

the start was dead level, from the moment the pins fell from the shackles to the casting adrift of the towlines and spreading our linen to a lively, off-shore breeze; excepting, that Styles stood straight out to sea with the Marmion, evidently determined on the bee-line course—she was a slick sailer in light winds—but Matson headed our ship to the South-east in search of wind—the more he got the better he liked it, and the Whitkirk liked it, too; she was a very glutton for gales and a sluggard in light weather. As I loosened the jigger royal on our full rigged four-master, the Marmion was nearly hull down on the port quarter, with her tacks raised to a spanking breeze; whilst we were close-hauled on the starboard tack, with the salt spray already hurtling across our bows—a befitting baptism to the long, ocean race.

For seventeen days, the Whitkirk was furiously driven by the wind—and Matson, first South-east, until we fairly sniffed the roaring forties; then, gradually edged up East and North, with her lee rail almost awash and sailor's soda water churned to her wake in an effervescing stream by day, a sheened ribbon of phosphorescent light by night. She reeled off the knots like a racing yacht in a made-to-measure breeze—a breeze that freshened into half a gale, veered as we changed our course, merged imperceptibly into the South-east trades, moderated, and finally melted into a zephyr of variable air, as the Whitkirk passed from South to North latitude; with more than a third of our race run and never a sign of the Marmion!

Where was she?——Dimly, over the intervening years, I remember the intensity of our desire to solve that question; sharpened by Matson's offer of a ten dollar bill to the first who sighted our rival.

Was she ahead or astern?——Opinions and bets were flung round the fok' sl like weevily biscuits on a long passage. Even our usually nonchalant skipper made sundry excursions to the jigger crosstrees with his binoculars, muttering as he left the deck something about the topmast stay, as an excuse for

his unwonten curiosity; which the horizon failed to satisfy, for it yielded nothing but a dithering rim to the oily, windless sea.

The doldrums held us in their blighting grip for three days—days of drifting and of cursing, both for'ard and aft. On the fourth day, at sunrise, the magnetism of the drift gave us a schooner for company; an island trader, smelling of copra and beetles, with banana skins dropping from her chute after every meal. We kept forced company the whole of that day, sometimes drifting together, until the shadow from her jibboom tipped our rail; at others, wallowing like a log, while she, under the influence of a catspaw, slipped through the water a few hundred yards, only to drift back during the hours of heartbreaking calm; till sweltering day passed into super-heated night, with our wee companion's green sidelight blinking and winking on our quarter.

We had the middle watch that night; four sultry hours filled with the overwhelming desire for sleep which attacks the sailor in the doldrums—God's factory, where he makes the rain and the wind; the latter, in the making process, generally straight up and down. During the second half of the watch, I walked the lee side of the poop in a dazed, semi-comatose state, lurching with every roll and colliding indiscriminately with skylight, mast, and rail; until, in desperation, I brought myself to an anchor against the latter: weaving fairy tales round the schooner's green light, which danced like a will-o'-the-wisp, first on one quarter then on the other, sometimes disappearing entirely, only to bob up serenely in a few moments, like the green eyed monster in the long-ago stories. Once, I could have sworn I saw it on both quarters at the same time; at others, my sleep-muddled brain dissolved the schooner and portrayed the Marmion: as a dragon with wide-open, sweat-bedewed jaws, ever chasing us and guiding her reptilian course by the aid of a solitary, green eye.

As the clock crawled to eight bells I gave a parting, sleepy look at my green