



IN THIS TALE JACK LONDON'S SEA EXPERIENCE IS USED WITH ALL THE POWER OF HIS VIRILE PEN

SYNOPSIS.

Humphrey Van Weyden, critic and dilettante, is thrown into the water by the sinking of a ferryboat in a fog in San Francisco bay, and becomes unconscious before help reaches him. On coming to his senses he finds himself aboard the sealing schooner Ghost, Captain Wolf Larsen, bound to Japan waters, witnesses the death of the first mate and hears the captain curse the dead man for presuming to die at the beginning of the voyage. The captain refuses to put Humphrey ashore and makes him cabin boy "for the good of his soul." Humphrey sees the body of the mate dumped into the sea. He begins to learn potato peeling and dish washing under the cockney cook, Murgidge, is caught by a heavy sea slipped over the quarter as he is carrying tea and his knee is seriously hurt, but no one pays any attention to his injury. Murgidge steals his money and chases him when accused of it. Later he listens to Wolf give his idea of life—"like yeast, a ferment... the big wet the little..."

CHAPTER VI—Continued.

A cruel thing happened just before supper, indicative of the callousness and brutishness of these men. There is one green hand in the crew, Harrison by name, a clumsy-looking country boy, mastered, I imagine, by the spirit of adventure, and making his first voyage. In some way, when Harrison was aloft, the sheet jammed in the block through which it runs at the end of the gaff. As I understood it, there were two ways of getting it cleared—first, by lowering the foresail, which was comparatively easy and without danger; and, second, by climbing out the peak-halyards to the end of the gaff itself, an exceedingly hazardous performance.

Johnson called out to Harrison to go out the halyards. The Ghost was rolling emptily in a long sea, and with each roll the halyards slackened and jerked taut. They were capable of snapping a man off like a fly from a whiplash.

Harrison heard the order and hesitated. It was probably the first time he had been aloft in his life. Johnson burst out with a volley of abuse and curses.

"That'll do, Johansen," Wolf Larsen said brusquely. "I'll have you know that I do the swearing on this ship. If I need your assistance, I'll call you in."

"Yes, sir," the mate acknowledged submissively.

In the meantime Harrison had started out on the halyards. It was a slight uphill climb, for the foresail peaked high. When he was half way out, the Ghost took a long roll to windward and back again into the hollow between two seas. It was the snap of the whip. His clutch was broken. His body pitched out and down, but in some way he managed to save himself with his legs, hanging head downward. A quick effort brought his hands up to the halyards again; but he was a long time regaining his former position, where he hung, a pitiable object.

"I'll bet he has no appetite for supper," I heard Wolf Larsen's voice, which came to me around the corner of the galley.

"It's a shame," I heard Johnson growling in painfully slow and correct English. He was standing by the main rigging, a few feet away from me. "The boy is willing enough. He will learn if he has a chance. But this is—" He paused awhile, for the word "murder" was his final judgment.

"Hist, will ye!" Louis whispered to him. "For the love iv your mother hold your mouth!"

It took Harrison fully ten minutes to get started again. A little later he made the end of the gaff, where, astride the spar itself, he cleared the sheet, and was free to return. But he had lost his nerve. Johansen called vainly for him to come down. At any moment he was liable to be snapped off the gaff, but he was helpless with fright. Wolf Larsen, walking up and down with Smoke and in conversation, took no more notice of him, though he cried sharply once to the man at the wheel.

"You're off your course, my man! Be careful, unless you're looking for trouble!"

"Ay, ay, sir," the helmsman responded, putting a couple of spokes down.

He had been guilty of running the Ghost several points off her course in order that what little wind there was should fill the foresail and hold it steady. He had striven to help the unfortunate Harrison at the risk of incurring Wolf Larsen's anger.

Fully half an hour went by, and then I saw Johnson and Louis in some sort of altercation. It ended with Johnson flinging off Louis' detaining arm and starting forward. He crossed the deck, springing into the fore rigging, and began to climb. But the quick eye of Wolf Larsen caught him.

"Here, you, what are you up to?" he cried.

Johnson's ascent was arrested. He looked his captain in the eyes and replied slowly:

"I am going to get that boy down." "You'll get down out of that rigging, and damn lively about it! D'ye hear? Get down!"

At half after five I went below to set the cabin table, but I hardly knew what I did, for my eyes and brain were filled with the vision of a man, white-faced and trembling, comically like a bug, clinging to the thrashing gaff. At six o'clock, when I served supper, going on deck to get the food from the galley, I saw Harrison, still in the same position. The conversation at the table was of other things. Nobody seemed interested in the wantonly imperiled life. But, making an extra trip to the galley a little later, I was gladdened by the sight of Harrison staggering weakly from the rigging to the fore-castle scuttle. He had finally summoned the courage to descend.

Before closing this incident, I must give a scrap of conversation I had with Wolf Larsen in the cabin, while I was washing dishes.

"You were looking squeamish this afternoon," he began. "What was the matter?"

I could see that he knew what had made me possibly as sick as Harrison, that he was trying to draw me, and I answered, "It was because of the brutal treatment of that boy."

He gave a short laugh. "Like sea-sickness, I suppose. Some men are subject to it, and others are not."

"Not so," I objected.

"Just so," he went on. "The earth is as full of brutality as the sea is full of motion. And some men are made sick by the one, and some by the other. That's the only reason."

"But you, who make a mock of human life, don't you place any value upon it whatever?" I demanded.

"Value? What value?" He looked at me, and though his eyes were steady and motionless, there seemed a cynical smile in them. "What kind of value? How do you measure it? Who values it?"

"I do," I made answer.

"Then what is it worth to you? Another man's life, I mean. Come, now, what is it worth?"

The value of life? How could I put a tangible value upon it? Somehow, I, who have always had expression,

lacked expression when with Wolf Larsen. The sacredness of life I had accepted as axiomatic. That it was intrinsically valuable was a truism I had never questioned. But when he challenged the truism I was speechless.

"We were talking about this yesterday," he said. "I held that life was a ferment, a yeast, something which devoured life that it might live, and that living was merely successful pigghishness. Why, if there is anything in supply and demand, life is the cheapest thing in the world. There is only so much water, so much earth, so much air; but the life that is demanding to be born is limitless. Nature is a spendthrift. Life? Bah! It has no value. Of cheap things it is the cheapest. Everywhere it goes begging. Nature spills it out with a lavish hand. Where there is room for one life, she sows a thousand lives, and it's life cats life till the strongest and most pigghish life is left."

"You have read Darwin," I said.

"But you read him misunderstandingly when you conclude that the struggle for existence sanctions your wanton destruction of life."

He shrugged his shoulders. "You know you only mean that in relation to human life, for of the flesh and fowl and the fish you destroy as much as I or any other man. And human life is in no wise different, though you feel it is and think that you reason why it is. Why should I be parsimonious with this life which is so cheap and without value?"

He started for the companion stairs, but turned his head for a final word. "Do you know the only value life has is what life puts upon itself? And it is of course overestimated, since it is of necessity prejudiced in its own favor. Take that man I had aloft. He held on as if he were a precious thing, a treasure beyond diamonds or rubies. To you? No. To me? Not at all. To

himself? Yes. But I do not accept his estimate. He sadly overrates himself. There is plenty more life demanding to be born. To himself only was he of value, and to show how fictitious even this value was, being dead he is unconscious that he has lost himself. He alone rated himself beyond diamonds and rubies. Diamonds and rubies are gone, spread out on the deck to be washed away by a bucket of sea-water, and he does not even know that the diamonds and rubies are gone. He does not lose anything, for with the loss of himself he loses the knowledge of loss. Don't you see? And what have you to say?"

"That you are at least consistent," was all I could say, and I went on washing the dishes.

CHAPTER VII.

At last, after three days of variable winds, we have caught the northeast trades. I came on deck, after a good night's rest in spite of my poor knee, to find the Ghost foaming along, wing-and-wing, and every sail drawing except the jibs, with a fresh breeze astern. Ten knots, twelve knots, eleven knots, varying from time to time, is the speed we are making. And ever out of the northeast the brave wind blows, driving us on our course 250 miles during the dawn.

Each day grows perceptibly warmer. In the second dog-watch the sailors come on deck, stripped, and heave buckets of water upon one another from overside. Flying fish are beginning to be seen, and during the night the watch above scrambles over the deck in pursuit of those that fall aboard. In the morning Thomas Murgidge being duly bribed, the galley is pleasantly areek with the odor of their frying, while dolphin meat is served fore and aft on such occasions as Johnson catches the blazing beauties from the bowsprit end.

The days and nights are "all a wonder and a wild delight," and though I have little time from my dreary work, I steal odd moments to gaze and gaze at the unending glory of what I never dreamed the world possessed. I do not forget one night, when I should have been asleep, of lying on the fore-castle head and gazing down at the spectral ripple of foam thrust aside by the gurgling of a brook over mossy stones in some quiet dell, and the crooning song of it lured me away and out of myself till I was no longer Hump the cabin-boy, nor Van Weyden, the man who had dreamed away thirty-five years among books. But a voice behind me, the unmistakable voice of Wolf Larsen, strong with the invincible certitude of the man and mellow with appreciation of the words he was quoting, aroused me.

"O the blazing tropic night, when the wake's a welt of light That holds the hot sky tame, And the steady forefoot snores through the planet-powdered floes Where the scared whale flukes in flame. Her plates are scarred by the sun, dear lass, And her ropes are taut with the dew, For we're booming down on the old trail, our own trail, the out trail, We're sagging south on the Long Trail—the trail that is always new."

"Eh, Hump? How's it strike you?" he asked, after the due pause which the words and setting demanded.

I looked into his face. It was aglow with light, as the sea itself, and the eyes were flashing in the starshine.

"It strikes me as remarkable, to say the least, that you should show enthusiasm," I answered coldly.

"Why, man, it's living! It's life!" he cried.

"Which is a cheap thing and without value," I flung his words at him.

He laughed, and it was the first time I had heard honest mirth in his voice.

"Ah, I cannot get you to understand, cannot drive it into your head, what a thing this life is. Of course life is valueless, except to itself. And I can tell you that my life is pretty valuable just now—to myself. It is beyond price, which you will acknowledge is a terrific overrating, but which I cannot help, for it is the life that is in me that makes the rating."

He left me as suddenly as he had come, springing to the deck with the weight and softness of a tiger. Sometimes I think him mad, or half mad at least, what of his strange moods and vagaries. At other times I take him for a great man, a genius who has never arrived. He is certainly an individualist of the most pronounced type. Not only that, but he is very lonely. His tremendous virility and mental strength wall him apart. Men are more like children to him, even the hunters, and as children he treats them, descending perforce to their level and playing with them as a man plays with puppies. Or else he probes them with the cruel hand of a vivisectionist, groping about in their mental processes as though to see of what soul-stuff is made.

While on the question of vagaries, I shall tell what befell Thomas Murgidge in the cabin, and at the same time complete an incident upon which I have already touched once or twice. The twelve o'clock dinner was over,

one day, and I had just finished putting the cabin in order, when Wolf Larsen and Thomas Murgidge descended the companion stairs. Though the cook had a cubbyhole of a stateroom opening off from the cabin, in the cabin itself he had never dared to linger or to be seen, and he fitted to and fro, once or twice a day, like a timid specter.

"So you know how to play 'Nap,'" Wolf Larsen was saying in a pleased sort of voice. "I might have guessed an Englishman would know. I learned it myself in English ships."

Thomas Murgidge was beside himself, a blithering imbecile, so pleased was he at chumming thus with the captain. The little airs he put on and the painful striving to assume the easy carriage of a man born to a dignified place in life would have been sickening had they not been ludicrous. He quite ignored my presence, though I credited him with being simply unable to see me. His pale, wishy-washy eyes were swimming like lazy summer seas, though what blissful visions they beheld were beyond my imagination.

"Get the cards, Hump," Wolf Larsen ordered, as they took seats at the table. "And bring out the cigars and the whisky you'll find in my berth."

I returned with the articles in time to hear the cockney hinting broadly that there was a mystery about him, that he might be a gentleman's son gone wrong or something of other; also, that he was a remittance man and was paid to keep away from England—"p'yd 'ansomely to sling my 'ook an' keep slinpin' it."

I had brought the customary liquor glasses, but Wolf Larsen frowned, shook his head, and signaled with his hands for me to bring the tumblers. These he filled two-thirds full with undiluted whisky—"a gentleman's drink," quoth Thomas Murgidge—and they clinked their glasses to the glorious game of "Nap," lighted cigars, and fell to shuffling and dealing the cards.

They played for money. They increased the amounts of the bets. They drank whisky, they drank it neat, and I fetched more. I do not know whether Wolf Larsen cheated or not—a thing he was thoroughly capable of doing—but he won steadily. The cook made repeated journeys to his bunk for money. Each time he performed the journey with greater swagger, but he never brought more than a few dollars at a time. He grew maudlin, familiar, could hardly see the cards or sit upright. As a preliminary to another journey to his bunk, he hooked Wolf Larsen's buttonhole with a greasy forefinger and vacuously proclaimed and reiterated, "I got money. I got money. I tell yer, an' I'm a gentleman's son."

Wolf Larsen was unaffected by the drink, yet he drank glass for glass, and if anything his glasses were fuller. There was no change in him. He did not appear even amused at the other's antics.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

SNAIL A VALUABLE FOOD

Edible and Nutritious, is the Verdict That Has Been Arrived At by Those Who Know.

"All snails are edible and nutritious," says Canon Horsley in a book on British land and fresh water molluscs, just published. He goes on to say that even the common or garden snail, though insipid, is as nourishing as calf's-foot jelly.

There is a large white shelled snail called Helix pomatia that is commonly eaten by connoisseurs in the south of England, while all over France, Italy and Spain several species are used as food. In France there are many snail farms, which yield a good profit to their owners. In the French and Italian quarters of New York snails may be bought, either alive or cooked, and at most of the French restaurants they are served, "escargots farcis" being the most usual form of the dish.

Snails are easy to raise in large quantities. They need lime for making their shells, but they do not have to be fed, as they can find their own food, which is exclusively the leaves of many plants. They are most delicious when properly prepared and cooked and, as Canon Horsley says, as nourishing as calf's-foot jelly.

Oil Wells Sunk in Bed of Ocean. Many persons would doubt the statement that it is possible to pump oil from the earth beneath the waters of the ocean. That this is done, however, is proved. The well towers are located on rough frame piers over the ocean and as far as a hundred feet from the surf. The oil is pumped through the waters of the sea and is carried through pipes to the land, where it is emptied into tanks. The pumps are worked by means of steam engines stationed on the piers. A few years ago there were many more of these wells, but some have been exhausted and abandoned in recent years.—Popular Science Monthly and World's Advance.

"Collect!" Large quantities of furs have, it is reported, recently been received in this country from Leipzig, Germany. Owing to the exigencies of the great fur houses of Leipzig, these furs are cheaper now than before the war. They were sent, it is said, by parcel post labeled "Collect," in this way escaping the attention of the British postal authorities.

Its Effect. "Jags was very much affected at my talk with him on the evil effects of drink. I could see how he filled up."

"Yes, that is what he is usually doing."

ROAD BUILDING

MAINTENANCE OF GOOD ROADS

Farmers Urged to Vote Against Bonds or Taxes Whenever Plans Do Not Provide for Up-Keep.

The progressive farmer believes in good roads, as everybody knows. Nobody needs good roads more than the farmer and his family. Good roads increase profits and enrich social life. Poor roads cost more than good ones.

At the same time, we have reached the conclusion that it is our patriotic duty to advise our readers to vote against road bonds or road taxes whenever the plans for building the roads do not include proper provision for maintaining them after they are built. It is just as foolish to spend money to build a road, without at the same time providing for funds to keep it up, as it would be to spend money to get a horse without providing feed for him after he is bought. The South has wasted millions and millions by building roads without keeping them up, and it is high time to stop wasting the people's tax money in this fashion. We must aim not merely to get good roads but to keep good roads.

Another important matter is that of having all road expenditures made under expert supervision. Secretary of Agriculture Houston says: "The nation today is spending annually the equivalent of more than \$200,000,000 for roads. Much of this is directed by local supervisors and it is estimated by experts that of the amount so directed anywhere from 30 to 40 per cent is, relatively speaking, wasted or misdirected." Every state should have a state highway commission, and the people should not vote money for any expensive scheme of country road improvement until it has been approved by experts.

The third matter we wish to emphasize is the importance of the road drag. As we have said before, the drag is undoubtedly the cheapest good roads maker ever invented, and if some commercial company had patented it and sold it at five times its cost, every county in the South would be using it. It is so simple and cheap that people will not realize what a wonder-worker it is. The time to prevent next winter's bad roads is now, and the way to prevent them is to make plans to have the roads dragged. Every farmer interested ought to see his county road authorities and demand action. Send to the United States department of agriculture, Washington, D. C., for a free copy of Farmers Bulletin 597, "The Road Drag and How to Use It," and keep pestering your fellow citizens until your county gets the dragging habit.

1. Road building is too expensive a business for you to intrust it to

men without expert knowledge. Demand that your state highway commission approve your county's projects.

2. The cheapest way to keep dirt roads in good conditions is by the use of the drag. Demand that your county commissioners make plans for using it to improve the roads you already have instead of spending all the road money building new roads.

3. There is no such thing as a "permanent road," hence no plan for road building should be approved unless it includes provision for keeping up the roads after they are built.—The Progressive Farmer.

Narrow Roads of Benefit. While it is bad policy to build roads of such narrow width where traffic is likely to become at all excessive, unquestionably there are many districts where they would be a profitable investment as compared with the fruitless effort to maintain ordinary stone or dirt roads.

Banish Poor Roads. Good road-building material is found in practically every county, according to the University of Missouri exhibits shown at the state fair. It ought to be used to banish poor roads.

Good Roads. The improvements of good roads and ditches is a matter which concerns every farmer who desires to increase the value of his land or the farm property of the community in which he resides as a whole.

Oil Helps Greatly. Properly applied, helps greatly, but the dust must be removed, and the surface broken up and loosened about two inches deep; otherwise the oil stands in pools or runs into the ditch.

CATARRH STAGNATION PE RU NA IS INVIGORATION

Catarrh means inflammation. Inflammation is the stagnation of blood—the gorging of the circulation with impure blood.

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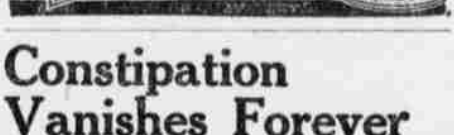
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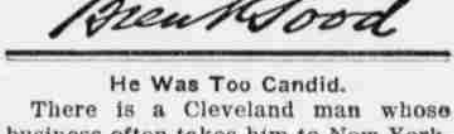
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He Was Too Candid. There is a Cleveland man whose business often takes him to New York. He doesn't stay long—two days at the most—but it seems long to his wife. And the other day his wife kicked.

"My dear," she said, "the next time you go to New York I want you to take me along."

"You wouldn't have a good time," he answered.

"Why wouldn't I have a good time?" "Because you have such a jealous disposition."

The next time she's going if she has to travel on a different car.—Cleveland Plaindealer.

Manners are the orchids of civilization; courtesy is its sweet violets.

Better keep your temper; otherwise it is apt to give you away.

Stop That Ache!

Don't worry along with a bad back. Get rid of it. It's a sign you haven't taken care of yourself—haven't had enough air, exercise and sleep. Probably this has upset your kidneys. Get back to sensible habits, and give the kidneys help. Then, if it's kidney backache, the dizziness, lameness and tiredness will disappear. Use Doan's Kidney Pills—the best recommended kidney remedy.

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