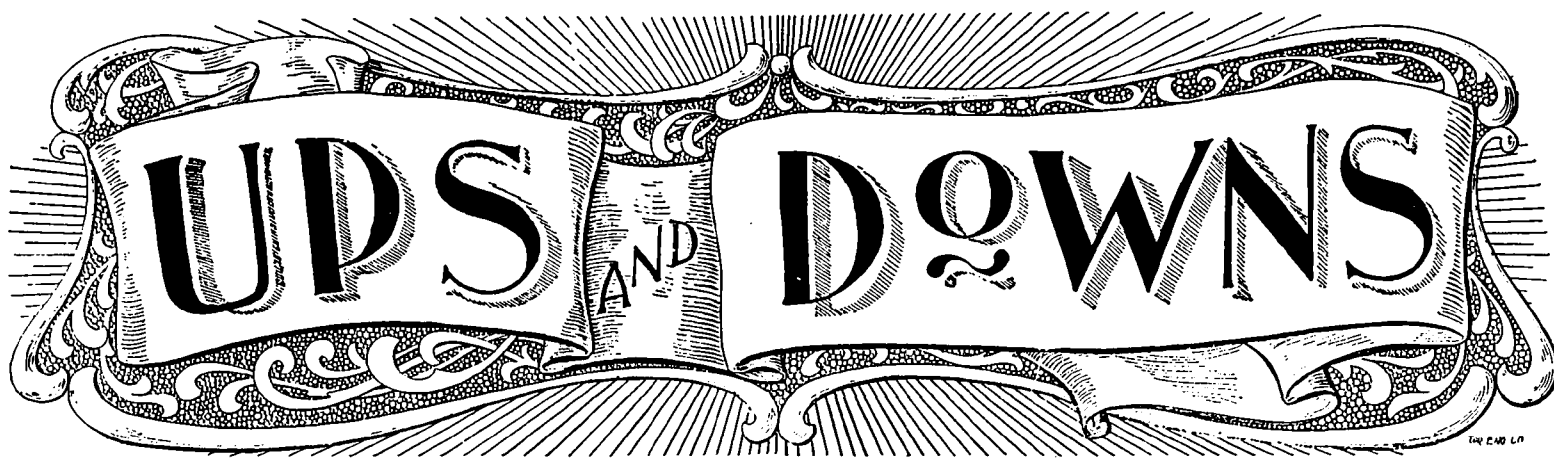


SUPPLEMENT



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Christmas Day

A COMPLETE STORY
Written Specially for UPS AND DOWNS

On an Iceberg

By W. C. METCALFE, author of "Nailing His Colors or the Light that Shines," "Steady Your Helm, or Stowed Away," "Undaunted, a Tale of the Solomon Islands," "Aboveboard, a Tale of Adventure on the Sea," and of other well known books devoted to life afloat.

YOU can run your easting down on any parallel of latitude you like, Captain M—; only do your best to make as quick a passage out to Melbourne as you can, that's all we want."

These were the parting words spoken to me by the managing owner in the firm of H— Bros., before I left to join my ship at Gravesend *en route* to Australia. I was a young man then and had only completed one voyage as commander of the *Smiling Morn*, and like most young skippers I was very anxious to do justice to the sailing powers of the ship placed under my charge. The owner's words were spoken in answer to a question I had put to him whether he had any objection to my sailing the ship in high latitudes—a question which I had felt myself called upon to ask for more reasons than one, the principal being that his own daughter Marion was to go to Melbourne in the ship, and to sail the ship in high latitudes would mean to experience colder weather and a little more discomfort than might otherwise be expected, and for his own daughter's sake I thought that the wealthy shipowner might very reasonably have objected.

But I was mistaken, no such consideration crossed his mind. A rapid passage was all that he required, and I left the office free to run the easting down on any parallel of latitude I chose. It was a bright afternoon in August when the *Smiling Morn* was unshackled from the buoy off Gravesend, and, under tow of the small steam-tug, proceeded down the river. A brisk northerly wind was blowing, and with all fore and aft canvas set the vessel was making good way round the different bends and reaches, and being in remarkably good trim I was confidently hoping she would make a good run out to Australia. Of my ship I felt remarkably proud, and not without good reason, for she was one of the most beautiful as well as the fastest in the Melbourne trade, and with three good officers and a stout, able crew, I flattered myself that we could hold our own with any

ship sailing out of the United Kingdom. In the hurry and bustle of getting the ship under way, I had no time to notice what my fair young passenger was doing until, during a few minutes' relaxation, I observed her standing alongside of her chaperone—a stout, middle-aged spinster lady, who had formerly been her governess—looking over the poop-rail with evident interest at the different passing objects. As she stood thus, her slight, girlish form in clear relief against the grey waters of the river, and ever and anon turning her pretty smiling face round to note what was passing on the other side of the ship, I thought she was one of the prettiest girls I had ever seen. But she was my employer's daughter and in a measure under my care, and it was not for me to think too much about her.

The days and weeks glided by without any event of any note having occurred, unless it was that I had found the person and manners of my fair young passenger so betwitching as to intrude into nearly every thought and deed, making me at times to feel very dissatisfied with my position and prospects. How foolish it was of me to think of Marion Hunter in any other light than as a young lady passenger. We had passed the meridian of the Cape of Good Hope, and I was edging the ship away to the southward intending to fetch the parallel of 48 degrees and sail due east until we had come to the meridian of about 100 E. The weather for the last few days had been stormy, but the winds favourable, and the ship having so far made a rattling passage, I felt in high spirits.

"How cold it is, Captain M—," remarked Marion Hunter one morning, her pretty face just emerging from the companion.

"Yes," I replied, "but we must expect it to be so down here in these latitudes. Miss Hunter, would you like to take my arm for a little walk up and down the deck; it will make you warm," I suggested, modestly. "Oh, yes

indeed, thank you, Captain." She assented with almost childish delight, and placing her little hand through my arm we were soon walking briskly up and down the deck, my companion asking me many questions in her pretty, girlish manner. "Will it be colder than it is now, Captain?" was one, with a pretty attempt at a shiver. "Yes," I replied; "we have another two degrees to go to the south'ard yet, and when the southerly wind blows, you—but hulloa!" I broke off; "what's the meaning of all this?" and, leading my fair companion, I turned to the rail and looked at what appeared to be a thick bank of fog coming rapidly up from the south-east, and at the same time felt a very perceptible increase of cold. I told the mate to take the temperature of the water. He did so, it had fallen.

"What is it, Captain?" queried Miss Hunter, who was viewing my actions with apparent great interest.

"Oh," I replied very indifferently, "we are getting near ice, Miss Hunter; that's all. Shall we resume our walk?"

She smilingly assented, and, as we walked up and down, plied me with many questions about ice and icebergs.

"I hope we shall not get too near one of these great icebergs that one reads about," she remarked gaily; "but I should so like to see one from a safe distance." Ah, how little did we then think how soon this wish was to be gratified.

"They are very beautiful indeed," I remarked, as in my mind's eye I pictured those I had seen before; "but," I added, "I would prefer not to see any at all."

The fog had now enveloped the ship and I gave orders to clew the top-gallant sails up and to post a look-out on the foretopsail yard and took other precautionary measures. Then the wind drew ahead and the ship broke three points off her course, and I braced the yards sharp up.

Since the fog enveloped the ship, Miss Hunter had gone below and I was left to my own thoughts and speculations. But not for long. The sharp clear voice of the third officer from the foretopsail yard shouting out, "Berg right ahead, sir! Starboard! starboard!" broke the train of thought I was indulging in and called for immediate attention.

"Helm up!" I roared to the man at the wheel, and the ship payed off from the wind.

"All clear now, sir," came the voice from the topsail yard, and "Steady your helm" from my own lips.

"There's the berg, sir!" exclaimed the chief