

But life is like a circle. As we near the grave we think of the cradle our mother rocked us in—only yesterday as it seems.

Dick was not an old man yet; in fact, he isn't now, but his friends persuaded him to knock off the sea and take to some employment with a trifle more shoregoing about it. He consented, and ever since he has commanded a barge running between Rochester and London. No man in the business is better known nor possesses more largely the respect and confidence of everybody who has dealings with him than does Captain Wadhams, of the barge "Alice."

Now here is a curious thing. We are often in danger when we think we are safe, and safe when we think we are in danger. In all his voyaging over the ocean's vast stormy surface Dick had suffered no serious accident, and as to health he thrived on hard work and fore-castle diet. If there is any better way of saying that he was blessed with a cast-iron constitution perhaps you will mention what it is. In a word he was strong, fearless and fortunate. Thus far luck ran right—for Dick Wadhams of Rochester.

But there was to be a falling barometer and heavy weather. One day in June, 1890, while on one of his regular trips, he felt really ill for the first time in his life. He couldn't account for it; he could scarcely believe it. *He ill? Sailor Wadhams?*—who had been through every imaginable sort of exposure to disease without starting a rope yarn of his health; who had been spared in every climate and under all circumstances of risk and peril? After such a series of escapes on the high seas and in foreign lands was he *now* to be sent groaning to his bunk on a barge with the English coast under his lee? It looked like a bit of nonsense and absurdity, yet that is exactly what happened.

From this point on we will let the Captain do the talking himself, as we should have

let him do it from the start. Still we can't go back and write the story all over again. So if we have made a mistake it will have to stand as a mistake, and we'll do better next time.

In conversation with the writer the other day (it was in the cabin of the "Alice" as she lay in the canal at Limehouse) Captain Wadhams told the adventures we have condensed above, and then went on to speak about what he has been through since. We give his talk as nearly as possible in his own words, and in no particular has anything been changed or exaggerated in spirit or purport.

"I can't tell, sir," said the Captain, "what the cause was, but I'm not likely to forget the trouble that came upon me that day. I was mazy, and tottered about like a green hand on the deck of a rolling ship. Then it turned into colic, painter's colic I thought it was, and I suffered awfully before I got relief. As I never had anything of this sort before, you can fancy, sir, I didn't know what to make of it. I hoped it would pass off, but it didn't; it kept coming on me more and more, as a cloud spreads out over the sky.

"Well, sir, when I got home after that trip, for I was taken ill on my barge, you know, I felt bad all over. In a few days there didn't appear to be a sound spot about me, inside or out. There was so many things the matter all at once I had nothing to go by to tell which was the cause and which the symptoms, as the doctors say. It was like a ship springing a leak in twenty places at the same time, everywhere from stem to stern."

"You can remember where some of the leaks were located, Captain, no doubt?" said the writer.

Leaning back on his seat the sailor was silent for half a minute, as though making an effort to get the facts in some sort of order, then he went on: "If you don't mind

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