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## POETRY.

### A SCORE OF YEARS AGO.

Down by the breaking waves we stood,  
Upon the rocky shore;  
The brave wave whispered courage,  
And hid with friendly roar  
The faltering words that told the tale  
I dared not tell before.

I asked if with the priceless gift,  
Her love, my life she'd bless,  
Was it her voice, or some fair wave—  
For sooth, I scarce may guess—  
Some murmuring wave, or her sweet voice,  
That lisp'd so sweetly, "Yes!"

And then, in happy silence, too,  
I clasped her fair wee hand;  
And long we stood there carelessly,  
While o'er the darkening land  
The sun set, and the fishing boats  
Were sailing from the strand.

It seems not many years ago—  
Like yesterday—no more,  
Since then we stood my love and I,  
Upon the rocky shore;  
But I was four-and-twenty then,  
And now I'm forty-four.

The lily hand is thinner now,  
And in her sunny hair,  
I see some silvery lines, and on  
Her brow some lines of care;  
But, wrinkled brow, or silver locks,  
She's not one whit less fair.

The fishing boats a score of years  
Go sailing from the strand,  
The crimson sun a score of years  
Set o'er the darkening land;  
And here to-night upon the cliff  
We're standing hand in hand.

"My darling, there's our eldest girl,  
Down by the rocks below;  
What's Stanley doing by her side?"  
My wife says: "You should know;  
He's telling her what you told me  
A score of years ago."

### BOARDING A WRECK.

We were bound from Hamburg for Philadelphia, and had already been twenty-six days at sea during which we had experienced a succession of light, easterly winds, which had scarcely stretched our heavy canvass, and sufficed to infect every man and officer on board—not excepting myself—with that peculiar dead and alive feeling, by seamen termed "the blue-old gentleman."

About three bells in the afternoon watch, being off duty, I had esconced myself in the starboard quarter boat, where, with a brace of prime Havanas and Cooper's Wing and Wing, was endeavoring to keep awake, being absolutely too lazy to wake up, should I fall asleep.

One cigar had just vanished in smoke and ashes, and I had reached the close of the third chapter of the interesting tale above mentioned, when the second mate—a canny Scot, named Mackenzie—approached the boat, and laying his hand on my shoulder, shook me gently.

"There's something aw' braid off the starboard bow, master!" he exclaimed—"I can make naething aw' o't, an' I wish you'd take a blink o't; mayhap ye hae better eyesight than me."

"What does it look like, George?" I demanded, as I relinquished my book and the stump of my cigar, leaving the latter overboard, and preparing for a journey to the fore-castle, with a desire to obtain an unobstructed view of the object of his solicitude.

"Saul o'me! that's what I dinna ken mon," replied the honest Scot. "Gif I could hae made it out myself, wad'na hae speered ye to left yer buke."

He walked off, leading the way to the fore-castle, whither I followed him, as speedily as my laziness would permit, taking the precaution to light my second cigar, at the gallery as I passed. On reaching the fore-castle my companion directed my attention to an object scarcely larger than a dot, upon the line of horizon towards which I directed the telescope, and bringing it to bear on the former, scrutinized it earnestly for the space of five minutes.

"What can you make o't?" demanded Mackenzie, as I lowered the glass.

"Nothing!" I replied. "A boat could not be seen at that distance, and it looks up to small to be a dismantled vessel of any class. I think I'll just take a squint from aloft."

Gliding along the rail, I gained the fore-rigging, which I ascended to the fore-yard, from which, after a short pause, I proceeded to the topsail yard, from which I could ob-

tain a good view of the object, with a broad expanse of water beyond. A brief scrutiny from the elevated position I then occupied served to convince me that I gazed upon a wreck, waterlogged, and, I trusted, abandoned; but the latter I could only surmise in the absence of all evidence to the fact, the object being still too distant to admit of the most remote degree of certainty on the subject.

As our course would carry us by at a distance of at least two miles, which would still be an impediment to the formation of any correct judgment of the real condition of the supposed wreck, I resolved to apprise the captain, that he might adopt such measures as he deemed proper for the gratification of the strange curiosity I felt concerning the object, whatever it might prove.

Once more I elevated the glass, sweeping the horizon until my eyes again rested on the wreck, at which I gazed, until a mist gathering before my over-strained eye, shut the former out from view, when, lowering the glass, I hailed the deck, requesting Mackenzie to call Captain Howard, and inform him of the occurrence, requiring his attention. He complied, and my superior soon joined me aloft.

"Mackenzie tells me we've a wreck in sight," said the captain. "Where away?" Ah! low in the water, I should say," he continued, after a brief pause. "Hang it," said he, "I've had too much sleep lately to see clear! How are you steering?" And lowering the glass, he commenced wiping the lenses carefully. "West-by-south-half-south, sir," I replied.

"Hail Mackenzie, and have the yards canted. Let her come to North-west by west," continued the captain. "Now that I'm here, I'll have a look at that concern, if it does cost me a mile or two."

Hailing the deck I transmitted his order, which was instantly executed, bringing the object almost dead ahead, in which position it was kept for about twenty minutes—the ship moving along about three and a half knots, during which Captain Howard scrutinized it closely, when he returned me the glass.

"It's a wreck sure enough," said he; "but so far submerged as to be almost invisible, except the after-house, which first attracted your attention. If you look close, you can make out something like forecastle bulwarks, with the stump of the bowsprit. She must be low, as the latter just shows above the surface."

"Yes, I see it," I replied. "She does indeed float deep; so deep, that she must have been abandoned some time."

"Probably," said the captain. "She must have heavy timber to carry her down so deep. Vessels waterlogged with white pine are as buoyant as a cork in comparison to her."

"Taking the glass, he again levelled it to the wreck, when, after a third scrutiny, he lowered it, and resumed, "I don't fancy the presence of that house aft. If it were not for that I should keep away at once; but it is possible some of her crew found shelter there, though whether past aid, or still needing succour, remains to be seen. We'll board her. Jump down, and turn the hands up. Let one watch shorten sail, while the other clears away a quarter boat."

"Ay, ay, sir," rejoined I, and leaving the yard, I soon gained the deck, when repeating the first order to the second mate, his deep toned voice resounded through every nook and cranny in the forward and after-houses, as with his head inside the fore-castle, he shouted, "All hands a-hoy! I tumble up, and stand by to board a wreck!"

This condition of purpose for which they were called brought the watch on deck in a hurry, when the royal and topgallant sails were slued up, the courses hauled up, and the ship, under topsails, jibs, and spanker, kept away about half a point to give a clear berth to the wreck, which was now within a mile of us. The starboard quarter-boat was cleared away, and swung outward, the oars unlashd and tiller shipped, when Captain Howard descended, and joined me on the quarter deck, made known his intention of visiting the wreck in person.

"We'll have some wine or, other cordial placed in the boat," said the captain. "Who knows what need we have for such articles? Steward send up a bottle of the best wine, and some of that cherry brandy, and bring some harts horn or camphor, or something of that sort. You'll find any quantity in the centre compartment of the upper drawer of the medicine chest."

But a few minutes elapsed ere the steward appeared with the desired articles, which were placed in the boat, when the captain, glancing toward the wreck, which we were now rapidly closing with, shouted, "Lay aft to the main braces! Let go the larboard main brace, Mr. Mackenzie, and lay that main yard square! Well! brace up sharp fore and aft!"

His order was speedily executed, and the

ship came to within a hundred yards of the wreck, which we now could make out plainly to be a large ship, every stick and stanchion gone, with the exception of the topsail and a few stanchions adjoining the knight heads forward—shorn off apparently at the plank-shear. All three masts were gone by the board, not even a chain being visible on her side, as she rolled up to view from time to time. Her bowsprit still stood, though dismantled of the cap, the only rigging remaining in its place on the hull being the chain lock stays, of which a few fathoms were visible every time she rose on the swell.

"Lower away!" said the captain, as he swung himself from the quarter rail to the stern-sheets of the gig, in which eight stout seamen had seated themselves.

"Lower away, Mr. Mackenzie!" echoed I, as amid the rattle of the block sheaves I took my place beside the captain, and the next minute our boat danced buoyantly on the swell.

The davit falls were unhooked, and the oars shipped, when falling clear of the ship's stern, a strong pull on the starboard bank of oars, aided by a slight movement of the helm, sufficed to shoot the boat clear of the ship, and into full view of the wreck, which now lay broad off on the ship's larboard beam.

"Give way, men!" said the captain. Then lapsing into silence, he spoke no more till we stood side by side on the main deck of the waterlogged ship, where we paused to reconnoitre.

It was evident at a glance that she had stood the worst kind of milling.

As before stated, every stanchion was gone—apparently broken or twisted off by some gigantic power or pressure—the masts were gone by the board, the main, below the deck, the planking of which was badly started in that quarter. Every eye and ringbolt in the deck, so far as we examined, was broken off, or fairly hauled out. The chains were all missing, being either dragged or broken off the ship's side by some means—to us unknown. Both anchors and cables were gone—the larboard altogether, and the starboard to the bare end, which was jammed somewhere below, or perhaps clinched, as is customary, round the head of the foremast. All these details were speedily gathered, when Capt Howard proposed a visit to the after-house, at the door of which we stopped.

"We must steel our hearts for heart-rending scenes," said the captain. "Who can tell what secret this cabin will disclose?" As before stated, every stanchion was gone—gone by the board, the main, below the deck, the planking of which was badly started in that quarter. Every eye and ringbolt in the deck, so far as we examined, was broken off, or fairly hauled out. The chains were all missing, being either dragged or broken off the ship's side by some means—to us unknown. Both anchors and cables were gone—the larboard altogether, and the starboard to the bare end, which was jammed somewhere below, or perhaps clinched, as is customary, round the head of the foremast. All these details were speedily gathered, when Capt Howard proposed a visit to the after-house, at the door of which we stopped.

"Whoever nailed that door was apparently inside," said the captain, "and must be there still; we must find other means of ingress."

We then went round the corner of the house, trying every window-shutter as we went, but all were fast. In the after end of the house we found a door which yielded to our first effort, when we entered a short passage terminating in a bulkhead, and from which we emerged into the cabin through a swinging door opening near its end.

At the first glance round the cabin by the uncertain light admitted through the door, Captain Howard exclaimed—"Thank heaven she is abandoned!" while I, less sanguine, rejoined—"I hope so, but I fear we shall find it otherwise. To me, the air here is like that of a charnel-house vault. Had we not better have the skylight hatch off, when we shall have more light, if not fresher air."

"Yes, off with it, two of you!" shouted the captain to some of the boat's crew, who had followed us to the inner door, in which they stood huddled, gazing upon the scene, in which there appeared but little that was uncommon, yet which they viewed with evident dread.

They obeyed; a rush of dull, red light flooded the cabin on the execution of the order, and tinging each object with the same blood red hue which characterized the glass composing the skylight.

"Smash out that glass, men!" shouted the captain, hurriedly. "Its effect here brings hordes of demons in human guise before my mental vision." As the skylight crumbled with a crash, and the bright sunlight burst in, he exclaimed, "See yonder water-stain on the bulk-head, long since dry; in that horrible light it assumed the appearance of dripping blood. Oh, it's fearful, what horrid phantoms man's fancy, aided by such simple auxiliaries, will conjure up! Open that state room!" he added, turning to me.

I obeyed, and glancing hastily into the apartment, drew as hastily back, with an exclamation of horror.

"Ha! What's that?" said the captain.

"What have you found?"

"Look for yourself, sir," I replied; and standing on one side, I afforded him an opportunity of viewing the object which filled me with horror.

He likewise drew back shuddering; but regaining his courage, entered the state-room, and sliding the sash down, unhooked the shutter, swinging it back, and exposing to full view the scene, which by the admission of light had been robbed of half its horrors. Seated on a chest, or rather half-reclining on it, with her head and shoulders supported in the angle formed by the bulkhead in which she had leaned, or perhaps fallen from faintness, was the shrunken form of a female, whose flesh like her own, was shrunk, or rather dried on her bones, and so far as exposed) covered with a slight incrustation of salt, which fact accounted for the strange preservation of the body. On the finger of her neck was the gold guard of a watch of exquisite workmanship, the hands of which were stationary at four minutes to twelve. Her dress, upon the removal of the green mould which encrusted it, was found to correspond in some measure with the articles of jewelry, and indicated the deceased to be at least wealthy, if not of high birth and station.

Turning from the scene, we subjected the berths, upper and lower, to a short examination, and in the lower found two other children—a boy and girl, both forms in the same state of preservation as the others, the elder of whom was evidently their mother, and the younger their infant brother or sister.

Turning out of the state room, we entered a second, which we found untenanted, Captain Howard bringing with him from the former the watch and chain, hoping thereby to identify the deceased, and at some future time to carry to her friends the sad certainty of her fate. In a third we found two forms encased in the habiliments peculiar to foremast men. One lay on the floor, while the other occupied the lower berth, the flesh of both, being like the first discovered, dried and shrunken—in fact fairly preserved in salt. In a fourth were found two more. A fifth had a like number, and in a sixth we discovered three, the position of which only served to increase our horror. The forms were those of a man, woman, and child, the two latter, evidently mother and offspring, and the former, from the position he occupied in relation to the latter, evidently some intruder in the premises. They lay partly in a heap, the man nearly on his back, while in his mouth, and between his tightly clenched teeth, he held a portion of flesh nearly torn from the child's shoulder, yet still attached thereto by the now dried tendons. The latter lay partially on its back, its damp, mildewed hair mingling with that of the man, whose face was partially hidden by its neck and upper shoulder, and to whose ravenous hunger it had evidently fallen, a premature victim. Its little features were writhed in agony, the view of which, death stamped as it were on the former, proved most heart-rending; and its little hands clenched, the right half upraised, with the gaping mouth, all combined to furnish evidence of its rude exit from life. Last of all, the woman lay partially across both forms, her left hand was pressed on her left breast, and clenched a knife handle, the blade of which was buried in her bosom, while her right hand lay on the man's throat, which her fingers half encircled, her features bearing evidence of her death agony. On closer examination we found a small pen-knife sticking in the man's shoulder, the size, shape, and finish of which indicated it to be the property of the woman, who had probably used it as the last and only means of effecting her child's rescue.

Leaving our readers to draw their own conclusions from the above description, we will cut short the narrative of horrors, the bare recollection of which causes my frame to thrill afresh as I write this scene of long ago.

One state-room beside the captain's private cabin remained to be examined, and on opening it and admitting the light, we beheld a scene calculated to banish the horror engendered by its predecessor, and also to soothe that vague feeling of terror which had been gradually but surely creeping over us from the first, drying up the fountains of our courage, and unfitting us for the discharge of our duties for days to come. In this room we found the forms of two adults and two children. The former male and female, evidently the parents of the latter, who, kneeling beside their mother, were gathered closely to her, an arm encircling the form of each, as if to protect them even in death. In this position the bodies had stiffened and died, that of the mother falling slightly forward, the face resting against the bulkhead, and acting as a support while the tiny forms on each side, coming in contact with the berth and outer bulkhead, aided in the maintenance of that position one might suppose so untenable.

Poor mother! What pen can paint the anguish rending her heart the moment she knelt there, gathering to her side, as if to protect them, her famishing children! Not mine, nor will I attempt it. It is enough that

I drank from that scene a deep draught of knowledge—aye, from every curvature of limb and form I learned the same great lesson of life—confidence, trust in all-wise, omnipotent God. On her knees that mother had died probably in the act of asking aid from on high, and her death had proved the speed with which her prayer was answered. The father lay in an upper berth, on the edge of which his hand rested, or rather, which he grasped, while the head lay partially over the edge of the berth, the face downward, the eyes open, the balls of which were sunken and mould-covered, being directed toward the kneeling group.

What paternal, conjugal solicitude did not that position betray! To be fully appreciated it should be witnessed.

Turning away, and closing the door upon the hallowed scene, we entered the captain's private cabin, in which we found four more salt-encrusted forms; one lying partially across the threshold of the door, and another on his back grasping a pistol in his right hand, while a compound fracture of the skull, and the lacerated appearance of the dried flesh on the right side of the head, clearly betrayed a suicidal end. A third lay on the couch, which bore, as did everything in that inner cabin, a heavier incrustation of mould than was observable elsewhere. At the table sat a fourth, the head bowed on an open book, which on examination proved to be the Bible. That we removed, and having searched narrowly for, and secured as many of the ship's papers as we could, we regained the deck, and were about embarking when Captain Howard suggested the propriety of securing the log-book. That we obtained by breaking into the mate's room from outside, none caring to brave the horrors of a second visit to the cabin, when, having secured it, we embarked, and soon stepped with a feeling of infinite relief upon our own deck, when Captain Howard ordered the boat away once more with directions to place a keg of powder—which he gave them prepared for that purpose—in the cabin, where they were to light a slow match and return.

While the men were absent in the execution of that task we ran over a few entries in the log-book, from which we learned the ship's name to be the *John Clark*, John Clark, master, from St. John, New Brunswick, bound to Liverpool.

The first entry—sea time—showed the ship had sailed from the first named port on the 13th day of August, 1846, three years previously; and the last entry but two was made on the 13th of October, or two months later, and showed her latitude to be, by observation, seventy-four degrees and thirty minutes—intermediate entries setting forth the loss of her spars by contact with an ice-berg when scudding before a violent gale. The last entry in the log-book, made and signed by the mate, was as follows:

"Captain Clark has just shot himself; in the cabin, silence profound as the grave reigns. I cannot bear it! 'Tis but a plague, and all is over. So closes my account of our misfortunes."

While gathering the above particulars from the log of the ill-fated ship, the absent boat returned. Hoisting her up, we filled away, and crowding sail had increased our distance to about a mile, when the cabin of the wreck blew up, scattering the fragments of the house far and near, and giving up to the keeping of the sea its ghastly tenants—the mould-encrusted, time-bleached, and ocean-salted forms of the dead.

The ship had probably remained imbedded in the ice in some high, northern latitude for one or two seasons, when, being by some means detached, she met some current counter to that which carried her north, which drifted her once more to the south. At all events, large quantities of ice were visible on the day succeeding her discovery.

Improving upon the day's lesson, which had been "On Forgiveness," a teacher asked the boy whether in view of what he had been studying and repeating, he could forgive those who had wronged him. "Could you?" said the teacher, "forgive a boy, for example, who had insulted or struck you?"

"Yes, sir," replied the lad, very slowly. "I think—I could," but he added, in a much more rapid manner, "I could if he was much bigger than I am!"

BLACK MAN'S WIT.—A few days since, in Buffalo, a colored man who was asked why, as the white men were fighting about slavery, he did not enlist.

"Did yer ever see two dogs fightin' ober a bone?" asked the colored man.

"Yes, to be sure I have," replied the interrogator.

"Well," retorted the colored man, "did yer ever see de bone fight?"

"Can you tell me, sir, how to find the sheriff's office?" "Yes sir, every time you earn five dollars spend ten."