"SHIP AHOY!"

A Yarn in Thirty-six Cable Lengths.

FIRST CABLE LENGTH.

FOW THE MERRY MAY CAME IN.

"Now, my sons, all together!"
"Yo-ho!—hey-y!"
"Now another?"
"Yo-ho!—hey-y!"
"Now all together, my lads!"
"Ahoy!—ho!—ho!—hey!—yer-hip!"
"Now a good one!"
"Yo-ho!—ho!—ho!—hey!"
"Another pull, my sons!"
"Ho! ho!—yoh!—yo-ho!—hup!"
"Well pulled, boys! Now yoicks!"
"Ho! I hauts yo! hey!
Cheerly, mates!—ho!—hey-y!"

Pull, stamp, and heat together, and the good ship, the Merry May, working into dock, with her flowing sheet, gone at the cross-trees, her mainsail-gallant belly-sprung, a splice in her spanker-boom, and her cables battered and bruised of paint. Two boats swept away, and a big piece of her bulwarks patched up by a sorry fashion after that great wave popped her, and cut its way out of the port side as through the bulwarks had been made of bandwood. Worse than all, too, there is about as strange a make-shift of a rudder as was ever seen by, other than her voyage from Colombo, in rounding the Cape the sea rose, and the wind blew when the Banil cutted her a scurvy, and he swore a dozen times—pooh! a thousand times in oaths, but in these times it is generally held that the May would go to the bottom.

But she did not go! for Captain John Anderson knew his duty as well as any sailor in the merchant service, and fought the storm like a gamecock and brought—yes, he is like a Briton, when a score of other men would have given up, and gave down on their knees in despair, prayed to God to save them.

"Like a set of lubbers!" said old Benah, when telling story at the "Jolly Bachelors" afterward, over a glass of Mrs. Garnett's best rum-and-water.

"Bet his life!" said Bines, pot in hand, "I taught the boy to make his first knot—I made a sailor of him; and a sailor he is, every inch. God bless him!"

Here old Jeemiah Banil wiped either a tear or a drop of rum-and-water out of his eye.

"Sink! Not she. We was knocking about for a fortnight, and he never once left the deck. Sails was blown outer the bolt-rope, hatchwatr swept away, boats stove, and the fallow was ready to give up; but d'ye think he would? Not he. Why, bless yer, he's had much out of a true Briton that if Davy Jones himself was to come up and say he, saying, 'Yo-ho! giv' up, yer lubber, fortune,' he wouldn't believe him! Not he. He says to me, just about the worst of it, when it was lowest, the greatest gale we ever did blow, 'Jerry,' he says, 'I understand this ship belongs to Mr. Halley,' he says; 'and she's got a cargo in her of tea and silk; and a hundred thousand pounds' worth of Mr. Halley's brief sun and brighter shade.' But still Robert go, Jehovah calls—And if I die, I die. Hark! as I go by scurvy And golden pillar, sweet shrill voices cry, Unbared of others—'Robert, stay the May.' O my lassie of lassie! how thy hands Cling to my robes and pluck pin to the King. God! Jim, his creepin up before my feet! But if I die, I die!—"

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"Hey! Mr. Benah—Jerry—Jemiah not a fuss," said Anderson, gently, as he passed his arm round the slight old figure and kissed the quivering lips.

"Bless—" said the old lady, enjoying the embrace, but instantly out of sorts with the "But not before you get your supper, you know," said the son, smiling; "they won't grant me there long. I'll be back in a month, and—"

"I don't know what I shall do without Mr. Halley," said John Anderson, sorrowfully, and with the cloud returning to his forehead.

"And I do not want her to be laying traps for my boy."

"Why, you poor old goose," cried John, laughing outright; "what a fine fellow this one of yours's, isn't he?"

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"Yes, sir, Anderson—Halley—no—no—no. If you can imagine Mary, Queen of Scots, at the age of seventy-two, and wearing a black silk dress, you have before you Mrs. Anderson, dignified, and with a stiffness that stick in one hand, while with the other she crosses the strip, brown, Sam-cards of her son's hair. Her fair old face stands out from her stiffly starched ruff-like collar and crimped cap. Her gray hair is neatly arranged over her temples, and every feature seems to speak and say—"This is my son."

It is a quaint old room where they are; well furnished, but there is a nautical smell about it. You can even smell the sea—the odour being furnished by some bunches of bladder-wrack hanging from the nail that supports the painting of "The Flying Betsy back passing the Nab Light"—a finely executed piece of art, signed, yes, being signed and set, a series of dots along the keel represent oakum and pitch, and the humble subject being the subject with a rudeness that suggests their all having been formed in the same month. Over the chimney-piece hangs the portrait of the late Captain Anderson, pere, who appears to have run a good deal to fat, to judge by the portrait in the top-gear, bearing upon its long nose the flag of all nations. There are cabinets of pickings, too, with curiosities from all parts. A chest from China, a screen from Japan, some fine Canadian wildfowl, and foot skins and feathers from the Cape—collections commenced by the father and continued by the son.

"So, you're going up to Mr. Halley's, John, are you?"

"Yes; to lunch, nothing."

"I don't think you ought to go, John—the first day you've been with your mother."

"Bless yer, mother, I'm all right, and I'ld go to the world's end to see Mr. Halley."

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