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CHAPTER XXII.

Aileen Learns Something of Fire-Arms

(Continued)

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"How do you load these things?" she demanded, handling the weighty weap on without shrinking. Curzon showed her, with something of relief.

"Then, when you've mended the other-if you do mend it," said Aieler when she was letter-perfect in loading and aiming, "give it to me, dad. It might come in useful; one never knows." She met her father's eye squarely as she spoke, and both under without further words. Not one of those men should ever tay desecrating hands on her as a living woman.

But though the fire smouldered unseen, without smoke or noise, it did not show any immediate disposition to break out into open flame. Long Jake was biding his time. It was difficult to rid himself of opposition in the calm waters of the Tropics; it would be easier to remove the officers on some storm-filled night in the Easting, when a man might steal ap, his footfalls drowned by the shriek of the gale, and strike down an unsuspecting officer neatly, without unnecessary outcry. Once that was done the way would be almost diabolically smooth before deck, and the ship was making heavy

the time was drawing near at last.

A DAUGHTER OF THE STORM! Easting was doing its maddest. when the Indian Ocean is out to rorise it can hold its own with most terrific seas of all the wide world. But the Zoroaster, in spite age, even though her crew were shivering apprehensively in the damp and dripping forecastle, totally deaf Long Jake's exhortations to rise and

> wreak a bloody revenge on those who had for so long trodden them down. With the gale came a corresponding improvement in Aileen's spirits, and er song came back to her lips in all its old light-heartedness. She forg the mind-wearing brooding of the past the frothing wake otwered far over- frenziedly to whatsoever they could an ox hove it up (cursing aloud at days, and gave herself up to the car esses of the storm as a bride to her mate. Her buoyancy filled her with immediate companions with something of rest; they had louxed for an outbreak under such conditions as then prevailed, and lo! the men were numbly impotent. But the gale that brought joy and gladness to Ailee was to bring sorrow and woe upon the old Zoroaster. CHAPTER XXIII. "N. C."

It was midnight when Leigh took the

weather of it. The outlook was as The Zoroaster sprang light-footed black as Erebus; save for the long, through the southern seas, and still sizzling jaggedness of the lightning, the blow was held suspended. By a the Zoroaster might have been the single hair indeed, and to outward centre of a whirling void of gloom. But seeming the men were all reconciled to the steel-white flare of the electric the existing condition of things; but fluid lit up the scene occasionally in all its frantic horror. The Easting

let them broach her to." ures appeared on the poop and struggled along, their curses rising even above the lifting hum of the gale. They flung themselves upon the kickinto the compass, and growled some deep-throated answer to the words of

"Mind your luff-savvy?" cried Leigh naught—a full-chested voice, a sailor's voice. "No luff too mucha, see? Suppose el barke broach-to, all up a gumtree, you Dago sinners!" Spanish it was beneath contempt; as an attempt, at the lingua franca of the deep sea it conveyed its import to the flannel-

pinning compass card in the bowl, astern convulsively, saw a vast, whitetipped green avalanche towering over their very heads; they flung the whee pars creaking and cracking dolefully. Down and down, until the seas raced n, a frightful torrent, over her Still she went over, and then, as she staggered to that sudden upleaval, the following wave broke a board over the starboard rail.

It was gigantic, terrific, unimaginable. Those on the poop, who had lung to swifter and backstay like mpets, felt their feet drawn from unleft, their extremities floating in up astern was to them an impending gulfed. A dismal crunching came to Curzon's ears above the unseemly suck "Watch the change of wheel," roar- and rush of water. He wormed his ed a stout figure standing by the miz- way, an inch at a time, to Leigh's side.

"The boats must have gone that "These chaps have the hang of the time," he screamed, and Leigh nodded, steering, but they're no good. Don't though he knew the gesture could not city. be seen. But, as if the voice of the Captain Curzon trusted his officers, captain had aroused him from a lethand knew that his words of caution argy, the second mate dropped from would bear fruit. Leigh at once lean- his holding to the deck and stumbled ed against the wind and worked a aft. The wheel was deserted; one man breathless way aft, reached the helm, was lying in the scuppers insensible, and stood there, steadying himself the other, almost a madman from

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refusing again to face that terrific power that seemed to make a plaything of the two-thousand-ton hull Leigh flung himself upon the clatterafter long minutes of tense waiting. staggered fabric like battering-rams the Zoroaster lifted herself cautiously.

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tentatively, shook her head in fretful pite, gathered confidence, and rose with a deep-toned roar from that down bearing weight of sea, once more fell back an inert and sodden mass, and then recovered again. It was a magni ficent struggle the old ship made; could not but be successful. Leigh held his own; his aided the ship by per fillers, 70c. every means as she seemed to rise too buoyantly, now putting it up in vast swirls as she slugged downwards gain. The swish and suck of the prisoned waters on deck added itself to the thunderous tumult: washports clanged, something that had carried away in the waist tore from side to side as the ship lurched and rocked and gradually the Zoroaster came upminutes she had lain soddenly help- Over-seas Novelty Co., less, incapable of movement, the plaything of every wave.

"She was nearly done for that time," cried Curzon, worming his way aft, and peering with a nod of satis faction into Leigh's set face. "Another like that and she'd have been gone Where are the men?"

"Don't know, sir. Found the whee leserted. Overboard, most likely. Leigh chopped out the words spasmo dically, for his breath was not yet back. A man may not wrestle with a kicking monster of a sea-tortured helm for minutes at a stretch and still re main in possession of unimpaired breathing power.

(To be continued.)

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ship's waist with creaming seas. The giant's children woe-stricken with Skinner's Monumental Art Works

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aft by the following, raging seas, the their teeth chattered, and at last, just old ship cleft the mountainous reaches as Leigh was turning away, satisfied of water that foamed ahead proudly that they understood their work, the frightened and woebegone, in forecas panic, jabbering in a confused babel of tongues, practically helpless.

tle to be seen. The ghostly white of bath of brine, their hands clinging ing wheel, and with the strength of DO IT NOW! head astern; the stripped spars reeled grip. The ship was like a halftide every effort; it was work for ten men, drunkenly against the suddenly reveal rock by this. Nothing of her was but in his angry zeal he possessed the ed, suddenly obliterated sky. Two visible save the denuded masts and the strength of a dozen, and slowly, his men were at the helm, both of them spidery spars. A vast flash of light- muscles creaking to the strain, he Spaniards, and the light from the bin- ning spun out of the howling ghastli- managed to bring about that which nacle shone ruddily on their whitened ness overhead, and revealed the scene he desired. Up went the wheel, and faces, the ear-rings in their ears, their in its full horror, leaving a photogleaming oilskins. Their moustaches graphic impression on the eyeballs of during which fresh seas smote th bristled with fright, they looked over captain and second mate, so that for their shoulders with furtive glances, long moments after the flash had gone, cowering down to the wheel-grating as whilst the near-by thunder clattered the thunderous roar of the following and reverberated with a sound as of a seas smote menacingly on their half- new creation, they still retained an covered ears. They had lost their mpression of the awful sight. Creamy nerves, and every wave that volleyed water everywhere, and the ship en-

en rigging as Leigh came forward.

against the grating, for the force of fright, cowered in the companionway, apl9,3m the gale was such that a strong man might not stand unaided. Two figing wheel, gripped the spokes, glanced

the men they were relieving. shrouded ears of the new-comers. But

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