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to afford a point of contact. Accordingly the wooden structure swung dangerously over the churning water. In spite of this, however, I saw a youth spring lightly between the rails and lower himself to the extreme end of the gangway. The united weight of the men on the shoreward part alone kept it from being overturned. Observing that he held a crumpled note in his hand I instantly rushed to the side and mounted the handrail. Steadying myself with my heels, I succeeded in reaching far enough forward to receive it from him. At this moment I recognized him as one of the lads in our agent's employ. On seeing his mission thus successfully accomplished, the dockers drew up the gangway and landed him safely on shore. Soon afterwards we were in mid-channel. A lusty cheer was raised on shore. We sent back a vigorous reply, and presently ran, full steam ahead, down the glittering harbor into the gathering night.

The letter, thus strangely delivered, was addressed in a sprawling hand to Captain Hayman. I straightway laid it on the table in his cabin, and proceeding to the bridge, acquainted him of its arrival. Together we remained on duty for an hour, when we were relieved by the first officer. The old man immediately went aft to read the agent's note, while I, having nothing better to do, went to smoke a pipe with chief engineer Burgin. On the way, one of the deck hands reported that a stowaway had been discovered in one of the chain lockers. Even while he spoke, two greasers appeared, dragging the lad between them. Like most of his class, he seemed pale, and pinched, and poverty-stricken, yet he was not so abject in demeanour as the majority I had seen. As he halted in front of me he pulled his meagre frame erect, and regarded his captors with a wild stare of defiance. There was something, indeed in the gleam of his light blue eye which was indicative, I imagined, of an unusually strong will, while the pucker between his eyebrows seemed to denote a fierce temper and the restive spirit of a young unbroken colt.

It was necessary, of course, to inform Captain Hayman of the stowaway's presence. Accordingly I sent the men to their posts, and taking the boy by the sleeve of his ragged coat, led him along. When a duty of this nature devolved upon me, I always experienced some unpleasant qualms, for the captain of the Tertius was a veritable scourge among unfortunates of this class. I believe, indeed, I dreaded the scene more than the culprit himself.

When we knocked at the door and entered the cabin at the captain's invitation, we found him seated on the edge of the table, with one foot swinging free of the floor. The open letter he held in one hand, while he stroked his chin meditatively with the other. He did not look up for some time, and when he did so at last, it was only to shift his position, and fall to perusing the strangely communicated epistle. While we paused, I distinctly remember noting for the first time that he was ageing rapidly. The crow's feet on his weather-beaten brow were more marked, I imagined. His nose, likewise, seemed rather pinched, the nostrils dilating with each breath he drew, and his mouth, at the moment, seemed haggard and drawn. The veins at the temple were too prominently outlined, perhaps, while the sunken eyes gave to the cheek bones a heightened appearance. Doubtless all this occurred to me at the least propitious moment for him, for it was evident from his manner that the news he had just received was very unwelcome, if not wholly disagreeable. I remembered, too, with pity, that his wife had died during the last trip. He was now without a home, and as his only daughter had disgraced him many years before by a runaway match, he was practically without a relative.

At length the old man threw the letter on the table and turned to where we stood.

"So," said he, addressing the boy, who, meanwhile, had respectfully removed his cap, "You have turned up after all! Damn me! I don't know whether to admire you for your pluck or to chastise you for your forwardness."

"This imp of Hell, Mr. Manson, met me a day or two ago at Brinlow's office and

asked me to give him a berth in the Tertius. I told him I had no use for him, but the brat was importunate, and you know I can't lump that sort of thing. I cuffed him soundly and kicked him downstairs, but the puppy had the audacity to turn and tell me that he would get aboard in spite of my teeth. The day after that I detected him trying to induce one of the deck boys to desert, in the hope, I suppose, of securing his berth at the last moment. I hounded him off and threatened to twist his neck if he should be seen about the wharf again. But it made no more impression on him than a bucket of suds in the South Pacific. I saw him steering around all yesterday, and in the evening caught him stumbling aboard with a sack on his back, thinking to pass as a lumper. I tell you I nearly crushed the life out of him—yet, by the great Columbus, here he is! Now, boy, what have you got to say for yourself?"

Captain Hayman's voice rose like a clap of thunder as he put the concluding question. Nevertheless, I could perceive that his anger, so ready to bubble on most occasions, was only assumed on this. Somehow, we have all of us a sneaking admiration for pluck, especially when opposing forces are strong, and repeated failure leaves it unshaken.

"Nothing, sir," replied the youth, in an off-hand manner, as if, having put his finger in the crow's nest, he could not rouse himself sufficiently to be interested in the consequences.

"No excuse to offer?" pursued the captain.

"None, sir."

"You were persistent in your endeavors to sail in the Tertius. Why did you choose her in preference to all the others in the harbor?"

"Because I was ordered."

"Why, who commanded you?"

"My mother, sir."

"What!" cried the skipper. "Do you mean to tell me, boy, that your mother ordered you to stowaway?"

"No, sir, not to stowaway. I was to ask you to take me on board. She never dreamt you would refuse."

"Do you know any reason why she was so confident of your success?"

"Her father was a seaman, and she had heard him speak of you."

"By the great Christopher!" said the master, turning to me. "That's like a woman, Manson, isn't it? Sent her lad to sea because her father was a sailor, and wanted him to join the Tertius because its captain, forsooth, was alleged to be like Brutus in the play 'an honorable man.' But here, send the imp to Burgin with the first hand you meet. He reported a short while ago the desertion of one of his men. I reckon he can be trusted to brace the brat a bit." Then, just as we were leaving, he added, "By the way, boy, what is your name?"

"Matt Grimm, sir," responded the youth, glad, doubtless, to find that he had come through the ordeal unscathed.

"Well," said the old man, "see that you do as Burgin tells you. If you give satisfaction you may be put on the ship's books and taken to London, but if there is any trouble, I'll give you a taste of a rope's end and hand you over to the authorities at the first port. Now go, and—"

"Mr. Manson, you might step this way as soon as your hands are free."

The captain's manner puzzled me hugely, for during the three years I had been under his command I had never seen him treat stowaways otherwise than with diabolical severity. Here he was, laboring under a passion that was wholly assumed, and uttering words more fit for a nurse's lullaby than the mouth of an old sea dog whom I had known to stand for three days with a revolver over the heads of a crew of mutinous Portuguese. A possible explanation presented itself when, on my return, he made me acquainted with a grievous piece of misfortune that had just befallen him: for I have noticed that a man of passionate temperament generally becomes more forbearing under calamity, just as his speech is always rendered less acrid by a piece of good fortune. The full extent of the old man's trouble had been communicated to him in the letter so strangely delivered by the agent's clerk. He now handed me the note. It was in a miserable hand, but I managed to