

"My sister writes they're soon to be married, too."

"Did I answer? I don't know. The next thing I remembered I was far away out of the town, by myself—alone, where I could roll on the ground, tear up the earth and call aloud, 'Signe! Signe!'"

"Alas, rage is very impotent, and when it is over there follows dumb misery, harder to bear because it must be hidden. I never doubted but what I had been told was true. In spite of the efforts I had made to cheat myself into a brighter mood, for months there had been hanging over me the certainty of coming evil; but not through Henrik. In my thousand speculations not a doubt of him had ever crossed my mind."

"Oh, Signe! I, who had been reckless and spendthrift, how I saved and hoarded for you! There was a gay-colored silk shawl, some flowers made from the feathers of birds, white coral, shells, a trinket or two, and the money I had put by. Twenty times I spread out all before me, asking myself 'What shall I do with all this—this, that was meant for her?' and I ended by making it into one parcel and writing on it Signe's name. And I looked about to find a ship going to Norway, and then I entrusted it to the keeping of some one who promised to have it safely delivered to her."

"God help the man who is struck by such a blow when alone and friendless in a foreign land; if he is not to seek death he must find destruction."

"I pass over the next four years of my life, to blot out which I would willingly forfeit half of that which remains to me."

"I had long since left my ship and had entered on board a Chilean one trading between Valparaiso and Rio Janeiro. I was first mate of this vessel, and the crew, grown familiar with a recklessness which they called courage, all obeyed and most of them looked up to me. We were making for the port of Concepcion, some three hundred miles from Valparaiso. It was moderately fair weather, and we calculated that in another couple of days we should reach there; but the night set in cloudy, and in spite of there being a moon the darkness thickened round us. Gradually a heavy fog spread over and hung low on the water, hiding from our sight the silent and terrible rollers, the first warning of which was the fury of one breaking into the ship and drenching to the skin every soul on board of her. Taken aback by the shock, had not the captain from experience been thoroughly familiar with the coast, our situation would have been an awkward one; as it was we felt anything but secure until about ten on the following morning, when the wind freshening a little, the haze cleared away and every man breathed more freely. There was nothing now to do but keep the vessel on her course. The captain went below leaving the charge to me. Some time passed by, and then I believe, although I could never quite ascertain, some one went to rouse him."

"He came on deck to find that in his absence I had managed that the ship was being steered straight into land again. I don't attempt to describe his anger. To estimate such an error one must be a seaman, and I had not a word to say in defence of a mistake which was inexplicable to myself."

"He was still enlarging on the disaster which my carelessness—he would give no credit to my ignorance—might have led us into, when we were silenced by the cry of something in sight—a ship—and in distress, seemingly; and by the aid of the glass we could see, not far from a towering rock, a vessel which the terrible surf had carried over the shoal and half embedded in the sand. Into my mind leaped the thought that there was the solution of the puzzle—to get aid for these poor fellows was the reason I had blundered. If help was to be given I would give it. Only waiting until we got near enough to get a better view, I put the question to the captain. 'Yes, I could go if any of the rest would go with me.' I asked them—made a sort of speech—and He whose hand must have ruled the helm helped me, so that with one voice they shouted 'Yes.'"

"I must pick my crew," I said; and I singled out six men, and the rest helped us to get out the boat, and we started on our way while the captain brought the ship to lie-to as the breakers would permit."

"While reading of wrecks and the many men saved from them, I have asked myself how was it I could remember so little of that time of danger. Truly, I can only tell you that we reached the ship; that my first question was, had they any sick or hurt among them; if so, they must be lowered first, then the youngest and least experienced. The boat was thus filled. We left, reached our own ship, and with better heart than before set off back again for those who were waiting us. I had not left them without swearing a promise that not one should be left behind; but about halfway there came over us a dread that saps the courage of the stoutest sailor. Following us we perceived three sharks, and the men who had voluntarily braved the anger of the waves trembled in every limb at the sight of these monsters of the deep. There was a common pause. I pulled out the revolver I had with me and pointing said, 'The first who stops pulling I shoot dead.' My resolution steadied them; they gave way with all their strength, and the faint sound of a cheer told us how we were gaining ground."

"Between fatigue, exposure, and the extra amount of drink they had taken, for, as far as I could guess, few among the crew were quite sober, the task of getting the men from off the

ship was not an easy one. Floating timber, spars, rigging, threatened with each roller to swamp us, and by the time the last man was in the boat I felt pretty nigh exhausted. I made a pause while word was passed asking if they were all there. The captain, with several others, in trying to throw a line on to the rock had perished before we reached them. The answer came, 'Yes;' but with it a doubt seized me. Stupefied as they seemed, could I trust them? Seizing my moment, I rushed forward. There at the door near the cabin a man was lying prostrate, his face hidden. 'Dead drunk,' I thought; and my hand was on him when he sprang to his feet. It was Larsen. 'Off with you; leave me,' he cried savagely. 'I'll not be beholden for life to you.'"

"Please yourself," I growled, turning away. 'Take that to Signe,' and a canvas money-bag was thrown after me; 'tell her if I forced her to marry me, it is by own free act I make her a widow now.'"

"My heart gave a great leap, but the same instant I felt its bound make me a murderer. I took a step forward, and pointed my revolver so that its muzzle all but touched him."

"I won't leave you here living," I cried. 'Come with me or I fire.'

"Fire."

"His lips said the word—no sound escaped them. The effort he was making was greater than he had strength to endure, his face blanched as in death, his body fell together, he gave a stagger so that I caught him by the throat, dragged him along, and we stumbled and fell one on the top of the other into the boat, where he lay senseless as a log. For a few minutes I was stunned, but quickly recovering we made all speed back to the ship, where, to the astonishment of all, I laid claim to Henrik. 'I know him,' I said. 'I'll look after him; help me to take him to my cabin.'"

"The history of the ill-fated ship we had rescued these men from was one that is very common. She was bound from Rio with a heavy cargo, taken hastily on board and clumsily stowed by a crew made up of men of all nations. The captain who had lost his life, judging from the report given, was a brave fellow, but unable to maintain discipline. At the first show of danger there had been a general rush to the spirit store, which, although guarded by Larsen—whom they described as a Northman who had only joined lately—they forced and drank until there was not a sober one left among them. Many were hurt and needed looking after. We had no doctor; the sole charge of Larsen was handed over to me. I need not enter into the details of his illness—a fever with great brain disorder, haunted and tortured by images of Signe and of me. Long before the moment when, reason suddenly returning so that he believed he was dying and wished to make a clean breast of it, I was in possession of how he had sinned and how they both had suffered; the reproaches she had heaped on him, the love she had withheld from him, the ever-gnawing agony of the demon jealousy. At length it became insupportable, and after a terrible scene he had left her, vowing that until he found death he would keep away. His object in getting to Rio was to be somewhere near me, so that through him word might reach me whenever Signe should be free to marry. When it comes to holding converse under the shadow of death, we go very straight to the point, and that day, when, worn out with much speaking, Henrik let himself fall back, to take, as he believed, his last sleep, not a trace of anger was left between us; no forgiveness had been asked, no repentance spoken of, but this full confession was accepted as freely as it was given."

"Well, you know, he recovered; in my turn I brought him back to life, and more, I sent him back to Signe. God is my witness that from that time I believe not a thought of jealousy existed between us. With a heart brimming over with satisfaction, I saw him set sail in the ship that was to carry him to Norway and to her. And from that hour, as if I had awakened from a hideous nightmare, I was a new being. At least I had never been wholly a bad fellow, and much of the folly I had plunged into, instead of distracting, disgusted me. By degrees my lost good temper, even my cheerfulness, came back, and by the time a year had passed I was cherishing thoughts of again seeing my home. It was true that at Bergen there was no good old mother to return to, but my sister and brothers still were there. In the letter Henrik had sent me after his arrival, he told me he had seen them, for he had been to Bergen to claim some money which, by the death of his father during his absence, had come to him. With it he meant to buy a share in a ship, of which he would be captain; and his only direct mention of Signe was, that when he again went to sea she wished to go with him. That seemed to speak well for their reconciliation. After that I heard no more from Henrik."

"I waited until the following spring before I left my ship, and then there was some delay in hearing of a homeward-bound one. Going down to the port one evening I met a friend."

"I've just left some one inquiring after you," he said. 'Larsen, the fellow who we all thought was going to die, you know.'"

"Larsen! he here—what's he doing?"

"He's captain of a ship; he's got a share in her. They've come from Monte Video with hides, I hear."

"After that I was not long in meeting Henrik, who was ashore searching for me."

"Signe is with me," he said; 'she wants to see you.' I suppose I seemed to hesitate, for as

if to urge me he added, 'her health hasn't been good since her baby died. You won't refuse her?'"

"Oh, no," I wished though, all the same, that I could think of some excuse why I should not go. I did not want to have the flavor of this bygone history taked up again. The Signe, she whom I had loved, was dead—this one was now nothing but Henrik's wife to me. We got into a boat, and as we neared where the ship lay, Henrik broke into the midst of something I was telling him by saying, 'You mustn't think her ill; she'll soon be better now—she only looks thin.'"

"Thin! This ghost, this shadow, with only the eyes left to remind me. Could it be Signe?—the Signe I had loved; the Signe I now knew had loved me!"

"Forgetting everything else, I flung myself down before her, and the tears poured from my eyes like water. I believe that not one of the three but knew what caused this outburst of sorrow, although each gave a different reason."

"You guess, don't you, that seeing they wished it, I joined them. Henrik was all anxiety to return home. In his opinion the sea did not agree with Signe. The weather, too, had set in warm; and heat, he said, always tried her. Alas! poor fellow, how pitiful were the poor devices he tried to veil the truth with!"

"That Signe was dying those who looked at her could not doubt; but to Henrik no one had ever dared to hint as much. Lose her now, just when he had gained her love! Fate could not be so cruel to him. So to me it was that Signe spoke openly, freely conversing of the time when she would no longer be with us. The hope of seeing Henrik and me reconciled to each other had been the strongest motive for her coming so far, and in the solemn talks we had together the sad past was laid bare."

"Henrik and I had so arranged our ship duties that it was not possible for us to be together with Signe; and both of us now felt this a relief. Daily she had grown weaker; she was not able to rise from her bed now. Every motion of the ship gave her such distress that, anxious as we were to get on, we had to lower the sails to stop the rolling. I think, at this time, his bitterest enemy must have felt compassion for Henrik. The unhappy fellow neither ate nor slept. Not a moment's rest did he give himself. Every one could see the agony he suffered; and yet, in the face of what was before him, he spoke as if there was still hope for Signe. We had on board with us one of those books about medicines which captains of vessels take to sea with them. In this he was forever searching for some fresh remedy; and because I would entreat him to let her be, he would turn fiercely on me, saying I did not care whether she was well or ill. What mattered it to me?"

"One evening as I sat by Signe's side watching—she had hardly moved or spoken that day—suddenly her hands stretched out. I turned and, looking on her face, I knew the moment for parting had come. Henrik! how should I get him? I dare not call his name for fear I might disturb her."

"Signe! I whispered; 'Signe, do you know me?' and I bent my face down to her, and the half-closed lids gave a quiver, and then the eyes opened, but not to look at me. The light that came into them was fixed above. A radiance spread over her face, and before its brightness faded the spirit of Signe had passed away."

"Henrik! I said, going on deck to him; but before I could add more, at sight of my face, he pushed past me, and was down in the cabin. At the threshold I caught hold of him. 'Nothing is of any more good now,' I sobbed. 'In an instant, without a struggle, before I could call you, it was all over. She did not speak. I don't know if she knew me.'"

"I fancied this might calm him; but he flung himself forward, and, catching her in his arms, poured out a torrent of reproach on me. I had neglected her. Fool that I was, she had but fainted; it was a swoon! Hadn't I eyes? Could I not see? And he began rubbing her forehead, chafing her hands, calling on every one he could think of to help him. He would have the whole crew down to try and bring back the circulation of her blood. Life had often been restored—after hours he had seen people brought in as dead breathe and move and speak again. So to humor him—for they looked on him as mad—the men came and spent hours in their vain endeavor; and then one by one they stole away, and the poor stricken soul was left alone with her loved one."

"After that night Henrik allowed me to have my will. There was but one order he gave. Signe's body was to be carried with us to land; and then he shut himself up in the cabin where she had lain so long and paid no more heed to anything going on around. What would have happened to the ship had I not been on board her, I cannot think. Possibly he might have roused himself; I do not know. As it was, unless to take sufficient food to keep himself alive, he neither moved nor spoke."

"You know full well, I dare say, that sailors are counted very superstitious among men. Their solitary lives feed the imagination, so that they tack their faith to dreams, omens and apparitions. Presently it became foreboding talk among those on board several had seen the ghost of Signe. It was a sign, they said, that her spirit was not at rest, and unless her body was given to the sea some terrible disaster would most certainly overtake us. Vainly, to calm these rumors, did I tell them that though, each

night going to see that all was safe, I often stood for hours by the coffin's side, never once had she appeared to me. My words had no weight. Our carpenter lay sick; our boy, a favorite among the crew, fell overboard; the murmurs which until now had been but the rumble of a distant thunder, became distinct and audible, until I was told that no man had engaged with me; I was not the captain there, and unless what they demanded was carried out, they refused any longer to obey. Nothing remained but to tell Henrik, and one evening I went to his cabin, and, without preamble, repeated to him what the crew had bid me say. 'So we must bury her,' I added stolidly; for since she died no word of friendship or of sympathy had been exchanged between us two; 'I have made all ready; no one will disturb us. Come with me.' And together we went."

"The moon shed its light over the water; myriad stars lit up the sky; reverently we lifted our burden, and then slowly lowered it down to the sea. Oh, the agony of that moment, when each waited for the other to let go! The hesitation passed swift as a flash of lightning; there was a splash; a cry wrung from the inmost souls of two men whose eyes met as they raised their bent heads, and sobbing fell each on the other's neck."

"Well, from that day Henrik and I have never crossed an angry look or word. We reached home in due time, but between one thing and the other, the cargo being next to spoil, the ship out of repair, all the money he had left him beside that which I had saved was gone. There were births in plenty open to me, but nothing for him; the sorrow that had tried him so sorely had turned him into an old man, more feeble and bent down than you now see him. For me to leave him would, I saw, be worse than his death blow; it would cost him his mind. So that when through old Jacob Anders dying the *Kolgeroes* wanted fresh hands, heartily I thanked heaven for giving us this opening. I am very well off here, more contented than half the people you meet; and as for Henrik, only one place in his eyes will be better, and that is, if ever we should get aloft, there to live, and never again part from Signe."

ARTISTIC.

ALMOST the only really fine monument to Wellington was erected by his tenants. It stands near the London entrance to his old Hampshire home, and is of bronze, nearly nine feet high, representing him in the field-marshal's uniform."

ONE of the pleasantest pieces of Italian news is that relating to the Corsini Palace in Rome. The Government decided to purchase it and make of it a *palazzo delle scienze*,—a sort of Roman Somerset House. Depretis, with the Minister of Education, Torlonia (the Roman syndicate), the presidents of the *Accademia* and other scientific societies, met with Prince Corsini to complete the contract. The terms included the palace, with all the land adjoining as far as the Janiculum, the price paid being \$625,000. After the papers had been signed, the Prince informed the assembled parties that he made a gift to the new establishment of the Corsini library and gallery of pictures, both of great value."

VARIETIES.

MR. WILKIE COLLINS has finished his long-announced novel, and it will be published next month. It is chiefly remarkable for a strong study of a vivisectionist of the most cold-blooded type."

MR. CHARLES DUDLEY WARNER begins his duties as editor of "The Drawer" in *Harpers Monthly* with the May number. The late Mr. W. A. Seaver had charge of this popular department of the magazine for many years."

MR. GEORGE PARSONS LATHROP is hard at work on a new novel, "Newport," which will run through a half-dozen numbers of *The Atlantic*, beginning in July. It is, as its name implies, a sketch of life and society in the old Rhode Island capital. Mr. Lathrop proposes, it is stated, to make New York his permanent abiding-place."

SOLAR CANNON OF THE PALAIS ROYAL.—Strangers in Paris who have happened to be in the garden of the Palais Royal at noon on a fair day, will have noticed groups of persons watching intently at a not very conspicuous object in the garden, but all eyes seem turned towards it. The object which attracts their attention is a small cannon of antique pattern, which is automatically fired at midday by the arrangement of a sun glass so adjusted as to concentrate the sun's rays upon the priming powder, and produce an explosion at exact noon. Referring to this little cannon *L'Astronomie* says it dates from a greater antiquity than is generally known. It thundered during the Commune, under the Empire, during the days of '48, under Louis Philippe, under the Restoration, during the wars of the Grand Armée, during the guillotines of the reign of Terror, on the day when Camille Desmoulins harangued the people, under Louis XVI., under Louis XV. In his charming "Journey from Paris to St. Cloud, by Land and by Sea," published in 1751, Neel makes his young tourist regulate his watch by it. The pillar on which it is fixed stands at the point where, in 1641, a year before his death, Cardinal Richelieu established a bond between the manors of St. Honoré and of the Archbishopric."