

A CHRISTMAS AT CAPE HORN.

ONCE I had a shipmate who celebrated the most grateful Christmas of his life at the Horn.

It was on the Mary Ann, in December, 1857. She was a deep cut steel clipper, but she was a four masted bark, and four masted barks are all ugly in heavy seas.

Some sailors can be likened to the four masted barks. They are the sailors who have been too long away from home.

One of my mates on the Mary Ann was Bob Jones, a typical "too long away from home" unfortunate.

Bob still had somebody dear to his heart. He had started on more than one trip around the world with the set determination that the end of the voyage should see him rejoin his own loved ones at home.

But on pay day at the end of his trips his good resolutions had been broken. It had often gone so, and Bob was hiding self despair under the grim surface of a man hating man.

Bob and I, with twelve other Yankees, Dutchmen and Swedes, were on the starboard watch under Chief Mate Dickson of the Mary Ann.

When we went below on Christmas eve the sea was running high. Sleet and hail came down in the squalls.

We had hardly fallen asleep when we heard the man at the wheel strike one bell. Before the signal for "All hands on deck" was answered forward Bob and I were out of our bunks and had our sea boots on.

article is a valuable straw pillow. Remember what Bill Shakespeare says, "Uneasy rests the head that hasn't got a pillow." What am I bid? Two dollars? Thank you! Three-four-five-six-six I have. (Cape Horn prices, gentlemen! Eight-ten-ten-are you all done? Tom, you can have it for \$10. You may get a better one in San Francisco for 50 cents, but you can't duplicate it for \$50 within a thousand miles of this place.

"Next article is a handsome stand-up linen collar. It has only been worn by poor Bob in Liverpool and can be washed absolutely clean for the small price of 5 cents. It is the only article of its kind that has ever been for sale at Cape Horn. What am I bid—a dollar—two, two-fifty, three-fifty, four—four are you all done? Sold to Dick for \$4. Dick is a sport now. Wait a minute; there is a button in the back of the collar. You will have to lay the button separately, Dick."

And so each worn and patched garment of poor Bob was sold at "Cape Horn prices." Bob's shipmates took care that none of them contributed less than a month's wages to Bob's final pay day.

The mate at last put his hand to the bottom of Bob's chest, and from a corner he brought up a bundle of papers wrapped in an old piece of canvas tied together with yellow silken cords.

"Open it up!" shouted the men in chorus. "Hem! Well, we will see what is in it anyway," assented the mate.

When the canvas cover was opened a score of letters in soiled and torn envelopes dropped out. "I see no harm in letting you fellows get a little home sentiment out of these old letters," said the mate, "but you must not keep them. They must be forwarded to Bob's friends. You boys can bid for the privilege of reading the letters."

Dick for \$3 bought the right to first pick. He took the best preserved envelope and its inclosure and went away to read the letter. The sale continued, letter after letter fetching a neat sum. Half the letters were sold when Dick came from his corner and interrupted the sale.

"Boys, this letter is from the girl," said he. "She's a dandy. Bob was no good. He didn't go home when he was paid off in Liverpool; he didn't go home from New York; he didn't go home from San Francisco when he could have made the trip in a day. The girl is waiting yet."

The mate, who had been intently reading one of the letters, here interrupted. "Bob's mother is getting old, and she is poor. She does not ask for money, however. All she wants is her boy. He will never return to her now. Poor Bob's mother! Poor Bob!"

"At four bells the lookout gave us his 'All's well! Side lights burning bright.' Suddenly he began to beat the forward bell like mad.

The lookout was shouting and waving his arms from the forecastle head, where he stood clinging to the rail. When we reached the fore part of the house the lookout attracted our attention to a dark object leaning limply against the starboard lighthouse.

It was Bob Jones. We carried him into the forecastle. The mate and the whisky bottle were brought forward, and Bob slowly came to his senses.

"I was slambanged something fearful, boys," drawled Bob. "That breaker caught me right, and the blamed strap broke. Then over she rolled to leeward!"

"And I saw you go over the side," interrupted Dick. "Not I. It may have been the sheet coil," continued Bob. "I was washed away up under the forecastle head. I guess I went clean off in a faint after I had crawled to a dry place. When I woke up I made for the forecastle, but I couldn't make it. I dropped right off again at the lighthouse."

When Bob had been bandaged up and given a warm breakfast he was the old Bob once more. The boys poked lots of fun at him when they returned his things to him. "Hold on, boys! let us make a bargain with Bob," the imperative Dick broke in. "Here is my Bible. If Bob will swear to go home to his mother and the girl from San Francisco he can take the auction money along as a Christmas present."

"That's right! Come on, Bob. Swear, man, swear!" "I do, so help me, God, and a merry Christmas to you all, boys!" said Bob. "I will go home, I swear—I will!"

CHRISTMAS IN FICTION.

By GEORGE H. PICARD

NOT until the first half of the last century was well spent did the species of literature which has come to be known as Christmas fiction effect a permanent lodgment in the hearts of English speaking mankind.

Like Dickens, Harte had a genuine fondness for the doings of Yuletide. One who knew him best says that up to the last day of his life "he thought much of the Christmas season and to the last kept up the fond and foolish custom of sending generous presents to his friends."

Better appreciated in England than in his native country, Harte spent the later years of his life abroad, but his stories were to the last distinctively American.

There is no flavor of the old world Christmas, and Johnny, clothed in the stars and stripes, is a young American of the most unmistakable sort.

Two of the most strikingly dissimilar Christmas stories ever written are Hawthorne's "Christmas Banquet" and Miss Mitford's "Christmas Party."

There is little of Christmas in Hawthorne's gruesome tale. The joyous festival is only a literary makeshift around which is woven a weird psychological study that drives all remembrance of the blessed season from the mind.

They are formless and creepy and all pervading. They are the fearsome specters that rise in the frigid vapors of German mysticism, and they are made icier still with a strong admixture of New England transcendentalism.

It is a masterpiece in conception and in treatment—no question at all about that—but it does not make the Yule log glow more brightly or lend a better flavor to the steaming bowl.

Mary Russell Mitford does not deal in ghosts. All of her Christmas characters are flesh and blood people, and they are not of the sort that "will not stay dead when they die."

Her "Christmas Party" is as dainty in its workmanship as anything which ever came from her careful pen, and that is saying much. It is as restful and non-suggestive as a pastoral, and its influence is as soothing as the delicate savor which escapes when the cover of a potpourri jar is lifted or the drawer of an old time cabinet is opened—the faint, pervasive odor of crushed rose leaves and dried lavender.

THE RATIONAL CHRISTMAS.

By ELLIS FRAME

"Let us give in reason this year," she suggested. "Not merely for the sake of giving things. It's the spirit, not the money invested. Let us, therefore, turn from foolish squanderings. Let the gifts we give be things that may be needed. Instead of trash soon to be cast aside, 'My darling, your suggestion shall be heeded. For there is wisdom in it,' he replied.

She did her shopping early, being guided by lessons learned from much experience. She would show her lord and master, she decided. How excellent a thing was common sense. For their baby boy she purchased a French corset and an oriental rug that caught her eye. "Though the darling longed to have a rocking horse, it wasn't sensible," she murmured, with a sigh. They had promised not to buy things for each other. They would merely get a few things for the child. She would sacrifice her sister and her mother. And it gladdened her to see the way he smiled. As he said his people, too, should be omitted. So the wise and winsome woman, day by day. From shop to shop, with sweet emotion, riveted. Having dry goods bound up and sent away. He bought a pipe and splendid smoking jacket. To give their darling glee on Christmas morn. With these the child could make no such a racket. As might have been produced with drum and horn. He also got the works, unexpurgated. Of old Teagarden and Rabelais. So that their little one might be elated. And long have glad remembrance of the day. On Christmas when their presents were unpacked. They sat on the sofa side by side, humming, and so killed and merrily increased portions of their time. But actual peace and love, that is the goal.

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(Signed) JAMES DINGWALL. Williamstown, Ont., July 27th, 1908. 50c a box, 6 for \$2.50—trial box, 25c—at dealers or from Fruit-a-tives Limited, Ottawa.

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SEALED TENDERS addressed to the undersigned, and endorsed "Tender for Wharf at Cumming's Cove, N. B.," will be received at this office until 5.00 P. M., on Thursday, December 30, 1909, for the construction of a wharf at Cumming's Cove, Deer Island, Charlotte County, N. B.

Plans, specifications and form of contract can be seen and forms of tender obtained at this Department and at the office of E. T. P. Sheven, Esq., Resident Engineer, St. John, N. B., and on application to the Postmaster at Cumming's Cove, N. B.

Persons tendering are notified that tenders will not be considered unless made on the printed forms supplied, and signed with their actual signatures, with their occupations and place of residence of each member of the firm must be given.

Each tender must be accompanied by an accepted cheque on a chartered bank, payable to the order of the Honourable the Minister of Public Works, for two thousand dollars (\$2,000.00) which will be forfeited if the person tendering declines to enter into a contract when called upon to do so, or fail to complete the work contracted for. If the tender is not accepted the cheque will be returned.

The Department does not bind itself to accept the lowest or any tender. By order. NAPOLEON TESSIER, Secretary. Department of Public Works, Ottawa, December 1, 1909.

Newspapers will not be held for this office, and no responsibility is assumed for their delivery or non-delivery.

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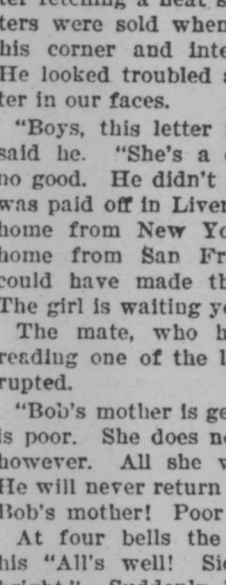
STRAYED. From the Premises of HIRAM WHITNEY, Whiteville, 3 young cattle, one and a-half years old. One light red heifer, partly white; one black steer, partly white; one black heifer, with white spots. Anyone knowing their whereabouts, or who can supply any information, would greatly oblige the owner, HIRAM WHITNEY, Whiteville. No. 14—Imo.

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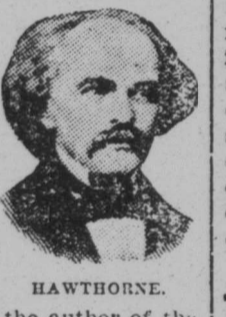
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