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"Anything in ship's papers against a man's shavin' and puttin' on decent clothes when he goes ashore?" demanded Trask, bridling.

"Well, I hate a dude," sneered the skipper.

"Hate, then, and be derved, but don't joggle my elbow," returned the crew, with a coaster's unconventionality in discipline, and he daubed more lather upon his cheeks. The placid rak-rak of the razor went on irritatingly.

"I ain't goin' to 'if-and-or-but' with you a minute, Trask," resumed Bodge, his ferocity not abating. "I owe you one month and three days which is twenty-two-fifty, and here it is, and when you go ashore you take your dirty dunnage and you stay."

For full fifteen seconds did the crew regard the skipper silently and with growing malevolence, trying to remember cause for this amazing outburst. Then came vituperation on both sides—the skipper concealing the real secret that prompted him, the crew maddened by a sense of injustice. A few minutes later the skipper had crew, a slighter antagonist, on his back, clutching his jutting ears, slippery with soap, and then he rapped his head smartly on the deck until Trask granted for mercy.

When at last the muttering Lester had gone over the packet's side, tugging his canvas bag, Captain Duncan sighed and murmured:

"I feel some better, but it ain't better enough to brag on!"

During the next few days the lading of the T. P. Todd went on placidly enough. When the news went abroad in the hamlet that Captain Bodge had discharged Lester Trask and hired Aminadab Doughty for 'fore the mast, there was some speculation as to what it meant. The explanation of a business partnership satisfied most persons. But Lester Trask, haunting the wharf, and gloomily eyeing operations, grumbling to himself and to those who would listen, was not satisfied.

On the morning of the fourth day at sunrise Captain Bodge and his new crew went on board, and an hour later the T. P. Todd was rolling down the channel, hay bales stuffing her old sides and tied so high on deck that her booms had scant clearing in which to swing.

Captain Duncan, at the wheel, turned now and then to wave his glazed cap in answer to an apron fluttering from the ell door of the Doughty farmhouse on the hill.

"Love is some better'n beet greens, hey, Dunk?" quizzed Aminadab. He was perched on a convenient bale, his knees under his chin, his gaunt arms clasped around his legs. His patriarchal beard flapped in trailing strands against either ear.

"But stop your wavin'. She can't see you. I want to talk to you about something that amounts to something. You say Griffin was ready to put on the insurance all right and tight?"

"Yes," sourly mumbled the skipper.

"Didn't hem and haw about it?"

"Said if it was anybody but me he'd want to paw 'round a little more, but said he knew anything I was in was all right." Captain Duncan's bitter gloom didn't fit the self-commendation that he was uttering.

"What did I tell ye," chirped the old man. "Repytation is like cash capital. But cash capital ain't turnin' in northin' till you invest it. I've been and showed ye how to invest yours, but you're actin' the billiousest I ever saw a bus'nness man act when he's got a good thing." Doughty tamped his tobacco into his pipe and puffed with much content.

"Say, Dab Doughty," gritted the skipper, "I've been coaxed and poked and slicked and headed-off into this without seein' a dodge-hole to get out of, and you've done it. You put me where I had to go on or else tell a good and innocent daughter that her father was a skin and a land pirut, or act as if I had jilted her, and now I'm in it all over. But you go to braggin' any more that you're doin' me a favor, and I'll tie you to the jib boom by them whiskers of your'n and let you swoosh. Now shet up whilst I meditate."

It was what the skipper called a "right good slarnt of a chanst" that

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