

MOTOR STORIES

THRILLING
ADVENTURE

MOTOR
FICTION

NO. 15
JUNE 5, 1909

FIVE
CENTS

**MOTOR MATT'S
SUBMARINE**

**OR THE STRANGE
CRUISE OF THE GRAMPUS**

By The Author of "MOTOR MATT"



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or

The Strange Cruise of The *Grampus*

By Stanley R Matthews

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Motor Matt's Submarine

OR,

THE STRANGE CRUISE OF
THE *GRAMPUS*

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CHARACTERS THAT APPEAR IN THIS STORY.

Matt King, concerning whom there has always been a mystery— a lad of splendid athletic abilities, and never-failing nerve, who has won for himself, among the boys of the Western town, the popular name of "Mile-a-minute Matt."

Dick Ferral, a young sea dog from Canada, with all a sailor's superstitions, but in spite of all that a royal chum, ready to stand by the friend of his choice through thick and thin.

Carl Pretzel, a cheerful and rollicking German boy, stout of frame as well as of heart, who is led by a fortunate accident to link his fortunes with those of Motor Matt.

Captain Nemo, Jr., otherwise Archibald Townsend, a fast friend of the Motor Boys and skipper of the submarine, *Grampus*.

Cassidy, mate of the *Grampus*.

Gaines, Clackett and Speake, crew of the *Grampus*.

Captain Jim Sixty, a seaman of long experience who resorts to filibustering in order to gain big prizes in the lottery of Fortune. Master of the wrecked brig, *Dolphin*.

Ysabel Sixty, Captain Sixty's daughter, who plays an ignoble part, although against her better nature.

CHAPTER I.

A STARTLING REPORT.

There is a speed limit for automobiles in the City of New Orleans, but a certain red touring car on this Wednesday morning gave little heed to the regulation. With two wheels in the air the car made a sharp turn into Prytania Street, slowed a little as it came within one of colliding with a two-wheeled milk wagon, swerved to one side and then leaped onward.

Besides the driver, the car contained only one man. This passenger sat in front, leaning eagerly forward and urging the driver constantly to a faster gait.

"That's the house," said the passenger finally, indicating a building with his stubby forefinger.

The car pulled up with a jerk and the passenger was out before the machine was fairly at a stop.

"Wait for me," he called as he rushed across the sidewalk, yanked the gate bell and then darted through and up the steps to the porch.

With savage impatience he jabbed at the push button beside the door and tramped fretfully until a colored servant answered his summons.

"Is Cap'n Nemo, Jr., in?" he flung at the darky.

"Dat's a new one on me, boss," was the puzzled answer. "Ah dunno no sich pusson. You-all must hab got de wrong—"

"Townsend, then?" broke in the caller. "Is *he* here?"

"Yassuh, Mistah Townsend is in his room, sah, but dat odder man—"

Without pausing further, the man pushed roughly past the darky, to that person's intense astonishment, and went up the hall stairs three steps at a time. A moment later he had flung open a door unceremoniously.

There were two men in the room, and they started up quickly as the newcomer hurled himself in on them.

"Clackett!" exclaimed one of the men who had been in the room, facing the other with a good deal of surprise. "What's all this hurry for?"

"Sixty has sailed, cap'n!" exclaimed Clackett, dropped into a chair.

"Great guns!" gasped the third man. "Must have been kind o' sudden."

"When did he sail, Clackett?"

"Ten o'clock this morning, steamer *Santa Maria*, a fruiter bound for British Honduras."

"He ain't goin' to British Honduras," burst from the third man, "and don't you think it."

"I don't think so either, Cassidy," replied the captain, "but he's the fellow we were to watch, and if he's gone we've got to put out after him."

The captain looked at his watch.

"Ten-twenty," he mused, slipping the watch back into his pocket. "How did you get here, Clackett?"

"In one of them automobiles, cap'n. Street cars was too bloomin' slow."

"You're positive there's no mistake?"

"I know Jim Sixty as well as I know you, cap'n, an' I'll take my solemn Alfred it was him standin' on the *Santa Maria's* deck when she steamed away from the

dock."

"A mistake, you know," pursued the captain, "would put us on the wrong track and cause no end of trouble."

"There ain't no mistake—take it from me."

At this the captain became intensely alive. He whirled on Cassidy.

"You ride with Clackett in the automobile to Carrolton, Cassidy," said he briskly, "take the ferry to Westwego and bring the *Grampus* on the run to Stuyvesant Dock. Clackett and I will be there waiting for you."

"Tough luck," growled Cassidy, "we didn't know something about this move o' Sixty's, 'cause then we could have had the submarine handier by."

"We'll not lose much time," returned the captain. "The *Grampus* is all ready for a long cruise? That's the main thing."

"The boys was gettin' on the last of the stores over at Westwego," replied Cassidy.

The captain whirled on Clackett.

"The ferry from Carrolton runs on the half hour," said he, "and if you hit up that buzz-wagon you ought to get Cassidy on the ten-thirty boat. After that, rush back into town. The Snug Harbor Hotel is not far from Stuyvesant Dock. Go there, ask for Motor Matt, and bring him and his friends to the dock, prepared to make the run down the river and into the gulf with us. That will be all. Off with you, on the jump. I'll look after your luggage and mine, Cassidy."

If Cassidy was to catch the first boat from Carrolton landing there was no time for talk. With a hearty, "Ay, ay," the two men whirled from the room and rushed

down the stairs. A moment later the captain, looking from a front window, saw them leap into the automobile and vanish up the street.

So far as the captain was concerned, he had plenty of time to make his preparations. It would be close to eleven o'clock before the *Grampus* could possibly get clear of Westwego, and possibly it would be eleven-fifteen before she would come alongside the Stuyvesant Dock.

For some time the captain had been lying ill in the Prytania Street house, but he was now rapidly recovering, and his restless, active nature welcomed this call to action. He felt that it was the one tonic he needed to bring him back to his usual form.

Cassidy was mate of the *Grampus*. Ever since the captain had been stricken down the mate had been with him as watcher and nurse.

Not much time was required to get Cassidy's property into his ditty-bag, and not much more time for the captain to pack his own satchel. The colored servant had telephoned for a carriage, and the vehicle came just as the captain had finished packing.

All that remained was to settle with Mrs. Thomas, the landlady, to thank her for her kindness, and to leave for downtown.

Twenty minutes after the departure of Cassidy and Clackett the captain was speeding away in the direction of Canal Street. He halted at a bank, at the corner of Camp and Common, and drew five thousand dollars in gold. This money was given to him in a canvas bag, and, with that and his luggage, he was hurried on to Stuyvesant Dock.

As he had surmised would be the case, he was ahead of the *Grampus*. Gathering his goods about him, he sat

down on a box near the edge of the dock and watched up stream for the first glimpse of the rounded deck, the conning tower, and the mast with the red periscope ball of the submarine.

Barely had he sighted her, cutting through the waves of the Lower Mississippi, when a quick step behind him caused him to look around.

Clackett, red-faced and perspiring, was hurrying toward him. There was a troubled, ominous look on Clackett's face.

"Where are Motor Matt and his two friends, Dick Ferral and Carl Pretzel?" cried the captain. "I need them on this cruise, and they understand the importance of their being here. Will they be along later, Clackett?"

"They'll not be along later, cap'n," answered Clackett. "You can wait for 'em as long as you please, an' the boys won't be showing up. Every minute you lose, too, the *Santa Maria* and Jim Sixty are gettin' farther and farther away from us."

A frown of heavy disappointment wrinkled the captain's brows.

"What's the matter?" he demanded. "Motor Matt's word is as good as his bond, and he told me he'd stay in New Orleans a week and wait for me to send word to him. Where is the boy?"

"He sailed on the *Santa Maria* this mornin'," was the startling announcement.

The captain jumped to his feet.

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed, staring at Clackett in blank amazement.

"It's a fact, cap'n," asserted Clackett. "I got it straight from the hotel feller that seen Matt and his friends

aboard the boat. There's been queer doin's, somehow."

"What do you mean by queer doings?" asked the captain sharply.

"Well, cap'n, this is the way that hotel feller handed it out to me: Ysabel Sixty, the ole filibuster's gal, called at the Snug Harbor about nine-thirty, this mornin', and had a short talk with Motor Matt. When the girl went away, Motor Matt settled his hotel bill, rounded up his friends and they all stampeded upstairs to git their baggage together. Then they flocked down and hustled for the *Santa Maria*. The hotel feller went with 'em, helpin' tote their traps."

The captain stared in bewilderment, his amazement growing as he listened.

"There's underhand work of some kind here," he muttered. "Motor Matt would never have gone off like that without telling me something about it."

"He tried to git you over the telephone, but the line was busy and he didn't have no time to wait."

"You saw Sixty on the *Santa Maria* as she drew away from the Fruit Company's dock?"

"Ay, ay, sir, as plain as I see you, this blessed minute. The girl was with him, too."

"Did you see Motor Matt and his friends?"

"I wasn't lookin' for them, particular. They might have been on the deck, cap'n, but I wouldn't swear to it. I was so jolted up by seein' Sixty pull out when we wasn't expectin' it of him, yet a while, that mebbly I was excited."

The captain, greatly perturbed, tramped back and forth across the dock. He was aroused from his unpleasant reflections by the voice of Cassidy.

"All aboard, cap'n! I reckon we pulled this off in short order, hey?"

The captain whirled around. Cassidy, standing in the top of the conning tower of the *Grampus*, was barely head and shoulders above the level of the dock. One of the hands, on the forward part of the rounded deck, had passed a rope through a ring and was holding the submarine steady.

"Pick up the luggage, Clackett," ordered the captain, himself taking charge of the bag of gold, "and we'll get aboard."

"What you goin' to do about Motor Matt?" queried Clackett as he picked up the luggage.

"He's aboard the *Santa Maria*, and I am convinced that, for some cause or other, he's there through some underhand work of Sixty's. Our orders call on us to follow the *Santa Maria* and keep watch of Sixty. By doing that, we shall also be trailing Motor Matt and his friends. Something is bound to happen that will give us a little light on this."

Fifteen minutes later the *Grampus* was hustling down the river, her screw racing under the terrific impulse of the gasolene motor, and a white line of foam surging across her low deck and breaking against the base of the conning tower.

CHAPTER II.

MIXED MESSAGES.

"I tell you somet'ing," said Carl Pretzel gloomily, "I don'd like hanging aroundt mitoudt any pitzness. Id gedds on my nerfs, yah, so helup me. For six tays, now, ve haf been loafing in New Orleans, und eferyt'ing vas so keviet as some Quaker meedings. Nodding habbens. Vy don'd ve hear from Downsent mit a hurry-ooop call to ged busy, eh?"

It was nine o'clock in the evening of the day preceding that on which the *Grampus* had got away in the wake of the *Santa Maria*, and Motor Matt, Dick and Carl were lounging in the small office of the Snug Harbor.

For two or three days Carl had been restless. He had visited all the five-cent shows on Canal Street, he had made a sight-seeing tour through the French Quarter, he had gone out to Lake Pontchartrain, and he had done various other things to pass away the time and make some excuse for his idleness, but his energetic spirit was not to be muzzled.

"Take it easy, old ship," said Dick; "I'm as anxious as you are to trip anchor and slant away for some port where we can do things, but there's a notion rattling around in my locker that it won't be long now before we run afoul of something real exciting. We were to wait a week on Townsend, and the week will be up tomorrow. We'll hear from him then, and I'll bank on it."

"So will I," spoke up Matt. "Don't be so impatient, Carl. Adventures are all right, but there are a few other things in life for fellows like us to think about."

"T'anks, broffessor," answered Carl, humbly. "Vat

else would you t'ink aboutt oof you wanted to be among der life vones?"

"An academy, for instance," said Matt with a far-away look in his gray eyes, "and a spell of grubbing at the stores of knowledge preparatory to a college course."

"Helup!" gasped Carl; "bolice! Matt is t'inking oof cutting himseluf oudt oof our herd, Tick, und going to school. Shpeaking for meinseluf, ven I go to school I don'd go, for I play vat you call hookey undt look for atvendures. All has got to go mit shnap und chincer for me, und vere iss lifeliness in pooks? Ach, donnervetter!"

"Avast, there, matey!" said Dick. "Matt is right. Adventures are all well enough in their place, but a cruise in the waters of learning is a main fine thing—for those who can afford it. Some day Matt will be in an academy, and some other day he will be in Harvard or Yale, and the King of the Motor Boys will be done with the buzz-engines for always."

Matt pulled himself together and laughed softly.

"Never, as long as I live," he declared, "will I be done with gasolene motors. Don't fool yourself on that for a minute. I may—"

"A message for you, Motor Matt. Just came off the wires."

A messenger boy pushed in among the three chums and handed a yellow envelope to Matt. All the messenger boys, together with nearly every one else in New Orleans, knew Motor Matt at least by sight. His work with the air ship, *Hawk*, which had recently been wrecked and destroyed, had kept him and his friends prominently in the public eye for some time.

"Sign the book, Dick," said Matt, tearing open the envelope.

"Vat you t'ink oof dot?" breathed Carl in a spasm of joyful excitement as the messenger boy went away. "Ve talk oof wanting t'ings to habben, und righdt off dey pegin. Ach, vat a luck! How easy id iss to be jeerful—somedimes!"

"Mayhap that message isn't anything to be cheerful about, Carl," said Dick. "I'll bet some one is asking to buy the *Hawk*, and her poor old bones are rusting in a live oak, down by Bayou Yamousa."

"Dot ain'd my guess, you bed you," palpitated Carl. "I t'ink id iss somepody asking vill ve go by der Spanish Main und hunt for birate shtuff. Vat a habbiness oof id iss!"

"You're both wrong," said Matt, a perplexed look on his face. "There has been some mistake in the telegraph office, and this message isn't for me."

"Not for you, mate?" queried Dick, picking the envelope off Matt's knee. "It's addressed plain enough—'Motor Matt, Care Snug Harbor Hotel, New Orleans.'"

"There's a different name inside," returned Matt.

"Vat id iss?" asked Carl, curiosity in a measure drawing the sting of disappointment.

"'Captain James Sixty,'" read off Matt, "'Snug Harbor Hotel, New Orleans, Louisiana.' The address is the same, but the name is different."

"Meppy der message iss for you, anyvay," persisted Carl. "Read him ofer und meppy you can dell."

"No, the message is part of the puzzle. Listen: 'In latitude twenty-eight degrees thirty minutes and twenty seconds north, longitude ninety-two degrees fourteen minutes and thirty-four seconds west two days ago. No wind and no drift since.' How could that possibly be for us, pards?"

"Id's some conuntrums, und dot's all aboutd id," grumbled Carl dejectedly. "Nodding habbens mit us more as you findt on a Suntay-school bicnic, und I'm going to ped mit meinseluf und hope for pedder t'ings in der morning. Good nightd, bards."

With that Carl got up disgustedly and left the hotel office.

"How do you account for that, mate?" asked Dick.

"The messages got into the wrong envelopes," answered Matt. "Mr. James Sixty must be staying in this hotel. He's got my message and I've got his. That means we've got to find each other and exchange. Come on, Dick. We'll go over and talk with the clerk."

When they got to the desk they found a hulk of a man with a very red face talking with the night man in the office. The red-faced man seemed very much put out about something. He had a voice like a fog horn, and he was using it with a good deal of power. As Matt and Dick approached the desk the clerk suddenly put out his hand and stopped the flow of language.

"There's Motor Matt now," said he. "Here, Matt!" he called. "Have you got a telegram that don't belong to you? There's been a mix-up in messages, somehow, for Captain Sixty, here, has got one you ought to have. He was just asking me where you could be found."

"I was just coming to ask you about Captain Sixty," said Matt, holding out the message.

Sixty turned and snatched the message away.

"D'you read it?" he roared.

"Couldn't very well help it, captain," answered Matt. "If you'll look at the envelope you'll see it's addressed to me."

"I like some people's nerve," scowled the captain.

"Here's your'n."

He flung a crumpled yellow sheet at Matt.

"It looks as though you'd read this," said Matt, "so I guess we're no more than even."

An angry gurgle came from Sixty's bull-like throat.

"I'll raise Cain if I find out this mix-up was done a-purpose," he growled.

"I don't see what anybody could want to do such a thing as that for," returned Matt.

The captain flung about and gave Matt an insolent up-and-down stare.

"Oh, you don't, huh?" he muttered. "Well, mebbly it's well you don't."

The captain rolled away.

"The way to talk with him," said Dick resentfully, "is with a belaying pin. He looks like an old shellback, and I'll bet he's a bucko. But what's the message, mate?"

"A man in Boston wants to buy the *Hawk*," answered Matt, "and asks us to name our price. He says he knows Archibald Townsend, and refers us to him as to his financial standing."

"I could have kissed the book on that, Matt," said Dick soberly. "Keelhaul me if I don't wish we had that blessed little flying machine this minute."

"So do I. But there's no use crying about it, Dick. Maybe we'll build another, some time; just now, though, we ought to think more about bed than anything else."

"I'm ready to do a caulk, if you are."

"Come on, then."

As they were leaving the office to go upstairs to their

room Matt took a look around. Captain Sixty was sitting in a chair in the corner, his message opened out on his knee. But his fishy little orbs were not on the message, but on Matt; and there was a glittering distrust in them which Matt could not fail to notice. However, he said nothing about it to Dick, and very soon forgot it himself.

Next morning the boys were hoping to hear from Townsend. Townsend, otherwise Captain Nemo, Jr., of the submarine *Grampus*, had some work in which he wanted Matt and his friends to assist him, and he had asked Matt, Dick and Carl to remain a week in New Orleans, at his expense, until he should be well enough to tell them about the work and get it under way.

The following day rounded out the period of time Townsend had asked for.

After breakfast the boys hung about the hotel waiting for some communication from Prythania Street. Toward the middle of the forenoon a bell boy ran into the office and hurried to the place where Matt was sitting with Dick and Carl.

"You're wanted in the parlor, Motor Matt," said the boy.

"Dere id vas!" exclaimed Carl delightedly. "Ve got id now, Tick."

"Who wants me?" asked Matt.

"A young woman—and she says she's in a hurry."

Matt was puzzled. He did not know any young ladies in New Orleans, and couldn't imagine why one should come to the hotel and ask for him.

"I'll go right up," said he—and immediately took the first step into a snare that had been laid for him.

CHAPTER III.

HURRY-UP ORDERS.

When Matt entered the bare little room on the second floor which served as a public parlor for the hotel, a girl of sixteen or seventeen arose to meet him. She had black hair and eyes, was well dressed, and looked like a Spanish señorita.

"Motor Matt?" she asked, stepping toward him with an engaging smile.

"My name," he answered.

"I am—" She paused, and a frightened look came into her wide, dark eyes. For the first time Matt noticed that, in spite of her smile, she seemed to be ill at ease. "I am Miss Harris," she finally went on, "Miss Sadie Harris, a niece of your friend, Mr. Townsend. Perhaps you have heard my uncle speak of me?"

The girl's English was good, so Matt argued that she was not a Spaniard after all.

"No," he answered, "I did not know that Mr. Townsend had a niece."

"That's strange," murmured the girl, "for I was always a favorite of his. As soon as I learned that he was sick I came right on to New Orleans. When I arrived here, yesterday, I found my uncle nearly well again. All this, though, has nothing to do with my errand. Here are three tickets to British Honduras, good on the steamer *Santa Maria*, which sails at ten, this morning. There is not much time, Motor Matt, and it is my uncle's wish that you go on that boat."

To say that Matt was "stumped" would hardly do justice to his feelings.

"British Honduras?" he echoed.

"Yes; the boat sails from the Fruit Company's dock."

"But why am I and my friends to go to British Honduras?"

"I don't know. My uncle gave me the tickets and asked me to hand them to you and tell you to expect word from him at Belize. He said the work was very important, and that you must not say a word about it to anybody."

"I don't know anything about the work, Miss Harris," answered Matt, "so it won't be possible for me to say anything to any one."

"Your intention of leaving on the *Santa Maria*, too, ought to be kept a secret. At least, that's what my uncle says."

"This is mighty sudden," murmured Matt dazedly. "Why couldn't Mr. Townsend have called me out to the house and talked this over with me yesterday?"

"He didn't know anything about it yesterday, Motor Matt. In fact, the work only came to his knowledge an hour ago."

"Wasn't he well enough to come and tell me himself?"

"Well enough, yes, but he had not the time. The *Grampus* is over at Westwego, and he is very busy getting her ready for sea."

"Isn't he going to British Honduras on the *Santa Maria*?"

"No."

"How am I to hear from him in Belize?"

Miss Harris tossed her head petulantly.

"My uncle isn't telling all his plans, even to me. I've delivered his orders, and it's getting along toward ten o'clock and you haven't much time if you're to sail on the *Santa Maria*. I'm to go on the boat myself, and it isn't likely my uncle would leave me alone and unprotected in Central America. He thought you and your friends could look after me a little, both on the boat and until he was able to reach Honduras, but—"

Miss Harris used her lustrous Spanish eyes with telling effect.

"Certainly we will go," broke in Matt, "only it was such a hurry-up order that it rather floored me. I and my pards have been waiting to hear from Mr. Townsend about some work which he was going to do when he got well enough. Perhaps the work has something to do with you?"

Matt was clever at drawing inferences. There might be Spanish blood in Miss Harris' veins—British Honduras was partially peopled with men and women of Spanish descent—and here was a call to Belize. Then, again, Miss Harris had only recently arrived in New Orleans, and it required no great stretch of fancy to imagine that she had sprung, thus suddenly, some line of endeavor for which her uncle had been waiting.

"I am not at liberty to tell you anything more, Motor Matt," said Miss Harris, with another of her bright smiles. "Will you take the *Santa Maria*?"

"Yes."

A strange glow danced in the girl's expressive eyes.

"That is nice of you," said she. "Here are the tickets. My uncle was so sure you'd go that he got them and secured your stateroom reservations."

Matt took the envelope the girl handed to him and walked down the stairs with her. She bade him good-

by at the ladies' entrance, and, as he turned to go back to the office he had a disturbing thought.

If there had been time to secure tickets and cabin reservations, there should have been time for Townsend to give Matt and his chums a little more notice of that trip to Honduras.

Matt, however, had abundant faith in Townsend. Undoubtedly he was proceeding in the manner that best suited his plans.

"Come on, boys," said the young motorist, hurrying up to Dick and Carl, "we've got to pack, and be in a rush about it."

"Hoop-a-la!" gloried Carl, catching the spirit of Matt's words, although he had not the remotest idea of the underlying cause. "Oof ve are going to pack oop, den id vas a skinch ve're going someveres; und oof ve vas going someveres, den der drouple-pot iss on, und vill pegin to poil rightd—"

"Ease up a bit on that jaw-tackle, mate," interrupted Dick, grabbing Carl's arm and hurrying him off after Matt. "It's as plain as the nose on your face that some kind of word has been received from Townsend, but it's just as plain that there's no time to talk about it. Matt's in a tearing hurry, and it's up to us to pull back into our shells, hustle the stuff into our dunnage-bags, and wait for him to tell us what we want to know."

When Dick and Carl reached their room, Matt was already throwing his belongings into a grip. The sailor and the Dutch boy got busy.

"The girl is a Miss Sadie Harris," explained Matt as he worked, "and she's a niece of Townsend's."

"Vas she a pooty goot looker?" inquired Carl, rolling up his eyes.

"What's that got to do with it?" demanded Dick.

"Nodding, only id vas more romandick oof a pooty girl vas mixed oop in der pitzness."

"My eye!" exploded Dick. "Well, cut out the romance. Unless I'm wide of the course this is nothing but pure business. Eh, Matt?"

"Yes," answered Matt. "We're to sail at ten o'clock for Belize, in British Honduras."

Carl slumped into a chair with a gasp.

"Pridish Honturas!" he gurgled. "Vere iss dot? Ofer py China someveres?"

"It's in Central America, you saphead!" cried Dick. "I've been in those waters, and I'm a Feejee if they ever took much of my fancy."

"Miss Harris brought our tickets," proceeded Matt, "and she's going to sail on the same boat."

"Vat are ve to do ven ve ged dere?"

"Wait for instructions from Townsend."

"Then Townsend isn't sailing with us, mate?"

"No."

"Well, keelhaul me, it's a queer course that's been laid for us. What makes it queerer is, that in all the time we've been hooked up with Townsend he's never once mentioned his niece."

"Townsend is an odd chap, in some ways, but he's as straight as a string for all that," returned the young motorist. "This work in Honduras, I feel pretty sure, has something to do with the girl."

"I like dot," spoke up Carl, kneeling on his rusty old suit-case in order to make the cover go down. "Peauty in tisdress always cuts some ice mit me. Dere! I vas

alretty for anyding vat comes my vay."

"I'm ready, too," added Dick.

"And I," said Matt, picking up his satchel.

They left the room hurriedly. At the bottom of the stairs Matt handed his grip to one of the porters.

"Carry that over to the Fruit Company's dock," said he. "Dick, you and Carl go on. I'll square up with the proprietor and trail along after you."

"Mind dot you don't get left," cautioned Carl.

"I've ten minutes," was the answer, "and I can get to the dock in half that time."

Dick, Carl and the porter hastened off, and Matt turned back into the office. He was only two or three minutes settling the bill, and as he started for the hotel door he passed a telephone booth and an idea came to him.

There could be no harm in calling up Mrs. Thomas' boarding-house in Prytania Street, telling Townsend they were off and saying good-by. A word of that kind with Townsend would prove reassuring.

The idea was no sooner conceived than it was carried out. But Matt was destined to disappointment. He was informed by "central" that the wire was busy, and, as it was already five minutes of ten, he had no time to wait.

Throwing the receiver back on the hooks, he left the hotel and ran toward the Fruit Company's dock. The warning bell of the *Santa Maria* was ringing, and deck hands were preparing to haul in the gang plank as he rushed across it.

"Py chiminy, aber dot vas some glose connections!" cried Carl, who, with Dick, was waiting and watching for Matt.

"A miss is as good as a mile," Matt replied. "Have you seen Miss Harris?"

"She's forward, matey," said Dick.

"We'll stow the luggage somewhere," went on Matt, "and then go forward ourselves and see the boat get away."

The baggage was piled in the cabin, and when the three boys reappeared and made their way toward the forward part of the main deck the *Santa Maria* was shivering from stem to stern under the impetus of her powerful engines and drawing away from the dock and into the channel.

There were a dozen or more people on the dock waving hats and handkerchiefs, while a dozen or more were clustered at the steamer's rail returning the parting salutes.

"Dere iss nopody dere to vave goot-py ad us," remarked Carl, "not efen Downsent!"

"We certainly couldn't expect Townsend, Carl," said Matt. "He has other matters to occupy his mind, I suppose."

"I shouldn't think he'd be too busy to come down and see his niece off on her voyage," put in Dick. "Still, as you say, mate, he may be—"

Dick suddenly broke off his words. His eyes had been roving over the passengers along the rail.

"Sink me!" he exclaimed, dropping a quick hand on Matt's arm. "Look over there—to the left."

Matt looked, and immediately experienced the same surprise that had laid hold of his chum.

The burly form of Captain Sixty was in plain view, and at the captain's elbow, and talking with him, was

Miss Harris!

CHAPTER IV.

ACCIDENT OR DESIGN?

Motor Matt took Dick and Carl each by one arm and led them back into the cabin.

"We'd better talk a little, pards," said Matt, with a worried look.

"Vat's der madder?" inquired Carl.

He had not seen Captain Sixty, not having been in the office of the Snug Harbor Hotel at the time Dick and Matt had met Sixty and exchanged telegrams with him.

"The big fellow," explained Matt, "is the one who got my telegram last night. Why is he on this boat? That's the point that puzzles me."

"Maybe it's an accident, matey," returned Dick.

"Yes; and maybe it's design. I'd like to size this business up before we get clear of the river. If we don't like the looks of things, we can have the captain of the boat put us ashore."

"What's the trouble with the outlook, old ship?" queried Dick. "So far as I'm concerned, it was a shot between wind and water when I saw Sixty there at the rail; but I don't think that the fact of the old hunks being aboard the steamer is anything to worry us. He probably has business in Honduras as well as ourselves."

"I wish this boat was equipped with a wireless telegraph apparatus," muttered Matt. "There's a wireless station at Algiers, and we could flash a message to Townsend."

"What would be the use? We've got his orders."

"I'd like to have the orders confirmed," said Matt grimly. "I tried to get Townsend over the phone just before I left the hotel, but, as luck would have it, the wire was busy."

"You've been taken all aback, same as though you'd been struck by a white squall," muttered Dick perplexedly. "I don't think that old flatfoot bucko ought to put you in such a taking, Matt."

"It wasn't Sixty alone that took me aback, Dick," answered Matt. "Miss Harris had more to do with that than Sixty had."

"Dit you see der young laty, Matt?" asked Carl, brightening.

"I saw her, yes."

"You were expecting to see her," chimed in Dick. "You told us she was intending to sail on the *Santa Maria*."

"When we talked at the hotel," went on Matt, "Miss Harris gave me to understand that Townsend expected us to look after her during the trip to Belize, and after we reached that town."

"Vell," remarked Carl, dusting his coat with his hand and adjusting his necktie, "I guess ve can do dot as vell as anypody. You pedder indrotuce Tick und me, Matt."

"I don't believe our services will be needed," said Matt dryly. "Miss Harris was talking with Captain Sixty and seemed to be on familiar terms with him."

This startled Dick and Carl. It was a good deal of a coincidence, even if not alarming, to find Captain Sixty voyaging to Honduras on the *Santa Maria*; but to find him on friendly terms with Townsend's niece gave the captain's presence on the boat rather an odd look.

"All this," said Matt finally, "may be either the result of accident or design. I think it would be well for us to find out as much as we can before we get too far down the river."

"How'll you find out, mate?" queried Dick.

"By talking with the girl. Wait here for me. I'll go and have that talk with her now."

As Matt started away, the girl herself suddenly entered the cabin, and she was bringing Captain Sixty with her.

Matt halted and drew back to the side of his friends. The girl looked toward the boys, smiled, said something to her companion, and hurried him across the cabin.

"Hello, Motor Matt!" cried Miss Harris. "I was afraid you'd got left, and was just telling Uncle Jim here that I didn't know what Uncle Archie would say when he found you had not gone to Belize."

Uncle Jim! Miss Harris had called this Sixty person her Uncle Jim! While Matt was puzzling over this, the girl had drawn close and was introducing Captain Sixty.

"I'll be blowed, girl," bellowed Uncle Jim, "if I need any introduction to Motor Matt. We've met before, eh, messmate? Hand us your fist till I give it a friendly shake. Why, I hadn't the least idee you was mixed up in this affair of Townsend's! Ain't it astonishin' how things fall out, now and again?"

"I should say so," answered Matt. "This is your uncle, Miss Harris?" he added to the girl.

"Why, yes, of course!" she laughed.

"His name ought to be Townsend, hadn't it?"

"Not at all. Uncle Archie is my father's brother, while Uncle Jim is my mother's brother."

"Then your name ought to be Townsend instead of Harris."

"Ho, ho!" laughed Captain Sixty. "He's a keen one, girl, and no mistake!"

"Of course he's a keen one, Uncle Jim," replied the girl, "or Uncle Archie wouldn't have had him take a hand in this work. You see, Motor Matt," and here she turned to the youth, "Uncle Archie Townsend's real name is Harris, while my mother's maiden name was Sixty. So, you see—"

"Softly, girl, softly," breathed Captain Sixty. "We don't want to talk too much about our relatives in this public place. Walls have ears, you know."

"I understand," said Matt. He had long known that Townsend, merely to save himself annoyance from newspaper reporters and other curious people, had one name ashore and another afloat, and used only his right name when at home in Philadelphia and among his friends. "Let me introduce both of you to my pards," Matt added, turning to Dick and Carl.

Sixty was more than agreeable to Dick and Carl, and Carl, on his part, tried to be more than agreeable to Miss Harris.

"Have we all got a part in this work of Mr. Townsend's?" asked Matt, feeling somewhat relieved, although still a little surprised over the way the matter had fallen out.

"Haven't you ever heard Uncle Archie speak of Captain Sixty?" inquired Miss Harris.

"Never."

"I wouldn't wonder at that none, girl," said Captain

Sixty. "It's been some sort of a while, you know, since my course has crossed Townsend's; and then, too, Townsend is close-mouthed, and he wouldn't be apt to say anything about me when I've got such an important part to play in his present business."

The captain lowered his voice and took another cautious look around that part of the cabin.

"Was you boys told anythin' about the work?" he asked in a whisper.

Matt shook his head, and a glow of relief flashed for an instant from Sixty's fishy eyes.

"From that, my lad," went on Sixty, "you can figure out how mighty important is the work we're engaged in. I don't know much about it myself. That telegram I got at the hotel last night has somethin' to do with it, though blest if I know what. Cassidy came for it about midnight; and next morning, along comes the girl, here, with a ticket for Belize and orders to sail on the *Santa Maria*. Wished I'd have known who you boys were last night. I'd have hobnobbed with you some instead of bein' short-like as I was. No hard feelin's?"

"None at all," answered Matt.

"I used to be skipper of the brig *Dolphin*, a hooker as sailed from any place to any place wherever there was a cargo to be picked up and carried. That's how I got the name o' captain. I've had a master's ticket, though, ever since I was twenty. Ysabel here"—Matt caught a sharp look from the girl directed at Sixty—"which is my pet name for Sadie," continued the captain, "had as fine a father as ever walked. He married a Spanish lady in Belize, and that's how Sadie looks Spanish and talks American. I'm rough and ready, I am, and ain't got no time for these here parlor frills—"

"We'll have lots of time to talk, Uncle Jim," broke in

the girl, "after we get settled in our staterooms and while we're crossing the gulf. Motor Matt and his friends, as well as ourselves, have got something else to do just now besides stand around and gossip. I don't think we'd better be seen talking together very much, anyhow."

"Right you are!" rumbled Captain Sixty. "See you again, messmates," and he lurched away with Miss Harris alongside him.

"Ach," muttered Carl, "dot leedle girl vas a peach, I bed you. Eferyt'ing iss all righdt, und ve all haf a finger in dot pie oof Downsents's."

"Wish I could smoke Townsend's weather roll a bit better than I do," said Dick. "I haven't any confidence in that man Sixty. From the cut of his jib, he's several kinds of a bear, bucko, bandicoot and crocodile. If we could, I think we ought to give him a good offing."

"We can't do that, Dick," answered Matt, "if Townsend's business throws us all together."

The boys fell into line at the purser's window, transacted their work there, and then picked up their luggage and went to their staterooms.

Each stateroom accommodated two passengers. Matt and Dick had one room to themselves, while Carl's room, which was next to theirs, would house a stranger in addition to the Dutch boy.

While Matt and Dick were stowing their traps and making themselves as comfortable as they could in their cramped quarters, Carl burst in on them.

"Vat you t'ink?" demanded Carl, closing the door securely behind him and dropping down on the lower berth.

"We're all ahoo and don't know what to think,

matey," answered Dick, giving the Dutch boy a slow sizing. "Why? Have you anything in particular on your own mind?"

"I shouldt say! Dot Sixdy feller iss my roommate."

"You're welcome to him," said Dick. "I wouldn't take him for a roommate on a bet."

Matt turned from the washbowl, where he had been removing some of the grime from his hands, and reached for a towel.

"No accident about that," said he. "I'll bet Sixty fixed it up with the purser."

"Why?" demanded Dick.

"I don't know why, but I've got a hunch that that's the way of it." Matt finished with the towel, threw it back on the rack and sat down in a chair. "There are a few things connected with this situation that won't hold water. Listen, pards, and see if you don't agree with me."

CHAPTER V.

SIXTY SHOWS HIS HAND.

"We'll suppose," proceeded Matt, "that Townsend has brought us all together on the *Santa Maria* for some work or other that's to be done in Belize. We'll suppose further that everything is all right and as it should be, and that Townsend had a niece whom he never mentioned to us, and a brother-in-law about whom he never said a word in all the time we have been with him. But why should the niece and the brother-in-law try to deceive us?"

"Der leedle girl wouldn't do dot, Matt," asserted Carl.

"I don't like to think that, Carl, any more than you do, but we're going it blind and ought to consider carefully anything we hear."

"Right-o, matey," said Dick. "What have you heard that makes you think the girl and her uncle are not dealing on the square with us?"

"Miss Harris said that her Uncle Archibald Townsend's real name is Harris, and—"

"Dot might be, Matt, for ve know dot Downsent uses odder names schust as he—"

"Wait a minute, Carl. Miss Harris also told us that her mother's maiden name was Sixty, and that Captain Sixty was her mother's brother."

"Also that Townsend was her father's brother," chimed in Dick. "I don't see anything wrong about that."

"Then," continued Matt, "Captain Sixty started to call Sadie Harris, Ysabel, but tried to explain away the

break when the girl looked at him. The captain also said that Miss Harris' mother was of Spanish origin, and whoever heard of Spaniard by the name of Sixty? Furthermore, if the captain is a brother of Miss Harris' mother, then the captain ought to be a Spaniard himself."

It was hard for Carl to follow this line of reasoning, although Matt made it as clear as he could. Dick, however, grasped the point Matt had brought up.

"Shiver me!" he exclaimed. "It's a wonder I didn't see that myself. The old bucko stepped over his chalk mark, and the girl hustled him away before he could say anything more. Great kedje anchors! What sort of a deal are we in on, anyhow? The girl's yarn don't hold together, and it was Sixty himself who let the cat out of the bag. What's to be done? We could have the captain set us ashore, and then we could make our way back to New Orleans and have a talk with Townsend."

"No, I don't think we'd better do that. After all, Dick, it may be that Townsend has fixed this thing up, and that the girl and the captain are talking according to instructions."

"Townsend never told them to pull the wool over our eyes, mate. He's not that kind of a fellow."

"If it comes to that, he's not the kind of a chap, to my notion, to mix up with a man like Sixty. Still, everything may be all right. The girl knew that we were expecting word from Townsend; in fact, all her talk and actions prove that she knows more about Townsend's plans than she could possibly know if Townsend hadn't taken her into his confidence. At least, that's the way I look at it. If we had the captain of the *Santa Maria* put us ashore we might be spoiling Townsend's plans. For that reason I'm in favor of staying right where we are and waiting for

developments. But we can be careful, pards, and keep our eyes open. If there is any crooked work on foot it will come to the surface in time."

"Aber ven id comes by der surface," spoke up Carl, with a good deal more wisdom than he generally showed, "meppy id vill be too lade to dodge drouple."

"If Miss Harris and Captain Sixty don't think we suspect anything underhand," answered Matt, "the advantage will be with us."

"Sure," averred Dick. "We can keep our own counsel and have a sharp eye to windward all the time."

"Oof Downsents vants us," continued Carl, "und oof dis ain'd vat he vants us for, den, py shinks, ve vas spoiling his blans vorse as ve vas by keeping on mit der poat."

"What's your idea, Dick?" asked Matt; "to keep on, or have the captain put us ashore and go back?"

"Our course is laid, matey," responded Dick, "so let's hang to it."

"There's no escaping Honduras after we once strike the gulf."

"Then we'll go to Honduras. It's a bally layout, any way you look at it, but the chances are that we're on the right tack."

"What have you to say, Carl?"

"I don'd t'ink der girl iss fooling us, und dot's all aboutd id. I say mit Tick dot ve keep on like ve're going, mit our vedder eyes shinned bot' vays for preakers. Oof ve ged to Honturas, und Downsents don'd show oop, den ve can send him some caplegrams und say vere ve vas, und vy. Yah, ve hat pedder keep on."

"That's my idea. I can't see what motive any one

would have for playing double with us. What enemies have we in New Orleans? And, if we had any there, why should they go to the trouble of buying tickets for us on the *Santa Maria* and sending us to Belize?"

"Right-o," agreed Dick. "We'll play a square game, and if any one tries to run afoul of us with anything different, why, we'll bring 'em up with a round turn. The outward trip to Honduras isn't costing us anything, anyhow."

Having arrived at this decision the boys left their stateroom and went down to their dinner.

The passenger business between New Orleans and Central America was not extensive, and there were no more than twenty people seated around the two tables in the dining room.

Matt and his friends found themselves at the captain's table, with Sixty and Miss Harris directly opposite. Miss Harris greeted them with one of her engaging smiles, and Sixty grinned and nodded his bullet-like head. But there was no talk across the board, although Carl was visibly eager for a little conversation with the girl.

Following the meal the boys strolled about the deck, hoping that either Sixty or Miss Harris would come looking for them and engage in talk which might either confirm their suspicions or else set them at rest. But nothing of the sort happened.

"They're sheering off from us," commented Dick. "Probably that's in accordance with Townsend's plan, too. I wish I knew what our work is to be."

"I've puzzled my brain over it till I'm tired," said Matt. "We've been a long while getting at the work, and while we've been waiting Townsend hasn't dropped a hint about what it was. We're just as much in the dark

now as ever."

During the afternoon the *Santa Maria* slipped through the lower end of South Pass into the gulf, and began to roll and wallow in the heavier swell.

Carl became indisposed. He declared that he wasn't seasick, but the motion of the boat annoyed him. He made for his stateroom with the announced intention of lying down and getting himself accustomed to the pitch and tumble. Dick, in the hope of discovering the whereabouts of Sixty and the girl, strolled forward. Matt was left alone on the stretch of deck aft of the bridge. An awning sheltered him from the sun, and the breeze that wafted itself across the broad reaches of the gulf was grateful and refreshing.

All the other passengers who had been occupying deck chairs in that part of the boat had gone away.

Matt, after half an hour's wait for Dick to return, got up with the idea of looking for him. As he passed a casual glance over the foamy trail left by the *Santa Maria*, his keen eye detected something appearing and disappearing in the tumbling waves that captured his immediate attention.

The object glistened in the rays of the afternoon sun and looked like a reddish ball. Sometimes he could see it quite plainly for a few moments, rolling and tumbling in the waters, and then a large wave would sweep past and blot it from his sight.

The ball seemed to be following the ship, maintaining at all times the same distance.

Was it some kind of a fish? Matt asked himself. If it was, then it was a variety of fish of which he had never heard or read.

He looked around to see if there were any of the officers or deck hands in his vicinity, but there were

none, and he was obliged to watch and wrestle with his curiosity.

It might be a piece of wreckage, he told himself; yet, if it was, what kept it in the wake of the *Santa Maria*?

He continued to hang over the rail and watch the queer red object, waiting for some of the ship's officers or men to come to that part of the boat.

Presently he heard a muffled footfall close behind him. He turned his head and saw Captain Sixty at his side. Beyond Sixty, and gliding hastily in his direction, was Miss Harris.

There was a question on Matt's lips, but it died away quickly when the youth saw the diabolical expression on Captain Sixty's face.

"Here's where you go over!" said Sixty hoarsely.

Then, before Motor Matt could make a move to defend himself, the burly scoundrel seized him in a grip of iron, lifted him bodily and flung him from the rail.

A loud cry escaped Matt's lips. It was taken up by a shrill scream from the girl, and, the next moment, by a hoarse shout from the treacherous Sixty.

"Man overboard! Man overboard!"

As Matt dropped into the lashing waves that frantic yell of Sixty's smote on his ears. Even in that perilous moment the reason for the scoundrel's alarm flashed through his brain. Matt's yell and the girl's scream had aroused the officers and crew, and there was nothing else for Sixty to do but to give his alarm and hope that the speed of the ship would take her so far away from Matt that rescue would not be possible.

The first officer was on the bridge. Turning a look rearward he saw a dark object in the smother of foam,

far astern, clinging to one of the ship's life-preservers.

It was the girl who had wrenched the life-preserver from the rail and flung it after Matt. She had succeeded in this before Sixty could reach her side and prevent the act.

Bells jingled in the engine room and the *Santa Maria* lessened speed quickly. Dick and Carl, hearing the loud yell of Captain Sixty, and the bustle on the deck, joined the other passengers who were hurrying from the cabin.

"Who was it?" cried Dick.

"Your friend, Motor Matt," answered Sixty, who was close to Dick and Carl.

Miss Harris, white as death and half fainting, was leaning against the deck-house. Sixty had his eyes on her, and their baleful influence held her silent.

"He was watching something astern," explained Sixty, "and went over the rail. I tried to get to him, but he slipped away from me."

"Matt!" whooped Carl, in a spasm of fear and apprehension. "It was our bard dot tumbled oferpoard!"

Dick rushed for the boat which the sailors, under an officer's direction, were getting ready to lower.

"We're going along!" shouted Dick wildly.

"Keep away!" ordered the officer.

"I'm a sailor," answered Dick, "and I can help! Motor Matt's my mate, and I'm going to help save him!"

Without waiting for permission, both Dick and Carl sprang into the boat. There was no time to lose making the boys get back on the deck, or arguing the question, and the officer yielded his place to Dick.

"Lower away!" he shouted, and the blocks rattled as the boat dropped from the davits.

CHAPTER VI.

AN UNEXPECTED RESCUE.

Sixty's unprovoked and murderous attack on Matt had been made with such brutal suddenness that the king of the motor boys had had no chance to defend himself. Before he fairly realized what had happened he was under the water and fighting his way upward to the surface. Had he not been such a good swimmer the weight of his clothing would have dragged him down and rendered his case hopeless. He was seriously handicapped, as it was, and when he gained the top of the water he was thankful to find a life-preserver bobbing and ducking beside him.

How the life-preserver happened to be there he did not know, but he seized hold of it gratefully and allowed it to support him in the tumbling waves. By that time the *Santa Maria* was far in the distance, but there was a commotion on her decks which indicated that the cry of "Man overboard!" was receiving a prompt response. The sharp orders of the officer of the deck, the cries of excited passengers, and even the jingle of the engine-room bell came distinctly to the ears of the youth in the water.

Matt, although still bewildered, congratulated himself on escaping the swiftly-revolving screw. He had been thrown from the ship near the stern, and it was a piece of luck that the suction had not drawn him under the sharp propeller-blades.

Buffeted by the waves, Matt swung back and forth in the water and watched while the boat was lowered. Dick and Carl were in the boat, and there were two sailors at the oars. Dick, at the bow, was coiling a piece of rope in his hands, making ready for a cast as soon as

the boat should come near enough.

Matt, his eyes fastened on the boat, gave no attention to the expanse of water in the other direction. Suddenly he heard a cry, coming from behind him, and turned his head. His amazement was complete when he saw a submarine rolling amid the waves. The mystery of the glistening red speck which had claimed his attention from the steamer was explained. It was the round periscope ball of the *Grampus*!

Some one—Matt could not see distinctly, for the spindrift was in his eyes—was half out of the conning tower of the submarine.

"Come aboard of us, Matt!" shouted the man, whirling a rope about his head and letting it fly.

The youth's ears were filled with the *poppety-pop* of the submarine's motor, but he heard the request. He could only guess how the submarine happened to be there, and guesses were useless, for he would soon be told everything about the queer situation.

Motor Matt grabbed at the rope as it was thrown to him by the man in the submarine.

As he hauled himself toward the *Grampus*, hand over hand, he saw that the man in the conning tower was Townsend, or Captain Nemo, Jr., as he preferred to be called when afloat.

Presently the young motorist was hauling himself up on the slippery deck of the submarine.

"Are you all right, Matt?" cried Captain Nemo, Jr.

"All right, captain," answered Matt, "except that I'm as wet as a drowned rat and can hardly understand why I was thrown from the steamer."

"You were thrown overboard?" demanded the

captain.

"Yes; by your man, Sixty."

"My man? I don't understand you. But we'll let that go for now. Dick and Carl are in that boat yonder. Shall we take them aboard?"

"I'd like to, sir, but we have some luggage on the *Santa Maria* and the boys had better go back after it."

"Tell them to get the luggage and that we'll stand by to take them off." Nemo, Jr., threw a hasty look around at the sky, which was rapidly becoming overcast. "Ask them to hurry," he added, "for we'll be in for dirty weather before long and we must get them on the *Grampus* before the storm comes down on us."

The rowboat by then had drawn as close to the submarine as safety would permit. The two sailors were lying on their oars and gazing at the craft in astonishment, while the rail of the steamer was crowded with passengers and crew, all staring at the strange scene going forward there in the waters of the gulf.

"Ahoy, Dick!" shouted Matt.

"Ahoy, yourself, old ship!" roared Dick. "That's the *Grampus*, I take it?"

"Yes. Captain Nemo, Jr., is going to take you and Carl aboard. Go back to the *Santa Maria* and get our traps. Be quick about it, for the weather is threatening."

"Ay, ay," cried Dick heartily, "and it's glad I am to leave the old hooker."

Dick dropped down in the boat and the sailors fell to on the oars.

"Come inside, Matt," called Captain Nemo, Jr. "I'll

get out of the way and make room for you."

The captain disappeared downward, and Matt climbed over the rim of the conning tower and quickly descended the iron ladder.

In a square chamber called the periscope room, at the foot of the ladder, Matt found the captain and Cassidy waiting for him. Each grasped his hand. There was only a moment for congratulations.

"Up into the tower with you, Cassidy," called the captain, "and keep watch for Dick and Carl. We're going to take them on as soon as they pick up their belongings."

"Ay, ay, sir," answered Cassidy, "I heard your talk with Matt, and Matt's talk with the fellows in the boat."

Cassidy disappeared up the ladder and Matt dropped down on a locker and began pulling off his water-logged shoes.

"I've got a dry suit in my grip," said he, "and when the boys get here I'll slide into a more comfortable rig."

"And Sixty threw you overboard!" muttered Nemo, Jr., a black frown crossing his face. "The murderous scoundrel! I have long known him as a desperate man, but I would hardly have believed him capable of such a move as that! What was his reason?"

"That's more than I know."

"You mean to say that you don't know what his motive was for attempting such a high-handed piece of work?"

"That's exactly what I mean, captain."

"Did any one see him?"

"Only his niece—and yours."

Captain Nemo, Jr.'s, amazement increased.

"My niece?" he echoed. "I have no niece."

"Is your real name Harris, Captain?"

"No, certainly not."

"And Sixty isn't your brother-in-law?"

The captain flung up his hands.

"I should hope not! Where did you get all this queer misinformation?"

"From the girl who called herself Sadie Harris, and who said she was a niece of yours."

"You and your friends have been badly fooled, Matt," said the captain. "We must probe to the bottom of this and—"

Just at that moment the *Grampus* gave a wild roll, nearly upsetting Captain Nemo, Jr., and almost throwing Matt from the locker. A bucket of water came sloshing down the conning-tower hatch.

"The squall's hit us!" roared Cassidy. "The weather's so thick with rain and flying scud I can't see the steamer."

"Did the boys get aboard?"

"Yes, and they've had time to get back into the whaleboat again, but there's been some sort of a hitch."

The *Grampus* was rolling and wallowing frightfully, and it seemed at times as though she must surely turn turtle. The slap of waves on her steel sides and against the conning tower caused a thunderous noise to echo through the boat.

"Close the hatch, and come down, Cassidy!" shouted the captain. "We'll have to submerge her, and try to pick up the steamer with the periscope."

Cassidy could be heard clamping down the hatch. While he was coming down the ladder, the captain turned to one of the speaking tubes that entered the periscope room.

"Let the water into the ballast tanks, Clackett!" he called. "A ten-foot submergence. Slow speed ahead, Gaines," he added through another tube. "Keep her south by west, Cassidy," said he to the mate.

"South by west it is, sir," answered Cassidy, posing himself by a small binnacle and laying hands on a steering wheel.

From a distance Matt heard the old familiar rhythm of the gasoline cylinders. There was a splashing as water poured into the ballast tanks, followed by a very perceptible sinking motion. The frightful wallowing and pitching ceased to a great extent, and the *Grampus* hung on a fairly even keel.

"Ten feet of submergence, cap'n!" came from a speaking tube so distinctly that it almost seemed as though the speaker was in the periscope room.

"Very good, Clackett," replied the captain. "Hold her so. Now, Matt," the captain went on, "we'll see what the periscope has to show us."

The hollow steel mast of the periscope, contrived with powerful reflectors, terminated in a hood that swung above a table.

Captain Nemo, Jr., pushed aside a fold of the hood and he and Matt looked down on the highly-polished mirror that formed the top of the table.

A stormy scene lay under their eyes. Their horizon was narrowed to only a few yards by rain and spray, but within this brief radius they got a sight of raging waves and a fierce tumult of waters. Now and again the scene was blotted out for a moment as the periscope

ball was drenched by a comber.

"We can't take the boys off now, captain," said Matt.

"It would be impossible in this sea," answered the captain. "I was not looking for the squall to hit us so soon. We'll try and follow the *Santa Maria*, however, and take them off later."

"How can you follow her when you can't see her?"

"We know her track, and we'll follow her by compass."

The wild roaring of wind and sea came to those in the *Grampus* like a dull murmur, and the submarine's rocking, at a ten-foot submergence, was proof of the power the elements must be showing on the surface.

Both Matt and the captain kept their eyes constantly on the table top, then, abruptly, Matt gave a gasp and caught at the table to support himself.

"Look!" he cried. "Captain—the boat—"

But Captain Nemo, Jr.'s, startled eyes had already seen what Matt had beheld. This was a whaleboat tossed wildly on the crest of a huge wave adrift, and with Carl and Dick clinging desperately to the oars.

Only Matt's two chums were in the boat. The captain whirled to one of the tubes.

"Turbines at work, Clackett!" he shouted; "quick, on your life. Empty the tanks and get us back to the surface! Reverse your engine, Gaines," he added through another tube.

Matt, still clinging to the table, stared down on its polished top. The drifting whaleboat, with his two chums, had vanished as quickly as it had appeared.

CHAPTER VII.

A FRUITLESS SEARCH.

"That boat was adrift!" cried Matt, as soon as he could find his tongue.

"Yes," answered the captain in a tense voice, "and only Dick and Carl were aboard of her."

"How could that have happened?"

"When the boys got back to the ship, the boat must have been left at the steamer's side while the luggage was being secured. The boys had time to get down into the boat, and before the sailors could follow the squall came rushing down and tore the boat away from the *Santa Maria*. Hard luck, Matt! Still, the case isn't hopeless by any manner of means. The whaleboat has an air chamber at each end and can't be sunk. If the boys can stay in her, and keep her right side up, we'll be able to rescue them."

The fierce pitching and plunging of the submarine told Matt that she was again battling with the elements on the surface. A look into the periscope also laid bare the heaving and churning waters within a narrow zone of observation, but nowhere could the whaleboat be seen.

"Follow the wind, cap'n," said Cassidy. "By doin' that we ought to be able to find the boat."

"That's my intention, Cassidy," returned the captain. "Take the waist-tarp and go up into the conning tower. Carry a rope with you, and be ready to throw it the moment we sight the boat."

"Let me go, captain!" requested Matt. "I'm already as wet as I can possibly be, and I should like to do my

part."

"Very well, Matt," replied the captain. "Put the tarp around him, Cassidy."

Cassidy lifted the lid of the locker and took a circular oilskin from inside. There was a round hole in the centre of the oilskin, and around the outside edge were eyelets.

The mate pulled the tarp over Matt's head and tied it about his waist.

"There's a ring of hooks around the rim of the tower, Matt," he explained, "and by fitting the edge of the tarp over them you'll keep us from being drowned out down here."

"I understand," answered Matt.

That was not his first voyage in the *Grampus*, and he was fairly familiar with the boat's equipment.

When he was ready, Cassidy handed him the coil of wet rope recently used by the captain to get Matt aboard.

"When you get tired, Matt," said the captain, "come down and Cassidy will relieve you."

"I hope we'll find the boys before then," answered Matt hopefully. "They were drifting, and if we go with the wind we ought to overhaul them."

"We'll keep track of operations through the periscope and do all we can to lay you alongside the boat if we sight her."

Matt climbed the ladder, pushed back the lever that held the air-tight hatch in place, and threw over the cover just in time to get a barrel of water over his head and shoulders.

Quickly as he could he pushed on until his body,

from the waist upward, was over the top of the conning tower. Then, with deft fingers, he made the circular tarp fast along the edge of the hatch. A minute more, when he had leisure to look around over the riotous waters, the novelty of his position caused his pulses to leap.

Forward and aft the water creamed over the steel deck of the *Grampus*, hiding the hull and leaving only the upper part of the conning tower and the steel periscope mast exposed. It seemed to Matt as though he was afloat in nothing more substantial than a barrel, with the clamoring, rushing waves all around him.

Forward, backward and sideways the submarine rolled through a terrific arc, and an occasional wave charged over him, leaving his dripping hair tumbled about his eyes.

For a brief space only did the awful spectacle claim his attention, and then he turned his eyes over the roaring waves in an attempt to locate the whaleboat. The *Grampus* was now racing with the wind, and the stinging lines of rain struck against the young motorist's back. Again and again he brushed the water from his eyes and continued to peer eagerly ahead.

But his heart was steadily sinking. Dick was a sailor, but what skill could keep the whaleboat right side up in such a tempest? The waves drove past the *Grampus* at racehorse speed, flinging their foamy arms high in the air. Matt shouted at the top of his lungs, but his voice was puny and ineffective. The gale caught it, feathered it out into a thousand wisps of sound and scattered it into the roar and crash of the waves.

From below him came the notes of a Gabriel horn, but these were little more effective than Matt's voice had been. The minutes passed, and Matt's hopes

declined steadily. After a time, he knew not how long, he felt a hand tugging at his feet. Quickly unhooking the edges of the tarp, he descended.

"You've been up there an hour, Matt," said Captain Nemo, Jr., "and Cassidy will relieve you."

"I don't think there's much hope," returned Matt heavily, removing the waist-tarp and handing it to the mate. "I don't see how Dick and Carl could possibly stay in the boat in such a frightful sea."

"We never can tell what we're able to do in this world," said the captain hopefully, "until we're called upon to put forth our best powers. Dick is a cool one, and he knows the sea. If any one could pull through that storm and bring Carl along with him, it's Dick Ferral. We may not find them while the gale is on, but afterward we can cruise about and perhaps be able to pick them up. That is my hope, at all events."

Cassidy, rope in hand, was already on his way up the ladder. When he had taken up his position, the captain turned to Matt.

"That locker is our slop chest," said he, "and in it you will find some dry clothes. Better make a change, Matt, and be as comfortable as possible."

This was good advice, and Matt proceeded to carry it out.

"I had thought of taking Cassidy's place again in an hour," he observed.

"No use," was the answer. "If we don't sight the boat within an hour, then the chances are that we have gone wide of her—perhaps left her behind. We'll sink into quieter waters and come up again when the storm has abated. Then we'll cruise around and do everything possible to locate Dick and Carl."

The captain drew up a chair and braced himself at the periscope table.

At the end of an hour night had fallen, closed in with the Stygian gloom of the clouds and tempest. From that on the periscope was useless, and even a lookout from the top of the conning tower was of no avail.

Cassidy descended, closing the hatch behind him. His face was long and ominous.

"This ends it till mornin', cap'n," said he.

"Exactly so, Cassidy," replied the captain; "but the case isn't hopeless, by any means." He whirled to a speaking tube. "Fill the tanks, Clackett," he ordered, "and descend to twenty yards. Shut off your engine, Gaines," he added through another tube; "we'll pass the night where we are, sixty feet down."

The orders were repeated back, and the *Grampus* began to sink. When the periscope ball was submerged an automatic valve closed the hollow mast against an inrush of water.

Down and down they went, slipping noiselessly into great depths. Cassidy turned on a light from the storage batteries and an incandescent bulb flooded the periscope room.

Climbing the ladder into the conning tower, Matt stole a look through the lunettes. To see under water, contrary to the usual fiction on the subject, is impossible. Only a sombre void met Matt's eyes. By means of electric light and powerful reflectors Captain Nemo, Jr., could throw a gleam several yards through the lunettes; but this was a drain on the storage batteries, and for use only in case of emergency.

At sixty feet down the *Grampus* lay as easily under the enormous water pressure as a man in a hammock. At the captain's suggestion, Matt stretched himself out

on a blanket on the floor of the periscope room and, in spite of his worry, was soon asleep.

When he was aroused by Cassidy a gleam of day was shining down the conning-tower hatch.

"Speake is getting breakfast, Matt," said Cassidy, "and we're up at the surface again. The storm is over, and the cap'n is on deck, calling for you. Better go up."

Matt jumped to his feet and raced up the ladder. The sea was still a bit rough, although part of the submarine's deck was high and dry. Captain Nemo, Jr., was on the deck, clinging to one of the wire guys that supported the periscope mast.

"Do you see anything of the whaleboat, captain?" were Matt's first words.

"Not a sign," answered the captain, handing Matt a pair of binoculars. "Take a look for yourself."

Bracing himself in the top of the tower Matt swept the glasses over the vast expanse of sunlit, heaving water.

There was nothing to be seen. From horizon to horizon the gulf held only the dancing, gleaming waves.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE OVERTURNED BOAT.

Matt's heaviness of spirit was reflected in his face.

"Don't be discouraged," said the captain. "We'll cruise around in this part of the gulf and I feel pretty sure we'll find your friends. It would have been difficult to locate them during the storm, and the *Grampus* might have passed within a cable's length of the whaleboat without seeing it or being seen; but, on a day like this, we've got the range of the ocean for miles, and the whaleboat can't get away from us!"

"Providing it's afloat," replied Matt apprehensively.

"Breakfast!" yelled Cassidy from the periscope room.

"That means us," said Captain Nemo, Jr.

The present complement of the submarine consisted of the captain, mate and three men. The duties of the captain and mate kept them constantly in the periscope room and conning tower. Gaines had charge of the hundred and twenty horse-power gasoline motor, Clackett looked after the trimming tanks, and Speake was general utility, taking care of the electric supply and compressed air and preparing the meals. Each had his particular station, and when the boat was running the officers rarely saw any of the crew.

Gaines' room was aft, Clackett's was nearer the waist of the boat, and Speake was forward in the torpedo room.

There being no use for the torpedo room during peaceable cruising, it was transformed into a galley, and here Speake prepared the meals on an electric range.

During breakfast Speake relieved Gaines at the motor, and Cassidy took the lookout. Gaines, Clackett, Captain Nemo, Jr., and Matt crowded into the little messroom, dropped down on low stools and drank their hot coffee and ate their crackers and boiled eggs.

When Matt and the captain had finished they went up and relieved Cassidy and sent him down. Matt seated himself on the deck at the base of the conning tower, the captain taking the elevated position in the top of the tower.

"While I'm using the glasses, and you're using your eyes, Matt," said the captain, "we might as well talk and try to understand the causes that brought you and your chums into this situation. I was curious on that point last night, but didn't want to bother you when you were so tired and worried."

"If you were surprised to see me, captain," returned Matt, "you can imagine how astounded I was to find you and the *Grampus*."

"The wind was taken out of my sails completely when I learned that you and your friends had sailed on the *Santa Maria*."

"Then you didn't send us three tickets and ask us to sail on the steamer for British Honduras?"

"Certainly not! That was part of the plan for getting you away. Sixty must have laid the plan and trusted to his daughter to carry it out."

"His daughter?"

"Yes. She was the girl who called on you at the hotel shortly before the steamer sailed—Ysabel Sixty. Captain Sixty married a Spanish woman in Cuba, and the girl was their only child."

"She used pretty good English when she talked with

me."

"That's because she has passed most of her life in the United States, while her father has been engaged in questionable work all over the high seas."

"She said she was your niece, that her mamma was Sadie Harris, and that she had come to New Orleans as soon as she heard that you were sick."

The captain smiled grimly.

"Sixty told her what to say," he answered.

"But," and Matt's surprise took another tack, "how do you happen to know that she called on me at the hotel?"

"Clackett found that out. I sent him to the hotel to ask you and your chums to come to Stuyvesant Dock and board the *Grampus*. Cassidy was to bring the submarine down from Westwego. But let's begin at the beginning and get at this thing with some sort of system."

Matt led off with an account of the mixed messages, following this with a description of the girl and of what had transpired during their interview, and then finishing with what had taken place on the steamer.

The captain, although he kept the binoculars sweeping the sea, was absorbed in the recital.

"What name was signed to that message that fell into your hands by mistake?" he asked.

"I didn't pay any attention to the name," Matt replied. "I read the message to make sure it wasn't for me, but I didn't read the signature."

"What was the message?"

"It merely gave a position by latitude and longitude with the added words, 'two days ago—no wind and no

drift since."

The captain showed signs of suppressed excitement.

"What was the latitude and longitude?" he asked. "Can you remember it?"

"No," said Matt. "I knew it did not concern me, so I failed to charge my mind with it."

"It concerned you more than you know. I am positive that Sixty lured you aboard the steamer because he feared you had learned something from the telegram which you could use to his disadvantage. What was your message—the one that Sixty got and read?"

"It was from a man who didn't know our air ship had been wrecked and destroyed. He wanted to buy her, and referred us to you, saying that he knew you."

"My name was mentioned in the telegram?"

"The name of Townsend was mentioned."

"Ah! The cause of Sixty's work is becoming clearer and clearer. He knew I was a friend of yours, that the government had asked me to watch him, and that you had had a chance to secure some important information from the telegram. It was enough to make a man like Sixty try something desperate!"

"You were watching him?" queried Matt, "and for the government?"

"Yes. Sixty has been a trader in the South Seas, but lately he has caused the government to suspect him of an attempt to smuggle arms and ammunition to Central America to help out some revolutionists there. His brig, the *Dolphin*, cleared from New Orleans a few weeks ago, having dropped in at that port from across the ocean, and has since mysteriously vanished. It has been something like a week since Sixty showed up in New Orleans again. The government had

communicated with me before I came to the South, asking me to locate the *Dolphin*, follow her and see what she was up to. If I couldn't find the brig I was to follow Sixty. That was the business on which I wanted your aid, but I couldn't tell you anything about it until the time came for us to act. You see, I didn't want Sixty to think that he was being watched. When Clackett, who was shadowing Sixty, brought me word that he had just seen him leaving New Orleans on the *Santa Maria*, I immediately made preparations to follow the steamer; and I was more anxious than ever to trail her when Clackett reported that you and your friends, as well as Sixty, were on the boat. I knew, at once, that there was some crooked work afoot.

"We gained on the steamer in the river, and came within sight of her two or three hours after she had reached the gulf. We submerged the *Grampus* until the periscope ball was just awash and trailed along in her wake. On the periscope table I saw some one drop overboard, and we immediately emptied our ballast tanks and came to the surface. I was surprised enough when I found that it was you who was in the water, Matt. We were too far away to see Sixty throw you over the rail. The truth of the matter is, Sixty is afraid of you—afraid you would tell me what was contained in that telegram. The bearings set forth by that latitude and longitude must have been mighty important!"

"Your work for the government," commented Matt, "in spite of the way you guarded it, must have become known to Sixty."

"Yes; but he did not learn it through me. Some one in Washington must have kept him informed."

"The girl also seemed to have a pretty good knowledge of the fact that I was going to help you."

"Sixty may have inferred that, and if the girl talked

guardedly with you she might still further have developed the point."

"That's exactly what she did!" exclaimed Matt, with sudden divination. "I can see now that she was playing a part all the time. I don't think she liked the work, but that she was forced to do it by her father."

"Sixty's a rough old webfoot, and when his unscrupulous mind counsels a course he's not at all particular as to the ways and means by which he keeps to it."

"How would throwing me overboard help him any?"

"If he had put you out of the way, you wouldn't have been able to use the knowledge you had acquired from that telegram."

"But there was Dick and Carl. They knew about the message as well as I did."

"Then Sixty would have taken care of them, too."

"What a murderous scoundrel he is!" muttered Matt with a shudder.

"He's all of that and—"

The words died on the captain's lips and, for a moment, he held the glasses rigidly on some object at a distance.

"What is it, captain?" cried Matt, leaping up and straining his eyes, but without being able to see anything.

"Perhaps nothing," answered Nemo, Jr., "I can't tell. But we'll give it the benefit of the doubt and go over that way."

Dropping a hand at his side he pressed a push button which had a wire communicating with the engine room. The signal he gave sent the *Grampus* on

another tack. As she rushed onward the object that had claimed the captain's attention grew slowly on Matt's eyes.

It was an overturned whaleboat, and on one side, in black letters, was the name "*Santa Maria*."

Matt staggered, and laid hold of the rim of the conning tower for support.

What if his chums had lost their lives through that despicable work of Captain Sixty's?

CHAPTER IX.

ADRIFT IN THE STORM.

Dick and Carl were dumfounded at sight of the *Grampus* appearing suddenly amid the waves and with Captain Nemo, Jr., in the conning tower heaving a rope at Matt. Their surprise wore away swiftly and delight took its place. Matt was saved, and they were soon to join him on the submarine.

"Hoop-a-la!" carolled the Dutch boy as the whaleboat put back to the steamer. "I peen gladder as I can dell dot ve're going to leaf dot *Sanda Maria*. I would like to ged pedder acquaintet mit Miss Harris, I bed you, aber I dradder got mit der *Grambus*."

"That there's the craft we heerd about on the waterfront in New Orleans," said one of the sailors.

"Easy enough," said the other over his oar, "but how does she chance to be bobbin' in our wake? Looks like she was a-follerin' us."

There were many excited questions from the passengers as the boat was held alongside by one of the davit ropes and a sea ladder was dropped over. Sixty and his daughter, alone of all those aboard, showed little interest in the submarine.

The sailors in the boat called out to the officer on the deck that Dick and Carl were to be returned to the submarine, and the officer, with a look at the threatening sky, grumbled at the delay.

"One of the lads is enough to get their luggage," he called down. "You shell-backs come up here and tell me all about it."

The slap of the waves and the noise made by the

rising wind rendered talking difficult. Carl went for the luggage, the sailors climbed to the deck, and Dick remained in the boat to keep her fended from the steamer's side with an oar.

While Carl was in the stateroom collecting the traps the officer hung over the rail with others of the crew and some of the passengers, studying the sky and apparently in doubt as to whether he should let the boat put back to the submarine.

Presently he went away, and before he got back Carl had appeared and begun tossing the luggage, piece by piece, into the bobbing whaleboat. Dick deftly caught and stowed the traps as they came down to him.

"Vy don'd you ged indo der poat?" asked Carl, of the two sailors, who were standing near.

"The fust orficer told us ter wait," replied one.

"Vy iss dot?"

"I don't think he reckons it's safe to go back ter the submarine."

"Ach, du lieber!" grunted Carl disgustedly. "Der itee oof sailormans being afraidt oof a leedle bit oof a vind! I peen a lubber meinseluf, aber I don'd vas afraidt!"

With that he lowered himself onto the shaking sea ladder and started downward. When Carl stepped off the ladder he came within one of stepping into the sea. Dick grabbed him, however, and heaved him over the gunwale and to a midship thwart by main force.

"Hi, there!" shouted the officer, coming back and leaning over the rail. "You can't go—it's not safe. We're going to catch it good and plenty in a minute."

"Bosh!" shouted Dick. "We can make it all right if you hurry."

Although Dick spoke confidently, for he was eager to join Matt on the *Grampus* even if it was necessary to take a chance or two, yet his practiced eye told him that fierce weather was imminent.

"Hook on the falls!" roared the officer. "Quick on it, or—"

At that moment, with a terrific shriek and a wild splash and splatter, the squall broke. The whaleboat was under the lee of the steamer, but the larger vessel shifted her position so that the heavy wind caught the whaleboat and jerked her away. The fastenings parted, and in a twinkling the boat had shot off from the steamer on the crest of a huge wave. A mist of rain and spindrift closed in between and the *Santa Maria* was shut out from the boys' view.

"The oars!" yelled Dick, floundering to a thwart and shipping the oar with which he had been keeping the boat from the steamer's side.

The boat was prancing like a festive broncho, now standing almost straight up in the air, and now dropping with dizzy abruptness, rolling at a hair-raising angle and shipping buckets of water. Carl had been having his hands full keeping himself from going overboard, but he managed to brace his feet and get busy with one of the oars.

Under Dick's direction the boat was brought with the wind and steadied.

"Led's ged on der supmarine!" yelled Carl.

"No use trying that," Dick shouted over his shoulder.

"Den, py shinks, led's ged pack on der shdeamer! I don'd like dis popping around ofer der ocean. I feel like I was in some shoot der chutes."

"Can't do that, either. We've got to do our best to

keep afloat—and that's going to be hard enough. Strike me lucky, but fate has played it low down on us."

"Meppy der shdeamer vill come afder us."

"Don't you ever think it! They'd rather lose the whaleboat than hunt for us in this weather. Anyhow, they'd stand about as much chance of finding us as they would of locating a needle in a haystack. We're in for it, mate. Take a piece of that rope and lash yourself to the thwart."

Dick hauled in a trailing line and slashed off a section with his sheath knife. It was difficult hanging on to an oar with one hand while they used the other to tie themselves, but they managed to accomplish the feat.

"Subbose der poat sinks?" howled Carl. "Den ve vas tied und ve sink mit her."

"She can't sink! There's an air chamber in each end."

"Vat oof she shouldt durn over mit herseluf?"

"We've got to keep her from doing that."

"Ach, himmelblitzen! Dis iss der vorst fix vat I was afer in. Der landt iss goot enough for me. Der more vat I see of der ocean, der more vat I like der solid eart'. Now, oof ve—"

Carl, at that moment, was deluged by a wave. He strangled, coughed and spluttered, and if he had not been bound to the thwart would surely have gone by the board.

"Let me have your oar," roared Dick. "Take your cap, and bale!"

"How I vas going to dip all der gulf oudt oof dis poat mit my cap?" answered Carl. "I mightd shust as vell drow der Mississippi Rifer ofer New Orleans mit a

t'imble."

"Bale, I tell you!" whooped Dick, grabbing the oar away from Carl and shipping it opposite his own position.

Carl dipped frantically into the water, but his efforts were of little avail.

"I'll have to make a sea anchor," announced Dick.

"How you make dot? You would haf to haf a placksmith shop, und—"

"Take the oars."

Dick swung the oars back and Carl laid hold of them. There was a mast and a furled sail in the bottom of the boat. With infinite difficulty, Dick got the mast over the side and made it fast to the stern by twenty feet of cable.

This weight, dragging behind, served to steady the lightly-weighted boat and rendered it easier for the boys to keep her clear of the swamping waves.

After that, Dick again took the oars and Carl continued his baling with more success.

"Id vas gedding vorse insteadt oof pedder," cried Carl, "der gale, I mean."

"That's a fact, matey," answered Dick, "but we're making better weather of it."

"Oof ve keep der poat on dop oof der vater ondil der shtorm iss ofer, ve vill be like some shipwrecked fellers und vill shdarve to deat'."

"We'll not starve to death. We can put up the sail and get to the nearest land. We're not such a long way from land, Carl, and this gale is blowing us toward the southern part of Florida."

"Oof ve hit Florida too kevick, den ve ged pusted oop."

"It will be a day or two before we get there."

"Vat ve eat in der meandime?"

"If you thought more of your life and less of your stomach, mate, you'd be better off."

"Vone means der odder. Und vat ve going to do for some vater to trink? Der ocean iss full mit salt."

"There's always a breaker of fresh water aboard these boats on the steamers."

"Den you t'ink, Tick, dere iss some shances for us?"

"Sure, I do! We're doing finely now!"

"Ach, finely! Mit der vater coming down from oferheadt, und oop from pelow, und der vind almost plowing us oudt oof der poat. Yah, ve vas in pooty fine shape, I bed you!"

Night fell, a hideous night, black as Erebus, with howling waves below and shrieking tempest overhead. The boys, nearly dropping from exhaustion, did their feeble best with the oars. They had no time for talk, and needed all their strength for their trying labor.

Minutes dragged like hours, and hours seemed like eternity.

How long a time passed, neither of the boys had any idea. All they could do was to work blindly and doggedly on and trust to luck.

"Py shinks," panted Carl, throwing down his oar, "I vas diret enough to tie und I can't do noddng more. Oof I'm to feed der fishes, pedder id vas now as some odder dime."

"You're not going to feed the fishes," answered Dick.

"Buck up, matey. The gale is slowly blowing itself out. It was only a squall, anyhow."

"I don'd like skvalls! Dey're too sutten. Anyvay, I don'd vork no more. I can't. My pack iss proke und my hants iss plistered. I vould schust as soon tie as keep id oop. Vat a plackness eferyvere! Der sea shpooks iss outd und yelling like anyt'ing. Oof I vas shdrong enough I vould ged shcared, aber I ain'd aple efen to do dot. I—"

Just at that moment Carl showed that he was strong enough, at all events, to give a startled yell. He was interrupted by a grinding crash, so terrific that it flung him from the thwart, tearing him loose from the lashings.

The boat had come to a halt, and was filling and turning over.

Carl had no idea what had happened and it was too dark for him to see anything. After his first frenzied cry, he gave himself up, being positive that he and Dick, in spite of their plucky fight, were bound for the bottom.

CHAPTER X.

THE DERELICT.

"Carl!"

It was Dick's voice and Carl was vaguely aware that his comrade was splashing toward him through the water in the boat.

"Goot-py, Tick," wailed Carl. "Dis iss der last, und ve vas a gouple oof goners! Led me take holt oof your hant as ve go down. Gompany vas goot ad a dime like dose."

"We're not going to Jones, matey, at least not right away. We've struck against a wreck of some kind and by luck I've grabbed a rope that was trailing overboard. Are you able to climb?"

"I ain'd aple, und I don'd vant to climb. I haf gifen oop, so I mightdt schust as vell go down as anyt'ing else."

Dick muttered impatiently, grabbed Carl and began tying the rope about his waist.

"Stay here," said he, "and I'll try and get you up. You'll have to help yourself a little, though."

Carl was vaguely conscious that Dick had disappeared somewhere. A few minutes later the whaleboat rolled over, was carried away, and Carl was left floundering in the water. Again he was sure he had reached the end, but again he found himself mistaken. There came a tug at the rope and Carl was hurled with stunning force against something big and heavy. Clutching the rope with his hands, he braced his feet against the object against which he had struck, and, after a fashion, started aloft. The pull on the rope

helped him, and he finally floundered over a barrier, dropped on a flat surface and his wits slipped away from him.

He was utterly spent, and his unconsciousness was caused by sleep rather than by the blow he had received. When he opened his eyes, he found that it was morning, that the sun was shining, and that Dick was on his knees beside him, briskly shaking him.

"Vere ve vas, anyway?" queried Carl, sitting up and peering around.

He was under the lee of a little house. Slippery planks, that heaved and rolled, were beneath him, and he could see the jagged stumps of two masts in the distance. A raffle of tangled rope lay near him.

"We're on a derelict," reported Dick.

"Vat iss a terelick?"

"It's a wreck that failed to go to the bottom. Having a cargo that floats, it stays on the surface, a menace to every craft that happens to be in its vicinity."

"T'anks. Iss breakfast retty, Tick?"

"We'll have to find something for breakfast before we can get it ready. It was a stroke of luck that laid us aboard the derelict. We smashed into her, in the dark, and it couldn't have happened once in a thousand times. Fortune has taken a turn with us."

Carl got up unsteadily, leaned against the side of the house behind him and looked over the cheerless prospect.

"Meppy fortune has dook some durns," he muttered, "aber she ditn't shtrain herseluf any. Vat sort oof a terelick iss dis?"

"She's a brig."

"Vat's a prig?"

"A two-masted, square-rigged vessel. Both masts are gone."

"Yah, I see dot."

"This is the galley. Under the poop, over there, is the after cabin; forward of us is the fo'c'sle."

"Vere iss der pantry? Led's try und findt a cupboardt or somet'ing vere dere iss a biece to eat. I'm so hungry, Tick, dot I don'd know vere I vas ad."

The door of the galley was closed and battened with a tarpaulin.

"The crew of the brig," said Dick, as he removed the tarpaulin, "did what they could to keep the water out. When the sticks went out of her, though, they had to quit."

The galley door was unlocked, and Dick threw it open. An odor came out to them that was far from pleasant, but they pushed into the little room and looked around.

There was a stove, serviceable although a bit rusty, and a number of pots and pans in racks. In a bin, in one corner, was a small supply of firewood. There was also a swinging cupboard, and in this the boys found a tin of ground coffee, a small can of brown sugar and a piece of salt pork that did not look any too fresh.

"Oof ve hat vater," remarked Carl, "ve could make some coffee."

"I'll hunt for the tanks and try to get some water," said Dick. "You get busy with a fire, Carl. There's a box of matches in the cupboard."

Dick took one of the kettles and left the galley. He was gone some fifteen or twenty minutes, and during

that time Carl had got a fire going. At first the draft was not good, and Carl investigated and found that the stove-pipe had been stuffed with oakum to keep out the water. When the oakum was removed the fire burned finely.

Dick, highly delighted, came back with the water.

"There's a full tank," said he, "and I believe we're going to be a lot better off than we supposed."

"I know I vill," chirruped Carl, "afder I ged on der outside oof someding to eat."

"When that's done, matey, we'll go on an exploring expedition, and see what we can find."

They took their coffee out of tin cups and ate their salt pork off of tin plates. Enough knives and forks were found to serve their purpose, and hot food put them both in better spirits.

"I vonder vat Matt is doing on der *Grambus*?" remarked Carl.

"More than likely, mate," answered Dick, "he thinks we're on the steamer."

"Vich means dot der supmarine vill follow der shdeamer to ged us off. Vell, I ped you dot Matt iss a goot vays off, py now, und ven vill ve see him nexdt?"

"Ask me something easy! But we'll see him again, one of these days. As soon as he finds out that we broke adrift from the fruiter, he'll come looking for us."

"Und der Gulf of Mexico iss so pig a blace dot he vill look a long dime pefore he findts der terelick! Vere iss der valepoat? Meppy ve could use her und go py Florida, hey?"

"We can't do that. The whaleboat was damaged, and she either went down or drifted off from the wreck

during the night."

"Iss dere some odder poats mit der wreck?"

"No. Captain and crew must have used them when they left."

"Den ve got to shday mit der terelick?"

"That's the sizing I give the outlook, Carl. However, we may drop in with some ship and be taken off. That's more than possible, I should say."

Having finished their meal, the boys got up and left the galley. They first looked into the fo'c'sle hatch. Like the galley door, it had been battened down, and a strong, disagreeable odor was wafted up to them. The bunks were in disorder, and Dick opened the deadlights in order to let the air blow through and sweeten up the place.

Off the fo'c'sle was a small room which had evidently been set aside for the carpenter. At any rate, it contained a small chest of tools.

"Bully!" cried Dick, taking an axe from the chest. "We can clear away the raffle and take more comfort on the wreck. If we could rig a jury mast and spread a sail, perhaps we could take this boat into New Orleans. There'd be a lot of salvage, perhaps."

"Vat's salfage?"

"That's what people get for picking up deserted ships and taking them into port. If the cargo is valuable, the salvage will run pretty heavy."

As they left the fo'c'sle and walked aft, they passed the side of the ship against which they had bumped the night before. Several ropes, from the tangle of cordage on the deck, lay over the side, some of them loose and trailing in the water, and others attached to broken yards.

"We were lucky to have slammed into the ship at just that point," observed Dick. "There were plenty of ropes for us to get hold of, and if I hadn't grabbed that rope, last night, we'd have gone under, sure as fate." He dropped his axe. "We'll leave that here, for now," he went on, "while we go aft and continue looking around."

They climbed the steps leading to the poop deck. The cabin roof rose out of the deck, and there was a row of little windows around the top of the cabin wall.

In the stern of the brig, directly back of the cabin, was the charthouse. This room was quite commodious and was furnished with heavy glass windows that had resisted the fury of the storm that had, in other ways, damaged the brig so heavily. There were two bunks in the charthouse, a deep locker, and a table. The air inside was damp and heavy, but by leaving the door open and opening the windows the atmosphere soon cleared.

"Here iss a goot place to shleep, anyvays," remarked Carl, with a good deal of satisfaction. "Oof ve can findt a lod oof grup, den I bed you ve ged along finer as silk. Oof id vasn't for Matt, I couldn't care oof ve floated to China."

"We're not going to leave the gulf, matey," averred Dick, decidedly. "We're going to get out of this fix as soon as we can."

"Yah, meppy dot vas pedder," agreed Carl. "Vat's der name oof dis poat? All poats haf names, don'd dey?"

"We'll try and find out," said Dick.

Leaving the charthouse, he lowered himself by the rope of one of the davits—from which a dory had presumably been suspended—and read the lettering on the brig's stern.

He gave a yell of surprise and swung himself back on deck in a good deal of excitement.

"Vat's der madder?" asked Carl.

"Do you remember, Carl," answered Dick, "that Captain Sixty said, that time we talked with him in the steamer's cabin, that he had been skipper of a brig called the *Dolphin*?"

"Yah, I rememper dot."

"Well, this is the *Dolphin*!"

Carl stared blankly into the gleaming eyes of Dick Ferral, wondering why the fact should put Dick in such a taking as it seemed to have done.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SCHOONER.

"Vat aboutt it, Tick?" queried Carl. "Dere iss more as vone poat named der *Tolphin*, I bed you."

"Sure; but there's no such happenchance in this case. Sixty's boat was a brig, and that was her name. This boat's a square-rigged two-master, and the word *Dolphin*, plain as the nose on your face, is there on the stern. It's a cinch this was Sixty's boat."

"Vell, subbosing id vas? Id don'd cut some ice. Ve're here, und Sixty iss on der shdeamer. Led's go looking some more."

"There's something main queer about all this tangle," muttered Dick, leading the way to the sliding doors of the after companion and removing the tarpaulin. "This ought to take us into the captain's quarters, and maybe we'll find something there that will shed light on the situation."

The doors were locked, but Dick sent Carl for the axe and smashed them open. The close air was almost stifling, but the boys faced it and descended into the small cabin. A sextant and a chronometer were the first things Dick's eyes lighted upon.

"If there are charts in that locker in the charthouse," he observed, "we can very easily tell whereabouts in the gulf we are."

Carl wanted to know how this was to be done, but Dick did not have time to explain, just then. He opened some windows, and the door leading out through the break in the poop. This caused a refreshing current of air to blow through the room.

There was a bunk built against one wall, and, like those in the fo'c'sle and the charthouse, it was in a state of disorder. A sea chest was near one wall. It was opened and, from the way its contents were scattered, it appeared to have been hastily rummaged.

In the centre of the cabin was a table, securely bolted to the floor. Dick pulled open a drawer of the table and drew out a couple of papers.

"The skipper got away in such a hurry," said Dick, "he didn't even take time to get these."

"Vat dey vas, anyhow?" inquired Carl, drawing close and looking over Dick's shoulder.

"The ship's log and her manifest," answered Carl.

"Dot's a funny kind oof a log," said Carl. "Vy dey call some bapers a log?"

"It is just a name, matey, and means a document in which the first officer sets down the things that happen to the ship, how far she sails, any notable things that occur, and so on. It's a sort of diary."

"Vat a funny pitzness!" exclaimed Carl. "Und dot odder t'ing, vat you say iss a manivest. Vat's dot?"

"Why, a manifest is a paper signed by the master. It gives the vessel's name and tonnage, the port she hails from and a full description of the cargo. This tells the number and character of the various boxes, bales and packages in the cargo, where they're taken aboard, and where they're going to. This is full of information for us, matey. And it's signed by James Sixty, as master, which proves conclusively that we're on the boat that was once under his orders."

"Meppy dot's righdt. Anyvay, id don'd make so mooch tifference so long as Sixty ain'd here now."

"But it's queer we happened to slam into his boat

during the storm last night."

"Forged aboutt dot und dell me vere der prig comes from, vat she's got apoardt, und how mooch salvage ve ged oof ve take her py New Orleans."

An examination of the log and the manifest showed the boys that the *Dolphin* had been doing some great stunts at traveling. Her last port of call was New Orleans, where she had discharged some manufactured products from Liverpool and filled out the available space in her hold with oak barrel staves. On her way from Liverpool she had also put in at Boston and taken on a consignment of mill work—that is, doors, sashes, window frames, etc.—which was to go to Belize. Before reaching Liverpool, the *Dolphin* had called at Lisbon, Portugal, for part of a load of cork. Previous to reaching Lisbon she had picked up some hemp and sugar and copra at Manila, which she had put ashore at Liverpool. Originally, the brig had cleared from San Francisco.

"Dot mixes me all oop," muttered Carl, who had seated himself in a chair while listening to Dick's reading.

"Belize seems to be the place she was going to when she left New Orleans," said Dick. "It appears, too, that she took on canned goods in addition to mill work in Boston, and that both were for British Honduras. We'd better go down in the hold and hunt for those canned goods."

Carl was immensely delighted with the proposition; anything that had a prospect of food at the end of it always made a hit with him. A lantern was secured in the captain's cabin, lighted with a match from the galley, and the boys stripped open a hatch and got into the 'tween decks.

Between the main and the lower deck there was a

good deal of water, and barrel staves were floating in every direction. There were a number of boxes snugly stowed out of reach of the water, however, and Dick, by the aid of the lantern, discovered that some of the upper boxes were filled with canned pork and beans.

"Yah," chuckled Carl, clinging to the iron ladder that led down from the hatch, "I bed you dot come from Poston! Iss id der parrel staves, Tick, vat keeps der wreck afloat?"

"No," answered Dick, crawling over the cargo and pushing the lantern ahead of him, "there are not enough staves to do that, although, of course, they help—and so does the mill work. The cork, though, must be down in the lower hold, and that, I take it, is what buoys the ship up principally. Cork is a great— Well, keelhaul me!"

Dick broke off his words with a startled exclamation.

"Vat's to pay now?" cried Carl.

"There's something here, matey, that's not down in the manifest."

"Vat id iss?"

"Boxes of ammunition and Krag-Jorgensen rifles."

"Hoop-a-la! Meppy olt Sixdy vas going to durn birate, und dot a gale plew along, wrecked der prig und made him shange his mindt. Vell, nefer mindt dot shtuff, Tick. Der pork und peans iss ammunidion enough for me. Id's pooty near tinner dime, so come on mit a pox."

Dick finished inspecting the rifles and ammunition and crawled back along the piles of boxes and over the sloshing water. Between the two of them, the boys succeeded in getting a case of the canned beans up on the deck.

"Sixty is an old law-breaker," averred Dick. "I had already sized him up for being a beach comber and I can't understand why Captain Nemo, Jr., has anything to do with him."

"Meppy Nemo, Jr., don'd have somet'ing to do mit him, und dot vat Sixdy toldt us vas all some cock-und-pull shtories. Aber vat makes you t'ink he vas a law-preaker?"

"Those rifles and that ammunition. Things like those, Carl, when they're not down in a ship's manifest were not taken aboard for any proper purpose. My eye! I'd give something handsome to know what's up."

While Carl was opening the box of beans and getting dinner, Dick began clearing the deck of the raffle of cordage that covered it. By the time he had finished and cast the splintered yards adrift, Carl was out of the galley and calling for him to come and eat.

In the afternoon the boys brought the bedding from the bunks in the charthouse and spread it on the deck to dry in the sun; then they went down into the 'tween-decks again and looked over as much of the cargo as was above water. They discovered that the freight of arms and ammunition was quite extensive. Carl could not work up much interest in the rifles and cartridges, but, while Dick was prowling through the wet hold looking them over, he dug out a box of tinned beef and a cask of ship's biscuit. With these discoveries they were able to vary their supper menu.

Leaving Carl to get supper, Dick hunted up two more lanterns and trimmed and lighted them and hung them forward, aft and amidships of the wreck.

"I'm tired enough to do a caulk to the king's taste," said Dick, as he left the galley and cast a self-satisfied glance at the lights, "but we can't both of us turn in. We'll have to stand watch and watch. Do you want the

first half of the night or the last half?"

"Vat's der use oof shtanding vatch?" protested Carl. "Dere von't nopody shdeal der poat, und oof ve vas going to run indo anypody ve couldn't helup dot."

"It's necessary, Carl," answered Dick, "to know all that takes place while we're on the brig. If our lights should attract any vessel that's passing, one of us ought to be on the alert to answer a hail."

"All righdt. I'll take der fairst vatch, und I vill call you py der chronomoder in der gaptain's room."

Dick had wound the chronometer and set it by guess. The timepiece might be off schedule by an hour or so, but it would serve for dividing the watches.

Leaving Carl by the galley, Dick climbed to the poop deck and went to the charthouse and turned in. Carl's mind was running on "spooks" a good deal, and the swish of water under the deck, and the grinding and thumping of the floating staves, kept his fears and his imagination working overtime.

However, nothing happened; and, after he had gone into the cabin seven or eight times and consulted the chronometer, he at last found it to be twelve o'clock and bounded up the poop-deck steps.

Dick had slept soundly, and when he went forward Carl crept into his warm blankets and was snoring almost as soon as his head was on the pillow.

It seemed to him that he had no more than closed his eyes before he was brought up in his bunk by a loud yell. It was daylight, and the sun was shining through the open door of the charthouse.

"Carl! Come out here!"

Carl leaped from the bunk and hurried out on the deck and to the broken monkey rail.

From the rail he could look down on the main deck and get a good view of Dick.

The sailor had found a piece of canvas and was standing on the stump of one of the masts, waving a signal.

Carl's eyes wandered out over the water, and his heart gave a bound as they rested on a sail not more than half a mile away.

"It's a schooner," shouted Dick, "and her lookout has seen us! The craft's lying-to, matey, and we'll be taken off this old hulk in a brace of shakes."

"Hoop-a-la!" shouted Carl.

CHAPTER XII.

A STUNNING SURPRISE.

As the overjoyed boys watched the trim little schooner, she came gracefully about, a boat was put over, and four men got into it and started for the wreck.

"This is what I call luck!" exclaimed Dick. "One day and two nights on the derelict, and now we're going to be taken off."

"Aber ve don'd ged some salfage," said Carl, with a note of regret in his voice, "like vat ve vould do oof ve sailed der terelick into New Orleans."

"I don't think we could ever sail her that far, even if we were able to get a jury rig on her. Her rudder's gone, and to rig a jury rudder would be too much for us. Besides, her seams have opened badly, and another storm would be likely to knock her to pieces."

"Den id's pedder dot ve be took off," said Carl.

As the boat was almost halfway between the schooner and the derelict, the boys gave over their talk to watch. They had not kept their gaze on the boat many minutes before they made out a figure on one of the thwarts that caused them to turn upon each other in blank astonishment.

"It can't be dot der feller in der front part oof dot poat iss Sixdy?" murmured Carl. "Haf I got der plind shtaggers or somet'ing?"

"Dowse me, mate," breathed Dick, "it's either the old hunks, or his double."

"I don'd pelieve in toubles like dot. Id vas eider him

or id vasn't him. Vat you t'ink, Tick?"

"I'm a Fiji if it ain't Sixty," declared Dick.

"How could he be dere ven ve left him on der shdeamer?"

"That's a hard one. This is Sixty's old boat, and it's natural he should be coming back to her again. I tell you, Carl, there's something queer in all this that we can't understand. Belay a bit!"

Without pausing to answer the excited query Carl threw after him, Dick rushed for the hatchway leading into the 'tween-decks. He was out of sight for several minutes, and when he came up again he had a couple of the Krag-Jorgensens, and his pockets were sagging with cartridges.

"Vat you going to do mit dose t'ings?" demanded Carl.

"I'm going to make Sixty keep a good offing until he tells us what his lay is," answered Dick, decidedly.

"Oof dis is his poat den he's got a pedder rightd on her as ve haf."

"Possession is nine points of the law, and we have possession. There's something crooked about this craft. The manifest says nothing about firearms and she carries enough for a regiment. We'll hold that boat off for a while and make sure of square treatment for ourselves, whatever else we do. Take one of the guns and fill the magazine, Carl. After that, get down behind the rail."

The boat was quite close, by that time, and the boys finished their preparations hurriedly and dropped to their knees behind the bulwarks.

"Halt!" shouted Dick. "Stay right where you are till we have a bit of a palaver."

The man in the bow was Captain Sixty. There was now not the least doubt of it. The boys heard him mutter something very much like an oath and saw him get to his feet. The three men at the oars ceased pulling and held the boat steady.

"You're the two kids that was with Motor Matt on the *Santa Maria*," shouted Sixty. "What you doin' on that brig?"

"Trying to get somebody to pick us off," Dick answered.

"Well, we seen your signal and that's what we've come to do, so why in thunder are you pullin' them guns on us?"

"You can't fool me, Old Cut-and-slash!" answered Dick. "That telegram of yours that my mate got in the hotel, by mistake, didn't give the position of this brig, did it? 'No wind and no drift.' That's what the telegram said. But that storm, the other night, blew her quite a distance across the gulf. You didn't take the *Santa Maria* in order to get close to this wreck and give it a sizing, did you?"

A perfect roar went up from Sixty.

"I knowed you was next to my game all the time," he whooped, irefully. "I wish I could have chucked you into the drink along with Motor Matt. Confound that blasted submarine! If she hadn't come snoopin' along after us, Motor Matt wouldn't be where he could bother me none."

For a thorough-going scoundrel, Sixty was peculiarly artless in letting out facts of importance. This was the first intimation Carl and Dick had had that Sixty was in any way concerned with Matt's going overboard. The revelation took them both aback.

"You heaved our old raggie over the rail, did you?"

demanded Dick, angrily.

"Yes," shouted Sixty furiously, shaking a fist in the direction of the brig, "and I have been hoping that storm had cooked your goose. I've been lookin' for the brig in that schooner, following on acrost the gulf in the way the wind must have drove her from the bearin's given me in that telegram. I allowed you chaps knowed more about my business than I wanted you to."

"We know you've got a cargo of arms and ammunition on the brig that's not down in the manifest."

Sixty yelled a frantic oath.

"Put down them guns," he bellowed. "We're comin' aboard."

"Not while we're able to use these Krag-Jorgensens," threatened Dick.

"We'll see about that." Sixty turned to the sailors. "Pull!" he ordered. "They're only makin' a bluff."

The sailors began to pull toward the brig once more. Dick saw there was nothing else for it but to open fire.

"We've got to scare 'em off, Carl," said he, in a low tone. "I'll do the shooting, and you lay by and watch."

Bang!

A bullet whistled through the air, zipped its course between two of the sailors and threw up a little spurt of water far beyond the boat. The sailors, in a panic, stopped their rowing.

Sixty was raving like a wild man. He could say nothing, however, that would induce the men with him to come any nearer the brig.

"The next bullet," shouted Dick, "will come closer to

you. We've got plenty of guns and plenty of ammunition, and you'll get your gruel if you come on."

Those in the rowboat held a brief consultation. In about two minutes the boat put about and started back to the schooner.

Carl jumped up on the rail and waved his hat.

"Ve vas too many for you," he taunted, in his characteristic fashion. "Goot-py, olt sore-headt! Meppy ve dake dose guns und ammunidions und der resdt oof der druck to New Orleans und make some salfage money. How you like dot?"

Carl, when he sprang back to Dick's side, was not so sure that it was a good thing to have the schooner sail away and leave them.

"Vat ve going to do on der terelick oof anodder shtorm hids us?" he asked.

"I don't believe there'll be another storm for a few days, Carl," answered Dick, his face strangely troubled.

"You don'd vas a Vedder Pureau, Tick. How you know dot?"

"I'm just guessing, that's all."

"Dot schooner must haf been vaiding for der *Sanda Maria*, somevere oudt in der gulf."

"That's about the way I figure it, Carl. Some one, just in from the gulf, sent that telegram to Sixty giving him the location of the wreck. He got word to some one to have the schooner meet him near the steamer's track, and he was transferred. This must have been some time yesterday, after the storm. I'm a juggins, though, if I have any idea what the old shell-back's game is."

"He drowed Modor Matt oferpoard, anyway," growled Carl, savagely, "und dot's pooty goot efitece,

Tick, dot der game don'd haf some bleasantness in id for us, hey?"

"Sixty would like to clear us off the slate, if he could. I shouldn't wonder if he was counting on saving this cargo for himself. It's an illegal cargo, if I know one when I see it, and the old shark is playing a ticklish game."

"Downsent ain'd in id, I bed you. He vouldn't do anyt'ing underhand for nodding. Vy dit dot Sixdy feller lie like vat he dit?"

"He wanted to get us out of New Orleans, I guess, and he thought that was the easiest way to do it. What do you think of that girl now, matey?"

"I vas tisabpointed in Miss Harris," acknowledged Carl, regretfully. "I vould nefer haf t'ought she vas dot kindt. She says t'ings dot vasn't der trut', like her uncle."

"It was all cut and spliced. We tumbled into the bight of the rope like a lot of swabs, and Sixty pulled his snare tight. If the submarine hadn't been handily by, Matt might have drowned."

"Und oof der wreck hatn't peen close around, ve vould haf done der same. I dell you, Tick, ve vas all in luck—aldough I ain'd saying but vat der luck might be pedder as vat it iss. I hope no shtorm vill come undil anodder poat sails py und bicks us oop."

"I can't understand that," muttered Dick, his eyes on the schooner.

"Vat's going on?" asked Carl.

"They've taken Sixty and the three with him aboard and the craft is making a slant in this direction. That doesn't look as though she was going to haul away."

"Some fellers are vorking in der bow oof der

schooner," observed Carl. "Vat are dose fellers aboutt?"

Dick strained his eyes. As the schooner drew nearer, laying a course that would take her past the stern of the wreck at less than a cable's length, Dick suddenly grabbed Carl and rushed him along the deck and into the after cabin.

"They're unlimbering a bow chaser!" he exclaimed.

"Vat's a pow shacer?"

"A small cannon. Sixty is going to try and shell us out."

Carl gasped. Was it possible the reckless scoundrel would attempt such a high-handed proceeding?

Even as the boys stood staring at each other, there came a loud report, followed by a crashing *thump* that made the derelict reel from end to end.

Dick looked out.

"There goes the galley!" he exclaimed, grimly. "Old Sixty seems determined to make the wreck of his boat complete."

CHAPTER XIII.

CLOSING IN.

Dick, as soon as he had spoken to Carl, ran out of the cabin and took a hasty look over the side of the wreck.

The schooner was now so close that he could see the men on her decks plainly. Some were putting another charge in the small cannon at the bow, while several more were loading a similar cannon whose muzzle swung over the taffrail.

"They're going to keep it up, matey," announced Dick, as Carl stole out to him. "Pretty soon they'll put another shot into us."

"Meppy dey vas drying to shcare us oudt," returned Carl. "Oof Sixdy vants to safe der cargo oof der prig he wouldn't send her to der pottom."

There came another roar, this time from the cannon at the stern of the schooner. A round shot sailed over the top of the charthouse and dropped into the sea, far to leeward, sending up a small geyser of water.

"Ve can shtandt all dot kindt oof shooding dot dey gif us," said Carl.

"They'll not give us that kind right along, mate. I don't think they'll put any shells into us between wind and water, but they'll bang away at the deck houses."

By then the schooner had crossed the stern of the wreck and was making ready to tack about and come up on the other side.

"They're going to put a few shots into us from starboard," hazarded Dick.

"Couldn't ve pick off some oof dose fellers mit der

rifles?" queried Carl.

"We could," replied Dick, "but we're not going to. We've got the right of this, now, and if we shot anybody we'd be in the wrong almost as much as Sixty. We'll let the old scoundrel play his hand, and see what it amounts to."

The boys could see that those on the schooner had loaded both guns. Two men stood by ready to fire them, but neither was discharged.

"Vy don'd dey shoot?" asked Carl. "Vat vas dey hanging pack for?"

"Ah!" muttered Dick, "they're getting a couple of boats in the water."

"Vat does dot mean?"

"They're going to close in. Get your rifle, Carl. From the looks of things, mate, we're going to have hot work."

"Ve don'd surrenter?"

"I'm a Britisher, and I don't know the word!" answered Dick.

"Me, neider," said Carl. "I vas American mit a Dutch accent, aber I don'd gif in to dot gang. Led dem shood deir olt headts off."

"Our heads will be the ones they'll try to shoot off."

Rifles in hand, the boys watched the boats as they struck the water. Five men tumbled into each of them, and the men were all armed.

Dick laughed softly.

"We're making them take a lot of trouble, mate," said he.

"Oof ve hat a gun like vat dey got, py shinks, ve would

gif dem as mooch fighdt as dey wanted. Ah, ha! der poats iss shtarting dis vay, und vone iss coming py der front oof der wreck und der odder py der rear end. Now vat you t'ink iss going to habben?"

"We're about at the end of our rope, Carl," said Dick. "Those boats are going to board us under cover of a couple of shots from the big guns. The outlook is getting dark. This way! We'll get down the main hatch into the 'tween decks. After the broadside, we'll come up again and fight off the boats."

It was not a time for words. The gunners on the schooner were preparing to fire, and if Dick and Carl got out of the way they would have to hurry.

The main hatch was open, just as Dick had left it when he had gone down after the rifles. Carl, who was following Dick, had no more than got his feet on the ladder, when there were two smashing reports, coming so close together that they sounded almost as one.

Dick, at the time, was standing on the ladder, up to his knees in water, urging Carl to hurry. The firing drowned his words.

Instantly there was a splintering crash, and the wreck rocked and heaved as though it would break apart. But Dick Ferral was not thinking of the derelict, just then. His every thought was for Carl.

The Dutch boy had pitched forward, the upper part of his body lying half over the hatch coaming.

"Carl!" cried Dick, frantically.

There was no answer. Carl's dangling feet swung backward and forward with the swaying of the wreck.

Dick, his heart in his throat, leaped up the ladder, bounded out on the deck, lifted Carl in his arms and carried him away from the hatch.

There was a smear of red on Carl's forehead, his face was deathly white and his eyes closed.

One of the cannon balls had knocked a hole in the bulwarks of the brig and scattered splinters all over that part of the boat. Carl, undoubtedly, had been struck by one of the flying fragments.

Kneeling at his chum's side, Dick laid a hand on his breast, then felt of his wrist. What he learned reassured him.

Hurrying to the galley he got what was left of a kettle of fresh water, ran back with it, tore a strip from the piece of canvas with which he had signaled the schooner, and began bathing Carl's forehead.

There was an ugly gash in the temple. So far as Dick could discover, however, the splinter had not done any serious damage.

"Here they are!" yelled a hoarse voice. "We've downed one of 'em!"

Dick started up. From forward and aft men were climbing over the derelict's side and rushing toward the main hatch. Quick as a wink he caught up one of the Krag-Jorgensens, placed himself over Carl and brought the gun to his shoulder.

Sixty was bearing down on Dick, and at his back were two swarthy sailors who had the appearance of Mexicans, or Spaniards.

"Sheer off!" shouted Dick, menacingly, pointing the rifle full at Captain Sixty. "Lay a finger on me or my mate and I'll shoot."

There was that in the boy's eyes which told of resolute determination, and Sixty and the others drew to an abrupt halt.

"Put down that gun, you young fool!" ordered Sixty,

angrily. "All we wanted was to get on this brig. You've made a fine mess of it, I must say."

"You've got on the brig," returned Dick, steadily, "but you haven't captured us, yet. Leave us alone—that's my advice to you."

"There's a chap on the schooner that's a halfway doctor," said Sixty. "Don't you want him to look after your friend?"

"We're not going on the schooner, Captain Sixty, and I tell you flat that before long you're going to answer for your villainous work of the last few days. What kind of a pirate are you, anyhow?"

"This is my boat," blustered Sixty, "and I've got the right to take her. You was lame in tryin' to keep me off. It was you two that first began usin' guns."

"But it was you that lured us aboard the *Santa Maria*! And it was you that threw Motor Matt off the steamer! Why shouldn't we use guns when we saw you coming for us? You're a lawless scoundrel, and if you had what was coming you'd be swinging from the yardarm of a man-o'-war! I wish there was a Yankee fighting ship in these waters! You'd have short shrift to your deserts, Captain Jim Sixty!"

"It's easy enough to blow," scowled Sixty, "but your talk don't amount to nothin'. I'm on my own deck, and that makes me high cockalorum. Drop that gun, I tell you, before we lay you on the deck alongside your mate."

"Drop me on the deck!" shouted Dick, recklessly. "Keep up your lawlessness, if you dare!"

Dick swerved his eyes a little to get a fleeting glance of the nine men who had boarded the wreck with Sixty.

"What sort of swabs are you?" he cried. "Don't you

know the risk you are taking in doing the dirty work for a ruffian like Sixty? He abandoned the brig—left her to her fate—and now the rest of you can pick him up and slant away. I'll stay here with my mate, and take care of him, but we'll neither of us set a foot on your pirate schooner!"

Dick was so wrought up that he would have defied an army if one had been mustered against him. He was hopelessly outnumbered, and there could have been but one result had events been allowed to take their course.

But the unexpected happened, and it happened just then when the brave Ferral, standing over the form of his unconscious chum, was defying Sixty and his men to do their worst.

"Ahoy, the brig!"

The faint hail came from the schooner.

"Ahoy!" roared Sixty, turning and making a trumpet of his hands.

"Look out for the submarine!"

Sixty's hands fell from his lips and he gave a jump for the side of the brig. The rest of the men ran with him. For an instant something like panic laid hold of the entire party.

Dick, thrilled with a wild feeling of hope, rushed for the battered bulwarks of the wreck—and stood there, gasping with astonishment.

Within fifty feet of the brig, bow on, lay the *Grampus*. There was not a sign of life about her, but there she lay, silent, menacing, a thing of power fraught with deadly peril for the lawless men on the wreck.

Sixty, regaining his wits, gave vent to a fierce oath

and jerked a musket from the hands of one of the sailors. He fired, but the bullet glanced harmlessly from the rounded steel deck of the submarine.

The next moment the top of the conning tower began lifting slowly.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE "GRAMPUS" GETS A CLUE.

For a few minutes Matt and Captain Nemo, Jr., stared at the overturned whaleboat. The captain read the dread suspicions that were passing through the young motorist's mind.

"Courage, my lad," said he, kindly. "Don't give up, yet."

"What else is there to hope for?" asked Matt. "Dick and Carl were in that boat, and they were not able to keep it from filling and turning turtle. If that is what happened, then—"

Matt could not finish. For a moment all the courage was taken out of him.

"If the worst has happened to your friends, Matt," said the captain, gravely, "then this man Sixty is directly, or indirectly, responsible for it. But cheer up. We both know what a resourceful fellow Ferral is, and that Carl is full of pluck and energy. I can't believe that they went down in that storm, even with the evidence of the overturned whaleboat to make us think to the contrary. I'll have Cassidy up and we'll draw closer to the boat and get a better look at her."

With Cassidy on deck, armed with a boathook, the *Grampus* was driven close alongside the boat. With the boathook, the mate was able to turn the boat partly over, giving those on the submarine a glimpse of her broken bulwarks.

"Ah!" cried Captain Nemo, Jr. "The whaleboat was struck by something—perhaps by some ship. In that event, the boys may have been taken out of the boat,

and be as safe, now, as we are."

"What's to be done, captain?" asked Matt. "I don't feel like leaving these waters until I learn something more definite regarding Dick and Carl, but I hardly see how we're going to learn anything by cruising around in this vicinity. If the whaleboat was stove by a ship, and Carl and Dick were taken aboard, then by now they must be a good way from this part of the gulf."

"It won't do any harm to cruise around here for a day or two, anyhow," replied the captain.

"Meanwhile," said Matt, "Captain Sixty is getting away on the *Santa Maria*."

"Then he'll have to get away," returned the captain. "He's only suspected of filibustering, and my orders were simply to keep track of him and discover what he was doing. We'll forget about Sixty and think only of Dick and Carl."

From that moment the *Grampus* began an aimless wandering through the waters of that part of the gulf. They were delayed three hours, shortly after noon, by a mishap to the gasoline motor. The trouble was too much for Gaines, and Matt was called on to locate the difficulty and repair it.

This was a good thing for Matt, inasmuch as it drew his thoughts from moody conjectures concerning his chums and gave him something important to do in the line of work that he liked best.

An hour after the motor was in working order again, and the *Grampus* was traveling along at a good clip, Cassidy, who was on the lookout, raised a smudge of smoke on the horizon. The steamer was coming from the south, and was evidently bound for some port to the north, either Mobile or New Orleans. With a desire to speak to her, on the possible chance of learning

something about Dick and Carl, the submarine altered her course so as to intersect that of the steamer.

Matt, Nemo, Jr., and Cassidy were on the deck when the *Grampus* had come close enough to get the steamer in full view.

"Great guns!" exclaimed Cassidy, as his eyes traveled over the vessel's trim lines, "it's the United States cruiser *Seminole*. I know her pretty near as well as I do the *Grampus*."

"Bring up the signal flags and code book, Mr. Cassidy," ordered the captain; "also the megaphone. We'll get into communication with the captain of the cruiser. Even if he can't tell us anything about Dick and Carl, we can talk with him a little about Jim Sixty."

Cassidy was soon back with signal flags, code book and megaphone. While he gave his attention to running up the flags at the short staff of the *Grampus*, Matt handled the code book.

"Have you seen anything of two men who were lost in a small boat during the storm last night?"

This was the first question spelled out by the flags.

With the binoculars, Captain Nemo, Jr., read the answer.

It was "No."

"Wish to communicate with you at closer range," the flags of the submarine next signaled.

"We'll heave to," answered the war ship. "Come up under our lee."

Cassidy dropped the flags through the conning tower hatch, then descended to reach the push buttons and send word to the engine room.

Gracefully the submarine rounded the stern of the

Seminole in a wide arc and came to a halt within thirty feet of the big vessel on the starboard side.

"What boat is that?" came from the bridge of the cruiser.

"The submarine *Grampus*, Captain Nemo, Jr., out of New Orleans and acting under orders from the government."

"What orders?"

"To watch a suspected filibuster named James Sixty."

"We've been looking for him and his brig, the *Dolphin*. The *Dolphin* is said to have been wrecked and is reported as a derelict, dangerous to commerce. We have orders to examine her, if possible, and she can be found, and then to destroy her. Where is Sixty?"

"He left New Orleans under suspicious circumstances aboard the fruiter *Santa Maria*, ostensibly bound for Belize."

"He's not bound for Belize. If he's doing anything, he's hunting for the *Dolphin*, hoping to salvage her cargo or else blow her up and send her to the bottom before any naval officer has a chance to look her over. We're cruising around to see if we can locate the derelict."

"And we're trying to find a couple of young fellows who were torn adrift from the *Santa Maria* during the storm, last night."

"Any success?"

"Found the whaleboat, stove and floating upside down on the water."

"Then you'd better give up," was the curt remark that closed the conversation.

The cruiser got under headway again and slanted off on a new course.

"You see how it is, captain," said Matt. "Even those on the cruiser think our search is useless."

"We'll keep it up, nevertheless," was the captain's dogged response.

"That's what I'm anxious to have you do, for I don't leave this part of the gulf until I know something more."

Night came on, and the *Grampus* was still running circles in the waters of the gulf. The sea had quieted down to an abnormal smoothness, and the submarine, with Matt at the engine to relieve Gaines, went on her aimless wanderings.

At midnight Gaines took the engine and gave Matt an opportunity to secure a little rest.

Matt was up for breakfast, and while he, and Captain Nemo, Jr., and Gaines were eating, they heard a muffled detonation, as it might have been of a blast from a great distance. Matt and the captain hurried to the deck, where they found that the mysterious noise had likewise claimed the attention of Cassidy.

"What did it sound like to you, Cassidy?" asked the captain.

"Like a cannon, sir," was the reply, "but it was a powerful ways off."

"That's how it sounded to me."

"What do you think it is?" inquired Matt.

"At a guess," replied the captain, "I should say the cruiser has found the derelict and is trying to break her up. We'll alter our course and see what we can discover."

Just as the *Grampus* was put on a new tack, there came another of the muffled crashes, which served to give them a further clue as to the location of the firing.

Gaines was told to speed up the motor to the top notch, and the submarine began to cleave her way through the water at her best speed.

Presently Cassidy, who was using the binoculars, declared that he could see a sail. This compelled the captain to alter his views as to the cause of the firing. If there was a sail, then it was impossible that the cruiser was struggling to destroy the derelict.

Just about then another roar of cannon was heard, this time so weirdly distinct that there could be no doubt as to what had caused the report.

"That's cannon, all right," muttered Cassidy, "but why is a schooner doing the shooting?"

"We'll get inside," said the captain, "and submerge until the periscope ball is just awash. It may be well to come into this thing cautiously."

All those on deck descended to the periscope room. Here, as once before, the captain and Matt kept their eyes on the mirror of the periscope table.

Slowly but clearly a schooner came into sight, and also the wreck of a two-masted brig.

"That brig is the derelict," remarked the captain, "and it looks as though the schooner is trying to sink her."

"Mighty queer to find a schooner carrying cannon," observed Cassidy.

"That's right, too," said the captain, plainly puzzled.

"There are two boats alongside the wreck," said Matt, excitedly, "and men are climbing over the

bulwarks! What does that mean, captain?"

"Right you are, Matt," muttered the captain, "and I'm in a quandary. We'll come up between the schooner and the brig and investigate before taking any decided action."

On and on the *Grampus* glided, unseen until, when she had attained the position she desired, she rose upward with a flurry of waves creaming from her deck plates.

From the elevated top of the periscope there was a view of the brig's dismantled deck; and Matt and the captain could see, as plainly as though they were on the derelict, Dick Ferral, gun at his shoulder, standing over the form of Carl. And Captain Sixty's bulky form was equally clear, as well as the figures of the rabble at his heels.

It was an astounding sight for those in the submarine, but it was a sight that left no time for useless words.

"Cassidy," cried Captain Nemo, Jr., with a snap of his lean jaws, "go to the torpedo room, take Speake with you and slip one of the Whiteheads into the port tube. After that, stand by for orders."

"Ay, ay, sir," answered Cassidy, and quickly vanished.

"I'm going up in the tower, Matt," said the captain. "You can crowd in to the lunettes and watch what goes on."

Then the captain made his way up the ladder with Matt tight at his heels. Hardly had Matt got his eyes to the lunette when a ringing thump echoed from the deck plates.

"A rifle shot!" exclaimed Nemo, Jr. "I'll just warn

those rascals what they're up against."

As he finished speaking, he pulled the lever that secured the hatch and pushed the iron disk slowly upward.

CHAPTER XV.

AN ULTIMATUM.

"That will do, Jim Sixty!" shouted Captain Nemo, Jr., the moment he had got head and shoulders over the rim of the tower.

With a burst of profanity, Sixty leveled the rifle at the captain.

"What's to hinder me from puttin' a bullet through you, right where you are, you meddlin' hound?" he shouted.

"Several things, Sixty," was the calm response. "In the first place, I don't think you're a good enough marksman; and, in the second place, I don't think you'll do anything rash when I tell you that we're ready to put a torpedo into the brig and blow you and the wreck out of water."

That was a blow in the face for Sixty. He staggered back, dropped his rifle, and cast longing eyes at the two boats moored to the brig's side.

"You wouldn't dare do a thing like that!" he cried.

"Why wouldn't I?" asked the captain, casually.

"Well, for one thing, if you blowed us up, Motor Matt's two pards would go with us. You ain't takin' no chances with—"

"The schooner! The schooner!" clamored those on the deck of the brig.

Through the lunette Matt could see the schooner, with all sail set, hustling off across the ocean, showing as clean a pair of heels as any sailing craft could.

"Come back here, blast you!" howled Sixty, trumpeting the words through his hands.

But, if any one on the schooner heard, they made no response. The craft kept to her course, hauling up every stitch of canvas possible.

"We've got her scared," remarked Captain Nemo, Jr., "for her skipper knows that if we could sink you with a torpedo we could also sink her."

"What d'you want?" demanded Sixty.

"We want you and your men as prisoners," replied the captain. "If Motor Matt's friend on the deck, there, is badly hurt, you'll all be held to answer for it. Not only that, but we want to examine the brig's cargo—"

"No need of that, captain," sung out Dick. "I've got her log and her manifest. There's enough guns and ammunition down below to arm a regiment—and they're not down in the papers."

With a swirling roar of rage, Sixty sprang toward Dick. The latter stepped away quickly.

"Stay right where you are, Sixty!" shouted the captain. "Make another move like that and you'll do it at your peril. If those men with you know when they're well off, they'll help Dick Ferral get his chum into one of the boats and bring him over here to us."

"They'll do nothin' o' the kind!" shouted Sixty. "If you blow us up, you're goin' to blow up Motor Matt's friends along with us."

But the nine men with Sixty were of another way of thinking. Their only hope had been the schooner, and, now that she had mysteriously taken to flight, their next best plan was to fall in with the desires of their captor—the gray-haired man in the submarine.

Together the nine swarthy sailors started toward

Carl. Sixty endeavored to drive them back, but they pointed revolvers at him and brandished dangerous-looking knives. Baffled, and held at bay by superior numbers, Sixty could only watch like an enraged panther while Carl was picked up and lowered by means of a rope into one of the boats.

Dick, before he dropped over the side, ran into the cabin after the log and manifest. Then, while Dick was getting down the side of the derelict, another unexpected thing happened.

A trim launch, manned by six of Uncle Sam's sailors and carrying four marines and a lieutenant, shot in between the brig and the submarine.

"Back, all!" shouted the lieutenant, and six oars pushed against the rushing water in perfect unison, bringing the launch to a halt.

"What's going on here?" asked the lieutenant, standing up, his amazed eyes wandering from the rowboat in which were Dick and Carl, then to the panic-stricken men on the derelict, and finally to the submarine.

Captain Nemo, Jr., and Matt had climbed from the conning tower to the deck of the *Grampus*, in readiness to give Dick a hand with Carl.

"They're threatenin' to blow us out of water with a torpedo," howled Sixty.

The trap had been sprung, but the filibuster was hoping to brazen his way through to freedom. But it was a forlorn hope.

"Where did you come from, Sixty?" demanded the lieutenant.

"I left New Orleans on the fruiter, *Santa Maria*," replied Sixty, "goin' on a hunt for this here brig which

was reported somewhere in the track of steamers for Central America. A schooner from Belize was waitin' for me, an' yesterday we sighted the schooner from the steamer and I was put aboard. Then we went lookin' for the brig."

"Where's the schooner now?" inquired the lieutenant.

"She slipped away like a singed cat, a little while ago, and she's purty nigh hull down."

"She left you and the rest of those men, together with the two boats, behind?"

"That's the how of it."

"Then it must be that she saw us coming. If she'd been engaged in honest business, Sixty, she'd have stayed right here. But she didn't stay. You're treed, my man, and if there are not arms and ammunition in that old hulk, I'm no prophet."

"There are, sir," called Dick. "I've been in the hold and there are plenty of Krag-Jorgensens down there, and ammunition, too."

"Who are you?" demanded the lieutenant.

"I and my mate, here, got adrift from the *Santa Maria* during that storm, night before last. We've been on the wreck nearly two nights and a day. Ran into her in the dark, caught a trailing rope and climbed aboard."

"These are the lads you were looking for, captain?" asked the lieutenant, turning to Captain Nemo, Jr.

"Yes," was the reply.

"Then you're in luck to find them. What was that shooting a while ago? It was that that brought us in this direction."

"Sixty and a boat's crew," explained Dick, "tried to get on the brig. My mate and I held 'em off with rifles, because we knew him for a treacherous swab who had thrown our raggie, Motor Matt, over the rail of the *Santa Maria*—"

"Did Sixty do that?" cut in the officer, sternly.

"Yes," spoke up Matt.

"Go on," proceeded the officer, laconically, turning to Dick.

"Well," went on Dick, "when Sixty found he couldn't board the brig, he went back to the schooner. They had a bow chaser, and another small cannon over the stern. They let drive at us, then rounded in on the other side and let drive again, covering the movements of two boats' crews who laid us aboard. The last shot splintered the bulwarks and brought down my chum here."

"How badly is he hurt, Dick?" queried Matt.

"Stunned, that's all."

"A nice sort of schooner that is," muttered the officer, staring off to sea. "If we hadn't had such important work here we might have followed her and compelled her to heave to. You say there are rifles and ammunition in the brig?" he added, to Dick.

"Yes; and they don't appear on the manifest."

"How do you know?"

"Here's the manifest and the log."

Dick held the documents out. At a word from the officer the launch was driven alongside the rowboat, and the papers changed hands.

"Up on deck," the lieutenant said to the marines, "disarm those scoundrels and make prisoners of them."

Look well after Sixty. Two of you boys come with me."

Two of the sailors dropped their oars and there was a scramble for the brig's deck.

Dick, dropping down on a thwart, picked up two of the oars and pulled the boat in which he and Carl found themselves over to the submarine.

"I'd about given you up, old chap!" exclaimed Matt as he seized Dick's hand.

"There was a time, old ship," replied Dick, "when I'd about given myself up. But all's well that ends well. If Carl proves to be only stunned, as I feel sure he will, there's no great damage done for all Sixty's treacherous planning."

Carl was taken below, Matt and Dick lifting him through the conning-tower hatch, down the ladder, and then making him comfortable on the locker in the periscope room.

CHAPTER XVI.

"OFF WITH THE OLD, AND ON WITH THE NEW."

Carl had been unconscious for a long time, and it was two hours before Matt and Dick, working assiduously, succeeded in reviving him.

By that time, many things had happened. When Carl lifted himself suddenly to a sitting position on the locker, he stared dazedly into the faces of his two chums.

"How dit you come on der prig, Matt?" he asked.

"We're not on the brig, Carl," replied Matt, "but in the periscope room of the *Grampus*."

"Dot's a funny pitzness! Der lasdt I knew I vas going down der hatch to ged oudt oof der vay oof der shooding. Den someding hit me, und I vent to shleep. Vat vas dot vat hit me, Tick?"

"It was a splinter, matey," replied Dick. "A solid shot tore up the bulwarks of the brig and you were knocked over with a piece of wood."

"I t'ought id vas der site oof a house. How long ago vas dot?"

"About three hours, I should say."

"Shimineddy! Dree hours!"

Carl put up his hands and felt of the bandage about his head.

"How do you feel, Carl?" asked Matt.

"Pooty goot," was the answer; "pedder as some fellers vat vas oudt oof der running for dree hours, I

bed you. Vere dit der supmarine come from, Matt?"

Matt explained at some length. Carl's wonder grew as he listened.

"Say, Tick," said he, "Matt und der odder fellers has been doing somet'ing der same as you und me. Hey?"

"I should say so!" exclaimed Dick. "If this submarine hadn't bobbed up just when she did, you and I would have been in a jolly hard row of stumps, matey."

Just then a tremendous roar was heard, and the submarine shook in every part.

"Vat id iss?" cried Carl, showing symptoms of panic. "Iss dot schooner come pack?"

"No, Carl," laughed Matt, "the schooner made a get-away. That's the cruiser *Seminole* doing that firing."

"Vat iss she firing ad?"

"At your brig. The boat is a derelict, and dangerous to shipping. The cruiser is breaking her up."

"Dere vas some salfages to be got oudt oof dot prig," mourned Carl, "und now id vill all go py der fishes. Oof dot poat couldt haf been got to port—"

"Which she couldn't, matey," put in Dick. "The pounding that schooner gave her wrenched her badly."

"Dit dose fellers in der poats ged on der prig?" asked Carl, harking back to the last thing he remembered.

"Well, I should say so!" answered Dick. "Sixty, and nine other flatfoots."

"Dot makes sixdy-nine," bubbled Carl, happy, now that it was all over. "Vat pecome oof dem?"

"They were taken to the cruiser and will be carried to the nearest port and tried for their criminal deeds."

"Pully! Dot vas pedder as I t'ought!"

"The officers on the cruiser have a clear case against Sixty. The lieutenant who went aboard the brig saw the rifles and ammunition with his own eyes. He had the manifest and the log, and that settled Sixty's case for him."

"I vonder vere iss Sixdy's niece, Miss Harris?"

Carl's sentimental thoughts would return to the girl.

"Belay, on that!" growled Dick. "The girl fooled us and got us into a pretty mess of trouble. Sheer off on that subject."

"She wasn't Sixty's niece, but his daughter," explained Matt. "And she was no more a relative of Captain Nemo, Carl, than you or I."

"Too pad, too pad! She has gone to Honturas, eh? Vell, I vish I vas dere to hear vat she has to say for herseluf. Meppy she couldt oxblain."

Dick was disgusted.

"Vere iss Captain Nemo, Jr.?" was Carl's next question.

"A boat took him off to the cruiser for a talk with the captain," said Matt.

At that moment some one could be heard springing to the rounded deck of the submarine.

"All right, captain?" called a voice.

"All right, lieutenant," answered the voice of Captain Nemo, Jr. "Much obliged to you."

A few moments later, the captain came down the tower hatch.

"All right, Carl?" he asked, reaching out his hand.

"Fine und tanty," answered Carl, grasping the hand cordially, "only I vas a leedle mixed oop mit all vat has habbened."

"We were all a little mixed for a while," laughed Captain Nemo, Jr. "But everything is as clear as day, now. Sixty will go back to New Orleans and have a trial. I don't know what will be done to the rascals with him, for they are from Central America, and will probably claim the protection of their own country. The graceless scoundrels! They belong to a pack of revolutionists, and Sixty was doing a little filibustering. The suspicions of the government officials were entirely correct. Through the aid of Motor Matt and his friends, the cruiser was able to bag Sixty with the goods on, as the saying is."

"Did you have a talk with some of the prisoners, captain?" queried Matt.

"Yes, and a number of interesting things developed. Sixty and his men, having cleared successfully from New Orleans with an illegal cargo, ran into such rough weather in the gulf that they were compelled to abandon the brig, fearing every moment that she would founder. Sixty and his crew got away in the boats and were picked up by a vessel that carried them to Tampa. While Sixty was in Tampa reports began to come in regarding a dangerous derelict. The wreck answered the description of the *Dolphin*, and Sixty cabled to the schooner, at some point in Central America, to look up the derelict and report her position to him. The schooner reported the latitude and longitude of the derelict from Galveston, and her skipper received an answer from Sixty telling him to lay by in the gulf along the course of the *Santa Maria* so as to take him off. After that Sixty and those on the schooner were to try and work the brig, in jury rig, to a Mexican port, the schooner first taking off the arms

and ammunition. In case the brig couldn't be saved, her contraband cargo was to be thrown overboard so as to avoid discovery by the naval authorities.

"Motor Matt and his friends jumped into the game when that telegram was received from Galveston. You all know how that worked out. I think this is about the strangest cruise the *Grampus* ever made—although, quite likely, she is in for one equally as strange."

"Vat's dot?" queried Carl, pricking up his ears.

Matt and Dick were equally interested.

"I have heard something on the cruiser that makes it advisable for me to proceed to Central America. The submarine can easily go that far without returning to the nearest port for fresh supplies. I am under sealed orders, and have only a hint as to what is required of me, but I imagine that the new work has something to do with the business that has just been accomplished. The question is, do you boys want to go along? You all, especially Motor Matt, will be of invaluable assistance, but I would not want that to influence you one way or the other."

There was a moment of silence.

"If you do not think you can go," went on Captain Nemo, Jr., with an under-note of disappointment in his voice, "I am to lay alongside the cruiser and put you aboard of her. She will be busy with the brig for the rest of the day."

"How long is the cruise to be, captain?" queried Matt.

"That is something I cannot tell," was the reply.

"To Central America?" asked Dick.

"Yes."

"What part?"

"I don't know, and will not find out until I open my sealed orders. Of course, I don't belong to the navy, but this submarine, which is one of the most successful long-cruising boats ever launched, places me in a position to be of use to Uncle Sam. I have therefore placed the boat and myself and crew at my country's service. If we perform well our mission, then I shall be able to dispose of the *Grampus*, and all my own individual patents, for a very large sum. In view of that, and my firm belief that the next cruise will be a complete success, I can offer you lads a fancy figure to go with me. What do you say?"

"Think you can stand it, Carl?" asked Matt.

"Shtand id?" cried Carl. "Vy, bard, I vas as goot as efer."

"What's your word, Dick?" asked Matt.

"I'll sign the articles," said Dick.

"And so will I," added Matt.

"Good!" exclaimed the captain, highly pleased. "Cassidy," he called to the mate, who was below, "we'll lay a course south by west, as fast as we can go. We're off for strange waters, and something worth while I am confident."

"Off with the old and on with the new," laughed Matt. "It doesn't take us long, eh, fellows?"

THE END.

The next number (16) will contain:

Motor Matt's Quest

OR,

THREE CHUMS IN STRANGE WATERS

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The Chicken-hearted Tenderfoot.

"Yah! Call yourself a cowpuncher? And you can't even rope a yearling colt, let alone do anything else! Take my tip, kid, and get back East by the quickest route; we don't want the like of you in Montana. There's too many good men round to make us have to keep you, doing nothing for your board. Get off the ranch!" The foreman of the Cup and Spur Ranch, never a man to spare the feelings of those under him, this time surpassed himself in expressing his contempt for the youngster who had earned his displeasure. The object of his scorn, a fresh-looking lad of some eighteen years of age, returned the foreman's irate and withering glance with one full of resentment, but entirely devoid of fear.

"I told you I'd never worked on the ranges before," he said angrily, "and you took me on under that knowledge. I never said I could rope a colt, and now I've found out I can't—yet. Do you expect a man to do everything for a miserable fifteen dollars a month? Oh, all right; I'll get off the place, and be mighty glad to do so, too!" The foreman had made a threatening gesture, as though he meant to teach this stripling that his reputation as the bully of the district was not unfounded.

"So I've got the bounce, eh?" muttered Ted Macbain to his horse, as he slowly rode away from the scene. "Well, perhaps the foreman's right, and I'm no good on a ranch. Guess I'll have to get back to the old farm in Minnesota. Just at present town's the place for me to make." And he headed for Elk Creek, some twenty

miles away.

"Wish I hadn't made such a fool of myself with that rope, just the same," he told himself. "How the mischief do they make the beastly thing go where they want it?" He unslung his lariat as he spoke to himself, and, shaking its coils loose, swung the noose wide above his head, fixing his eye on the stump of a tree he was passing. His horse was traveling at a brisk canter, but he measured the distance with his eye, and let the rope go on its way. It fell fair and true over the stump, but he forgot to pull the horse in. The result was that he felt a great jerk at his saddle, and the horse, shying, threw him violently to the ground. He was half stunned by his fall, and he did not open his eyes until a dim speck on the horizon was all that could be seen of the animal he had been bestriding.

To catch the brute looked impossible, but as it was heading for the town, and as it was likely it would be caught there, Ted did not feel any anxiety on its behalf. The remaining ten miles would have to be walked.

He had time to think things over for the next two or three hours. To be candid, he had not been an absolute success in Montana, the land where daredevil horsemanship and an utter disregard for human life are the main essentials. He would have been far better off to have stayed at home in Minnesota, where his father was a prosperous farmer. But the confinement of that life jarred on him to such an extent that he felt himself compelled to strike out for fresh scenes. A passionate love for horses caused him to go to the horse-ranching State, where he thought he would be able to give his passion full satisfaction. Oh, what a disillusionment! He found that to treat horses kindly on the ranges, where the animals, for the most part, had never looked on man as anything but a cruel enemy, did not serve to win their love. He could not

bring himself to administer the brutal treatment he saw other cowboys deliver, and was not afraid of expressing his displeasure at their methods. This earned for him the sobriquet of "the chicken-hearted tenderfoot," which name became a byword on the plains. His most vehement denunciations of their behavior only served to create mirth among the others. The foreman of the Cup and Spur Ranch—the fifth ranch in six months on which Ted had tried his fortunes—was loudest of all in his expressions of contempt, giving the youngster the most objectionable jobs to perform out of pure malice. When he was told to throw a year-old colt that had quite won the young fellow's heart, as all colts did, he had had so little heart for the task that the scene which opens this story was the result.

"Guess ranching isn't in my line," he told himself, as he trudged along the prairie under the blazing, withering sun of an exceptionally hot August. "It's all right to raise colts by hand, but to knock 'em about as they do here goes for me too strongly."

It was very hot, as he soon began to discover, as the miles slowly passed under his feet. He grew thirsty; the alkali dust, resultant of a three weeks' drought, parched his throat until he decided that water was the only thing in his life he needed at that moment. There was no stream at hand. The only habitation near was a shack. He made for this, and as he came closer he saw a well and bucket. As is the custom, he did not trouble to inquire whether he might be allowed to partake of the well's contents, but let down the bucket, and drew himself a quantity of the cheerful, refreshing fluid, and drank his fill.

He poured the remainder of the pailful on the ground. As he did so something glittered at his feet, something that was not water. He stooped and picked

it up. It was an American ten-dollar gold piece.

Perhaps it was none of his business, and perhaps he should have been content to take the coin to the house and leave it there, so that the owner would see it. But something recurred to him; he remembered that he had felt a slight jerk as he hauled up the bucket, and his curiosity was aroused. He glanced down the well; he saw that a ladder was set there. He climbed down until he was close to the surface of the water. There, set in a hole that had evidently been purposely cut out for the purpose, was a bag full of coins similar to the one that he had hauled up to the top. A slight rent in one corner, through which a coin was peeping, showed him how his bucket had caused one to drop in. He banished all further idea of considering himself inquisitive.

"There's something rocky about this," he said. "No one would hide gold down a well if there wasn't something up. There's a bank at Elk Creek; why wasn't it put there?"

He climbed to the surface of the ground again. That there was no one around was apparent; the noise he had made would have been sure to attract any one who had been in the house. His curiosity was now fully aroused. He thought nothing of entering the shack, and of examining its contents. He turned everything upside down in his search, but nothing that would go to confirm any of his half-aroused suspicions could he see. He was on the point of resuming his journey when a loose board in the floor creaked under his foot. He lifted it, to expose a small cavity, down which he felt with his hand. Something cold and hard met his fingers, which he withdrew. It was a branding iron. That would not have struck him as being at all out of the way if a casual glance had not shown him that the iron bore a cup and spur—the brand of the ranch from which he had just been discharged. He was puzzled.

He knew that all the irons that belonged to that ranch were in the charge of the foreman, being delivered to the branders at each round-up. No man was allowed to carry one except on these occasions, and the next round-up would not take place for more than a month.

"Can't make head or tail of it," muttered the lad. "Is it that— By thunder, I have it! There are horse thieves around here! They must have started their work since last round-up, and it hasn't been found out yet. They've been stealing unbranded colts, and been putting a mark on 'em. But why should they use the cup and spur? It gets me, sure."

And that was as far as he could get to a solution of the problem.

"I don't know whether there's anything in it, but I found this iron in a shack about five miles north of here," said Ted. "Seems to me there's something fishy about it, though I might be mistaken."

He was speaking to the sheriff at Elk Creek, who took the iron and examined it closely. No light of understanding dawned on that worthy's face for the moment.

"Guess it must be an old one that's been thrown away," was all he could suggest.

"It doesn't look too old," returned the lad. "It's new enough to make a pretty good brand yet, anyway. Looks to me as though it wasn't being used fairly. Hobson, the foreman of the Cup and Spur, should have all these locked up at this time of the year. Have there been any horses shipped away from this district lately?"

"Why, yes; the Cup and Spur outfit sent a bunch of

spring colts East only six weeks ago. Struck me as they were rather young to go, but I didn't trouble about it. 'Twas none of my business."

"But Mr. Knowles, the boss of that ranch, doesn't believe in shipping away so soon."

The sheriff began to understand.

"I see what you're driving at now, kid," he said, "and I'm beginning to agree with you. Those colts that were shipped away weren't Cup and Spur stock at all! They were rustled and branded with that mark, so's suspicion wouldn't fall on any one. No one would believe Knowles capable of stealing, and no questions would be asked."

"Well, that point's pretty well settled," went on Ted. "Next thing is, who's rustling 'em?"

"Got me again," said the sheriff laconically.

"Well, what do you say if we do a little work? I've got an idea that may be worth something. Let's go back to the Cup and Spur Ranch and make inquiries."

The sheriff complied with him. Together they rode southward, Ted having found his horse when he arrived at Elk Creek. The first man they met on their arrival at their destination was Hobson.

"What?" shouted the foreman. "Back again already? Didn't I tell you to get out?"

"You did," said Ted coolly. "Also, you said something about my being no good on a ranch. What do you say to a foreman who leaves branding irons lying about when they ought to be safely put away?"

Hobson started.

"What are you getting at?" he asked with a grin, but

with an uneasy glance at Sheriff Walton. "Who's leaving irons about?"

Ted produced the article.

"This should be in your care," he said, showing it. Hobson held out his hand eagerly. Ted drew the iron out of reach.

"No," he said; "I think we'll keep it now. The sheriff wants it for evidence should anything crop up. It's my belief that next round-up'll show a few things in the way of colts being missed."

Hobson paled, his face working nervously.

"Give it to me," he shouted, with a poor attempt at anger. Ted's lips curled scornfully.

"It's not mine to give," he said. "Ask Walton here; perhaps he will, though I don't think so. By the way, he says a carload of colts were shipped off lately, bearing the brand of this ranch. Know anything about them?"

A sound like a snarl burst from the foreman's lips. He whipped his hand to his belt, but Ted had him covered with his own revolver first.

"Don't get mad like that," he said. "I only asked you a question. Come, now! Put your hand away from your belt! You're not my boss now, I'll have you know!"

Hobson complied, and allowed Walton to relieve him of his weapon.

"We won't do anything over this," said Ted, as he prepared to take his departure. "But we'll watch things a bit for the next few weeks. Perhaps you'll see that the chicken-hearted tenderfoot isn't such a fool as you take him for." He could not resist the temptation of dealing this thrust.

For the next few days a careful watch was kept on Jake Hobson. The sheriff had come to share Ted's suspicions, which were briefly that the foreman had more than a little to do with horse thieving. But no proof could be brought forward; the only thing to do was to wait for another haul to be made, catch the thief or thieves, and drag them before a judge.

A visit was paid to the lonely shack where Ted had found the gold on the occasion of his dismissal. No search could discover any evidence, and, though the money was seized by Walton, they had to return baffled.

In spite of Ted's suspicions, the sheriff soon began to lose faith in the idea that Hobson was the culprit, and, as nothing showed itself, Ted found himself wondering if he were not mistaken, after all.

Inquiries told him, at the very commencement of the fall round-up, that several mares that were known to have had colts in the earlier part of the spring, were now without. It was discovered that the Cup and Spur Ranch had not lost any; a further proof, in Ted's mind, that Hobson knew more than he would tell.

But there was something else, of which Ted never dreamed. A plot was in the making for a wholesale theft and stampede of colts and horses.

It was by mere chance that Ted and Walton paid a visit to the Cup and Spur one evening, when all the stock of that ranch were rounded up and safe in the corrals. Walton found out that Knowles was away at Butte, seeing about the sale of a bunch of four-year olds. This gave Ted an idea that something might happen, and, though they took pains to show that they had left the ranch, they took good care not to let Hobson see that they had returned on their tracks. They waited in the shelter of a bluff until evening fell—

waited for they hardly knew what.

They did not wait long after dark. Soon they heard the rumble of hoofs coming from the ranch.

"By gosh! He's done it, after all!" yelled the sheriff delightedly. "Bully for you, kid! You've got brains!"

"But what are we going to do about it?" asked the lad, who, afire as he was with the excitement, had thought nothing of the difficulty that faced him. "Can we stop 'em?"

"We'll have a try, you bet," replied Walton, drawing his revolver, and twisting the cylinder to see that it was fully loaded.

The sound of the stampede was drawing nearer and nearer. The two in the bluff mounted their horses, and rode straight for it. There was only one man driving the herd. Ted easily recognized him as the foreman of the ranch. Every suspicion he had formed was fully founded.

Walton, as soon as the stampede came abreast, fired three shots from his revolver, hoping to check them. They half served the purpose, but there was a man urging them on who was worth more than a mere consideration. As soon as Hobson saw that his plan was known to others, bullets began to whistle round Ted's and the sheriff's heads at an alarming rate. One bullet caught the hindquarters of the boy's horse, inflicting a maddening, scorching wound that made the brute grip the bit fiercely in its teeth, swerve to the right, and bolt headlong, in spite of the lad's frantic efforts to check its flight. Another shot struck the leader of the herd of bronchos, not seriously wounding it, but driving it crazy with rage, pain, and fear. It, too, wheeled half about, and followed close on the lad's tracks, the whole herd stampeding after it. ShriII

neighs filled the air, making it hideous with the tumult. More shots were fired between the sheriff and the foreman. Ted could not notice any of the events that were occurring near him. His whole attention was centred on his efforts to hold his animal in and maintain his seat.

Ted's horse was quite unmanageable. Straight ahead, never swerving, with a hundred more pounding behind him, man and horse rushed. It soon became apparent that it was more than a runaway for Ted; it was a race for life. Those fear-consumed, mad, unreasoning brutes behind him were heedless of the fact that a man was in front. Without heed of the direction in which he was going, the lad spurred his horse, hoping to keep safely ahead—not trying now to check its career. He knew that to turn aside was impossible. All he cared for was to keep ahead. And, in spite of the extra burden his beast was carrying, the pursuers gained nothing on him.

Fear filled the lad's heart. If it had been an ordinary death that threatened him, he would have faced it bravely enough; but the thought of being ground to death beneath the hoofs of those equine fiends behind him terrorized him until he almost lost sense of everything but his desire to escape.

It would have frightened any man. The weird shrieks, the bellows-like breathing of his own and of the other horses, the hollow, muffled, pounding of hoofs on the hard, sun-baked prairie, the whistle of the wind about his ears, all combined to make his brain reel. He thought nothing of what was ahead, until it was nearly too late.

Nearly—not quite!

He had a dim recollection of a feeling, a foreboding that all was not right in front. The pale glimmer of the

moon made the earth appear as though it suddenly dropped away into nothingness. Like a flash it came home to him that he was close to the edge of Rushing Cañon, a great cleft, dropping to a depth of five hundred feet, sheer to the bottom, where a roaring torrent raged.

Something like a moan passed his lips. He felt himself wondering which would be the better death: to have the life stamped out of him, or to be dashed to pieces below.

He had only a hundred yards to go—seventy-five—fifty! Thirty! The stampede was not a hundred feet behind him. Another minute, and he would be falling. He tugged once again at the reins, but he might as well have pulled at a stump. Another moan broke from him; he kicked his feet free from the stirrups, gave a mad spring outward, and fell headlong to the ground. His horse made a struggle to stop itself, failed, and went hurtling through space.

Ted scrambled to his feet. Five yards ahead of him was the cañon; ten yards behind him the stampede. He would die by the former!

He ran, ran like the wind, toward the drop.

He never could tell what happened in the next few moments. A horrid din filled his ears. He felt himself falling, and mechanically threw out his hands. He caught something—he knew not what—and hung, suspended between heaven and earth. Some dark shapes seemed to hurtle past his head, overhead, all around him. Terrified, shrill snorts and neighs were all that he could hear, save the queer buzzing that was in his head. But he gripped the support that had saved him, and hung on, half unconsciously, his nerves and sinews strained nigh to breaking point.

Then all was quiet overhead. He looked up, wondering dully that he was still alive, and not, as he had expected to be, a smashed, battered mass, on the rocks five hundred feet below.

Painfully, gaspingly, he drew himself upward. Though he thought he had fallen a long distance before he saved himself, he really had not dropped more than his own length. What he had caught and held was nothing more nor less than a sturdy weed, growing on the extreme edge of the cañon. He pulled himself to earth and safety again. His feet felt solid ground. Then his head swam, his limbs tottered, he reeled, and fell heavily, his arms hanging over the edge, unconscious. The reaction had set in, and he had fainted.

He was found half an hour later by Sheriff Walton, who, partly guided by the sound of the stampede, and partly through knowledge of the country, came close to the figure of the prostrate lad. He set about bringing him back to life, and his efforts were rewarded by seeing Ted's eyes open. The lad stared, and then recollection came back to him, for he shuddered violently, and pointed shakingly to the awful depths below.

"They went over there!" he gasped, "and I nearly did so, too. I don't know what saved me."

"But you are saved," was the reply, "and that's the main thing."

"And about Hobson?" asked the lad, when his brain had sufficiently cleared to think of other things beyond his own awful narrow escape from a double danger.

"Hobson won't steal any more horses," said the sheriff grimly.

"Is he dead?"

Walton nodded, but said nothing.

"Did you kill him?" Ted shuddered at the thought. To take human life was terrible to him.

"It was a fair fight, lad," said the sheriff. "If I hadn't done so, he'd have nailed me. In fact, I don't know how he missed me. I emptied my gun, and then closed with him. In the struggle his own gun went off, and the bullet went through his heart. A bad end for a bad man; but only justice."

It was discovered later that Walton needed an assistant. And so Ted did not go back to Minnesota after all. He might not have been much good as a cowboy, but Walton now thinks he cannot do without him to help in his work of keeping law and order in the district.



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