

# A DAUGHTER OF THE STORM!

BY CAPT. FRANK H. SHAW.

## CHAPTER II.

### The Waiting.

(Continued)

A sudden roar that seemed to beat down the strident note of the gale, the clattering of heavy feet overhead, set Curzon's teeth on edge. The ship lost her steadiness, she lurched sickly, twisted and rose, only to descend again.

"Mainsail's gone," said the mate. "Reckon I'd better get on deck and attend to things."

"Yes, you'd better. No—stay where you are," replied Curzon, for, with the crash of the ruined sail in his ears, he had heard another sound. The two men looked at one another again, and then disappeared into the inner room.

## CHAPTER III.

### Two Great Mysteries.

"Pass that brandy bottle over, Steadman. Look alive, man. She's collapsed."

"Damn this cork," grunted the mate, worrying out the offending stopper with his teeth. "Here you are, sir. A glass? Yes, here it is."

He poured out a generous allowance into the tumbler which Captain Curzon extended shakily. Curzon's other arm was under his wife's fallen head. "Funnest brandy I ever saw," grunted Steadman, still pouring. "Why—it's water! That stoward—the devil!" Curzon smelt the liquid swiftly, and a look of awful agony crossed his face.

"That's it," he said. "He's drunk it and filled the bottle with water. I'll

"I'll nip along to the galley and see if there's any hot coffee. If I hadn't been a beast I'd have saved some of my own spirit. There isn't another drop aboard, is there?" asked Steadman. And Captain Curzon shook his head madly.

It was all over by this. Heralded by the sonorous bellowsings of the untamed storm, rocked in the boisterous cradle of the angry sea, a little life had come into being out of departing life, and Mrs. Curzon lay back on the pillows deathly white, swooning, the shell of a woman. As yet her husband could not realise what had passed; it had been a vague, poignant dream, punctuated by frenzied spasms of helplessness. The nightmares of real sleep were but as trivialities when compared with that which he had endured. Presently would come a knowledge of what had gone; but, so far, Curzon seemed wrapped up in a stupor, moving automatically, actuated by his subconscious will.

He waved his hand towards the door, and Steadman disappeared. But, after wading breast-deep in boiling, surging water, the mate found the galley dark and cold, the fires extinguished by the pouring water, and the coffee in the great boiler rank and chill, strongly impregnated with salt. For five full minutes he strove to kindle warmth and light in the stove, but in vain.

He reeled back to the cabin, streaming wet, blood dripping from a wounded arm, and entered the silent room again. Curzon looked up expectantly, then stifled a groan as the mate shook his head.

"Is she better?" asked Steadman in a whisper.

"No, she's not come round yet. If we'd had that brandy—curse that devil of a steward! If we'd only been prepared. Hush! she's moving."

The inert figure had stirred slightly in his arms. He swung around, to meet the dim gaze of his wife's half-closed eyes.

"What—is—it?" she panted. "A girl," he whispered tenderly. "Look up, Mary, lass, look up. Don't—don't—I can't bear it, girl; I'm afraid."

"I'm glad—dear—but—I'm—sorry, too. I'd—hoped—to—give—you—a—son—but—"

"I'm glad, sweetheart," he groaned. "Rouse yourself, Mary. It is all over now."

"Remember what you promised," she said with sudden spirit and alarming distinctness. "I leave here to you, Jack. Now, kiss me."

Steadman seemed to know by instinct that an even greater presence than new-born life was in the stifling, oppressive room. He moved away silently, his face working frightfully, the hot salt tears running down his face. At heart this gruff, hard man of the sea was as soft and tender as a woman, and he knew that Mary Curzon stood outside the entrance to a harbour fairer far than any on this earth.

The storm gained in violence as he waited in the outer chamber, his slow-moving mind at war with itself. One desire seemed to rise paramount even in that time of bitter grief—the desire

ings, which in turn gave place to still more Titanic bellowsings.

"She's better!" cried the mate of a sudden, as the door opened and Captain Curzon came forth. Curzon's face seemed nobler than ever before. In his arms was a small bundle, that moved feebly.

"No, she's dead," he whispered. "She's left me this to remind me of

through a port, which was showing red against the blackness. "Light out of darkness," he murmured, and then the strong man bowed his head and wept till the great sobs shook him to his very soul.

And so, a chill of storm, born in the lap of the gale, Aileen Curzon, robbing her mother of life, stepped forth from the void of the infinite by the gate of birth, and drew the breath of life strongly.

Steadman, the child in his arms, rose awkwardly and placed one rough hand on his captain's heaving shoulder. "We must forget what's gone," he said, "and remember the child. Pull yourself together, man."

## CHAPTER IV.

### The Steward Settles His Account.

The dawn broke high above a black cloud-bank red as fire, sure foreteller of still worse weather, and young Vigors, grimy and weary, gazed numbly forward. Long hours had passed since he took charge of the deck, every fraction of sea knowledge that he possessed had been drawn upon to minimise the awful discomfort of the staggering ship, but he said that all would be well.

After frantic strivings, the Zoroaster had recognised the master hand on the helm, and had thrown herself along with increased steadiness; the sickly lurches and the awful swoops had lessened vastly. Simms, as calm and imperturbable as if taking a fine-weather trick in the Trades, gnawed stolidly at his tobacco quid and passed the spokes of the wheel from hand to hand slowly, watching the ship as a dying man might watch for the opening of Heaven's gate. To leeward of the wheel Fraser stood, and his grim, set face told of what he had endured those long hours of suspense.

Dimly objects became distinguishable now. The sky overhead was steely blue in patches, astern it was black and intensely ominous. Ahead, the red and lurid glow of the sunrise, shot here and there with livid green, suffused the raging sea with a crimson glow of fictitious warmth that might have deceived one little experienced to the vagaries of Easting weather.

Round and about the mizen truck, with never a moment of its widespread pinions, a mighty albatross careered, keeping up with the racing ship without a single muscular effort. Now and then it emitted a strange, croaking cry; once it left its lofty eyrie, swooping down to the sea, grasped at a floating piece of refuse with its foot-long beak, and soared anew, maintaining easily its steadfast position.

Now the Zoroaster began to gleam brightly in the gathering day. She

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presented a strange spectacle, for she had run through a tremendous gale, and showed signs of what she had endured. The upper sails were lying neatly along their yards; they had been stowed in fine weather; the solid rolls of canvas were so closely furled that nothing short of a typhoon could have stirred them from their holding. But lower down the traces of the storm were more in evidence.

The mainsail had carried away, and had been hauled up and stowed as chance permitted. It hung in ugly lumps beneath the yard, it lay in miniature mountains above the jacks; in place of the small gaskets which should have kept it fast, long stretches of rope were passed and re-passed around sail and yard together. Men had grappled with what seemed like certain death to bring that ninety-foot stretch of sail to obedient quiescence. They had clawed and sworn, had strained with fingers from which the angry blood strated protestingly to reduce order out of thunderous, flapping riot.

One of the forward lifeboats had been swept away bodily; the davits swung creakingly over the side, the unrove tackle-falls reaching far ahead like spidery whips. The chicken coop had carried away from its lashings, and now lay in a distorted heap in the lee scuppers, the water pouring in and out of the barred front. Some drenched, still bodies, the ship's stock of poultry, washed about on the floor of the great box.

(To be continued.)

## Wild N.S. Sheep Are Victims of Extreme Cold

Halifax, March 20.—Among the wild creatures that suffered most during the recent cold weather were the hardy sheep that swarm on the coasts in the Eastern part of Nova Scotia on the archipelago of the thousand islands upon which these inhabitants of the sea-coast live. Hundreds of the wild sheep were found upon the shores of the rocky and wooded coasts where they had perished in their attempts to obtain their daily food of seaweed, dulce, eel grass and kelp, their shaggy coats a mass of solid ice from the spray that had dashed over them from the sea.

A large number of the sheep are found in the county of Guysboro of unusual size. They are loaded down with coats of heavy wool that has never been shorn since the owners were born. Sure footed and swift as antelopes they jump from crag to crag of the high cliffs trusting to their heavy coats to save them in case of a fall.

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to lay hands on the cringing, drunken brute whose latest orgy was responsible for the sweet woman's death. To have dragged the steward down by the lying thriat, to have torn the life out of his miserable heart, to have dispatched him beforehand before the great Throne as a herald of the coming of one whose presence he was not fit to pollute, that was the dominant thought in Steadman's mind.

At times he shivered in his soaking garments, but he did it unconsciously. The fury of the gale seemed limitless. It was a mad battle of giants; their hoarse roars to one another sounded stridently, only to die down into gasping screams and frantic whin-

her." and he drew aside the blanket. Steadman gazed down with some curiosity at the tiny, wrinkled face disclosed. Then, because of a new strange lump in his throat, a lump that no amount of swallowing would displace, he turned away, blindly groping for a seat. Curzon followed him and placed the squirming bundle in his unwilling arms.

"You've got to help me with her," said the father. "You're all she's got beside myself."

"Please God, I'll do my best," said Steadman huskily.

"We'll call her Aileen," said Captain Curzon after a while. "It means light, and there's the day." He pointed

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