The Trawler

By

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Freeditorial

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I

To John Snow's home in Gloucester came the tale this night of how Arthur Snow was washed from the deck of Hugh Glynn's vessel and lost at sea; and it was Saul Haverick, his sea clothes still on him, who brought the word.

"I'm telling you, John Snow," said Saul—and he out of breath almost with the telling—"and others than me will by an' by be telling you, what a black night it was, with a high-running sea and wind to blow the last coat o' paint off the vessel, but o' course he had to be the first o' the fleet—nothing less would do him—to make the market with his big ketch. It was for others, not for him, to show the way to take in sail, he said, and not a full hour before it happened that was." Such was Saul Haverick's ending.

John Snow said nothing; Mrs. Snow said nothing. Saul looked to me, but I gave no sign that I had heard him. Only John Snow's niece, Mary, looking up from her hands folded in her lap, said: "Surely you must find it painful, Saul Haverick, to ship with such a wicked man and take the big shares of money that fall to his crew?"

"Eh!" said Saul, frightened-like at her. "I'm not denying that he is a great fish killer, Mary Snow, and that we haven't shared some big trips with him; but it is like his religion, I'm telling you, to be able to say how he allowed no man ever he crossed tacks with to work to wind'ard of him. He's that vain he'd drive vessel, himself, and all hands to the bottom afore he'd let some folks think anything else of him."

"He lost my boy—we'll say no more of him," said John Snow.

"Ay," said Saul Haverick, "we'll speak no more of him. But I was Arthur's dory mate, John Snow, as you well know, and my heart is sick to think of it.

I'll be going now," and go he did, softly and by way of the back stairs; and he no more than gone when a knock came to the door.

After a time, the clock on the mantel ticking loud among us, John Snow called out: "Come in!"

II

I remember how Hugh Glynn stepped within the door of John Snow's kitchen that night, and how he bent his head to step within; and, bending his head, took off his cap; and how he bowed to John Snow, Mrs. Snow, and Mary Snow in turn, and, facing John Snow, made as if to speak; but how his voice would not come, not until he had lifted his head yet higher and cleared his throat. And beginning again, he took a step nearer the middle of the floor, to where the light of the bracket lamp above the kitchen table shone full on his face. He was a grand man to look at, not only his face but the height and build of him, and he was fresh in from sea.

"John Snow—and you, Mrs. Snow—the Arbiter's to anchor in the stream, and her flag's to half-mast. And knowing that, maybe there's no need to say anything more."

Mrs. Snow said nothing, Mary Snow said nothing, but I remember how from under John Snow's brows the deep eyes glowed out.

"Go on," said John Snow at last.

Hugh Glynn went on. "Well, he was a good boy, your Arthur—maybe you'd like to be told that, even by me, though of course you that was his father, John Snow, and you that was his mother, Mrs. Snow, know better than anybody else what he was. Three nights ago it was, and we to the south'ard of Sable Island in as nasty a breeze as I'd been in for some time. A living gale it was, a November no'wester—you know what that is, John Snow—but I'd all night been telling the crew to be careful, for a sea there was to sweep to eternity whoever it could've caught loose around deck. I could've hove her to and let her lay, but I was never one to heave to my vessel—not once I'd swung her off for home. And there, God help me, is maybe my weakness.

"She was under her gaff tops'l, but I see she couldn't stand it. 'Boys,' says I, 'clew up that tops'l.' Which they did, and put it in gaskets, and your Arthur, I mind, was one of the four men to go aloft to clew it up. Never a

lad to shirk was Arthur. Well, a stouter craft of her tonnage than theArbiter maybe never lived, nor no gear any sounder, but there are things o' God's that the things o' man were never meant to hold out against. Her jib flew to ribbons. 'Cut it clear!' I says, and nigh half the crew jump for'ard. Half a dozen of the crew to once, but Arthur,—your Arthur, your boy, Mrs. Snow, your son, John Snow—he was quick enough to be among the half-dozen. Among a smart crew he was never left behind. It looked safe for us all then, coming on to morning, but who can ever tell? Fishermen's lives, they're expected to go fast, but they're men's lives for all that, and 'Have a care!' I called to them, myself to the wheel at the time, where, God knows, I was careful.

"Well, I saw this big fellow coming, a mountain of water with a snow-white top to it against the first light of the morning. And I made to meet it. A better vessel than the Arbiter the hand o' man never turned out—all Gloucester knows that—but, her best and my best, there was no lifting her out of it. Like great pipe-organs aroaring this sea came, and over we went. Over we went, and I heard myself saying: 'God in heaven! You great old wagon, but are you gone at last?' And said it again when maybe there was a fathom of water over my head—her quarter was buried that deep and she that long coming up. Slow coming up she was, though up she came at last. But a man was gone."

He had stopped; but he went on. "It was Arthur, John Snow, and you, Mrs. Snow, who was gone. The boy you were expecting to see in this very room by now, he was gone. Little Arthur that ten years ago, when first I saw him, I could've swung to the ceiling of this room with my one finger—little Arthur was gone. Well, 'Over with a dory!' I said. And, gale and all, we over with a dory, with three of us in it. We looked and looked in that terrible dawn, but no use—no man short o' the Son o' God himself could a' stayed afloat, oilskins and red jacks, in that sea. But we had to look, and coming aboard the dory was stove in—smashed, like 'twas a china teacup and not a new banker's double dory, against the rail. And it was cold. Our

frost-bitten fingers slipped from her ice-wrapped rail, and the three of us nigh came to joining Arthur, and Lord knows—a sin, maybe you'll say, to think it, John Snow—but I felt then as if I'd just as soon, for it was a hard thing to see a man go down to his death, maybe through my foolishness. And to have the people that love him to face in the telling of it—that's hard, too."

He drew a great breath. "And"—again a deep breath and a deepened note of pain—"that's what I've come to tell you, John Snow, and you, Mrs. Snow—how your boy Arthur was lost."

John Snow, at the kitchen table, I remember, one finger still in the pages of the black-lettered Bible he had been reading when Hugh Glynn stepped in, dropped his head on his chest and there let it rest. Mrs. Snow was crying out loud. Mary Snow said nothing, nor made a move, except to sit in her chair by the window and look to where, in the light of the kitchen lamp, Hugh Glynn stood.

There was a long quiet. Hugh Glynn spoke again. "Twenty years, John Snow, and you, Mrs. Snow—twenty good years I've been fishing out o' Gloucester, and in that time not much this side the western ocean I haven't laid a vessel's keel over. From Greenland to Hatteras I've fished, and many smart seamen I've been shipmates with—dory, bunk, and watch mates with in days gone by—and many a grand one of 'em I've known to find his grave under the green-white ocean, but never a smarter, never an abler fisherman than your boy Arthur. Boy and man I knew him, and, boy and man, he did his work. I thought you might like to hear that from me, John Snow. And not much more than that can I say now, except to add, maybe, that when the Lord calls, John Snow, we must go, all of us. The Lord called and Arthur went. He had a good life before him—if he'd lived. He'd 've had his own vessel soon—could've had one before this—if he'd wanted. But 'No,' he says, 'I'll stay with you yet a while, Captain Hugh.' He loved me and I loved him. 'I'll stay with you yet a while, Captain Hugh,' he says, but, staying with me, he was lost, and if I was old enough to have a grown

son o' my own, if 'twas that little lad who lived only long enough to teach me what it is to have hope of a fine son and then to lose him, if 'twas that little lad o' mine grown up, I doubt could I feel it more, John Snow."

John Snow let slip his book and stood up, and for the first time looked fair at Hugh Glynn. "We know, Captain Glynn," John Snow said, "and I'm thanking you now. It's hard on me, hard on us all—our only son, captain—our only child. But, doubtless, it had to come. Some goes young and some goes old. It came to him maybe earlier than we ever thought for, or he thought for, no doubt, but—it come. And what you have told us, captain, is something for a man to be hearing of his son—and to be hearing it from you. And only this very night, with the word of you come home, my mind was hardening against you, Captain Glynn, for no denying I've heard hard things even as I've heard great things of you. But now I've met you, I know they mixed lies in the telling, Captain Glynn. And as for Arthur—" John Snow stopped.

"As for Arthur"—'twas something to listen to, the voice of Hugh Glynn then, so soft there was almost no believing it—"as for Arthur, John Snow, he went as all of us will have to go if we stop long enough with the fishing."

"Ay, no doubt. As you may go yourself, captain?"

"As I expect to go, John Snow. To be lost some day—what else should I look forward to?"

"A black outlook, captain."

"Maybe, maybe. And yet a man's death at the last."

"So 'tis, captain—so 'tis."

John Snow and Hugh Glynn gripped hands, looked into each other's eyes, and parted—Hugh Glynn out into the night again and John Snow, with Mrs. Snow, to their room, from where I could hear her sobbing. I almost wanted to cry myself, but Mary Snow was there. I went over and stood behind her. She was looking after some one through the window.

It was Hugh Glynn walking down the steep hill. Turning the corner below, I remember how he looked back and up at the window.

For a long silence Mary Snow sat there and looked out. When she looked up and noticed me, she said: "It's a hard life, the bank fishing, Simon. The long, long nights out to sea, the great gales; and when you come home, no face, it may be, at the door to greet you."

"That it is, Mary."

"I saw his wife one day, Simon," said Mary Snow softly, "and the little boy with her. But a week before they were killed together that was; six years ago, and he, the great, tall man, striding between them. A wonderful, lovely woman and a noble couple, I thought. And the grand boy! And I at that heedless age, Simon, it was a rare person, be it man or woman, I ran ahead to see again."

"Come from the window, Mary," I said to that, "and we'll talk of things more cheerful."

"No, no, Simon—don't ask me to talk of light matters to-night." With that and a "Good night" she left me for her room.

Out into the street I went. John Snow's house stood at the head of a street atop of a steep hill, and I remember how I stood on the steps of John Snow's house and looked down the slope of the hill, and below the hill to the harbor, and beyond the harbor to clear water. It was a cold winter moonlight, and under the moon the sea heaved and heaved and heaved. There was no break in the surface of that sea that night, but as it heaved, terribly slow and heavy, I thought I could feel the steps beneath me heaving with it.

III

All that night I walked the streets and roads of Cape Ann, walking where my eyes would lose no sight of that sea to which I had been born, and thinking, thinking, thinking always to the surge and roar of it; and in the morning I went down to where Hugh Glynn's vessel lay in dock; and Hugh Glynn himself I found standing on the string-piece, holding by the hand and feeding candy to the little son of one of his crew, the while half a dozen men were asking him, one after the other, for what I, too, had come to ask.

My turn came. "I never met you to speak to before, Captain Glynn," I began, "but I was a friend of Arthur Snow's, and I was hopeful for the chance to ship with you in Arthur's place."

"My name is Simon Kippen," I went on, when he made no answer. "I was in John Snow's kitchen when you came in last night."

"I know"—he waved the hand that wasn't holding the little boy—"I know. And"—he almost smiled—"you're not afraid to come to sea with me?"

"Why more afraid," I said, "than you to take me with you?"

"You were a great friend of Arthur's?"

"A friend to Arthur—and more if I could," I answered.

He had a way of throwing his head back and letting his eyes look out, as from a distance, or as if he would take the measure of a man. 'Twas so he looked out at me now.

"He's a hard case of a man, shouldn't you say, Simon Kippen, who would play a shipmate foul?"

I said nothing to that.

"And, master or hand, we're surely all shipmates," he added; to which again I said nothing.

"Will you take Saul Haverick for dory mate?" he said again.

"I bear Saul Haverick no great love," I said; "but I have never heard he wasn't a good fisherman, and who should ask more than that of his mate in a dory?"

He looked out at me once more from the eyes that seemed so far back in his head; and from me he looked to the flag that was still to the half-mast of his vessel for the loss of Arthur Snow.

"We might ask something more in a dory mate at times, but he is a good fisherman," he answered at last. "A good hand to the wheel of a vessel, too, a cool head in danger, and one of the best judges of weather ever I sailed with. We're putting out in the morning. You can have the chance."

As to what was in my heart when I chose to ship with Hugh Glynn, I cannot say. There are those who tell us how they can explain every heart-beat, quick or slow, when aught ails them. I never could. I only know that standing on the steps of Mary Snow's house the night before, all my thought was of Mary Snow sitting at the window and looking down the street after Hugh Glynn. And "God help you, Simon Kippen!" I found myself saying—"it's not you, nor Saul Haverick, nor any other living man will marry Mary Snow while Hugh Glynn lives, for there is no striving against the strength of the sea, and the strength of Hugh Glynn is the strength of the sea." But of what lay beyond that in my heart I could not say.

And now I was to sea with Hugh Glynn, and we not four days out of Gloucester when, as if but to show me the manner of man he was, he runs clear to the head of Placentia Bay, in Newfoundland, for a baiting on our way to the banks; and whoever knows Placentia Bay knows what that means, with the steam-cutters of the Crown patrolling, and their sleepless watches night and day aloft, to trap whoever would try to buy a baiting there against the law.

No harm fell to Hugh Glynn that time. No harm ever fell to him, fishermen said. Before ever the cutters could get sight of him he had sight of them; and his bait stowed below, safe away he came, driving wild-like past the

islands of the bay, with never a side-light showing in the night, and not the first time he had done so.

"What d'y' say to that, Simon? Didn't we fool 'em good?" he asked, when once more we were on the high seas and laying a free course for the western banks.

"I'm grateful you did not ask me to go in any dory to bring the bait off," I answered.

"Why is that, Simon?" he asked, as one who has no suspicion.

"It was against the law, Captain Glynn."

"But a bad law, Simon?"

"Law is law," I answered to that.

He walked from the wheel, where I was, twice to the break of the vessel and back again and said, in a voice no louder than was needful to be heard above what loose water was splashing over her quarter to my feet: "Don't be put out with me for what I'll tell you now, Simon. You're a good lad, Simon, and come of good people, but of people that for hundreds o' years have thought but one way in the great matters of life. And when men have lived with their minds set in the one way so long, Simon, it comes hard for them to understand any other way. Such unfrequent ones as differed from your people, Simon, them they cast out from among them. I know, I know, Simon, because I come from people something like to them, only I escaped before it was too late to understand that people who split tacks with you do not always do it to fetch up on a lee shore."

"And from those other people, no doubt, Captain Glynn, you learned it was right to break a country's laws?"

"It wasn't breaking our country's law, Simon, nor any good man's law, to get a baiting last night. There are a lot of poor fishermen, Simon—as none know better than yourself—in Placentia Bay who have bait to sell, and there is a law which says they must not. But whose law? An American law?

No. God's law? No. The law of those poor people in Placentia Bay? No. Some traders who have the making of the laws? Yes. And there you have it. If the Placentia Bay fishermen aren't allowed to sell bait to me, or the like of me, they will have to sell it to the traders themselves, but have to take their one dollar, where we of Gloucester would pay them five, and, paying it, would give some of them and their families a chance to live."

He stood there in his rubber boots to his hips and his long greatcoat to his ankles—he was one who never wore oilskins aboard ship—swinging with the swing of the plunging vessel as if he was built into her, and with his head thrown back and a smile, it may be, that was not a smile at all, and kept looking at me from out of eyes that were changeable as the sea itself.

"Don't you be getting mad with me, Simon, because we don't think alike in some things. To the devil with what people think of you—I've said that often enough, Simon, but not when they're good people. If some people don't like us, Simon, there will come no nourishment to our souls. Some day you're going to come to my way o' thinking, Simon, because we two are alike underneath."

"Alike!" I smiled to myself.

"Ay, alike at heart, Simon. We may look to be sailing wide apart courses now, but maybe if our papers were examined 'twould be found we'd cleared for the same last port of call, Simon."

And no more talk of anything like that between us until the night before we were to leave the fishing grounds for home. In the afternoon we had set our trawls, and, leaving the vessel, the skipper had said, "Our last set, boys. Let 'em lay to-night, and in the morning we'll haul;" and, returning aboard after setting, we had our supper and were making ready, such as had no watch to stand, to turn in for a good, long sleep against the labor of the morrow.

It was an oily sea that evening—a black, oily-smooth surface, lifting heavy and slow to a long swell. A smooth, oily sea—there is never any good

comes out of it; but a beautiful sea notwithstanding, with more curious patterns of shifting colors than a man could count in a year playing atop of it. The colors coming and going and rolling and squirming—no women's shop ashore ever held such colors under the bright nightlights as under the low sun we saw this night on the western banks. It was a most beautiful and a most wicked sea to stop and look at.

And the sun went down that evening on a banking of clouds no less beautiful; a copper-red sun, and after 'twas gone, in lovely massy forms and splendid colors, were piled the clouds in all the western quarter.

Such of the crew as stopped to speak of it did not like at all the look of that sea and sky, and some stopped beside the skipper to say it, he leaning against the main rigging in the way he had the while he would be studying the weather signs; but he made no answer to the crew, to that or any other word they had this evening—except to Saul Haverick, and to him only when he came up from supper complaining of not feeling well.

He was one could drive his crew till they could not see for very weariness; but he was one could nurse them, too. "Go below and turn in," was his word to Saul, "and stay there till you feel better. Call me, Simon, if I'm not up," he then said to me. "I'll stand Saul's watch with you, if Saul is no better."

It was yet black night when I was called to go on watch, and, Saul Haverick still complaining, I went to call the skipper. But he was already up and had been, the watch before me said, for the better part of the night. I found him leaning over the gunnels of the wind'ard nest of dories when I went on deck, gazing out on a sea that was no longer oily-smooth, though smooth enough, too, what was to be seen of it, under the stars of a winter night.

I stood on the break and likewise looked about me. To anchor, and alone, lay the vessel, with but her riding-light to mark her in the dark; alone and quiet, with never a neighbor to hail us, nor a sound from any living thing whatever. The very gulls themselves were asleep; only the fores'l, swaying to a short sheet, would roll part way to wind'ard and back to loo'ard, but

quiet as could be even then, except for the little tapping noises of the reef-points when in and out the belly of the canvas would puff full up and let down again to what little wind was stirring.

It was a perfect, calm night, but no calm day was to follow. "Wicked weather ahead," said Hugh Glynn, and came and stood beside me on the break. "A wicked day coming, but no help for it now till daylight comes to see our trawls to haul 'em." And, as one who had settled that in his mind, he said no more of it, but from mainm'st to weather rail he paced, and back again, and I took to pacing beside him.

A wonderful time, the night-watches at sea, for men to reveal themselves. Night and sky overhead and the wide ocean to your elbow—it drives men to thought of higher things. The wickedest of men—I have known them, with all manner of blasphemies befouling their lips by day, to become holy as little children in the watches of the night.

No blasphemer was Hugh Glynn, nor did the night hold terror for him; only as we paced the break together he spoke of matters that but himself and his God could know. It was hard to listen and be patient, though maybe it was as much of wonder as of impatience was taking hold of me as I listened.

"Do you never fear what men might come to think of you, Captain Glynn," I said, "confessing your very soul?"

"Ho, ho, that's it, is it?" He came to a sudden stop in our walking. "I should only confess the body—is that it, Simon Kippen? And, of course, when a man confesses to one thing of his own free will, you know there must be something worse behind? Is that it, Simon?" He chuckled beside me and, as if only to scandalize me, let his tongue run wilder yet.

His tales were of violations of laws such as it had been my religion to observe since I was a boy, and little except of the comic, ridiculous side of them all. The serious matters of life, if 'twas to judge by what he spoke to me that night, had small interest for him. But the queer power of the man!

Had it been light where he could see me, I would have choked before ever I would let him hear me laugh; but he caught me smiling and straightened up, chuckling, to say: "Many other things you would smile at, too, Simon, if your bringing up would but allow the frost to thaw from your soul."

"And are reckless carryings-on and desperate chancing things to smile at?"

"O Simon, Simon, what a righteous man you're to be that never expects to see the day when no harbor this side of God's eternal sea will offer you the only safe and quiet mooring!"

Again I saw Mary Snow sitting at the window and looking down the street, and remembering how she had spoken of his lonely home, I said: "No doubt a man, like a vessel, Captain Glynn, should have always a mooring somewhere. A wonder you never thought of marrying again?"

"I have thought of it."

"And with some one woman in mind?"

"It may be." He answered that, too, without a pause.

"And does she know?"

"It may be she knows. No knowing when they know, Simon. As men best understand the soul, so it is woman's best gift to understand the heart. But no fair play in me to ask her. I've had my great hour, and may not have it again with another. To offer the woman I have in mind anything less than a great love—it would be to cheat, Simon. No, no, no—it's not the kind of a man I am now, but the kind you are, Simon, should marry."

"It's not my kind that women like best, captain," I said.

"There are women to like every kind, Simon, and almost any kind of a woman would like your kind, Simon, if you would only learn to be less ashamed of what should be no shame. And it is you, already in love, who——"

"Me—in love?" I was like a vessel luffing to escape a squall, he had come on me so quickly.

"There it is, Simon—the upbringing of you that would never own up to what you think only yourself know. Three weeks to sea now you've been with me, and never a gull you've seen skirling to the west'ard that your eyes haven't followed. By no mistake do you watch them flying easterly. And when last evening I said, 'To-morrow, boys, we'll swing her off and drive her to the west'ard—to the west'ard and Gloucester!' the leaping heart in you drove the blood to your very eyes. Surely that was not in sorrow, Simon?"

I made no answer.

Back and forth we paced, and talked as we paced, until the stars were dimming in the sky and the darkness fading from the sea. He stopped by the rail and stared, aweary-like, I thought, upon the waters.

"Simon, surely few men but would rather be themselves than anybody else that lives; but surely, too, no man sailing his own wide courses but comes to the day when he wishes he'd been less free in his navigation at times. You are honest and right, Simon. Even when you are wrong you are right, because for a man to do what he thinks is right, whether he be right or wrong, at the time, is to come to be surely right in the end. And it is the like of you, not yet aweary in soul or body, should mate with the women moulded of God to be the great mothers."

"You have done much thinking of some matters, captain," I said, not knowing what else to say.

"Alone at sea before the dawn—it is a wonderful hour for a man to cross-question himself, Simon; and not many nights of late years that I haven't seen the first light of dawn creeping up over the edge of the ocean. You marry Mary Snow, Simon."

He knew. What could I say? "I never thought to talk like this, captain, to a living man." In the growing light we now stood plain to each other's sight. "I don't understand what made me," I said, and said it, doubtless, with a note of shame.

"It may be just as well at your age that you don't understand every feeling that drives you on, Simon. Our brains grow big with age, but not our hearts. No matter what made you talk to-night, Simon, you marry Mary Snow."

I shook my head, but opened my heart to him, nevertheless. "I haven't the clever ways of Saul Haverick."

"Simon, it's my judgment this night that Mary Snow will never marry Saul Haverick."

"I'm glad to hear you think that, captain. 'Twould spoil her life—or any woman's."

"No, no," he said, quick-like. "Almost any woman's—yes; but not Mary Snow's—not altogether."

"And why?"

"Because she's too strong a soul to be spoiled of her life by any one man; because no matter what man she marries, in her heart will be the image, not of the man her husband is, but of the man she'd wish him to be, and in the image of that man of her fancy will her children be born. Women moulded of God to be the mothers of great men are fashioned that way, Simon. They dream great dreams for their children's sake to come, and their hearts go out to the man who helps to make their dreams come true. If I've learned anything of good women in life, Simon, it is that. And, no saying, I may be wrong in that, too, Simon, but so far I've met no man who knows more of it than I to gainsay me. You marry Mary Snow, Simon, and she will bear you children who will bring new light to a darkening world."

The dawn was rolling up to us and the next on watch was on deck to relieve me; and the cook, too, with his head above the fo'c's'le hatch, was calling that breakfast was ready, and we said no more of that.

"Go for'ard, Simon," said Captain Glynn, "and have your breakfast. After breakfast we'll break out her anchor, and out dories and get that gear aboard afore it's too late. I'll go below and see how Saul's getting on."

With that he went into the cabin; but soon was back to take his seat at the breakfast table; but no word of Saul until we had done eating, and he standing to go up on deck. Then he said: "Saul says he is still too sick to go in the dory with you, Simon."

And to that I said: "Well, I've hauled a halibut trawl single-handed before, Captain Glynn, and I can do it again if need be."

He put on his woollen cap, and across the table he looked at me, and I looked hard at him.

"This will be no morning to go single-handed in a dory, Simon. Saul is not too sick, he says, to stand to the wheel and handle the vessel in my place. I will take his place along with you in the dory."

What he was thinking I could not say. His head was thrown back and his eyes looking out and down at me, as from the top of a far-away hill, and no more knowing what thoughts lay behind them than what ships lay beyond the horizon.

IV

It was a blood-red sunrise and a sea that was making when we left the vessel, but nothing to worry over in that. It might grow into a dory-killing day later, but so far it was only what all winter trawlers face more days than they can remember.

We picked up our nearest buoy, with its white-and-black flag floating high to mark it, and as we did, to wind'ard of us we could see, for five miles it might be, the twisted lines of the dories stretching. Rising to the top of a sea we could see them, sometimes one and sometimes another, lifting and falling, and the vessel lifting and falling to wind'ard of them all.

Hugh Glynn took the bow to do the hauling and myself the waist for coiling, and it was a grand sight to see him heave in on that heavy gear on that December morning. Many men follow the sea, but not many are born to it. Hugh Glynn was. Through the gurdy he hauled the heavy lines, swinging forward his shoulders, first one and then the other, swaying from his waist and all in time to the heave of the sea beneath him, and singing, as he heaved, the little snatches of songs that I believe he made up as he went along.

As he warmed to his work he stopped to draw off the heavy sweater that he wore over his woollen shirt, and made as if to throw it in the bow of the dory. "But no," he said, "it will get wet there. You put it on you, Simon, and keep it dry for me." He was a full size bigger than me in every way, and I put it on, over my cardigan jacket and under my oil jacket, and it felt fine and comfortable on me.

It came time for me to spell him on the hauling, but he waved me back. "Let be, let be, Simon," he said, "it's fine, light exercise for a man of a brisk morning. It's reminding me of my hauling of my first trawl on the Banks. Looking back on it, now, Simon, I mind how the bravest sight I thought I ever saw was our string of dories racing afore the tide in the sea of that sunny winter's morning, and the vessel, like a mother to her little boats, standing off and on to see that nothing happened the while we hauled and

coiled and gaffed inboard the broad-backed halibut. All out of myself with pride I was—I that was no more than a lad, but hauling halibut trawls with full-grown Gloucester men on the Grand Banks! And the passage home that trip, Simon! Oh, boy, that passage home!"

Without even a halt in his heaving in of the trawls, he took to singing:

"It came one day, as it had to come—

I said to you 'Good-by.'

'Good luck,' said you, 'and a fair, fair wind'—

Though you cried as if to die;

Was all there was ahead of you

When we put out to sea;

But now, sweetheart, we're headed home

To the west'ard and to thee.

"So blow, ye devils, and walk her home—

For she's the able Lucy Foster.

The woman I love is waiting me,

So drive the Lucy home to Gloucester.

O ho ho for this heaven-sent breeze,

Straight from the east and all you please!

Come along now, ye whistling gales,

The harder ye blow the faster she sails—

O my soul, there's a girl in Gloucester!"

He stopped to look over his shoulder at me. "Simon, boy, I mind the days when there was no stopping the songs in me. Rolling to my lips o' themselves they would come, like foam to the crests of high seas. The days

of a man's youth, Simon! All I knew of a gale of wind was that it stirred the fancies in me. It's the most wonderful thing will ever happen you, Simon."

"What is, skipper?"

"Why, the loving a woman and she loving you, and you neither knowing why, nor maybe caring."

"No woman loves me, skipper."

"She will, boy—never a fear."

He took to the hauling, and soon again to the singing:

"My lad comes running down the street,

And what says he to me?

Says he, 'O dadda, dadda,

And you're back again from sea!

"'And did you ketch a great big fish

And bring him home to me?

O dadda, dadda, take me up

And toss me high!' says he.

"My love looks out on the stormy morn,

Her thoughts are on the sea.

She says, ''Tis wild upon the Banks,'

And kneels in prayer for me."

"'O Father, hold him safe!' she prays, 'And——'"

"There's one, Simon!" he called.

A bad sea he meant. They had been coming and going, coming and going, rolling under and past us, and so far no harm; but this was one more wicked to look at than its mates. So I dropped the coiling lines and, with the oar already to the becket in the stern, whirled the dory's bow head on.

The sea carried us high and far and, passing, left the dory deep with water, but no harm in that so she was still right side up.

"A good job, Simon," said Hugh Glynn the while we were bailing. "Not too soon and not too late."

That was the first one. More followed in their turn; but always the oar was handy in the becket, and it was but to whirl bow or stern to it with the oar when it came, not too soon to waste time for the hauling but never, of course, too late to save capsizing; and bailing her out, if need be, when it was by.

Our trawl was in, our fish in the waist of the dory, and we lay to our roding line and second anchor, so we might not drift miles to loo'ard while waiting for the vessel to pick us up. We could see the vessel—to her hull, when to the top of a sea we rose together; but nothing of her at all when into the hollows we fell together.

She had picked up all but the dory next to wind'ard of us. We would be the last, but before long now she would be to us. "When you drop Simon and me, go to the other end of the line and work back. Pick Simon and me up last of all," Hugh Glynn had said to Saul, and I remember how Saul, standing to the wheel, looked down over the taffrail and said, "Simon and you last of all," and nodded his head as our dory fell away in the vessel's wake.

Tide and sea were such that there was no use trying to row against it, or we would not have waited at all; but we waited, and as we waited the wind, which had been southerly, went into the east and snow fell; but for not more than a half-hour, when it cleared. We stood up and looked about us. There was no vessel or other dory in sight.

We said no word to each other of it, but the while we waited further, all the while with a wind'ard eye to the bad little seas, we talked.

"Did you ever think of dying, Simon?" Hugh Glynn said after a time.

"Can a man follow the winter trawling long and not think of it at times?" I answered.

"And have you fear of it, Simon?"

"I know I have no love for it," I said. "But do you ever think of it, you?"

"I do—often. With the double tides working to draw me to it, it would be queer enough if now and again I did not think of it."

"And have you fear of it?"

"Of not going properly—I have, Simon." And after a little: "And I've often thought it a pity for a man to go and nothing come of his going. Would you like the sea for a grave, Simon?"

"I would not," I answered.

"Nor me, Simon. A grand, clean grave, the ocean, and there was a time I thought I would; but not now. The green grave ashore, with your own beside you—a man will feel less lonesome, or so I've often thought, Simon.

"I've often thought so," he went on, his eyes now on watch for the bad seas and again looking wistful-like at me. "I'd like to lie where my wife and boy lie, she to one side and the lad to the other, and rise with them on Judgment Day. I've a notion, Simon, that with them to bear me up I'd stand afore the Lord with greater courage. For if what some think is true—that it's those we've loved in this world will have the right to plead for us in the next—then, Simon, there will be two to plead for me as few can plead."

He stood up and looked around. "It is a bad sea now, but worse later, and a strong breeze brewing, Simon"; and drew from an inside pocket of his woollen shirt a small leather note-book. He held it up for me to see, with the slim little pencil held by little loops along the edges.

"'Twas hers. I've a pocket put in every woollen shirt I wear to sea so 'twill be close to me. There's things in it she wrote of our little boy. And I'm writing here something I'd like you to be witness to, Simon."

He wrote a few lines. "There, Simon. I've thought often this trip how 'tis hard on John Snow at his age to have to take to fishing again. If I hadn't lost Arthur, he wouldn't have to. I'm willing my vessel to John Snow. Will you witness it, Simon?"

I signed my name below his; and he set the book back in his inside pocket.

"And you think our time is come, skipper?" I tried to speak quietly, too.

"I won't say that, Simon, but foolish not to make ready for it."

I looked about when we rose to the next sea for the vessel. But no vessel. I thought it hard. "Had you no distrust of Saul Haverick this morning?" I asked him.

"I had. And last night, too, Simon."

"And you trusted him?"

"A hard world if we didn't trust people, Simon. I thought it over again this morning and was ashamed, Simon, to think it in me to distrust a shipmate. I wouldn't believed it of any man ever I sailed with. But no use to fool ourselves longer. Make ready. Over with the fish, over with the trawls, over with everything but thirty or forty fathom of that roding line, and the sail, and one anchor, and the two buoys."

It was hard to have to throw back in the sea the fine fish that we'd taken hours to set and haul for; hard, too, to heave over the stout gear that had taken so many long hours to rig. But there was no more time to waste—over they went. And we took the two buoys—light-made but sound and tight half-barrels they were—and we lashed them to the risings of the dory.

"And now the sail to her, Simon."

We put the sail to her.

"And stand by to cut clear our anchorage!" I stood by with my bait knife; and when he called out, I cut, and away we went racing before wind and tide; me in the waist on, the buoy lashed to the wind'ard side, to hold her

down, and he on the wind'ard gunnel, too, but aft, with an oar in one hand and the sheet of the sail in the other.

"And where now?" I asked, when the wind would let me.

"The lee of Sable Island lies ahead."

The full gale was on us now—a living gale; and before the gale the sea ran higher than ever, and before the high seas the flying dory. Mountains of slate-blue water rolled down into valleys, and the valleys rolled up into mountains again, and all shifting so fast that no man might point a finger and say, "Here's one, there's one!"—quick and wild as that they were.

From one great hill we would tumble only to fall into the next great hollow; and never did she make one of her wild plunges but the spume blew wide and high over her, and never did she check herself for even the quickest of breaths, striving the while to breast up the side of a mountain of water, but the sea would roll over her, and I'd say to myself once again: "Now at last we're gone!"

We tumbled into the hollows and a roaring wind would drive a boiling foam, white as milk, atop of us; we climbed up the hills and the roaring wind would drive the solid green water atop of us. Wind, sea, and milk-white foam between them—they seemed all of a mind to smother us. These things I saw in jumps-like. Lashed to the wind'ard buoy I was by a length of roding line, to my knees in water the better part of the time, and busy enough with the bailing. There was no steady looking to wind'ard, such was the weight of the bullets of water which the wild wind drove off the sea crests; but a flying glance now and again kept me in the run of it.

I would have wished to be able to do my share of the steering, but only Hugh Glynn could properly steer that dory that day. The dory would have sunk a hundred times only for the buoys in the waist; but she would have capsized more times than that again only for the hand of him in the stern. Steady he sat, a man of marble, his jaw like a cliff rising above the collar of

his woollen shirt, his two eyes like two lights glowing out from under his cap brim.

And yet for all of him I couldn't see how we could live through it. Once we were so terribly beset that, "We'll be lost carrying sail like this, Hugh Glynn!" I called back to him.

And he answered: "I never could see any difference myself, Simon, between being lost carrying sail and being lost hove to."

After that I said no more.

And so, to what must have been the wonder of wind and sea that day, Hugh Glynn drove the little dory into the night and the lee of Sable Island.

V

We took in our sail and let go our anchor. Hugh Glynn looked long above and about him. "A clear night coming, Simon; and cold, with the wind backing into the no'west. We'll lay here, for big vessels will be running for this same lee to-night, and maybe a chance for us to be picked up with the daylight. Did I do well this day by you, Simon?"

"I'd be a lost man hours back but for you," I said, and was for saying more in praise of him, but he held up his hand.

"So you don't hold me a reckless, desperate sail carrier, Simon, never mind the rest." His eyes were shining. "But your voice is weary, Simon, and you're hungry, too, I know."

I was hungry and worn—terribly worn—after the day, and so told him.

"Then lie down and 'twill rest you, and for a time make you forget the hunger. And while you're lying down, Simon, I'll stand watch."

And I made ready to lie down, when I thought of his sweater I was wearing. I unbuttoned my oil jacket to get at it. "It's colder already, skipper, and you will be needing it."

"No, it is you will be needing it, Simon. Being on my feet, d'y' see, I can thrash around and keep warm."

"But will you call me and take it if it grows too cold, skipper?"

"I'll call you when I want it—lie down now."

"A wonderful calm night, full as quiet as last night, skipper," I said, "only no harm in this night—no gale before us on the morrow."

"No, Simon," he said—"naught but peace before us. But lie down you, boy."

"And you''ll call me, skipper," I said, "when my watch comes?"

"I'll call you when I've stood my full watch. Lie down now."

I lay down, meaning to keep awake. But I fell asleep.

I thought I felt a hand wrapping something around me in the night, and I made to sit up, but a voice said, "Lie down, boy," and I lay down and went to asleep again.

When I awoke it was to the voices of strange men, and one was saying: "He will be all right now."

I sat up. I was still in the dory, and saw men standing over me; and other men were looking down from a vessel's side. Ice was thick on the rail of the vessel.

It was piercing cold and I was weak with the fire of the pains running through my veins, but remembering, I tried to stand up.

"Hsh-h, boy!" they said, "you are all right," and would have held me down while they rubbed my feet and hands.

I stood up among them, nevertheless, and looked for Hugh Glynn. He was on the after thwart, his arms folded over the gunnel and his forehead resting on his arms. His woollen shirt was gone from him. I looked back and in the waist of the dory I saw it, where they had taken it off me; and the sail of the boat he had wrapped around me, too; and his woollen mitts.

I lifted his head to see his face. If ever a man smiled, 'twas he was smiling as I looked. "Skipper! O skipper!" I called out; and again: "O skipper!"

One of the men who had been rubbing my feet touched my shoulder. "Come away, boy; the voice o' God called him afore you."

And so Hugh Glynn came to his green grave ashore; and so I came home to marry Mary Snow; and in the end to father the children which may or may not grow great as he predicted. But great in the eyes of the world they could become, greater than all living men, it might be, and yet fall far short in our eyes of the stature of the man who thought that 'twas better for one to live than for two to die, and that one not to be himself.

Desperate he was and lawbreaking, for law is law, whosoever it bears hard upon; but the heart was warm within him. And if my children have naught

else, and it is for their mother and me to say, the heart to feel for others they shall have; and having that, the rest may follow or not, as it will; which would be Hugh Glynn's way of it, too, I think.