SHELLEY BROOKS.

Another Bibbles voice sweeter than ever,
One more gone from the earth-confines dark,
One springing seed of life the less on earth,
Slips by what seemed so winsome from

Still our small band grows smaller; left there by
Fewer old faces, and more empty rooms
Till, whenever we gather, we have to keep
A place of memories—a field of tombs.

What though our growths seem to grow the old,
Blended and blent in spirit and will,
Though young hands grow strong to take up the tools
And new faces fill the vacant places

The life of *Punch* lives on, and knows not loss;
His deaths are mere worse death, one of a kind;
Then a merry laugh let his laughter cross,
And gently sighs—for with his mirth blend

But three springs have been green since we closed
record
To hear the cold fall on Mark Lemon's bier,
The wild-flowers yet have barely endued the ground,
Where sweet Douglas Jerrold's memory still is dear.

Now our worn mourning must for him be donned,
Then took his place, where we left singing lines,
Wondering, as bereaved from the Church we wonded,
Who Bibbles-to fill best that empty chair!

And we can choose, when in heart we know
The brightest, blithest, freshest and most bold,
The heartest joker, yet with wise brain,
The defiest hand to plant it in the "gold."

But mere, because, bidds the reality wit,
The well-versed humorist, the police joke,
We know his tempers for right rolling fit—
His genial art that charm is dashing ease.

So he has sat, the focus of our hours,
The best jest, assumed prisoner, cheerliest voice,
The centre of clear counsel, deed and word,
And none has ever misconstrued of the choice.

It seems but yesterday that he was here,
The banner in the bestmost of the hour,
With a full judgment, quick wit, vision clear,
Full of the easy conscionness of power.

The clasp of his kind hand still seems to cling
To mine, his blithe voice still rings in my ear,
Even while this poor memorial wreath I fling,
With brother's hand, on his untimely bier—

Untimely!—Yes, to those who count by time;
But who can say how long his life is here?
Gained by the hold, the thoughts in prose and rhyme,
Experience of things heard and read and seen,

Recorded, in the web riverlets of the brain,
Leaves of the tree, whose sap no winter sags,
That spring to life, and die to spring again,
But as one who knows what toil of nights and days!

And who that marks God's way in nature traced,
The million germs to round one life that die,
Shall say that all this work, or sights, is waste,
Mere man-made, if not what they in the sky?

To tell our sons what our friend wrote or thought
Little or nothing may o'er-dust Time's fleak;
What he saw we know not, what were he wrought,
And Her who sit, old as a darkened home.

"SHIP AHOY!"

A Yarn in Thirty-six Cable Lengths

EIGHTH CABLE LENGTH.

HOW JOHN ANDERSON WENT TO SEE A COFFIN SHIP.

"It was for all the world like a dog going to shake a cat," said Sasuk, as he still held John Anderson's arm, and walked him down the street. "I don't know which that chap's most like, a cat or a shark; but he'd do fagginer. Eh, Jack? Look here, my mateyest, I'm not jawing. You promise me you will. You won't go on, mind."

John Anderson turned round, and gazed in the old fellow's face before speaking.

"I promise you I'll go, Jerry," he said, quietly. "I have undertaken the job, and I will not turn back."

Jerusalem Sasuk let go of his companion's arm; spat savagely at a passing dog, which darted and bit at his heels; and then, thrusting his hands into the bottom of his pockets, he drew from one a knife, and from the other a cake of tobacco, off which he hacked a small square of about an inch across, thrust it into the cheek, and then walked forward toward the station by his captain's side, as stubborn an old sea-dog as ever stepped a plank.

The railway soon took them within easy reach of the dock, through whose gates they passed in silence. Sasuk, John Anderson's mate, was any thing but a conversational one. He glanced to left and right, at the tiers of shipping and discharging cargoes, as if in search of the vessel he was to command, but he kept his mouth as tightly closed, as if to avoid by instinct the various obstacles in his path, till he was roused to himself by Sasuk exclaiming:

"Wortix—there she lies."

Anderson stood and looked across the basin to where, long three-masted vessel lay close to the wharf, glistening with paint, and looking new, and perfectly seaworthy. A white, statuesque figure of fame stood out from beneath her bowsprit, holding in the lips a gilded trumpet; and at the stern, decorated with scroll-work and conventional carving, was the name in gold letters,

Men were very busy aboit unbending sails; and wheels and pulleys were creaking as the stevedores hauled aboard, on bale, box and cask, to lower them into the gaping hold.

"What do you think of her?" said Anderson after a nearer scrutiny.

Sasuk stood gazing hard at the ship, and did not answer.

"What do you think of her?" said Anderson again.

"Don't know," was the rough response.

"Let's go aboard."

They passed round the end of the basin, and crossed the gangway on to the littered decks, where, in a quiet, unobtrusive manner the two experienced men looked over the vessel, inspecting her from stem to stern, went up aloft to see the standing and the running rigging, climbed over into the chains, went down below, and ended by being seen and addressed by Mrs. Gurnett's with-out saying a word.

They found the old lady with her bonnet on, apparently about to go out; but she hurried away, and returned do wait upon them in the little parlor, where Sasuk was soon busy with a pipe and glass Anderson refusing all refreshment.

"Well?"

"Ill, you know, lady, we reply."

"I'm afraid so, Jerry."

"Fraid so! Why, the poor old thing seems to be in great danger, her paint is patchery. They've stuffed up the strakes in best, if ever rotten-ship's ever did it. Why, she's a dream-boy skeleton. You've done wrong, cap'n, you've done wrong. Give it up."

Anderson had turned away his head, and remained silent for a few minutes before speaking.

"No, lad, no," he said; "I'll undertaken to sail her to China and back, and, please God, I'll do it, though it be a hard task. You shall not go, though."

"Make's off Sasuk, gruffly.

"No. It would not be fair to you. *You* shall go, lad."

"Wot's fair for you's fair for me; and if you go, I go. She's a rotten old hulk, patched up and painted to the nines. Drowning's easy it's as sheltie as any it. I will say one thing, and that's, that if a ship's to make at Kooee-Kooee harbour, I'm all that there would to the Chinese east and back. Wot's the use of talking about the new to a partner of 'The Jolly Sailors,' the one drinking his grog and smoking his pipe this a Christian, and his mate a cockeyed as him. Give it up, and I sails with you in another ship. Here's to your health, and I pour out this in the Wictrix; but before I'll ask one of my poor lads as I've had afloat with me to go in her, may I be—d if I don't sit down in this here house, with a plaster ceiling over my head; but if I was afloat, with good sea-room, I'd say, as I'd say something stiff, and no mistake."

Further conversation was stayed by the entrance of Mrs. Garnett with a very troubled face.

"If you please, Captain Anderson, here's some of the men want to see you."

John Anderson, from longevity and dejected, was a moment all animation now; and, turning to Sasuk, he said,

"Mind, see a man of them ships with us."

"No, not with my consent," said the old fellow. "I did think of getting the lot, but not now. They may be plague ship, or crew, and good luck to 'em, and bad luck to 'em. Is it really true, then, Captain Anderson," and the old lady, "that you are going directly in one of Rutherby's ships?"

"Yes, Mrs. Garnett," said Sasuk, speaking for his employer; "and I'm going with him."

"Oh, Captain Anderson, don't go—don't go—and don't take him! There are such tales about these ships, and only just now one was lost. Pray, pray don't take him with you."

"Sotty, my dear Rutherby," cried Sasuk, crossing to her side, and leading her to the other, in the middle of the room. "Don't be alarmed, "what the song says—

"There's a nest, little chick, as sir up aloft,
To keep mother and chicks from the rain of your head."

"Sasuk," said Anderson, quietly, "I'll go into the tap-room and speak to the boys. Don't keep Mrs. Garnett waiting."

He went coolly out of the room, leaving Mrs. Garnett with Sasuk, whose arm, for the very first time, now stole round the widow's waist—a movement so far from resented that Mrs. Garnett's head leant upon his shoulder as she clung to him sobbing.

"Betsy, my dear—Jerry," he whispered, "they say I'm a sailor—an't religious, and I suppose they an't; for, as far as I'm concerned, I wouldn't be a preacher, and I don't know much about it. But I know this, that if ever I'd a good wife, I'd like to be with her when I'm a-dying, and I'm sure I'd like to be with you, Jerry, if I'd a good wife."

"Sasuk, I'm ashamed of you," said Mrs. Garnett, raising her head from his shoulder, and looking at him with a smile through her tears.

"Ashamed! Of course, my dear; unless you think that the gentlemen to whom you are engaged in school as black a scoundrel and murderer as ever stepped. May, I'm sorry to see you cry, but I don't think what has come over you of late. It's really too bad—it is, indeed. I've been thinking of it, and I don't like it. Not only you know, the way in which you treated his partner, Mr. Longshed, last night, was quite insulting."

"Papa!" cried May, passionately, "I can't make friends with a slimy snake."

"Now, my dear child," cried the old man petulantly, "that—this is stupid; it's—it's a crime; it's—it's so like your poor mother—bursting out in the most unreasonable way against a man whom you do not fancy."

"Fancy! Oh, papa!" cried May, "did you ever shake hands with him?"

"Why, of course, my dear. Shake hands, indeed!"

"It was dreadful; so cold and damp, and—and—and fishy," said May.

"Now, my darling child, I must beg of you not to be absurd. Longshe is a man of position, and Mortlake's partner. Longshe and Mortlake are really the men, for four old Rutherby is quite a nonentity. And here, last night, you treated Longshe as if he were—were—were—"

"A nasty, cold, twining, slimy snake," said May, impetuously. "Ugh!"

"Tut, tut, tut!" exclaimed the old man peevishly; "really, May!"

"Do you think, papa, there is any truth in what has been said about Rutherby's ships?"

"Why—why—why—what do you know about Rutherby's ships, child!" cried the old man, uneasily.

"Why, papa, the reports, papa, about their unworthy state," said May, excitedly; "and how it is so dreadful, so horrible, that it makes me shudder."

"It's all a cruel, atrocious lie. There never was a better ship than—than—than—Rutherby's ships." he added, as if forced to the conclusion that domestic matters had taken a turn.

"What's the matter, my dear?" he said.

"Nothing, papa."

"Nothing—no—no; there is, my dear. I have noticed—in—in—mentioned lately—"

Here Mr. Hailey's voice grew husky, and he had to cough, twice, before he could go on it, while May's face became scarlet.

"I have—I have—I have noticed the matter, and I have noticed lately that you have been very strange and—and—not what you should be. Mortlake came to me yesterday."

He paused, as if expecting May to speak; but she sat perfectly silent.

"I said Mortlake came to me yesterday, my dear; and he wanted to know if he had given any offence."

May still silent.

"I said him—nothing of the kind. He said he was afraid somebody had been trying to poison your ears against him, and he hoped that you did not take any notice of the absurd reports spread about the shipping house which he belonged."

"Do you think, papa, that those reports are absurd?" said May, so suddenly that the old man started.

"Absurd! Of course, my dear; unless you think that the gentlemen to whom you are engaged in school as black a scoundrel and murderer as ever stepped. May, I'm sorry to see you cry, but I don't think what has come over you of late. It's really too bad—it is, indeed. I've been thinking of it, and I don't like it. Not only you know, the way in which you treated his partner, Mr. Longshed, last night, was quite insulting."

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