

queen of the mermaids here they affirmed had often been seen sitting in this chair through hours of a summer night. But the chair was empty now and so were all the rocks; and the maids must have been off bathing in the phosphorescent sea.

Splash!

A dark object plunged into the water from one of the flat sea-rocks and sent a thousand pale yellow sparks about. At the moment we all thought it was a mermaid, and the fishermen were not able afterwards to make up their minds thoroughly about it, but I am convinced now that it was a seal. Then we turned our prow toward the narrows, and took a last look at the fantastic pinnacles around the Grot, at the mysterious chair, then listened once again, till our ears had drunk their fill, to the sweet mystic music; and sailed away.

Two hours sail brought us to the offing of the spot where the fated ship had gone down. The night being cloudless any object afloat could be discerned for a considerable distance, and Jim requested all to keep a sharp look out. Presently from out the shadow of the cliff a boat shot across our bows. At once we perceived that this was the Underwriters' skiff, for besides the crew there were two policemen on board.

"Wherebound?" asked the largest policeman in gruff tones.

"Well I suppose that's *our* business" answered Jim, "I think we have the right to sail these seas if we want to."

"If you don't know how to be civil, I think I can teach you," and the policeman made an ominous movement with his rifle.

"Well, thin, faith as to tacin' me to be civil, I don't think its any use in your thryin', if I'm not inclined that way. You made some motion with that gun o' yours, just now. Now, let me ask if I'm to look on you as a common murderer that makes movements as if he's goin' to shoot if he can't get people to be polite, or as an interferin' boaster as tries to skeer people that can't be skeered. Now, look, misther policeman, I don't belave you could strike the wather there wid your gun this minute. Upon me sowl, I'll sit here for ye to blaze at me for an hour." The policeman, at this unexpected turn of affairs, looked very much like a dumbfounded sheep that had lately been playing the lion. He did, at last, try to cover his discomfiture by putting on an official air and saying:

"I'll keep my eye on you. I think a winter in jail on bread and water may help to mend your manners, as well as your morals."

"Divil resave ye; here, but take the shot at me, wont ye?" Jim retorted, holding up his arms in mock defiance. "Now, misther boaster, wid the brass buttons an' the pot hat, if I was a barn, and the barn was alive, I wouldn't be afraid of you wid a gun."

"Pull away from this ruffian," the official said, sitting up very stiffly.

"Go long you boastin', intherferin' loafer, an' mind your own business; and next time let people sail where tney please without meddlin'." I put my thumb upon my nose and extended my little finger in the direction of the parting officer; Edgar did the same, so did the rest; when we all said "Ba-a-a," and sailed away under the gloom of the cliff. We had not proceeded far when we observed that the police-boat was after us.

"He's bent on shpoilin' our cruise," Jim said, as he peered out under the mainsail at the following skiff; "but I don't think he'll shpoil it much after all. There's plenty of win' comin' an' I don't give a thravnycen for the dirthy peeler." The sails were hauled in tight, and the skiff was brought close to the wind. Then she plunged onward like a spirited horse under tight reins.

"It's Paddy Doolin's dirthy tub after Jim Foley's clain, fast shkiff," shouted Jim, as our pursuers fell behind and to leeward. "Slack away; there, now, keep quiet. Do you see that?" and Jim pointed to leeward to a small dark object. In a few seconds we were beside it, and it proved to be a bale about four feet long and two and a-half feet thick. It was heavy and ungainly, and we found that we would have much difficulty in getting it into the boat. But the police skiff was nearly half a mile a stern, and we had plenty of time. Jim, his man and Edgar struggled to the full of their bent with the box, while I kept the little craft up in the wind. At last it was got in over the side, and we all gave a hurrah. Then Jim grabbed the tiller, the sheets were pulled in, and the skiff went along almost in the wind's eye.

"Me respects to ye, Misther Peeler," Jim shouted "Thry to ketch us wid Paddy Doolin's dirty tub wont ye. Ye're nice fellows to come down to this coast and chase naite, clain shkiffs, ain't yez? Good night, Misther Constable."

Crack! Then there was a flash, and a bullet said "pat" upon the water, about twenty paces to the right of us.

"We're safe enough," Jim said. "He doesn't want to shstrike us; an' he couldn't if he thried. Divil resave me, though, it is whin he doesn't want to hit us that he is the most dangerous." Another shot was fired, and another, but we heard no more bullets. Notwithstanding Jim's lack of respect for the constable's markmanship, I lay down in the bottom of the boat. Edgar did the same, so did the man; but Jim sat bolt upright in the stern in a state of comic unconcern.

In half an hour the pursuer had faded in the dim horizon of the moon-lit sea; and we reached the cove without any further adventure. The bale contained, I think a gross of cashmere shawls which the wreckers, after putting into fresh water, to take the salt out of them, promptly secreted. On the forenoon following a policeman, the same whom we had the passages with in the night, walked up from the dock to Jim's cottage. Jim was called for by the said officer and promptly appeared.