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IN THE CHINA SEA

A NARRATIVE OF ADVENTURE.

By SEWARD W. HOPKINS.

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CHAPTER VI.

[CONTINUED.]

I waited some time impatiently watching for signs of land, but none appeared. Looking astern, I was startled at the sight of a large fin sticking above the water, and following the yacht. I knew it was a shark. Another thing that alarmed me even more than the presence of the shark, was the fact that the wake of the vessel showed that she was describing a circle. There must be a motive in that and I divined it to be a plan of Mr. Snell's to keep us afloat until, worn out by exhaustion, I would go to sleep and become an easy prey. I had slept but little the night before, and if Mr. Snell could keep up his tactics much longer, I must give way.

The more I studied the matter the more convinced I became that for the second time Mr. Snell was plotting my murder. I noticed a change, also, in the demeanor of my fellows. They looked at me in a threatening way, and I knew that the possession of the rifle was the only thing that saved me from an attack.

The thought of being defeated and murdered by this wretch, Gambok Snell, and his ugly crew maddened me. Much more did the horrible thought of leaving Miss Arnold to the mercies of this scoundrel. Anything could be gained by making haste. I must make a bold move. I did not care for what I was about to do. Gambok Snell was so utterly wicked that he merited death. And, besides that, it was simply a matter of life or death between him and me.

With that resolve I unscrewed the nozzle and gulped down a pint. Instantly the alcohol fired my blood. The sun, and the fearful exposure had attacked my face. He called to the crew, and I saw that they were coming for his assistance. Springing off my seat, as soon as I finished the last drop of the liquor, I ran to the cabin, and then, seizing my rifle, turned to meet the infuriated horde. One of them opened fire on me as I ran. Mr. Snell, and I shot him in his tracks as I reached the rail.

Miss Arnold had seen my return, when Mr. Snell sought to detain me, but now she paid no attention.

The change in her manner at the command of the crew drew a pistol from his belt, but my rifle gave him no time to use it, and he went down. The last of the crew now were upon us. I attempted to use the pistol with my one good hand, but it dropped to the deck. The heathen was on me.

I drew my sword and made a slash at him. We closed forward a little, locking at each other furiously. I could instantly have cut him down with more time to strength, but my wound placed me at the mercy of his superior accidentals. With a terrible blow he sent my sword flashing to the deck and raised his cutlass.

I shut my eyes, expecting to feel the keen blade in my skull the next instant.

I was helpless.

Just when I expected to feel my death blow, I felt some one brush past me. The sharp report of a pistol rang out, and with a shriek the Chinaman fell to the deck. Miss Arnold had grasped the pistol that I dropped and had saved my life.

At that moment a boarding sea came from the water. I saw Gambok Snell being drawn down into the sea. I knew that the shark had found his victim.

My eyes met those of Miss Arnold's as we turned from the scene. Neither of us spoke. I clasped her hand and pressed it.

"You are wounded!" she cried.

"It isn't serious," I replied; "but you were brave and skillful."

With deft and shapely fingers she followed my instructions, and bound a handkerchief tightly around my wrist.

"Thank you," I said; "it will do nicely now."

But she did not hear me. Serene and courageous when I was near to death, she had swept away my enemy with a sure and deadly aim, and calm still when I needed her services to bind my wounded arm; but when it was all over she was a woman again. She had fainted.

It was then my turn to become nurse, and my strength did not fail me in the emergency. I bathed her face. I chafed her hands. As her senses came to, her head rested on my arm. Her eyes looked up into mine, and she smiled. I was content. We had both escaped death.

CHAPTER VII.

ALOFT ON A TROPIC-BIRD.

The yacht that had been Chu Fong's was, like everything else that belonged to that person, the best that could be had. It was not large, but it was admirably adapted to the purpose for which it had been built—cruising in the waters of the Chinese coast. But no matter how elegant or how well equipped a yacht may be, it is useless if by with all sails set and no hand at the helm. While I had been working over Miss Arnold, the vessel had turned in the wind, and was now drifting [illegible] on, not [illegible] happily [illegible] on the [illegible].

When Miss Arnold had so far recovered as to be able to sit up, I led her to a chair near the rail. She was somewhat nervous.

"You had better sit here, Miss Arnold," I said, "and rest, while I get the boat to rights. We will never get anywhere at this rate."

She looked up at me, smiling.

"You cannot do much, can you, with one arm?"

"Not very much, but I can, at least, keep her steady."

I grasped the tiller and swung the yacht round. She caught some which made Miss Arnold catch the rail to steady herself.

"I am not much of a sailor, and it would not be well for us if a storm came up," I said; "but with this breeze we are all right. But the thing is, which way are we going?"

"I am sure I don't know," she replied, shaking her head dolefully. "From all that I have heard, I think we are the island of Sa Cocta to south from Hong Kong, but now where is the island?"

"That I don't know either," I answered. "We have been tacking and drifting around under the auspices of Gambok Snell that I really know, in fact, I don't know where we are."

She shuddered when I mentioned Snell's name. His fate was indeed a terrible one; but I was [illegible] by the belief that he richly deserved it.

"The only thing for us to do is to sail on and on until we get somewhere. We must trust in Providence."

"We are, at least, better off than in Chu Fong's temple," she said.

"We are, indeed—as much so as our enemies are all dead and we have means of transportation."

She looked at the dead Chinamen lying on the deck and shuddered.

"As soon as you are able to mind the helm, I will throw those fellows overboard," I said.

"But can you?" she asked.

"Yes, at least I can try."

"Well, do it then," she said, covering her face and giving a shudder of disgust and horror.

She took the tiller. I told her how to keep it, and was surprised to learn that she knew as much about it as I did.

"I used to go sailing a great deal in England," she said, laughing at my surprised surprise.

My arm—the wounded one—was not of much use to me, but there was a deal of strength left in the other. By dint of great perseverance I got the four Chinamen, one by one, over into the sea. When I had finished that task, I threw a few pailfuls of water on the deck and washed it down as well as I was able.

"There," I said, "it will look better. No one would suspect the sanguinary nature of the scene that has been enacted there."

"Let us forget it," she replied; "it is awful to think of."

"Now, if you will persevere in that other work," I said, "I will go below and see what I can do to get a meal. I am getting very hungry. I suppose there is a larder. I think that Chu Fong was a person who always had around him plenty of good things to eat."

I went below. I was agreeably surprised to find the skylights cleaned and saloon so inviting and comfortable. The main-cabin, about ten feet long and six wide. Seats were fixed along the sides, and a table occupied the center. This table, instead of being on legs, was suspended from the ceiling on silver chains. At one end was a small stand, with lamps, evidently for the fastening of a tureen or soup bowl solidly to the table.

Over the table hung a cabinet, in which were glasses, cups, saucers, plates, spoons, knives and forks. In front of this main-cabin were two smaller rooms, or staterooms. They were elegant in their appointments. The expense of furnishing the yacht must have been enormous. These cabins were lighted by silver lamps, hung from the ceiling, which burned perfumed oil.

Aft, or to the rear of the dining room, I found a small galley, or kitchen, with a stove and various cooking utensils. At one side of this a storeroom, stocked with sugar, coffee, tea, canned goods and some freshly killed fowl. Also a piece of rib beef for roasting. I had seen enough. I repaired at once to the deck.

Miss Arnold smiled when she saw me emerge from the companion-way.

"I suppose you are happy," she said.

I replied, stepping to her side, "What do you think? There is a cupboard down there stocked with tea, coffee, sugar, meat, pheasants, birds, rice, canned corn, canned peas, canned tomatoes and grapes, bananas and oranges. We are in luck for once."

"We are, indeed," she said, laughing, "and if you will take the tiller, I will go right down and get up something to stop that awful hunger of yours."

"I wish you would," I replied, taking the helm from her. "I am a starving as a bear."

"Can I find these treasures anywhere?" she asked. "Where is the cupboard?"

"It is easy to find. You go down the main cabin into a small passageway. Beyond this is the kitchen. The cupboard is on the left."

"I know the arrangement of the yacht well enough," said Miss Arnold. "It was a sore trial to me, all tied up with cords. But is there a fire in the kitchen?"

"There is. I put some coal on before coming up."

"Then we will have a cup of coffee," she said, leaving me alone on the deck.

When she had gone I fell to musing. Our adventures were by no means at an end. We were sailing rapidly away, away. But where and to what purpose? Of course, if the yacht should prove able to stand all sorts of weather, and I was able to retain control of her night and day, we were bound to fetch up somewhere. It was a chance whether we were on our way toward the Chinese coast or out into the Pacific Ocean. I fell to thinking of Palestina and Jessamine, and to wondering if I would ever see them again. I pictured them as I pictured wanderers, telling the sad news of Annie Baldwin's death and my own, out in the China Sea. I pictured that poor old father, who had sent me across the sea with his blessing, to dad and mourn his darling daughter. And now she was dead and I was lost. I fancied I saw Lamont in a corner of the Golden Gate Club, the center of a circle of admirers, telling over and over again the story of our journey and its results. I could even hear, in my mind, a few regretful remarks over my own untimely death. And I could see my empty chair in the club room.

I had not spent much time in my musing before my companion reappeared. She carried before her a small tray, from which came the appetizing fragrance of good coffee.

"Here you are, Captain Cobbleigh," she said smilingly. She placed a chair near me and set the tray upon it. There were displayed temptingly before me a bowl of coffee, a broiled pheasant, some rice-cakes and some fruit.

"Ah, Miss Arnold," I said, "that looked tempting! But are you not going to eat, too?"

"Oh, yes, but I could not carry up so much at one time. I will be back soon."

In a short time I was enjoying my supper as thoroughly as if it were being eaten in that office in Gotham City, instead of in the China Sea.

"Wasn't it a strange course that threw me in the way of rescuing you, to be saved by you in return?" I said, putting a cheerful heart. "I shall be ever grateful to Mr. Gambok Snell for the part he played in throwing me overboard, I mean."

"But you threw him overboard, instead of throwing him. That was more grateful," she replied.

"That first was necessary to our safety. The other was a gratuitous act, despite what he got. That I found life, instead of death, was not the fault."

In this way we continued our talk on deck, and when it was over, Miss Arnold gathered up the cloisonné tray of Chu Fong, and disappeared with it below.

"I can't be lazy," I said. "It is going to be a busy evening. I can enjoy it, with no thought of danger. We can forget under the [illegible] southern skies."

What a night that was in my life! The little yacht sped through the water as evenly and certainly as though a tried crew was on the tiller. The stars, rainy and warm, days enough to be were blinking to give the yacht good bearing. The rippling water gurgled and bubbled along the sides as she cut through the tiny waves. The influence of the night was soothing.

We sat there in the bright moonlight and talked. Long, long we sat there. The darkness of the night increased the brilliancy of the stars. Brilliant comets, that had at times been low on the horizon, were now high above us.

I looked at the watch I had taken from Chu Fong. It was midnight.

"Do you know that it is twelve o'clock?" I asked Miss Arnold.

"Midnight! Is it possible! How quickly the hours have fled! I did not suppose it was here yet. And to bed in sight yet."

There was a tremor of disappointment in her voice.

"No, not in sight yet. But we will reach land to-morrow. Don't worry. You need rest. You certainly need it."

"Yes. I am sorry that sleepy. But you cannot remain here alone. Can I not relieve you and let you get some rest?"

"No. You must go below and to sleep. I shall be all right here. The night is calm. The yacht needs very little attention. I can fasten the tiller and catch a wink now and then. And to-morrow you relieve me, and will rest."

"Well, if you wish it so," she said "good night."

When she had gone, I had nothing to keep me awake, and I was soon fast asleep.

I got very sleepy. Everything was calm and peaceful. I set the tiller, and, making a pillow of cushions, lay down to rest.

I soon fell asleep. I slept soundly. I needed it. The past excitement and my wound had told on my strength. Only sleep could restore it.

It was probably one o'clock when I fell asleep.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

The smallest man who ever lived was probably the dwarf Bebe, born in France in 1759. He was just twenty inches tall and eight pounds in weight when full grown.

The elegant beetle of Venezuela is the largest of its species. An average specimen of this insect, when full grown, weighs half a pound.

BREAKFAST.

Baked pears.
Broiled bacon. Boiled potatoes.
Whole wheat bread.
Corn muffins. Maple syrup.
Coffee.

DINNER.

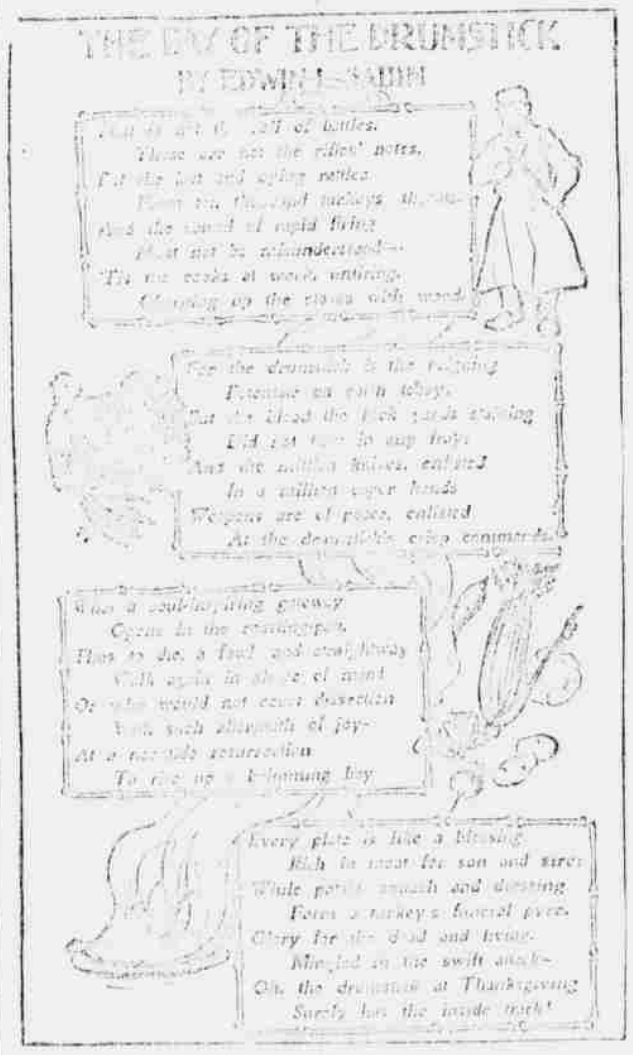
(Served for 6 P.M.)

Mock turtle soup. Clear soup.
Boiled salmon. Pumpkin.
Thanksgiving turkey with dressing.
Sweet potatoes. Browned sweet potatoes.
Cranberry frappe.
Lettuce and celery salad. Cheese straws.
Pumpkin pie. Mincemeat.
Sage. Grapes.
Coffee.

BEDTIME SUPPER.

Pound cake. Pumpkin chips.
Pickled peaches. Thanksgiving relish.
Grape nectar.

After a heavy late dinner one hardly knows how to spend the evening in the way most conducive to digestion. A simple supper will be found appropriate to the occasion. The bedtime supper here given is a very light one, and should be served at 8 o'clock.



Are you looking for my little boy?