

## THE ADVENTURER

"Leave it to me," laughed Kirk. "I'm going to land her alongside the marquee!"

There was a hail of orders, a rush to stations, expectant faces waiting for the word.

Up shot Kirk's hand.

"Stand by! Shorten sail!" he thundered.

The sails came down, lashing and reverberating, flooding the decks with yellow billows.

"Brakes!"

"Ay, ay, sir."

"Easy, boys, easy!"

The towering hull sped nearer the rows of tents, dwarfing them into insignificance.

"Hard down!"

"Hard down it is, sir."

There was a grinding jar, the groan of metal on metal, a shrill screech dying to a moan.

The ponderous wheels slowly came to rest.

The voyage was over.

A waggish voice from the merry, noisy, hilarious crowd below yelled out: "What ship's that?"

Then came the answer in a stentorian voice.

"Topsail schooner, *Fortuna*, Captain Kirkpatrick!"

"Where from?"

"Three days out of Cassaquiari, in treasure!"

Any further questions were drowned in the salvos of cheers and counter cheers that burst forth from every throat. The lowered gangway swarmed with an incoming throng, shouting and vociferating at the top of their lungs.

Wicks, elbowing vigorously, forced his way up to Kirk.

"What orders, captain?" he asked, in his usual blunt, cool, sailorlike way.

"My dear old chap," said Kirk, "I have given my last