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ing and so certain to cost life that men attempted it only in final extremities, when the ship must be lightened at any cost. Alan had never seen the effect of such an attempt, but he had heard of it as the fear which sat always on the hearts of the men who navigate the ferries—the cars loose on a rolling, lurching ship! He was going to that now. Two figures appeared before him, one half supporting, half dragging the other. Alan sprang and offered aid; but the injured man called to him to go on; others needed him. Alan went past them and down the steps to the car deck. Half-way down, the priest whom he had noticed among the passengers stood staring aft, a tense, black figure; beside him other passengers were clinging to the handrail and staring down in awestruck fascination. The lowest steps had been crushed back and half upturned; some monstrous, inanimate thing was battering about below; but the space at the foot of the steps was clear at that moment. Alan leaped over the ruin of the steps and down upon the car deck.

A GIANT iron casting six feet high, yards across and tons in weight, tumbled and ground before him; it was this which had swept away the steps; he had seen it, with two others like it, upon a flat car which had been shunted upon one of the tracks on the starboard side of the ferry, one of the tracks on his left now as he faced the stern. He leaped upon and over the great casting, which turned and spun with the motion of the ship as he vaulted it. The car deck was a pitching, swaying slope; the cars nearest him were still upon their tracks, but they tilted and swayed ugly from side to side; the jacks were gone from under them; the next cars already were hurled from the rails, their wheels screaming on the steel deck, clanging and thudding together in their couplings.

Alan ran aft between them. All of the crew who could be called from deck and engine room and firehold were struggling at the fantail, under the direction of the captain, to throw off the cars. The mate was working as one of the men, and with him was Benjamin Corvet. The crew already must have loosened and thrown over the stern three cars from the two tracks on the port side; for there was a space vacant; and as the train charged into that space and the men threw themselves upon it, Alan leaped with them.

The leading car—a box car, heavily laden—swayed and shrieked with the pitching of the ship. Corvet sprang between it and the car coupled behind; he drew out the pin from the coupling, and the men with pinch-bars attacked the car to isolate it and force it aft along the track. It moved slowly at first; then leaped its length; sharply with the lift of the deck, it stopped, toppled toward the men who, yelling to one another, scrambled away. The hundred-ton mass swung from side to side; the ship dropped swiftly to starboard, and the stern went down; the car charged, and its aftermost wheels left the deck; it swung about, slewed, and jammed across both port tracks. The men attacked it with dismay; Corvet's shout called them away and rallied them farther back; they ran with him to the car from which he had uncoupled it.

It was a flat car laden with steel beams. At Corvet's command, the crew ranged themselves beside it with

bars. The bow of the ferry rose to some great wave and, with a cry to the men, Corvet pulled the pin. The others thrust with their bars, and the car slid down the sloping track; and Corvet, caught by some lashing of the beams, came with it. The car crashed into the box car, splintered it, turned it, shoved it, and thrust it over the fantail into the water; the flat car, telescoped into it, was dragged after. Alan leaped upon it and catching at Corvet, freed him and flung him down to the deck, and dropped with him. A cheer rose as the car cleared the fantail, dove, and disappeared.

Alan clambered to his feet. Corvet already was back among the cars again, shouting orders; the mate and the men who had followed him before leaped at his yells. The lurch which had cleared the two cars together had jumped others away from the rails. They hurtled from side to side, splintering against the stanchions which stayed them from crashing across the centre line of the ship; rebounding, they battered against the cars on the outer tracks and crushed them against the side of the ship. The wedges, blocks, and chains which had secured them banged about on the deck, useless; the men who tried to control these cars, dodging as they charged, no longer made attempt to secure the wheels. Corvet called them to throw ropes and chains to bind the loads which were letting go; the heavier loads—steel beams, castings, machinery—snapped their lashings, tipped from their flat cars and tumbled down the deck. The cars tipped farther, turned over; others balanced back; it was upon their wheels that they charged forward, half riding one another, crashing and demolishing, as the ferry pitched; it was upon their trucks that they tottered and battered from side to side as the deck swayed. Now the stern again descended; a line of cars swept for the fantail. Corvet's cry came to Alan through the screaming of steel and the clangor of destruction. Corvet's cry sent men with bars beside the cars as the fantail dipped into the water; Corvet, again leading his crew, cleared the leader of those madly charging cars and ran it over the stern.

The fore trucks fell and, before the rear trucks reached the edge, the stern lifted and caught the car in the middle; it balanced, half over the water, half over the deck. Corvet crouched under the car with a crowbar; Alan and two others went with him; they worked the car on until the weight of the end over the water tipped it down; the balance broke, and the car tumbled and dived. Corvet, having cleared another hundred tons, leaped back, calling to the crew.

THEY followed him again, unquestioning, obedient. Alan followed close to him. It was not pity which stirred him now for Benjamin Corvet; nor was it bitterness; but it certainly was not contempt. Of all the ways in which he had fancied finding Benjamin Corvet, he had never thought of seeing him like this!

It was, probably, only for a flash; but the great quality of leadership which he once had possessed, which Sherrill had described to Alan and which had been destroyed by the threat over him, had returned to him in this desperate emergency which he had created. How much or how little of his own condition Corvet understood, Alan could not tell; it was plain only that he comprehended that he

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