



At 2 o'clock on a winter's night, the Narka, a fresh fisherman of about 60 tons, spreading her sails to a brisk nor' west breeze, slid between the high bluffs at the mouth of the little cove, and putting her bows into a heavy southeast swell—the aftermath of a recent gale—plunged out to sea.

The night was clear and crisp. Overhead an oval moon shone bright and cold in a star-studded sky. On the starboard bow, Chebucta Head, grim and forbidding, lifted its bald crown against the stars, while the big combers, rolling in from the Atlantic, broke against its granite base with a dull, ominous roar, and leaped in furious fountains of flashing foam, high up its gaunt sides.

Ahead, half a mile or so, seven or eight small schooners, their sails gleaming white in the light of the moon, were standing out to sea. The fishing fleet out of Herring Cove were bound to the fishing grounds.

The Narka had been the last to leave.

As the schooner passed out by Sambro, the skipper relinquished the wheel to the cook and went forward to the fo'c's'le, where the rest of the crew, having finished their early morning coffee, were sitting around on the lockers enjoying a smoke.

"Fine night, boys," observed the skipper, as he poured himself a steaming mug of coffee. "Quite a change since this time yesterday. If this weather will only hold for a while and let us have a few days' good fishing, we'll be able to celebrate Christmas in proper style, an' stop home for three or four days, whether it blows, high or low."

The Narka was a trawler, carrying four dories and a crew of twelve, all told—skipper, cook, eight dory-men, and two boys. A single trawl line is usually about forty fathoms in length and is provided with about sixty hooks. At intervals of about four feet along the main lines, smaller lines, about three feet in length, are spliced; these are called "snoods" and support the hooks. The Narka's crew hauled from seven to ten miles of trawl lines, and from 10,000 to 16,000 hooks. They started to bait up about 3 o'clock, and by the time they had their gear snugly coiled in the tubs ready for use, it was getting along toward daylight. Meanwhile the schooner had passed the rest of the fleet, and run off shore about thirty-five miles. Presently she luffed up in the wind, and the second hand, taking a cast of the lead, reported a depth of fifty fathoms.

"Put the starboard boats over, boys." Two boats were hoisted over the rail, lowered into the sea, and their gear—trawl tubs, anchors and buoys—were placed in them. Their crews—two men to each—sprang aboard. The schooner filled away, leaving one boat behind, and towing the other. When she had run about three-quarters of a mile to the eastward, she dropped the other boat. She put out her remaining dories in like manner, some distance apart, and then, coming about, stood back to where she had left the first boat.

So, while the East grew gray with the dawn, the men in the dories, tossing erratically over a confused tumble of ragged seas, went to work to set their trawls. The boat skipper, the after oarsman, throws out a little anchor, to which is attached the main trawl line, and a conical buoy with a staff through it, bearing a flag. Then the bowman rows, the skipper pays out the trawl, dexterously throwing the hook clear of the main line. A man, unaccustomed to the work, would soon have half a dozen hooks caught in his hands and the trawl in a hopeless tangle, but an expert fisherman will coil up or pay out mile after mile of trawls without pricking a finger or entangling a snood. As the line goes over the stern, the boat skipper, at intervals of forty fathoms attaches a small weight, usually a small stone of about ten pounds, prepared for the purpose, and when he comes to the end he throws over another anchor and buoy. Each dory sets about two miles of trawl in one string; and

by that time it is sun-up. The schooner picks up her boats in the same order she dropped them; and the men have breakfast. Then, almost immediately she drops her dories again to "under-run," or look, the trawls.

The nor' west wind is raw and cold, and the water is not warm, but the bowman, though his hands be numb, is soon sweating with his exertions, because hauling a trawl in fifty fathoms of water, in a sea way, is hard work.

Comes the head of a cod. "Dog-fish about," grunts the bowman. The skipper, in silence, unhooks it, throws it overboard, and renews the bait. The bowman jerks a limber, but villainous-looking fish into the boat. This gluttonous rascal, a member of the shark tribe, generally swallows the bait, and, owing to the peculiar formation and position of its mouth, it requires considerable skill to extract the hook. The skipper grasps the snood with his left hand, thrusts the gob-stick down the ugly throat, and with a dexterous twist or two removes the hook, and throws the writhing squalus overboard.

Then, for an hour the bowman, grunting disgustedly, hauls in dog-fish after dog-fish, and now and then the head of a cod, whose body had provided a banquet for the marauders

press of sail, burying her deep-laden hull in the short-plunging seas.

At noon the Narka was alone under the lowering sky, on the gray waste of sea. She kept her boats out and shortened her trawls. At any moment a snow squall was liable to sweep down upon them, but the fishing was good, and the men toiled on cheerfully. The little dories bounded and bucked madly in the seas. When laden with fish, the scumming surges dashed in spray over them, and sheathed them outside and in with shell ice. The men, despite their oil-skins, were wet to the skin, and very cold; and over them, like the shadow of death, hung the leaden sky. But they worked on, careless of cold and danger, wresting a hard harvest from the miserly and treacherous sea. Christmas was coming—was only two days off—and they would make it a merry one for their folks ashore.

In the northwest, the heavens crowded up with dense, blue-black, hard-edged masses of cloud, which, twisting and turning, spread zenithward, rapidly. The air grew colder—the wind blew harder—and a thin frost-fog rose from the sea. A snow storm was sweeping down out of the north. The Narka signaled her boats to pick up their trawls without delay.

She had taken three boats aboard, and filled away to pick up the fourth and last. She fairly flew, but it soon became evident that the snow squalls would be upon her before she could reach the boat.

"If they'd hung on to their anchor, we'd surely have run across them. I had their bearings and steered a straight course. They must have let go, and drifted to leeward. Anyway, we're past where they ought to be. Haul down your jib. Then I'll let her come about."

The schooner cruised about for half an hour, showing a flare-up, and sounding the fog horn. Suddenly the squall slackened its force; the snow thinned, and the horizon widened around. And as the men on the schooner looked about them, they saw down to leeward hardly a hundred yards away, the dory rising and sinking bravely to the swing of the smoking seas. The schooner ran down, rounded to, and the dory rowed under her lee. The little craft was badly iced-up, and the men, to lighten her, had jettisoned fish and trawl gear. As she was hoisted aboard, the captain came forward



"THE LITTLE DORIES BOUNDED AND BUCKED MADLY IN THE SEAS."

of the deep. The skipper's exasperation steadily increases.

The Narka comes along, and the captain hails: "How are they comin', boys?" The boat skipper straightens up, and abjures the luck, in language, lurid and emphatic. The captain's face darkens; then he calls out, quietly: "Take up your trawls; we'll try somewhere else."

When at last they got her boats and trawls aboard for the night, the short December day had long since drawn to a close. The weather continued moderate and clear, but the sky, which had been of a deep blue color, had taken on a pale, sickly hue. A change was imminent, but it wouldn't be immediate.

The Narka remained outside all night, hove-to, with two men, relieved at intervals, on watch on deck. At 3 o'clock all hands were called, and after coffee, went to work, baiting up the gear. And before daylight the dories were hoisted out, and sent off to make a set.

After daybreak the sky began to look gloomy, and was soon overcast with grayish vapor. The nor'west wind freshened in gusts, and lifted up a short, swift running top of a sea. When the dories went out to the under running, they found the trawls fairly loaded with fine cod and had-dock. They returned to the schooner dangerously deep before they had underderrun half their lines, forked the catch aboard, and went immediately to look the rest of their lines.

The day wore on, growing gusty and cold. The other vessels of the fleet, distrustful the look of the weather, began to take up their gear and start for home. A big barkentine, bound in to Halifax, passed under a

and fronted the men who a moment before had been fighting for their very lives, and who but for a whim of the wind that made the snow to lift, would have gone down to death in the deep—the skipper faced them angrily:

"Why didn't you fellows hold on to your anchor?" he demanded, frately. "Expect me to pick you up—rowing and drifting all round the ship?"

"We were hanging on to our mooring, skipper," answered the boat skipper. "But the rope parted, and before Gordon could get his oars out she nearly filled on us. I had to throw everything overboard, and bale."

"Well, you're mighty lucky," he observed. "If it had kept on snowing half an hour longer, we'd never have got you. \* \* \* It's going to be a wild night I'm thinkin', an' we'll have a job to beat her in. Turn to now, and close reef her fore and aft. It'll come down again in a few minutes, blowing hard enough to lift us out of the water, and cold enough to freeze icicles. So we'd better get her reefed down before everything is froze hard."

As the night wore on, the gale developed into a blizzard. The schooner, held up to it by the shred of try sail, wallowed wildly in the infuriated sea. The tops of the seas, torn off by the wind, swept over her in icy showers, and now and then bodies of broken water tumbled aboard and surged around the decks. She made ice everywhere, fast and hard, and the weary, half frozen crew had to pound continuously to keep her clear—to keep her from sinking under the weight of it. At times, despite their efforts, three inch ropes grew as stout as a man, the bowsprit became as big as a church steeple, the bows, as far as the foremast, filled up level with the rails, and her sides above the wa-

ter line sheathed over with ice three feet thick.

At dawn the blizzard blew itself out suddenly, the sky cleared off, and the wind dropped dead. In the clearing light, the Narka's men saw, half a mile to windward, a barquentine, under close-reefed mainsail and main stay-sail. She was in a sorry plight, her masts, yards and rigging being coated with congealed spray, and sleet, and her hull from jib-boom to taffrail, apparently a mere mass of white ice.

"That's the fellow who passed us yesterday," observed the skipper. "He's been making bad weather of it. The poor beggars aboard of her suffered some last night, I'll bet—comin' right out of warm weather."

The schooner's sails were cleared of ice and hoisted, and presently a light breeze bringing up from the north, she trimmed her sheets for a beat to harbor. The barquentine, after a time, got her fore and aft sails up, and sent men aloft on the yards to clear the ice off the gear. The Narka, making a short tack, passed under her lee, and the skipper sang out:

"A wild night, Cap'. You must have been pretty near in when it struck down, wasn't you?"

"Ay!" answered the master of the barquentine, a big, bearded man. "I was abreast of Sambro, when I got it. Couldn't stand up to it, at all. Thought I'd have to run her off for the Gulf Stream. She's got a little ice on her, hey? Got to rig up dummy braces to get my yards round. Think I'll get a chance to buck her in to-day."

"It doesn't look too promisin', Cap. Looks to me as if we were goin' to have some more dirt before night. So long."

The schooner forged ahead out of ear-shot of the old ice wagon, but before she had proceeded far the wind died out again and left her rolling idly in the sea.

"Talk about miserly luck," growled the skipper lugubriously. "We seem to be having a fair share of it. But there's one consolation—we won't have to wait long for wind hereabouts this time of year. Like as not it'll be dead ahead when it comes, but whether or no I'm goin' to buck her into port. I promised the wife I'd be home for Christmas eve, and home I'm goin' to be if this packet holds together long enough to take me there."

At noon a nor'east wind came blustering down, and it started to snow. The schooner, under her four lowers, crashed through the choppy seas, reeling off twelve knots an hour. The skipper grew good-humored, and started to sing cheerily—

"Strike eight bells, call the watch, Relieve the wheel and chain! Oh, won't we have a merry time When we get home again."

Night came again—a black blind night. The schooner was working into smoother water—was getting well inshore; and a man could not see his hand before his face. She was crawling up to a coast, fringed with outlying shoals and isolated rocks; feeling her way through the utter dark with the lead. Ordinarily the skipper would have waited for the weather to clear, and let him see where he was; but tonight was Christmas eve and he had promised his wife to spend it at home. So he beat her in through the smother, groping his way by luck and lead up Chebucto Bay.

Presently, as she roared along on the starboard tack, they heard the report of a gun and the sound of a tug whistle coming faintly through the whirling snow.

"Chebucto head, boys," cried the skipper. "Tack ship. We'll make the cove next leg." The schooner stood away on the port tack, for a few miles. Then, as she came about and stood in toward the land again, the snow thinned, and they saw ahead, a point on her lee bow, the glimmer of a red light—the harbor light of Herring Cove. And presently the Narka shot between the high bluffs at the harbor entrance—out of the boisterous fury of a mid-winter's gale into the calm of her desired haven.

A fortnight thereafter the Yarmouth barquentine, battered and leaking, with half her sails blown away, and half her crew frozen and helpless in the fo'castle, crept wearily into the harbor of Halifax.—Montreal Star.

#### For Sweet Charity's Sake.

Mother—I left 10 cents on this bureau. Did you take it, Tommy?

Tommy—Why—er—yes'm; I gave it to a poor lame man that has a wife and four children to support.

Mother—Indeed? Where did you see this poor lame man?

Tommy—Why, he was out in the street sellin' popcorn an' candy.—Catholic Standard.

#### A Good Start.

Mamma—Gracious, Harold! What are you doing with the dictionary.

Harold—You know, mamma, I'm going to be a doctor when I grow up, and I thought I'd begin by cutting out the appendix.—Judge.

When a wedding is described as "simple," it means there were at least six people in the parade, and that there was an orchestra, and a detective to guard the presents.

#### AGES OF RAILWAY CHIEFS.

##### Application of Osler Theory to Great American Industry.

Application of Professor Osler's "age" theory to the presidents of seventeen of the greatest railroad systems of the United States, says the New York Evening Post, discloses the interesting fact that every one of these executives must have long passed the limit of constructive usefulness, and that seven of them, including James J. Hill of the Great Northern; A. J. Cassatt of the Pennsylvania and Edward T. Jeffrey, president of the Rio Grande and George J. Gould's personal railroad adviser, have already lingered several years beyond Professor Osler's limit of retirement. E. H. Harriman of the Union Pacific system escapes this fate by three years, having had his 57th birthday on Feb. 25 last.

An odd fact brought to light by the examination of these prominent railroad men's ages is that not one of the seventeen was born after the war of the rebellion. None of them is under 50 years of age.

James J. Hill is the oldest of the executives enumerated, having been born in 1838, but his activity in Northwestern Railroad affairs is undiminished, in spite of the "age" theory. A. J. Cassatt ranks second, with 66 years to his credit, and Marvin Huggitt, president of the Chicago & Northwestern road, follows Mr. Cassatt, being 64 years old. E. T. Jeffrey, Roswell Miller, chairman of the St. Paul, and Thomas Lowry of the Minneapolis, St. Paul & Sault Ste. Marie admit 62 years each. E. P. Ripley, president of the Atchafalpa, is 60 years old, while Samuel Spencer of the Southern Railway, W. H. Newman of the New York Central, and Oscar G. Murray of the Baltimore & Ohio, are 58. Joseph Ramsey, Jr., who is pushing the Wabash through to the Atlantic seaboard, is 55, and so is Frederick D. Underwood of the Erie.

W. H. Truesdale, who has been called upon for vigorous planning and initiative in reconstructing and modernizing the Lackawanna, is 54, which is also the age of President C. S. Mellon, lately brought to the New Haven to introduce up-to-date modern methods. Stuyvesant Fish of the Illinois Central is in the same rank. James M. Barr, one of the highest salaried executives of the country, having received a bonus of \$100,000 to come to the road, is building up the Seaboard Air Line as the youth of seventeen representative railroad men, being only 50 years old.

In view of the fact that "railroading" is regarded as a peculiarly wearing and exhausting occupation, this is a very remarkable showing. It has a bearing, also, on a favorite "Oslerism" of industrial philosophers some years ago, to the effect that the day had come when young men must be put in charge of our great enterprises, because men past middle life could not keep up the pace.

#### NURSES IN THE NAVY.

##### Surgeon General Rixey Recommends Employment of Women.

The surgeon general of the navy has made a strong plea for the employment of women nurses in the naval medical service. "That women nurses are by natural endowment and aptitude," says he, "superior to male nurses for much of the duty required in the care of sick and injured men is generally admitted. Every war of modern times has demonstrated this fact. The medical department of the army is now provided with a corps of trained women nurses, and their adaptability to service conditions in the naval hospitals, insures for the sick of the navy as careful nursing as is now given to the sick of the army."

"Valuable assistance, moreover, in teaching and training the men of the hospital corps their special duties of attendance on the sick could be rendered by them, and, in the event of war, besides being utilized on hospital ships, they could, in large part, take the place of the men in the naval hospitals, thereby releasing the latter for service with the force afloat where they would be needed. In the opinion of the bureau, provision should be made for one superintendent of nurses to supervise the discipline of the corps, and as many chief nurses, nurses and reserve nurses as may be needed, in the discretion of the Secretary of the Navy. In time of peace the number of such trained women nurses would be very small, but the organization should be such as to admit of ready expansion to meet extraordinary needs without delay or confusion. The recommendation of the bureau that Congress be asked to authorize the appointment of trained women nurses has heretofore met with the approval of the department, but necessary legislation has so far failed of enactment, the bureau has renewed its recommendation that legislation authorizing the employment of trained women nurses for the navy be requested of Congress.—Washington Star.

The white man's burden: The illies of the field who toll not, neither do they spln, and yet live well.