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THE JOURNAL.

H. E. HUNN, Editor. W. H. HARRIS, Business Manager.

NEW BERNE, N. C., MAY 29 1886.

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THE YOUNG CAPTAIN'S GIFT.

"I see them plainly—a man and a woman on that desolate rock! As I live, there are savages making for them! We must save them, sir!"

The speaker was Ben Raymond, the good-looking young captain of the ship Canton, bound to the Sandwich Islands.

After years of hard toil at sea Ben had bought the fine vessel, which he had hoped would be the means of his soon acquiring a fortune.

He had safely rounded Cape Horn without incurring a stay or a spar, but he then met with a succession of gales and head winds which finally brought the craft within dangerous proximity to that group of rocky islands just north of the peninsula of Tres Montes, off the coast of Patagonia.

With care and skill, however, Captain Ben would have escaped the rocks—which, in fact, he was slowly but surely passing—when the forms of two persons were detected on one of the rugged islands.

As the Canton was hardly a mile from the elevated point on which they stood, and as a recent fog had cleared, the captain could see them plainly enough through his glass to decide that they were white people.

A crowd of hideous savages, armed with spears and clubs, and clothed in rough skins, were hurrying towards them, although to reach them they would be obliged to have recourse to their canoes, as they were at present on an isle a little to the north of that occupied by their intended victims. The latter, much alarmed, were making signals to the ship's crew, and their appeals went to the very heart of the young captain.

"Ay! we must save them, and lose no time about it!" he said to his first officer, Mr. Barnes.

"But, sir, we will lose your ship by it," said Mr. Barnes.

This fact could not be denied. There was a strong current setting toward the islands, and if one of the boats, which, full of stout oarsmen, were now being used for towing the craft out of her danger, were taken away nothing could save her from drifting down on the rocks. To anchor would have been useless, for with the forced wind and current against her, her anchors would have dragged, and she would have thumped her bows to pieces against some sunken ledge, upon which, by depriving her of her headway—her only salvation—she would certainly have been drawn.

"I know I will lose my vessel by going to the rescue of the man and woman," said Ben, sadly, "but it can't be helped. What is a ship compared to human life?"

"But, sir, if we lose your ship, are we sure we can save those people, after all?"

"If we should not be picked up, we can at least reach San Carlos," replied Ben.

The ship was provided with only a launch and a quarter-boat. Having issued certain orders to the men he was to leave behind, the captain started off for the isle in the quarter-boat, with a crew of twelve, armed with muskets and pistols, that they might be prepared for an encounter with the savages, who numbering about thirty fierce, powerful fellows, were now coming off in two canoes.

With much difficulty, owing to a swift, diagonal current, Ben at last reached the man and woman, who were evidently father and daughter. The latter was a young girl of nineteen—the loveliest creature he had ever seen.

Scarcely had he helped them into the boat when a shower of spears

came whizzing from the two canoes, now about thirty yards off, but thanks to the strong wind, which blew the missiles to one side, they did no mischief.

"Now, men," said Ben, "let them have it! Aim low and carefully!"

The roar of a volley was heard, followed by the zip, zip of the bullets as they skimmed the waves, and down went three of the natives killed and as many wounded.

The fierce gang were unprepared for so warm a reception, and turning their canoes, they headed back for the isle they had left. But many more were collecting there, until the shore was fairly alive with them to the number of nearly a hundred.

Ben now directed the boat towards the launch, which ere this, had left the ship and in obedience to the orders he had given, was speeding seaward. As the captain had supposed would be the case, the men in the launch had found it impossible to tow the Canton successfully. The wind and the strong current had drawn her on to her doom. She struck a ledge of sunken rocks, her three masts went by the board, and she now lay a mere wreck, gradually breaking up. All at once a volume of dense smoke, followed by columns of flame, burst from her hatches, and she was soon ablaze from bow to stern.

The crew of the launch had faithfully obeyed their captain. After taking from the wreck such provisions and valuables as could be the most readily obtained they set the hull on fire to prevent the savages from plundering it.

This Ben explained to the two rescued people, as, with dismayed faces, they gazed at the burning craft.

"And so," cried the girl, the truth breaking on her mind, "you have lost your vessel by coming to our rescue?"

"It could not be helped," said Ben, smiling, although his heart sank within him at sight of that fine ship, for which he had paid many thousands of dollars vanishing in smoke and flame.

"Was she your own?" inquired the young lady's father.

"Yes, sir."

"You have an insurance?"

"Under the circumstances," said Ben, "I cannot, of course, get my insurance money. Had I not withdrawn one boat, I could have saved her—could have towed her out of danger."

"And that boat was withdrawn for our sakes?" cried the girl, with tears in her beautiful eyes.

"Never mind," said Ben. "Your lives were of much more consequence than my ship."

He changed the subject, remarking that they were now safe from the savages, who, perceiving that the boat's crew, with their sail up, would escape them, had desisted from the chase.

The rescued man then told his story, first stating that his name was Barton.

Four days before he had sailed from Valdivia, Chili, where he had been for eight months, with his daughter, on a visit to a brother in business there. He had taken passage aboard a small steamer for San Carlos, he had been informed, he would find a good vessel to carry him and his child to their native city of New York.

A few days after the little steamer sailed, the Chilean mate quarreled with his captain. They came to blows, and the mate almost killed his adversary. He then took command of the craft, and changed her course. What his intentions were the two passengers could not tell; but they believed that he would avoid San Carlos until he should discover whether or not the captain would recover from his injuries. Mr. Barton remonstrated; and, not wishing to be burdened with him and his daughter, the unprincipled mate finally set them ashore, at midnight, on the desolate island from which Ben had rescued them. In what direction the steamer went after they were put ashore, they could not tell, as she showed no light, and it was dark at the time. Mr. Barton was of the opinion, however, that the mate had seen the light of the Canton in the distance before taking them to the shore, as it was only six hours later when they were picked up.

Ben felt much sympathy for father and daughter, and exerted himself to make them comfortable.

As soon as he joined the launch, both boats kept along together.

They tossed about on the ocean all night; but at dawn a large ship was seen, and they were finally taken aboard of her. She proved to be the North Light, bound to New York.

Ben was much in the society of Ida Barton during the passage. He loved her, and he had reason to believe that she shared his affection.

It chanced, from something said a few days before the ship arrived at New York, that he learned, for the first time, that Mr. Barton was an oil merchant, and wealthy. Previous to this, Ben had informed him that he loved Ida, and asked his consent to make her his wife when

his business affairs should become more prosperous.

"You shall have my answer in time," Mr. Barton had replied, with a peculiar look.

Now the young man was in despair. Poor as he was, what hope was there of his ever being in a situation to win the hand of the rich man's daughter!

When the vessel reached New York, and he parted with the girl and her father, the latter did not even invite him to call and see him.

Weeks passed. Ben made vain efforts to obtain command of a ship. The persons to whom he applied had heard of the loss of the Canton, and did not wish to run any risk. True, the loss had been caused by his going to the rescue of human beings, but it was a loss all the same. Finding that he could not even obtain the situation of second or third officer, he had actually resolved to ship before the mast, when Mr. Barton called upon him.

"I have had my eye upon you, sir," he said. "You have been trying to get command of a ship?"

"It is true, sir."

"And I have also been busy getting one ready for you. You must know that I am a ship owner as well as an oil merchant," he added, noticing Ben's surprise. "And I am going to put you in command of the Triton—one of my best vessels. Come with me and look at her."

He conducted his overjoyed companion to the Triton.

She was even a handsomer craft than the one Ben had owned and lost. Every ringbolt shone like silver. The wheel was of ebony, inlaid with ivory. She had clipper bows. Her masts, tall and tapering, were as smooth as glass, and provided with a brand new set of sails.

"What do you think of her?" inquired the merchant.

"The most perfect beauty I ever saw!" cried Ben.

"Well, sir, she is yours—not only to command, but to own."

"Sir, I cannot think of accepting so great a gift!"

"Nonsense! She is yours, with everything in her. Step into the cabin, sir."

Ben entered the cabin, to find himself face to face with beautiful Ida Barton.

Then the meaning of her father's remark flashed on his mind.

The ship and everything in it his!

Ida was in the ship, and Mr. Barton must have meant that the young captain could have her, too!

He was sure of this, when, with the joyful cry of "Dear Ben!" the blushing girl fell upon his breast.

The lovers were married soon after, and Ben could not refuse the vessel as a wedding-gift from his father-in-law. The happy captain, accompanied by his pretty wife, performed many profitable voyages aboard the craft, and in time he became almost as rich as Mr. Barton.

—N. Y. Ledger.

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