

A Sea Lawyer.

Written by W. L. ALDEN.

"DON'T hold," said Captain Tarbox, with the sailor's notion that lawyers are no better than sharks. I've reason to know better. Three is lawyer Twigg of our town, who had the settling of a dead man's estate worth nigh on two hundred thousand dollars, and when he got through he handed over to the widow pretty nearly five thousand dollars, when he might have grabbed the whole of it without letting the widow have a share. And I believe that there are a good many other lawyers that are every bit as honest as Twigg himself. "If you talk of sea lawyers, I'll admit that they are the biggest scoundrels outside the legislature. Of course, you know that a sea lawyer is the sort of a chap that spend all his time in talking to his mates about the rights of sailors, and making him believe that a sailor's most precious right is never to do any work. For cheek and general cussedness there is nothing to compare with a sea lawyer.

"I had an experience with one of that sort when I was with Captain Pratt in the Seabird—or, come to think of it, in the Colchester. We were coming to the westward, and were well on with the eastern edge of the banks, when we sighted a small boat about three miles on the starboard bow there being a light breeze from the southward at the time, and very little sea on. We kept the ship away till we came up with the boat, and one of the hands jumped into her, and made her fast to the mizzen chains. She was a ship's quarter boat, and was fit to carry thirty men, but she had only one passenger. He was a sailor, by his clothes, and was lying in the stern sheets, asleep, or dead, leaving the boat to drift whichever way she chose.

"Finding that the man was insensible, we rigged a whip, and hoisted him aboard. The old man examined him the moment he was over the rail, and said that he was alive, but nearly dead with starvation. 'Carry him below,' and lay him on the cabin locker,' said the Captain. 'Be mighty careful with the poor chap, for there's very little life left in him. Tell the steward to bear a hand and get some beef tea, and some blankets, while I overhaul the medicine chest.'

"I asked the captain if I should hoist in the boat, but he said we hadn't any room for her, and that after I had examined her I should cast her adrift. There was nothing in her except five biscuits, a bottle with about two fingers of brandy, her mast and sail, two pairs of oars, and an empty breaker of water. I noticed that a name had been scraped, by accident or otherwise off her bow, but I thought I could make out the letters 'gi' and the end of a swallow-tailed flag that had been painted alongside of the name. I had her cast adrift, and after we had braced up the yards and put her on her course again, went below to see how things were getting on—the second mate being in charge of the deck.

"The captain and the steward were standing over the rescued man, who was lying on his back, and looking pretty red in the face for a dying man. Pratt had the man's jaws pried open with the handle of his tooth brush, and was trying to pour some medicine down his throat. All at once he choked, and sat up, and after coughing a spell, says to the old man in a good strong voice, 'What's this infernal skylarking? Are you trying to murder me?'