

Light Freights

By
W. W. JACOBS
**BULLY OF THE
"CAVENDISH"**

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"Talking of prize fighters, sir," said the night watchman, who had nearly danced himself over the edge of the wharf in illustrating one of Mr. Corbett's most trusted blows, and was now sitting down taking in sufficient air for three, "they ain't wot they used to be when I was a boy. They advertise in the papers for months and months about their fights, and when it does come off, they do it with gloves, and they're all right again a day or two arter."

"The strangest prize fighter I ever come across was one wot shipped with me on the Cavendish. He was the most eggstrordinary fighter I've ever seen or 'card of, and 'e got to be such a nuisance afore 'e'd done with us that we could 'ardly call our souls our own. He shipped as an ordinary seaman—a unfair thing to do, as 'e was anything but ordinary, and 'ad no right to be there at all."

"We'd got one terror on board afore he come, and that was Bill Bone, one o' the biggest and strongest men I've ever seen down a ship's fo'c's'le, and that's saying a good deal. Built more like a bull than a man, 'e was, and when he was in his tantrums the best thing to do was to get out of 'is way or else get into your bunk and keep quiet. Opposition used to send 'im crazy 'most, an' if 'e said a red shirt was a blue one, you 'ad to keep quiet. It didn't do to argue with 'im and call it blue even, cos if you did he'd call you a liar and punch you for telling lies."

"The v'yge I'm speaking of—we used to trade between Australia and London—Bill came aboard about an hour afore the ship sailed. The rest of us was already aboard and down below, some of us stowing our things away and the rest sitting down and telling each other lies about wot we'd been doing. Bill came lurching down the ladder, and Tom Baker put 'is 'and to 'im to steady 'im as he got to the bottom."

"Who are you putting your 'ands on?" ses Bill, glaring at 'im. "Only 'olding you up, Bill," ses Tom, smiling."

"Oh," ses Bill. "He put 'is back up agin a bunk and pulled his self together. "'Olding of me—up—was you?" he ses; 'whaffor, if I might be so bold as to ask?"

"I thought your foot 'ad slipped, Bill, old man," ses Tom; 'but I'm sorry if it 'adn't."

"Bill looks at 'im agin, and, smiling."



Nasty, Low-Looking Little Chap Was Doggy.

"Sorry if my foot didn't slip?" he ses.

"You know wot I mean, Bill," ses Tom, smiling a uneasy smile.

"Don't laugh at me," roars Bill.

"I wasn't laughing, Bill, old pal," ses Tom.

"'E's called me a liar," ses Bill, looking round at us; 'called me a liar. 'Old my coat, Charles, and I'll split 'im in halves."

"Charles took the coat like a lamb, though he was Tom's pal, and Tom looked round to see whether he couldn't nip up the ladder and get away, but Bill was just in front of it. Then Tom found out that one of 'is bootlaces was undone and he knelt down to do it up, and this young ordinary seaman, Joe Simms by name, put his 'ead out of his bunk and he ses, quiet like:

"You ain't afraid of that thing, mate, are you?"

"Wot?" screams Bill, starting.

"Don't make such a noise when I'm

speaking," ses Joe; 'where's your manners, you great 'ulking rascal?"

"I thought Bill would ha' dropped with surprise at being spoke to like that. His face was purple all over and 'e stood staring at Joe as though 'e didn't know wot to make of 'im. And we stared, too, Joe being a smallish sort o' chap and not looking at all strong."

"Go easy, mate," whispers Tom; 'you don't know who you're talking to."

"You touch that man," he ses, quietly, pointing to Tom, 'and I'll give you such a dressing-down as you've never 'ad afore. Mark my words, now."

"I wasn't going to 'it 'im," ses Bill, in a strange, mild voice."

"You'd better not," ses the young 'un, shaking his fist at 'im; 'you'd better not, my lad. If there's any fighting to be done in this fo'c's'le I'll do it. Mind that."

"It's no good me saying we was staggered, becoss staggered ain't no word for it. To see Bill put 'is hands in 'is pockets and try and whistle, and then sit down on a locker and scratch 'is head, was the most amazing thing I've ever seen. Presently 'e begins to sing under his breath."

"Stop that 'umming," ses Joe; 'when I want you to 'um, I'll tell you."

"Bill left off 'umming, and then he gives a little cough behind the back of 'is 'and, and, arter fidgeting about a



"You Better Not."

bit with 'is feet, went up on deck again."

"Strewth," ses Tom, looking round at us, 'ave we shipped a bloomin' prize fighter?"

"He was a ordinary seaman, mind, talking to A. B.'s like that. Men wot'd been up aloft and doing their little bit when 'e was going about catching cold in 'is little petti-cos. Still, if Bill could stand it, we supposed as we'd better."

"Bill stayed up on deck till we was under way, and 'is spirit seemed to be broke. He went about 'is work like a man wot was walking in 'is sleep, and when breakfast come 'e 'ardly tasted it."

"Joe made a splendid breakfast, and when he'd finished 'e went to Bill's bunk and chucked the things out all over the place and said 'e was going to 'ave it for himself. And Bill sat there and took it all quiet, and by-and-by he took 'is things up and put them in Joe's bunk without a word."

"You've been in a scrap or two in your time, I know," Tom ses, admiring like. "I knew you was a bit of a one with your fists direkly I see you."

"Oh, 'ow's that?" asks Joe.

"I could see by your nose," ses Tom. "You never know how to take people like that. The words 'ad 'ardly left Tom's lips afore the other ups with a basin of 'ot tea and heaves it all over 'im."

"Take that, you insulting rascal," he ses.

"Get up," ses Tom, dancing with rage. "Get up; prize fighter or no prize fighter, I'll mark you."

"Sit down," ses Bill, turning round.

"I'm going to 'ave a go at 'im, Bill," ses Tom; 'if you're afraid of 'im, I ain't."

"Sit down," ses Bill, starting up.

"Ow dare you insult me like that?"

"Like wot?" ses Tom, starting.

"If I can't lick 'im you can't," ses Bill; 'that's 'ow it is, mate."

"But I can try," ses Tom.

"All right," ses Bill. "Me fust, then if you lick me, you can 'ave a go at 'im. If you can't lick me, 'ow can you lick 'im?"

"That was the beginning of it, and instead of 'aving one master we found we'd got two, owing to the eggstrordinary way Bill had o' looking at things."

"In about three days our life wasn't worth living, and the fo'c's'le was more like a Sunday school class than anything else. In the fust place Joe put down swearing. He wouldn't 'ave no bad language, he said, and he didn't neither. If a man used a bad word Joe would pull 'im up the fust time, and the second he'd order Bill to 'it 'im, being afraid of 'urting 'im too much 'imself."

"Then Joe objected to us playing cards for money, and we 'ad to arrange on the quiet that brace buttons was ha'pennies and coat buttons pennies, and that lasted until one evening Tom Baker got up and danced and nearly went off 'is 'ead with joy through havin' won a few dozen. That was enough for Joe, and Bill by 'is

orders took the cards and pitched 'em over the side."

"It was a mystery to all of us, and it got worse and worse as time went on. Bill didn't dare call 'is soul 'is own, although Joe only hit 'im once the whole time, and then not very hard, and he excused 'is cowardice by telling us of a man Joe 'ad killed in a fight down in one o' them West End clubs."

"Wot with Joe's Sunday school ways and Bill backing 'em up, we was all pretty glad by the time we got to Melbourne."

"Arter we'd been there two or three days we began to feel a'most sorry for Bill. Night arter night, when we was ashore, Joe would take 'im off and look arter 'im, and at last, partly for 'is sake, but more to see the fun, Tom Baker managed to think o' something to put things straight."

"There'll be an end o' that bullying Joe," ses Tom, taking Bill by the arm. "We've arranged to give 'im a lesson as'll lay 'im up for a time."

"Oh," ses Bill, looking 'ard at a boat wot was passing."

"We've got Doggy Pete coming to see us to-night," ses Tom, in a whisper; 'there'll only be the second officer aboard, and he'll likely be asleep. Doggy's one o' the best light-weights in Australia, and if 'e don't fix up Mister Joe, it'll be a pity."

"At about ha'-past six Doggy comes aboard, and the fun begins to commence."

"He was a nasty, low-looking little chap, was Doggy, very fly-looking and very conceited. I didn't like the look of 'im at all, and unbearable as Joe was, it didn't seem to be quite the sort o' thing to get a chap aboard to 'ammer a shipmate you couldn't 'ammer yourself."

"An' what's that in that bunk over there?" ses Doggy, pointing with 'is cigar at Joe."

"Hush, be careful," ses Tom, with a wink; 'that's a prize fighter."

"Oh," ses Doggy, grinning, 'I thought it was a monkey."

"Bill, who is that 'andsome, gentlemanly-looking young feller over there smoking a half-crown cigar?" ses Joe."

"That's a young gent wot's come down to 'ave a look 'round," ses Tom, as Doggy takes 'is cigar out of 'is mouth and looks 'round, puzzled."

"Take that lovely little gentleman and kick 'im up the fo'c's'le ladder," ses Joe to Bill, taking up 'is jacket agin; 'and don't make too much noise over it, cos I've got a bit of a 'eadache, else I'd do it myself."

"Wot's the game?" ses Doggy, starting."

"I'm obeying orders," ses Bill. "Last time I was in London, Joe 'ere half killed me one time, and 'e made me promise to do as 'e told me for six months. I'm very sorry, mate, but I've got to kick you up that ladder."

"You kick me up?" ses Doggy, with a nasty little laugh."

"I can try, mate, can't I?" ses Bill, folding 'is things up very neat and putting 'em on a locker."

"The fust blow Bill missed, and the next moment 'e got a tap on the jaw that nearly broke it, and that was followed up by one in the eye that sent 'im staggering up agin the side, and when 'e was there Doggy's fists were rattling all round 'im."

"I believe it was that that brought Bill round, and the next moment Doggy was on 'is back with a blow that nearly knocked his 'ead off. Charlie grabbed at Tom's watch and began to count, and after a little bit called out "Time." It was a silly thing to do, as it would 'ave stopped the fight then and there if it 'adn't been for Tom's presence of mind, saying it was two minutes slow. That gave Doggy a chance, and he got up again and walked round Bill very careful, swearing 'ard at the small size of the fo'c's'le."

"He got in three or four at Bill afore you could wink a'most, and when Bill 'it back 'e wasn't there."

"Charlie called "Time" again, and we let 'em 'ave five minutes."

"In five minutes more, though, it was all over, Doggy not being able to see plain—except to get out o' Bill's way—and hitting wild. He seemed to think the whole fo'c's'le was full o' Bills sitting on a locker and waiting to be punched, and the end of it was a knock-out 'low from the real Bill which left 'im on the floor without a soul offering to pick 'im up."

"Bill 'elped 'im up at last and shook hands with 'im, and they rinsed their faces in the same bucket, and began to praise each other up. They sat there purring like a couple o' cats, until at last we 'eard a smothered voice coming from Joe Simms' bunk."

"Is it all over?" he asks."

"Yes," ses somebody."

"How is Bill?" ses Joe's voice again."

"Look for yourself," ses Tom."

"Joe sat up in 'is bunk then and looked out, and he no sooner saw Bill's face than he gave a loud cry and fell back agin, and, as true as I'm sitting here, fainted clean away. We was struck all of a 'cap, and then Bill picked up the bucket and threw some water over 'im, and by and by he comes round agin and in a dazed sort o' way puts his arm round Bill's neck and begins to cry."

"Mighty Moses!" ses Doggy Pete, jumping up; 'it's a woman!"

"It's my wife!" ses Bill."

"We understood it all then, least-ways the married ones among us did. She'd shipped aboard partly to be with Bill and partly to keep an eye on 'im, and Tom Baker's mistake about a prize fighter had just suited her book better than anything. How Bill was to get 'er home 'e couldn't think, but it 'appened the second officer had been peeping down the fo'c's'le, waiting for ever so long for a suitable opportunity to stop the fight, and the old man was so tickled about the way we'd all been done 'e gave 'er a passage back as stewardess to look arter the ship's cat."

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CENTRAL LABOR UNION.

First November Meeting Slated for
Next Tuesday Evening at
Bruse's Hall.

The Central Labor union will meet at Bruse's hall next Tuesday evening. This will be the last meeting before the convening at Denver of the annual convention of the American Federation of Labor. If the local delegate goes to Denver next Tuesday's meeting ought to have a few instructions to give."

T. C. Kelsey, who has been a delegate to the central body ever since Hector was an infant canine, has returned from a special tour of Iowa, Illinois and Indiana. He says organized labor "stood up" for Bryan and the Gompers' program and the farmers let their pocketbooks and bellies influence their votes."

FATHER MAUPIN BETTER.

W. M. Maupin returned Tuesday from Hennessey, Okla., where he was called a week before by a telegram announcing the serious illness of his father. Elder Maupin was considerably better when the son left for home, and while not entirely out of danger there was every reason to believe that he would ultimately recover."

THE CARPENTERS.

One hundred and fifty carpenters were initiated at a single joint meeting of the two Los Angeles carpenters' unions a few weeks ago. This is said to be the largest class initiation into the membership of a labor organization ever known in that city. Very effective work in adding to the membership of the various Los Angeles unions is being done under the plans recently devised there. The city was sub-divided into districts and headquarters established in each, where the principles of unionism are expounded by capable advocates."

CAPITAL AUXILIARY.

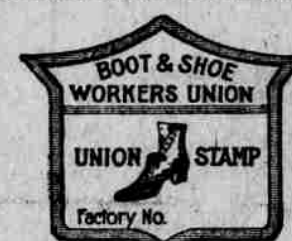
Capital Auxiliary No. 11 will meet Wednesday at the home of Mrs. Orville S. Young, 3226 W street."

Harvey Garman has retired from the labor paper game after an experience of a couple of months. Harvey had been accustomed to eating regularly and he couldn't stand the change."

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