

kind of trimming or ornament, strikingly contrasted with the gay dresses of the nobles. It was easy to see that the Dean of the Clothworkers, in affecting this plainness of apparel, wished to make ostentatious display of his estate in life, and so to oppose pride to pride; for, in truth, this coarse wollen gown covered the most powerful man in Flanders. On his head he wore a flat cap, from under which his hair hung down half a foot long over his ears. A leathern belt drew in the wide folds of the gown about his body, and the hilt of a cross-handled knife glittered at his side. An excessive paleness, high cheek bones, and a wrinkled forehead, threw an air of deep thought over his countenance; while the loss of an eye gave a somewhat unpleasant expression there to his features. On common occasions there was nothing to distinguish him from ordinary men; but no sooner was he moved or interested than his glance became lively and penetrating; beams of intelligence and manly spirit shone from his remaining eye, and his bearing was proud and even imperious. On first entering the room, he cast a respectful glance on all present, mistakingly Master Roger, in whom he once perceived more of worldly craft than in the other two.

"Master Deconinck," commenced Adolf, "be pleased to draw near to me. I have something to ask of you that you must not refuse me, for I have no other hope but in you; only you must first give me your solemn assurance that you will never divulge to any human being that which I am about to communicate." "The just dealings and good offices of the lords of Newfoundland are not forgotten by the Clothworkers," answered Deconinck; "and you, noble sir, may ever count upon me as your faithful servant. Nevertheless, sir, allow me first to warn you, that if you have any hand in any way contrary to the rights of the commons, you will do well to keep it to yourself, and tell me nothing of it." "Since when then," cried Adolf, somewhat sternly, "have the Newfoundlanders touched you in your rights? Such language is injurious to my honor!" "Pardon me, sir, if my words have offended you," replied the Dean; "it is hard to distinguish the eyes from the goods, that one is obliged to trust all. Allow me to ask you only one question, the answer to which will remove all doubt from my mind at once; are you a Lillard noble, sir?" "A Lillard?" cried Adolf, indignantly; "no, Master Deconinck! In my breast beats a heart that has no nobility, but a heart that has no fear of nobility, and the very scheme about which I wished to consult you is directed against them." "Speak freely then, noble sir; I am at your service."

which he could draw it off and sell it by the gallon, or whatever measure of electrical use, just as there might be a demand for it. Now, I know that this matter of storing electricity, had always bothered the electricians, and had interfered considerably with the trade. 'I'm the only man,' said Professor Smith to me, 'who has solved the problem. I can collect and store away aboard this bark of mine enough electricity of prime quality to light the lamps of London for six months. I know where there is an unlimited supply of electricity to be had for nothing, all you have to do is to collect it, store it, and transport it. When you think what it costs to grind out electricity from dynamos, you will understand that if I had a shipload of electricity that has cost me nothing except the expense of a voyage to Greenland and back, I can supply the market at a price that will defy competition.' "But where's your mine of electricity?" said I. "It's in Greenland, the coast of working a mine with the ground frozen solid for a hundred feet from the surface will be pretty big."

"I can't describe the collecting apparatus, except by saying that it looked something like the hood of a monstrous big searchlight, filled with short lengths of wire fixed to a point so that they stood out by themselves all through the inside of the collector. However, I needn't try to describe it. The really important thing was that it worked beautifully and collected electricity even faster than the professor had expected. Every time the Northern Lights shot up a stream of electricity would pour into the receiver, and I fancied that I could hear it running into the tank as if it was a stream of water. But the professor said this was a mistake, and that it didn't make any noise whatever. Perhaps he was right, for up there in the North a man is apt to fancy that he sees and hears things that don't exist. That is why Arctic explorers, when they come home, manage to tell such interesting yarns. "It took less than half an hour to fill the first tank chock-a-block. When it was full the professor corked it up; and connected his collecting apparatus with the next tank. We worked along in that way pretty near all night, for the Northern Lights didn't seem to weaken until about 4 o'clock in the morning, and the professor was so interested that he wouldn't leave my side. I kept him company on deck, but everybody else was asleep. You see there wasn't really anything that the men could do, except stand still and watch the electricity flowing in the receiver, and I didn't see the use of keeping them on deck just for that. We filled five tanks that night, and the next night we filled the remaining four, and were ready to sail for England with a full cargo of the first quality of arctic electricity."

"The professor was perfectly happy for the first three or four days of the passage home, and then his troubles began; I might say my troubles, too, and the troubles of all hands, including the crew, was on deck in the middle watch of the fourth Cape of Greenland, when I saw a bright light coming by out of the main hatchway. Of course, I supposed it was one of the men with a lantern, and I waited for him with a baying plan, calculating to remind him that going below with a lantern and rummaging, without orders, wasn't allowed aboard that bark. But it wasn't any man; it was the ship's cat. Every hair of that blessed beast stood on end, and from his head to his tail he was crackling with electricity. He shone like a first-class Fresnel light, and whenever he brushed up against anything the sparks flew from him like drops of water from a dog when he shakes himself after having been overboard. The curious thing was that the cat didn't seem to appreciate his condition, or at any rate he didn't seem to mind it. He was always a mighty supercilious beast, and my idea is that when his fur began to rise up and sparkle he reckoned that somebody had been putting up a practical joke on him, and he calculated to spoil the joker's fun by not seeming to notice that anything unusual had happened. He was walking along the quarter deck in a slow, dignified sort of way, and was on the point of stopping to say good morning to me, when I stepped backward, and sang out to the boy to bring me a bucket of water. You see I didn't know but what the electricity might give me a serious shock if I let the cat touch me, and was afraid that if the cat wasn't extinguished he would set fire to something. I have the water over him, but it didn't do the least good, it only hurt his feelings; and as soon as it hit him he went aloft and over head, and sat down in the mizzen mast, his fur dry. I could see his head over the edge of the top, and it's a solemn fact that as he licked himself his mouth was all lit up with electricity, till he looked as if he was breathing out fire and threatening slaughter, as the good book says. "I passed the word for the professor to come on deck, which he did as soon as he could get his clothes on, which they were mostly put up and down, he thinking that I had called him because the ship was sinking and there wasn't any time for the 'frivolities of fashion. When I told him what had happened, and showed him the cat, he said that there must be a trifling leak in one of the tanks, and that the cat, being so near the leak, had absorbed a little electricity. I was sure that that there wasn't the least danger that the cat would set anything on fire. The electricity that was in his fur would only illuminate things for a few hours, and would gradually pass off into the air. I told the Professor if there was a leak in one of the tanks it ought to be stopped at once, but he said that wasn't possible. Then I said that due to some little imperfection in the coating of a tank, and of course the coating couldn't be got at without tearing the tank to pieces and letting all the electricity escape. "However, we went below after breakfast to examine the tanks, but he didn't find any leak. When he came on deck again he noticed that the cargo was being quickly absorbing electricity from the Northern Lights, and had taken in more than he could hold. 'I coked up every tank tight,' said the Professor, 'and I am confident that there can be no leaking through the linings.' "If that's so," said I, "will you kindly explain why your hair is standing on end, and why your nose is glowing as if you'd been in the sun faster to the Queen and all the royal family here the last fifty years? For, as a matter of fact, the Professor's hair, which was long enough to have qualified him to practice as a professional musician, was standing straight on end, and shining like the headlight of a locomotive. "When I convinced him that he was pretty near as full of electricity as the cat he admitted that there must be a leak somewhere, and he showed that he felt considerably annoyed. I told him to go below before the men should notice him, for I didn't want them to get the idea that our cargo of electricity had sprung a leak. They wouldn't be very much surprised at an illuminated cat, for cats are notoriously un-

trustworthy and liable to do anything that is unexpected and undesirable; but an unaccountable scientific man would have aroused their suspicions, and being ignorant men they would probably have refused to accept his assurance that neither he nor the cat would set the bark afire. However, my precaution was useless for about 9 o'clock that night the mate came running into my cabin where I was asleep—it being my watch below—and informed me that the bark was on fire. I went on deck immediately and saw a stream of light running along each top rope—and they being chain instead of rope—and streaming out on each yard arm, where they ended in the biggest kind of corpuasants. "I told the mate that it was all right. 'It's only an electrical phenomenon,' says I, 'and as harmless as rotten pork.' "Just then the watch below came piling up the fore'st's ladder, soared out of their minds. Every man jack was shivering like the Christian martyrs that the history book says a Roman emperor filled up with kerosene and then used for lighting the streets. Their hair and beards were streaming with electricity, and when one of them came close to another a shower of crackling sparks would pour from one man's head or beard to the other's. It was an awful sight to see a whole watch apparently burning to death; but I wasn't seriously alarmed. The men said that soon after they had turned in they were waked by a bright light in the fore'st's, and found that every man was blazing in his bunk. By the time I had been on deck a few minutes down a bit, and they accepted his promise that if the electricity really succeeded in doing them any harm he would pay them big damages. "The leak kept growing bigger every day, and the Professor explained that the lining of the tanks, which he had relied upon to prevent leaking, had proved to be a failure. It had decomposed and allowed the electricity to come in contact with the iron of the tanks, and then escape into the atmosphere. As there was no possible way of stopping the leaks, the whole of our cargo of electricity was bound to escape. It wasn't many hours before it had got into pretty near everything aboard that bark. It went up every poop and every spar, so that the whole top hamper seemed to be picked out with fire. It made every living soul shine as bright as the Northern Lights at their best. There wasn't any need of artificial light either on deck or below. Even the biacanic light wasn't needed, for the hair of the man at the wheel was enough to make the compass sailing by at midnight as it was at noon. When the Professor and the mate and I sat down to meals we couldn't touch a knife or a fork without letting loose a stream of sparks, and every time one of us put his knife in his mouth the electricity would run along the metal and light up the food till it looked precisely as if he was eating fire. When we touched metal or a damp rope, and the sparks were set flying, there was a slight prickly sensation in our fingers, but it wasn't of much account and

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couldn't possibly have explained the spectacle of a barque that was a sheet of flame, with a captain who could deny that he had seen any fire, though his hair and beard were blazing. "You may ask if the two vessels that we met reported having spoken a bark on fire that blazed like an oil warehouse, and yet didn't seem to be any the worse for it. I'm betting even money that neither of them made any report, nor yet mentioned the matter in their log books. Any captain who should have made such a report would have stood a good chance of being discharged for drunkenness. It wouldn't have been like reporting the sea serpent. Many a ship's master meets with the sea serpent, but he never mentions it, knowing if he does all the newspapers will be advising him to sign the pledge, and his owners will either discharge him on the spot or get rid of him at the first possible chance. No, sir! We were never reported, and I knew very well that we never would be. "Well, all things must come to an end, and in course of time all the professor's electricity leaked out, and before we sighted the coast of Ireland our electric lights had burned clean out, and even the cat didn't shine any more. The professor was so discouraged by his failure to bring home a cargo of electricity that he gave the whole thing up, and I never heard a word from him after we were paid off. He died about two years ago, and all the papers said he was a most distinguished inventor and electrician. I shall always be of the opinion that if his tanks hadn't leaked he would have made a good thing of importing electricity, and that some of these days some other electrician will try the same plan and make a success of it. All that is needed is tanks that don't leak, and when such a tank is invented we shall import all our electricity from the Arctic regions." — The Graphic.

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