AN OCEAN TRAMP.

THE INNATE HEROISM THAT SAVED THE SHIP.

One fine evening in December I pulled off in the coaling company's smart gig to the three thousand ton tramp steamer "Corona," then rolling on the long Atlantic swell just outside the breakwater of Las Palmas harbor, Grand Canary. As the white gig flashed through the clear green water there was ample opportunity to look at the vessel, and her appearance was by no means pleasing. With her full bows, square quarters, huge upright funnel, and rusty sides, she was not an attractive object as loaded down to the last inch with nitrate from South America, she wallowed in the long sea slopes that swept round the end of the breakwater. Climbing over the low rail and forcing my way through a pandemonium of swarthy Spanish coal heavers, dealers in fruit and tobacco, and vendors of canaries, the latter alternately coaxing and abusing their feathered merchandise in the vain hope of making them sing, I met Captain Cranston.

"She's not exactly a floathing palace, but with fine weather will take you home all right, and you can see what a deep tramp is like at sea," said the latter.

Just then a dilapidated looking Englishman, clad in greasy dungaree, with a battered engineer's silk cap on his head, thrust on one side a gesticulating Spaniard who was trying to force a bunch of hard bananas and a half-dead canary on a grinning fireman, and, touching his grimy forehead, asked:

"Are you Captain Cranston, sir?"

"Yes," said the officer. "What is it you want?"

"I want to see if there's any chance of working a passage home. I'm a boilermaker and have served as fourth engineer. I'm starving here," was the answer.

"H'm! What are you doing in Las Palmas, then—deserted, I suppose?" said the Captain.

"No, sir. It was this way. I shipped at Liverpool aboard of the 'Coquimbo' to load coal at Cardiff for Rio, and the night afore she sailed I met Tom Stevenson, who served his time at Dunlop's."

"Never mind Stevenson—go on," interjected the skipper.

"Well, we went to have a partin' glass or two—not too much, sir; about a bottle of whisky atween two of us—an' when they turned us out at 11 Tom, he sits in the gutter, and sez he, 'I won't go home till morning.' I sez, 'Don't be a fool, Tom,' and a p'leeceman comes, so I goes off and makes down to the coal tips. It didn't seem quite the right tip, but I sees a big four-masted boat with a yellow funnel, and sez I, 'That's the "Coquimbo"—I knows the ugly look of her.' So I crawled aboard and goes to sleep in the fo'c'sle. When I awakened up, she were rolling heavy far out at sea, and when I got on deck I says to myself, 'It's another bloomin' African boat.' So it was, and they made me scrape paint, and when we got here the skipper he sez, 'Clear out, and be thankful you ain't locked up by the Consul.' and I landed without a cent."

The Captain hesitated and looked at the man once or twice, while the latter spat calmly on the deck. At last he said to himself, "The chief wants another hand with that broken-down engine of his," then, raising his voice, "All right, I'll take you if the chief engineer approves. Go and see him. Mind, I'm not going to sign you on and pay more than you're worth for stamps, but if you behave I'll give you a trifle to go ashore with."

While I leaned over the rail, smoking and watching the foam crawl past—crawl is the proper word—the chief officer came along, and in reply to my query, said:

"What kind of a boat is she? Well, you can see—about as hard an old tramp as was ever launched into the German Ocean. Besides, we've been knocking about for months, and there's shells and grass on her a foot along. The engineer says his mill is all to bits, too." Subsequent experience proved that this description was by no means exaggerated.

Turning out early nearly next morning, I climbed to the poop—for the "Corona" was of the usual well deck build—and could see nothing but an azure circle above and a sweep of sparkling foam flecked sea below, plied into ridges by the fresh trade breeze, across while the steamer slowly rolled.

One glance at the water, without looking at the log dial, was sufficient to show that she was only going six knots. So, climbing down the narrow steel-runged ladder, I made my way forward over the slippery iron deck, dodging the spouts of water which gushed in through the scuppers at every roll, to look for the chief engineer. Passing the engine room door, the thumping and clanging that floated up were quite enough to tell of worn-out journals and general out of linedness to one who could interpret it. I found the chief in his room, rubbing his hands with the inevitable ball of waste, and said:

"What kind of mill have you got?"

"Weel," he said—for most marine engineers are Clydesdale men—"there's maybe waur jobs afloat, but I havena seen yin. Man do ye no hear her clack-clackin' and wheeze-wheezin'? There's a third o' the tubes in the port boiler plugged and a'leakin', forby the firemen canna keep steam wi' they dirt o' coals."

Now, a Clydesdale man is rarely satisfied with his engine and would burn gold if he could get it, so I did not think too much of this outburst, but had only to understand that the engine was not what he would have called an "A 1 mill."

Soon afterward the already strong breeze began to freshen up, and when the sun sank, a glowing orb of copper beneath a ragged edged bank of dark clouds, leaving a brassy yellow glare across threatening sky and angry water, it was evident we were in for bad weather.

The seas were rapidly growing steeper and breaking more sharply, while the heavy steamer flung herself about as if she would shake the masts out of her, with water and spray already flying in all directions.

For some hours I hung about under the lee of the "dodgers," or canvas screens, chatting with the mate and trying to evade the stinging spindrift which lashed our faces like a whip from time to time. At last, as the poop disappeared to the top of the hand wheel in a rush of water, the mate, shaking the water from his sou'wester, said:

"If she jumps any more, the chief will be slowing her down. He's an awful old heathen over that broken-down engine of his, and the second says he sits and talks to it in bad weather. Anyway, the sooner we get this hooker home the better."

Sleep that night was difficult, for every now and then, as the steamer lifted her stem clear of the sea, the whole poop shook to the heavy vibration of the whirring propeller, until, knowing what ship it was and bad rivets are, I sincerely wished myself out of it.

In the morning I found the water pouring in over either rail, while all around was a wild, drifting, crested sea. Some of the cargo had shifted, and the ship lay down to it and wallowed, as only a tramp can, shoving her bows up to foremast into the big ridges that rolled upon her. The chief said:

"Man, the auld mill's turning half speed, but we're gaun back sterrun first tae Las Palmas."

Then misfortunes began to arise. Something got adrift on the forecastle head and clanged about. It may have been an unshackled chain of anchor lashing. Three men, watching their time and clinging to the rail when a heavy sea came on board, crawled forward. I was watching them from the bridge, and I saw an unusually large wave rising ahead—a wall of glittering green water, curling over into foam at the summit. The Captain waved his hand to the men and they grasped the rails. Next moment the bows disappeared deep in the sea, and when the steamer slowly lifted a steaming forecastle out of the ocean, only one remained, clinging, half drowned, to the rails, while as the vessel rolled heavily down and the sea poured out I saw his companion clutch at the bulwarks, miss them, and disappear beyond all hope of rescue in a smother of foam.

The other poor fellow lay washing about the deck beneath with broken ribs, and as three or four seamen crept forward to go to his aid, Mack came up with a long face to say that more of the tubes in the port boiler had burst and that the water was pouring out under the grates from a leak in the back end. He said:

"I hae scaulden baith hands an' feet trying tae pit in the patent stoppers, but there's that much steam an' hot water flyin' round it canna be done."

There was a brief consultation, and it was decided to draw the fires in one boiler while the firemen did their best to raise enough steam from the remaining one to keep the ship's head to sea.

"Mind, Mack, if she falls off in this sea it's all up. Be quick," said the Captain, to which the chief answered briefly:

"I hae been in a hot furance afore, and I can gang again. There'll be no time lost."

So the rest of the day and all night we lay to, every man at his post, while with ventilators torn up, hatch covers ripped off, and waters gurgling about deep in the holds, the "Corona" swung to the heavy Atlantic sea in imminent peril. Next morning a steady clang and clatter floated up through the stokehold gratings, and a fireman, wiping the sweat from the sooty face, came up to say that the chief wanted me below to see how repairs were done at sea. The chief engineer, looking gaunter and grimmer than ever, was swathing himself in sacks opposite the front of the port boiler, which, although the fires had been drawn, was still almost at blue heat. His third was trying to persuade him not to enter the flue himself, but the chief shook him off.

An acrid smell of charring wood floated out of the three feet flues, and then, while we held our breath, the chief slowly crawled down the hot furnace and disappeared into the dark boiler, while a fireman followed him along the wing flue. For some minutes there was a clattering hammers, and then a nerve-trying silence. We listened with hearts in our mouths, but only heard the hammering of the plates as a heavy sea struck the ship. Then a smothered cry came from the flue, "For God's sake get me out!" and, leaning forward, two firemen dragged the engineer forth, blackened and burned, after which he promptly collapsed into a dead faint, while a fireman went into the other flue at the risk of his life, and, making fast a rope, his comrade was hauled out. Presently the chief gasped and sat up, holding out a hand on which the flesh was peeling from the bones in rags. "I can do nae mair," he said. "It's a boilermaker's job. An' we canna drive the ither boiler at that rate any longer. It's no safe the noo. She'll fall off in the trough of the sea when the engine slows—an' roll over. Lord have mercy on us!"

Just then a dilapidated greaser came in from the engine room, and I recognized the man who was working his passage. "You should have sent for me before," he said. "Give me the tools."

"What dae ye ken aboot calking?" asked the chief roughly.

"I was the best boilermaker in Hartlepool before I took to drink," was the quite reply.

"Give him the tools. It's neck or nothing the noo," said the chief.

The stranger carefully wrapped his hands in the sacks, and then, with a hammer slung around his neck, crawled into the black mouth of the flue, pushing a flat engine lamp before him. The red glare of the boiler lamps fell on anxious faces, dripping with sweat and smeared with soot, all turned toward the yawning mouth of the flue and as I watched I could plainly feel a tiny artery pulsing as if it would burst beneath my ear. Then the tap of the hammer ceased, there was a clatter, as of something dropping in the combustion chamber, and with a low hiss, as of water on hot metal, the dim light went out.

"He's dropped his lamp. Get in one of you, and bring him out," said the third engineer. And while four firemen struggled to be first to undertake the dangerous work the chief staggered across the stokehold, and, turning a wheel, the sharp clang of the brass rams pumping up the half empty boiler rang out across the silence.

The seconds dragged slowly past in anxious suspense, while only a rustling sound and a sour smell of charring wood and smouldering cloth drifted out of the black furnace. Then there was a shuffling along the plank, and the fireman fell out a limp heap amid the coal below.

"I'm done; take hold!" he gasped. And his comrades seized a shrivelled blackened hand that lay upon the deal plank, ringed round with a smouldering sleeve. A moment later they hauled out a ghastly object with charred clothing, singed hair, and blackened face, and laid it, with the features distorted in a slightless spasm of pain, carefully upon the floorplates.

"Poor fellow! I'm afraid he's gone. Get those fires started," said the third engineer, kneeling down and lifting the unconscious form in his arms.

Presently the relighted fires roared and crackled, and while the half hours crept slowly by and the finger of the steam gauge steadily mounted the scale, the third engineer, surrounded by such firemen whose duties were over, knelt on the coal, bathing the blistered face and hands with the healing oil and trying to force a few drops of spirits between the clenched teeth. At last, just before the change of the morning watch, the burned and blackened lids fell back and the eyes opened.

A faint smile crept over the scorched face, softening away the stamp of pain, and the voice of the dying man sounded hollow and strange as he spoke in low gasps. "I've earned my passage—anyway—the leak's stopped. Mine's been a hard—hard life—it's finished now—goodby." Then the weary eyes closed forever on this world.

There is little more to be told. With steam from both boilers the "Corona" was able to keep head to sea until the gale broke and a faint, watery sunlight streamed down between lines of whirling clouds, and shone across the foaming ridges below.

At eight bells the engines stopped for a few minutes, and as the solemn words: "We therefore commit his body to the deep, in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life," sounding clearly above the gurgle and swish of the water along the plates of the plunging ship, the stern grating was tipped up, and there was a heavy splash in the sea.

Then a silence fell over the bareheaded crew, and they turned softly away, a hazy idea in each man's heart—for Jack is not much given to sentiment and can rarely express himself clearly—that whatever the boilermaker's past life may have been he had at least made a good end, and possibly also a vague pride in another proof—although he has proved it over and over again—that even the "drunken sailorman" can occasionally die in a manner of which his countrymen have no cause to be ashamed.

Though he could never put it into words, poor Jack has got the feelings in him which a poet has expressed—

"But once in a while we can finish in style—
For the ends of the earth to view."

CHOLERA INFANTUM.

Cholera infantum is one of the most dreaded diseases of infancy. It is prevalent during the heat of summer in spite of all the care mothers may take to guard against it, and it sometimes progresses so quickly that death occurs in a few hours no matter what care is given the child. The first thing to do is to stop feeding the child and give him plenty of fresh air and pure water to drink. Give Baby's Own Tablets to carry off the poison in the system. Do not under any circumstance give a medicine to check the diarrhoea, except under the advice of a doctor. By using Baby's Own Tablets the cause of the diarrhoea will be removed, and the disease will thus be checked in a natural manner. Proof that the Tablets cure this too often fatal trouble is given by Mrs. Herbert Burnham, Smith's Falls, Ont., who says: "When my eldest child was six weeks old he had an attacd of cholera infantum and was at death's door. My doctor advised me to try Baby's Own Tablets and in twenty-four hours baby was better; the vomiting and purging ceased and he regained strength rapidly."

Keep the Tablets in the house—their prompt use may save your little one's life. Sold by medicine dealers or mailed at 25 cents a box by writing the Dr. Williams Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

BRUTALITY TO CHILDREN.

The French have been regarded as a chivalrous people, but infidelity destroys the spirit of chivalry. They have been making war on helpless woman, turning them out of their convent homes and threatening vengeance on any one who should dare to receive them. Now they have turned their attention to children. When President Loubert's son made his First Communion lately, they had to content themselves with a resolution censuring the first citizen of the Republic. Dealing with people of humble station they were braver. As a number of boys and girls were leaving St. James' Church, Reines, a few weeks ago after having made their first Cummunion, they were attacked by a body of anticlericals. One little boy was knocked senseless with a blow of a loaded cane; another got such a shock that he had to be taken to the hospital and will probably not recover. Many little girls had their veils torn off and their faces spat upon. The police made no effort to protect these children and the Government, by doing nothing, tactly approves the rowdyism!—Antigonish Casket.

FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD.

AUGUST 15.

American Herald.

In the system of Christianity, in the story of the Church, in the hearts of the faithful, in the glory of heaven, the Virgin Mother forever has her place beside her Divine Son, and the name of Mary lives upon the lips of these who call upon the name of Jesus. The devotion of the Church to the Blessed Virgin may be said to consist of two parts. First, we honor Mary, and, secondly, we have recourse to her intercession. Hence, in order to prove the reasonableness of this devotion it is only necessary to prove—first, that Mary is worthy of honor, and, secondly, that she has the power and the inclination to help us. Is Mary worthy of honor? Well, if any one ever asks you the question let your answer be: "Surely Mary is worthy of all honor given her by God Himself. He is the infallible Judge of all worthiness; and there is no honor which men can pay to the Blessed Virgin Mary equal to the honor which God bestowed upon her when he elevated her to the dignity of being mother to His Son. Mary is Mother of God. What honor—provided it be less than the honor due to God alone—can be too great to lavish upon her whom out of all creatures actual and possible, Jesus selected as His mother. But in the second place, from their motherhood comes not only dignity, but power. Throned Queen of Heaven, seated at the right hand of her Son and her God, what shall Mary ask and not obtain? What prayer of hers can fall unheeded upon the ear of Jesus? What prayerful look shall fail to touch that Sacred Heart that first was formed of her purest blood?

But if Mary be worthy of honor — if from her dignity as Mother of God comes her power to hear us and to help—it only remains to ask if, being able, Mary is also willing to assist us? Behold the answer, Mary is our Mother! Even in our fallen nature, branded as it is with the degradation which sin has brought upon it, there are still some feelings which seem beyond the reach of corruption, and chief of these is mother's love. It is unselfish and everlasting, patient and ineffaceable; it never tires, it never gives up; time cannot weaken it; ingratitude itself cannot kill it. Even in this cold world the mother will not forget the son whom she has borne. Unlovely he may be to others, but they do not see him with a mother's eye. He may have drifted far from the innocence of childhood, he may be stained with many a crime, his hand may be against the world and the world's hand against him, but still, while his mother lives, he holds one fast, one firm friend. The world may frown on him, but her eyes light up with welcome when he comes. The heart that cherished him in his days of innocence, when he was a child, cannot forget him even in his days of crime, when he is grown into a sin-stained man. Sorrowing, but with a patience like the patience of heaven, her head, her house, her heart, are open to the world-worn prodigal. He may have placed the early wrinkle on her brow, and sown the silver streaks upon her hair; he may have planted thorns in her pillow and made her heart ache with very anguish for his follies and his crimes; still she remembers only that she is his mother. When all her schemes have failed, when his sins—as sins always do—have found him out and dragged him down, when the hand of sorrow has bowed him to the dust, his mother's hand is there to soothe, his mother's heart is there to sympathize, his mother's love is there to pour balm into the wounds that sin and sorrow have inflicted on his soul. And Mary is your mother. You have it on the word of the dying Saviour: "Behold thy Mother." And what a Mother? Earthly mother may forget her son, and remember no more the child whom she has borne, but Mary can no more forget her children than she can forget Him who committed them to her tender motherhood.—Sacerdos.

THE QUESTION-BOX ANSWERS.

REPLIES TO QUESTIONS RECEIVED ON MISSIONS TO NON-CATHOLICS.

By Rev. Bertrand L. Conway of the Paulist Fathers.

In his preface to this book Cardinal Gibbons states that it "answers in a brief and popular manner the most important questions actually received by the author during the past five years of missionary activity in all parts of the United States from Boston to Denver." These words of praise are weighty, coming as they do from one who has himself prepared a work of the same nature, long since become one of the most popular books of the nineteenth century. Father Conway gathers under more than sixty titles a multitude of objections received by the Diocesan Missionaries on their apostolic tours here and there in the United States. Not all of them affect immediately the special tenets of Catholicism. The rule of faith, the "notes" of the true Church, politico-ecclesiastical matters, peculiar institutions of Catholicism like celibacy. abstinence, fasting and indulgences, come in for a large meed of explanation. The Mass, the Sacraments, the Blessed Virgin and Saints, the life to come, are other sources of ignorance or misunderstanding. It is remarkable to what an extent these average objections of the non-Catholic mind square with the original polemics of Protestantism in the sixteenth century, or when they are new, are nearly all drawn from erroneous views of the great lines of the Church. It needs no profound work like Moehler's Symbolism to grapple with this material—one would think after reading the book that the average American mind had been little touched by the advanced Protestant theological literature of the last two centuries. If these objections really represent the elements of religious doubt and hesitation in the American mind as regards Catholicism, there is reason for believing the assertion of Mr. Henry Sidgwick in a late issue of the Atlantic Monthly, viz., that there is no longer any insurmountable doctrinal obstacle to the reunion of the Protestant churches with the Roman Church on the basis of her actual teaching. There are other instructive thoughts suggested by the examination of these curious statistics.

This little catechism may rightly hope to become a popular vade mecum. Its place is already marked in the average Catholic home library besides the Faith of Our Fathers and the Catholic Doctrine of Faa di Bruno, not to speak of older works like Hay's Sincere Christian and Milner's End of Controversy. The style is quite suitable to the scope of the work—direct, clear, and simple. There is a sustained effort to make known frankly and sufficiently the elements of Catholic truth and discipline in a diction that avoids theological phraseology without losing fullness and precision. The writer does not try to say all that might be said, but only what is needed to make clear the immediate vision of his opponent or disciple. Such a book is equipped to take care of itself, to be its own tongue, its own commentary. Its circulation should therefore be an unlimited one. Improvements will no doubt be suggested. Thus, the titles of all books cited are indeed printed in a special bibliography, but they might be again grouped with others in a logical order, to furnish a course of regular and progressive reading in Catholic theology and history. The titles of chapters ought to be numbered both in the text and in the table of contents, and with this might be combined a progressive numbering of all the paragraphs. Where an index-subject includes several references, it might be well to introduce the practice of indicating in heavier type the page or pages where an objection is most efficiently dealt with. Finally, we cannot help suggesting that a companion volume of "Select Readings" be issued, drawn, when possible, from eloquent non-Catholic writers, and by cross-references made to act as a companion or key to certain important lines of objection. We wish Father Conway and his co-laborers an ever-growing measure of success in the immense vineyard that has been allotted to them. Here grow brambles, it is true, and here are the ruins of a rich cultivation—but here also are fertile soil, abundant sap, racy if wild fruit, the traces of former success and comfort, consoling and inspiriting evidences of former unity and communion. Only the persistent and ingenious husbandry of charity may hope to reclaim these lost provinces from the moral desolation that has fallen or is impending over them—but it is precisely as Catholicism that the Almighty has planted the inexhaustible reservoir of charity, as wide as the world and humanity, and as inexhaustible as the divine love itself.—Very Rev. Thomas J. Shahan in Catholic University Bulletin.

Truculant Rascality.

A Protestant clergyman, Rev. J. R. Wakeford, speaking recently at a meeting of the English Church Union at Liverpool, said this about Orangemen:

"The knowledge that William III. won the battle of the Boyne is the entire theological knowledge of Orangemen. Orangemen have changed their religion but never their character—that of truculent rascality."

With the character of the Orangemen as thus emphasized there is nothing in conflict in the entire history of the brotherhood. They have been a "bad lot" from the start.

There is nothing steadfast in life but our memories We are sure of keeping intact only that which we have lost.—Madame Swetchine.

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