

# By Wireless Telegraphy

At the extreme end of the Cornish coast, on the most southerly point of England, stand the sentinels of the Past and Future. A great ragged rock rears its head above the sea some four miles from the shore, barren but for tufts of sickly grass, uninhabited save by sea birds. For centuries the rock has stood amid the wild waters, once an island, green and fair, now gradually being devoured by the insatiable waves, gradually crumbling and passing with the ages from the knowledge and memory of man. Once a guide to the unwieldy ships that sailed seeking empires, a landmark to sailors, the first glimpse of homeland to wanderers, now a "danger mark" to the huge black liners—a forgotten Sentinel of the Past.

And a little inland, a small gray turret, with a wooden mast pointing skyward, and square glass eyes ever staring oceanward—a little house built by a man's clumsy fingers, not one-fiftieth the size of the fading rock speck on the ocean—yet it is Time's fingermark—it is the ear of the clouds, the Sentinel of the Future.

The ocean had been driving round the Lizard point for several days, forming solid banks of blackness in the southwest, swooping across the green seas, that hourly grew more restless, and often hiding the old barren rock from the strongest telescope. The lonely watcher—one by day and one by night—in the gray house, Marconi's wireless telegraph station of the south, had long known of the approach of the storm. Ships already caught in its fierce clutches had telegraphed its advent to the watcher, and he, Jovelike, had hurried electric warnings of the danger to other boats.

And this evening, as John Priest walked along the narrow cliff path to relieve his companion for night duty, it seemed as if nature's great struggle were about to begin. The wind had dropped a little; the breakers, far below, ceased to throw their shining, white foam arms upward; instead the waves heaved and rolled in large, greasy mountains. An unnatural silence had fallen, almost terrifying to the lonely human being.

Ere he reached its shelter big drops of rain began to fall—slowly, with an ugly, regular splash—flashes of lightning lit the horizon, dividing green and black.

John Priest felt the nervous excitement in the air communicate itself to his body, filling him with a vague unrest and fear.

His companion was waiting at the door. "I'm glad you're not late," he said. "I fear even now I shall get caught in the storm before I can cover those three miles along the cliff. Good-night."

"Good night," replied John Priest. He watched the other run swiftly down the path and along the cliffs. He felt a strange longing to call him back, to ask him to share the watch that night. The quiet threatening of the night, quivering with electricity and storm, thrilled his nerves.

"I wonder what's wrong with me?" he said aloud, and then checked himself, unpleasantly unconscious of his own voice—that none could hear or answer. Quickly his companion disappeared, enveloped in clouds and darkness.

Nothing living was visible—not even a tree, not a bird on the wing—nothing. With an effort he laughed and banged and bolted the door loudly, and entered the operating room—the room with the square-eyes facing seaward. It was a round plainly furnished chamber, containing one comfortable sofa, a book shelf filled with books, several maps, and charts; a list of rules and explanations concerning the working of the Marconi wireless telegraph, and in the centre of the room the instrument itself.

Priest looked at his watch; eleven hours and a half of solitary confinement, practically cut off from all human communication! He leaned against the window and stared into the darkness.

He looked at the instrument, fingered it, saw all was in order, tried to keep himself busy with trifles, praying for the time to pass quickly, for the storm to come or go. When he looked at his watch again what had seemed an hour proved fifteen minutes. Then he swore quietly at himself for a fool and filled his pipe deliberately. As he put it to his lips a sudden blaze of light lit the room and a terrible crash rent the air, tearing silence and the night asunder, and echoing from cliff to cliff.

With the first great crash all the elements sprang to life. To the watcher it seemed as if fire, earth,

air, and water were swirling and struggling through space inextricably mixed together.

How long he watched with awe and wonder he did not know, but the rushing winds howled him into a semi-conscious sleep, in which he heard the waves rising and roaring nearer and nearer.

He awoke with a start, feeling something or some one had spoken to him. The yellow light burnt more dimly, but instinctively he glanced first at the Marconi instrument. All was in order. The tapper was silent, motionless. As he wondered what had suddenly called him the instrument clicked.

Some one had called! Whence could a message come on such a night and from whom? Was it a trick of the storm that raged and shrieked like a furious beast, outside?

He drew his chair to the table and bent over the instrument and waited. Again that little spark of light behind him and simultaneously the click—dot—"—LE—LE—DH—DH—H," it said.

Still the same question: "Can send help?"

With horrid vividness he saw 500 men and women huddled together on the sinking ship in the midst of the raging tempest waiting for that answer, praying heaven that it might be—"Yes," trusting, believing it would be—"Yes."

His hand moved slowly, steadily now, as he spelled out four words in the darkness, and he felt the darkness was best, though there were none to see, or hear, or know—"Impossible to send help."

Five hundred men and women; husbands, wives, lovers! Children, too—five hundred. He, John Priest, safe on land in the little room with its square eyes looking seaward, and 500 souls far away across the boiling waters calling out to him, waiting for his message—of life, or death.

He had sent death!

Had they received it yet? What did they think or feel? He could speak with them, but he couldn't save them!

He jumped from his chair and rushed to the window and stared out; black, black everywhere! Impotently he beat his hands against the window and mercilessly the rain and the wind and the sea spume beat back.

Who were they on board the boat sinking out yonder? What ties had they, what passions bound them to the red earth and the things of the earth?

Back to his seat he rushed, and of a sudden an inspiration came. If, perchance, there was another boat anywhere near that he could telegraph to!

Hope yet; a chance of life yet! He relit the lamp and turned up the book giving the names of vessels fitted with wireless telegraphy. One by one he read and passed the names—all those were in port or a thousand miles away.

The last boat on the list, the Scotsman, there was just a chance it might be in the English channel, the vaguest chance, he knew; but it was possible.

Hastily he telegraphed now: "Am trying to signal Scotsman; if within distance will send it to help you."

He waited for an answer, but none came; had it already gone down?

"DH!" That was no trick of the storm; yet he did not know the call. Quickly he turned to the code:

"DH"—SS. Delilah, mail and passenger steamer, 9,000 tons. Good heavens! what did the Delilah want, and where was it? Surely, if he remembered right, it was due at Liverpool two days ago!

For an instant Priest hesitatingly watched and listened. Whence amidst the thousands of miles of mad waves was this message sent? With unsteady hand he held his machine, replied—

"Go on," and waited. No answer. He held his breath and counted the seconds.

At last an answer. "LE" again; an instant's pause, then the machine began slowly with many pauses and breaks, as if the message, flying on magnetic wings through space to the little gray turret on the Cornish coast, was battling each yard of its way with the wind, the sea, and the rain—the machine began to spell its message:

"The Delilah—damaged by terrific seas—fear fast sinking—400 passengers—send help—"

Priest gasped and his grip on the machine tightened. Delilah sinking; 400 passengers, and crew; send help! What did it mean! Breathless he waited; watching the tapper with distended eyes; it clicked; was silent.

The perspiration broke out on his forehead; a thousand questions flashed through his brain; his body stiffened and quivered; he felt 500 lives

in his hand—fighting death. The little square room, dimly lit with the yellow lamp light, ceased to exist; the storm no longer roared in his ears, nor the sea spray and rain drops to beat the windows; a silence greater and more intense than the silence of the afternoon wrapped itself round him.

Flash—"DH. Where are you?" He found a difficulty in breathing—how the seconds dragged—minutes, surely, now, and no answer. Again, "Where are you?"

At last an answer: "S.S.W. of Lizard, about 100 miles off; instruments damaged; rudder broken; keep afloat few more hours—is help possible, or until Delilah sinks?"

"The rest was unreadable; still the tapper clicked again, 'is help—' Help! How could he send help? He sprang from his seat and rushed to the door and unbolted it. With a yell of triumph the wind rushed in, shaking the little house to its foundations and hurling him back to the ground.

He had forgotten the storm! It took him some time to shut and bolt the door again; then he returned to the room bruised and wet. The lamp had been blown out, and all was dark. As he searched for the matches he heard the click of the machine.

He groped his way to the table and bent over it; he could read the message in the dark.

If so—hastily he changed the signal call—the machine clicked—and waited. He was fighting the storm now, fighting nature, who gives no quarter; fighting death, who, open-mouthed, panted for 500 lives.

Why didn't it answer? Wherever it was it should receive the message!

Ah, at last—"S. S. Delilah sinking fast; are you near enough to help?"

Presently the answer: "Fear impossible, but will look out for it—trying to beat down channel myself." Then, after a pause: "Am trying to get into communication with it."

Again Priest flashed: "For God's sake, do your best—400 passengers."

He leant back in his chair and wiped his brow. He dared not call the Delilah again; he feared lest no answer should come.

He waited, and for an instant the silence lifted, and he heard an exulting shriek from the wind outside, and the house trembled. Where were those 500 souls?

Click!

Close over the table he bent and held his breath.

"Cannot keep afloat until the morning; have you been able to send help?"

"Yes. Spoken Scotsman beating down channel; it is looking for you. Keep afloat as long as possible. All I can do—his fingers ceased to move. The horror of having done no more, the weakness of that message! He set his teeth.

Again the tapper moved, and now he feared what it would spell.

"Thanks, don't leave instrument. Communicate with us as long as possible, or until Delilah sinks."

He whispered a prayer as he sat before the table: "Please, God, save them, forgive and help;" and at the same time he telegraphed:

"Shall not leave instrument; will communicate with you until help comes."

A few minutes elapsed and no further message was sent; then suddenly, with long pauses between each letter—

"We are getting out the boats." Another pause that seemed hours. A stronger gust of wind seemed to make the little building rock. A flash of lightning momentarily filled the room with a blue glare, and the crash of thunder deafened Priest for a moment.

When the last rumble died away again he heard that the instrument was again clicking. Had he missed something during that appalling crash? "Have launched one of the boats." A pause that seemed to last for hours. Then: "Boat has overturned with twenty passengers. All lost." Another wait longer than the first. In imagination Priest saw men and women struggling in the relentless waves. He pictured the others huddling at the side of the helpless liner, and at each flash of lightning thought he could see the ghastly terror on pale faces. "Good heaven, they will drown, drown!" he cried aloud, in agony. He seemed to feel the sting of the cold water himself, and wished that he could go down with the vessel rather than endure this racking torture of waiting—waiting for what he felt was inevitable, waiting for something that he could not prevent.

Again the instrument ticked out its piteous message: "Two more boats launched. Both overturned. Fear must abandon hope. Fast filling."

A long pause. Priest sat motionless, his eyes steadfast on the ma-

chine, coldly ticking of approaching doom to the only man in the world who knew and could save him.

Then—"Passengers have behaved splendidly; perfect order; no panic." A still longer pause. Priest dropped from the chair to his knees and began hysterically to pray, while he watched with staring eyes the tapper and heard the click—dot—beat hammerlike into his brain.

"Passengers four hundred and forty—two fifty men, one seventy women, twenty children—remainder crew, officers—"

"Save them, save them!" cried Priest aloud, and the storm shrieked derisively. Unconsciously his fingers convulsively touching the machine, spelled those two words, and the message was carried out into the night, over the seas, to the sinking ship.

"There is still hope," the women whispered; "he is sending for help." But the men—guessed—

"Cannot decipher your last message—stern of ship nearly under water—a matter of minutes now—passengers ask will you kindly convey to friends—the letters danced before Priest's eyes and became confused. He fancied he heard the voices of men and women calling—he sprang to the window and looked out. A pale gray light in the east. Was that dawn?

The tapper still clicked, but the words it spelt were confused—then it stopped.

What was happening now beyond that bar of light, on the gray dawn? Where is the Scotsman? Frantically he seized the instrument and called the Scotsman again. He is answered: "Have sighted Delilah—making for it."

One, two, three, four—how the minutes slide away, each one an hour. Ten, fifteen—the bar of light has grown; the gray dawn peeps of sudden through the square window of the little house, the sunlight of the future, and touches the cold, bare sides of the rock at sea, the sentinels of the past, and John Priest hears a rush and swirl of waters—and that an oppressive silence and a void. Still he watches the machine; the tapper quivers; the final message slowly spells itself: "Have passed you, and down where saw Delilah, wreckage visible save wreckage—Scotsman."

This is the final message. The gray dawn is over all now—Chicago Tribune.

"There is only one reason," he said, "why I have never asked you to be my wife."

"What is that?" she asked. "I have always been half afraid you might refuse."

"Well," she whispered, after a brief silence, "I should think you'd be curious enough to want to find out whether your suspicion was founded or not."—Chicago Times Herald.

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**Detail**

Every year since the birth of Victoria—now known as Victoria day—in Dawson in a mild occasion. Last year the celebration was introduced in the way of a number of boats gotten up by the citizens of the city, new to Dawson and highly interesting. It was called for by a number of public men in Pioneer hall to arrange the celebration this year. The celebration will eclipse all previous ones. The celebration was called for by the citizens and was made chairman being selected secretary. The day in a fitting manner, and a large number of citizens were chosen from representative citizens will be the usual practice and the afternoon wholly to sports for value will be offered. There will be a musical committee on when the various streets are named and the celebration will be a grand affair. The committee consists of Col. Donald McGregg, D. Williams, Mr. Justice Dugas, Mr. Senkler, C. D. Newlands, Mayor Wills, E. O. F. States Consul Sayon, F. X. Gossel, homme, Dr. Alfred Barrett, D. C. Melbeck, Moses McGregg, Donald, Dr. J. N. McKay, Hugh McKay, Diarmid, Dan McGregg, Turner, Tom, J. U. Nicol, J. T. Lithgow, R. W. Thornburn, J. Searth, Dick, C. V. son, J. A. Clarke, M. Allen, H. S. Coover, H. Te Rollet, Grant, John Gilson, Dan Matheson, H. Macfarlane, C. W. Donaghy, C. M. W. Black, Grant Murphy, Frank Clayton, M. H. Boulais, J. Landerville, Dr. Davidson, Donald Congdon, John H. R. P. McLennan, Foley, Temple Sierly, Chief Lester, Ed Port, Alexander Stewart, Douglas, Chief, Harry Baird, Frank W. F. P. Slavin, Ch. Dornier, C. S. Jephson, George Mars, George McL. Dick Butler, J. Hinton, Harry Strand, Tom Kirk, Pierre, S. Pell, Charles Houshy, H. S. Tobin, Smith, T. G. Kin, H. McKinnon, A. Kinnon, Pete Ben Everett, F. B. Lyons, Geo. J. P. McLennan, Noel Reichenbach, Macdonald, T. G. George Murphy, R. H. Hurdman, son, L. L. James, B. Condon, J. A. McGowan, I. Thur Lewin.

At the last pro Harum" at the day evening there dent transpired bills, something, sole edification not the audience scale of the se Deacon is seen o with the balky during the week