

Simply this, I would ask you to walk with me in imagination at night-fall, when the labours of the day are over, through the length and breadth of that immense area of the peninsula known as Bengal; to stand with me on the outskirts of the village as the veil of the evening falls over the tired face of day; to thread with me the streets of city and town, while the stars twinkle above dome and minaret and terraced roof; or to pace with me before the simple coolie's hut or shepherd's tent, and listen to the message that is being everywhere wafted to the starlight and the night.

To the rude accompaniment of native drum or tom-tom, everywhere ascends the message; in the once busy bazaar, before the huckster's booth, in the area of the caravansera, by the river's marge, in the full starlight, beneath the shadow of the wall, under the impending gloom of mango-tops or jungle bough.

It is the hour of relaxation and song. To the monotonous tap of the drum, wells upward and outward the measured chant, legend or dirge, recitative of war-deed, or refrain of love-lilt, hour after hour, till the stars pale and the shadows strengthen, and the gloom of the blacker midnight settles over everything, hushing, for the time being, even the poetry on the lips of the enthusiastic reciter, and stilling the harsh heart-throbbings of the accompanying drum.

Let us change the scene.

It is no longer a vast stretch of peninsula, palm-crowned and mountain ribbed, but an infinite waste of waters, over which the gray clouds stoop, and whose surface is dotted, far as eye can reach, with the white and flashing manes of the horses of the sea. There is no land in sight, but a gallant ship is slowly and stubbornly ploughing her way between the wave-ridges towards her distant haven.

And, again, it is evening and starlight, and men even here, within this shell of oaken rib and plank, are resting and enjoying themselves after the manner of their kind.

A group of blue-jackets, hardy children of the sea, with cheeks like russet apples kissed by the breath of winter, throats bare, and muscles, which stand out like knotted cords beneath their duck or canvas jumpers, are assembled on the foc's'tle, and to the sound of fiddle or fife ascends their evening serenade. Now it is a rollicking chorus: "A Life on the Ocean Wave," or, "A Wet Sheet and a Flowing Sea." Anon, the measure changes. It is a love story told in pathetic verse to the low sobbing of the flute, told as only a sailor can tell such a story, while the waves whisper in sympathy round the prow, and the night breeze sighs another accompaniment among the taut rigging. Once more the measure changes, and it is a lay of home and rest, and the fife ceases to wail and sob, and the very winds stop to listen to the meeting and the greeting of the "Homeward Bound." Then the rollicking chorus breaks in once more, the night falls blacker, and by and bye the tired throats and muscles rest, and all sleep, all save the watch on deck, wakeful and wary, all, save the great, gaunt, oaken-ribbed, sea-greyhound, that still tireless and stubborn seeks her quarry, the bright-eyed beacon cresting the border-land of haven and home. But the songs have gone out to the night and are stilled.

Yet once more let us change the scene, and, if it please you, the hour. It is morning, and the landscape with its face yet wet with dew is no longer an unfamiliar one. It is home, the mother-land, Canada of the maple leaf, the scarlet splendour and the yellow glory. Yonder is the village school; and the fresh young voices of children come welling from the