“Just that!” Totley exclaimed. “I’ll not give it to her. If you’re t’ have parsons, why, pay for un. Don’t come askin’ me t’ do it for you.”

“But she—she—*she’s only a woman!* An’ she sort o’ feels bad. Not that ’twould make any difference t’ me—not t’ *me*. Oh, I tells her that. But she ’lows she wants it, anyhow. She sort o’ *hankers* for it. An’ if you could manage—”

“Not I!” Totley was very much out of temper. “Pay for your own parson,” he growled.

“Ah, well,” Jonathan sighed, “she ’lowed, if you made a p’int of it, that she’d take the grub an’ do without—the other. Ay, do without—the other.”

So Jonathan went home with what the parson needed to eat, and he was happy.

It was still windy weather. Dusks and dawns came in melancholy procession. The wind swept in the east—high, wet, cold. Fog and rain and drift-ice were

to be met on the grounds of Candlestick Cove. From Nanny's Old Head the outlook was more perturbing than ever: the sea's distances were still hid in the mist; the breakers on the black rocks below gave the waste a voice, expressed its rage, its sullen purpose; the grounds where the men of Candlestick Cove must fish were still in a white-capped tumble; and the sores on the wrists of the men of Candlestick Cove were not healed. There was no fish; the coast hopelessly faced famine; men and women and children would all grow lean. The winter, approaching, was like an angry cloud rising from the rim of the sea. The faces of the men of Candlestick Cove were drawn—with fear of the sea and with dread of what might come to pass. In the meeting-house of Candlestick Cove, in district meeting assembled, the Black Bay clergy engaged in important discussions, with which the sea and the dripping rocks and the easterly wind had nothing to do....

The Black Bay parsons were exchanging farewells at the landing-stage. The steamer was waiting. There had been no change in the weather: the wind was blowing high from the east, there was fog abroad, the air was clammy. Parson Jaunt took Parson All by the arm and led him aside.

"How was you fixed, brother?" he whispered, anxiously. "I haven't had time to ask you before."

Parson All's eyebrows were lifted in mild inquiry.

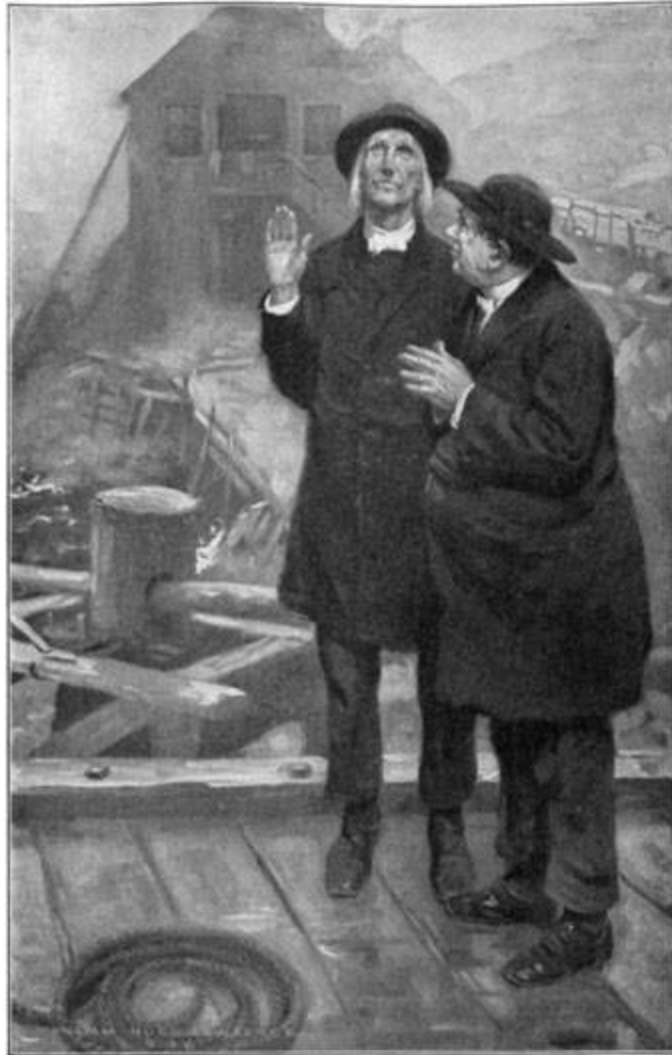
"Was you comfortable? Did you get enough to eat?"

There was concern in Parson Jaunt's voice—a sweet, wistful consideration.

"Yes, yes!" Parson All answered, quickly. "They are very good people—the Stocks."

"They're clean, but—"

"Poor."



“YOU WAS FIXED ALL RIGHT?” PARSON JAUNT ASKED

“Very, very poor! Frankly, Brother All, I was troubled. Yes, indeed! I was troubled. I knew they were poor, and I didn’t know whether it was wise or right to put you there. I feared that you might fare rather badly. But there was nothing else to do. I sincerely hope—”

Parson All raised a hand in protest.

“You was fixed all right?” Parson Jaunt asked.

“Yes, brother,” answered Parson All, in genuine appreciation of the hospitality he had received. “It was touching. Praise the Lord! I’m glad to know that such people *live* in a selfish world like this. It was very, very touching.”

Parson Jaunt's face expressed some surprise.

"Do you know what they did?" said Parson All, taking Parson Jaunt by the lapel of the coat and staring deep into his eyes. "*Do you know what they did?*"

Parson Jaunt wagged his head.

"Why, brother," Parson All declared, with genuinely grateful tears in his eyes, "when I told Skipper Jonathan that brewis soured on my stomach, he got me tinned beef, and butter, and canned peaches, and cheese. I'll never forget his goodness. Never!"

Parson Jaunt stared. "What a wonderful thing Christianity is!" he exclaimed. "What a wonderful, wonderful thing! By their fruits," he quoted, "ye shall know them."

The Black Bay clergy were called aboard. Parson Jaunt shook off the mild old Parson All and rushed to the Chairman of the District, his black coat-tails flying in the easterly wind, and wrung the Chairman's hand, and jovially laughed until his jolly little paunch shook like jelly....

That night, in the whitewashed cottage upon which the angry gale beat, Skipper Jonathan and Aunt Tibbie sat together by the kitchen fire. Skipper Jonathan was hopelessly in from the sea—from the white waves thereof, and the wind, and the perilous night—and Aunt Tibbie had dressed the sores on his wrists. The twins and all the rest of the little crew were tucked away and sound asleep.

Skipper Jonathan sighed.

"What was you thinkin' about, Jonathan?" Aunt Tibbie asked.

"Jus' ponderin'," said he.

"Ay; but what upon?"

"Well, Tibbie," Jonathan answered, in embarrassment, "I was jus'—ponderin'."

"What is it, Jonathan?"

"I was 'lowin', Tibbie," Jonathan admitted, "that it wouldn't be so easy—no,

not so *easy*—t’ do without that sweetness in my tea.”

Aunt Tibbie sighed.

“What *you* thinkin’ about, dear?” Jonathan asked.

“I got a sinful hankerin’,” Aunt Tibbie answered, repeating the sigh.

“Is you, dear?”

“I got a sinful hankerin’,” said she, “for that there bottle o’ hair-restorer. For I don’t *want* t’ go bald! God forgive me,” she cried, in an agony of humiliation, “for this vanity!”

“Hush, dear!” Jonathan whispered, tenderly; “for I loves you, bald or not!”

But Aunt Tibbie burst out crying.

VII—"BY-AN'-BY" BROWN OF BLUNDER COVE

"By-an'-by" Brown he was called at Blunder Cove. And as "By-an'-by" Brown he was known within its fishing radius: Grave Head to Blow-me-down Billy. Momentarily, on the wet night of his landing, he had been "Mister" Brown; then—just "By-an'-by" Brown.

There was no secret about the baby. Young Brown was a bachelor of the outports: even so, there was still no secret about the baby. Nonsense! It was not "By-an'-by's." It never had been. Name? Tweak. Given name? She. What! Well, then, *It!* Age? Recent—somewheres 'long about midsummer. Blunder Cove was amazed, but, being used to sudden peril, to misfortune, and strange chances, was not incredulous. Blunder Cove was sympathetic: so sympathetic, indeed, so quick to minister and to assist, that "By-an'-by" Brown, aged fifteen, having taken but transient shelter for the child, remained to rear it, forever proposing, however, to proceed—by-and-by. So there they were, "By-an'-by" Brown and the baby! And the baby was not "By-an'-by's." Everybody knew it—even the baby: perhaps best of all.

"By-an'-by" Brown had adopted the baby at Back Yard Bight of the Labrador. There had been nothing else to do. It was quite out of the question, whatever the proprieties, whatever the requirements of babies and the inadequacy of bachelors—it was quite out of the question for "By-an'-by" Brown, being a bachelor of tender years and perceptions, to abandon even a baby at Back Yard Bight of the Labrador, having first assisted at the interment of the mother and then instantly lost trace of the delinquent father. The monstrous expedient had not even occurred to him; he made a hasty bundle of the baby and took flight for more populous neighborhoods, commanding advice, refuge, and infinitely more valuable assistance from the impoverished settlements by the way. And thereafter he remembered the

bleak and lonely reaches of Back Yard Bight as a stretch of coast where he had been considerably alarmed.

It had been a wet night when “By-an’-by” Brown and the baby put into Blunder Cove—wind in the east, the sea in a tumble: a wet night, and late of it. All the windows were black; and the paths of the place—a water-side maze in the lee of great hills—were knee-deep in a flood of darkness. “By-an’-by” Brown was downcast: this because of his years. He was a lad of fifteen. Fifteen, mark you!—a gigantic fifteen: a wise and competent fifteen, too, having for seven years fended for itself in the turf huts of the Labrador and the forecastles of the lower coasts. But still, for the moment, he was downcast by the burden upon his youth. So he knocked diffidently at the first kitchen door; and presently he stood abashed in a burst of warm light from within.

Shelter? Oh, ay! T’ be sure. But (in quick and resentful suspicion):

“B’y,” Aunt Phoebe Luff demanded, “what ye got in them ile-skins? Pups?”

“By-an’-by” Brown observed that there were embers in the kitchen stove, that steam was faintly rising from the spout of the kettle.

“Baby,” said he.

Aunt Phoebe jumped. “What!” cried she:

“Jus’ a baby,” said “By-an’-by” Brown. “*Well!*—you give that there baby here.”

“I’ll be glad t’, ma’am,” said young “By-an’-by” Brown, in childish tenderness, still withholding the bundle from the woman’s extended arms, “but not for keeps.”

“For keeps!” Aunt Phoebe snorted.

“No, ma’am; not for keeps. I’m ’lowin’ t’ fetch it up myself,” said “By-an’-by” Brown, “by-an’-by.”

“Dunderhead!” Aunt Phoebe whispered, softly.

And “By-an’-by” Brown, familiar with the exigency, obediently went in.

Then there were lights in the cottages of Blunder Cove: instantly, it seemed. And company—and tea and hard bread and chatter—in Skipper Tom Luff’s

little white kitchen. A roaring fire in the stove: a kettle that sang and chuckled and danced, glad once more to be engaged in the real business of life. So was the cradle—glad to be useful again, though its activity had been but for an hour suspended. It went to work in a business-like way, with never a creak, in response to the gentle toe of “By-an’-by” Brown’s top-boot. There was an inquisition, too, through which “By-an’-by” Brown crooned to the baby, “Hush-a-by!” and absently answered, “Uh-huh!” and “By-an’-by!” as placid as could be. Concerning past troubles: Oh, they was—yesterday. And of future difficulties: Well, they was—by-an’-by. “Hush-a-by!” and “By-an’-by!” So they gave him a new name—“By-an’-by” Brown—because he was of those whose past is forgot in yesterday and whose future is no more inimical than—well, jus’ by-an’-by.

“By-an’-by” Brown o’ Blunder Cove—paddle-punt fishin’ the Blow-me-down grounds....

It had not been for keeps. “By-an’-by” Brown resisted in a fashion so resolute that no encroachment upon his rights was accomplished by Aunt Phoebe Luff. He had wandered too long alone to be willing to yield up a property in hearts once he possessed it. And Blunder Cove approved. The logic was simple: *If* “By-an’-by” Brown took the child t’ raise, why, then, nobody else would *have* t’. The proceeding was never regarded as extraordinary. Nobody said, “How queer!” It was looked upon merely as a commendably philanthropic undertaking on the part of “By-an’-by” Brown; the accident of his sex and situation had nothing to do with the problem. Thus, when Aunt Phoebe’s fostering care was no longer imperative “By-an’-by” Brown said *Now* for the first time in his life, and departed with the baby. By that time, of course, there was an establishment: a whitewashed cottage by the water-side, a stage, a flake, a punt—all the achievement of “By-an’-by’s” own hands. A new account, too: this on the ledger of Wull & Company, trading the French Shore with the *Always Loaded*, putting in off and on.

“By-an’-by’s” baby began to grow perceptibly. “By-an’-by” just kept on growing, ’lowin’ t’ stop sometime—by-an’-by. It happened—by-an’-by. This was when he was two-and-twenty: by which time, according to enthusiastic observers from a more knowing and appreciative world, he was Magnificent. The splendor consisted, it was said, in bulk, muscle, and the like, somewhat,

too, perhaps, in poise and glance; but Blunder Cove knew that these external and relatively insignificant aspects were transcended by the spiritual graces which “By-an’-by” Brown displayed. He was religious; but it must be added that he was amiable. A great, tender, devoted dog: “By-an’-by” Brown. This must be said for him: that if he by-an’-byed the unpleasant necessities into a future too distant to be troublesome, he by-an’-byed the appearance of evil to the same far exile. After all, it may be a virtue to practise the art of by-an’-bying.

As for the baby at this period, the age of seven years, the least said the less conspicuous the failure to say anything adequate. Language was never before so helplessly mocked. It may be ventured, however, to prove the poverty of words, that dispassionately viewed through the eyes of “By-an’-by” Brown, she was angelic. “Jus’ a wee li’l’ mite of a angel!” said he. Of course, this is not altogether original, nor is it specific; but it satisfied “By-an’-by” Brown’s idea of perfection. A slim little slip of a maid of the roguishly sly and dimpled sort: a maid of delicate fashioning, exquisite of feature—a maid of impulsive affections. Exact in everything; and exacting, too—in a captivating way. And herein was propagated the germ of disquietude for “By-an’-by” Brown: promising, indeed (fostered by the folly of procrastination), a more tragic development. “By-an’-by’s” baby was used to saying, You *told* me so. Also, But you *promised*. The particular difficulty confronting “By-an’-by” Brown was the baby’s insistent curiosity, not inconsistent with the age of seven, concerning the whereabouts of her father and the time and manner of his return.

Brown had piqued it into being: just by saying—“By-an’-by!”

“Ay,” says she; “but *when* will he be comin’ back?”

“Why,” he answered, bewildered—“by-an’-by!”

It was a familiar evasion. The maid frowned. “Is you sure?” she demanded, sceptically.

“Ye bet ye!” he was prompt to reply, feeling bound now, to convince her, whatever came of it; “he’ll be comin’ back—by-an’-by.”

“Well, then,” said the maid, relieved, “I s’pose so.”

Brown had never disclosed the brutal delinquency of Long Bill Tweak. Not to the maid, because he could not wound her; not to Blunder Cove, because

he would not shame her. The revelation must be made, of course; but not now—by-an’-by. The maid knew that her mother was dead beyond recall: no mystery was ever made of that; and there ended the childish wish and wonder concerning that poor woman. But her father? Here was an inviting mystery. No; he was not what you might call dead—jus’ sort o’ gone away. Would he ever come back? Oh, *sure!* no need o’ frettin’ about that; *he’d* be back—by-an’-by. Had “By-an’-by” Brown said *Never*, the problem would have been dieposed of, once and for all: the fretting over with, once and for all. But what he said was this uncourageous and specious by-an’-by. So the maid waited in interested speculation: then impatiently. For she was used to saying, *You told me so. Also, But then you promised.*

As by-an’-by overhauled by-an’-by in the days of “By-an’-by” Brown, and as the ultimate by-an’-by became imminent, “By-an’-by” Brown was ever more disquieted.

“But,” says the maid, “‘by-an’-by’ is never.”

“Oh, my, no!” he protested.

She tapped the tip of his nose with a long little forefinger, and emphasized every word with a stouter tap. “Yes—it—is!” said she.

“Not *never*,” cried “By-an’-by” Brown.

“Then,” says she, “is it to-morrow?”

Brown violently shook his head.

“Is it nex’ week?”

“Goodness, no!”

“Well,” she insisted—and she took “By-an’-by’s” face between her palms and drew it close to search his eyes—“is it nex’ year?”

“Maybe.”

She touched the tip of her white little nose to the sunburned tip of his. “But *is* it?” she persisted.

“Uh-huh,” said “By-an’-by” Brown, recklessly, quite overcome, committing himself beyond redemption; “nex’ year.”

And “By-an’-by’s” baby remembered....

Next year began, of course, with the first day of January. And a day with wind and snow it was! Through the interval of three months preceding, Brown had observed the approach of this veritable by-an'-by with rising alarm. And on New Year's Day, why, there it was: by-an'-by come at last! "By-an'-by" Brown, though twenty-two, was frightened. No wonder! Hitherto his life had not been perturbed by insoluble bewilderments. But how to produce Long Bill Tweak from the mist into which he had vanished at Back Yard Bight of the Labrador seven years ago? It was beyond him. Who could call Bill Tweak from seven years of time and the very waste places of space? Not "By-an'-by" Brown, who could only ponder and sigh and scratch his curly head. And here was the maid, used to saying, as maids of seven will, But you told me so! and, You *promised*! So "By-an'-by" Brown was downcast as never before; but before the day was spent he conceived that the unforeseen might yet fortuitously issue in the salvation of himself and the baby.

"Maybe," thought he—"by-an'-by!"

As January progressed the maid grew more eager and still more confident. He *promised*, thinks she; also, He *told* me so. There were times, as the terrified Brown observed, when this eagerness so possessed the child that she trembled in a fashion to make him shiver. She would start from her chair by the stove when a knock came late o' windy nights on the kitchen door; she would stare up the frozen harbor to the Tickle by day—peep through the curtains, interrupt her housewifely duties to keep watch at the window.

"Anyhow, he *will* come," says she, quite confidently, "by-an'-by."

"Uh-huh!" Brown must respond.

What was a shadow upon the gentle spirit of "By-an'-by" Brown was the sunlight of certain expectation irradiating "By-an'-by's" baby. But the maid fell ill. Nobody knew why. Suspicion dwelled like a skeleton with "By-an'-by" Brown; but this he did not divulge to Blunder Cove. Nothin' much the matter along o' she, said the Cove; jus' a little spell o' somethin' or other. It was a childish indisposition, perhaps—but come with fever and pallor and a poignant restlessness. "By-an'-by" Brown had never before known how like to a black cloud the future of a man might be. At any rate, she must be put to bed: whereupon, of course, "By-an'-by" Brown indefinitely put off going to

bed, having rather stand watch, he said. It was presently a question at Blunder Cove: who was the more wan and pitiable, “By-an’-by’s” baby, being sick, or “By-an’-by,” being anxious? And there was no cure anywhere to be had—no cure for either. “By-an’-by” Brown conceived that the appearance of Long Bill Tweak would instantly work a miracle upon the maid. But where was Bill Tweak? There was no magic at hand to accomplish the feat of summoning a scamp from Nowhere!

One windy night “By-an’-by” Brown sat with the child to comfort her. “I ’low,” he drawled, “that you wisht a wonderful sight that your father was here.”

“Uh-huh!” the maid exclaimed.

Brown sighed. “I s’pose,” he muttered.

“Is he comin’?” she demanded.

“Oh—by-an’-by!”

“I wisht ’twas *now*,” said she. “That I does!”

Brown listened to the wind. It was blowing high and bitterly: a winter wind, with snow from the northeast. “By-an’-by” was troubled.

“I ’low,” said he, hopelessly, “that you’ll love un a sight, won’t ye?—when he comes?”

“Ye bet ye!” the maid answered.

“More’n ye love—some folks?”

“A lot,” said she.

Brown was troubled. He heard the kitchen stove snore in its familiar way, the kettle bubble, the old wind assault the cottage he had builded for the baby; and he remembered recent years—and was troubled.

“Will ye love un more?” he asked, anxiously, turning his face from the child, “than ye loves me?” He hesitated. “Ye won’t, will ye?” he implored.

“’Twill be different,” said she.

“Will it?” he asked, rather vacantly.

“Ye see,” she explained, “he’ll be my *father*.”

“Then,” suggested “By-an’-by,” “ye’ll be goin’ away along o’ he?—when he comes?”

“Oh, my, no!”

“Ye’ll not? Ye’ll stay along o’ me?”

“Why, ye see,” she began, bewildered, “I’ll—why, o’ course, I’ll—oh,” she complained, “what ye ask me *that* for?”

“Jus’ couldn’t *help* it,” said “By-an’-by,” humbly.

The maid began to cry.

“Don’t!” pleaded “By-an’-by” Brown. “Jus’ can’t *stand* it. I’ll do anything if ye’ll on’y stop cryin’. Ye can *have* your father. Ye needn’t love me no more. Ye can go away along o’ he. An’ he’ll be comin’ soon, too. Ye’ll see if he don’t. Jus’ by-an’-by—by-an’-by!”

“’Tis never,” the maid sobbed.

“No, no! By-an’-by is soon. Why,” cried “By-an’-by” Brown, perceiving that this intelligence stopped the child’s tears, “by-an’-by is—wonderful soon.”

“To-morrow?”

“Well, no; but—”

“’Tis never!” she wailed.

“’Tis nex’ week!” cried “By-an’-by” Brown....

When the dawn of Monday morning confronted “By-an’-by” Brown he was appalled. Here was a desperately momentous situation: by-an’-by must be faced—at last. Where was Long Bill Tweak? Nobody knew. How could Long Bill Tweak be fetched from Nowhere? Brown scratched his head. But Long Bill Tweak *must* be fetched: for here was the maid, chirpin’ about the kitchen—turned out early, ecod! t’ clean house against her father’s coming. Cured? Ay; that she was—the mouse! “By-an’-by” Brown dared not contemplate her collapse at midnight of Saturday. But chance intervened: on Tuesday morning Long Bill Tweak made Blunder Cove on the way from Lancy Loop to St. John’s to join the sealing fleet in the spring of the year. Long Bill Tweak in the flesh! It was still blowing high: he had come out of the snow—a

shadow in the white mist, rounding the Tickle rocks, observed from all the windows of Blunder Cove, but changing to Long Bill Tweak himself, ill-kempt, surly, gruff-voiced, vicious-eyed, at the kitchen door of “By-an’-by” Brown’s cottage.

Long Bill Tweak begged the maid, with a bristle-whiskered twitch—a scowl, mistakenly delivered as a smile—for leave to lie the night in that place.

The maid was afraid with a fear she had not known before. “We’re ’lowing for company,” she objected.

“Come in!” “By-an’-by” called from the kitchen.

The maid fled in a fright to the inner room, and closed the door upon herself; but Long Bill Tweak swaggered in.

“Tweak!” gasped “By-an’-by” Brown.

“Brown!” growled Long Bill Tweak.

There was the silence of uttermost amazement; but presently, with a jerk, Tweak indicated the door through which “By-an’-by’s” baby had fled.

“It?” he whispered.

Brown nodded.

“’Low I’ll be goin’ on,” said Long Bill Tweak, making for the windy day.

“Ye’ll go,” answered “By-an’-by” Brown, quietly, interposing his great body, “when ye’re let: not afore.”

Long Bill Tweak contented himself with the hospitality of “By-an’-by” Brown....

That night, when Brown had talked with the maid’s father for a long, long time by the kitchen stove, the maid being then turned in, he softly opened the bedroom door and entered, closing it absent-mindedly behind him, dwelling the while, in deep distress, upon the agreement he had wrested by threat and purchase from Long Bill Tweak. The maid was still awake because of terror; she was glad, indeed, to have caught sight of “By-an’-by” Brown’s broad, kindly young countenance in the beam of light from the kitchen, though downcast, and she snuggled deeper into the blankets, not afraid any more.

“By-an’-by” touched a match to the candle-wick with a great hand that trembled. He lingered over the simple act—loath to come nearer to the evil necessity of the time. For Long Bill Tweak was persuaded now to be fatherly to the child; and “By-an’-by” Brown must yield her, according to her wish. He sat for a time on the edge of the little bed, clinging to the maid’s hand; and he thought, in his gentle way, that it was a very small, very dear hand, and that he would wish to touch it often, when he could not.

Presently Brown sighed: then, taking heart, he joined issue with his trouble.

“I ’low,” he began, “that you wisht your father was here.”

The maid did.

“I ’low,” he pursued, “that you wisht he was here this very minute.”

That the maid did!

“I ’low,” said “By-an’-by,” softly, lifting the child’s hands to his lips, “that you wisht the man in the kitchen was him.”

“No,” the maid answered, sharply.

“Ye doesn’t?”

“Ye bet ye—no!” said she.

“Eh?” gasped the bewildered Brown.

The maid sat upright and stiff in bed. “Oh, my!” she demanded, in alarm; “he *isn’t*, is he?”

“No!” said “By-an’-by” Brown.

“Sure?”

“Isn’t I jus’ *tol’* ye so?” he answered, beaming.

Long Bill Tweak followed the night into the shades of forgotten time....

Came Wednesday upon “By-an’-by” Brown in a way to make the heart jump. Midnight of Saturday was now fairly over the horizon of his adventurous sea. Wednesday! Came Thursday—prompt to the minute. Days of bewildered inaction! And now the cottage was ship-shape to the darkest corners of its closets. Ship-shape as a wise and knowing maid of seven, used to

housewifely occupations, could make it: which was as ship-shape as ship-shape could be, though you may not believe it. There was no more for the maid to do but sit with folded hands and confidently expectant gaze to await the advent of her happiness. Thursday morning: and “By-an’-by” Brown had not mastered his bearings. Three days more: Thursday, Friday, Saturday. It occurred, then, to “By-an’-by” Brown—at precisely ten o’clock of Friday morning—that his hope lay in Jim Turley of Candlestick Cove, an obliging man. They jus’ *had* t’ be a father, didn’t they? But they *wasn’t* no father no more. Well, then, ecod! *make* one. Had t’ be a father, *somehow*, didn’t they? And—well—there was Jim Turley o’ Candlestick Cove. He’d answer. Why not Jim Turley o’ Candlestick Cove, an obligin’ man, known t’ be such from Mother Burke t’ the Cape Norman Light? He’d ’blige a shipmate in a mess like this, ecod! You see if he didn’t!

Brown made ready for Candlestick Cove.

“But,” the maid objected, “what is I t’ do if father comes afore night?”

“Ah!” drawled “By-an’-by,” blankly.

“Eh?” she repeated.

“Why, o’ course,” he answered, with a large and immediate access of interest, drawing the arm-chair near the stove, “you jus’ set un there t’ warm his feet.”

“An’ if he doesn’t know me?” she protested.

“Oh, sure,” “By-an’-by” affirmed, “the ol’ man’ll know *you*, never fear. You jus’ give un a cup o’ tea an’ say I’ll be back afore dark.”

“Well,” the maid agreed, dubiously.

“I’ll be off,” said Brown, in a flush of embarrassment, “when I fetches the wood t’ keep your father cosey. He’ll be thirsty an’ cold when he comes. Ye’ll take good care of un, won’t ye?”

“Ye bet ye!”

“Mind ye get them there ol’ feet warm. An’ jus’ you fair pour the tea into un. He’s used t’ his share o’ tea, ye bet! *I* knows un.”

And so “By-an’-by” Brown, travelling over the hills, came hopefully to Jim Turley of Candlestick Cove, an obliging man, whilst the maid kept watch at the window of the Blunder Cove cottage. And Jim Turley was a most obligin’

man. 'Blige? Why, sure! *I'll* 'blige ye! There was no service difficult or obnoxious to the selfish sons of men that Jim Turley would not perform for other folk—if only he might 'blige. Ye jus' go ast Jim Turley; *he'll* 'blige ye. And Jim Turley would with delight: for Jim had a passion for 'bligin'—assiduously seeking opportunities, even to the point of intrusion. Beaming Jim Turley o' Candlestick Cove: poor, shiftless, optimistic, serene, well-beloved Jim Turley, forever cheerfully sprawling in the meshes of his own difficulties! Lean Jim Turley—forgetful of his interests in a fairly divine satisfaction with compassing the joy and welfare of his fellows! I shall never forget him: his round, flaring smile, rippling under his bushy whiskers, a perpetual delight, come any fortune; his mild, unself-conscious, sympathetic blue eyes, looking out upon the world in amazement, perhaps, but yet in kind and eager inquiry concerning the affairs of other folk; his blithe “Yo-ho!” at labor, and “Easy does it!” Jim Turley o' Candlestick Cove—an' obligin' man!

“In trouble?” he asked of “By-an'-by” Brown, instantly concerned.

“Not 'xactly trouble,” answered “By-an'-by.”

“Sort o' bothered?”

“Well, no,” drawled “By-an'-by” Brown; “but I got t' have a father by Satu'day night.”

“For yerself?” Jim mildly inquired.

“For the maid,” said “By-an'-by” Brown; “an' I was 'lowin’,” he added, frankly, “that you might 'blige her.”

“Well, now,” Jim Turley exclaimed, “I'd like t' wonderful well! But, ye see,” he objected, faintly, “bein' a ol' bachelor I isn't s'posed t'—”

“Anyhow,” “By-an'-by” Brown broke in, “I jus' got t' have a father by Satu'day night.”

“An' I'm a religious man, an'—”

“No objection t' religion,” Brown protested. “I'm strong on religion m'self. Jus' as soon have a religious father as not. Sooner. Now,” he pleaded, “they isn't nobody else in the world t' 'blige me.”

“No,” Jim Turley agreed, in distress; “no—I 'low not.”

“An’ I jus’ *got*,” declared Brown, “t’ have a father by Satu’day night.”

“Course you is!” cried Jim Turley, instantly siding with the woebegone. “Jus’ got t’!”

“Well?”

“Oh, well, pshaw!” said Jim Turley, “*I’ll* ’blige ye!”

The which he did, but with misgiving: arriving at Blunder Cove after dark of Saturday, unobserved by the maid, whose white little nose was stuck to the frosty window-pane, whose eyes searched the gloom gathered over the Tickle rocks, whose ears were engaged with the tick-tock of the impassive clock. No; he was not observed, however keen the lookout: for he came sneaking in by Tumble Gully, ’cordin’ t’ sailin’ orders, to join “By-an’-by” Brown in the lee of the meeting-house under Anxiety Hill, where the conspiracy was to be perfected, in the light of recent developments, and whence the sally was to be made. He was in a shiver of nervousness; so, too, “By-an’-by” Brown. It was the moment of inaction when conspirators must forever be the prey of doubt and dread. They were determined, grim; they were most grave—but they were still afraid. And Jim Turley’s conscience would not leave him be. A religious man, Jim Turley! On the way from Candlestick Cove he had whipped the perverse thing into subjection, like a sinner; but here, in the lee of the meeting-house by Anxiety Hill, with a winter’s night fallen like a cold cloud from perdition, conscience was risen again to prod him.

An obligin’ man, Jim Turley: but still a religious man—knowing his master.

“I got qualms,” said he.

“Stummick?” Brown demanded, in alarm.

“This here thing,” Jim Turley protested, “isn’t a religious thing to do.”

“Maybe not,” replied “By-an’-by” Brown, doggedly; “but I promised the maid a father by Satu’day night, an’ I got t’ have un.”

“’Twould ease my mind a lot,” Jim Turley pleaded, “t’ ask the parson. Come, now!”

“By-an’-by,” said “By-an’-by” Brown.

“No,” Jim Turley insisted; “now.”

The parson laughed; then laughed again, with his head thrown back and his

mouth fallen open very wide. Presently, though, he turned grave, and eyed “By-an’-by” Brown in a questioning, anxious way, as though seeking to discover in how far the big man’s happiness might be chanced: whereupon he laughed once more, quite reassured. He was a pompous bit of a parson, this, used to commanding the conduct of Blunder Cove; to controlling its affairs; to shaping the destinies of its folk with a free, bold hand: being in this both wise and most generously concerned, so that the folk profited more than they knew. And now, with “By-an’-by” Brown and the maid on his hands, to say nothing of poor Jim Turley, he did not hesitate; there was nothing for it, thinks he, but to get “By-an’-by” Brown out of the mess, whatever came of it, and to arrange a future from which all by-an’-bying must be eliminated. A new start, thinks he; and the by-an’-by habit would work no further injury. So he sat “By-an’-by” Brown and Jim Turley by the kitchen stove, without a word of explanation, and, still condescending no hint of his purpose, but bidding them both sit tight to their chairs, went out upon his business, which, as may easily be surmised, was with the maid.

“Bein’ a religious man,” said Jim Turley, solemnly, “he’ll mend it.”

When the parson came back there was nothing within her comprehension, which was quite sufficient to her need. “By-an’-by” Brown was sent home, with a kindly God-bless-ye! and an injunction of the most severe description to have done with by-an’-bying. He stumbled into his own kitchen in a shamefaced way, prepared, like a mischievous lad, to be scolded until his big ears burned and his scalp tingled; and he was a long, long time about hanging up his cap and coat and taking off his shoes, never once glancing toward the maid, who sat silent beyond the kitchen stove. And then, when by no further subterfuge could he prolong his immunity, he turned boldly in her direction, patiently and humbly to accept the inevitable correction, a promise to do better already fashioned upon his tongue. And there she sat, beyond the glowing stove, grinning in a way to show her white little teeth. Tears? Maybe: but only traces—where-left, indeed, for the maid to learn, or, at least, by her eyes shone all the brighter. And “By-an’-by” Brown, reproaching himself bitterly, sat down, with never a word, and began to trace strange pictures on the floor with the big toe of his gray-socked foot, while the kettle and the clock and the fire sang the old chorus of comfort and cheer.

The big man’s big toe got all at once furiously interested in its artistic occupation.

“Ah-ha!” says “By-an’-by’s” baby, “*I* found you out!”

“Uh-huh!” she repeated, threateningly, “I found *you* out.”

“Did ye?” “By-an’-by” softly asked.

The maid came on tiptoe from behind the stove, and made an arrangement of “By-an’-by” Brown’s long legs convenient for straddling; and having then settled herself on his knees, she tipped up his face and fetched her own so close that he could not dodge her eyes, but must look in, whatever came of it; and then—to the reviving delight of “By-an’-by” Brown—she tapped his nose with a long little forefinger, emphasizing every word with a stouter tap, saying:

“Yes—I—did!”

“Uh-huh!” he chuckled.

“An’,” said she, “I don’t *want* no father.”

“Ye don’t?” he cried, incredulous.

“Because,” she declared, “I’m ’lowin’ t’ take care o’ *you*—an’ *marry* you.”

“Ye is?” he gasped.

“Ye bet ye, b’y,” said “By-an’-by’s” baby—“by-an’-by!”

Then they hugged each other hard.

VIII—THEY WHO LOSE AT LOVE

And old Khalil Khayyat, simulating courage, went out, that the reconciliation of Yusef Khouri with the amazing marriage might surely be accomplished. And returning in dread and bewildered haste, he came again to the pastry-shop of Nageeb Fiani, where young Salim Awad, the light of his eyes, still lay limp over the round table in the little back room, grieving that Haleema, Khouri's daughter, of the tresses of night, the star-eyed, his well-beloved, had of a sudden wed Jimmie Brady, the jolly truckman. The smoke hung dead and foul in the room; the coffee was turned cold in the cups, stagnant and greasy; the coal on the narghile was grown gray as death: the magic of great despair had in a twinkling worked the change of cheer to age and shabbiness and frigid gloom. But the laughter and soft voices in the outer room were all unchanged, still light, lifted indifferently above the rattle of dice and the aimless strumming of a canoun; and beyond was the familiar evening hum and clatter of New York's Washington Street, children's cries and the patter of feet, drifting in at the open door; and from far off, as before, came the low, receding roar of the Elevated train rounding the curve to South Ferry.

Khayyat smiled in compassion: being old, used to the healing of years, he smiled; and he laid a timid hand on the head of young Salim Awad.

"Salim, poet, the child of a poet," he whispered, "grieve no more!"

"My heart is a gray coal, O Khalil!" sighed Salim Awad, who had lost at love. "For a moment it glowed in the breath of love. It is turned cold and gray; it lies forsaken in a vast night."

"For a moment," mused Khalil Khayyat, sighing, but yet smiling, "it glowed in the breath of love. Ah, Salim," said he, "there is yet the memory of that ecstasy!"

“My heart is a brown leaf: it flutters down the wind of despair; it is caught in the tempest of great woe.”

“It has known the sunlight and the tender breeze.”

Salim looked up; his face was wet and white; his black hair, fallen in disarray over his forehead, was damp with the sweat of grief; his eyes, soulful, glowing in deep shadows, he turned to some place high and distant. “My heart,” he cried, passionately, clasping his hands, “is a thing that for a moment lived, but is forever dead! It is in a grave of night and heaviness, O Khalil, my friend!”

“It is like a seed sown,” said Khalil Khayyat.

“To fail of harvest!”

“Nay; to bloom in compassionate deeds. The flower of sorrow is the joy of the world. In the broken heart is the hope of the hopeless; in the agony of poets is their sure help. Hear me, O Salim Awad!” the old man continued, rising, lifting his lean brown hand, his voice clear, vibrant, possessing the quality of prophecy. “The broken heart is a seed sown by the hand of the Beneficent and Wise. Into the soil of life He casts it that there may be a garden in the world. With a free, glad hand He sows, that the perfume and color of high compassion may glorify the harvest of ambitious strife; and progress is the fruit of strife and love the flower of compassion. Yea, O Salim, poet, the child of a poet, taught of a poet, which am I, the broken heart is a seed sown gladly, to flower in this beauty. Blessed,” Khalil Khayyat concluded, smiling, “oh, blessed be the Breaker of Hearts!”

“Blessed,” asked Salim Awad, wondering, “be the Breaker of Hearts?”

“Yea, O Salim,” answered Khalil Khayyat, speaking out of age and ancient pain; “even blessed be the Breaker of Hearts!”

Salim Awad turned again to the place that was high and distant—beyond the gaudy, dirty ceiling of the little back room—where, it may be, the form of Haleema, the star-eyed, of the slender, yielding shape of the tamarisk, floated in a radiant cloud, compassionate and glorious.

“What is my love?” he whispered. “Is it a consuming fire? Nay,” he answered, his voice rising, warm, tremulous; “rather is it a little blaze, kindled brightly in the night, that it may comfort my beloved. What is my

love, O Haleema, daughter of Khouri, the star-eyed? Is it an arrow, shot from my bow, that it may tear the heart of my beloved? Nay; rather is it a shield against the arrows of sorrow—my shield, the strength of my right arm: a refuge from the cruel shafts of life. What are my arms? Are they bars of iron to imprison my beloved? Nay,” cried Salim Awad, striking his breast; “they are but a resting-place. A resting-place,” he repeated, throwing wide his arms, “to which she will not come! Oh, Haleema!” he moaned, flinging himself upon the little round table, “Haleema! Jewel of all riches! Star of the night! Flower of the world! Haleema ... Haleema....”

“Poet!” Khalil Khayyat gasped, clutching the little round table, his eyes flashing. “The child of a poet, taught of a poet, which am I!”

They were singing in the street—a riot of Irish lads, tenement-born; tramping noisily past the door of Nageeb Fiani’s pastry-shop to Battery Park. And Khalil Khayyat sat musing deeply, his ears closed to the alien song, while distance mellowed the voices, changed them to a vagrant harmony, made them one with the mutter of Washington Street; for there had come to him a great thought—a vision, high, glowing, such as only poets may know—concerning love and the infinite pain; and he sought to fashion the thought: which must be done with tender care in the classic language, lest it suffer in beauty or effect being uttered in haste or in the common speech of the people. Thus he sat: low in his chair, his head hanging loose, his eyes jumping, his brown, wrinkled face fearfully working, until every hair of his unshaven beard stood restlessly on end. And Salim Awad, looking up, perceived these throes: and thereby knew that some prophetic word was immediately to be spoken.

“They who lose at love,” Khayyat muttered, “must.... They who lose at love....”

“Khalil!”

The Language Beautiful was for once perverse. The words would not come to Khalil Khayyat. He gasped, tapped the table with impatient fingers—and bent again to the task.

“They who lose at love....”

“Khalil!” Salim Awad’s voice was plaintive. “What must they do, O Khalil,” he implored, “who lose at love? Tell me, Khalil! *What must they do?*”

“They who lose at love.... They who lose at love must.... They who lose at love must ... seek....”

“Speak, O Khalil, concerning those wretched ones! And they must seek?”

Khayyat laughed softly. He sat back in the chair—proudly squared his shoulders. “And now I know!” he cried, in triumph. He cleared his throat. “They who lose at love,” he declaimed, “must seek....” He paused abruptly. There had been a warning in the young lover’s eyes: after all, in exceptional cases, poetry might not wisely be practised.

“Come, Khalil!” Salim Awad purred. “They who lose at love? What is left for them to do?”

“Nay,” answered Khalil Khayyat, looking away, much embarrassed, “I will not tell you.”

Salim caught the old man’s wrist. “What is the quest?” he cried, hoarsely, bending close.

“I may not tell.”

Salim’s fingers tightened; his teeth came together with a snap; his face flushed—a quick flood of red, hot blood.

“What is the quest?” he demanded.

“I dare not tell.”

“The quest?”

“I *will* not tell!”

Nor would Khalil Khayyat tell Salim Awad what must be sought by such as lose at love; but he called to Nageeb Fiani, the greatest player in all the world, to bring the violin, that Salim might hear the music of love and be comforted. And in the little back room of the pastry-shop near the Battery, while the trucks rattled over the cobblestones and the songs of the Irish troubled the soft spring night, Nageeb Fiani played the Song of Love to Lali, which the blind prince had made, long, long ago, before he died of love; and in the sigh and wail and passionate complaint of that dead woe the despair of Salim Awad found voice and spent itself; and he looked up, and gazing deep into the dull old eyes of Khalil Khayyat, new light in his own, he smiled.

“Yet, O Khalil,” he whispered, “will I go upon that quest!”

Now, Salim Awad went north to the bitter coasts—to the shore of rock and gray sea—there to carry a pack from harbor to harbor of a barren land, ever seeking in trade to ease the sorrows of love. Neither sea nor land—neither naked headland nor the unfeeling white expanse—neither sunlit wind nor the sleety gale in the night—helped him to forgetfulness. But, as all the miserable know, the love of children is a vast delight: and the children of that place are blue-eyed and hungry; and it is permitted the stranger to love them.... On he went, from Lobster Tickle to Snook's Arm, from Dead Man's Cove to Righteous Harbor, trading laces and trinkets for salt fish; and on he went, sanguine, light of heart, blindly seeking that which the losers at love must seek; for Khalil Khayyat had told him that the mysterious Thing was to be found in that place.

With a jolly wind abeam—a snoring breeze from the southwest—the tight little *Bully Boy*, fore-and-after, thirty tons, Skipper Josiah Top, was footing it through the moonlight from Tutt's Tickle to the Labrador: bound down north for the first fishing of that year. She was tearing through the sea—eagerly nosing the slow, black waves; and they heartily slapped her bows, broke, ran hissing down the rail, lay boiling in the broad, white wake, stretching far into the luminous mist astern. Salim Awad, the peddler, picked up at Bread-and-Water Harbor, leaned upon the rail—staring into the mist: wherein, for him, were melancholy visions of the star-eyed maid of Washington Street.... At midnight the wind veered to the east—a swift, ominous change—and rose to the pitch of half a gale, blowing cold and capriciously. It brought fog from the distant open; the night turned clammy and thick; the *Bully Boy* found herself in a mess of dirty weather. Near dawn, being then close inshore, off the Seven Dogs, which growled to leeward, she ran into the ice—the first of the spring floes: a field of pans, slowly drifting up the land. And when the air was gray she struck on the Devil's Finger, ripped her keel out, and filled like a sieve; and she sank in sixty seconds, as men say—every strand and splinter of her.

But first she spilled her crew upon the ice.

The men had leaped to port and starboard, fore and aft, in unthinking terror,

each desperately concerned with his own life; they were now distributed upon the four pans which had been within leaping distance when the *Bully Boy* settled: white rafts, floating on a black, slow-heaving sea; lying in a circle of murky fog; creeping shoreward with the wind. If the wind held—and it was a true, freshening wind,—they would be blown upon the coast rocks, within a measurable time, and might walk ashore; if it veered, the ice would drift to sea, where, ultimately, in the uttermost agony of cold and hunger, every man would yield his life. The plight was manifest, familiar to them, every one; but they were wise in weather lore: they had faith in the consistency of the wind that blew; and, in the reaction from bestial terror, they bandied primitive jokes from pan to pan—save the skipper, who had lost all that he had, and was helplessly downcast: caring not a whit whether he lived or died; for he had loved his schooner, the work of his hands, his heart's child, better than his life.

It chanced that Salim Awad, who loved the star-eyed daughter of Khouri, and in this land sought to ease the sorrow of his passion—it chanced that this Salim was alone with Tommy Hand, the cook's young son—a tender lad, now upon his first voyage to the Labrador. And the boy began to whimper.

“Dad,” he called to his father, disconsolate, “I wisht—I wisht—I was along o’ you—on *your* pan.”

The cook came to the edge of the ice. “Does you, lad?” he asked, softly. “Does you wisht you was along o’ me, Tommy? Ah, but,” he said, scratching his beard, bewildered, “you isn’t.”

The space of black water between was short, but infinitely capacious; it was sullen and cold—intent upon its own wretchedness: indifferent to the human pain on either side. The child stared at the water, nostrils lifting, hands clinched, body quivering: thus as if at bay in the presence of an implacable terror. He turned to the open sea, vast, gray, heartless: a bitter waste—might and immensity appalling. Wistfully then to the land, upon which the scattered pack was advancing, moving in disorder, gathering as it went: bold, black coast, naked, uninhabited—but yet sure refuge: being greater than the sea, which it held confined; solid ground, unmoved by the wind, which it flung contemptuously to the sky. And from the land to his father's large, kind face.

“No, b’y,” the cook repeated, “you isn’t. You sees, Tommy lad,” he added, brightening, as with a new idea, “you *isn’t* along o’ me.”

Tommy rubbed his eyes, which were now wet. "I wisht," he sobbed, his under lip writhing, "I *was*—along o' you!"

"I isn't able t' swim t' you, Tommy," said the cook; "an', ah, Tommy!" he went on, reproachfully, wagging his head, "you isn't able t' swim t' me. I tol' you, Tommy—when I went down the Labrador las' year—I *tol'* you t' l'arn t' swim. I tol' you, Tommy—don't you mind the time?—when you was goin' over the side o' th' ol' *Gabriel's Trumpet*, an' I had my head out o' the galley, an' 'twas a fair wind from the sou'east, an' they was weighin' anchor up for'ard—don't you mind the day, lad?—I tol' you, Tommy, you *must* l'arn t' swim afore another season. Now, see what's come t' you!" still reproachfully, but with deepening tenderness. "An' all along o' not mindin' your dad! 'Now,' says you, 'I wisht I'd been a good lad an' minded my dad.' Ah, Tommy—shame! I'm thinkin' you'll mind your dad after this."

Tommy began to bawl.

"Never you care, Tommy," said the cook. "The wind's blowin' we ashore. You an' me'll be saved."

"I wants t' be along o' you!" the boy sobbed.

"Ah, Tommy! *You* isn't alone. You got the Jew."

"But I wants *you*!"

"You'll take care o' Tommy, won't you, Joe?"

Salim Awad smiled. He softly patted Tommy Hand's broad young shoulder. "I weel have," said he, slowly, desperately struggling with the language, "look out for heem. I am not can," he added, with a little laugh, "do ver' well."

"Oh," said the cook, patronizingly, "you're able for it, Joe."

"I am can try eet," Salim answered, courteously bowing, much delighted. "Much 'bliged."

Meantime Tommy had, of quick impulse, stripped off his jacket and boots. He made a ball of the jacket and tossed it to his father.

"What you about, Tommy?" the cook demanded. "Is you goin' t' swim?"

Tommy answered with the boots; whereupon he ran up and down the edge of the pan, and, at last, slipped like a reluctant dog into the water, where he

made a frothy, ineffectual commotion; after which he sank. When he came to the surface Salim Awad hauled him inboard.

“You isn’t goin’ t’ try again, is you, Tommy?” the cook asked.

“No, sir.”

Salim Awad began to breathe again; his eyes, too, returned to their normal size, their usual place.

“No,” the cook observed. “’Tis wise not to. You isn’t able for it, lad. Now, you sees what comes o’ not mindin’ your dad.”

The jacket and boots were tossed back. Tommy resumed the jacket.

“Tommy,” said the cook, severely, “isn’t you got no more sense ’n that?”

“Please, sir,” Tommy whispered, “I forgot.”

“Oh, *did* you! *Did* you forget? I’m thinkin’, Tommy, I hasn’t been bringin’ of you up very well.”

Tommy stripped himself to his rosy skin. He wrung the water out of his soggy garments and with difficulty got into them again.

“You better be jumpin’ about a bit by times,” the cook advised, “or you’ll be cotchin’ cold. An’ your mamma wouldn’t like *that*,” he concluded, “if she ever come t’ hear on it.”

“Ay, sir; please, sir,” said the boy.

They waited in dull patience for the wind to blow the floe against the coast.

It began to snow—a thick fall, by-and-by: the flakes fine and dry as dust. A woolly curtain shut coast and far-off sea from view. The wind, rising still, was charged with stinging frost. It veered; but it blew sufficiently true to the favorable direction: the ice still made ponderously for the shore, reeling in the swell.... The great pan bearing Salim Awad and Tommy Hand lagged; it was soon left behind: to leeward the figures of the skipper, the cook, the first hand, and the crew turned to shadows—dissolved in the cloud of snow. The cook’s young son and the love-lorn peddler from Washington Street alone peopled a world of ice and water, all black and white: heaving, confined. They huddled, cowering from the wind, waiting—helpless, patient:

themselves detached from the world of ice and water, which clamored round about, unrecognized. The spirit of each returned: the one to the Cedars of Lebanon, the other to Lobster Cove; and in each place there was a mother. In plights like this the hearts of men and children turn to distant mothers; for in all the world there is no rest serene—no rest remembered—like the first rest the spirits of men know.

When dusk began to dye the circumambient cloud, the pan of ice was close inshore; the shape of the cliffs—a looming shadow—was vague in the snow beyond. There was no longer any roar of surf; the first of the floe, now against the coast, had smothered the breakers. A voice, coming faintly into the wind, apprised Tommy Hand that his father was ashore.... But the pan still moved sluggishly.

Tommy Hand shivered.

“Ah, Tom-ee!” Salim Awad said, anxiously. “Run! Jump! You weel have—what say?—cotch seek. Ay—cotch thee seek. Eh? R-r-run, Tom-ee!”

“Ay, ay,” Tommy Hand answered. “I’ll be jumpin’ about a bit, I’m thinkin’, t’ keep warm—as me father bid me do.”

“Queek!” cried Salim, laughing.

“Ay,” Tommy muttered; “as me father bid me do.”

“Jump, Tom-ee!” Salim clapped his hands. “Hi, hi! Dance, Tom-ee!”

In the beginning Tommy was deliberate and ponderous; but as his limbs were suppld—and when his blood ran warm again—the dance quickened; for Salim Awad slapped strangely inspiring encouragement, and with droning “la, la!” and sharp “hi, hi!” excited the boy to mad leaps—and madder still. “La, la!” and “Hi, hi!” There was a mystery in it. Tommy leaped high and fast. “La, la!” and “Hi, hi!” In response to the strange Eastern song the fisherboy’s grotesque dance went on.... Came then the appalling catastrophe: the pan of rotten, brittle salt-water ice cracked under the lad; and it fell in two parts, which, in the heave of the sea, at once drifted wide of each other. The one part was heavy, commodious; the other a mere unstable fragment of what the whole had been: and it was upon the fragment that Salim Awad and Tommy Hand were left. Instinctively they sprawled on the ice, which was

now overweighted—unbalanced. Their faces were close; and as they lay rigid—while the ice wavered and the water covered it—they looked into each other's eyes.... There was, not room for both.

“Tom-ee,” Salim Awad gasped; his breath indrawn, quivering, “I am—mus’—go!”

The boy stretched out his hand—an instinctive movement, the impulse of a brave and generous heart—to stop the sacrifice.

“Hush!” Salim Awad whispered, hurriedly, lifting a finger to command peace. “I am—for one queek time—have theenk. Hush, Tom-ee!”

Tommy Hand was silent.

And Salim Awad heard again the clatter and evening mutter of Washington Street, children's cries and the patter of feet, drifting in from the soft spring night—heard again the rattle of dice in the outer room, and the aimless strumming of the canoun—heard again the voice of Khalil Khayyat, lifted concerning such as lose at love. And Salim Awad, staring into a place that was high and distant, beyond the gaudy, dirty ceiling of the little back room of Nageeb Fiani's pastry-shop near the Battery, saw again the form of Haleema, Khouri's star-eyed daughter, floating in a cloud, compassionate and glorious. ““The sun as it sets,”” he thought, in the high words of Antar, spoken of Abla, his beloved, the daughter of Malik, when his heart was sore, ““turns toward her and says, “Darkness obscures the land, do thou arise in my absence.” The brilliant moon calls out to her: “Come forth, for thy face is like me, when I am in all my glory.” The tamarisk-trees complain of her in the morn and in the eve, and say: “Away, thou waning beauty, thou form of the laurel!” She turns away abashed, and throws aside her veil, and the roses are scattered from her soft, fresh cheeks. Graceful is every limb; slender her waist; love-beaming are her glances; waving is her form. The lustre of day sparkles from her forehead, and by the dark shades of her curling ringlets night itself is driven away!”.... They who lose at love? Upon what quest must the wretched ones go? And Khalil Khayyat had said that the Thing was to be found in this place.... Salim Awad's lips trembled: because of the loneliness of this death—and because of the desert, gloomy and infinite, lying beyond.

“Tom-ee,” Salim Awad repeated, smiling now, “I am—mus’—go. Goo’-bye, Tom-ee!”

“No, no!”

In this hoarse, gasping protest Salim Awad perceived rare sweetness. He smiled again—delight, approval. “Ver’ much ’bliged,” he said, politely. Then he rolled off into the water....

One night in winter the wind, driving up from the Battery, whipped a gray, soggy snow past the door of Nageeb Fiani's pastry-shop in Washington Street. The shop was a cosy shelter from the weather; and in the outer room, now crowded with early idlers, they were preaching revolution and the shedding of blood—boastful voices, raised to the falsetto of shallow passion. Khalil Khayyat, knowing well that the throne of Abdul-Hamid would not tremble to the talk of Washington Street, sat unheeding in the little back room; and the coal on the narghile was glowing red, and the coffee was steaming on the round table, and a cloud of fragrant smoke was in the air. In the big, black book, lying open before the poet, were to be found, as always, the thoughts of Abo Elola Elmoarri.

Tanous, the newsboy—the son of Yusef, the father of Samara, by many called Abosamara—threw *Kawkab Elhorriah* on the cook's counter.

“News of death!” cried he, as he hurried importantly on. “*Kawkab!* News of death!”

The words caught the ear of Khalil Khayyat. “News of death?” mused he. “It is a massacre in Armenia.” He turned again, with a hopeless sigh, to the big, black book.

“News of death!” cried Nageeb Fiani, in the outer room. “What is this?”

The death of Salim Awad: being communicated, as the editor made known, by one who knew, and had so informed an important person at St. John's, who had despatched the news south from that far place to Washington Street.... And when Nageeb Fiani had learned the manner of the death of Salim Awad, he made haste to Khalil Khayyat, holding *Kawkab Elhorriah* open in his hand.

“There is news of death, O Khalil!” said he.

“Ah,” Khayyat answered, with his long finger marking the place in the big, black book, “there has been a massacre in Armenia. God will yet punish the murderer.”

“No, Khalil.”

Khayyat looked up in alarm. “The Turks have not shed blood in Beirut?”

“No, Khalil.”

“Not so? Ah, then the mother of Shishim has been cast into prison because of the sedition uttered by her son in this place; and she has there died.”

“No, Khalil.”

“Nageeb,” Khayyat demanded, quietly, “of whom is this sad news spoken?”

“The news is from the north.”

Khayyat closed the book. He sipped his coffee, touched the coal on the narghile and puffed it to a glow, contemplated the gaudy wall-paper, watched a spider pursue a patient course toward the ceiling; at last opened the big, black book, and began to turn the leaves with aimless, nervous fingers. Nageeb stood waiting for the poet to speak; and in the doorway, beyond, the people from the outer room had gathered, waiting also for words to fall from the lips of this man; for the moment was great, and the poet was great.

“Salim Awad,” Khayyat muttered, “is dead.”

“Salim is dead. He died that a little one might live.”

“That a little one might live?”

“Even so, Khalil—that a child might have life.”

Khayyat smiled. “The quest is ended,” he said. “It is well that Salim is dead.”

It is well? The people marvelled that Khalil Khayyat should have spoken these cruel words. It is well? And Khalil Khayyat had said so?

“That Salim should die in the cold water?” Nageeb Fiani protested.

“That Salim should die—the death that he did. It is well.”

The word was soon to be spoken; out of the mind and heart of Khalil Khayyat, the poet, great wisdom would appear. There was a crowding at the door: the people pressed closer that no shade of meaning might be lost; the dark faces turned yet more eager; the silence deepened, until the muffled rattle of trucks, lumbering through the snowy night, and the roar of the Elevated train were plain to be heard. What would the poet say? What word of eternal truth would he speak?

“It is well?” Nageeb Fiani whispered.

“It is well.”

The time was not yet come. The people still crowded, still shuffled—still

breathed. The poet waited, having the patience of poets.

“Tell us, O Khalil!” Nageeb Fiani implored.

“They who lose at love,” said Khalil Khayyat, fingering the leaves of the big, black book, “must patiently seek some high death.”

Then the people knew, beyond peradventure, that Khalil Khayyat was indeed a great poet.

IX—THE REVOLUTION AT SATAN’S TRAP

Jehoshaphat Rudd of Satan’s Trap was shy—able-bodied, to be sure, if a gigantic frame means anything, and mature, if a family of nine is competent evidence, but still as shy as a child. Moreover, he had the sad habit of anxiety: whence tense eyelids, an absent, poignant gaze, a perpetual pucker between the brows. His face was brown and big, framed in tawny, soft hair and beard, and spread with a delicate web of wrinkles, spun by the weather—a round countenance, simple, kindly, apathetic. The wind had inflamed the whites of his eyes and turned the rims blood red; but the wells in the midst were deep and clear and cool. Reserve, courageous and methodical diligence at the fishing, a quick, tremulous concern upon salutation—by these signs the folk of his harbor had long ago been persuaded that he was a fool; and a fool he was, according to the convention of the Newfoundland outports: a shy, dull fellow, whose interests were confined to his punt, his gear, the grounds off the Tombstone, and the bellies of his young ones. He had no part with the disputatious of Satan’s Trap: no voice, for example, in the rancorous discussions of the purposes and ways of the Lord God Almighty, believing the purposes to be wise and kind, and the ways the Lord’s own business. He was shy, anxious, and preoccupied; wherefore he was called a fool, and made no answer: for doubtless he *was* a fool. And what did it matter? He would fare neither better nor worse.

Nor would Jehoshaphat wag a tongue with the public-spirited men of Satan’s Trap: the times and the customs had no interest, no significance, for him; he was troubled with his own concerns. Old John Wull, the trader, with whom (and no other) the folk might barter their fish, personified all the abuses, as a matter of course. But—

“I ’low I’m too busy t’ think,” Jehoshaphat would reply, uneasily. “I’m too

busy. I—I—why, I got t' tend my *fish!*”

This was the quality of his folly.

It chanced one summer dawn, however, when the sky was flushed with tender light, and the shadows were trooping westward, and the sea was placid, that the punts of Timothy Yule and Jehoshaphat Rudd went side by side to the Tombstone grounds. It was dim and very still upon the water, and solemn, too, in that indifferent vastness between the gloom and the rosy, swelling light. Satan's Trap lay behind in the shelter and shadow of great hills laid waste—a lean, impoverished, listless home of men.

“You dunderhead!” Timothy Yule assured Jehoshaphat. “He've been robbin' you.”

“Maybe,” said Jehoshaphat, listlessly. “I been givin' the back kitchen a coat o' lime, an' I isn't had no time t' give t' thinkin'.”

“An' he've been robbin' this harbor for forty year.”

“Dear man!” Jehoshaphat exclaimed, in dull surprise. “Have he told you that?”

“Told me!” cried Timothy. “No,” he added, with bitter restraint; “he've not.”

Jehoshaphat was puzzled. “Then,” said he, “how come you t' know?”

“Why, they says so.”

Jehoshaphat's reply was gently spoken, a compassionate rebuke. “An I was you, Timothy,” said he, “I wouldn't be harsh in judgment. 'Tisn't quite Christian.”

“My God!” ejaculated the disgusted Timothy.

After that they pulled in silence for a time. Jehoshaphat's face was averted, and Timothy was aware of having, in a moment of impatience, not only committed a strategic indiscretion, but of having betrayed his innermost habit of profanity. The light grew and widened and yellowed; the cottages of Satan's Trap took definite outline, the hills their ancient form, the sea its familiar aspect. Sea and sky and distant rock were wide awake and companionably smiling. The earth was blue and green and yellow, a glittering place.

“Look you! Jehoshaphat,” Timothy demanded; “is you in debt?”

“I is.”

“An’ is you ever been out o’ debt?”

“I isn’t.”

“How come you t’ know?”

“Why,” Jehoshaphat explained, “Mister Wull *told* me so. An’ whatever,” he qualified, “father was in debt when he died, an’ Mister Wull told me I ought t’ pay. Father was *my* father,” Jehoshaphat argued, “an’ I ’lowed I *would* pay. For,” he concluded, “’twas right.”

“Is he ever give you an account?”

“Well, no—no, he haven’t. But it wouldn’t do no good, for I’ve no learnin’, an’ can’t read.”

“No,” Timothy burst out, “an’ he isn’t give nobody no accounts.”

“Well,” Jehoshaphat apologized, “he’ve a good deal on his mind, lookin’ out for the wants of us folk. He’ve a *wonderful* lot o’ brain labor. He’ve all them letters t’ write t’ St. John’s, an’ he’ve got a power of ’rithmetic t’ do, an’ he’ve got the writin’ in them big books t’ trouble un, an’—”

Timothy sneered.

“Ah, well,” sighed Jehoshaphat, “an I was you, Timothy, I wouldn’t be harsh in judgment.”

Timothy laughed uproariously.

“Not harsh,” Jehoshaphat repeated, quietly—“not in judgment.”

“Damn un!” Timothy cursed between his teeth. “The greedy squid, the devil-fish’s spawn, with his garden an’ his sheep an’ his cow! *You* got a cow, Jehoshaphat? *You* got turnips an’ carrots? *You* got ol’ Bill Lutt t’ gather soil, an’ plant, an’ dig, an’ weed, while you smokes plug-cut in the sunshine? Where’s *your* garden, Jehoshaphat? Where’s *your* onions? The green lumpfish! An’ where do he get his onions, an’ where do he get his soup, an’ where do he get his cheese an’ raisins? ’Tis out o’ you an’ me an’ all the other poor folk o’ Satan’s Trap. ’Tis from the fish, an’ *he* never cast a line. ’Tis from the fish that we takes from the grounds while he squats like a

lobster in the red house an' in the shop. An' he gives less for the fish 'n he gets, an' he gets more for the goods an' grub 'n he gives. The thief, the robber, the whale's pup! Is you able, Jehoshaphat, t' have the doctor from Sniffle's Arm for *your* woman! Is you able t' feed *your* kids with cow's milk an' baby-food?"

Jehoshaphat mildly protested that he had not known the necessity.

"An' what," Timothy proceeded, "is you ever got from the grounds but rheumatiz an' salt-water sores?"

"I got enough t' eat," said Jehoshaphat.

Timothy was scornful.

"Well," Jehoshaphat argued, in defence of himself, "the world have been goin' for'ard a wonderful long time at Satan's Trap, an' nobody else haven't got no more'n just enough."

"Enough!" Timothy fumed. "'Tis kind o' the Satan's Trap trader t' give you that! *I'll* tell un," he exploded; "I'll give un a piece o' my mind afore I dies."

"Don't!" Jehoshaphat pleaded.

Timothy snorted his indignation.

"I wouldn't be rash," said Jehoshaphat. "Maybe," he warned, "he'd not take your fish no more. An' maybe he'd close the shop an' go away."

"Jus' you wait," said Timothy.

"Don't you do it, lad!" Jehoshaphat begged. "'Twould make such a wonderful fuss in the world!"

"An' would you think o' that?"

"I isn't got *time* t' think," Jehoshaphat complained. "I'm busy. I 'low I got my fish t' cotch an' cure. I isn't got time. I—I—I'm too busy."

They were on the grounds. The day had broken, a blue, serene day, knowing no disquietude. They cast their grapnels overside, and they fished until the shadows had fled around the world and were hurrying out of the east. And they reeled their lines, and stowed the fish, and patiently pulled toward the harbor tickler, talking not at all of the Satan's Trap trader, but only of certain agreeable expectations which the young Timothy had been informed he

might entertain with reasonable certainty.

“I ’low,” said Jehoshaphat, when they were within the harbor, “I understand. I got the hang of it,” he repeated, with a little smile, “now.”

“Of what?” Timothy wondered.

“Well,” Jehoshaphat explained, “’tis your first.”

This was a sufficient explanation of Timothy’s discontent. Jehoshaphat remembered that he, too, had been troubled, fifteen years ago, when the first of the nine had brought the future to his attention. He was more at ease when this enlightenment came.

Old John Wull was a gray, lean little widower, with a bald head, bowed legs, a wide, straight, thin-lipped mouth, and shaven, ashy cheeks. His eyes were young enough, blue and strong and quick, often peering masterfully through the bushy brows, which he could let drop like a curtain. In contrast with the rugged hills and illimitable sea and stout men of Satan’s Trap, his body was withered and contemptibly diminutive. His premises occupied a point of shore within the harbor—a wharf, a storehouse, a shop, a red dwelling, broad drying-flakes, and a group of out-buildings, all of which were self-sufficient and proud, and looked askance at the cottages that lined the harbor shore and strayed upon the hills beyond.

It was his business to supply the needs of the folk in exchange for the fish they took from the sea—the barest need, the whole of the catch. Upon this he insisted, because he conscientiously believed, in his own way, that upon the fruits of toil commercial enterprise should feed to satiety, and cast the peelings and cores into the back yard for the folk to nose like swine.

Thus he was accustomed to allow the fifty illiterate, credulous families of Satan’s Trap sufficient to keep them warm and to quiet their stomachs, but no more; for, he complained: “Isn’t they got enough on their backs?” and, “Isn’t they got enough t’ eat?” and, “Lord!” said he, “they’ll be wantin’ figs an’ joolry next.”

There were times when he trembled for the fortune he had gathered in this way—in years when there were no fish, and he must feed the men and women and human litters of the Trap for nothing at all, through which he was

courageous, if niggardly. When the folk complained against him, he wondered, with a righteous wag of the head, what would become of them if he should vanish with his property and leave them to fend for themselves. Sometimes he reminded them of this possibility; and then they got afraid, and thought of their young ones, and begged him to forget their complaint. His only disquietude was the fear of hell: whereby he was led to pay the wage of a succession of parsons, if they preached comforting doctrine and blue-pencilled the needle's eye from the Testament; but not otherwise. By some wayward, compelling sense of moral obligation, he paid the school-teacher, invariably, generously, so that the little folk of Satan's Trap might learn to read and write in the winter months. 'Rithmetic he condemned, but tolerated, as being some part of that unholy, imperative thing called l'arnin'; but he had no feeling against readin' and writin'.

There was no other trader within thirty miles.

"They'll trade with me," John Wull would say to himself, and be comforted, "or they'll starve."

It was literally true.

In that winter certain gigantic forces, with which old John Wull had nothing whatever to do, were inscrutably passionate. They went their way, in some vast, appalling quarrel, indifferent to the consequences. John Wull's soul, money, philosophy, the hopes of Satan's Trap, the various agonies of the young, were insignificant. Currents and winds and frost had no knowledge of them. It was a late season: the days were gray and bitter, the air was frosty, the snow lay crisp and deep in the valleys, the harbor water was frozen. Long after the time for blue winds and yellow hills the world was still sullen and white. Easterly gales, blowing long and strong, swept the far outer sea of drift-ice—drove it in upon the land, pans and bergs, and heaped it against the cliffs. There was no safe exit from Satan's Trap. The folk were shut in by ice and an impassable wilderness. This was not by the power or contriving of John Wull: the old man had nothing to do with it; but he compelled the season, impiously, it may be, into conspiracy with him. By-and-by, in the cottages, the store of food, which had seemed sufficient when the first snow flew, was exhausted. The flour-barrels of Satan's Trap were empty. Full barrels were in the storehouse of John Wull, but in no other place. So it

chanced that one day, in a swirling fall of snow, Jehoshaphat Rudd came across the harbor with a dog and a sled.

John Wull, from the little office at the back of the shop, where it was warm and still, watched the fisherman breast the white wind.

“Mister Wull,” said Jehoshaphat, when he stood in the office, “I ’low I’ll be havin’ another barrel o’ flour.”

Wull frowned.

“Ay,” Jehoshaphat repeated, perplexed; “another barrel.”

Wull pursed his lips.

“O’ flour,” said Jehoshaphat, staring.

The trader drummed on the desk and gazed out of the window. He seemed to forget that Jehoshaphat Rudd stood waiting. Jehoshaphat felt awkward and out of place; he smoothed his tawny beard, cracked his fingers, scratched his head, shifted from one foot to the other. Some wonder troubled him, then some strange alarm. He had never before realized that the lives of his young were in the keeping of this man.

“Flour,” he ventured, weakly—“one barrel.”

Wull turned. “It’s gone up,” said he.

“Have it, now!” Jehoshaphat exclaimed. “I ’lowed last fall, when I paid eight,” he proceeded, “that she’d clumb as high as she could get ’ithout fallin’. But she’ve gone up, says you? Dear man!”

“Sky high,” said the trader.

“Dear man!”

The stove was serene and of good conscience. It labored joyously in response to the clean-souled wind. For a moment, while the trader watched the snow through his bushy brows and Jehoshaphat Rudd hopelessly scratched his head, its hearty, honest roar was the only voice lifted in the little office at the back of John Wull’s shop.

“An’ why?” Jehoshaphat timidly asked.

“Scarcity.”

“Oh,” said Jehoshaphat, as though he understood. He paused. “Isn’t you got

as much as you *had*?" he inquired.

The trader nodded.

"Isn't you got enough in the storehouse t' last till the mail-boat runs?"

"Plenty, thank God!"

"Scarcity," Jehoshaphat mused. "Mm-m-m! Oh, I sees," he added, vacantly. "Well, Mister Wull," he sighed, "I 'low I'll take one of Early Rose an' pay the rise."

Wull whistled absently.

"Early Rose," Jehoshaphat repeated, with a quick, keen glance of alarm.

The trader frowned.

"Rose," Jehoshaphat muttered. He licked his lips. "Of Early," he reiterated, in a gasp, "Rose."

"All right, Jehoshaphat."

Down came the big key from the nail. Jehoshaphat's round face beamed. The trader slapped his ledger shut, moved toward the door, but stopped dead, and gazed out of the window, while his brows fell over his eyes, and he fingered the big key.

"Gone up t' eighteen," said he, without turning.

Jehoshaphat stared aghast.

"Wonderful high for flour," the trader continued, in apologetic explanation; "but flour's wonderful scarce."

"Tisn't *right*!" Jehoshaphat declared. "Eighteen dollars a barrel for Early Rose? 'Tisn't right!"

The key was restored to the nail.

"I can't pay it, Mister Wull. No, no, man, I can't do it. Eighteen! Mercy o' God! 'Tisn't right! 'Tis too *much* for Early Rose."

The trader wheeled.

"An' I *won't* pay it," said Jehoshaphat.

"You don't have to," was the placid reply.

Jehoshaphat started. Alarm—a sudden vision of his children—quieted his indignation. “But, Mister Wull, sir,” he pleaded, “I got t’ have it. I—why—I just *got* t’ have it!”

The trader was unmoved.

“Eighteen!” cried Jehoshaphat, flushing. “Mercy o’ God! I says ’t isn’t right.”

“Tis the price.”

“’T isn’t right!”

Wull’s eyes were now flashing. His lips were drawn thin over his teeth. His brows had fallen again. From the ambush they made he glared at Jehoshaphat.

“I say,” said he, in a passionless voice, “that the price o’ flour at Satan’s Trap is this day eighteen.”

Jehoshaphat was in woful perplexity.

“Eighteen,” snapped Wull. “Hear me?”

They looked into each other’s eyes. Outside the storm raged, a clean, frank passion; for nature is a fair and honest foe. In the little office at the back of John Wull’s shop the withered body of the trader shook with vicious anger. Jehoshaphat’s round, brown, simple face was gloriously flushed; his head was thrown back, his shoulders were squared, his eyes were sure and fearless.

“’Tis robbery!” he burst out.

Wull’s wrath exploded. “You bay-noddy!” he began; “you pig of a punt-fisherman; you penniless, ragged fool; you man without a copper; you sore-handed idiot! What you whinin’ about? What right *you* got t’ yelp in my office?”

Of habit Jehoshaphat quailed.

“If you don’t want my flour,” roared Wull, fetching the counter a thwack with his white fist, “leave it be! ’Tis mine, isn’t it? I *paid* for it. I *got* it. There’s a law in this land, you pauper, that *says* so. There’s a law. Hear me? There’s a law, Mine, mine!” he cried, in a frenzy, lifting his lean arms. “What I got is mine. I’ll eat it,” he fumed, “or I’ll feed my pigs with it, or I’ll spill it for the fishes. They isn’t no law t’ make me sell t’ *you*. An’ you’ll pay what I’m askin’, or you’ll starve.”

“You wouldn’t do that, sir,” Jehoshaphat gently protested. “Oh no—*no*! Ah, now, you wouldn’t do that. You wouldn’t throw it t’ the fishes, would you? Not flour! ’Twould be a sinful waste.”

“Tis my right.”

“Ay,’ Mister Wull,” Jehoshaphat argued, with a little smile, “’tis yours, I’ll admit; but we been sort o’ dependin’ on you t’ lay in enough t’ get us through the winter.”

WULL’s response was instant and angry. “Get you out o’ my shop,” said he, “an’ come back with a civil tongue!”

“I’ll go, Mister Wull,” said Jehoshaphat, quietly, picking at a thread in his faded cap. “I’ll go. Ay, I’ll go. But—I got t’ have the flour. I—I—just *got* to. But I won’t pay,” he concluded, “no eighteen dollars a barrel.”

The trader laughed.

“For,” said Jehoshaphat, “’tisn’t right.”

Jehoshaphat went home without the flour, complaining of the injustice.

Jehoshaphat Rudd would have no laughter in the house, no weeping, no questions, no noise of play. For two days he sat brooding by the kitchen fire. His past of toil and unfailing recompense, the tranquil routine of life, was strangely like a dream, far off, half forgot. As a reality it had vanished. Hitherto there had been no future; there was now no past, no ground for expectation. He must, at least, take time to think, have courage to judge, the will to retaliate. It was more important, more needful, to sit in thought, with idle hands, than to mend the rent in his herring seine. He was mystified and deeply troubled.

Sometimes by day Jehoshaphat strode to the window and looked out over the harbor ice to the point of shore where stood the storehouse and shop and red dwelling of old John Wull. By night he drew close to the fire, and there sat with his face in his hands; nor would he go to bed, nor would he speak, nor would he move.

In the night of the third day the children awoke and cried for food. Jehoshaphat rose from his chair, and stood shaking, with breath suspended, hands clinched, eyes wide. He heard their mother rise and go crooning from

cot to cot. Presently the noise was hushed: sobs turned to whimpers, and whimpers to plaintive whispers, and these complaints to silence. The house was still; but Jehoshaphat seemed all the while to hear the children crying in the little rooms above. He began to pace the floor, back and forth, back and forth, now slow, now in a fury, now with listless tread. And because his children had cried for food in the night the heart of Jehoshaphat Rudd was changed. From the passion of those hours, at dawn, he emerged serene, and went to bed.

At noon of that day Jehoshaphat Rudd was in the little office at the back of the shop. John Wull was alone, perched on a high stool at the desk, a pen in hand, a huge book open before him.

“I’m come, sir,” said Jehoshaphat, “for the barrel o’ flour.”

The trader gave him no attention.

“I’m come, sir,” Jehoshaphat repeated, his voice rising a little, “for the flour.”

The trader dipped his pen in ink.

“I says, sir,” said Jehoshaphat, laying a hand with some passion upon the counter, “that I’m come for that there barrel o’ flour.”

“An’ I s’pose,” the trader softly inquired, eying the page of his ledger more closely, “that you thinks you’ll get it, eh?”

“Ay, sir.”

Wull dipped his pen and scratched away.

“Mister Wull!”

The trader turned a leaf.

“Mister Wull,” Jehoshaphat cried, angrily, “I wants flour. Is you gone deaf overnight?”

Impertinent question and tone of voice made old John Wull wheel on the stool. In the forty years he had traded at Satan’s Trap he had never before met with impertinence that was not timidly offered. He bent a scowling face upon Jehoshaphat. “An’ you thinks,” said he, “that you’ll get it?”

“I does.”

“Oh, you does, does you?”

Jehoshaphat nodded.

“It all depends,” said Wull. “You’re wonderful deep in debt, Jehoshaphat.” The trader had now command of himself. “I been lookin’ up your account,” he went on, softly. “You’re so wonderful far behind, Jehoshaphat, on account o’ high livin’ an’ Christmas presents, that I been thinkin’ I might do the business a injury by givin’ you more credit. I can’t think o’ *myself*, Jehoshaphat, in this matter. ’Tis a *business* matter; an’ I got t’ think o’ the business. You sees, Jehoshaphat, eighteen dollars more credit—”

“Eight,” Jehoshaphat corrected.

“Eighteen,” the trader insisted.

Jehoshaphat said nothing, nor did his face express feeling. He was looking stolidly at the big key of the storehouse.

“The flour depends,” Wull proceeded, after a thoughtful pause, through which he had regarded the gigantic Jehoshaphat with startled curiosity, “on what I thinks the business will stand in the way o’ givin’ more credit t’ you.”

“No, sir,” said Jehoshaphat.

Wull put down his pen, slipped from the high stool, and came close to Jehoshaphat. He was mechanical and slow in these movements, as though all at once perplexed, given some new view, which disclosed many and strange possibilities. For a moment he leaned against the counter, legs crossed, staring at the floor, with his long, scrawny right hand smoothing his cheek and chin. It was quiet in the office, and warm, and well-disposed, and sunlight came in at the window.

Soon the trader stirred, as though awakening. “You was sayin’ eight, wasn’t you?” he asked, without looking up.

“Eight, sir.”

The trader pondered this. “An’ how,” he inquired, at last, “was you makin’ that out?”

“Tis a fair price.”

Wull smoothed his cheek and chin. “Ah!” he murmured. He mused, staring at the floor, his restless fingers beating a tattoo on his teeth. He had turned

woebegone and very pale. “Jehoshaphat,” he asked, turning upon the man, “would you mind tellin’ me just how you’re ’lowin’ t’ get my flour against my will?”

Jehoshaphat looked away.

“I’d like t’ know,” said Wull, “if you wouldn’t mind tellin’ me.”

“No,” Jehoshaphat answered. “No, Mister Wull—I wouldn’t mind tellin’.”

“Then,” Wull demanded, “how?”

“Mister Wull,” Jehoshaphat explained, “I’m a bigger man than you.”

It was very quiet in the office. The wind had gone down in the night, the wood in the stove was burned to glowing coals. It was very, very still in old John Wull’s office at the back of the shop, and old John Wull turned away, and went absently to the desk, where he fingered the leaves of his ledger, and dipped his pen in ink, but did not write. There was a broad window over the desk, looking out upon the harbor; through this, blankly, he watched the children at play on the ice, but did not see them. By-and-by, when he had closed the book and put the desk in order, he came back to the counter, leaned against it, crossed his legs, began to smooth his chin, while he mused, staring at the square of sunlight on the floor. Jehoshaphat could not look at him. The old man’s face was so gray and drawn, so empty of pride and power, his hand so thin and unsteady, his eyes so dull, so deep in troubled shadows, that Jehoshaphat’s heart ached. He wished that the world had gone on in peace, that the evil practices of the great were still hid from his knowledge, that there had been no vision, no call to revolution; he rebelled against the obligation upon him, though it had come to him as a thing that was holy. He regretted his power, had shame, indeed, because of the ease with which the mighty could be put down. He felt that he must be generous, tender, that he must not misuse his strength.

The patch of yellow light had perceptibly moved before the trader spoke. “Jehoshaphat,” he asked, “you know much about law?”

“Well, no, Mister Wull,” Jehoshaphat answered, with simple candor; “not *too* much.”

“The law will put you in jail for this.”

Constables and jails were like superstitious terrors to Jehoshaphat. He had

never set eyes on the brass buttons and stone walls of the law.

“Oh no—*no!*” he protested. “He wouldn’t! Not in *jail!*”

“The law,” Wull warned, with grim delight, “will put you in jail.”

“He *couldn’t!*” Jehoshaphat complained. “As I takes it, the law sees fair play atween men. That’s what he was *made* for. I ’low he ought t’ put you in jail for raisin’ the price o’ flour t’ eighteen; but not me—not for what I’m bound t’ do, Mister Wull, law or no law, as God lives! ’Twouldn’t be right, sir, if he put me in jail for that.”

“The law will.”

“But,” Jehoshaphat still persisted, doggedly, “’twouldn’t be *right!*”

The trader fell into a muse.

“I’m come,” Jehoshaphat reminded him, “for the flour.”

“You can’t have it.”

“Oh, dear!” Jehoshaphat sighed. “My, my! Pshaw! I ’low, then, us’ll just have t’ *take* it.”

Jehoshaphat went to the door of the shop. It was cold and gloomy in the shop. He opened the door. The public of Satan’s Trap, in the persons of ten men of the place, fathers of families (with the exception of Timothy Yule, who had qualified upon his expectations), trooped over the greasy floor, their breath cloudy in the frosty air, and crowded into the little office, in the wake of Jehoshaphat Rudd. They had the gravity of mien, the set faces, the compassionate eyes, the merciless purpose, of a jury. The shuffling subsided. It was once more quiet in the little office. Timothy Yule’s hatred got the better of his sense of propriety: he laughed, but the laugh expired suddenly, for Jehoshaphat Rudd’s hand fell with unmistakable meaning upon his shoulder.

John Wull faced them.

“I ’low, Mister Wull,” said Jehoshaphat, diffidently, “that we wants the storehouse key.”

The trader put the key in his pocket.

“The key,” Jehoshaphat objected; “we wants that there key.”

“By the Almighty!” old John Wull snarled, “you’ll all go t’ jail for this, if they’s a law in Newfoundland.”

The threat was ignored.

“Don’t hurt un, lads,” Jehoshaphat cautioned; “for he’s so wonderful tender. He’ve not been bred the way we was. He’s wonderful old an’ lean an’ brittle,” he added, gently; “so I ’low we’d best be careful.”

John Wull’s resistance was merely technical.

“Now, Mister Wull,” said Jehoshaphat, when the big key was in his hand and the body of the trader had been tenderly deposited in his chair by the stove, “don’t you go an’ fret. We isn’t the thieves that break in an’ steal nor the moths that go an’ corrupt. We isn’t robbers, an’ we isn’t mean men. We’re the public,” he explained, impressively, “o’ Satan’s Trap. We got together, Mister Wull,” he continued, feeling some delight in the oratory which had been thrust upon him, “an’ we ’lowed that flour was worth about eight; but we’ll pay nine, for we got thinkin’ that if flour goes up an’ down, accordin’ t’ the will o’ God, it ought t’ go up now, if ever, the will o’ God bein’ a mystery, anyhow. We don’t want you t’ close up the shop an’ go away, after this, Mister Wull; for we got t’ have you, or some one like you, t’ do what you been doin’, so as we can have minds free o’ care for the fishin’. If they was anybody at Satan’s Trap that could read an’ write like you, an’ knowed about money an’ prices—if they was anybody like that at Satan’s Trap, willin’ t’ do woman’s work, which I doubts, we wouldn’t care whether you went or stayed; but they isn’t, an’ we can’t do ’ithout you. So don’t you fret,” Jehoshaphat concluded. “You set right there by the fire in this little office o’ yours. Tom Lower’ll put more billets on the fire for you, an’ you’ll be wonderful comfortable till we gets through. I’ll see that account is kep’ by Tim Yule of all we takes. You can put it on the books just when you likes. No hurry, Mister Wull—no hurry. The prices will be them that held in the fall o’ the year, ’cept flour, which is gone up t’ nine by the barrel. An’, ah, now, Mister Wull,” Jehoshaphat pleaded, “don’t you have no hard feelin’. ’Twouldn’t be right; We’re the public; so *please* don’t you go an’ have no hard feelin’.”

The trader would say nothing.

“Now, lads,” said Jehoshaphat, “us’ll go.” In the storehouse there were two interruptions to the transaction of business in an orderly fashion. Tom Lower,

who was a lazy fellow and wasteful, as Jehoshaphat knew, demanded thirty pounds of pork, and Jehoshaphat knocked him down. Timothy Yule, the anarchist, proposed to sack the place, and him Jehoshaphat knocked down twice. There was no further difficulty.

“Now, Mister Wull,” said Jehoshaphat, as he laid the key and the account on the trader’s desk, “the public o’ Satan’s Trap is wonderful sorry; but the thing had t’ be done.”

The trader would not look up.

“It makes such a wonderful fuss in the world,” Jehoshaphat complained, “that the crew hadn’t no love for the job. But it—it—it jus’ had t’ be done.”

Old John Wull scowled.

For a long time, if days may be long, Jehoshaphat Rudd lived in the fear of constables and jails, which were the law, to be commanded by the wealth of old John Wull; and for the self-same period—the days being longer because of the impatience of hate—old John Wull lived in expectation of his revenge. Jehoshaphat Rudd lowed he’d stand by, anyhow, an’ *go t’ jail*, if ’twas needful t’ maintain the rights o’ man. Ay, *he’d go t’ jail*, an’ be whipped an’ starved, as the imagination promised, but he’d be jiggered if he’d “*pologize*.” Old John Wull kept grim watch upon the winds; for upon the way the wind blew depended the movement of the ice, and the clearing of the sea, and the first voyage of the mail-boat. He was glad that he had been robbed; so glad that he rubbed his lean, transparent hands until the flush of life appeared to surprise him; so glad that he chuckled until his housekeeper feared his false teeth would by some dreadful mischance vanish within him. Jail? ay, he’d put Jehoshaphat Rudd in jail; but he would forgive the others, that they might continue to fish and to consume food. In jail, ecod! t’ be fed on bread an’ water, t’ be locked up, t’ wear stripes, t’ make brooms, t’ lie there so long that the last little Rudd would find its own father a stranger when ’twas all over with. ’Twould be fair warning t’ the malcontent o’ the folk; they would bide quiet hereafter. All the people would toil and trade; they would complain no more. John Wull was glad that the imprudence of Jehoshaphat Rudd had provided him with power to restore the ancient peace to Satan’s Trap.

One day in the spring, when the bergs and great floes of the open had been blown to sea, and the snow was gone from the slopes of the hills, and the sun was out, and the earth was warm and yellow and merrily dripping, old John Wull attempted a passage of the harbor by the ice, which there had lingered, confined. It was only to cross the narrows from Haul-Away Head to Daddy Tool's Point, no more than a stone's throw for a stout lad. The ice had been broken into pans by a stiff breeze from the west, and was then moving with the wind, close-packed, bound out to sea, there to be dispersed and dissolved. It ran sluggishly through the narrows, scraping the rocks of the head and of the point; the heave of the sea slipped underneath and billowed the way, and the outermost pans of ice broke from the press and went off with the waves. But the feet of old John Wull were practised; he essayed the crossing without concern—indeed, with an absent mind. Presently he stopped to rest; and he stared out to sea, musing; and when again he looked about, the sea had softly torn the pan from the pack.

Old John Wull was adrift, and bound out.

“Ahoy, you, Jehoshaphat!” he shouted. “Jehoshaphat! Oh, Jehoshaphat!”

Jehoshaphat came to the door of his cottage on Daddy Tool's Point.

“Launch that rodney,”^[1] Wull directed, “an’ put me on shore. An’ lively, man,” he complained. “I’ll be cotchin’ cold out here.”

With the help of Timothy Yule, who chanced to be gossiping in the kitchen, Jehoshaphat Rudd got the rodney in the open water by the stage-head. What with paddling and much hearty hauling and pushing, they had the little craft across the barrier of ice in the narrows before the wind had blown old John Wull a generous rod out to sea.

“Timothy, lad,” Jehoshaphat whispered, “I ’low you better stay here.”

Timothy kept to the ice.

“You been wonderful slow,” growled Wull. “Come ’round t’ the lee side, you dunderhead! Think I wants t’ get my feet wet?”

“No, sir,” Jehoshaphat protested. “Oh no; I wouldn’t have you do that an I could *help* it.”

The harbor folk were congregating on Haul-Away Head and Daddy Tool's Point. ’Twas an agreeable excitement to see John Wull in a mess—in a

ludicrous predicament, which made him helpless before their eyes. They whispered, they smiled behind their hands, they chuckled inwardly.

Jehoshaphat pulled to the lee side of the pan.

“Come ’longside,” said Wull.

Jehoshaphat dawdled.

“Come ’longside, you fool!” Wull roared. “Think I can leap three fathom?”

“No, sir; oh no; no, indeed.”

“Then come ’longside.”

Jehoshaphat sighed.

“Come in here, you crazy pauper!” Wull screamed, stamping his rage. “Come in here an’ put me ashore!”

“Mister Wull!”

Wull eyed the man in amazement.

“Labor,” said Jehoshaphat, gently, “is gone up.”

Timothy Yule laughed, but on Haul-Away Head and Daddy Tool’s Point the folk kept silent; nor did old John Wull, on the departing pan, utter a sound.

“Sky high,” Jehoshaphat concluded.

The sun was broadly, warmly shining, the sky was blue; but the wind was rising smartly, and far off over the hills of Satan’s Trap, beyond the wilderness that was known, it was turning gray and tumultuous. Old John Wull scowled, wheeled, and looked away to sea; he did not see the ominous color and writhing in the west.

“We don’t want no law, Mister Wull,” Jehoshaphat continued, “at Satan’s Trap.”

Wull would not attend.

“Not law,” Jehoshaphat repeated; “for we knows well enough at Satan’s Trap,” said he, “what’s fair as atween men. You jus’ leave the law stay t’ St. John’s, sir, where he’s t’ home. He isn’t fair, by no means; an’ we don’t want un here t’ make trouble.”

The trader’s back was still turned.

“An’, Mister Wull,” Jehoshaphat entreated, his face falling like a child’s, “don’t you have no hard feelin’ over this. Ah, now, *don’t!*” he pleaded. “You won’t, will you? For we isn’t got no hate for you, Mister Wull, an’ we isn’t got no greed for ourselves. We just wants what’s fair—just what’s fair.” He added: “Just on’y that. We likes t’ see you have your milk an’ butter an’ fresh beef an’ nuts an’ whiskey. We don’t want them things, for they isn’t ours by rights. All we wants is just on’y fair play. We don’t want no law, sir: for, *ecod!*” Jehoshaphat declared, scratching his head in bewilderment, “the law looks after them that *has*, so far as I *knows*, sir, an’ don’t know nothin’ about them that *hasn’t*. An’ we don’t want un here at Satan’s Trap. We won’t *have* un! We—we—why, *ecod!* we—we can’t ’low it! We’d be ashamed of ourselves an we ’lowed you t’ fetch the law t’ Satan’s Trap t’ wrong us. We’re free men, isn’t we?” he demanded, indignantly. “Isn’t we? *Ecod!* I ’low we *is!* You think, John Wull,” he continued, in wrath, “that *you* can do what you like with we just because you an’ the likes o’ you is gone an’ got a law? You can’t! You can’t! An’ you can’t, just because we won’t ’low it.”

It was an incendiary speech.

“No, you can’t!” Timothy Yule screamed from the ice, “you robber, you thief, you whale’s pup! *I’ll* tell you what I thinks o’ you. You can’t scare *me*. I wants that meadow you stole from my father. I wants that meadow—”

“Timothy,” Jehoshaphat interrupted, quietly, “you’re a fool. Shut your mouth!”

Tom Lower, the lazy, wasteful Tom Lower, ran down to the shore of Haul-Away Head, and stamped his feet, and shook his fist. “I wants your cow an’ your raisins an’ your candy! We got you down, you robber! An’ I’ll *have* your red house; I’ll have your wool blankets; I’ll have your—”

“Tom Lower,” Jehoshaphat roared, rising in wrath, “I’ll floor you for that! That I will—next time I cotch you out.”

John Wull turned half-way around and grinned.

“Mister Wull,” Jehoshaphat asked, propitiatingly, “won’t you be put ashore?”

“Not at the price.”

“I ’low, then, sir,” said Jehoshaphat, in some impatience, “that you might as well be comfortable while you makes up your mind. Here!” He cast a square

of tarpaulin on the ice, and chancing to discover Timothy Yule's jacket, he added that. "There!" he grunted, with satisfaction; "you'll be sittin' soft an' dry while you does your thinkin'. Don't be long, sir—not overlong. *Please* don't, sir," he begged; "for it looks t' me—it looks wonderful t' me—like a spurt o' weather."

John Wull spread the tarpaulin.

"An' when you gets through considerin' of the question," said Jehoshaphat, suggestively, "an' is come t' my way o' thinkin', why all you got t' do is lift your little finger, an' I'll put you ashore"—a gust of wind whipped past—"if I'm able," Jehoshaphat added.

Pan and boat drifted out from the coast, a slow course, which in an hour had reduced the harbor folk to black pygmies on the low rocks to windward. Jehoshaphat paddled patiently in the wake of the ice. Often he raised his head, in apprehension, to read the signs in the west; and he sighed a deal, and sometimes muttered to himself. Old John Wull was squatted on the tarpaulin, with Timothy Yule's jacket for a cushion, his great-coat wrapped close about him, his cap pulled over his ears, his arms folded. The withered old fellow was as lean and blue and rigid and staring as a frozen corpse.

The wind had freshened. The look and smell of the world foreboded a gale. Overhead the sky turned gray. There came a shadow on the sea, sullen and ominous. Gusts of wind ran offshore and went hissing out to sea; and they left the waters rippling black and flecked with froth wherever they touched. In the west the sky, far away, changed from gray to deepest black and purple; and high up, midway, masses of cloud, with torn and streaming edges, rose swiftly toward the zenith. It turned cold. A great flake of snow fell on Jehoshaphat's cheek, and melted; but Jehoshaphat was pondering upon justice. He wiped the drop of water away with the back of his hand, because it tickled him, but gave the sign no heed.

"I 'low, Mister Wull," said he, doggedly, "that you better give Timothy Yule back his father's meadow. For nobody knows, sir," he argued, "why Timothy Yule's father went an' signed his name t' that there writin' just afore he died. 'Twasn't right. He didn't ought t' sign it. An' you got t' give the meadow back."

John Wull was unmoved.

“An’, look you! Mister Wull,” Jehoshaphat continued, pulling closer to the pan, addressing the bowed back of the trader, “you better not press young Isaac Lower for that cod-trap money. He’ve too much trouble with that wife o’ his t’ be bothered by debt. Anyhow, you ought t’ give un a chance. An’, look you! you better let ol’ Misses Jowl have back her garden t’ Green Cove. The way you got that, Mister Wull, is queer. I don’t know, but I ’low you better give it back, anyhow. You *got* to, Mister Wull; an’, ecod! you got t’ give the ol’ woman a pound o’ cheese an’ five cents’ worth—no, ten—ten cents’ worth o’ sweets t’ make her feel good. She *likes* cheese. She ’lows she never could get *enough* o’ cheese. She ’lows she *wished* she could have her fill afore she dies. An’ you got t’ give her a whole pound for herself.”

They were drifting over the Tombstone grounds.

“Whenever you makes up your mind,” Jehoshaphat suggested, diffidently, “you lift your little finger—jus’ your little finger.”

There was no response.

“Your little finger,” Jehoshaphat repeated. “Jus’ your little finger—on’y that.”

Wull faced about. “Jehoshaphat,” said he, with a grin, “you wouldn’t leave me.”

“Jus’ wouldn’t I!”

“You wouldn’t.”

“You jus’ wait and see.”

“You wouldn’t leave me,” said Wull, “because you couldn’t. I knows you, Jehoshaphat—I knows you.”

“You better look out.”

“Come, now, Jehoshaphat, is you goin’ t’ leave an old man drift out t’ sea an’ die?”

Jehoshaphat was embarrassed.

“Eh, Jehoshaphat?”

“Well, no,” Jehoshaphat admitted, frankly. “I isn’t; leastways, not alone.”

“Not alone?” anxiously.

“No; not alone. I’ll go with you, Mister Wull, if you’re lonesome, an’ wants company. You sees, sir, I can’t give in. I jus’ *can’t*! I’m here, Mister Wull, in this here cranky rodney, beyond the Tombstone grounds, with a dirty gale from a point or two south o’ west about t’ break, because I’m the public o’ Satan’s Trap. I can die, sir, t’ save gossip; but I sim-plee jus’ isn’t able t’ give in. ’Twouldn’t be *right*.”

“Well, I won’t give in.”

“Nor I, sir. So here we is—out here beyond the Tombstone grounds, you on a pan an’ me in a rodney. An’ the weather isn’t—well—not quite *kind*.”

It was not. The black clouds, torn, streaming, had possessed the sky, and the night was near come. Haul-Away Head and Daddy Tool’s Point had melted with the black line of coast. Return—safe passage through the narrows to the quiet water and warm lights of Satan’s Trap—was almost beyond the most courageous hope. The wind broke from the shore in straight lines—a stout, agile wind, loosed for riot upon the sea. The sea was black, with a wind-lop upon the grave swell—a black-and-white sea, with spume in the gray air. The west was black, with no hint of other color—without the pity of purple or red. Roundabout the sea was breaking, troubled by the wind, indifferent to the white little rodney and the lives o’ men.

“You better give in,” old John Wull warned.

“No,” Jehoshaphat answered; “no; oh no! I won’t give in. Not *in*.”

A gust turned the black sea white.

“*You* better give in,” said Jehoshaphat.

John Wull shrugged his shoulders and turned his back.

“Now, Mister Wull,” said Jehoshaphat, firmly, “I ’low I can’t stand this much longer. I ’low we can’t be fools much longer an’ get back t’ Satan’s Trap. I got a sail, here, Mister Wull; but, ecod! the beat t’ harbor isn’t pleasant t’ *think* about.”

“You better go home,” sneered old John Wull.

“I ’low I *will*,” Jehoshaphat declared.

Old John Wull came to the windward edge of the ice, and there stood frowning, with his feet submerged. “What was you sayin’?” he asked. “That

you'd go home?"

Jehoshaphat looked away.

"An' leave me?" demanded John Wull. "Leave *me? Me?*"

"I got t' think o' my kids."

"An' you'd leave me t' *die?*"

"Well," Jehoshaphat complained, "'tis long past supper-time. You better give in."

"I won't!"

The coast was hard to distinguish from the black sky in the west. It began to snow. Snow and night, allied, would bring Jehoshaphat Rudd and old John Wull to cold death.

"Mister Wull," Jehoshaphat objected, "'tis long past supper-time, an' I wants t' go home."

"Go—an' be damned!"

"I'll count ten," Jehoshaphat threatened.

"You dassn't!"

"I don't know whether I'll *go* or not," said Jehoshaphat. "Maybe not. Anyhow, I'll count ten, an' see what happens. Is you ready?"

Wull sat down on the tarpaulin.

"One," Jehoshaphat began.

John Wull seemed not to hear.

"Two," said Jehoshaphat. "Three—four—five—six—seven."

John Wull did not turn.

"Eight."

There was no sign of relenting.

"Nine."

Jehoshaphat paused. "God's mercy!" he groaned, "don't you be a fool, Mister Wull," he pleaded. "Doesn't you *know* what the weather is?"

A wave—the lop raised by the wind—broke over the pan. John Wull stood up. There came a shower of snow.

“Eh?” Jehoshaphat demanded, in agony.

“I won’t give in,” said old John Wull.

“Then I got t’ say ten. I jus’ *got* to.”

“I dare you.”

“I will, Mister Wull. Honest, I will! I’ll say ten an you don’t look out.”

“Why don’t you *do* it?”

“In a minute, Mister Wull. I’ll say it just so soon as I get up the sail. I will, Mister Wull, honest t’ God!”

The coast had vanished.

“Look,” cried Jehoshaphat, “we’re doomed men!”

The squall, then first observed, sent the sea curling over the ice. Jehoshaphat’s rodney shipped the water it raised. Snow came in a blinding cloud.

“Say ten, you fool!” screamed old John Wull.

“Ten!”

John Wull came to the edge of the pan. ’Twas hard for the old man to breast the gust. He put his hands to his mouth that he might be heard in the wind.

“I give in!” he shouted.

Jehoshaphat managed to save the lives of both.

Old John Wull, with his lean feet in a tub of hot water, with a gray blanket over his shoulders, with a fire sputtering in the stove, with his housekeeper hovering near—old John Wull chuckled. The room was warm and his stomach was full, and the wind, blowing horribly in the night, could work him no harm. There he sat, sipping herb tea to please his housekeeper, drinking whiskey to please himself. He had no chill, no fever, no pain; perceived no warning of illness. So he chuckled away. It was all for the best. There would now surely be peace at Satan’s Trap. Had he not yielded? What

more could they ask? They would be content with this victory. For a long, long time they would not complain. He had yielded; very well: Timothy Yule should have his father's meadow, Dame Jowl her garden and sweets and cheese, the young Lower be left in possession of the cod-trap, and there would be no law. Very well; the folk would neither pry nor complain for a long, long time: that was triumph enough for John Wull. So he chuckled away, with his feet in hot water, and a gray blanket about him, bald and withered and ghastly, but still feeling the comfort of fire and hot water and whiskey, the pride of power.

And within three years John Wull possessed again all that he had yielded, and the world of Satan's Trap wagged on as in the days before the revolution.

[1] A rodney is a small, light boat, used for getting about among the ice packs, chiefly in seal-hunting.

X—THE SURPLUS

To the east was the illimitable ocean, laid thick with moonlight and luminous mist; to the west, beyond a stretch of black, slow heaving water, was the low line of Newfoundland, an illusion of kindness, the malignant character of its jagged rock and barren interior transformed by the gentle magic of the night. Tumm, the clerk, had the wheel of the schooner, and had been staring in a rapture at the stars.

“Jus’ readin’, sir,” he explained.

I wondered what he read.

“Oh,” he answered, turning again to contemplate the starlit sky, “jus’ a little psa’m from my Bible.”

I left him to read on, myself engaged with a perusal of the serene and comforting text-book of philosophy spread overhead. The night was favorably inclined and radiant: a soft southerly wind blowing without menace, a sky of infinite depth and tender shadow, the sea asleep under the moon. With a gentle, aimlessly wandering wind astern—an idle, dawdling, contemptuous breeze, following the old craft lazily, now and again whipping her nose under water to remind her of suspended strength—the trader *Good Samaritan* ran on, wing and wing, through the moonlight, bound across from Sinners’ Tickle to Afterward Bight, there to deal for the first of the catch.

“Them little stars jus’ *will* wink!” Tumm complained.

I saw them wink in despite.

“Ecod!” Tumm growled.

The amusement of the stars was not by this altered to a more serious regard: everywhere they winked.

“I’ve seed un peep through a gale o’ wind, a slit in the black sky, a cruel, cold time,” Tumm continued, a pretence of indignation in his voice, “when ’twas a mean hard matter t’ keep a schooner afloat in a dirty sea, with all hands wore out along o’ labor an’ the fear o’ death an’ hell; an’, ecod! them little cusses was winkin’ still. Eh? What d’ye make o’ that?—winkin’ still, the heartless little cusses!”

There were other crises, I recalled—knowing little enough of the labor of the sea—upon which they winked.

“Ay,” Tumm agreed; “they winks when lovers kiss on the roads; an’ they winks jus’ the same,” he added, softly, “when a heart breaks.”

“They’re humorous little beggars,” I observed.

Tumm laughed. “They been lookin’ at this here damned thing so long,” he drawled—meaning, no doubt, upon the spectacle of the world—“that no wonder they winks!”

This prefaced a tale.

“Somehow,” Tumm began, his voice fallen rather despondent, I fancied, but yet continuing most curiously genial, “it always made me think o’ dust an’ ashes t’ clap eyes on ol’ Bill Hulk o’ Gingerbread Cove. Ay, b’y; but I could jus’ fair hear the parson singsong that mean truth o’ life: ‘Dust t’ dust; ashes t’ ashes’—an’ make the best of it, ye sinners an’ young folk! When ol’ Bill hove alongside, poor man! I’d think no more o’ maids an’ trade, o’ which I’m fair sinful fond, but on’y o’ coffins an’ graves an’ ground. For, look you! the ol’ feller was so white an’ wheezy—so fishy-eyed an’ crooked an’ shaky along o’ age. ’Tis a queer thing, sir, but, truth o’ God, so old was Bill Hulk that when he’d board me I’d remember somehow the warm breast o’ my mother, an’ then think, an’ couldn’t help it, o’ the bosom o’ dust where my head must lie.”

Tumm paused.

“Seemed t’ me, somehow,” he continued, “when the *Quick as Wink* was lyin’ of a Sunday t’ Gingerbread Cove—seemed t’ me somehow, when I’d hear the church bell ring an’ echo across the water an’ far into the hills—when I’d catch sight o’ ol’ Bill Hulk, with his staff an’ braw black coat, crawlin’ down

the hill t' meetin'—ay, an' when the sun was out, warm an' yellow, an' the maids an' lads was flirtin' over the roads t' hear the parson thunder agin their hellish levity—seemed t' me then, somehow, that ol' Bill was all the time jus' dodgin' along among open graves; for, look you! the ol' feller had such trouble with his legs. An' I'd wish by times that he'd stumble an' fall in, an' be covered up in a comfortable an' decent sort o' fashion, an' stowed away for good an' all in the bed where he belonged.

“‘Uncle Bill,’ says I, ‘you at it yet?’

“‘Hangin’ on, Tumm,’ says he. ‘I isn’t quite through.’



“OL’ BILL HULK CRAWLIN’ DOWN THE HILL T’ MEETIN’”

“‘Accordin’ t’ the signs,’ says I, ‘you isn’t got much of a grip left.’

“‘Yes, I is!’ says he. ‘I got all my fishin’ fingers exceptin’ two, an’ I ’low they’ll last me till I’m through.’

“‘Ecod! sir, but it made me think so mean o’ the world that I ’lowed I’d look away.

“‘No, Tumm,’ says he, ‘I isn’t *quite* through.’

“‘Well,’ says I, ‘you must be tired.’

“‘Tired,’ says he. ‘Oh no, b’y! Tired? Not me! I got a little spurt o’ labor t’ do afore *I* goes.’

“‘An’ what’s that, Uncle Bill?’ says I.

“‘Nothin’ much,’ says he.

“‘But what *is* it?’

“‘Nothin’ much,’ says he; ‘jus’ a little spurt o’ labor.’

“The ol’ feller lived all alone, under Seven Stars Head, in a bit of a white house with black trimmin’s, jus’ within the Tickle, where ’twas nice an’ warm an’ still; an’ he kep’ his house as neat an’ white as a ol’ maid with a gray tomcat an’ a window-garden o’ geraniums, an’, like all the ol’ maids, made the best fish on fifty mile o’ coast. ’Twas said by the ol’ folks o’ Gingerbread Cove that their fathers knowed the time when Bill Hulk had a partner; but the partner got lost on the Labrador, an’ then Bill Hulk jus’ held on cotchin’ fish an’ keepin’ house all alone, till he got the habit an’ couldn’t leave off. Was a time, I’m told, a time when he had his strength—was a time, I’m told, afore he wore out—was a time when Bill Hulk had a bit o’ money stowed away in a bank t’ St. John’s. Always ’lowed, I’m told, that ’twas plenty t’ see un through when he got past his labor. ‘I got enough put by,’ says he. ‘I got more’n enough. I’m jus’ fishin’ along,’ says he, ‘t’ give t’ the poor. Store in your youth,’ says he, ‘an’ you’ll not want in your age.’ But somehow some o’ them St. John’s gentlemen managed t’ discover expensive ways o’ delightin’ theirselves; an’ what with bank failures an’ lean seasons an’ lumbago, ol’ Bill was fallen poor when first I traded Gingerbread Cove. About nine year after that, bein’ then used t’ the trade o’ that shore, I ’lowed that Bill had better knock off an’ lie in the sun till ’twas time for un t’ go t’ his last berth. “‘Twon’t be long,’ thinks I, ‘an’ I ’low my owners can stand it. Anyhow,’ thinks I, ‘’tis high time the world done something for Bill.’

“But—

“‘Tumm,’ says he, ‘how many books is kep’ by traders in Newf’un’land?’

“I ’lowed I didn’t know.

“‘Call it a round million,’ says he.

“‘What of it?’ says I.

“‘Nothin’ much,’ says he.

“‘But what of it?’ says I.

“‘Well,’ says he, ‘if you was t’ look them million books over, goin’ as easy as you please an’ markin’ off every line o’ every page with your forefinger, what d’ye think would come t’ pass?’

“I ’lowed I couldn’t tell.

“‘Eh?’ says he. ‘Come, now! give a guess.’

“‘I don’t know, Bill,’ says I.

“‘Why, Tumm,’ says he, ‘you wouldn’t find a copper agin the name o’ ol’ Bill Hulk!’

“‘That’s good livin’,’ says I.

“‘Not a copper!’ says he. ‘No, sir; *not if you looked with spectacles*. An’ so,’ says he, ‘I ’low I’ll jus’ keep on payin’ my passage for the little time that’s left. If my back on’y holds out,’ says he, ‘I’ll manage it till I’m through. ’Twon’t be any more than twenty year. Jus’ a little spurt o’ labor t’ do, Tumm,’ says he, ‘afore I goes.’

“‘More labor, Uncle Bill?’ says I. ‘God’s sake!’

“‘Nothin’ much,’ says he; ‘jus’ a little spurt afore I goes in peace.’

“Ah, well! he’d labored long enough, lived long enough, t’ leave other hands clean up the litter an’ sweep the room o’ his life. I didn’t know what that little spurt o’ labor was meant t’ win for his peace o’ mind—didn’t know what he’d left undone—didn’t know what his wish or his conscience urged un t’ labor for. I jus’ wanted un t’ quit an’ lie down in the sun. ‘For,’ thinks I, ‘the world looks wonderful greedy an’ harsh t’ me when I hears ol’ Bill Hulk’s bones rattle over the roads or come squeakin’ through the Tickle in his punt. ‘Leave un go in peace!’ thinks I. ‘I isn’t got no love for a world that sends

them bones t' sea in an easterly wind. Ecod!' thinks I; 'but he've earned quiet passage by jus' livin' t' that ghastly age—jus' by hangin' on off a lee shore in the mean gales o' life.' Seemed t' me, too, no matter how Bill felt about it, that he might be obligin' an' quit afore he *was* through. Seemed t' me he might jus' stop where he was an' leave the friends an' neighbors finish up. 'Tisn't fair t' ask a man t' have his labor done in a ship-shape way—t' be through with the splittin' an' all cleaned up—when the Skipper sings out, 'Knock off, ye dunderhead!' Seems t' me a man might leave the crew t' wash the table an' swab the deck an' throw the livers in the cask.

"'You be obligin', Bill,' says I, 'an' quit.'

"'Isn't able,' says he, 'till I'm through.'

"So the bones o' ol' Bill Hulk rattled an' squeaked right on till it made me fair ache when I *think* o' Gingerbread Cove.

"About four year after that I made the Cove in the spring o' the year with supplies. 'Well,' thinks I, 'they won't be no Bill Hulk this season. With that pain in his back an' starboard leg, this winter have finished he; an' I'll lay a deal on that.' 'Twas afore dawn when we dropped anchor, an' a dirty dawn, too, with fog an' rain, the wind sharp, an' the harbor in a tumble for small craft; but the first man over the side was ol' Bill Hulk.

"'It *can't* be you, Uncle Bill!' says I.

"'Tumm,' says he, 'I isn't quite through—yet.'

"'You isn't goin' at it *this* season, is you?'

"'Ay,' says he; 'goin' at it again, Tumm.'

"'What for?' says I.

"'Nothin' much,' says he.

"'But what *for*?'

"'Well,' says he, 'I'm savin' up.'

"'Savin' up?' says I. 'Shame *to* you! What you savin' up for?'

"'Oh,' says he, 'jus' savin' up.'

"'But what *for*?' says I. 'What's the sense of it?'

“‘Bit o’ prope’ty,’ says he. ‘I’m thinkin’ o’ makin’ a small investment.’

“‘At your age, Uncle Bill!’ says I. ‘An’ a childless man!’

“‘Jus’ a small piece,’ says he. ‘Nothin’ much, Tumm.’

“‘But it won’t do you no *good*,’ says I.

“‘Well, Tumm,’ says he, ‘I’m sort o’ wantin’ it, an’ I ’low she won’t go t’ waste. I been fishin’ from Gingerbread Cove for three hundred year,’ says he, ‘an’ when I knocks off I wants t’ have things ship-shape. Isn’t no comfort, Tumm,’ says he, ‘in knockin’ off no other way.’

“Three hundred year he ’lowed he’d fished from that there harbor, a hook-an’-line man through it all; an’ as they wasn’t none o’ us abroad on the coast when he come in, he’d stick to it, spite o’ parsons. They was a mean little red-headed parson came near churchin’ un for the whopper; but Bill Hulk wouldn’t repent. ‘You isn’t been here long enough t’ *know*, parson,’ says he. ‘’Tis goin’ on three hundred year, I tells you! I’ll haul into my fourth hundred,’ says he, ‘come forty-three year from Friday fortnight.’ Anyhow, he’d been castin’ lines on the Gingerbread grounds quite long enough. ’Twas like t’ make a man’s back ache—t’ make his head spin an’ his stomach shudder—jus’ t’ think o’ the years o’ labor an’ hardship Bill Hulk had weathered. Seemed t’ me the very stars must o’ got fair disgusted t’ watch un put out through the Tickle afore dawn an’ pull in after dark.

“‘Lord!’ says they. ‘If there ain’t Bill Hulk puttin’ out again! Won’t nothin’ ever happen t’ he?’”

I thought it an unkind imputation.

“Well,” Tumm explained, “the little beggars is used t’ change; an’ I wouldn’t wonder if they was bored a bit by ol’ Bill Hulk.”

It might have been.

“Four or five year after that,” Tumm proceeded, “the tail of a sou’east gale slapped me into Gingerbread Cove, an’ I ’lowed t’ hang the ol’ girl up till the weather turned civil. Thinks I, ‘’Tis wonderful dark an’ wet, but ’tis also wonderful early, an’ I’ll jus’ take a run ashore t’ yarn an’ darn along o’ ol’ Bill Hulk.’ So I put a bottle in my pocket t’ warm the ol’ ghost’s marrow, an’ put out for Seven Stars Head in the rodney. ’Twas mean pullin’ agin the wind, but I fetched the stage-head ’t last, an’ went crawlin’ up the hill. Thinks

I, 'They's no sense in knockin' in a gale o' wind like this, for Bill Hulk's so wonderful hard o' hearin' in a sou'east blow.'

"So I drove on in.

"'Lord's sake, Bill!' says I, 'what you up to?'

"'Nothin' much, Tumm,' says he.

"'It don't look right,' says I. 'What is it?'

"'Nothin' much,' says he; 'jus' countin' up my money.'

"'Twas true enough: there he sot—playin' with his fortune. They was pounds of it: coppers an' big round pennies an' silver an' one lone gold piece.

"'You been gettin' rich?' says I.

"'Tumm,' says he, 'you got any clear idea o' how much hard cash they is lyin' right there on that plain deal table in this here very kitchen you is in?'

"'I isn't,' says I.

"'Well,' says he, 'they's as much as fourteen dollar! An' what d'ye think o' that?'

"'I 'lowed I'd hold my tongue; so I jus' lifted my eyebrow, an' then sort o' whistled, 'Whew!'

"'Fourteen,' says he, 'an' more!'

"'Whew!' says I.

"'An', Tumm,' says he, 'I had twenty-four sixty once—about eighteen year ago.'

"'You got a heap now,' says I. 'Fourteen dollar! Whew!'

"'No, Tumm!' cries he, all of a sudden. 'No, no! I been lyin' t' you. I been lyin'!' says he. 'Lyin'!'

"'I don't care,' says I; 'you go right ahead an' lie.'

"'They *isn't* fourteen dollar there,' says he. 'I jus' been makin' *believe* they was. See that there little pile o' pennies t' the nor'east? I been sittin' here countin' in them pennies twice. They isn't fourteen dollar,' says he; 'they's on'y thirteen eighty-four! But I *wisht* they was fourteen.'

“‘Never you mind,’ says I; ‘you’ll get that bit o’ prope’ty yet.’

“‘I *got* to,’ says he, ‘afore I goes.’

“‘Where does it lie?’ says I.

“‘Oh, ’tishn’t nothin’ much, Tumm,’ says he.

“‘But what *is* it?’

“‘Nothin’ much,’ says he; ‘jus’ a small piece.’

“‘Is it meadow?’ says I.

“‘No,’ says he; ‘tishn’t what you might call meadow an’ be right, though the grass grows there, in spots, knee high.’

“‘Is it a potato-patch?’

“‘No,’ says he; ‘nor yet a patch.’

“‘’Tishn’t a *flower* garden, is it?’ says I.

“‘N-no,’ says he; ‘you couldn’t rightly say so—though they *grows* there, in spots, quite free an’ nice.’

“‘Uncle Bill,’ says I, ‘you isn’t never told me nothin’ about that there bit o’ prope’ty. What’s it held at?’

“‘The prope’ty isn’t much, Tumm,’ says he. ‘Jus’ a small piece.’

“‘But how much *is* it?’

“‘Tom Neverbudge,’ says he, ‘is holdin’ it at twenty-four dollar; he’ve come down one in the las’ seven year. But I’m on’y ’lowin’ t’ pay twenty-one; you sees I’ve come *up* one in the las’ *four* year.’

“‘’Twould not be hard t’ split the difference,’ says I.

“‘Ay,’ says he; ‘but they’s a wonderful good reason for not payin’ more’n twenty-one for that there special bit o’ land.’

“‘What’s that?’ says I.

“‘Well,’ says he, ‘’tis second-handed.’

“‘Second-handed!’ says I. ‘That’s queer!’

“‘Been used,’ says he.

“‘Used, Uncle Bill?’

“‘Ay,’ says he; ‘been used—been used, now, for nigh sixty year.’

“‘She’s all wore out?’ says I.

“‘No,’ says he; ‘not wore out.’

“‘*She’d* grow nothin’?’ says I.

“‘Well,’ says he, ‘nothin’ much is expected, Tumm,’ says he, ‘in that line.’

“‘I give a tug at my pocket, an’, ecod! out jumped the bottle o’ Scotch.

“‘Well, well!’ says he. ‘Dear man! But I bet ye,’ says he, ‘that you isn’t fetched no pain-killer.’

“‘That I is!’ says I.

“‘Then,’ says he, ‘about half an’ half, Tumm, with a dash o’ water; that’s the way I likes it when I takes it.’

“‘So we fell to, ol’ Bill Hulk an’ me, on the Scotch an’ the pain-killer.

“Well, now, after that,” Tumm resumed, presently, “I went deep sea for four year in the South American fish trade; an’ then, my ol’ berth on the *Quick as Wink* bein’ free of incumbrance—’twas a saucy young clerk o’ the name o’ Bullyworth—I ’lowed t’ blow the fever out o’ my system with the gales o’ this here coast. ‘A whiff or two o’ real wind an’ a sight o’ Mother Burke,’ thinks I, ‘will fix *me*.’ ’Twas a fine Sunday mornin’ in June when I fetched Gingerbread Cove in the ol’ craft—warm an’ blue an’ still an’ sweet t’ smell. ‘They’ll be no Bill Hulk, thank God!’ thinks I, ‘t’ be crawlin’ up the hill t’ meetin’ *this* day; *he’ve* got through an’ gone t’ his berth for all time. I’d like t’ yarn with un on this fine civil Sunday,’ thinks I; ‘but I ’low he’s jus’ as glad as I is that he’ve been stowed away nice an’ comfortable at last.’ But from the deck, ecod! when I looked up from shavin’, an’ Skipper Jim was washin’ up in the forecandle, I cotched sight o’ ol’ Bill Hulk, bound up the hill through the sunshine, makin’ tolerable weather of it, with the wind astern, a staff in his hand, and the braw black coat on his back.

“‘Skipper Jim,’ sings I, t’ the skipper below, ‘you hear a queer noise?’

“‘No,’ says he.

“‘Nothin’ like a squeak or a rattle?’

“‘No,’ says he. ‘What’s awry?’

“‘Oh, nothin’ says I:’ on’y ol’ Bill Hulk’s on the road.’

“I watched un crawl through the little door on Meetin’-house Hill long after ol’ Sammy Street had knocked off pullin’ the bell; an’ if I didn’t hear neither squeak nor rattle as he crep’ along, why, I *felt* un, anyhow, which is jus’ as hard to bear. ‘Well,’ thinks I, ‘he’ve kep’ them bones above ground, poor man! but he’s never *at* it yet. He’ve knocked off for good,’ thinks I; ‘he’ll stumble t’ meetin’ of a fine Sunday mornin’, an’ sit in the sun for a spell; an’ then,’ thinks I, ‘they’ll stow un away where he belongs.’ So I went aboard of un that evenin’ for a last bit of a yarn afore his poor ol’ throat rattled an’ quit.

“‘So,’ says I, ‘you is at it yet?’

“‘Ay, Tumm,’ says he; ‘isn’t quite through—yet. But,’ says he, ‘I’m ’lowin’ t’ *be*.’

“‘Hard at it, Uncle Bill?’ says I.

“‘Well, no, Tumm,’ says he; ‘not hard. Back give warnin’ a couple o’ year ago,’ says he, ‘an’ I been sort o’ easin’ off for fear o’ accident. I’ve quit the Far Away grounds,’ says he, ‘but I been doin’ very fair on Widows’ Shoal. They’s on’y one o’ them fishin’ there nowadays, ah’ she ’lowed she didn’t care.’

“‘An’ when,’ says I, ‘is you ’lowin’ t’ knock off?’

“‘Jus’ as soon as I gets through, Tumm,’ says he. ‘I won’t be a minute longer.’

“Then along come the lean-cheeked, pig-eyed, scrawny-whiskered son of a squid which owned the bit o’ prope’ty that Bill Hulk had coveted for thirty year. Man o’ the name o’ Tom Budge; but as he seldom done it, they called un Neverbudge; an’ Gingerbread Cove is full o’ Never-budges t’ this day. Bill ’lowed I might as well go along o’ he an’ Tom t’ overhaul the bit o’ land they was tryin’ t’ trade; so out we put on the inland road—round Burnt Bight, over the crest o’ Knock Hill, an’ along the alder-fringed path. ’Twas in a green, still, soft-breasted little valley—a little pool o’ sunshine an’ grass among the hills—with Ragged Ridge t’ break the winds from the sea, an’ the wooded slope o’ the Hog’s Back t’ stop the nor’westerly gales. ’Twas a

lovely spot, sir, believe me, an' a gentle-hearted one, too, lyin' deep in the warmth an' glory o' sunshine, where a man might lay his head on the young grass an' go t' sleep, not mindin' about nothin' no more. Ol' Bill Hulk liked it wonderful well. Wasn't no square o' ground on that coast that he'd rather own, says he, than the little plot in the sou'east corner o' that graveyard.

“‘Sight rather have that, Tumm,’ says he, ‘than a half-acre farm.’

“‘Twas so soft an' snug an' sleepy an' still in that little graveyard that I couldn't blame un for wantin' t' stretch out somewheres an' stay there forever.

“‘Ay,’ says he, ‘an' a thirty-foot potato-patch throwed in!’

“‘‘Tis yours at the price,’ says Tom Neverbudge.

“‘If,’ says Bill Hulk, ‘twasn't a second-handed plot. See them graves in the sou'west corner, Tumm?’

“‘Graves o' two children, sir: jus' on'y that—laid side by side, sir, where the sunlight lingered afore the shadow o' Hog's Back fell.

“‘Been there nigh sixty year,’ says Bill. ‘Pity,’ says he; ‘wonderful pity.’

“‘They won't do you no harm,’ says Neverbudge.

“‘Ay,’ says Bill; ‘but I'm a bachelor, Tom, used t' sleepin' alone,’ says he, ‘an' I'm 'lowin' I wouldn't take so wonderful quick t' any other habit. I'm told,’ says he, ‘that sleepin' along o' children isn't what you might call a easy berth.’

“‘You'd soon get used t' *that*,’ says Neverbudge. ‘Any family man'll tell you so.’

“‘Ay,’ says Bill; ‘but they isn't kin o' mine. Why,’ says he, ‘they isn't even friends!’

“‘That don't matter,’ says Neverbudge.

“‘Not matter!’ says he. ‘Can you tell me, Tom Neverbudge, the *names* o' them children?’

“‘Not me.’

“‘Nor yet their father's name?’

“‘No, sir.’

“‘Then,’ says Bill, ‘as a religious man, is you able t’ tell me they was born in a proper an’ perfectly religious manner?’

“‘I isn’t,’ says Neverbudge. ‘I guarantees nothin’.’

“‘An’ yet, as a religious man,’ says Bill, ‘you stands there an’ says it doesn’t matter?’

“‘Anyhow,’ says Neverbudge, ‘it doesn’t matter *much*’

“‘Not much!’ cries Bill. ‘An’ you a religious man! Not much t’ lie for good an’ all,’ says he, ‘in the company o’ the damned?’

“‘With that Tom Neverbudge put off in a rage.

“‘Uncle Billy,’ says I, ‘what you wantin’ that plot for, anyhow? ’Tis so damp ’tis fair swampy.’

“‘Nothin’ much,’ says he.

“‘But what *for*?’ says I.

“‘Well,’ says he, ‘I wants it.’

“‘An’ ’tis on a side-hill,’ says I. ‘If the dunderheads doesn’t dig with care, you’ll find yourself with your feet higher’n your head.’

“‘Well,’ says he, ‘I wants it.’

“‘You isn’t got no friends in this neighborhood,’ says I; ‘they’re all put away on the north side. An’ the sun,’ says I, ‘doesn’t strike here last.’

“‘I wants it,’ says he.

“‘What for?’ says I.

“‘Nothin’ much,’ says he; ‘but I wants it.’

“‘But what for?’ says I.

“‘Well,’ says he, in a temper, ‘I got a *hankerin*’ for it!’

“‘Then, Uncle Bill,’ says I, for it made me sad,’ I wouldn’t mind them little graves. They’re poor wee things,’ says I, ‘an’ they wouldn’t disturb your rest.’

“‘Hush!’ says he. ‘Don’t—*don*’t say that!’

“‘Graves o’ children,’ says I.

“‘Don’t say no more, Tumm,’ says he.

“‘Jus’ on’y poor little kids,’ says I.

“‘Stop!’ says he. ‘Doesn’t you see I’m cryin’?’

“Then up come Tom Neverbudge. ‘Look you, Bill Hulk!’ says he, ‘you can take that plot or leave it. I’ll knock off seventy-five cents on account o’ the risk you take in them children. Come now!’ says he; ‘you take it or leave it.’

“‘Twenty-one fifty,’ says Bill. ‘That’s a raise o’ fifty, Tom.’

“‘Then,’ says Tom, ‘I’ll use that plot meself.’

“Bill Hulk jumped. ‘You!’ says he. ‘Nothin’ gone wrong along o’ you, is they, Tom?’

“‘Not yet,’ says Tom; ‘but they might.’

“‘No chill,’ says Bill, ‘an’ no fever? No ache in your back, is they, Tom?’

“‘Nar a ache.’

“‘An’ you isn’t give up the Labrador?’

“‘Not me!’

“‘Oh, well,’ says Bill, feelin’ easy again, ‘I ’low *you* won’t never need no graveyard.’

“Tom Neverbudge up canvas an’ went off afore the wind in a wonderful temper; an’ then ol’ Bill Hulk an’ me took the homeward road. I remembers the day quite well—the low, warm sun, the long shadows, the fresh youth an’ green o’ leaves an’ grass, the tinkle o’ bells on the hills, the reaches o’ sea, the peace o’ weather an’ Sabbath day. I remembers it well: the wheeze an’ groan o’ ol’ Bill—crawlin’ home, sunk deep in the thought o’ graves—an’ the tender, bedtime twitter o’ the new-mated birds in the alders. When we rounded Fish Head Rock—’tis half-way from the graveyard—I seed a lad an’ a maid flit back from the path t’ hide whilst we crep’ by; an’ they was a laugh on the lad’s lips, an’ a smile an’ a sweet blush on the maid’s young face, as maids will blush an’ lads will laugh when love lifts un high. ’Twas at that spot I cotched ear of a sound I knowed quite well, havin’ made it meself, thank God! many a time an’ gladly.

“Bill Hulk stopped dead in the path. ‘What’s that?’ says he.

“‘Is you not knowin’?’ says I.

“‘I’ve heared it afore,’ says he, ‘somewheres.’

“‘Twas a kiss,’ says I.

“‘Tumm,’ says he, in a sort o’ scared whisper, ‘*is they at that yet in the world?*’

“‘Jus’ as they used t’ be,’ says I, ‘when you was young.’

“‘Well,’ says he, ‘jig *me!*’

“‘Then I knowed, somehow, jus’ how old ol’ Bill Hulk must be.

“‘Well, thereafter,” Tumm continued, with a sigh and a genial little smile, “they come lean years an’ they come fat ones, as always, by the mystery o’ God. Ol’ Bill Hulk drove along afore the wind, with his last rags o’ sail all spread, his fortune lean or fat as the Lord’s own seasons ’lowed. He’d fall behind or crawl ahead jus’ accordin’ t’ the way a careful hand might divide fish by hunger; but I ’lowed, by an’ all, he was overhaulin’ Tom Neverbudge’s twenty-three twenty-five, an’ would surely make it if the wind held true a few years longer. ‘Twelve thirty more, Tumm,’ says he, ‘an’ if ’twasn’t for the pork I might manage it this season. The longer you lives, Tumm,’ says he, ‘the more expensive it gets. Cost me four fifty las’ season for Dr. Hook’s Surecure Egyptian Lumbago Oil, an’ one fifty, Tumm, for a pair o’ green glasses t’ fend off blindness from the aged. An’ I jus’ got t’ have pork t’ keep my ol’ bones warm. I don’t *want* no pork,’ says he; ‘but they isn’t no heat in flour, an’, anyhow, I got t’ build my shoulder muscles up. You take a ol’ hulk like mine,’ says he, ‘an’ you’ll find it a wonderful expensive craft t’ keep in sailin’ order.’

“‘You stick t’ pork,’ says I.

“‘I was thinkin’,’ says he, ‘o’ makin’ a small investment in a few bottles o’ Hook’s Vigor. Clerk o’ the *Free for All*,’ says he, ‘’lows ’tis a wonderful nostrum t’ make the old feel young.’

“‘You stick t’ pork,’ says I, ‘an’ be damned t’ the clerk o’ the *Free for All*.’

“‘Maybe I better,’ says he, ‘an’ build up my shoulders. They jus’ *got* t’ be humored.’

“‘Ol’ Bill Hulk always ’lowed that if by God’s chance they’d on’y come a fair

fishin' season afore his shoulders give out he'd make a self-respectin' haul an' be through. 'Back give out about thirteen year ago,' says he, 'the time I got cotched by a dirty nor'easter on the Bull's Horn grounds. One o' them strings back there sort o' went an' snapped,' says he, 'jus' as I was pullin' in the Tickle, an' she isn't been o' much use t' me since. Been rowin' with my shoulders for a little bit past,' says he, 'an' doin' very fair in southerly weather; but I got a saucy warnin',' says he, 'that they won't stand nothin' from the nor'east. "No, sir," says they; "nothin' from the nor'east for we, Bill Hulk, an' don't you put us to it!" I'm jus' a bit afeared,' says he, 'that they might get out o' temper in a southerly tumble; an' if they done that, why, I'd jus' have t' stop, dear Lord!' says he, 'ithout bein' through! Isn't got no legs t' speak of,' says he, 'but I don't need none. I got my arms runnin' free,' says he, 'an' I got one thumb an' all my fishin' fingers 'ceptin' two. Lungs,' says he, 'is so-so; they wheezes, Tumm, as you knows, an' they labors in a fog, an' aches all the time, but chances is they'll *last*, an' a fair man can't ask no more. As for liver, Tumm,' says he, 'they isn't a liver on these here coasts t' touch the liver I got. Why,' says he, 'I never knowed I had one till I was told!'

"'Liver,' says I, 'is a ticklish business.'

"'Lowin' a man didn't overeat,' says he, 'think he could spurt along for a spell on his liver?'

"'I does,' says I.

"'That's good,' says he; 'for I'm countin' a deal on she.'

"'Never you fear,' says I. '*She'll* stand you.'

"'Think she will?' says he, jus' like a child. 'Maybe, then,' says he, 'with my own labor, Tumm, I'll buy my own grave at last!'

"'But the season bore hard on the ol' man, an' when I balanced un up in the fall o' the year, the twelve thirty he'd been t' leeward o' the twenty-three twenty-five Tom Neverbudge wanted for the plot where the two little graves lay side by side had growed t' fifteen ninety-three.

"'Jus' where I was nine year ago,' says he, 'lackin' thirty-four cents.'

"'Never you fear,' says I

"'My God! Tumm,' says he, 'I got t' do better nex' season.'"

Tumm paused to gaze at the stars.

“Still there,” I ventured.

“Winkin’ away,” he answered, “the wise little beggars!”

The *Good Samaritan* dawdled onward.

“Well, now, sir,” Tumm continued, “winter tumbled down on Gingerbread Cove, thick an’ heavy, with nor’east gales an’ mountains o’ snow; but ol’ Bill Hulk weathered it out on his own hook, an’ by March o’ that season, I’m told, had got so far along with his shoulder muscles that he went swilin’ [sealing] with the Gingerbread men at the first offshore sign. ’Twas a big pack, four mile out on the floe, with rough ice, a drear gray day, an’ the wind in a nasty temper. He done very well, I’m told, what with the legs he had, an’ was hard at it when the wind changed to a westerly gale an’ drove the ice t’ sea. They wasn’t no hope for Bill, with four mile o’ ice atween him an’ the shore, an’ every chunk an’ pan o’ the floe in a mad hurry under the wind: *they* knowed it an’ *he* knowed it. ‘Lads,’ says he, ‘you jus’ run along home or you’ll miss your supper. As for me,’ says he, ‘why, I’ll jus’ keep on swilin’. Might as well make a haul,’ says he, ‘whatever comes of it.’ The last they seed o’ Bill, I’m told, he was still hard at it, gettin’ his swiles on a likely pan; an’ they all come safe t’ land, every man o’ them, ’ceptin’ two young fellers, I’m told, which was lost in a jam off the Madman’s Head. Wind blowed westerly all that night, I’m told, but fell jus’ after dawn; an’ then they nosed poor ol’ Bill out o’ the floe, where they found un buried t’ the neck in his own dead swiles, for the warmth of the life they’d had, but hard put to it t’ keep the spark alight in his own chilled breast.

“‘Maybe I’m through,’ says he, when they’d got un ashore; ‘but I’ll hang on so long as I’m able.’

“‘Uncle Billy,’ says they, ‘you’re good for twenty year yet.’

“‘No tellin’,’ says he.

“‘Oh, sure!’ says they; ‘you’ll do it.’

“‘Anyhow,’ says he, ‘now that you’ve fetched me t’ *land*,’ says he, ‘I got t’ hang on till the *Quick as Wink* comes in.’

“‘What for?’ says they.

“‘Nothin’ much,’ says he; ‘but I jus’ got to.’

“‘You go t’ bed,’ says they, ‘an’ we’ll stow them swile in the stage.’

“‘I’ll lie down an’ warm up,’ says he, ‘an’ rest for a spell. Jus’ a little spurt,’ says he, ‘jus’ a little spurt—o’ rest.’

“‘You’ve made a wonderful haul,’ says they.

“‘At last!’ says he.

“‘Rest easy,’ says they, ‘as t’ that.’

“‘Twas the women that put un t’ bed.

“‘Seems t’ me,’ says he, ‘that the frost has bit my heart.’

“So ol’ Bill Hulk was flat on his back when I made Gingerbread Cove with supplies in the first o’ that season—anchored there in bed, sir, at last, with no mortal hope o’ makin’ the open sea again. Lord! how white an’ withered an’ cold he was! From what a far-off place in age an’ pain an’ weariness he looked back at me!

“‘I been waitin’, Tumm,’ says he. ‘Does you hear?’

“‘I bent close t’ hear.

“‘I’m in a hurry,’ says he. ‘Isn’t got no chance t’ pass the time o’ day. Does you hear?’

“‘Ay,’ says I.

“‘I got hopes,’ says he. ‘Tom Neverbudge haves come down t’ twenty-two seventy-five. You’ll find a old sock in the corner locker, Tumm,’ says he, ‘with my fortune in the toe. Pass un here. An’ hurry, Tumm, hurry, for I isn’t got much of a grip left! Now, Tumm,’ says he, ‘measure the swile oil in the stage an’ balance me up for the las’ time.’

“‘How much you got in that sock?’ says I.

“‘Nothin’ much,’ says he. ‘Jus’ a little left over.’

“‘But *how* much?’

“‘I’m not wantin’ t’ tell,’ says he, ‘lest you cheat me with kindness. I’d have you treat me as a man, come what will.’

“‘So help me God! then, Bill Hulk,’ says I, ‘I’ll strike that balance fair.’

“‘Tumm!’ he called.

“I turned in the door.

““Oh, make haste!’ says he.

“I measured the swile oil, neither givin’ nor takin’ a drop, an’ I boarded the *Quick as Wink*, where I struck ol’ Bill Hulk’s las’ balance, fair t’ the penny, as atween a man an’ a man. Ah! but ’twas hard, sir, t’ add no copper t’ the mean small total that faced me from the page: for the fortune in the toe o’ Bill Hulk’s ol’ sock was light enough, God knows! when I passed un over.

““Tumm,’ says he, ‘is it a honest balance?’

““It is,’ says I.

““Wait a minute!’ says he. ‘Jus’ a minute afore you tells me. I isn’t quite ready.’

“I watched the sun drop into the sea while I waited.

““Now,’ says he, ‘tell me quick!’

““Nine eighty-three,’ says I.

““Add t’ that,’ says he, ‘the twelve ninety-three in the sock. Quick, Tumm!’ says he.

“I scribbled it out.

““Wait!’ says he. ‘Just a minute, Tumm, till I gets a better grip.’

“I seed ’twas growin’ quite gray in the west.

““Now!’ says he.

““Uncle Billy,’ roars I, ‘tis twenty-two seventy-six!’

““Send for Tom Neverbudge!’ cries he: ‘for I done it—thank God, I done it!’

“I fetched Tom Neverbudge with me own hands t’ trade that grave for the fortune o’ ol’ Bill Hulk,” Tumm proceeded, “an’ I seed for meself, as atween a party o’ the first part an’ a party o’ the second, that ’twas all aboveboard an’ ship-shape, makin’ what haste I was able, for Bill Hulk’s anchor chain showed fearful signs o’ givin’ out.

““Is it done?’ says he.

““All fast,’ says I.

“‘A plot an’ a penny left over!’ says he.

“‘A plot an’ a penny,’ says I.

“‘Tumm,’ says he, with a little smile, ‘I needs the plot, but *you* take the penny. ’Tis sort o’ surprisin’,’ says he, ‘an’ wonderful nice, too, t’ be able t’ make a bequest. I’d like t’ do it, Tumm,’ says he, ‘jus’ for the feel of it, if you don’t mind the size.’

“I ’lowed I’d take it an’ be glad.

“‘Look you! Bill Hulk,’ says Neverbudge, ‘if them graves is goin’ t’ trouble you, I’ll move un an’ pay the cost o’ labor. There, now!’ says he; ‘that’s kind enough.’

“Bill Hulk got up on his elbow. ‘*What*’ll you do along o’ my plot?’ says he.

“‘Move them graves,’ says Neverbudge.

“‘You leave my plot be, Tom Neverbudge!’ says Bill. ‘What you think I been wantin’ t’ lie in that plot for, anyhow?’

“Tom Neverbudge ’lowed he didn’t know.

“‘Why,’ says ol’ Bill Hulk, ‘jus’ t’ lie alongside them poor lonely little kids!’

“I let un fall back on the pillow.

“‘I’m through, Tumm,’ says he, ‘an’ I ’low I’ll quit.’

“Straightway he quit....”

Wind astern, moonlight and mist upon the sea, a serene and tender sky, with a multitude of stars benignantly peeping from its mystery: and the *Good Samaritan* dawdled on, wing and wing to the breeze, bound across from Sinners’ Tickle to Afterward Bight, there to deal for the first of the catch. Tumm looked up to the sky. He was smiling in a gentle, wistful way. A little psalm from his Bible? Again I wondered concerning the lesson. “Wink away,” said he, “you little beggars! Wink away—wink away! You been lookin’ at this damned thing so long that no wonder you winks. Wink away! I’m glad you’ve the heart t’ do it. I’m not troubled by fears when you winks down, you’re so wonderful wiser’n we. Wink on, you knowin’ little beggars!”

This, then, it seemed, was the lesson.

THE END

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK EVERY MAN FOR
HIMSELF ***

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