

flock of hungry crows arrived. Followed a sudden flight, a noisy flurry, and out of a cloud of feathers, the fish flopped down, the gull flapped up, and squawking, circled seaward. During the battle, a bluejay seized upon the prize, screaming derision.

"Poor Archie Hartogensis," said the man in the doorway, staring after the terror-stricken gull. "You and your fat fish. Poor John Waldemar! Poor Benjamin Hartogensis. While you were fighting for it, the bluejays got it, didn't they?"

He had turned to watch the jay who, with his fat fish, had careened off to the farthest fastness of the peninsula; was now about to alight upon some long black object imbedded in the sand. As grace before meat, Master Blue-Crow again indulged his cynical sense of humor. His harsh and noisy mirth seemed sufficiently expressive of a similar state of mind in his human prototype.

"Ha! Ha! Gull, indeed! Well-named, well-named! But how did Blackie Crow get a reputation for being wise? Ha! Ha! Ha!"

So accustomed was the man to the ways of birds and smaller beasts, so often had he observed them, that, when the jay's note changed, and he further postponed his stolen breakfast to make an investigatory flight around that unusually long black object on which he had alighted, the man thought it worth while to reach within for his marine-glasses.

The jay again stood guard over his fat fish, but stood it on one foot, the other scratching beneath his wing. "Oh, yes. A boat. Didn't recognize it at first upside down. Anyhow it's a wretched boat. Respectable boats are made with some regard for the comfort of jays. And how can any jay be comfortable on a sharp slippery keel? Some crazy new fashion of those crazy humans, I suppose." Having settled the matter, he began his belated breakfast.

Not so the man. He had deciphered the letters on the long boat's stern. Long-boat it was, and of the centuries-old sort used by sailing-ships. The man's hands dropped to his sides.