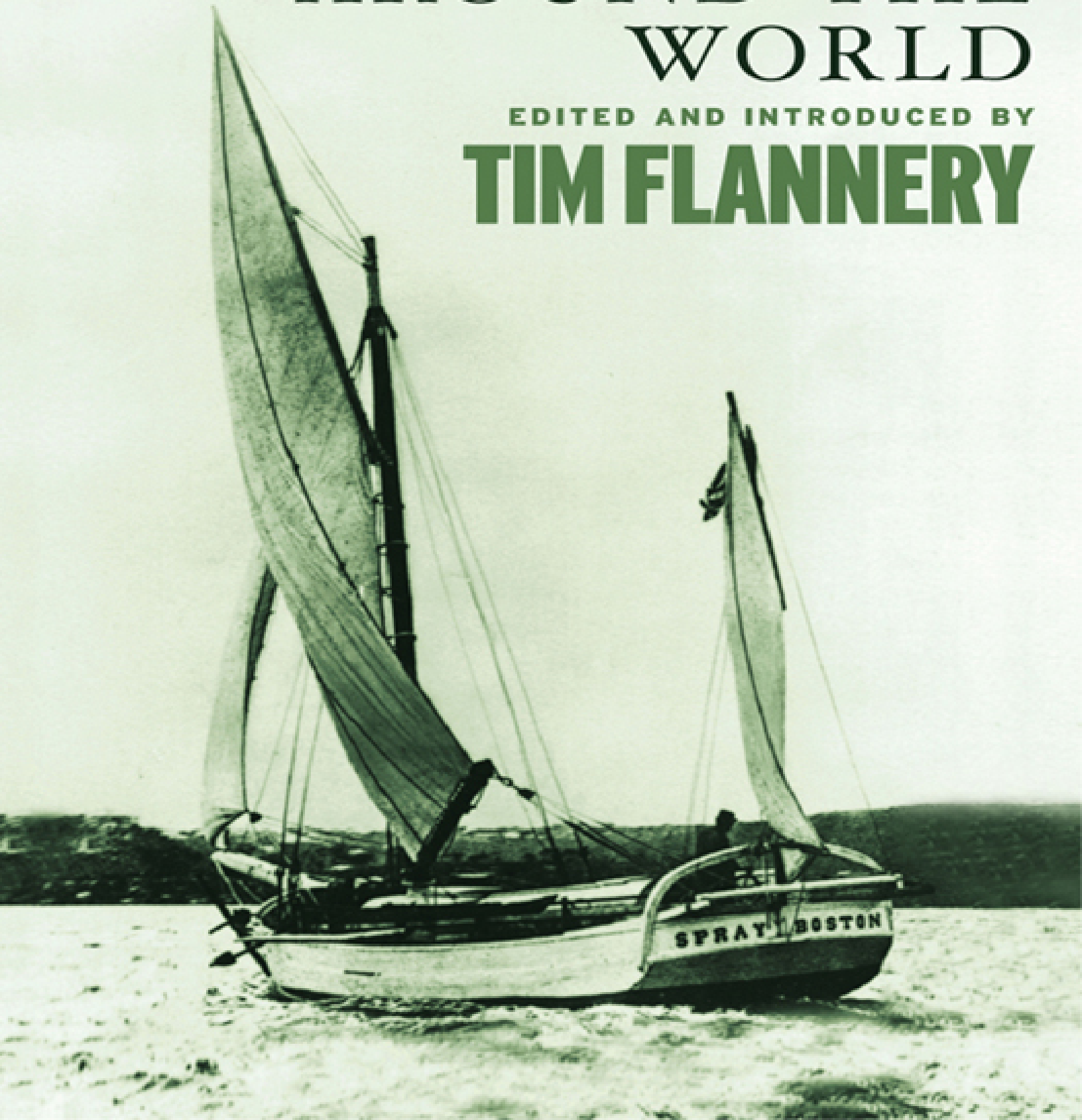
Joshua Slocum

SAILING ALONE AROUND THE WORLD

EDITED AND INTRODUCED BY

TIM FLANNERY



SAILING ALONE AROUND THE WORLD

‘A brush with Fuegians.’

Tim Flannery was born in Melbourne in 1956. He is director of the South Australian Museum and has made contributions of international significance to the fields of palaeontology, mammalogy and conservation.

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Sailing Alone Around the World

Joshua Slocum

WITH AN EXCERPT FROM

Strange, but True: Life and Adventures of Captain Thomas Crapo and Wife

EDITED AND INTRODUCED BY
TIM FLANNERY

Text Publishing Melbourne Australia

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CONVERSION TABLE

Length
1 inch = 2.5 centimetres
1 foot = 30.5 centimetres
1 yard = 0.914 metres
1 mile = 1.61 kilometres

Mass
1 ounce = 28.3 grams
1 pound = 454 grams
1 ton = 1.02 tonne

Volume
1 gallon = 4.55 litres
Temperature
C = 5/9 × (F -32)

Depth
1 fathom = 1.83 metres

GLOSSARY

Bark: a sailing vessel with three or more masts, square-rigged on two masts, excepting the aftermost mast, which is fore- and aft-rigged.

Dory: a small flat-bottomed sailing vessel, most often used for fishing.

Drogue: a sea anchor, rather like a bucket thrown over the bow.

Sloop: a sailing vessel with one mast carrying fore and aft sails—a mainsail and headsail.

Schooner: a sailing vessel with two or more masts, with the aftermast as tall or taller than the other(s).

Windjammer: a sailing ship.

DISCOVERING CAPTAIN SLOCUM

Tim Flannery

Among the many classics of the sea, few books can rival Joshua Slocum's *Sailing Alone around the World* for sheer audacity, adventure and beauty of language. Although written little over a century ago it is redolent of an even earlier age, and has made so great an impression that thousands have been moved to emulate Slocum's great feats. Indeed, Slocum societies continue to thrive around the world.

Until James Cook conquered the affliction of scurvy with his barrels of sauerkraut, circumnavigating the globe inevitably killed many of those who attempted it. Of the 267 souls who first set out to achieve the task with Ferdinand Magellan, just eighteen survived, and when they returned in 1521 they were so worn down by the three-year voyage that each man appeared 'leaner than an old worn-out hack'. So dangerous was the undertaking that for centuries the major European naval powers considered it acceptable if only one or two of every ten sailors should die during each year of such a long voyage. Yet a little over a century after Cook met his untimely death on Hawaii in 1779, the remarkable Joshua Slocum set out to sail around the world—alone. He was superbly qualified for the task, for by then he had spent thirty-seven of his fifty-one years at sea.

It is difficult for those who are familiar with the feats of solo sailing performed by Sir Francis Chichester, Kay Cottee and others to recapture the bravado of Slocum's venture. When he set out in 1895 his voyage was truly a step into the wild blue yonder. He would not be heard of for months at a time, and for most of the voyage was utterly out of reach of help. As audacious as the venture was overall, it was the little things that people wondered at. How, the land-lubbers asked, during a voyage which lasted more than three years, would Slocum steer his vessel and still find sleep?

How would he avoid hurricanes, and the madness brought on by solitude? But to a man of Slocum's sea experience, difficulties that seemed insurmountable to others were simply matters to be solved by common sense.

In many ways Slocum's whole life can be seen as preparation for his remarkable solo voyage. He was born beside the Bay of Fundy, Nova Scotia, on 20 February 1844, and like so many lads of his day he ran away to sea at a tender age. But his stint as a cook on a fishing schooner at age fourteen was not a success, and he returned home to a thrashing from his father. Two years later he left for blue waters, and this time would never see home again. Although his entire formal education comprised just three years at a village school, which he left at the age of ten, Slocum was a natural student. He taught himself how to navigate from John William Norie's *Epitome of Navigation* and spent a lifetime closely observing the sea. He would later say of himself, 'I was born in the breezes and I had studied the sea as perhaps few men have studied it, neglecting all else.' Such was his nautical competence that at eighteen he was appointed second mate on the bark *Agra.*

When she pulled into San Francisco harbour in 1864, the twenty-year-old Slocum, now chief mate, decided to make the town his home port. He became an American citizen in order to pursue fishing and sealing, and five years later was given his first command—a coastal schooner. Within a year he found himself captain of the bark *Washington*, with a general cargo, on his way to Sydney, Australia.

In that beautiful harbourside city something very special happened to Joshua Slocum, for our young wanderer fell in love. The romance with Virginia Walker of 19 Buckingham Street, Strawberry Hills (near Central station) was a whirlwind affair. On 31 January 1871, a matter of weeks after they first met, the twenty-six-year-old sailor and his nineteen-year-old sweetheart were married in the church of the Holy Trinity at the Garrison on Lower Fort Street. It was a suitably maritime location to celebrate a marriage that would be spent almost entirely at sea.

The American-born Virginia was quite a catch. Her father was a forty-niner who left New York to chase gold in California and Australia before going into business as a stationer in Sydney. One wonders whether Slocum, who had an abiding love of literature and writing, first glimpsed his future

wife as she worked in her father's store. Virginia counted among her maternal forebears the Native Americans of New York's Leni Lenape tribe, and it was perhaps from them that she got her brilliant golden eyes. 'I have seen such eyes on our golden eagles,' one of her sons was to recall.

The marriage was a match made in heaven, for Virginia sailed with Slocum wherever he went. Yet she would pay dearly for her love, for the life of a sailing captain's wife was an extraordinarily tough one. On their honeymoon voyage to Alaska to find salmon their vessel was trapped on shoals some 300 kilometres from Kodiak Island and they were forced to return to San Francisco on a Russian ship. Virginia endured this misfortune while pregnant, and she spent the first anniversary of their marriage aboard Slocum's bark *Constitution* at anchor in San Francisco, in labour with their first child.

During the thirteen years she accompanied her husband around the Pacific, Virginia bore seven children, only four of whom survived childhood. The year 1875 gives us some idea of what she had to put up with. It saw the Slocums in the village of Olongapo on the shores of Subic Bay in the Philippines, the young family living in a thatched hut replete with chickens, pigs, scorpions and centipedes. Joshua was busy building an eighty-tonne schooner, doing everything from felling the hardwood trees to dragging them to the makeshift boat building yard by the bay.

A letter written four years later affords us another glimpse into the family's life. The normally indomitable Virginia sent it to her mother from the Philippines on 17 July 1879, where Joshua was loading timber:

> You must excuse for writing you so short a letter. I have been very sick ever since the 15th of last month…I have not been able to eat anything till lately. Dear Josh has got me everything he can think of. My hand shakes so now I can hardly write. Dear Mother, my dear little baby died the other day and I expect that is partly the cause. Every time her teeth would start to come she would cry all night. If I cut them through, the gum would grow together again. The night she died she had one convulsion after the other. I gave her a hot bath and some medicine and she was quite quiet. In fact I thought she was going to come around, when she gave a quiet sigh and was gone. Dear Josh embalmed her in brandy, for we would not leave her in this horrid

place. She did look so pretty after she died. Dearest Mother I cannot write any more.

Such was the life of many women who ventured to sea, but there were good times as well as bad. The Slocums' most comfortable days were spent aboard the *Northern Light,* a three-masted windjammer then considered 'the finest American sailing vessel afloat', which came under Joshua's command in March 1881. The captain's pride in his new vessel was perhaps only slightly diminished by the fact that the days of sail had by then all but given way to steam, for he was a traditionalist who would never embrace the new mode of transportation. In 1882, when he guided the *Northern Light* to its mooring on Pier 23 on the East River, New York, her lofty rigging had to be partly dismantled to pass under Brooklyn Bridge, which was then completed but not yet open to traffic. It was one of the last times that such a vessel would moor upstream of the famous bridge, her rigging standing proudly above the still low skyline of New York.

Despite the ship's grandeur, life aboard the *Northern Light* was rarely uneventful. Given the changing times it was difficult to find reliable and competent seamen, and increasingly the last of the old sailing ships were crewed with drifters and vagabonds. On her first voyage from New York the crew, who had been disaffected since they boarded, mutinied when the ship was forced to put into New London, Connecticut, for repairs. The first mate was fatally stabbed, and Joshua and Virginia were compelled to subdue the rabble at gunpoint. Although the wounded mate and chief mutineer were taken off, Slocum was forced to continue on with the same disaffected crew. Some time later the vessel sailed past the island of Krakatoa, only days before it blew its top in 1883. Then, off the Cape of Good Hope, she encountered a fierce storm and was forced to jettison her cargo. All this in under three years!

Fallout from the mutiny would come back to haunt Slocum. Nervous of another outbreak he confined the second mate in irons for fifty-three days on the suspicion that he had 'arranged with some of the crew to murder Captain Slocum and take possession of the ship'. The imprisoned mate was Henry Slater, an ex-convict whom Slocum had picked up in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. Back in New York, Slater pursued Slocum through the courts, where the captain was found guilty of false and cruel

imprisonment. Slater, however, withdrew his civil suit for compensation, and indeed exonerated Slocum publicly.

Nonetheless, much damage had been done, for legal and other costs forced Slocum to sell his share in the *Northern Light* and purchase a vessel barely one-fifth its size. It was in this ship, the trading bark *Aquidneck*, that the Slocums set sail for South America. Although only thirty-four years old, Virginia had been unwell for some time, worn out by a hard life and constant childbirth. When the vessel was anchored off Buenos Aires in July 1884, she took a sudden turn for the worse. There seems to have been no doctor, and when Slocum called the children to kneel by their mother's bed around eight o'clock that night, she breathed her last. The grieving husband would have been painfully aware of the difficulties he must now face.

Slocum wrote that Virginia's death drove him 'crazy' with grief. Just a few days later the *Aquidneck* ran aground on a sandbar, from which it was rescued only at considerable expense. Now began a swift decline in Slocum's fortunes, for without Virginia the captain was, according to his son Garfield, 'like a ship with a broken rudder'. He immediately embarked on a series of backto-back voyages, perhaps to forget or perhaps to restore his failing fortunes, but everything seemed to go wrong. On one he found himself in a heavy sea between Baltimore and Pernambuco captaining a ship loaded with pianos. The cargo broke loose and the air was filled with the sound of snapping wires, each dissonant twang spelling financial ruin.

Recovery seemed possible when, nineteen months after Virginia's death, Slocum married his first cousin, the twenty-four-year-old Henrietta Miller Elliott. Six days after the wedding, the vivacious and pretty Hettie shipped to sea with her forty-two-year-old husband. Their vessel was the *Aquidneck.* Virginia's death bed was now Henrietta's honeymoon bower, and Virginia's children were still by their father's side. The new bride could not have imagined what was in store.

The *Aquidneck*, loaded with kerosene, ran into a gale as soon as she left New York harbour. Her seams gaped so widely that for thirty-six hours the crew had to pump for their lives, and the journey in the crippled vessel dragged on for two months. With the kerosene discharged and her seams re-caulked, the *Aquidneck* set out for Argentina to load a cargo of baled hay. On the return to Brazil, Slocum discovered that the government had closed all ports to vessels coming from Argentina. An armoured cruiser threatened

to blow the *Aquidneck* out of the water, and Slocum had no choice but to return to Argentina to wait until the blockade was lifted. Three months passed before that happened, and by then his crew had deserted, forcing him to scour the local brothels and prisons for replacements.

Around midnight on 23 July 1887, Hettie woke to the sound of footsteps on the poop deck. She roused Joshua, who burst out of the cabin, rifle in hand, crying ‘Avast, you scum!’ to be confronted with a gang of mutineers led by a low-life rejoicing in the nickname ‘Bloody Tommy’. A thick-headed bully from Boston charged the captain head down. Slocum clubbed him with the butt of his rifle, but the man kept coming, a raised knife in his hand. The captain then had no choice but to shoot, hitting him in the stomach. The mutineers thought that Slocum’s gun contained a single shot, so the others rushed forward. Slocum fired point-blank at the ringleader, and Tommy fell dead at his feet.

Upon arriving in Brazil Slocum was arrested and charged with murder. A Brazilian court soon acquitted him on grounds of self-defence, but in his absence the motley crew had got ashore and caught smallpox. Hettie found herself confined to a plague ship, where half the crew had died and just three men were fit enough to work. By the time the *Aquidneck* returned to port and was cleansed of the pestilence, her captain had run up debts of over a thousand dollars.

Somehow the Slocums persisted in this unluckiest of nuptial voyages, taking on a cargo of Brazilian hardwood, but then they ran onto a sandbar. The *Aquidneck* survived being battered by heavy swells for three days, but eventually her back broke and the uninsured bark was lost. Lacking funds even to purchase a passage home from Montevideo, and armed only with an axe, an adze, two saws, three augers, two sail needles, a punch and a rusty file, the ever resourceful Slocum set about completing a boat he had earlier commenced building on the *Aquidneck*’s deck.

The *Liberdade*, as he christened the ten-and-a-halfmetre dory, was launched on 13 May 1888, and it was in this crazy vessel ‘half Cape Ann Dory, half Japanese Sampan’ that the Slocums completed their honeymoon cruise. Early in the voyage the *Liberdade*’s sails were torn to shreds in a squall, then a whale threatened to overturn the frail craft. Later, at the mouth of the Amazon, she escaped certain destruction by a hair’s breadth, almost caught in heavy seas breaking on sandbars.

When the *Liberdade* finally downed anchor in Washington D.C. on 27 December 1888 her captain received something of a hero's welcome. After the *Liberdade* completed the final leg of her journey and arrived in Boston, Hettie was asked by a journalist if the life of a sea captain's wife agreed with her. 'I shall travel by rail,' she replied, 'I have had enough of sailing to last me a long time.' And she was as good as her word, for she never went to sea with her husband again. Within a year she had left him, taking the two youngest children of Slocum's first marriage to live with relatives.

That is how, in his late forties, Captain Joshua Slocum found himself broke and alone. What was worse, the age of sail was itself nearing extinction. Having devoted his life to perfecting the art of sailing, Slocum could never adapt to steam, and he would never get another commission. So where was this indefatigable man to look for a new start? Perhaps he turned to the example set by another financially embarrassed Yankee sailor, who just eighteen years earlier had come up with an ingenious solution to extricate himself from similar difficulties.

'Captain' Thomas Crapo was born in New Bedford two years before Slocum, and in some ways their lives ran in parallel. Crapo was thirteen when he shipped aboard a whaler as cabin boy. He was not as talented a sailor as Slocum, and never rose above the rank of first mate. But like Slocum he had experienced a mutinous crew. 'A sheath knife is an ugly thing to be cut with,' said Crapo of a deep gash made in his neck during one such incident.

Mariner's berths were so hard to come by near the end of the era of sail that the year 1877 saw Crapo working behind the counter of a New England junk shop, and it was there that he devised his great plan. This was the age of the grand exhibition and the beginning of spectacles from the likes of Barnum and Bailey. Everything from pygmies to the most advanced manufacturing techniques were displayed at such venues, so why not a daring sailor? Crapo would build a cockleshell of a boat and sail in it right across the Atlantic. When he arrived in England he would exhibit himself and his boat to the paying public. Perhaps he would even publish an account of the voyage.

We do not know if Crapo worried about whether he would be portrayed as an eccentric, a freak or a hero by the exhibition managers he planned to work under, for all shades of human enterprise and variety were

on display under the one roof in the nineteenth century. As it happened, however, the matter seems to have been decided by his wife Joanna, for ‘Captain’ Thomas Crapo was destined to sail with her as crew. He had not intended to do so, but at the last moment she insisted on boarding the tiny vessel he had built for the solo venture.

The fact that Mrs Crapo sailed with her husband seems to have been the chief attraction of the voyage to the media, and perhaps the paying public as well. Their success was seen as depending upon an exceptionally —perhaps freakishly—harmonious marriage, and Joanna attracted multitudes of women anxious to know her secret. Contemporary adventurers often struggle with their own version of Crapo’s dilemma: they wish to be seen as heroic and selfless, yet it is the quirky aspects of their exploits that catch the media’s eye. In a sense, Crapo and Slocum were the pioneers of modern adventure record-setting, and little in this type of relationship with the media and public has changed over the past century.

The Crapos’ *New Bedford* was six metres long and weighed just 220 kilograms. She was the only vessel that Thomas Crapo had ever captained, and Mrs Crapo’s sleeping quarters were so cramped that she could not turn over without rising. The pair set out on 29 May 1877, and by the time they reached England on 21 July the redoubtable Mrs Crapo was dangerously ill, while her husband was paralysed on his left side by his constant attendance to the tiller. Their voyage was surely one of the most uncomfortable ever undertaken by a married couple. Yet they had achieved their goal, and the Crapos displayed themselves to large crowds at the Alexander Palace amidst minstrels, racehorses, cricket players and ‘a hundred other things’. When their six-week stint there was finished they moved on to Rockferry Garden in Liverpool, then the King’s Road skating rink, and finally to Worthing and Brighton.

Upon their return to America they displayed themselves before large crowds on Broadway, in Madison Square Garden, and in other cities. Their account, the self-published *Strange, but True: Life and Adventures of Captain Thomas Crapo and Wife*, was hardly a bestseller, but it did provide a modest stream of income to the couple for decades.

One wonders whether it was Joshua Slocum’s resounding success aboard the *Spray* or sheer penury that inspired ‘Captain’ Thomas Crapo to set out in a small vessel once more. On 3 May 1899 he departed Newport

bound for the island of Cuba, this time alone in a rowboat less than three metres long which he dubbed the *Volunteer.* If it was a game of brinkmanship he was playing with Slocum, he was destined to lose, for the very next day his boat washed up on a beach near Charleston, Rhode Island. The captain, it seems, had fallen foul of a severe storm soon after setting out.

If having an adventure and writing about it was a recipe for success, then Slocum was well prepared for a change in career. Despite his short-lived formal education he was a natural writer of exceptional power and originality who had been contributing articles to newspapers in various ports for years. He had a love of literature that was surprisingly broad, for his maritime library comprised more than 500 volumes, including the works of Macaulay, Gibbon, Hume, Prescott, Tennyson, Shakespeare, Stevenson, Cervantes, Defoe, Swift, Darwin, Huxley, Kipling, Lear, Dickens and Boswell. By 1890 he had published, at his own expense, his first book, *The Voyage of the* Liberdade. In 1894 he self-published a second volume, *The Voyage of the* Destroyer *from New York to Brazil,* being an account of his commission to deliver a barely seaworthy iron-clad gunboat to the Brazilian government. Neither was a bestseller, yet it was on the slim success of these books that Slocum would stake his future.

I suspect that the Crapos' audacious Atlantic crossing was very much on Slocum's mind in 1891 and 1892 while he stayed with his sister in East Boston, picking up odd jobs as a carpenter or rigger along the waterfront. Slocum's break came when his sorry state inspired pity in an old colleague. Captain Ebenezer Pierce must have known Slocum's character and capacities well, for he offered him the remains of a near-century-old sloop that lay quietly rotting in a paddock near his home at Fairhaven, and suggested that Slocum come and stay while he restored the boat. It is impossible to know whether Slocum had already settled upon sailing round the world when Pierce's offer was made, but it seems clear that soon after examining the hulk he had some extraordinary feat in mind.

By the spring of 1895 the reconstruction was complete, and the newly christened *Spray* was ready for the voyage. Slocum seemed naturally to sleep with one eye open as the wind carried him on his circumnavigation, and as for steering—he didn't bother. Instead he tied the tiller and the *Spray* took care of herself. He could read in the waves of roiling, distant tempests,

and of the positions of capes and headlands, and so often avoided danger. But he did suffer one extraordinary handicap. The first man to sail solo round the world could not swim.

Despite the fact that many commentators wondered how Slocum would keep his course, navigation seems to have barely worried the captain. Crossing the Indian Ocean towards obscure Christmas Island he wrote:

> For several days now the *Spray* sailed west…as true as a hair. If she deviated at all…she was back, strangely enough, at noon, at the same latitude. But the greatest science was in reckoning the longitude. My tin clock and only timepiece had by this time lost its minute-hand, but after I boiled her she told the hours, and that was near enough on a long stretch.

The truth is that Slocum was so familiar with the ways of the sea that ‘sleeping or waking, I seemed always to know the position of the sloop, and I saw my vessel moving across the chart, which became a picture before me’.

The thing that strikes the contemporary reader most in Slocum’s wonderful tale is the lack of hurry and the old sailor’s relaxed manner even when in conditions that would terrify a lesser soul. Upon rounding Cape Horn and emerging into the Pacific, he encountered conditions so violent that he was forced back into the Straits of Magellan. For weeks he had battled alone through the worst seas on earth, and now had to return to where he started to do the entire business again, as well as fending off piratical Fuegian Indians. Yet never did he seem hurried, defeated, or despairing. He just went on, confident in his little *Spray* and his own abilities.

Slocum must have looked forward to his first Australian landfall since he had carried away his beautiful wife all those years before, but unknown to him a spider from his past lay in wait. Slater, the mutinous second mate of the *Northern Light*, was now living in Sydney and had heard that his old tormentor was coming to town. He started his attack by using the colonial press to pillory Slocum for what he saw as his unjust imprisonment. And Slater was in a position to do so, for he had, at least in the eyes of the world, reinvented himself. Now he was a heroic ex-constable who had only

recently put his life at risk while foiling a burglary. His stories of being bullied to within an inch of his life by a veritable Captain Blood were thus given a hearing.

Whipped into action by the scent of scandal, the reporters were awaiting the *Spray* as she docked at Newcastle in October 1896. The captain displayed great restraint, refusing to comment on the matter, and only showing reports of the incident as given in the American press. In Sydney Slater held public meetings and directed such threatening language towards Slocum that a magistrate bound Slater over to keep the peace. The *Daily Telegraph* reported: ‘Feeling is running very high over the matter, and the city promises to be divided into two sections over the alleged ill-treatment of thirteen years ago.’

The ruckus caused by Slater can hardly have been enjoyable, but Slocum must surely have felt great pleasure to once again walk the streets where he met Virginia. And the Sydney Yacht Club at least put on a truly warm welcome. The respected Chinese merchant Quong Tart, who was renowned for speaking English with a Scots accent and for dressing in tartan on occasion, sailed out to meet him, as did other local luminaries such as Mark Foy and J. L. Hordern.

Upon leaving Sydney Slocum headed south for Melbourne, then Tasmania. His reception in Hobsons Bay was a low-key affair, which was perhaps a relief after the fracas in Sydney. But at Melbourne, for the first and only time during her voyage, the *Spray* was required to pay port fees. The ever resourceful Slocum turned this misfortune to advantage by catching a shark and displaying her for a fee to the citizenry at St Kilda until he had recouped his outlay.

It was in Tasmania that the captain found the hospitality, peace and tranquility that he so badly needed, and he was to tarry there for three months. He sailed into Launceston in January 1897 without the aid of a pilot, and moored at a small jetty at the lower end of Charles Street. While in the town on the Tamar he made some lifelong friends, among them a Mrs Richardson, who, when asked in 1972 at the age of eighty-six for her recollections of the captain, said, ‘He was a perfect gentleman. We all liked him.’ She was eleven at the time, and the captain had given her a large clamshell as a token of his visit.

After Launceston it was George Town, then Devonport, where the *Spray* became the first vessel ever to fly American colours. Here Slocum made more firm friends among the local children. One of them was to recall in 1962:

> My grandfather was the harbour-master and my father pilot and dredge-master, so they had quite a lot in common. Amongst the other children of the town we were very proud of our friendship with the captain. He told us the story of a rat he had found when at sea. He built a boat for it, stocked it with provisions and when near land with a favourable current, put the rat to sea knowing it would make the shore.

Slocum was fifty-four when he finally downed anchor at Newport, Rhode Island, on 27 June 1898, at the completion of his voyage. The journey had taken him three years and two months, and in that time he had ridden the wind as solitary as an albatross for over 74,000 kilometres. He was not a boaster, but he knew the worth of what he had achieved, and soon after returning he wrote to his publisher:

> When my countrymen come to know about it, and have time to think it over, they will not be ashamed of the *Spray.* It would be out of place to make ado of it especially at this time; the story will keep. No one short of bone and muscle and pine knots will lower the record.

Slocum's great achievements belong to an earlier age, for few sailors if any today have the easy knowledge of the sea that would allow them to build their own craft and sail it as he did. And who among us would have the temerity to sail with a crew drawn from the prisons and brothels of Brazil, or to pickle the body of their dear infant daughter in brandy? The end of the age of sail heralded not only a turning point in commerce and technology, but also a change in what the sea demanded of people. True enough, sailing men, women and even children today can circle the globe, non-stop, in less than one hundred days. But they do so with the aid of telephones, weather maps, satellite navigation and often the assistance of multi-million-dollar corporate sponsorships, and the very best boats that

modern technology can produce. If we compare them with Slocum, it doesn't seem right to think of people so equipped as sailing solo at all.

It is perhaps typical of a man who had led such an intense and varied life that his later years were not quiet ones. Following a stint of lecturing, then an attempted retirement at Martha's Vineyard, in 1906 Slocum decided to sail to the Caribbean for a cargo of conch shells and rare orchids he had been commissioned to deliver to President Theodore Roosevelt. Upon his return, while anchored off New Jersey, an extraordinary incident occurred. After Slocum was visited by a twelve-year-old girl, her father claimed that the captain had assaulted her. When questioned in court, Slocum stated that he had no recollection of the incident. He was jailed for forty-two days for rape, but an ensuing medical examination of the girl failed to find any physical evidence of sexual activity. The charge was reduced to indecent assault, to which Slocum pleaded no contest. His plea cannot simply be construed as an admission of guilt, for not all was well in the captain's life by this time. Visitors to the *Spray* had noticed that the ageing sailor was becoming 'exceedingly indifferent to his surroundings', and rundown physically and perhaps mentally as well. So far had his lack of care progressed that he had been observed to greet visitors with his trousers unbuttoned. Perhaps an increasing absent-mindedness, particularly in the trousers department, had clashed with a prudish morality to produce this unfortunate outcome.

In May 1908 Slocum was reported lost at sea, but two months later the *Spray* turned up in New York harbour carrying a two-tonne piece of Caribbean coral for the American Museum of Natural History. In the autumn of 1909, at sixty-five, Joshua Slocum set off in the *Spray* once more, this time intent on exploring the Orinoco and Amazon rivers. He has not been heard of since. His son Victor thought he knew what must have happened; the old sailor had been run down in the night by a steamer in one of the many shipping lanes he had to cross. If so, it was as symbolic an end as an old sailor could wish.

SOURCES

The Search for Captain Slocum, Walter Magnes Teller, Andre Deutsch, London, 1959.

Daily Telegraph, 9 October 1896.
Sydney Morning Herald, 10 October and 12 October 1896.
Age, 23 December 1896.
Express, 1 January and 8 January 1972.

SAILING ALONE AROUND THE WORLD

To the one who said:
‘*The* Spray *will come back.*’

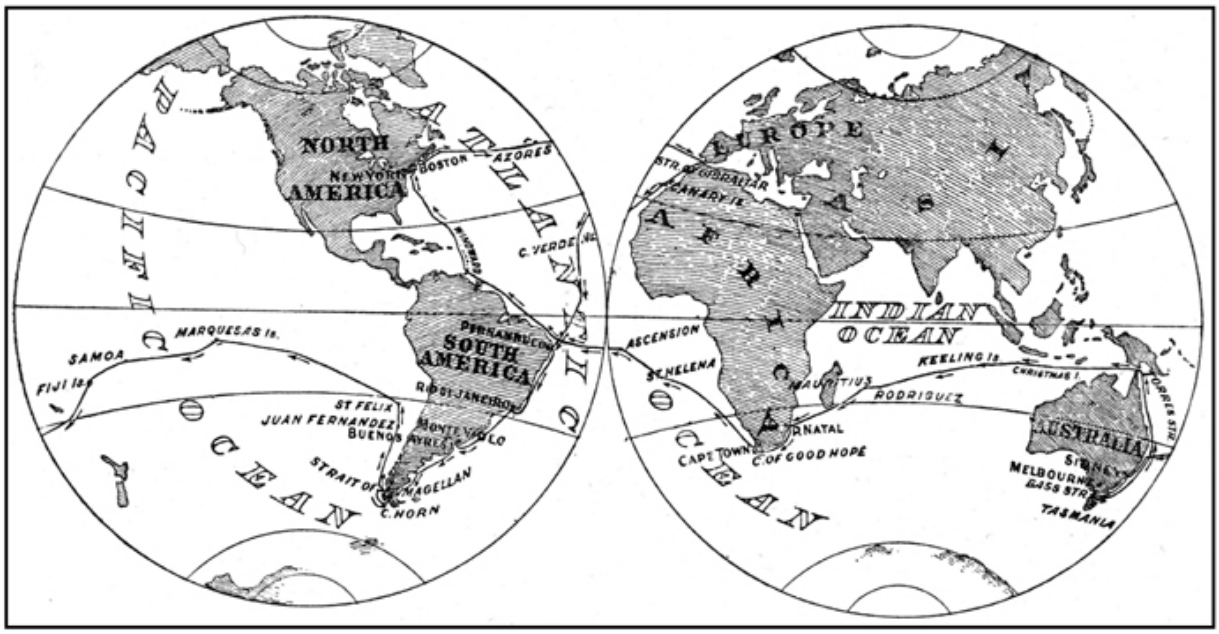

Chart of the *Spray*'s course around the world—24 April 1895 to 8 July 1896.

CHAPTER I

A blue-nose ancestry with Yankee proclivities—Youthful fondness for the sea—Master of the ship *Northern Light*—Loss of the *Aquidneck*—Return home from Brazil in the canoe *Liberdade*—The gift of a ‘ship’—The rebuilding of the *Spray*—Conundrums in regard to finance and caulking—The launching of the *Spray.*

In the fair land of Nova Scotia, a maritime province, there is a ridge called North Mountain, overlooking the Bay of Fundy on one side and the fertile Annapolis valley on the other. On the northern slope of the range grows the hardy spruce tree, well adapted for ship-timbers, of which many vessels of all classes have been built. The people of this coast, hardy, robust and strong, are disposed to compete in the world’s commerce, and it is nothing against the master mariner if the birthplace mentioned on his certificate be Nova Scotia. I was born in a cold spot, on coldest North Mountain, on a cold 20 February, though I am a citizen of the United States—a naturalised Yankee, if it may be said that Nova Scotians are not Yankees in the truest sense of the word. On both sides my family were sailors; and if any Slocum should be found not seafaring, he will show at least an inclination to whittle models of boats and contemplate voyages. My father was the sort of man who, if wrecked on a desolate island, would find his way home, if he had a jack-knife and could find a tree. He was a good judge of a boat, but the old clay farm which some calamity made his was an anchor to him. He was not afraid of a capful of wind, and he never took a back seat at a camp meeting or a good oldfashioned revival.

As for myself, the wonderful sea charmed me from the first. At the age of eight I had already been afloat along with other boys on the bay, with chances greatly in favour of being drowned. When a lad I filled the important post of cook on a fishing schooner; but I was not long in the galley, for the crew mutinied at the appearance of my first duff, and

‘chucked me out’ before I had a chance to shine as a culinary artist. The next step towards the goal of happiness found me before the mast in a full-rigged ship bound on a foreign voyage. Thus I came ‘over the bows’, and not in through the cabin windows, to the command of a ship.

My best command was that of the magnificent ship *Northern Light,* of which I was part-owner. I had a right to be proud of her, for at that time—in the eighties—she was the finest American sailing vessel afloat. Afterward I owned and sailed the *Aquidneck*, a little bark which of all man’s handiwork seemed to me the nearest to perfection of beauty, and which in speed, when the wind blew, asked no favours of steamers. I had been nearly twenty years a shipmaster when I quit her deck on the coast of Brazil, where she was wrecked. My home voyage to New York with my family was made in the canoe *Liberdade*, without accident.

My voyages were all foreign. I sailed as freighter and trader principally to China, Australia and Japan, and among the Spice Islands. Mine was not the sort of life to make one long to coil up one’s ropes on land, the customs and ways of which I had finally almost forgotten. And so when times for freighters got bad, as at last they did, and I tried to quit the sea, what was there for an old sailor to do? I was born in the breezes, and I had studied the sea as perhaps few men have studied it, neglecting all else. Next in attractiveness, after seafaring, came ship-building. I longed to be master in both professions, and in a small way, in time, I accomplished my desire. From the decks of stout ships in the worst gales I had made calculations as to the size and sort of ship safest for all weather and all seas. Thus the voyage which I am now to narrate was a natural outcome not only of my love of adventure, but of my lifelong experience.

One midwinter day of 1892, in Boston, where I had been cast up from old ocean, so to speak, a year or two before, I was cogitating whether I should apply for a command, and again eat my bread and butter on the sea, or go to work at the shipyard, when I met an old acquaintance, a whaling captain, who said: ‘Come to Fairhaven and I’ll give you a ship. But,’ he added, ‘she wants some repairs.’ The captain’s terms, when fully explained, were more than satisfactory to me. They included all the assistance I would require to fit the craft for sea. I was only too glad to accept, for I had already found that I could not obtain work in the shipyard without first paying fifty dollars to a society, and as for a ship to command—there were

not enough ships to go round. Nearly all our tall vessels had been cut down for coal-barges, and were being ignominiously towed by the nose from port to port, while many worthy captains addressed themselves to Sailors' Snug Harbour.

The next day I landed at Fairhaven, opposite New Bedford, and found that my friend had something of a joke on me. For seven years the joke had been on him. The 'ship' proved to be a very antiquated sloop called the *Spray,* which the neighbours declared had been built in the year 1. She was affectionately propped up in a field, some distance from salt water, and was covered with canvas. The people of Fairhaven, I hardly need say, are thrifty and observant. For seven years they had asked, 'I wonder what Captain Eben Pierce is going to do with the old *Spray*?' The day I appeared there was a buzz at the gossip exchange: at last someone had come and was actually at work on the old *Spray.* 'Breaking her up, I s'pose?'

'No; going to rebuild her.'

Great was the amazement. 'Will it pay?' was the question which for a year or more I answered by declaring that I would make it pay.

My axe felled a stout oak tree nearby for a keel, and Farmer Howard, for a small sum of money, hauled in this and enough timbers for the frame of the new vessel. I rigged a steam-box and a pot for a boiler. The timbers for ribs, being straight saplings, were dressed and steamed till supple, and then bent over a log, where they were secured till set. Something tangible appeared every day to show for my labour, and the neighbours made the work sociable. It was a great day in the *Spray* shipyard when her new stem was set up and fastened to the new keel. Whaling captains came from far to survey it. With one voice they pronounced it 'A 1', and in their opinion 'fit to smash ice'. The oldest captain shook my hand warmly when the breast-hooks were put in, declaring that he could see no reason why the *Spray* should not 'cut in bow-head' yet off the coast of Greenland. The much-esteemed stem-piece was from the butt of the smartest kind of a pasture oak. It afterward split a coral patch in two at the Keeling Islands, and did not receive a blemish. Better timber for a ship than pasture white oak never grew. The breast-hooks, as well as all the ribs, were of this wood, and were steamed and bent into shape as required. It was hard upon March when I began work in earnest; the weather was cold; still, there were plenty of

inspectors to back me with advice. When a whaling captain hove in sight I just rested on my adze awhile and ‘gammed’ with him.

New Bedford, the home of whaling captains, is connected with Fairhaven by a bridge, and the walking is good. They never ‘worked along up’ to the shipyard too often for me. It was the charming tales about arctic whaling that inspired me to put a double set of breasthooks in the *Spray*, that she might shunt ice.

The seasons came quickly while I worked. Hardly were the ribs of the sloop up before apple trees were in bloom. Then the daisies and the cherries came soon after. Close by the place where the old *Spray* had now dissolved rested the ashes of John Cook, a revered Pilgrim father. So the new *Spray* rose from hallowed ground. From the deck of the new craft I could put out my hand and pick cherries that grew over the little grave. The planks for the new vessel, which I soon came to put on, were of Georgia pine an inch and a half thick. The operation of putting them on was tedious, but, when on, the caulking was easy. The outward edges stood slightly open to receive the caulking, but the inner edges were so close that I could not see daylight between them. All the butts were fastened by through bolts, with screw-nuts tightening them to the timbers, so that there would be no complaint from them. Many bolts with screw-nuts were used in other parts of the construction, in all about a thousand. It was my purpose to make my vessel stout and strong.

Now, it is a law in Lloyd’s that the *Jane* repaired all out of the old until she is entirely new is still the *Jane*. The *Spray* changed her being so gradually that it was hard to say at what point the old died or the new took birth, and it was no matter. The bulwarks I built up of white-oak stanchions fourteen inches high, and covered with seven-eighth-inch white pine. These stanchions, mortised through a two-inch covering board, I caulked with thin cedar wedges. They have remained perfectly tight ever since. The deck I made of one-and-a-half-inch by three-inch white pine spiked to beams, six by six inches, of yellow or Georgia pine, placed three feet apart. The deck-enclosures were one over the aperture of the main hatch, six feet by six, for a cooking galley, and a trunk farther aft, about ten feet by twelve, for a cabin. Both of these rose about three feet above the deck, and were sunk sufficiently into the hold to afford headroom. In the spaces along the sides of the cabin, under the deck, I arranged a berth to sleep in, and shelves for

small storage, not forgetting a place for the medicine chest. In the midship hold, that is, the space between cabin and galley, under the deck, was room for provision of water, salt beef, etc., ample for many months.

The hull of my vessel being now put together as strongly as wood and iron could make her, and the various rooms partitioned off, I set about ‘caulking ship’. Grave fears were entertained by some that at this point I should fail. I myself gave some thought to the advisability of a ‘professional caulker’. The very first blow I struck on the cotton with the caulking-iron, which I thought was right, many others thought wrong. ‘It’ll crawl!’ cried a man from Marion, passing with a basket of clams on his back. ‘It’ll crawl!’ cried another from West Island, when he saw me driving cotton into the seams. Bruno simply wagged his tail. Even Mr Ben J——, a noted authority on whaling ships, whose mind, however, was said to totter, asked rather confidently if I did not think ‘it would crawl’. ‘How fast will it crawl?’ cried my old captain friend, who had been towed by many a lively sperm whale. ‘Tell us how fast,’ cried he, ‘that we may get into port in time.’ However, I drove a thread of oakum on top of the cotton, as from the first I had intended to do. And Bruno again wagged his tail. The cotton never ‘crawled’. When the caulking was finished, two coats of copper paint were slapped on the bottom, two of white lead on the topsides and bulwalks. The rudder was then shipped and painted, and on the following day the *Spray* was launched. As she rode at her ancient, rust-eaten anchor, she sat on the water like a swan.

The *Spray*’s dimensions were, when finished, thirtysix feet nine inches long, over all, fourteen feet two inches wide, and four feet two inches deep in the hold, her tonnage being nine tons net and twelve and seventy one hundredths tons gross.

Then the mast, a smart New Hampshire spruce, was fitted, and likewise all the small appurtenances necessary for a short cruise. Sails were bent, and away she flew with my friend Captain Pierce and me, across Buzzard’s Bay on a trial trip—all right. The only thing that now worried my friends along the beach was, ‘Will she pay?’ The cost of my new vessel was $553.62 for materials, and thirteen months of my own labour. I was several months more than that at Fairhaven, for I got work now and then on an occasional whaleship fitting farther down the harbour, and that kept me the overtime.

CHAPTER II

Failure as a fisherman—A voyage around the world projected—From Boston to Gloucester—Fitting out for the ocean voyage—Half of a dory for a ship's boat—The run from Gloucester to Nova Scotia—A shaking up in home waters—Among old friends.

I spent a season in my new craft fishing on the coast, only to find that I had not the cunning properly to bait a hook. But at last the time arrived to weigh anchor and get to sea in earnest. I had resolved on a voyage around the world, and as the wind on the morning of 24 April 1895 was fair, at noon I weighed anchor, set sail, and filled away from Boston, where the *Spray* had been moored snugly all winter. The twelve o'clock whistles were blowing just as the sloop shot ahead under full sail. A short board was made up the harbour on the port tack, then coming about she stood seaward, with her boom well off to port, and swung past the ferries with lively heels. A photographer on the outer pier at East Boston got a picture of her as she swept by, her flag at the peak throwing its folds clear. A thrilling pulse beat high in me. My step was light on deck in the crisp air. I felt that there could be no turning back, and that I was engaging in an adventure the meaning of which I thoroughly understood. I had taken little advice from anyone, for I had a right to my own opinions in matters pertaining to the sea. That the best of sailors might do worse than even I alone was borne in upon me not a league from Boston docks, where a great steamship, fully manned, officered and piloted, lay stranded and broken. This was the *Venetian.* She was broken completely in two over a ledge. So in the first hour of my lone voyage I had proof that the *Spray* could at least do better than this full-handed steamship, for I was already farther on my voyage than she. 'Take warning, *Spray,* and have a care,' I uttered aloud to my bark, passing fairylike silently down the bay.

The wind freshened, and the *Spray* rounded Deer Island light, going at the rate of seven knots. Passing it, she squared away direct for Gloucester, where she was to procure some fishermen's stores. Waves dancing joyously across Massachusetts Bay met the sloop coming out, to dash themselves instantly into myriads of sparkling gems that hung about her breast at every surge. The day was perfect, the sunlight clear and strong. Every particle of water thrown into the air became a gem, and the *Spray,* making good her name as she dashed ahead, snatched necklace after necklace from the sea, and as often threw them away. We have all seen miniature rainbows about a ship's prow, but the *Spray* flung out a bow of her own that day, such as I had never seen before. Her good angel had embarked on the voyage; I so read it in the sea.

Bold Nahant was soon abeam, then Marblehead was put astern. Other vessels were outward bound, but none of them passed the *Spray* flying along on her course. I heard the clanking of the dismal bell on Norman's Woe as we went by; and the reef where the schooner *Hesperus* struck I passed close aboard. The 'bones' of a wreck tossed up lay bleaching on the shore abreast. The wind still freshening, I settled the throat of the mainsail to ease the sloop's helm, for I could hardly hold her before it with the whole mainsail set. A schooner ahead of me lowered all sail and ran into port under bare poles, the wind being fair. As the *Spray* brushed by the stranger, I saw that some of his sails were gone, and much broken canvas hung in his rigging, from the effects of a squall.

I made for the cove, a lovely branch of Gloucester's fine harbour, again to look the *Spray* over and again to weigh the voyage, and my feelings, and all that. The bay was feather-white as my little vessel tore in, smothered in foam. It was my first experience of coming into port alone, with a craft of any size, and in among shipping. Old fishermen ran down to the wharf for which the *Spray* was heading, apparently intent upon braining herself there. I hardly know how a calamity was averted, but with my heart in my mouth, almost, I let go the wheel, stepped quickly forward, and downed the jib. The sloop naturally rounded in the wind, and just ranging ahead, laid her cheek against a mooringpile at the windward corner of the wharf, so quietly, after all, that she would not have broken an egg. Very leisurely I passed a rope around the post, and she was moored. Then a cheer went up from the little crowd on the wharf. 'You couldn't 'a' done it better,'

cried an old skipper, ‘if you weighed a ton!’ Now, my weight was rather less than the fifteenth part of a ton, but I said nothing, only putting on a look of careless indifference to say for me, ‘Oh, that’s nothing’; for some of the ablest sailors in the world were looking at me, and my wish was not to appear green, for I had a mind to stay in Gloucester several days. Had I uttered a word it surely would have betrayed me, for I was still quite nervous and short of breath.

I remained in Gloucester about two weeks, fitting out with the various articles for the voyage most readily obtained there. The owners of the wharf where I lay, and of many fishing vessels, put on board dry cod galore, also a barrel of oil to calm the waves. They were old skippers themselves, and took a great interest in the voyage. They also made the *Spray* a present of a ‘fisherman’s own’ lantern, which I found would throw a light a great distance round. Indeed, a ship that would run another down having such a good light aboard would be capable of running into a light-ship. A gaff, a pugh and a dip-net, all of which an old fisherman declared I could not sail without, were also put aboard. Then, too, from across the cove came a case of copper paint, a famous antifouling article, which stood me in good stead long after. I slapped two coats of this paint on the bottom of the *Spray* while she lay a tide or so on the hard beach.

For a boat to take along, I made shift to cut a castaway dory in two athwartships, boarding up the end where it was cut. This half-dory I could hoist in and out by the nose easily enough, by hooking the throathalyards into a strop fitted for the purpose. A whole dory would be heavy and awkward to handle alone. Manifestly there was not room on deck for more than the half of a boat, which, after all, was better than no boat at all, and was large enough for one man. I perceived, moreover, that the newly arranged craft would answer for a washing machine when placed athwartships, and also for a bathtub. Indeed, for the former office my razeed dory gained such a reputation on the voyage that my washerwoman at Samoa would not take no for an answer. She could see with one eye that it was a new invention which beat any Yankee notion ever brought by missionaries to the islands, and she had to have it.

The want of a chronometer for the voyage was all that now worried me. In our newfangled notions of navigation it is supposed that a mariner cannot find his way without one; and I had myself drifted into this way of

thinking. My old chronometer, a good one, had been long in disuse. It would cost fifteen dollars to clean and rate it. Fifteen dollars! For sufficient reasons I left that timepiece at home, where the Dutchman left his anchor. I had the great lantern, and a lady in Boston sent me the price of a large two-burner cabin lamp, which lighted the cabin at night, and by some small contriving served for a stove through the day.

Being thus refitted I was once more ready for sea, and on 7 May again made sail. With little room in which to turn, the *Spray,* in gathering headway, scratched the paint off an old, fine-weather craft in the fairway, being puttied and painted for a summer voyage. ‘Who’ll pay for that?’ growled the painters. ‘I will,’ said I. ‘With the main-sheet,’ echoed the captain of the *Bluebird,* close by, which was his way of saying that I was off. There was nothing to pay for above five cents’ worth of paint, maybe, but such a din was raised between the old ‘hooker’ and the *Bluebird,* which now took up my case, that the first cause of it was forgotten altogether. Anyhow, no bill was sent after me.

The weather was mild on the day of my departure from Gloucester. On the point ahead, as the *Spray* stood out of the cove, was a lively picture, for the front of a tall factory was a flutter of handkerchiefs and caps. Pretty faces peered out of the windows from the top to the bottom of the building, all smiling *bon voyage.* Some hailed me to know where away and why alone. Why? When I made as if to stand in, a hundred pairs of arms reached out, and said come, but the shore was dangerous! The sloop worked out of the bay against a light southwest wind, and about noon squared away off Eastern Point, receiving at the same time a hearty salute—the last of many kindnesses to her at Gloucester. The wind freshened off the point, and skipping along smoothly, the *Spray* was soon off Thatcher’s Island lights. Thence shaping her course east, by compass, to go north of Cashes Ledge and the Amen Rocks, I sat and considered the matter all over again, and asked myself once more whether it were best to sail beyond the ledge and rocks at all. I had only said that I would sail round the world in the *Spray,* ‘dangers of the sea excepted’, but I must have said it very much in earnest. The ‘charter party’ with myself seemed to bind me, and so I sailed on. Towards night I hauled the sloop to the wind, and baiting a hook, sounded for bottom fish, in thirty fathoms of water, on the edge of Cashes Ledge. With fair success I hauled till dark, landing on deck three cod and two

haddocks, one hake, and, best of all, a small halibut, all plump and spry. This, I thought, would be the place to take in a good stock of provisions above what I already had; so I put out a sea anchor that would hold her head to windward. The current being southwest, against the wind, I felt quite sure I would find the *Spray* still on the bank or near it in the morning. Then ‘stradding’ the cable and putting my great lantern in the rigging, I lay down, for the first time at sea alone, not to sleep, but to doze and to dream.

I had read somewhere of a fishing schooner hooking her anchor into a whale, and being towed a long way and at great speed. This was exactly what happened to the *Spray*—in my dream! I could not shake it off entirely when I awoke and found that it was the wind blowing and the heavy sea now running that had disturbed my short rest. A scud was flying across the moon. A storm was brewing; indeed, it was already stormy. I reefed the sails, then hauled in my sea anchor, and setting what canvas the sloop could carry, headed her away for Monhegan light, which she made before daylight on the morning of the 8th. The wind being free, I ran on into Round Pond harbour, which is a little port east from Pemaquid. Here I rested a day, while the wind rattled among the pine trees on shore. But the following day was fine enough, and I put to sea, first writing up my log from Cape Ann, not omitting a full account of my adventure with the whale.

The *Spray,* heading east, stretched along the coast among many islands and over a tranquil sea. At evening of this day, 10 May, she came up with a considerable island, which I shall always think of as the Island of Frogs, for the *Spray* was charmed by a million voices. From the Island of Frogs we made for the Island of Birds, called Gannet Island, and sometimes Gannet Rock, whereon is a bright, intermittent light, which flashed fitfully across the *Spray*’s deck as she coasted along under its light and shade. Thence shaping a course for Briar’s Island, I came among vessels the following afternoon on the western fishing grounds, and after speaking to a fisherman at anchor, who gave me a wrong course, the *Spray* sailed directly over the southwest ledge through the worst tide race in the Bay of Fundy, and got into Westport harbour in Nova Scotia, where I had spent eight years of my life as a lad.

The fisherman may have said ‘east-southeast’, the course I was steering when I hailed him; but I thought he said ‘east-northeast’, and I accordingly changed it to that. Before he made up his mind to answer me at

all, he improved the occasion of his own curiosity to know where I was from, and if I was alone, and if I didn't have 'no dorg nor no cat'. It was the first time in all my life at sea that I had heard a hail for information answered by a question. I think the chap belonged to the Foreign Islands. There was one thing I was sure of, and that was that he did not belong to Briar's Island, because he dodged a sea that slopped over the rail, and stopping to brush the water from his face, lost a fine cod which he was about to ship. My islander would not have done that. It is known that a Briar Islander, fish or no fish on his hook, never flinches from a sea. He just tends to his lines and hauls or 'saws'. Nay, have I not seen my old friend Deacon W. D——, a good man of the island, while listening to a sermon in the little church on the hill, reach out his hand over the door of his pew and 'jig' imaginary squid in the aisle, to the intense delight of the young people, who did not realise that to catch good fish one must have good bait, the thing most on the deacon's mind.

I was delighted to reach Westport. Any port at all would have been delightful after the terrible thrashing I got in the fierce sou'west rip, and to find myself among old schoolmates now was charming. It was the 13th of the month, and thirteen is my lucky number—a fact registered long before Dr Nansen sailed in search of the North Pole with his crew of thirteen. Perhaps he had heard of my success in taking a most extraordinary ship successfully to Brazil with that number of crew. The very stones on Briar's Island I was glad to see again, and I knew them all. The little shop round the corner, which for thirty-five years I had not seen, was the same, except that it looked a deal smaller. It wore the same shingles—I was sure of it; for did not I know the roof where we boys, night after night, hunted for the skin of a black cat, to be taken on a dark night, to make a plaster for a poor lame man? Lowry the tailor lived there when boys were boys. In his day he was fond of the gun. He always carried his powder loose in the tail pocket of his coat. He usually had in his mouth a short dudeen; but in an evil moment he put the dudeen, lighted, in the pocket among the powder. Mr Lowry was an eccentric man.

At Briar's Island I overhauled the *Spray* once more and tried her seams, but found that even the test of the sou'west rip had started nothing. Bad weather and much head wind prevailing outside, I was in no hurry to round Cape Sable. I made a short excursion with some friends to St Mary's

Bay, an old cruising ground, and back to the island. Then I sailed, putting into Yarmouth the following day on account of fog and head wind. I spent some days pleasantly enough in Yarmouth, took in some butter for the voyage, also a barrel of potatoes, filled six barrels of water, and stowed all under deck. At Yarmouth, too, I got my famous tin clock, the only timepiece I carried on the whole voyage. The price of it was a dollar and a half, but on account of the face being smashed the merchant let me have it for a dollar.

CHAPTER III

Goodbye to the American coast—Off Sable Island in a fog—In the open sea —The man in the moon takes an interest in the voyage—The first fit of loneliness—The *Spray* encounters *La Vaguisa*—A bottle of wine from the Spaniard—A bout of words with the captain of the *Java*—The steamship *Olympia* spoken—Arrival at the Azores.

I now stowed all my goods securely, for the boisterous Atlantic was before me, and I sent the topmast down, knowing that the *Spray* would be the wholesomer with it on deck. Then I gave the lanyards a pull and hitched them afresh, and saw that the gammon was secure, also that the boat was lashed, for even in summer one may meet with bad weather in the crossing.

In fact, many weeks of bad weather had prevailed. On 1 July, however, after a rude gale, the wind came out nor'west and clear, propitious for a good run. On the following day, the head sea having gone down, I sailed from Yarmouth, and let go my last hold on America. The log of my first day on the Atlantic in the *Spray* reads briefly: '9.30 a.m. sailed from Yarmouth. 4.30 p.m. passed Cape Sable; distance, three cables from the land. The sloop making eight knots. Fresh breeze N.W.' Before the sun went down I was taking my supper of strawberries and tea in smooth water under the lee of the eastcoast land, along which the *Spray* was now leisurely skirting.

At noon on 3 July Ironbound Island was abeam. The *Spray* was again at her best. A large schooner came out of Liverpool, Nova Scotia, this morning, steering eastward. The *Spray* put her hull down astern in five hours. At 6.45 p.m. I was in close under Chebucto Head light, near Halifax harbour. I set my flag and squared away, taking my departure from George's Island before dark to sail east of Sable Island. There are many beacon lights along the coast. Sambro, the Rock of Lamentations, carries a noble light, which, however, the liner *Atlantic*, on the night of her terrible disaster, did not see. I watched light after light sink astern as I sailed into the unbounded

sea, till Sambro, the last of them all, was below the horizon. The *Spray* was then alone, and sailing on, she held her course. July 4th, at 6 a.m., I put in double reefs, and at 8.30 a.m. turned out all reefs. At 9.40 p.m. I raised the sheen only of the light on the west end of Sable Island, which may also be called the Island of Tragedies. The fog, which till this moment had held off, now lowered over the sea like a pall. I was in a world of fog, shut off from the universe. I did not see any more of the light. By the lead, which I cast often, I found that a little after midnight I was passing the east point of the island, and should soon be clear of dangers of land and shoals. The wind was holding free, though it was from the foggy point, south-southwest. It is said that within a few years Sable Island has been reduced from forty miles in length to twenty, and that of three lighthouses built on it since 1880, two have been washed away and the third will soon be engulfed.

On the evening of 5 July the *Spray*, after having steered all day over a lumpy sea, took it into her head to go without the helmsman's aid. I had been steering southeast by south, but the wind hauling forward a bit, she dropped into a smooth lane, heading southeast, and making about eight knots, her very best work. I crowded on sail to cross the track of the liners without loss of time, and to reach as soon as possible the friendly Gulf Stream. The fog lifting before night, I was afforded a look at the sun just as it was touching the sea. I watched it go down and out of sight. Then I turned my face eastward, and there, apparently at the very end of the bowsprit, was the smiling full moon rising out of the sea. Neptune himself coming over the bows could not have startled me more. 'Good evening, sir,' I cried; 'I'm glad to see you.' Many a long talk since then I have had with the man in the moon; he had my confidence on the voyage.

About midnight the fog shut down again denser than ever before. One could almost 'stand on it'. It continued so for a number of days, the wind increasing to a gale. The waves rose high, but I had a good ship. Still, in the dismal fog I felt myself drifting into loneliness, an insect on a straw in the midst of the elements. I lashed the helm, and my vessel held her course, and while she sailed I slept.

During these days a feeling of awe crept over me. My memory worked with startling power. The ominous, the insignificant, the great, the small, the wonderful, the commonplace—all appeared before my mental vision in magical succession. Pages of my history were recalled which had been so

long forgotten that they seemed to belong to a previous existence. I heard all the voices of the past laughing, crying, telling what I had heard them tell in many corners of the earth.

The loneliness of my state wore off when the gale was high and I found much work to do. When the weather returned, then came the sense of solitude, which I could not shake off. I used my voice often, at first giving some order about the affairs of a ship, for I had been told that from disuse I should lose my speech. At the meridian altitude of the sun I called aloud, ‘Eight bells’, after the custom on a ship at sea. Again from my cabin I cried to an imaginary man at the helm, ‘How does she head, there?’ and again, ‘Is she on her course?’ But getting no reply, I was reminded the more palpably of my condition. My voice sounded hollow on the empty air, and I dropped the practice. However, it was not long before the thought came to me that when I was a lad I used to sing; why not try that now, where it would disturb no one? My musical talent had never bred envy in others, but out on the Atlantic, to realise what it meant, you should have heard me sing. You should have seen the porpoises leap when I pitched my voice for the waves and the sea and all that was in it. Old turtles, with large eyes, poked their heads up out of the sea as I sang ‘Johnny Boker’, and ‘We’ll Pay Darby Doyl for His Boots’, and the like. But the porpoises were, on the whole, vastly more appreciative than the turtles; they jumped a deal higher. One day when I was humming a favourite chant, I think it was ‘Babylon’s a-Fallin’, a porpoise jumped higher than the bowsprit. Had the *Spray* been going a little faster she would have scooped him in. The seabirds sailed around rather shy.

On 10 July, eight days at sea, the *Spray* was 1200 miles east of Cape Sable. One hundred and fifty miles a day for so small a vessel must be considered good sailing. It was the greatest run the *Spray* ever made before or since in so few days. On the evening of 14 July, in better humour than ever before, all hands cried, ‘Sail ho!’ The sail was a barkantine, three points on the weather bow, hull down. Then came the night. My ship was sailing along now without attention to the helm. The wind was south; she was heading east. Her sails were trimmed like the sails of the nautilus. They drew steadily all night. I went frequently on deck, but found all well. A merry breeze kept on from the south. Early in the morning of the 15th the *Spray* was close aboard the stranger, which proved to be *La Vaguisa* of

Vigo, twenty-three days from Philadelphia, bound for Vigo. A lookout from his masthead had spied the *Spray* the evening before. The captain, when I came near enough, threw a line to me and sent a bottle of wine across slung by the neck, and very good wine it was. He also sent his card, which bore the name of Juan Gantes. I think he was a good man, as Spaniards go. But when I asked him to report me ‘all well’ (the *Spray* passing him in a lively manner), he hauled his shoulders much above his head; and when his mate, who knew of my expedition, told him that I was alone, he crossed himself and made for his cabin. I did not see him again. By sundown he was as far astern as he had been ahead the evening before.

There was now less and less monotony. On 16 July the wind was northwest and clear, the sea smooth, and a large bark, hull down, came in sight on the lee bow, and at 2.30 p.m. I spoke to the stranger. She was the bark *Java* of Glasgow, from Peru for Queenstown for orders. Her old captain was bearish, but I met a bear once in Alaska that looked pleasanter. At least, the bear seemed pleased to meet me, but this grizzly old man! Well, I suppose my hail disturbed his siesta, and my little sloop passing his great ship had somewhat the effect on him that a red rag has upon a bull. I had the advantage over heavy ships, by long odds, in the light winds of this and the two previous days. The wind was light; his ship was heavy and foul, making poor headway, while the *Spray,* with a great mainsail bellying even to light winds, was just skipping along as nimbly as one could wish. ‘How long has it been calm about here?’ roared the captain of the *Java,* as I came within hail of him. ‘Dunno, cap’n,’ I shouted back as loud as I could bawl. ‘I haven’t been here long.’ At this the mate on the forecastle wore a broad grin. ‘I left Cape Sable fourteen days ago,’ I added. (I was now well across towards the Azores.) ‘Mate,’ he roared to his chief officer—‘mate, come here and listen to the Yankee’s yarn. Haul down the flag, mate, haul down the flag!’ In the best of humour, after all, the *Java* surrendered to the *Spray.*

The acute pain of solitude experienced at first never returned. I had penetrated a mystery, and, by the way, I had sailed through a fog. I had met Neptune in his wrath, but he found that I had not treated him with contempt, and so he suffered me to go on and explore.

In the log for 18 July there is this entry: ‘Fine weather, wind south-southwest. Porpoises gambolling all about. The S.S. *Olympia* passed at 11.30 a.m., long. W. 34° 50′.’

‘It lacks now three minutes of the half-hour,’ shouted the captain, as he gave me the longitude and the time. I admired the businesslike air of the *Olympia*; but I have the feeling still that the captain was just a little too precise in his reckoning. That may be all well enough, however, where there is plenty of sea-room. But overconfidence, I believe, was the cause of the disaster to the liner *Atlantic,* and many more like her. The captain knew too well where he was. There were no porpoises at all skipping along with the *Olympia*! Porpoises always prefer sailing ships. The captain was a young man, I observed, and had before him, I hope, a good record.

Land ho! On the morning of 19 July a mystic dome like a mountain of silver stood alone in the sea ahead. Although the land was completely hidden by the white, glistening haze that shone in the sun like polished silver, I felt quite sure that it was Flores Island. At half past four p.m. it was abeam. The haze in the meantime had disappeared. Flores is 174 miles from Fayal, and although it is a high island, it remained many years undiscovered after the principal group of the islands had been colonised.

Early on the morning of 20 July I saw Pico looming above the clouds on the starboard bow. Lower lands burst forth as the sun burned away the morning fog, and island after island came into view. As I approached nearer, cultivated fields appeared, ‘and oh, how green the corn!’ Only those who have seen the Azores from the deck of a vessel realise the beauty of the mid-ocean picture.

At 4.30 p.m. I cast anchor at Fayal, exactly eighteen days from Cape Sable. The American consul, in a smart boat, came alongside before the *Spray* reached the breakwater, and a young naval officer, who feared for the safety of my vessel, boarded, and offered his services as pilot. The youngster, I have no good reason to doubt, could have handled a man-of-war, but the *Spray* was too small for the amount of uniform he wore. However, after fouling all the craft in port and sinking a lighter, she was moored without much damage to herself. This wonderful pilot expected a ‘gratification’, I understood, but whether for the reason that his government, and not I, would have to pay the cost of raising the lighter, or because he did not sink the *Spray,* I could never make out. But I forgive him.

It was the season for fruit when I arrived at the Azores, and there was soon more of all kinds of it put on board than I knew what to do with. Islanders are always the kindest people in the world, and I met none

anywhere kinder than the good hearts of this place. The people of the Azores are not a very rich community. The burden of taxes is heavy, with scant privileges in return, the air they breathe being about the only thing that is not taxed. The mother country does not even allow them a port of entry for a foreign mail service. A packet passing never so close with mails for Horta must deliver them first in Lisbon, ostensibly to be fumigated, but really for the tariff from the packet. My own letters posted at Horta reached the United States six days behind my letter from Gibraltar, mailed thirteen days later.

The day after my arrival at Horta was the feast of a great saint. Boats loaded with people came from other islands to celebrate at Horta, the capital, or Jerusalem, of the Azores. The deck of the *Spray* was crowded from morning till night with men, women and children. On the day after the feast a kindhearted native harnessed a team and drove me a day over the beautiful roads all about Fayal, ‘because,’ said he, in broken English, ‘when I was in America and couldn’t speak a word of English, I found it hard till I met someone who seemed to have time to listen to my story, and I promised my good saint then that if ever a stranger came to my country I would try to make him happy.’ Unfortunately, this gentleman brought along an interpreter, that I might ‘learn more of the country’. The fellow was nearly the death of me, talking of ships and voyages, and of the boats he had steered, the last thing in the world I wished to hear. He had sailed out of New Bedford, so he said, for ‘that Joe Wing they call “John”’. My friend and host found hardly a chance to edge in a word. Before we parted my host dined me with a cheer that would have gladdened the heart of a prince, but he was quite alone in his house. ‘My wife and children all rest there,’ said he, pointing to the churchyard across the way. ‘I moved to this house from far off,’ he added, ‘to be near the spot, where I pray every morning.’

I remained four days at Fayal, and that was two days more than I had intended to stay. It was the kindness of the islanders and their touching simplicity which detained me. A damsel, as innocent as an angel, came alongside one day, and said she would embark on the *Spray* if I would land her at Lisbon. She could cook flying fish, she thought, but her forte was dressing *bacalhao.* Her brother Antonio, who served as interpreter, hinted that, anyhow, he would like to make the trip. Antonio’s heart went out to

one John Wilson, and he was ready to sail for America by way of the two capes to meet his friend. ‘Do you know John Wilson of Boston?’ he cried.

‘I knew a John Wilson,’ I said, ‘but not of Boston.’

‘He had one daughter and one son,’ said Antonio, by way of identifying his friend.

If this reaches the right John Wilson, I am told to say that ‘Antonio of Pico remembers him’.

CHAPTER IV

Squally weather in the Azores—High living—Delirious from cheese and plums—The pilot of the *Pinta*—At Gibraltar—Compliments exchanged with the British navy—A picnic on the Morocco shore.

I set sail from Horta early on 24 July. The southwest wind at the time was light, but squalls came up with the sun, and I was glad enough to get reefs in my sails before I had gone a mile. I had hardly set the mainsail, double-reefed, when a squall of wind down the mountains struck the sloop with such violence that I thought her mast would go. However, a quick helm brought her to the wind. As it was, one of the weather lanyards was carried away and the other was stranded. My tin basin, caught up by the wind, went flying across a French school ship to leeward. It was more or less squally all day, sailing along under high land; but rounding close under a bluff, I found an opportunity to mend the lanyards broken in the squall. No sooner had I lowered my sails when a four-oared boat shot out from some gully in the rocks, with a customs officer on board, who thought he had come upon a smuggler. I had some difficulty in making him comprehend the true case. However, one of his crew, a sailorly chap, who understood how matters were, while we palavered jumped on board and rove off the new lanyards I had already prepared, and with a friendly hand helped me ‘set up the rigging’. This incident gave the turn in my favour. My story was then clear to all. I have found this the way of the world. Let one be without a friend, and see what will happen!

Passing the island of Pico, after the rigging was mended, the *Spray* stretched across to leeward of the island of St Michael’s, which she was up with early on the morning of 26 July, the wind blowing hard. Later in the day she passed the Prince of Monaco’s fine steam yacht bound to Fayal, where, on a previous voyage, the prince had slipped his cables to ‘escape a reception’ which the padres of the island wished to give him. Why he so

dreaded the ‘ovation’ I could not make out. At Horta they did not know. Since reaching the islands I had lived most luxuriously on fresh bread, butter, vegetables, and fruits of all kinds. Plums seemed the most plentiful on the *Spray,* and these I ate without stint. I had also a Pico white cheese that General Manning, the American consul-general, had given me, which I supposed was to be eaten, and of this I partook with the plums. Alas! by night-time I was doubled up with cramps. The wind, which was already a smart breeze, was increasing somewhat, with a heavy sky to the sou’west. Reefs had been turned out, and I must turn them in again somehow. Between cramps I got the mainsail down, hauled out the earings as best I could, and tied away point by point, in the double reef. There being sea-room, I should, in strict prudence, have made all snug and gone down at once to my cabin. I am a careful man at sea, but this night, in the coming storm, I swayed up my sails, which, reefed though they were, were still too much in such heavy weather; and I saw to it that the sheets were securely belayed. In a word, I should have laid to, but did not. I gave her the doublereefed mainsail and whole jib instead, and set her on her course. Then I went below, and threw myself upon the cabin floor in great pain. How long I lay there I could not tell, for I became delirious. When I came to, as I thought, from my swoon, I realised that the sloop was plunging into a heavy sea, and looking out of the companionway, to my amazement I saw a tall man at the helm. His rigid hand, grasping the spokes of the wheel, held them as in a vise. One may imagine my astonishment. His rig was that of a foreign sailor, and the large red cap he wore was cockbilled over his left ear, and all was set off with shaggy black whiskers. He would have been taken for a pirate in any part of the world. While I gazed upon his threatening aspect I forgot the storm, and wondered if he had come to cut my throat. This he seemed to divine. ‘Señor,’ said he, doffing his cap, ‘I have come to do you no harm.’ And a smile, the faintest in the world, but still a smile, played on his face, which seemed not unkind when he spoke. ‘I have come to do you no harm. I have sailed free,’ he said, ‘but was never worse than a *contrabandista.* I am one of Columbus’s crew,’ he continued. ‘I am the pilot of the *Pinta* come to aid you. Lie quiet, señor captain,’ he added, ‘and I will guide your ship tonight. You have a *calentura,* but you will be all right tomorrow.’ I thought what a very devil he was to carry sail. Again, as if he read my mind, he exclaimed, ‘Yonder is the *Pinta* ahead; we

must overtake her. Give her sail; give her sail! *Vale, vale, muy vale*!' Biting off a large quid of black twist, he said, 'You did wrong, captain, to mix cheese with plums. White cheese is never safe unless you know whence it comes. *Quien sabe,* it may have been from *leche de Capra* and becoming capricious—'

'Avast, there!' I cried. 'I have no mind for moralising.'

I made shift to spread a mattress and lie on that instead of the hard floor, my eyes all the while fastened on my strange guest, who, remarking again that I would have 'only pains and calentura', chuckled as he chanted a wild song:

High are the waves, fierce, gleaming,
High is the tempest roar!
High the seabird screaming!
High the Azore!

I suppose I was now on the mend, for I was peevish, and complained: 'I detest your jingle. Your Azore should be at roost, and would have been were it a respectable bird!' I begged he would tie a rope-yarn on the rest of the song, if there was any more of it. I was still in agony. Great seas were boarding the *Spray,* but in my fevered brain I thought they were boats falling on deck, that careless draymen were throwing from wagons on the pier to which I imagined the *Spray* was now moored, and without fenders to breast her off. 'You'll smash your boats!' I called out again and again, as the seas crashed on the cabin over my head. 'You'll smash your boats, but you can't hurt the *Spray.* She is strong!' I cried.

I found, when my pains and calentura had gone, that the deck, now as white as a shark's tooth from seas washing over it, had been swept of everything movable. To my astonishment, I saw now at broad day that the *Spray* was still heading as I had left her, and was going like a racehorse. Columbus himself could not have held her more exactly on her course. The sloop had made ninety miles in the night through a rough sea. I felt grateful to the old pilot, but I marvelled some that he had not taken in the jib. The gale was moderating, and by noon the sun was shining. A meridian altitude and the distance on the patent log, which I always kept towing, told me that she had made a true course throughout the twenty-four hours. I was getting

much better now, but was very weak, and did not turn out reefs that day or the night following, although the wind fell light; but I just put my wet clothes out in the sun when it was shining, and lying down there myself, fell asleep. Then who should visit me again but my old friend of the night before, this time, of course, in a dream. ‘You did well last night to take my advice,’ said he, ‘and if you would, I should like to be with you often on the voyage, for the love of adventure alone.’ Finishing what he had to say, he again doffed his cap and disappeared as mysteriously as he came, returning, I suppose, to the phantom *Pinta.* I awoke much refreshed, and with the feeling that I had been in the presence of a friend and a seaman of vast experience. I gathered up my clothes, which by this time were dry, then, by inspiration, I threw overboard all the plums in the vessel.

July 28th was exceptionally fine. The wind from the northwest was light and the air balmy. I overhauled my wardrobe, and bent on a white shirt against nearing some coasting-packet with genteel folk on board. I also did some washing to get the salt out of my clothes. After it all I was hungry, so I made a fire and very cautiously stewed a dish of pears and set them carefully aside till I had made a pot of delicious coffee, for both of which I could afford sugar and cream. But the crowning dish of all was a fish-hash, and there was enough of it for two. I was in good health again, and my appetite was simply ravenous. While I was dining I had a large onion over the double lamp stewing for a luncheon later in the day. High living today!

In the afternoon the *Spray* came upon a large turtle asleep on the sea. He awoke with my harpoon through his neck, if he awoke at all. I had much difficulty in landing him on deck, which I finally accomplished by hooking the throat-halyards to one of his flippers, for he was about as heavy as my boat. I saw more turtles, and I rigged a burton ready with which to hoist them in; for I was obliged to lower the mainsail whenever the halyards were used for such purposes, and it was no small matter to hoist the large sail again. But the turtle steak was good. I found no fault with the cook, and it was the rule of the voyage that the cook found no fault with me. There was never a ship’s crew so well agreed. The bill of fare that evening was turtle steak, tea and toast, fried potatoes, stewed onions; with dessert of stewed pears and cream.

Sometime in the afternoon I passed a barrel-buoy adrift, floating light on the water. It was painted red, and rigged with a signal staff about six feet

high. A sudden change in the weather coming on, I got no more turtle or fish of any sort before reaching port. On 31 July a gale sprang up suddenly from the north, with heavy seas, and I shortened sail. The *Spray* made only fifty-one miles on her course that day. On 1 August, the gale continued, with heavy seas. Through the night the sloop was reaching, under close-reefed mainsail and bobbed jib. At 3 p.m. the jib was washed off the bowsprit and blown to rags and ribbons. I bent the ‘jumbo’ on a stay at the night-heads. As for the jib, let it go; I saved pieces of it, and, after all, I was in want of pot-rags.

On 3 August the gale broke, and I saw many signs of land. Bad weather having made itself felt in the galley, I was minded to try my hand at a loaf of bread, and so rigging a pot of fire on deck by which to bake it, a loaf soon became an accomplished fact. One great feature about ship’s cooking is that one’s appetite on the sea is always good—a fact that I realised when I cooked for the crew of fishermen in the beforementioned boyhood days. Dinner being over, I sat for hours reading the life of Columbus, and as the day wore on I watched the birds all flying in one direction, and said, ‘Land lies there.’

Early the next morning, 4 August, I discovered Spain. I saw fires on shore, and knew that the country was inhabited. The *Spray* continued on her course till well in with the land, which was that about Trafalgar. Then keeping away a point, she passed through the Strait of Gibraltar, where she cast anchor at 3 p.m. of the same day, less than twenty-nine days from Cape Sable. At the finish of this preliminary trip I found myself in excellent health, not overworked or cramped, but as well as ever in my life, though I was as thin as a reef-point.

Two Italian barks, which had been close alongside at daylight, I saw long after I had anchored, passing up the African side of the strait. The *Spray* had sailed them both hull down before she reached Tarifa. So far as I know, the *Spray* beat everything going across the Atlantic except the steamers.

All was well, but I had forgotten to bring a bill of health from Horta, and so when the fierce old port doctor came to inspect there was a row. That, however, was the very thing needed. If you want to get on well with a true Britisher you must first have a deuce of a row with him. I knew that well enough, and so I fired away, shot for shot, as best I could. ‘Well, yes,’

the doctor admitted at last, ‘your crew are healthy enough, no doubt, but who knows the diseases of your last port?’—a reasonable enough remark. ‘We ought to put you in the fort, sir!’ he blustered; ‘but never mind. Free pratique, sir! Shove off, cockswain!’ And that was the last I saw of the port doctor.

But on the following morning a steam launch, much longer than the *Spray,* came alongside—or as much of her as could get alongside—with compliments from the senior naval officer, Admiral Bruce, saying there was a berth for the *Spray* at the arsenal. This was around at the new mole. I had anchored at the old mole, among the native craft, where it was rough and uncomfortable. Of course I was glad to shift, and did so as soon as possible, thinking of the great company the *Spray* would be in among battleships such as the *Collingwood, Balfleur* and *Cormorant,* which were at that time stationed there, and on board all of which I was entertained, later, most royally.

‘ “Put it thar!” as the Americans say,’ was the salute I got from Admiral Bruce, when I called at the admiralty to thank him for his courtesy of the berth, and for the use of the steam launch which towed me into dock. ‘About the berth, it is all right if it suits, and we’ll tow you out when you are ready to go. But, say, what repairs do you want? Ahoy the *Hebe,* can you spare your sailmaker? The *Spray* wants a new jib. Construction and repair, there! will you see to the *Spray*? Say, old man, you must have knocked the devil out of her coming over alone in twenty-nine days! But we’ll make it smooth for you here!’ Not even her Majesty’s ship the *Collingwood* was better looked after than the *Spray* at Gibraltar.

Later in the day came the hail: ‘*Spray* ahoy! Mrs Bruce would like to come on board and shake hands with the *Spray.* Will it be convenient today?’

‘Very!’ I joyfully shouted.

On the following day Sir F. Carrington, at the time governor of Gibraltar, with other high officers of the garrison, and all the commanders of the battleships, came on board and signed their names in the *Spray*’s logbook. Again there was a hail, ‘*Spray* ahoy!’

‘Hello!’

‘Commander Reynolds’s compliments. You are invited on board HMS *Collingwood,* “at home” at 4.30 p.m. Not later than 5.30 p.m.’

I had already hinted at the limited amount of my wardrobe, and that I could never succeed as a dude.

‘You are expected, sir, in a stovepipe hat and a clawhammer coat!’

‘Then I can’t come.’

‘Dash it! come in what you have on; that is what we mean.’

‘Aye, aye, sir!’

The *Collingwood*’s cheer was good, and had I worn a silk hat as high as the moon I could not have had a better time or been made more at home. An Englishman, even on his great battleship, unbends when the stranger passes his gangway, and when he says ‘at home’ he means it.

That one should like Gibraltar would go without saying. How could one help loving so hospitable a place? Vegetables twice a week and milk every morning came from the palatial grounds of the admiralty. ‘*Spray* ahoy!’ would hail the admiral. ‘*Spray* ahoy!’

‘Hello!’

‘Tomorrow is your vegetable day, sir.’

‘Aye, aye, sir!’

I rambled much about the old city, and a gunner piloted me through the galleries of the rock as far as a stranger is permitted to go. There is no excavation in the world, for military purposes, at all approaching these of Gibraltar in conception or execution. Viewing the stupendous works, it became hard to realise that one was within the Gibraltar of his little old Morse geography.

Before sailing I was invited on a picnic with the governor, the officers of the garrison, and the commanders of the warships at the station; and a royal affair it was. Torpedo boat No. 91, going twenty-two knots, carried our party to the Morocco shore and back. The day was perfect—too fine, in fact, for comfort on shore, and so no one landed at Morocco. No. 91 trembled like an aspen leaf as she raced through the sea at top speed. Sublieutenant Boucher, apparently a mere lad, was in command, and handled his ship with the skill of an older sailor. On the following day I lunched with General Carrington, the governor, at Line Wall House, which was once the Franciscan convent. In this interesting edifice are preserved relics of the fourteen sieges which Gibraltar has seen. On the next day I supped with the admiral at his residence, the palace, which was once the convent of the Mercenaries. At each place, and all about, I felt the friendly

grasp of a manly hand, that lent me vital strength to pass the coming long days at sea. I must confess that the perfect discipline, order and cheerfulness at Gibraltar were only a second wonder in the great stronghold. The vast amount of business going forward caused no more excitement than the quiet sailing of a well-appointed ship in a smooth sea. No one spoke above his natural voice, save a boatswain's mate now and then. The Hon. Horatio J. Sprague, the venerable United States consul at Gibraltar, honoured the *Spray* with a visit on Sunday, 24 August, and was much pleased to find that our British cousins had been so kind to her.

CHAPTER V

Sailing from Gibraltar with the assistance of her Majesty's tug—The *Spray*'s course changed from the Suez Canal to Cape Horn—Chased by a Moorish pirate—A comparison with Columbus—The Canary Islands—The Cape Verde Islands—Sea life—Arrival at Pernambuco—A bill against the Brazilian government—Preparing for the stormy weather of the cape.

Monday, 25 August, the *Spray* sailed from Gibraltar, well repaid for whatever deviation she had made from a direct course to reach the place. A tug belonging to her Majesty towed the sloop into the steady breeze clear of the mount, where her sails caught a volant wind, which carried her once more to the Atlantic, where it rose rapidly to a furious gale. My plan was, in going down this coast, to haul offshore, well clear of the land, which hereabouts is the home of pirates; but I had hardly accomplished this when I perceived a felucca making out of the nearest port, and finally following in the wake of the *Spray.* Now, my course to Gibraltar had been taken with a view to proceed up the Mediterranean Sea, through the Suez Canal, down the Red Sea, and east about, instead of a western route, which I finally adopted. By officers of vast experience in navigating these seas, I was influenced to make the change. Longshore pirates on both coasts being numerous, I could not afford to make light of the advice. But here I was, after all, evidently in the midst of pirates and thieves! I changed my course; the felucca did the same, both vessels sailing very fast, but the distance growing less and less between us. The *Spray* was doing nobly; she was even more than at her best; but, in spite of all I could do, she would broach now and then. She was carrying too much sail for safety. I must reef or be dismasted and lose all, pirate or no pirate. I must reef, even if I had to grapple with him for my life.

I was not long in reefing the mainsail and sweating it up—probably not more than fifteen minutes; but the felucca had in the meantime so

shortened the distance between us that I now saw the tuft of hair on the heads of the crew—by which, it is said, Mohammed will pull the villains up into heaven—and they were coming on like the wind. From what I could clearly make out now, I felt them to be the sons of generations of pirates, and I saw by their movements that they were now preparing to strike a blow. The exultation on their faces, however, was changed in an instant to a look of fear and rage. Their craft, with too much sail on, broached to on the crest of a great wave. This one great sea changed the aspect of affairs suddenly as the flash of a gun. Three minutes later the same wave overtook the *Spray* and shook her in every timber. At the same moment the sheet strop parted, and away went the main boom, broken short at the rigging. Impulsively I sprang to the jib-halyards and down-haul, and instantly downed the jib. The headsail being off, and the helm put hard down, the sloop came in the wind with a bound. While shivering there, but a moment though it was, I got the mainsail down and secured inboard, broken boom and all. How I got the boom in before the sail was torn I hardly know; but not a stitch of it was broken. The mainsail being secured, I hoisted away the jib, and, without looking round, stepped quickly to the cabin and snatched down my loaded rifle and cartridges at hand; for I made mental calculations that the pirate would by this time have recovered his course and be close aboard, and that when I saw him it would be better for me to be looking at him along the barrel of a gun. The piece was at my shoulder when I peered into the mist, but there was no pirate within a mile. The wave and squall that carried away my boom dismasted the felucca outright. I perceived his thieving crew, some dozen or more of them, struggling to recover their rigging from the sea. Allah blacken their faces!

I sailed comfortably on under the jib and forestaysail, which I now set. I fished the boom and furled the sail snug for the night; then hauled the sloop’s head two points offshore to allow for the set of current and heavy rollers towards the land. This gave me the wind three points on the starboard quarter and a steady pull in the headsails. By the time I had things in this order it was dark, and a flying fish had already fallen on deck. I took him below for my supper, but found myself too tired to cook, or even to eat a thing already prepared. I do not remember to have been more tired before or since in all my life than I was at the finish of that day. Too fatigued to sleep, I rolled about with the motion of the vessel till near midnight, when I

made shift to dress my fish and prepare a dish of tea. I fully realised now, if I had not before, that the voyage ahead would call for exertions ardent and lasting. On 27 August nothing could be seen of the Moor, or his country either, except two peaks, away in the east through the clear atmosphere of morning. Soon after the sun rose even these were obscured by haze, much to my satisfaction.

The wind, for a few days following my escape from the pirates, blew a steady but moderate gale, and the sea, though agitated into long rollers, was not uncomfortably rough or dangerous, and while sitting in my cabin I could hardly realise that any sea was running at all, so easy was the long, swinging motion of the sloop over the waves. All distracting uneasiness and excitement being now over, I was once more alone with myself in the realisation that I was on the mighty sea and in the hands of the elements. But I was happy, and was becoming more and more interested in the voyage.

Columbus, in the *Santa Maria,* sailing these seas more than four hundred years before, was not so happy as I, nor so sure of success in what he had undertaken. His first troubles at sea had already begun. His crew had managed, by foul play or otherwise, to break the ship's rudder while running before probably just such a gale as the *Spray* had passed through; and there was dissension on the *Santa Maria,* something that was unknown on the *Spray.*

After three days of squalls and shifting winds I threw myself down to rest and sleep, while, with helm lashed, the sloop sailed steadily on her course.

On 1 September, in the early morning, land clouds rising ahead told of the Canary Islands not far away. A change in the weather came next day: storm clouds stretched their arms across the sky; from the east, to all appearances, might come a fierce harmattan, or from the south might come the fierce hurricane. Every point of the compass threatened a wild storm. My attention was turned to reefing sails, and no time was to be lost over it, either, for the sea in a moment was confusion itself, and I was glad to head the sloop three points or more away from her true course that she might ride safely over the waves. I was now scudding her for the channel between Africa and the island of Fuerteventura, the easternmost of the Canary Islands, for which I was on the lookout. At 2 p.m., the weather becoming

suddenly fine, the island stood in view, already abeam to starboard, and not more than seven miles off. Fuerteventura is 2700 feet high, and in fine weather is visible many leagues away.

The wind freshened in the night, and the *Spray* had a fine run through the channel. By daylight, 3 September, she was twenty-five miles clear of all the islands, when a calm ensued, which was the precursor of another gale of wind that soon came on, bringing with it dust from the African shore. It howled dismally while it lasted, and though it was not the season of the harmattan, the sea in the course of an hour was discoloured with a reddish-brown dust. The air remained thick with flying dust all the afternoon, but the wind, veering northwest at night, swept it back to land, and afforded the *Spray* once more a clear sky. Her mast now bent under a strong, steady pressure, and her bellying sail swept the sea as she rolled scuppers under, courtesying to the waves. These rolling waves thrilled me as they tossed my ship, passing quickly under her keel. This was grand sailing.

On 4 September, the wind, still fresh, blew from the north-northeast, and the sea surged along with the sloop. About noon a steamship, a bullock-droger, from the River Plate hove in sight, steering northeast, and making bad weather of it. I signalled her, but got no answer. She was plunging into the head sea and rolling in a most astonishing manner, and from the way she yawed one might have said that a wild steer was at the helm.

On the morning of 6 September I found three flying fish on deck, and a fourth one down the forescuttle as close as possible to the frying pan. It was the best haul yet, and afforded me a sumptuous breakfast and dinner.

The *Spray* had now settled down to the trade winds and to the business of her voyage. Later in the day another droger hove in sight, rolling as badly as her predecessor. I threw out no flag to this one, but got the worst of it for passing under her lee. She was, indeed, a stale one! And the poor cattle, how they bellowed! The time was when ships passing one another at sea backed their topsails and had a ‘gam’, and on parting fired guns; but those good old days have gone. People have hardly time nowadays to speak even on the broad ocean, where news is news, and as for a salute of guns, they cannot afford the powder. There are no poetryenshrined freighters on the sea now; it is a prosy life when we have no time to bid one another good morning.

My ship, running now in the full swing of the trades, left me days to myself for rest and recuperation. I employed the time in reading and writing, or in whatever I found to do about the rigging and the sails to keep them all in order. The cooking was always done quickly, and was a small matter, as the bill of fare consisted mostly of flying fish, hot biscuits and butter, potatoes, coffee and cream—dishes readily prepared.

On 10 September the *Spray* passed the island of St Antonio, the northwesternmost of the Cape Verdes, close aboard. The landfall was wonderfully true, considering that no observations for longitude had been made. The wind, northeast, as the sloop drew by the island, was very squally, but I reefed her sails snug, and steered broad from the highland of blustering St Antonio. Then leaving the Cape Verde Islands out of sight astern, I found myself once more sailing a lonely sea and in a solitude supreme all around. When I slept I dreamed that I was alone. This feeling never left me; but, sleeping or waking, I seemed always to know the position of the sloop, and I saw my vessel moving across the chart, which became a picture before me.

One night while I sat in the cabin under this spell, the profound stillness all about was broken by human voices alongside! I sprang instantly to the deck, startled beyond my power to tell. Passing close under lee, like an apparition, was a white bark under full sail. The sailors on board of her were hauling on ropes to brace the yards, which just cleared the sloop's mast as she swept by. No one hailed from the white-winged flier, but I heard someone on board say that he saw lights on the sloop, and that he made her out to be a fisherman. I sat long on the starlit deck that night, thinking of ships, and watching the constellations on their voyage.

On the following day, 13 September, a large fourmasted ship passed some distance to windward, heading north.

The sloop was now rapidly drawing towards the region of doldrums, and the force of the trade winds was lessening. I could see by the ripples that a countercurrent had set in. This I estimated to be about sixteen miles a day. In the heart of the counter-stream the rate was more than that setting eastward.

On 14 September a lofty three-masted ship, heading north, was seen from the masthead. Neither this ship nor the one seen yesterday was within signal distance, yet it was good even to see them. On the following day

heavy rain-clouds rose in the south, obscuring the sun; this was ominous of doldrums. On the 16th the *Spray* entered this gloomy region, to battle with squalls and to be harassed by fitful calms; for this is the state of the elements between the northeast and the southeast trades, where each wind, struggling in turn for mastery, expends its force whirling about in all directions. Making this still more trying to one's nerve and patience, the sea was tossed into confused cross-lumps and fretted by eddying currents. As if something more were needed to complete a sailor's discomfort in this state, the rain poured down in torrents day and night. The *Spray* struggled and tossed for ten days, making only 300 miles on her course in all that time. I didn't say anything!

On 23 September the fine schooner *Nantasket* of Boston, from Bear River, for the River Plate, lumberladen, and just through the doldrums, came up with the *Spray,* and her captain passing a few words, she sailed on. Being much fouled on the bottom by shellfish, she drew along with her fishes which had been following the *Spray,* which was less provided with that sort of food. Fishes will always follow a foul ship. A barnacle-grown log adrift has the same attraction for deep-sea fishes. One of this little school of deserters was a dolphin that had followed the *Spray* about a thousand miles, and had been content to eat scraps of food thrown overboard from my table; for, having been wounded, it could not dart through the sea to prey on other fishes. I had become accustomed to seeing the dolphin, which I knew by its scars, and missed it whenever it took occasional excursions away from the sloop. One day, after it had been off some hours, it returned in company with three yellowtails, a sort of cousin to the dolphin. This little school kept together, except when in danger and when foraging about the sea. Their lives were often threatened by hungry sharks that came round the vessel, and more than once they had narrow escapes. Their mode of escape interested me greatly, and I passed hours watching them. They would dart away, each in a different direction, so that the wolf of the sea, the shark, pursuing one, would be led away from the others; then after a while they would all return and rendezvous under one side or the other of the sloop. Twice their pursuers were diverted by a tin pan, which I towed astern of the sloop, and which was mistaken for a bright fish; and while turning, in the peculiar way that sharks have when about to devour their prey, I shot them through the head.

Their precarious life seemed to concern the yellowtails very little, if at all. All living beings, without doubt, are afraid of death. Nevertheless, some of the species I saw huddle together as though they knew they were created for the larger fishes, and wished to give the least possible trouble to their captors. I have seen, on the other hand, whales swimming in a circle around a school of herrings, and with mighty exertion ‘bunching’ them together in a whirlpool set in motion by their flukes, and when the small fry were all whirled nicely together, one or the other of the leviathans, lunging through the centre with open jaws, take in a boatload or so at a single mouthful. Off the Cape of Good Hope I saw schools of sardines or other small fish being treated in this way by great numbers of cavally fish. There was not the slightest chance of escape for the sardines, while the cavally circled round and round, feeding from the edge of the mass. It was interesting to note how rapidly the small fry disappeared; and though it was repeated before my eyes over and over, I could hardly perceive the capture of a single sardine, so dexterously was it done.

Along the equatorial limit of the southeast trade winds the air was heavily charged with electricity, and there was much thunder and lightning. It was hereabout I remembered that, a few years before, the American ship *Alert* was destroyed by lightning. Her people, by wonderful good fortune, were rescued on the same day and brought to Pernambuco, where I then met them.

On 25 September, in the latitude of 5° N., longitude 26° 30′ W., I spoke to the ship *North Star* of London. The great ship was out forty-eight days from Norfolk, Virginia, and was bound for Rio, where we met again about two months later. The *Spray* was now thirty days from Gibraltar.

The *Spray*’s next companion of the voyage was a swordfish, that swam alongside, showing its tall fin out of the water, till I made a stir for my harpoon, when it hauled its black flag down and disappeared.

On 30 September, at half past eleven in the morning, the *Spray* crossed the equator in longitude 29° 30′ W. At noon she was two miles south of the line. The southeast trade winds, met, rather light, in about 4° N., gave her sails now a stiff full sending her handsomely over the sea towards the coast of Brazil, where on 5 October, just north of Olinda Point, without further incident, she made the land, casting anchor in Pernambuco harbour about noon: forty days from Gibraltar, and all well on board. Did I tire of the

voyage in all that time? Not a bit of it! I was never in better trim in all my life, and was eager for the more perilous experience of rounding the Horn.

It was not at all strange in a life common to sailors that, having already crossed the Atlantic twice and being now halfway from Boston to the Horn, I should find myself still among friends. My determination to sail westward from Gibraltar not only enabled me to escape the pirates of the Red Sea, but, in bringing me to Pernambuco, landed me on familiar shores. I had made many voyages to this and other ports in Brazil. In 1893 I was employed as master to take the famous Ericsson ship *Destroyer* from New York to Brazil to go against the rebel Mello and his party. The *Destroyer,* by the way, carried a submarine cannon of enormous length.

In the same expedition went the *Nictheroy,* the ship purchased by the United States government during the Spanish war and renamed the *Buffalo.* The *Destroyer* was in many ways the better ship of the two, but the Brazilians in their curious war sank her themselves at Bahia. With her sank my hope of recovering wages due me; still, I could but try to recover, for to me it meant a great deal. But now within two years the whirligig of time had brought the Mello party into power, and although it was the legal government which had employed me, the so-called ‘rebels’ felt under less obligation to me than I could have wished.

During these visits to Brazil I had made the acquaintance of Dr Perera, owner and editor of *El Commercio Jornal,* and soon after the *Spray* was safely moored in Upper Topsail Reach, the doctor, who is a very enthusiastic yachtsman, came to pay me a visit and to carry me up the waterway of the lagoon to his country residence. The approach to his mansion by the waterside was guarded by his armada, a fleet of boats including a Chinese sampan, a Norwegian pram, and a Cape Ann dory, the last of which he obtained from the *Destroyer.* The doctor dined me often on good Brazilian fare, that I might, as he said, ‘*salle gordo*’ for the voyage; but he found that even on the best I fattened slowly.

Fruits and vegetables and all other provisions necessary for the voyage having been taken in, on 23 October I unmoored and made ready for sea. Here I encountered one of the unforgiving Mello faction in the person of the collector of customs, who charged the *Spray* tonnage dues when she cleared, notwithstanding that she sailed with a yacht licence and should have been exempt from port charges. Our consul reminded the collector of

this and of the fact—without much diplomacy, I thought—that it was I who brought the *Destroyer* to Brazil. ‘Oh, yes,’ said the bland collector, ‘we remember it very well,’ for it was now in a small way his turn.

Mr Lungrin, a merchant, to help me out of the trifling difficulty, offered to freight the *Spray* with a cargo of gunpowder for Bahia, which would have put me in funds; and when the insurance companies refused to take the risk on cargo shipped on a vessel manned by a crew of only one, he offered to ship it without insurance, taking all the risk himself. This was perhaps paying me a greater compliment than I deserved. The reason why I did not accept the business was that in so doing I found that I should vitiate my yacht licence and run into more expense for harbour dues around the world than the freight would amount to. Instead of all this, another old merchant friend came to my assistance, advancing the cash direct.

While at Pernambuco I shortened the boom, which had been broken when off the coast of Morocco, by removing the broken piece, which took about four feet off the inboard end; I also refitted the jaws. On 24 October 1895, a fine day even as days go in Brazil, the *Spray* sailed, having had abundant good cheer. Making about one hundred miles a day along the coast, I arrived at Rio de Janeiro on 5 November, without any event worth mentioning, and about noon cast anchor near Villaganon, to await the official port visit. On the following day I bestirred myself to meet the highest lord of the admiralty and the ministers, to inquire concerning the matter of wages due me from the beloved *Destroyer.* The high official I met said: ‘Captain, so far as we are concerned, you may have the ship, and if you care to accept her we will send an officer to show you where she is.’ I knew well enough where she was at that moment. The top of her smokestack being awash in Bahia, it was more than likely that she rested on the bottom there. I thanked the kind officer, but declined his offer.

The *Spray,* with a number of old shipmasters on board, sailed about the harbour of Rio the day before she put to sea. As I had decided to give the *Spray* a yawl rig for the tempestuous waters of Patagonia, I here placed on the stern a semicircular brace to support a jigger mast. These old captains inspected the *Spray*’s rigging, and each one contributed something to her outfit. Captain Jones, who had acted as my interpreter at Rio, gave her an anchor, and one of the steamers gave her a cable to match it. She never dragged Jones’s anchor once on the voyage, and the cable not only stood

the strain on a lee shore, but when towed off Cape Horn helped break combing seas astern that threatened to board her.

CHAPTER VI

Departure from Rio de Janeiro—The *Spray* ashore on the sands of Uruguay—A narrow escape from shipwreck—The boy who found a sloop—The *Spray* floated but somewhat damaged—Courtesies from the British consul at Maldonado—A warm greeting at Montevideo—An excursion to Buenos Aires—Shortening the mast and bowsprit.

On 28 November the *Spray* sailed from Rio de Janeiro, and first of all ran into a gale of wind, which tore up things generally along the coast, doing considerable damage to shipping. It was well for her, perhaps, that she was clear of the land. Coasting along on this part of the voyage, I observed that while some of the small vessels I fell in with were able to outsail the *Spray* by day, they fell astern of her by night. To the *Spray* day and night were the same; to the others clearly there was a difference. On one of the very fine days experienced after leaving Rio, the steamship *South Wales* spoke to the *Spray* and unsolicited gave the longitude by chronometer as 48° W., ‘as near as I can make it’, the captain said. The *Spray*, with her tin clock, had exactly the same reckoning. I was feeling at ease in my primitive method of navigation, but it startled me not a little to find my position by account verified by the ship’s chronometer.

On 5 December a barkantine hove in sight, and for several days the two vessels sailed along the coast together. Right here a current was experienced setting north, making it necessary to hug the shore, with which the *Spray* became rather familiar. Here I confess a weakness: I hugged the shore entirely too close. In a word, at daybreak on the morning of 11 December the *Spray* ran hard and fast on the beach. This was annoying; but I soon found that the sloop was in no great danger. The false appearance of the sandhills under a bright moon had deceived me, and I lamented now that I had trusted to appearances at all. The sea, though moderately smooth, still carried a swell which broke with some force on the shore. I managed to

launch my small dory from the deck, and ran out a kedge anchor and warp; but it was too late to kedge the sloop off, for the tide was falling and she had already sewed a foot. Then I went about ‘laying out’ the larger anchor, which was no easy matter, for my only lifeboat, the frail dory, when the anchor and cable were in it, was swamped at once in the surf, the load being too great for her. Then I cut the cable and made two loads of it instead of one. The anchor, with forty fathoms bent and already buoyed, I now took and succeeded in getting through the surf; but my dory was leaking fast, and by the time I had rowed far enough to drop the anchor she was full to the gunwale and sinking. There was not a moment to spare, and I saw clearly that if I failed now all might be lost. I sprang from the oars to my feet, and lifting the anchor above my head, threw it clear just as she was turning over. I grasped her gunwale and held on as she turned bottom up, for I suddenly remembered that I could not swim. Then I tried to right her, but with too much eagerness, for she rolled clean over, and left me as before, clinging to her gunwale, while my body was still in the water. Giving a moment to cool reflection, I found that although the wind was blowing moderately towards the land, the current was carrying me to sea, and that something would have to be done. Three times I had been under water, in trying to right the dory, and I was just saying, ‘Now I lay me’, when I was seized by a determination to try yet once more, so that no one of the prophets of evil I had left behind me could say, ‘I told you so.’ Whatever the danger may have been, much or little, I can truly say that the moment was the most serene of my life.

After righting the dory for the fourth time, I finally succeeded by the utmost care in keeping her upright while I hauled myself into her and with one of the oars, which I had recovered, paddled to the shore, somewhat the worse for wear and pretty full of salt water. The position of my vessel, now high and dry, gave me anxiety. To get her afloat again was all I thought of or cared for. I had little difficulty in carrying the second part of my cable out and securing it to the first, which I had taken the precaution to buoy before I put it into the boat. To bring the end back to the sloop was a smaller matter still, and I believe I chuckled above my sorrows when I found that in all the haphazard my judgment or my good genius had faithfully stood by me. The cable reached from the anchor in deep water to the sloop’s windlass by just enough to secure a turn and no more. The anchor had been

dropped at the right distance from the vessel. To heave all taut now and wait for the coming tide was all I could do.

I had already done enough work to tire a stouter man, and was only too glad to throw myself on the sand above the tide and rest; for the sun was already up, and pouring a generous warmth over the land. While my state could have been worse, I was on the wild coast of a foreign country, and not entirely secure in my property, as I soon found out. I had not been long on the shore when I heard the patter, patter of a horse's feet approaching along the hard beach, which ceased as it came abreast of the sand ridge where I lay sheltered from the wind. Looking up cautiously, I saw mounted on a nag probably the most astonished boy on the whole coast. He had found a sloop! 'It must be mine,' he thought, 'for am I not the first to see it on the beach?' Sure enough, there it was all high and dry and painted white. He trotted his horse around it, and finding no owner, hitched the nag to the sloop's bobstay and hauled as though he would take her home; but of course she was too heavy for one horse to move. With my skiff, however, it was different; this he hauled some distance, and concealed behind a dune in a bunch of tall grass. He had made up his mind, I dare say, to bring more horses and drag his bigger prize away, anyhow, and was starting off for the settlement a mile or so away for the reinforcement when I discovered myself to him, at which he seemed displeased and disappointed. '*Buenos dias, muchacho,*' I said. He grunted a reply, and eyed me keenly from head to foot. Then bursting into a volley of questions—more than six Yankees could ask—he wanted to know, first, where my ship was from, and how many days she had been coming. Then he asked what I was doing here ashore so early in the morning. 'Your questions are easily answered,' I replied; 'my ship is from the moon, it has taken her a month to come, and she is here for a cargo of boys.' But the intimation of this enterprise, had I not been on the alert, might have cost me dearly; for while I spoke this child of the campo coiled his lariat ready to throw, and instead of being himself carried to the moon, he was apparently thinking of towing me home by the neck, astern of his wild cayuse, over the fields of Uruguay.

The exact spot where I was stranded was at the Castillo Chicos, about seven miles south of the dividing line of Uruguay and Brazil, and of course the natives there speak Spanish. To reconcile my early visitor, I told him that I had on my ship biscuits, and that I wished to trade them for butter and

milk. On hearing this a broad grin lighted up his face, and showed that he was greatly interested, and that even in Uruguay a ship's biscuit will cheer the heart of a boy and make him your bosom friend. The lad almost flew home, and returned quickly with butter, milk and eggs. I was, after all, in a land of plenty. With the boy came others, old and young, from neighbouring ranches, among them a German settler, who was of great assistance to me in many ways.

A coast guard from Fort Teresa, a few miles away, also came, 'to protect your property from the natives of the plains', he said. I took occasion to tell him, however, that if he would look after the people of his own village, I would take care of those from the plains, pointing, as I spoke, to the nondescript 'merchant' who had already stolen my revolver and several small articles from my cabin, which by a bold front I had recovered. The chap was not a native Uruguayan. Here, as in many other places that I visited, the natives themselves were not the ones discreditable to the country.

Early in the day a dispatch came from the port captain of Montevideo, commanding the coast guards to render the *Spray* every assistance. This, however, was not necessary, for a guard was already on the alert, and making all the ado that would become the wreck of a steamer with a thousand emigrants aboard. The same messenger brought word from the port captain that he would dispatch a steam tug to tow the *Spray* to Montevideo. The officer was as good as his word; a powerful tug arrived on the following day; but, to make a long story short, with the help of the German and one soldier and one Italian, called 'Angel of Milan', I had already floated the sloop and was sailing for port with the boom off before a fair wind. The adventure cost the *Spray* no small amount of pounding on the hard sand; she lost her shoe and part of her false keel, and received other damage, which, however, was readily mended afterward in dock.

On the following day I anchored at Maldonado. The British consul, his daughter and another young lady came on board, bringing with them a basket of fresh eggs, strawberries, bottles of milk and a great loaf of sweet bread. This was a good landfall, and better cheer than I had found at Maldonado once upon a time when I entered the port with a stricken crew in my bark, the *Aquidneck.*

In the waters of Maldonado Bay a variety of fishes abound, and fur seals in their season haul out on the island abreast the bay to breed. Currents on this coast are greatly affected by the prevailing winds, and a tidal wave higher than that ordinarily produced by the moon is sent up the whole shore of Uruguay before a southwest gale, or lowered by a northeaster, as may happen. One of these waves having just receded before the northeast wind which brought the *Spray* in left the tide now at low ebb, with oyster rocks laid bare for some distance along the shore. Other shellfish of good flavour were also plentiful, though small in size. I gathered a mess of oysters and mussels here, while a native with hook and line, and with mussels for bait, fished from a point of detached rocks for bream, landing several good-sized ones.

The fisherman's nephew, a lad about seven years old, deserves mention as the tallest blasphemer, for a short boy, that I met on the voyage. He called his old uncle all the vile names under the sun for not helping him across the gully. While he swore roundly in all the moods and tenses of the Spanish language, his uncle fished on, now and then congratulating his hopeful nephew on his accomplishment. At the end of his rich vocabulary the urchin sauntered off into the fields, and shortly returned with a bunch of flowers, and with all smiles handed them to me with the innocence of an angel. I remembered having seen the same flower on the banks of the river farther up, some years before. I asked the young pirate why he had brought them to me. Said he, 'I don't know; I only wished to do so.' Whatever the influence was that put so amiable a wish in this wild pampa boy, it must be far-reaching, thought I, and potent, seas over.

Shortly after, the *Spray* sailed for Montevideo, where she arrived on the following day and was greeted by steam-whistles till I felt embarrassed and wished that I had arrived unobserved. The voyage so far alone may have seemed to the Uruguayans a feat worthy of some recognition; but there was so much of it yet ahead, and of such an arduous nature, that any demonstration at this point seemed, somehow, like boasting prematurely.

The *Spray* had barely come to anchor at Montevideo when the agents of the Royal Mail Steamship Company, Messrs Humphreys & Co., sent word that they would dock and repair her free of expense and give me twenty pounds sterling, which they did to the letter, and more besides. The

caulkers at Montevideo paid very careful attention to the work of making the sloop tight.

Carpenters mended the keel and also the lifeboat (the dory), painting it till I hardly knew it from a butterfly. Christmas of 1890 found the *Spray* refitted even to a wonderful makeshift stove which was contrived from a large iron drum of some sort punched full of holes to give it a draft; the pipe reached straight up through the top of the forecastle. Now, this was not a stove by mere courtesy. It was always hungry, even for green wood; and in cold, wet days off the coast of Tierra del Fuego it stood me in good stead. Its one door swung on copper hinges, which one of the yard apprentices, with laudable pride, polished till the whole thing blushed like the brass binnacle of a P & O steamer.

The *Spray* was now ready for sea. Instead of proceeding at once on her voyage, however, she made an excursion up the river, sailing 29 December. An old friend of mine, Captain Howard of Cape Cod and of River Plate fame, took the trip in her to Buenos Aires, where she arrived early on the following day, with a gale of wind and a current so much in her favour that she outdid herself. I was glad to have a sailor of Howard's experience on board to witness her performance of sailing with no living being at the helm. Howard sat near the binnacle and watched the compass while the sloop held her course so steadily that one would have declared that the card was nailed fast. Not a quarter of a point did she deviate from her course. My old friend had owned and sailed a pilot-sloop on the river for many years, but this feat took the wind out of his sails at last, and he cried, 'I'll be stranded on Chico Bank if ever I saw the like of it!' Perhaps he had never given his sloop a chance to show what she could do. The point I make for the *Spray* here, above all other points, is that she sailed in shoal water and in a strong current, with other difficult and unusual conditions. Captain Howard took all this into account.

In all the years away from his native home Howard had not forgotten the art of making fish chowders; and to prove this he brought along some fine rockfish and prepared a mess fit for kings. When the savoury chowder was done, chocking the pot securely between two boxes on the cabin floor, so that it could not roll over, we helped ourselves and swapped yarns over it while the *Spray* made her own way through the darkness on the river. Howard told me stories about the Fuegian cannibals as she reeled along,

and I told him about the pilot of the *Pinta* steering my vessel through the storm off the coast of the Azores, and that I looked for him at the helm in a gale such as this. I do not charge Howard with superstition—we are none of us superstitious—but when I spoke about his returning to Montevideo on the *Spray* he shook his head and took a steam-packet instead.

I had not been in Buenos Aires for a number of years. The place where I had once landed from packets, in a cart, was now built up with magnificent docks. Vast fortunes had been spent in remodelling the harbour; London bankers could tell you that. The port captain, after assigning the *Spray* a safe berth, with his compliments, sent me word to call on him for anything I might want while in port, and I felt quite sure that his friendship was sincere. The sloop was well cared for at Buenos Aires; her dockage and tonnage dues were all free, and the yachting fraternity of the city welcomed her with a good will. In town I found things not so greatly changed as about the docks, and I soon felt myself more at home.

From Montevideo I had forwarded a letter from Sir Edward Hairby to the owner of the *Standard,* Mr Mulhall, and in reply to it was assured of a warm welcome to the warmest heart, I think, outside of Ireland. Mr Mulhall, with a prancing team, came down to the docks as soon as the *Spray* was berthed, and would have me go to his house at once, where a room was waiting. And it was New Year’s Day, 1896. The course of the *Spray* had been followed in the columns of the *Standard.*

Mr Mulhall kindly drove me to see many improvements about the city, and we went in search of some of the old landmarks. The man who sold ‘lemonade’ on the plaza when first I visited this wonderful city I found selling lemonade still at two cents a glass; he had made a fortune by it. His stock in trade was a washtub and a neighbouring hydrant, a moderate supply of brown sugar, and about six lemons that floated on the sweetened water. The water from time to time was renewed from the friendly pump, but the lemon ‘went on forever’, and all at two cents a glass.

But we looked in vain for the man who once sold whisky and coffins in Buenos Aires; the march of civilisation had crushed him—memory only clung to his name. Enterprising man that he was, I fain would have looked him up. I remember the tiers of whisky barrels, ranged on end, on one side of the store, while on the other side, and divided by a thin partition, were the coffins in the same order, of all sizes and in great numbers. The unique

arrangement seemed in order, for as a cask was emptied a coffin might be filled. Besides cheap whisky and many other liquors, he sold ‘cider’, which he manufactured from damaged Malaga raisins. Within the scope of his enterprise was also the sale of mineral waters, not entirely blameless of the germs of disease. This man surely catered to all the tastes, wants and conditions of his customers.

Farther along in the city, however, survived the good man who wrote on the side of his store, where thoughtful men might read and learn: ‘This wicked world will be destroyed by a comet! The owner of this store is therefore bound to sell out at any price and avoid the catastrophe.’ My friend Mr Mulhall drove me round to view the fearful comet with streaming tail pictured large on the trembling merchant’s walls.

I unshipped the sloop’s mast at Buenos Aires and shortened it by seven feet. I reduced the length of the bowsprit by about five feet, and even then I found it reaching far enough from home; and more than once, when on the end of it reefing the jib, I regretted that I had not shortened it another foot.

CHAPTER VII

Weighing anchor at Buenos Aires—An outburst of emotion at the mouth of the Plate—Submerged by a great wave—A stormy entrance to the strait—Captain Samblich's happy gift of a bag of carpet tacks—Off Cape Froward—Chased by Indians from Fortescue Bay—A miss-shot for Black Pedro—Taking in supplies of wood and water at Three Island Cove—Animal life.

On 26 January 1896, the *Spray*, being refitted and well provisioned in every way, sailed from Buenos Aires. There was little wind at the start; the surface of the great river was like a silver disc, and I was glad of a tow from a harbour tug to clear the port entrance. But a gale came up soon after, and caused an ugly sea, and instead of being all silver, as before, the river was now all mud. The Plate is a treacherous place for storms. One sailing there should always be on the alert for squalls. I cast anchor before dark in the best lee I could find near the land, but was tossed miserably all night, heartsore of choppy seas. On the following morning I got the sloop under way, and with reefed sails worked her down the river against a head wind. Standing in that night to the place where pilot Howard joined me for the up-river sail, I took a departure, shaping my course to clear Point Indio on the one hand, and the English Bank on the other.

I had not for many years been south of these regions. I will not say that I expected all fine sailing on the course for Cape Horn direct, but while I worked at the sails and rigging I thought only of onward and forward. It was when I anchored in the lonely places that a feeling of awe crept over me. At the last anchorage on the monotonous and muddy river, weak as it may seem, I gave way to my feelings. I resolved then that I would anchor no more north of the Strait of Magellan.

On 28 January the *Spray* was clear of Point Indio, English Bank, and all the other dangers of the River Plate. With a fair wind she then bore away for the Strait of Magellan, under all sail, pressing farther and farther

towards the wonderland of the South, till I forgot the blessings of our milder North.

My ship passed in safety Bahia Blanca, also the Gulf of St Matias and the mighty Gulf of St George. Hoping that she might go clear of the destructive tide-races, the dread of big craft or little along this coast, I gave all the capes a berth of about fifty miles, for these dangers extend many miles from the land. But where the sloop avoided one danger she encountered another. For, one day, well off the Patagonian coast, while the sloop was reaching under short sail, a tremendous wave, the culmination, it seemed, of many waves, rolled down upon her in a storm, roaring as it came. I had only a moment to get all sail down and myself up on the peak halliards, out of danger, when I saw the mighty crest towering masthead-high above me. The mountain of water submerged my vessel. She shook in every timber and reeled under the weight of the sea, but rose quickly out of it, and rode grandly over the rollers that followed. It may have been a minute that from my hold in the rigging I could see no part of the *Spray*'s hull. Perhaps it was even less time than that, but it seemed a long while, for under great excitement one lives fast, and in a few seconds one may think a great deal of one's past life. Not only did the past, with electric speed, flash before me, but I had time while in my hazardous position for resolutions for the future that would take a long time to fulfil. The first one was, I remember, that if the *Spray* came through this danger I would dedicate my best energies to building a larger ship on her lines, which I hope yet to do. Other promises, less easily kept, I should have made under protest. However, the incident, which filled me with fear, was only one more test of the *Spray*'s seaworthiness. It reassured me against rude Cape Horn.

From the time the great wave swept over the *Spray* until she reached Cape Virgins nothing occurred to move a pulse and set blood in motion. On the contrary, the weather became fine and the sea smooth and life tranquil. The phenomenon of mirage frequently occurred. An albatross sitting on the water one day loomed up like a large ship; two fur seals asleep on the surface of the sea appeared like great whales, and a bank of haze I could have sworn was high land. The kaleidoscope then changed, and on the following day I sailed in a world peopled by dwarfs.

On 11 February the *Spray* rounded Cape Virgins and entered the Strait of Magellan. The scene was again real and gloomy; the wind, northeast, and

blowing a gale, sent feather-white spume along the coast; such a sea ran as would swamp an ill-appointed ship. As the sloop neared the entrance to the strait I observed that two great tide-races made ahead, one very close to the point of the land and one farther offshore. Between the two, in a sort of channel, through combers, went the *Spray* with close-reefed sails. But a rolling sea followed her a long way in, and a fierce current swept around the cape against her; but this she stemmed, and was soon chirruping under the lee of Cape Virgins and running every minute into smoother water. However, long trailing kelp from sunken rocks waved forebodingly under her keel, and the wreck of a great steamship smashed on the beach abreast gave a gloomy aspect to the scene.

I was not to be let off easy. The Virgins would collect tribute even from the *Spray* passing their promontory. Fitful rain squalls from the northwest followed the northeast gale. I reefed the sloop's sails, and sitting in the cabin to rest my eyes, I was so strongly impressed with what in all nature I might expect that as I dozed the very air I breathed seemed to warn me of danger. My senses heard '*Spray* ahoy!' shouted in warning. I sprang to the deck, wondering who could be there that knew the *Spray* so well as to call out her name passing in the dark; for it was now the blackest of nights all around, except away in the southwest, where the old familiar white arch, the terror of Cape Horn, rapidly pushed up by a southwest gale. I had only a moment to douse sail and lash all solid when it struck like a shot from a cannon, and for the first half-hour it was something to be remembered by way of a gale. For thirty hours it kept on blowing hard. The sloop could carry no more than a three-reefed mainsail and forestaysail; with these she held on stoutly and was not blown out of the strait. In the height of the squalls in this gale she doused all sail, and this occurred often enough.

After this gale followed only a smart breeze, and the *Spray,* passing through the narrows without mishap, cast anchor at Sandy Point on 14 February 1896.

Sandy Point (Punta Arenas) is a Chilean coaling station, and boasts about two thousand inhabitants, of mixed nationality, but mostly Chileans. What with sheep farming, gold mining, and hunting, the settlers in this dreary land seemed not the worst off in the world. But the natives, Patagonian and Fuegian, on the other hand, were as squalid as contact with unscrupulous traders could make them. A large percentage of the business

there was traffic in ‘firewater’. If there was a law against selling the poisonous stuff to the natives, it was not enforced. Fine specimens of the Patagonian race, looking smart in the morning when they came into town, had repented before night of ever having seen a white man, so beastly drunk were they, to say nothing about the peltry of which they had been robbed.

The port at that time was free, but a custom house was in course of construction, and when it is finished, port and tariff dues are to be collected. A soldier police guarded the place, and a sort of vigilante force besides took down its guns now and then; but as a general thing, to my mind, whenever an execution was made they killed the wrong man. Just previous to my arrival the governor, himself of a jovial turn of mind, had sent a party of young bloods to foray a Fuegian settlement and wipe out what they could of it on account of the recent massacre of a schooner’s crew somewhere else. Altogether the place was quite newsy and supported two papers—dailies, I think. The port captain, a Chilean naval officer, advised me to ship hands to fight Indians in the strait farther west, and spoke of my stopping until a gunboat should be going through, which would give me a tow. After canvassing the place, however, I found only one man willing to embark, and he on condition that I should ship another ‘mon and a doog’. But as no one else was willing to come along, and as I drew the line at dogs, I said no more about the matter, but simply loaded my guns. At this point in my dilemma Captain Pedro Samblich, a good Austrian of large experience, coming along, gave me a bag of carpet tacks, worth more than all the fighting men and dogs of Tierra del Fuego. I protested that I had no use for carpet tacks on board. Samblich smiled at my want of experience and maintained stoutly that I would have use for them. ‘You must use them with discretion,’ he said; ‘that is to say, don’t step on them yourself.’ With this remote hint about the use of the tacks I got on all right, and saw the way to maintain clear decks at night without the care of watching.

Samblich was greatly interested in my voyage, and after giving me the tacks he put on board bags of biscuits and a large quantity of smoked venison. He declared that my bread, which was ordinary sea biscuits and easily broken, was not as nutritious as his, which was so hard that I could break it only with a stout blow from a maul. Then he gave me, from his own sloop, a compass which was certainly better than mine, and offered to unbend her mainsail for me if I would accept it. Last of all, this large-

hearted man brought out a bottle of Fuegian gold-dust from a place where it had been *cached* and begged me to help myself from it, for use farther along on the voyage. But I felt sure of success without this draft on a friend, and I was right. Samblich's tacks, as it turned out, were of more value than gold.

The port captain finding that I was resolved to go, even alone, since there was no help for it, set up no further objections, but advised me, in case the savages tried to surround me with their canoes, to shoot straight, and begin to do it in time, but to avoid killing them if possible, which I heartily agreed to do. With these simple injunctions the officer gave me my port clearance free of charge, and I sailed on the same day, 19 February 1896. It was not without thoughts of strange and stirring adventure beyond all I had yet encountered that I now sailed into the country and very core of the savage Fuegians.

A fair wind from Sandy Point brought me on the first day to St Nicholas Bay, where, so I was told, I might expect to meet savages; but seeing no signs of life, I came to anchor in eight fathoms of water, where I lay all night under a high mountain. Here I had my first experience with the terrific squalls, called williwaws, which extended from this point on through the strait to the Pacific. They were compressed gales of wind that Boreas handed down over the hills in chunks. A full-blown williwaw will throw a ship, even without sail on, over on her beam ends; but, like other gales, they cease now and then, if only for a short time.

February 20th was my birthday, and I found myself alone, with hardly so much as a bird in sight, off Cape Froward, the southernmost point of the continent of America. By daylight in the morning I was getting my ship under way for the bout ahead.

The sloop held the wind fair while she ran thirty miles farther on her course, which brought her to Fortescue Bay, and at once among the natives' signal fires, which blazed up now on all sides. Clouds flew over the mountain from the west all day; at night my good east wind failed, and in its stead a gale from the west soon came on. I gained anchorage at twelve o'clock that night, under the lee of a little island, and then prepared myself a cup of coffee, of which I was sorely in need; for, to tell the truth, hard beating in the heavy squalls and against the current had told on my strength. Finding that the anchor held, I drank my beverage, and named the place

Coffee Island. It lies to the south of Charles Island, with only a narrow channel between.

By daylight the next morning the *Spray* was again under way, beating hard; but she came to in a cove in Charles Island, two and a half miles along on her course. Here she remained undisturbed two days, with both anchors down in a bed of kelp. Indeed, she might have remained undisturbed indefinitely had not the wind moderated; for during these two days it blew so hard that no boat could venture out on the strait, and the natives being away to other hunting grounds, the island anchorage was safe. But at the end of the fierce windstorm fair weather came; then I got my anchors, and again sailed out upon the strait.

Canoes manned by savages from Fortescue now came in pursuit. The wind falling light, they gained on me rapidly till coming within hail, when they ceased paddling, and a bow-legged savage stood up and called to me, ‘Yammerschooner! yammerschooner!’ which is their begging term. I said, ‘No!’

Now, I was not for letting on that I was alone, and so I stepped into the cabin, and, passing through the hold, came out at the forescuttle, changing my clothes as I went along. That made two men. Then the piece of bowsprit which I had sawed off at Buenos Aires, and which I had still on board, I arranged forward on the lookout, dressed as a seaman, attaching a line by which I could pull it into motion. That made three of us, and we didn’t want to ‘yammerschooner’; but for all that the savages came on faster than before. I saw that besides four at the paddles in the canoe nearest to me, there were others in the bottom, and that they were shifting hands often.

At eighty yards I fired a shot across the bows of the nearest canoe, at which they all stopped, but only for a moment. Seeing that they persisted in coming nearer, I fired the second shot so close to the chap who wanted to ‘yammerschooner’ that he changed his mind quickly enough and bellowed with fear, ‘*Bueno jo via Isla*’, and sitting down in his canoe, he rubbed his starboard cathead for some time. I was thinking of the good port captain’s advice when I pulled the trigger, and must have aimed pretty straight; however, a miss was as good as a mile for Mr ‘Black Pedro’, as he it was, and no other, a leader in several bloody massacres. He made for the island now, and the others followed him. I knew by his Spanish lingo and by his full beard that he was the villain I have named, a renegade mongrel, and the

worst murderer in Tierra del Fuego. The authorities had been in search of him for two years. The Fuegians are not bearded.

So much for the first day among the savages. I came to anchor at midnight in Three Island Cove, about twenty miles along from Fortescue Bay. I saw on the opposite side of the strait signal fires, and heard the barking of dogs, but where I lay it was quite deserted by natives. I have always taken it as a sign that where I found birds sitting about, or seals on the rocks, I should not find savage Indians. Seals are never plentiful in these waters, but in Three Island Cove I saw one on the rocks, and other signs of the absence of savage men.

On the next day the wind was again blowing a gale, and although she was in the lee of the land, the sloop dragged her anchors, so that I had to get her under way and beat farther into the cove, where I came to in a landlocked pool. At another time or place this would have been a rash thing to do, and it was safe now only from the fact that the gale which drove me to shelter would keep the Indians from crossing the strait. Seeing this was the case, I went ashore with gun and axe on an island, where I could not in any event be surprised, and there felled trees and split about a cord of firewood, which loaded my small boat several times.

While I carried the wood, though I was morally sure there were no savages near, I never once went to or from the skiff without my gun. While I had that and a clear field of over eighty yards about me I felt safe.

The trees on the island, very scattering, were a sort of beech and a stunted cedar, both of which made good fuel. Even the green limbs of the beech, which seemed to possess a resinous quality, burned readily in my great drum-stove. I have described my method of wooding up in detail, that the reader who has kindly borne with me so far may see that in this, as in all other particulars of my voyage, I took great care against all kinds of surprises, whether by animals or by the elements. In the Strait of Magellan the greatest vigilance was necessary. In this instance I reasoned that I had all about me the greatest danger of the whole voyage—the treachery of cunning savages, for which I must be particularly on the alert.

The *Spray* sailed from Three Island Cove in the morning after the gale went down, but was glad to return for shelter from another sudden gale. Sailing again on the following day, she fetched Borgia Bay, a few miles on her course, where vessels had anchored from time to time and had nailed

boards on the trees ashore with name and date of harbouring carved or painted. Nothing else could I see to indicate that civilised man had ever been there. I had taken a survey of the gloomy place with my spyglass, and was getting my boat out to land and take notes, when the Chilean gunboat *Huemel* came in, and officers, coming on board, advised me to leave the place at once, a thing that required little eloquence to persuade me to do. I accepted the captain's kind offer of a tow to the next anchorage, at the place called Notch Cove, eight miles farther along, where I should be clear of the worst of the Fuegians.

We made anchorage at the cove about dark that night, while the wind came down in fierce williwaws from the mountains. An instance of Magellan weather was afforded when the *Huemel,* a well-appointed gunboat of great power, after attempting on the following day to proceed on her voyage, was obliged by sheer force of the wind to return and take up anchorage again and remain till the gale abated; and lucky she was to get back!

Meeting this vessel was a little godsend. She was commanded and officered by high-class sailors and educated gentlemen. An entertainment that was gotten up on her, impromptu, at the Notch would be hard to beat anywhere. One of her midshipmen sang popular songs in French, German and Spanish, and one (so he said) in Russian. If the audience did not know the lingo of one song from another, it was no drawback to the merriment.

I was left alone the next day, for then the *Huemel* put out on her voyage, the gale having abated. I spent a day taking in wood and water; by the end of that time the weather was fine. Then I sailed from the desolate place.

There is little more to be said concerning the *Spray*'s first passage through the strait that would differ from what I have already recorded. She anchored and weighed many times, and beat many days against the current, with now and then a 'slant' for a few miles, till finally she gained anchorage and shelter for the night at Port Tamar, with Cape Pillar in sight to the west. Here I felt the throb of the great ocean that lay before me. I knew now that I had put a world behind me and that I was opening out another world ahead. I had passed the haunts of savages. Great piles of granite mountains of bleak and lifeless aspect were now astern; on some of them not even a speck of moss had ever grown. There was an unfinished newness all about

the land. On the hill back of Port Tamar a small beacon had been thrown up, showing that some man had been there. But how could one tell but that he had died of loneliness and grief? In a bleak land is not the place to enjoy solitude.

Throughout the whole of the strait west of Cape Froward I saw no animals except dogs owned by savages. These I saw often enough, and heard them yelping night and day. Birds were not plentiful. The scream of a wild fowl, which I took for a loon, sometimes startled me with its piercing cry. The steamboat duck, so called because it propels itself over the sea with its wings, and resembles a miniature side-wheel steamer in its motion, was sometimes seen scurrying on out of danger. It never flies, but, hitting the water instead of the air with its wings, it moves faster than a rowboat or a canoe. The few fur seals I saw were very shy; and of fishes I saw next to none at all. I did not catch one; indeed, I seldom or never put a hook over during the whole voyage. Here in the strait I found great abundance of mussels of an excellent quality. I fared sumptuously on them. There was a sort of swan, smaller than a Muscovy duck, which might have been brought down with the gun, but in the loneliness of life about the dreary country I found myself in no mood to make one life less, except in self-defence.

CHAPTER VIII

From Cape Pillar into the Pacific—Driven by a tempest towards Cape Horn —Captain Slocum's greatest sea adventure—Reaching the strait again by way of Cockburn Channel—Some savages find the carpet tacks—Danger from firebrands—A series of fierce williwaws—Again sailing westward.

It was 3 March when the *Spray* sailed from Port Tamar direct for Cape Pillar, with the wind from the northeast, which I fervently hoped might hold till she cleared the land; but there was no such good luck in store. It soon began to rain and thicken in the northwest, boding no good. The *Spray* neared Cape Pillar rapidly, and, nothing loath, plunged into the Pacific Ocean at once, taking her first bath of it in the gathering storm. There was no turning back even had I wished to do so, for the land was now shut out by the darkness of night. The wind freshened, and I took in a third reef. The sea was confused and treacherous. In such a time as this the old fisherman prayed, 'Remember, Lord, my ship is small and thy sea is so wide!' I saw now only the gleaming crests of the waves. They showed white teeth while the sloop balanced over them. 'Everything for an offing,' I cried, and to this end I carried on all the sail she would bear. She ran all night with a free sheet, but on the morning of 4 March the wind shifted to southwest, then back suddenly to northwest, and blew with terrific force. The *Spray,* stripped of her sails, then bore off under bare poles. No ship in the world could have stood up against so violent a gale. Knowing that this storm might continue for many days, and that it would be impossible to work back to the westward along the coast outside of Tierra del Fuego, there seemed nothing to do but to keep on and go east about, after all. Anyhow, for my present safety the only course lay in keeping her before the wind. And so she drove southeast, as though about to round the Horn, while the waves rose and fell and bellowed their neverending story of the sea; but the Hand that held these held also the *Spray.* She was running now with a reefed

forestaysail, the sheets flat amidship. I paid out two long ropes to steady her course and to break combing seas astern, and I lashed the helm amidship. In this trim she ran before it, shipping never a sea. Even while the storm raged at its worst, my ship was wholesome and noble. My mind as to her seaworthiness was put at ease for aye.

When all had been done that I could do for the safety of the vessel, I got to the forescuttle, between seas, and prepared a pot of coffee over a wood fire, and made a good Irish stew. Then, as before and afterward on the *Spray,* I insisted on warm meals. In the tide-race off Cape Pillar, however, where the sea was marvellously high, uneven and crooked, my appetite was slim, and for a time I postponed cooking. (Confidentially, I was seasick!)

The first day of the storm gave the *Spray* her actual test in the worst sea that Cape Horn or its wild regions could afford, and in no part of the world could a rougher sea be found than at this particular point, namely, off Cape Pillar, the grim sentinel of the Horn.

Farther offshore, while the sea was majestic, there was less apprehension of danger. There the *Spray* rode, now like a bird on the crest of a wave, and now like a waif deep down in the hollow between seas; and so she drove on. Whole days passed, counted as other days, but with always a thrill—yes, of delight.

On the fourth day of the gale, rapidly nearing the pitch of Cape Horn, I inspected my chart and pricked off the course and distance to Port Stanley, in the Falkland Islands, where I might find my way and refit, when I saw through a rift in the clouds a high mountain, about seven leagues away on the port beam. The fierce edge of the gale by this time had blown off, and I had already bent a square-sail on the boom in place of the mainsail, which was torn to rags. I hauled in the trailing ropes, hoisted this awkward sail reefed, the forestaysail being already set, and under this sail brought her at once on the wind heading for the land, which appeared as an island in the sea. So it turned out to be, though not the one I had supposed.

I was exultant over the prospect of once more entering the Strait of Magellan and beating through again into the Pacific, for it was more than rough on the outside coast of Tierra del Fuego. It was indeed a mountainous sea. When the sloop was in the fiercest squalls, with only the reefed forestaysail set, even that small sail shook her from keelson to truck when it shivered by the leech. Had I harboured the shadow of a doubt for her safety,

it would have been that she might spring a leak in the garboard at the heel of the mast; but she never called me once to the pump. Under pressure of the smallest sail I could set she made for the land like a racehorse, and steering her over the crests of the waves so that she might not trip was nice work. I stood at the helm now and made the most of it.

Night closed in before the sloop reached the land, leaving her feeling the way in pitchy darkness. I saw breakers ahead before long. At this I wore ship and stood offshore, but was immediately startled by the tremendous roaring of breakers again ahead and on the lee bow. This puzzled me, for there should have been no broken water where I supposed myself to be. I kept off a good bit, then wore round, but finding broken water also there, threw her head again offshore. In this way, among dangers, I spent the rest of the night. Hail and sleet in the fierce squalls cut my flesh till the blood trickled over my face; but what of that? It was daylight, and the sloop was in the midst of the Milky Way of the sea, which is northwest of Cape Horn, and it was the white breakers of a huge sea over sunken rocks which had threatened to engulf her through the night. It was Fury Island I had sighted and steered for, and what a panorama was before me now and all around! It was not the time to complain of a broken skin. What could I do but fill away among the breakers and find a channel between them, now that it was day? Since she had escaped the rocks through the night, surely she would find her way by daylight. This was the greatest sea adventure of my life. God knows how my vessel escaped.

The sloop at last reached inside of small islands that sheltered her in smooth water. Then I climbed the mast to survey the wild scene astern. The great naturalist Darwin looked over this seascape from the deck of the *Beagle,* and wrote in his journal, ‘Any landsman seeing the Milky Way would have nightmare for a week.’ He might have added, ‘or seaman’ as well.

The *Spray*’s good luck followed fast. I discovered, as she sailed along through a labyrinth of islands, that she was in the Cockburn Channel, which leads into the Strait of Magellan at a point opposite Cape Froward, and that she was already passing Thieves’ Bay, suggestively named. And at night, on 8 March, behold, she was at anchor in a snug cove at the Turn! Every heartbeat on the *Spray* now counted thanks.

Here I pondered on the events of the last few days, and, strangely enough, instead of feeling rested from sitting or lying down, I now began to feel jaded and worn; but a hot meal of venison stew soon put me right so that I could sleep. As drowsiness came on I sprinkled the deck with tacks, and then I turned in, bearing in mind the advice of my old friend Samblich that I was not to step on them myself. I saw to it that not a few of them stood ‘business end’ up; for when the *Spray* passed Thieves’ Bay two canoes had put out and followed in her wake, and there was no disguising the fact any longer that I was alone.

Now, it is well known that one cannot step on a tack without saying something about it. A pretty good Christian will whistle when he steps on the ‘commercial end’ of a carpet tack; a savage will howl and claw the air, and that was just what happened that night about twelve o’clock, while I was asleep in the cabin, where the savages thought they ‘had me’, sloop and all, but changed their minds when they stepped on deck, for then they thought that I or somebody else had them. I had no need of a dog; they howled like a pack of hounds. I had hardly use for a gun. They jumped pell-mell, some into their canoes and some into the sea, to cool off, I suppose, and there was a deal of free language over it as they went. I fired several guns when I came on deck, to let the rascals know that I was home, and then I turned in again, feeling sure I should not be disturbed any more by people who left in so great a hurry.

The Fuegians, being cruel, are naturally cowards; they regard a rifle with superstitious fear. The only real danger one could see that might come from their quarter would be from allowing them to surround one within bow-shot, or to anchor within range where they might lie in ambush. As for their coming on deck at night, even had I not put tacks about, I could have cleared them off by shots from the cabin and hold. I always kept a quantity of ammunition within reach in the hold and in the cabin and in the forepeak, so that retreating to any of these places I could ‘hold the fort’ simply by shooting up through the deck.

Perhaps the greatest danger to be apprehended was from the use of fire. Every canoe carries fire; nothing is thought of that, for it is their custom to communicate by smoke signals. The harmless brand that lies smouldering in the bottom of one of their canoes might be ablaze in one’s cabin if he were not on the alert. The port captain of Sandy Point warned

me particularly of this danger. Only a short time before they had fired a Chilean gunboat by throwing brands in through the stern windows of the cabin. The *Spray* had no openings in the cabin or deck, except two scuttles, and these were guarded by fastenings which could not be undone without waking me if I were asleep.

On the morning of the 9th, after a refreshing rest and a warm breakfast, and after I had swept the deck of tacks, I got out what spare canvas there was on board, and began to sew the pieces together in the shape of a peak for my square-mainsail, the tarpaulin. The day to all appearances promised fine weather and light winds, but appearances in Tierra del Fuego do not always count. While I was wondering why no trees grew on the slope abreast of the anchorage, half minded to lay by the sailmaking and land with my gun for some game and to inspect a white boulder on the beach, near the brook, a williwaw came down with such terrific force as to carry the *Spray,* with two anchors down, like a feather out of the cove and away into deep water. No wonder trees did not grow on the side of that hill! Great Boreas! a tree would need to be all roots to hold on against such a furious wind.

From the cove to the nearest land to leeward was a long drift, however, and I had ample time to weigh both anchors before the sloop came near any danger, and so no harm came of it. I saw no more savages that day or the next; they probably had some sign by which they knew of the coming williwaws; at least, they were wise in not being afloat even on the second day, for I had no sooner gotten to work at sailmaking again, after the anchor was down, than the wind, as on the day before, picked the sloop up and flung her seaward with a vengeance, anchor and all, as before. This fierce wind, usual to the Magellan country, continued on through the day, and swept the sloop by several miles of steep bluffs and precipices overhanging a bold shore of wild and uninviting appearance. I was not sorry to get away from it, though in doing so it was no Elysian shore to which I shaped my course. I kept on sailing in hope, since I had no choice but to go on, heading across for St Nicholas Bay, where I had cast anchor on 19 February. It was now March 10th! Upon reaching the bay the second time I had circumnavigated the wildest part of desolate Tierra del Fuego. But the *Spray* had not yet arrived at St Nicholas, and by the merest accident her bones were saved from resting there when she did arrive. The parting of a

staysail-sheet in a williwaw, when the sea was turbulent and she was plunging into the storm, brought me forward to see instantly a dark cliff ahead and breakers so close under the bows that I felt surely lost, and in my thoughts cried, ‘Is the hand of fate against me, after all, leading me in the end to this dark spot?’ I sprang aft again, unheeding the flapping sail, and threw the wheel over, expecting, as the sloop came down into the hollow of a wave, to feel her timbers smash under me on the rocks. But at the touch of her helm she swung clear of the danger, and in the next moment she was in the lee of the land. It was the small island in the middle of the bay for which the sloop had been steering, and which she made with such unerring aim as nearly to run it down. Farther along in the bay was the anchorage, which I managed to reach, but before I could get the anchor down another squall caught the sloop and whirled her round like a top and carried her away, altogether to leeward of the bay. Still farther to leeward was a great headland, and I bore off for that. This was retracing my course towards Sandy Point, for the gale was from the southwest.

I had the sloop soon under good control, however, and in a short time rounded to under the lee of a mountain, where the sea was as smooth as a millpond, and the sails flapped and hung limp while she carried her way close in. Here I thought I would anchor and rest till morning, the depth being eight fathoms very close to the shore. But it was interesting to see, as I let go the anchor, that it did not reach the bottom before another williwaw struck down from this mountain and carried the sloop off faster than I could pay out cable. Instead of resting, I had to ‘man the windlass’ and heave up the anchor and fifty fathoms of cable hanging up and down in deep water. This was in that part of the strait called Famine Reach. I could have wished it Jericho! On that little crab-windlass I worked the rest of the night, thinking how much easier it was for me when I could say, ‘Do that thing or the other’, than to do it myself. But I hove away on the windlass and sang the old chants that I sang when I was a sailor, from ‘Blow, Boys, Blow for Californy, O’ to ‘Sweet By and By’.

It was daybreak when the anchor was at the hawse. By this time the wind had gone down, and cat’s-paws took the place of williwaws. The sloop was then drifting slowly towards Sandy Point. She came within sight of ships at anchor in the roads, and I was more than half minded to put in for new sails, but the wind coming out from the northeast, which was fair

for the other direction, I turned the prow of the *Spray* westward once more for the Pacific, to traverse a second time the second half of my first course through the strait.

CHAPTER IX

Repairing the *Spray*'s sails—Savages and an obstreperous anchor—A spider fight—An encounter with Black Pedro—A visit to the steamship *Colombia*—On the defensive against a fleet of canoes—A record of voyages through the strait—A chance cargo of tallow.

I was determined to rely on my own small resources to repair the damages of the great gale which drove me southward towards the Horn, after I had passed from the Strait of Magellan out into the Pacific. So when I had got back into the strait, by way of Cockburn Channel, I did not proceed eastward for help at the Sandy Point settlement, but turning again into the northwestward reach of the strait, set to work with my palm and needle at every opportunity, when at anchor and when sailing. It was slow work; but little by little the squaresail on the boom expanded to the dimensions of a serviceable mainsail with a peak to it and a leech besides. If it was not the best-setting sail afloat, it was at least very strongly made and would stand a hard blow. A ship, meeting the *Spray* long afterward, reported her as wearing a mainsail of some improved design and patent reefer, but that was not the case.

The *Spray* for a few days after the storm enjoyed fine weather, and made fair time through the strait for the distance of twenty miles, which, in these days of many adversities, I called a long run. The weather, I say, was fine for a few days; but it brought little rest. Care for the safety of my vessel, and even for my own life, was in no wise lessened by the absence of heavy weather. Indeed, the peril was even greater, inasmuch as the savages on comparatively fine days ventured forth on their marauding excursions, and in boisterous weather disappeared from sight, their wretched canoes being frail and undeserving the name of craft at all. This being so, I now enjoyed gales of wind as never before, and the *Spray* was never long without them during her struggles about Cape Horn. I became in a measure

inured to the life, and began to think that one more trip through the strait, if perchance the sloop should be blown off again, would make me the aggressor, and put the Fuegians entirely on the defensive. This feeling was forcibly borne in on me at Snug Bay, where I anchored at grey morning after passing Cape Froward, to find, when broad day appeared, that two canoes which I had eluded by sailing all night were now entering the same bay stealthily under the shadow of the high headland. They were well manned, and the savages were well armed with spears and bows. At a shot from my rifle across the bows, both turned aside into a small creek out of range. In danger now of being flanked by the savages in the bush close aboard, I was obliged to hoist the sails, which I had barely lowered, and make across to the opposite side of the strait, a distance of six miles. But now I was put to my wit's end as to how I should weigh anchor, for through an accident to the windlass right here I could not budge it. However, I set all sail and filled away, first hauling short by hand. The sloop carried her anchor away, as though it was meant to be always towed in this way underfoot, and with it she towed a ton or more of kelp from a reef in the bay, the wind blowing a wholesale breeze.

Meanwhile I worked till blood started from my fingers, and with one eye over my shoulder for savages, I watched at the same time, and sent a bullet whistling whenever I saw a limb or a twig move; for I kept a gun always at hand, and an Indian appearing then within range would have been taken as a declaration of war. As it was, however, my own blood was all that was spilt—and from the trifling accident of sometimes breaking the flesh against a cleat or a pin which came in the way when I was in haste. Sea cuts in my hands from pulling on hard, wet ropes were sometimes painful and often bled freely; but these healed when I finally got away from the strait into fine weather.

After clearing Snug Bay I hauled the sloop to the wind, repaired the windlass, and hove the anchor to the hawse, catted it, and then stretched across to a port of refuge under a high mountain about six miles away, and came to in nine fathoms close under the face of a perpendicular cliff. Here my own voice answered back, and I named the place 'Echo Mountain'. Seeing dead trees farther along where the shore was broken, I made a landing for fuel, taking, besides my axe, a rifle, which on these days I never left far from hand; but I saw no living thing here, except a small spider,

which had nested in a dry log that I boated to the sloop. The conduct of this insect interested me now more than anything else around the wild place. In my cabin it met, oddly enough, a spider of its own size and species that had come all the way from Boston—a very civil little chap, too, but mighty spry. Well, the Fuegian threw up its antennae for a fight; but my little Bostonian downed it at once, then broke its legs, and pulled them off, one by one, so dexterously that in less than three minutes from the time the battle began the Fuegian spider didn't know itself from a fly.

I made haste the following morning to be under way after a night of wakefulness on the weird shore. Before weighing anchor, however, I prepared a cup of warm coffee over a smart wood fire in my great Montevideo stove. In the same fire was cremated the Fuegian spider, slain the day before by the little warrior from Boston, which a Scots lady at Cape Town long after named 'Bruce' upon hearing of its prowess at Echo Mountain. The *Spray* now reached away for Coffee Island, which I sighted on my birthday, 20 February 1896.

There she encountered another gale, that brought her in the lee of great Charles Island for shelter. On a bluff point on Charles were signal fires, and a tribe of savages, mustered here since my first trip through the strait, manned their canoes to put off for the sloop. It was not prudent to come to, the anchorage being within bow-shot of the shore, which was thickly wooded; but I made signs that one canoe might come alongside, while the sloop ranged about under sail in the lee of the land. The others I motioned to keep off, and incidentally laid a smart Martini-Henry rifle in sight, close at hand, on the top of the cabin. In the canoe that came alongside, crying their never-ending begging word 'yammerschooner', were two squaws and one Indian, the hardest specimens of humanity I had ever seen in any of my travels. 'Yammerschooner' was their plaint when they pushed off from the shore, and 'yammerschooner' it was when they got alongside. The squaws beckoned for food, while the Indian, a black-visaged savage, stood sulkily as if he took no interest at all in the matter, but on my turning my back for some biscuits and jerked beef for the squaws, the 'buck' sprang on deck and confronted me, saying in Spanish jargon that we had met before. I thought I recognised the tone of his 'yammerschooner', and his full beard identified him as the Black Pedro whom, it was true, I had met before.

‘Where are the rest of the crew?’ he asked, as he looked uneasily around, expecting hands, maybe, to come out of the forescuttle and deal him his just deserts for many murders. ‘About three weeks ago,’ said he, ‘when you passed up here, I saw three men on board. Where are the other two?’ I answered him briefly that the same crew was still on board. ‘But,’ said he, ‘I see you are doing all the work,’ and with a leer he added, as he glanced at the mainsail, ‘*hombre valiente.*’ I explained that I did all the work in the day, while the rest of the crew slept, so that they would be fresh to watch for Indians at night. I was interested in the subtle cunning of this savage, knowing him, as I did, better perhaps than he was aware. Even had I not been advised before I sailed from Sandy Point, I should have measured him for an arch-villain now. Moreover, one of the squaws, with that spark of kindliness which is somehow found in the breast of even the lowest savage, warned me by a sign to be on my guard, or Black Pedro would do me harm. There was no need of the warning, however, for I was on my guard from the first, and at that moment held a smart revolver in my hand ready for instant service.

‘When you sailed through here before,’ he said, ‘you fired a shot at me,’ adding with some warmth that it was ‘*muy malo*’.

I affected not to understand, and said, ‘You have lived at Sandy Point, have you not?’ He answered frankly, ‘Yes,’ and appeared delighted to meet one who had come from the dear old place. ‘At the mission?’ I queried.

‘Why, yes,’ he replied, stepping forward as if to embrace an old friend. I motioned him back, for I did not share his flattering humour.

‘And you know Captain Pedro Samblich?’ continued I.

‘Yes,’ said the villain, who had killed a kinsman of Samblich—‘yes, indeed; he is a great friend of mine.’ ‘I know it,’ said I. Samblich had told me to shoot him on sight. Pointing to my rifle on the cabin, he wanted to know how many times it fired. ‘*Cuantos?*’ said he. When I explained to him that that gun kept right on shooting, his jaw fell, and he spoke of getting away. I did not hinder him from going. I gave the squaws biscuits and beef, and one of them gave me several lumps of tallow in exchange, and I think it worth mentioning that she did not offer me the smallest pieces, but with some extra trouble handed me the largest of all the pieces in the canoe. No Christian could have done more. Before pushing off from the sloop the cunning savage asked for matches, and made as if to reach with the end of

his spear the box I was about to give him; but I held it towards him on the muzzle of my rifle, the one that ‘kept on shooting’. The chap picked the box off the gun gingerly enough, to be sure, but he jumped when I said, ‘*Quedao* [Look out]’, at which the squaws laughed and seemed not at all displeased. Perhaps the wretch had clubbed them that morning for not gathering mussels enough for his breakfast. There was a good understanding among us all.

From Charles Island the *Spray* crossed over to Fortescue Bay, where she anchored and spent a comfortable night under the lee of high land, while the wind howled outside. The bay was deserted now. They were Fortescue Indians whom I had seen at the island, and I felt quite sure they could not follow the *Spray* in the present hard blow. Not to neglect a precaution, however, I sprinkled tacks on deck before I turned in.

On the following day the loneliness of the place was broken by the appearance of a great steamship, making for the anchorage with a lofty bearing. She was no Diego craft. I knew the sheer, the model and the poise. I threw out my flag, and directly saw the Stars and Stripes flung to the breeze from the great ship.

The wind had then abated, and towards night the savages made their appearance from the island, going direct to the steamer to ‘yammerschooner’. Then they came to the *Spray* to beg more, or to steal all, declaring that they got nothing from the steamer. Black Pedro here came alongside again. My own brother could not have been more delighted to see me, and he begged me to lend him my rifle to shoot a guanaco for me in the morning. I assured the fellow that if I remained there another day I would lend him the gun, but I had no mind to remain. I gave him a cooper’s draw-knife and some other small implements which would be of service in canoe-making, and bade him be off.

Under the cover of darkness that night I went to the steamer, which I found to be the *Colombia*, Captain Henderson, from New York, bound for San Francisco. I carried all my guns along with me, in case it should be necessary to fight my way back. In the chief mate of the *Colombia,* Mr Hannibal, I found an old friend, and he referred affectionately to days in Manila when we were there together, he in the *Southern Cross* and I in the *Northern Light,* both ships as beautiful as their names.

The *Colombia* had an abundance of fresh stores on board. The captain gave his steward some order, and I remember that the guileless young man asked me if I could manage, besides other things, a few cans of milk and a cheese. When I offered my Montevideo gold for the supplies, the captain roared like a lion and told me to put my money up. It was a glorious outfit of provisions of all kinds that I got.

Returning to the *Spray*, where I found all secure, I prepared for an early start in the morning. It was agreed that the steamer should blow her whistle for me if first on the move. I watched the steamer, off and on, through the night for the pleasure alone of seeing her electric lights, a pleasing sight in contrast to the ordinary Fuegian canoe with a brand of fire in it. The sloop was the first under way, but the *Colombia*, soon following, passed, and saluted as she went by. Had the captain given me his steamer, his company would have been no worse off than they were two or three months later. I read afterward, in a late California paper, 'The *Colombia* will be a total loss.' On her second trip to Panama she was wrecked on the rocks of the California coast.

The *Spray* was then beating against wind and current, as usual in the strait. At this point the tides from the Atlantic and the Pacific meet, and in the strait, as on the outside coast, their meeting makes a commotion of whirlpools and combers that in a gale of wind is dangerous to canoes and other frail craft.

A few miles farther along was a large steamer ashore, bottom up. Passing this place, the sloop ran into a streak of light wind, and then—a most remarkable condition for strait weather—it fell entirely calm. Signal fires sprang up at once on all sides, and then more than twenty canoes hove in sight, all heading for the *Spray.* As they came within hail, their savage crews cried, '*Amigo* yammerschooner', *'Anclas aqui', 'Bueno puerto aqui*', and like scraps of Spanish mixed with their own jargon. I had no thought of anchoring in their 'good port'. I hoisted the sloop's flag and fired a gun, all of which they might construe as a friendly salute or an invitation to come on. They drew up in a semicircle, but kept outside of eighty yards, which in self-defence would have been the death-line.

In their mosquito fleet was a ship's boat stolen probably from a murdered crew. Six savages paddled this rather awkwardly with the blades of oars which had been broken off. Two of the savages standing erect wore

sea boots, and this sustained the suspicion that they had fallen upon some luckless ship's crew, and also added a hint that they had already visited the *Spray*'s deck, and would now, if they could, try her again. Their sea boots, I have no doubt, would have protected their feet and rendered carpet tacks harmless. Paddling clumsily, they passed down the strait at a distance of a hundred yards from the sloop, in an offhand manner and as if bound to Fortescue Bay. This I judged to be a piece of strategy, and so kept a sharp lookout over a small island which soon came in range between them and the sloop, completely hiding them from view, and towards which the *Spray* was now drifting helplessly with the tide, and with every prospect of going on the rocks, for there was no anchorage, at least, none that my cables would reach. And, sure enough, I soon saw a movement in the grass just on top of the island, which is called Bonet Island and is 136 feet high. I fired several shots over the place, but saw no other sign of the savages. It was they that had moved the grass, for as the sloop swept past the island, the rebound of the tide carrying her clear, there on the other side was the boat, surely enough exposing their cunning and treachery. A stiff breeze, coming up suddenly, now scattered the canoes while it extricated the sloop from a dangerous position, albeit the wind, though friendly, was still ahead.

The *Spray,* flogging against current and wind, made Borgia Bay on the following afternoon, and cast anchor there for the second time. I would now, if I could, describe the moonlit scene on the strait at midnight after I had cleared the savages and Bonet Island. A heavy cloud bank that had swept across the sky then cleared away, and the night became suddenly as light as day, or nearly so. A high mountain was mirrored in the channel ahead, and the *Spray* sailing along with her shadow was as two sloops on the sea.

The sloop being moored, I threw out my skiff, and with axe and gun landed at the head of the cove, and filled a barrel of water from a stream. Then as before, there was no sign of Indians at the place. Finding it quite deserted, I rambled about near the beach for an hour or more. The fine weather seemed, somehow, to add loneliness to the place, and when I came upon a spot where a grave was marked I went no farther. Returning to the head of the cove, I came to a sort of Calvary, it appeared to me, where navigators, carrying their cross, had each set one up as a beacon to others coming after. They had anchored here and gone on, all except the one under

the little mound. One of the simple marks, curiously enough, had been left there by the steamship *Colimbia,* sister ship to the *Colombia,* my neighbour of that morning.

I read the names of many other vessels; some of them I copied in my journal, others were illegible. Many of the crosses had decayed and fallen, and many a hand that put them there I had known, many a hand now still. The air of depression was about the place, and I hurried back to the sloop to forget myself again in the voyage.

Early the next morning I stood out from Borgia Bay, and off Cape Quod, where the wind fell light, I moored the sloop by kelp in twenty fathoms of water, and held her there a few hours against a three-knot current. That night I anchored in Langara Cove, a few miles farther along, where on the following day I discovered wreckage and goods washed up from the sea. I worked all day now, salving and boating off a cargo to the sloop. The bulk of the goods was tallow in casks and in lumps from which the casks had broken away; and embedded in the seaweed was a barrel of wine, which I also towed alongside. I hoisted them all in with the throat-halyards, which I took to the windlass. The weight of some of the casks was a little over eight hundred pounds.

There were no Indians about Langara; evidently there had not been any since the great gale which had washed the wreckage on shore. Probably it was the same gale that drove the *Spray* off Cape Horn, from 3 to 8 March. Hundreds of tons of kelp had been torn from beds in deep water and rolled up into ridges on the beach. A specimen stalk which I found entire, roots, leaves, and all, measured 131 feet in length. At this place I filled a barrel of water at night, and on the following day sailed with a fair wind at last.

I had not sailed far, however, when I came abreast of more tallow in a small cove, where I anchored, and boated off as before. It rained and snowed hard all that day and it was no light work carrying tallow in my arms over the boulders on the beach. But I worked on till the *Spray* was loaded with a full cargo. I was happy then in the prospect of doing a good business farther along on the voyage, for the habits of an old trader would come to the surface. I sailed from the cove about noon, greased from top to toe, while my vessel was tallowed from keelson to truck. My cabin, as well as the hold and deck, was stowed full of tallow, and all were thoroughly smeared.

CHAPTER X

Running to Port Angosto in a snowstorm—A defective sheet rope places the *Spray* in peril—The *Spray* as a target for a Fuegian arrow—The island of Alan Erric—Again in the open Pacific—The run to the island of Juan Fernandez—An absentee king—At Robinson Crusoe's anchorage.

Another gale had then sprung up, but the wind was still fair, and I had only twenty-six miles to run for Port Angosto, a dreary enough place, where, however, I would find a safe harbour in which to refit and stow cargo. I carried on sail to make the harbour before dark, and she fairly flew along, all covered with snow, which fell thick and fast, till she looked like a white winter bird. Between the storm bursts I saw the headland of my port, and was steering for it when a flaw of wind caught the mainsail by the lee, jibed it over, and dear! dear! how nearly was this the cause of disaster; for the sheet parted and the boom unshipped, and it was then close upon night. I worked till the perspiration poured from my body to get things adjusted and in working order before dark, and, above all, to get it done before the sloop drove to leeward of the port of refuge. Even then I did not get the boom shipped in its saddle. I was at the entrance of the harbour before I could get this done, and it was time to haul her to or lose the port; but in that condition, like a bird with a broken wing, she made the haven. The accident which so jeopardised my vessel and cargo came of a defective sheet rope, one made from sisal, a treacherous fibre which has caused a deal of strong language among sailors.

I did not run the *Spray* into the inner harbour of Port Angosto, but came to inside a bed of kelp under a steep bluff on the port hand going in. It was an exceedingly snug nook, and to make doubly sure of holding on here against all williwaws I moored her with two anchors and secured her, besides, by cables to trees. However, no wind ever reached there except back flaws from the mountains on the opposite side of the harbour. There,

as elsewhere in that region, the country was made up of mountains. This was the place where I was to refit and whence I was to sail direct, once more, for Cape Pillar and the Pacific.

I remained at Port Angosto some days, busily employed about the sloop. I stowed the tallow from the deck to the hold, arranged my cabin in better order, and took in a good supply of wood and water. I also mended the sloop's sails and rigging, and fitted a jigger, which changed the rig to a yawl, though I called the boat a sloop just the same, the jigger being merely a temporary affair.

I never forgot, even at the busiest time of my work there, to have my rifle by me ready for instant use; for I was of necessity within range of savages, and I had seen Fuegian canoes at this place when I anchored in the port, farther down the reach, on the first trip through the strait. I think it was on the second day, while I was busily employed about decks, that I heard the swish of something through the air close by my ear, and heard a zip-like sound in the water, but saw nothing. Presently, however, I suspected that it was an arrow of some sort, for just then one passing not far from me struck the mainmast, where it stuck fast, vibrating from the shock—a Fuegian autograph.

A savage was somewhere near, there could be no doubt about that. I did not know but he might be shooting at me, with a view to getting my sloop and her cargo; and so I threw up my old Martini-Henry, the rifle that kept on shooting, and the first shot uncovered three Fuegians, who scampered from a clump of bushes where they had been concealed, and made over the hills. I fired away a good many cartridges, aiming under their feet to encourage their climbing. My dear old gun woke up the hills, and at every report all three of the savages jumped as if shot; but they kept on, and put Fuego real estate between themselves and the *Spray* as fast as their legs could carry them. I took care then, more than ever before, that all my firearms should be in order and that a supply of ammunition should always be ready at hand. But the savages did not return, and although I put tacks on deck every night, I never discovered that any more visitors came, and I had only to sweep the deck of tacks carefully every morning after.

As the days went by, the season became more favourable for a chance to clear the strait with a fair wind, and so I made up my mind after six attempts, being driven back each time, to be in no further haste to sail. The

bad weather on my last return to Port Angosto for shelter brought the Chilean gunboat *Condor* and the Argentine cruiser *Azopardo* into port. As soon as the latter came to anchor, Captain Mascarella, the commander, sent a boat to the *Spray* with the message that he would take me in tow for Sandy Point if I would give up the voyage and return—the thing farthest from my mind. The officers of the *Azopardo* told me that, coming up the strait after the *Spray* on her first passage through, they saw Black Pedro and learned that he had visited me. The *Azopardo,* being a foreign man-of-war, had no right to arrest the Fuegian outlaw, but her captain blamed me for not shooting the rascal when he came to my sloop.

I procured some cordage and other small supplies from these vessels, and the officers of each of them mustered a supply of warm flannels, of which I was most in need. With these additions to my outfit, and with the vessel in good trim, though somewhat deeply laden, I was well prepared for another bout with the Southern, misnamed Pacific, Ocean.

In the first week in April southeast winds, such as appear about Cape Horn in the fall and winter seasons, bringing better weather than that experienced in the summer, began to disturb the upper clouds; a little more patience, and the time would come for sailing with a fair wind.

At Port Angosto I met Professor Dusen of the Swedish scientific expedition to South America and the Pacific Islands. The professor was camped by the side of a brook at the head of the harbour, where there were many varieties of moss, in which he was interested, and where the water was, as his Argentine cook said, ‘*muy rico*’. The professor had three well-armed Argentines along in his camp to fight savages. They seemed disgusted when I filled water at a small stream near the vessel, slighting their advice to go farther up to the greater brook, where it was ‘*muy rico’*. But they were all fine fellows, though it was a wonder that they did not all die of rheumatic pains from living on wet ground.

Of all the little haps and mishaps to the *Spray* at Port Angosto, of the many attempts to put to sea, and of each return for shelter, it is not my purpose to speak. Of hindrances there were many to keep her back, but on the thirteenth day of April, and for the seventh and last time, she weighed anchor from that port. Difficulties, however, multiplied all about in so strange a manner that had I been given to superstitious fears I should not have persisted in sailing on a thirteenth day, notwithstanding that a fair

wind blew in the offing. Many of the incidents were ludicrous. When I found myself, for instance, disentangling the sloop's mast from the branches of a tree after she had drifted three times around a small island, against my will, it seemed more than one's nerves could bear, and I had to speak about it, so I thought, or die of lockjaw, and I apostrophised the *Spray* as an impatient farmer might his horse or his ox. 'Didn't you know,' cried I —'didn't you know that you couldn't climb a tree?' But the poor old *Spray* had essayed, and successfully too, nearly everything else in the Strait of Magellan, and my heart softened towards her when I thought of what she had gone through. Moreover, she had discovered an island. On the charts this one that she had sailed around was traced as a point of land. I named it Alan Erric Island, after a worthy literary friend whom I had met in strange by-places, and I put up a sign, 'Keep off the grass', which, as discoverer, was within my rights.

Now at last the *Spray* carried me free of Tierra del Fuego. If by a close shave only, still she carried me clear, though her boom actually hit the beacon rocks to leeward as she lugged on sail to clear the point. The thing was done on 13 April 1896. But a close shave and a narrow escape were nothing new to the *Spray.*

The waves doffed their white caps beautifully to her in the strait that day before the southeast wind, the first true winter breeze of the season from that quarter, and here she was out on the first of it, with every prospect of clearing Cape Pillar before it should shift. So it turned out; the wind blew hard, as it always blows about Cape Horn, but she had cleared the great tide-race off Cape Pillar and the Evangelistas, the outermost rocks of all, before the change came. I remained at the helm, humouring my vessel in the cross seas, for it was rough, and I did not dare to let her take a straight course. It was necessary to change her course in the combing seas, to meet them with what skill I could when they rolled up ahead, and to keep off when they came up abeam.

On the following morning, 14 April, only the tops of the highest mountains were in sight, and the *Spray,* making good headway on a northwest course, soon sank these out of sight. 'Hurrah for the *Spray*!' I shouted to seals, seagulls and penguins; for there were no other living creatures about, and she had weathered all the dangers of Cape Horn. Moreover, she had on her voyage round the Horn salved a cargo of which

she had not jettisoned a pound. And why should not one rejoice also in the main chance coming so of itself?

I shook out a reef, and set the whole jib, for, having sea-room, I could square away two points. This brought the sea more on her quarter, and she was the wholesomer under a press of sail. Occasionally an old southwest sea rolling up, combed athwart her, but did no harm. The wind freshened as the sun rose half-mast or more, and the air, a bit chilly in the morning, softened later in the day; but I gave little thought to such things as these.

One wave, in the evening, larger than others that had threatened all day —one such as sailors call ‘fineweather seas’—broke over the sloop fore and aft. It washed over me at the helm, the last that swept over the *Spray* off Cape Horn. It seemed to wash away old regrets. All my troubles were now astern; summer was ahead; all the world was again before me. The wind was even literally fair. My ‘trick’ at the wheel was now up, and it was 5 p.m. I had stood at the helm since eleven o’clock the morning before, or thirty hours.

Then was the time to uncover my head, for I sailed alone with God. The vast ocean was again around me, and the horizon was unbroken by land. A few days later the *Spray* was under full sail, and I saw her for the first time with a jigger spread. This was indeed a small incident, but it was the incident following a triumph. The wind was still southwest, but it had moderated, and roaring seas had turned to gossiping waves that rippled and pattered against her sides as she rolled among them, delighted with their story. Rapid changes went on, those days, in things all about while she headed for the tropics. New species of birds came around; albatrosses fell back and became scarcer and scarcer; lighter gulls came in their stead, and pecked for crumbs in the sloop’s wake.

On the tenth day from Cape Pillar a shark came along, the first of its kind on this part of the voyage to get into trouble. I harpooned him, and took out his ugly jaws. I had not till then felt inclined to take the life of any animal, but when John Shark hove in sight my sympathy flew to the winds. It is a fact that in Magellan I let pass many ducks that would have made a good stew, for I had no mind in the lonesome strait to take the life of any living thing.

From Cape Pillar I steered for Juan Fernandez, and on 26 April, fifteen days out, made that historic island right ahead.

The blue hills of Juan Fernandez, high among the clouds, could be seen about thirty miles off. A thousand emotions thrilled me when I saw the island, and I bowed my head to the deck. We may mock the Oriental salaam, but for my part I could find no other way of expressing myself.

The wind being light through the day, the *Spray* did not reach the island till night. With what wind there was to fill her sails she stood close in to shore on the northeast side, where it fell calm and remained so all night. I saw the twinkling of a small light farther along in a cove, and fired a gun, but got no answer, and soon the light disappeared altogether. I heard the sea booming against the cliffs all night, and realised that the ocean swell was still great, although from the deck of my little ship it was apparently small. From the cry of animals in the hills, which sounded fainter and fainter through the night, I judged that a light current was drifting the sloop from the land, though she seemed all night dangerously near the shore, for, the land being very high, appearances were deceptive.

Soon after daylight I saw a boat putting out towards me. As it pulled near, it so happened that I picked up my gun, which was on the deck, meaning only to put it below; but the people in the boat, seeing the piece in my hands, quickly turned and pulled back for shore, which was about four miles distant. There were six rowers in her, and I observed that they pulled with oars in oar-locks, after the manner of trained seamen, and so I knew they belonged to a civilised race; but their opinion of me must have been anything but flattering when they mistook my purpose with the gun and pulled away with all their might. I made them understand by signs, but not without difficulty, that I did not intend to shoot, that I was simply putting the piece in the cabin, and that I wished them to return. When they understood my meaning they came back and were soon on board.

One of the party, whom the rest called ‘King’, spoke English; the others spoke Spanish. They had all heard of the voyage of the *Spray* through the papers of Valparaiso, and were hungry for news concerning it. They told me of a war between Chile and the Argentine, which I had not heard of when I was there. I had just visited both countries, and I told them that according to the latest reports, while I was in Chile, their own island was sunk. (This same report that Juan Fernandez had sunk was current in Australia when I arrived there three months later.)

I had already prepared a pot of coffee and a plate of doughnuts, which, after some words of civility, the islanders stood up to and discussed with a will, after which they took the *Spray* in tow of their boat and made towards the island with her at the rate of a good three knots. The man they called King took the helm, and with whirling it up and down he so rattled the *Spray* that I thought she would never carry herself straight again. The others pulled away lustily with their oars. The king, I soon learned, was king only by courtesy. Having lived longer on the island than any other man in the world—thirty years—he was so dubbed. Juan Fernandez was then under the administration of a governor of Swedish nobility, so I was told. I was also told that his daughter could ride the wildest goat on the island. The governor, at the time of my visit, was away at Valparaiso with his family, to place his children at school. The king had been away once for a year or two, and in Rio de Janeiro had married a Brazilian woman who followed his fortunes to the faroff island. He was himself a Portuguese and a native of the Azores. He had sailed in New Bedford whaleships and had steered a boat. All this I learned, and more too, before we reached the anchorage. The sea breeze, coming in before long, filled the *Spray*'s sails, and the experienced Portuguese mariner piloted her to a safe berth in the bay, where she was moored to a buoy abreast the settlement.

CHAPTER XI

The islanders at Juan Fernandez entertained with Yankee doughnuts—The beauties of Robinson Crusoe's realm—The mountain monument to Alexander Selkirk—Robinson Crusoe's cave—A stroll with the children of the island—Westward ho! with a friendly gale—A month's free sailing with the Southern Cross and the sun for guides—Sighting the Marquesas—Experience in reckoning.

The *Spray* being secured, the islanders returned to the coffee and doughnuts, and I was more than flattered when they did not slight my buns, as the professor had done in the Strait of Magellan. Between buns and doughnuts there was little difference except in name. Both had been fried in tallow, which was the strong point in both, for there was nothing on the island fatter than a goat, and a goat is but a lean beast, to make the best of it. So with a view to business I hooked my steelyards to the boom at once, ready to weigh out tallow, there being no customs officer to say 'Why do you do so?', and before the sun went down the islanders had learned the art of making buns and doughnuts. I did not charge a high price for what I sold, but the ancient and curious coins I got in payment, some of them from the wreck of a galleon sunk in the bay no one knows when, I sold afterward to antiquarians for more than face value. In this way I made a reasonable profit. I brought away money of all denominations from the island, and nearly all there was, so far as I could find out.

Juan Fernandez, as a place of call, is a lovely spot. The hills are well wooded, the valleys fertile, and pouring down through many ravines are streams of pure water. There are no serpents on the island, and no wild beasts other than pigs and goats, of which I saw a number, with possibly a dog or two. The people lived without the use of rum or beer of any sort. There was not a police officer or a lawyer among them. The domestic economy of the island was simplicity itself. The fashions of Paris did not

affect the inhabitants; each dressed according to his own taste. Although there was no doctor, the people were all healthy, and the children were all beautiful. There were about forty-five souls on the island all told. The adults were mostly from the mainland of South America. One lady there, from Chile, who made a flying jib for the *Spray,* taking her pay in tallow, would be called a belle at Newport. Blessed island of Juan Fernandez! Why Alexander Selkirk ever left you was more than I could make out.

A large ship which had arrived some time before, on fire, had been stranded at the head of the bay, and as the sea smashed her to pieces on the rocks, after the fire was drowned, the islanders picked up the timbers and utilised them in the construction of houses, which naturally presented a ship-like appearance. The house of the king of Juan Fernandez, Manuel Carroza by name, besides resembling the ark, wore a polished brass knocker on its only door, which was painted green. In front of this gorgeous entrance was a flagmast all ataunto, and near it a smart whaleboat painted red and blue, the delight of the king's old age.

I of course made a pilgrimage to the old lookout place at the top of the mountain, where Selkirk spent many days peering into the distance for the ship which came at last. From a tablet fixed into the face of the rock I copied these words, inscribed in Arabic capitals:

IN MEMORY

OF

ALEXANDER SELKIRK,

mariner,

A native of Largo, in the county of Fife, Scotland, who lived on this island in com plete solitude for four years and four months. He was landed from the *Cinque Ports* galley, 96 tons, 18 guns, A.D. 1704, and was taken off in the *Duke,* privateer, 12th February, 1709. He died Lieutenant of HMS *Weymouth,* A.D. 1723, aged 47.* This tablet is erected near Selkirk's lookout, by Commodore Powell and the officers of HMS *Topaze,* A.D. 1868.

The cave in which Selkirk dwelt while on the island is at the head of the bay now called Robinson Crusoe Bay. It is around a bold headland west

of the present anchorage and landing. Ships have anchored there, but it affords a very indifferent berth. Both of these anchorages are exposed to north winds, which, however, do not reach home with much violence. The holding ground being good in the first-named bay to the eastward, the anchorage there may be considered safe, although the undertow at times makes it wild riding.

I visited Robinson Crusoe Bay in a boat, and with some difficulty landed through the surf near the cave, which I entered. I found it dry and inhabitable. It is located in a beautiful nook sheltered by high mountains from all the severe storms that sweep over the island, which are not many; for it lies near the limits of the trade wind regions, being in latitude 35½° S. The island is about fourteen miles in length, east and west, and eight miles in width; its height is over three thousand feet. Its distance from Chile, to which country it belongs, is about 340 miles.

Juan Fernandez was once a convict station. A number of caves in which the prisoners were kept, damp, unwholesome dens, are no longer in use, and no more prisoners are sent to the island.

The pleasantest day I spent on the island, if not the pleasantest on my whole voyage, was my last day on shore—but by no means because it was the last—when the children of the little community, one and all, went out with me to gather wild fruits for the voyage. We found quinces, peaches and figs, and the children gathered a basket of each. It takes very little to please children, and these little ones, never hearing a word in their lives except Spanish, made the hills ring with mirth at the sound of words in English. They asked me the names of all manner of things on the island. We came to a wild fig tree loaded with fruit, of which I gave them the English name. ‘Figgies, figgies!’ they cried, while they picked till their baskets were full. But when I told them that the *cabra* they pointed out was only a goat, they screamed with laughter, and rolled on the grass in wild delight to think that a man had come to their island who would call a *cabra* a goat.

The first child born on Juan Fernandez, I was told, had become a beautiful woman and was now a mother. Manuel Carroza and the good soul who followed him here from Brazil had laid away their only child, a girl, at the age of seven, in the little churchyard on the point. In the same half-acre were other mounds among the rough lava rocks, some marking the burial place of native-born children, some the resting places of seamen from

passing ships, landed here to end days of sickness and get into a sailors' heaven.

The greatest drawback I saw in the island was the want of a school. A class there would necessarily be small, but to some kind soul who loved teaching and quietude life on Juan Fernandez would, for a limited time, be one of delight.

On the morning of 5 May 1896, I sailed from Juan Fernandez, having feasted on many things, but on nothing sweeter than the adventure itself of a visit to the home and to the very cave of Robinson Crusoe. From the island the *Spray* bore away to the north, passing the island of St Felix before she gained the trade winds, which seemed slow in reaching their limits.

If the trades were tardy, however, when they did come they came with a bang, and made up for lost time; and the *Spray,* under reefs, sometimes one, sometimes two, flew before a gale for a great many days, with a bone in her mouth, towards the Marquesas, in the west, which she made on the forty-third day out, and still kept on sailing. My time was all taken up those days—not by standing at the helm; no man, I think, could stand or sit and steer a vessel round the world: I did better than that; for I sat and read my books, mended my clothes, or cooked my meals and ate them in peace. I had already found that it was not good to be alone, and so I made companionship with what there was around me, sometimes with the universe and sometimes with my own insignificant self; but my books were always my friends, let fail all else. Nothing could be easier or more restful than my voyage in the trade winds.

I sailed with a free wind day after day, marking the position of my ship on the chart with considerable precision; but this was done by intuition, I think, more than by slavish calculations. For one whole month my vessel held her course true; I had not, the while, so much as a light in the binnacle. The Southern Cross I saw every night abeam. The sun every morning came up astern; every evening it went down ahead. I wished for no other compass to guide me, for these were true. If I doubted my reckoning after a long time at sea I verified it by reading the clock aloft made by the Great Architect, and it was right.

There was no denying that the comical side of the strange life appeared. I awoke, sometimes, to find the sun already shining into my

cabin. I heard water rushing by, with only a thin plank between me and the depths, and I said, ‘How is this?’ But it was all right; it was my ship on her course, sailing as no other ship had ever sailed before in the world. The rushing water along her side told me that she was sailing at full speed. I knew that no human hand was at the helm; I knew that all was well with ‘the hands’ forward, and that there was no mutiny on board.

The phenomena of ocean meteorology were interesting studies even here in the trade winds. I observed that about every seven days the wind freshened and drew several points farther than usual from the direction of the pole; that is, it went round from east-southeast to south-southeast, while at the same time a heavy swell rolled up from the southwest. All this indicated that gales were going on in the antitrades. The wind then hauled day after day as it moderated, till it stood again at the normal point, eastsoutheast. This is more or less the constant state of the winter trades in latitude 12° S., where I ‘ran down the longitude’ for weeks. The sun, we all know, is the creator of the trade winds and of the wind system over all the earth. But ocean meteorology is, I think, the most fascinating of all. From Juan Fernandez to the Marquesas I experienced six changes of these great palpitations of sea winds and of the sea itself, the effect of far-off gales. To know the laws that govern the winds, and to know that you know them, will give you an easy mind on your voyage round the world; otherwise you may tremble at the appearance of every cloud. What is true of this in the trade winds is much more so in the variables, where changes run more to extremes.

To cross the Pacific Ocean, even under the most favourable circumstances, brings you for many days close to nature, and you realise the vastness of the sea. Slowly but surely the mark of my little ship’s course on the track-chart reached out on the ocean and across it, while at her utmost speed she marked with her keel still slowly the sea that carried her. On the forty-third day from land—a long time to be at sea alone—the sky being beautifully clear and the moon being ‘in distance’ with the sun, I threw up my sextant for sights. I found from the result of three observations, after long wrestling with lunar tables, that her longitude by observation agreed within five miles of that by dead reckoning.

This was wonderful; both, however, might be in error, but somehow I felt confident that both were nearly true, and that in a few hours more I

should see land; and so it happened, for then I made the island of Nukahiva, the southernmost of the Marquesas group, clear-cut and lofty. The verified longitude when abreast was somewhere between the two reckonings; this was extraordinary. All navigators will tell you that from one day to another a ship may lose or gain more than five miles in her sailing account, and again, in the matter of lunars, even expert lunarians are considered as doing clever work when they average within eight miles of the truth.

I hope I am making it clear that I do not lay claim to cleverness or to slavish calculations in my reckonings. I think I have already stated that I kept my longitude, at least, mostly by intuition. A rotator log always towed astern, but so much has to be allowed for currents and for drift, which the log never shows, that it is only an approximation, after all, to be corrected by one's own judgment from data of a thousand voyages; and even then the master of the ship, if he be wise, cries out for the lead and the lookout.

Unique was my experience in nautical astronomy from the deck of the *Spray*—so much so that I feel justified in briefly telling it here. The first set of sights, just spoken of, put her many hundred miles west of my reckoning by account. I knew that this could not be correct. In about an hour's time I took another set of observations with the utmost care; the mean result of these was about the same as that of the first set. I asked myself why, with my boasted self-dependence, I had not done at least better than this. Then I went in search of a discrepancy in the tables, and I found it. In the tables I found that the column of figures from which I had got an important logarithm was in error. It was a matter I could prove beyond a doubt, and it made the difference as already stated. The tables being corrected, I sailed on with self-reliance unshaken, and with my tin clock fast asleep. The result of these observations naturally tickled my vanity, for I knew that it was something to stand on a great ship's deck and with two assistants take lunar observations approximately near the truth. As one of the poorest of American sailors, I was proud of the little achievement alone on the sloop, even by chance though it may have been.

I was *en rapport* now with my surroundings, and was carried on a vast stream where I felt the buoyancy of His hand who made all the worlds. I realised the mathematical truth of their motions, so well known that astronomers compile tables of their positions through the years and the days, and the minutes of a day, with such precision that one coming along

over the sea even five years later may, by their aid, find the standard time of any given meridian on the earth.

To find local time is a simpler matter. The difference between local and standard time is longitude expressed in time—four minutes, we all know, representing one degree. This, briefly, is the principle on which longitude is found independent of chronometers. The work of the lunarian, though seldom practised in these days of chronometers, is beautifully edifying, and there is nothing in the realm of navigation that lifts one's heart up more in adoration.

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* Mr J. Cuthbert Hadden, in the *Century Magazine* for July 1899, shows that the tablet is in error as to the year of Selkirk's death. It should be 1721.

CHAPTER XII

Seventy-two days without a port—Whales and birds—A peep into the *Spray*'s galley—Flying fish for breakfast—A welcome at Apia—A visit from Mrs Robert Louis Stevenson—At Vailima—Samoan hospitality—Arrested for fast riding—An amusing merry-go-round—Teachers and pupils of Papauta College—At the mercy of sea nymphs.

To be alone forty-three days would seem a long time, but in reality, even here, winged moments flew lightly by, and instead of my hauling in for Nukahiva, which I could have made as well as not, I kept on for Samoa, where I wished to make my next landing. This occupied twenty-nine days more, making seventy-two days in all. I was not distressed in any way during that time. There was no end of companionship; the very coral reefs kept me company, or gave me no time to feel lonely, which is the same thing, and there were many of them now in my course to Samoa.

First among the incidents of the voyage from Juan Fernandez to Samoa (which were not many) was a narrow escape from collision with a great whale that was absent-mindedly ploughing the ocean at night while I was below. The noise from his startled snort and the commotion he made in the sea, as he turned to clear my vessel, brought me on deck in time to catch a wetting from the water he threw up with his flukes. The monster was apparently frightened. He headed quickly for the east; I kept on going west. Soon another whale passed, evidently a companion, following in its wake. I saw no more on this part of the voyage, nor did I wish to.

Hungry sharks came about the vessel often when she neared islands or coral reefs. I own to a satisfaction in shooting them as one would a tiger. Sharks, after all, are the tigers of the sea. Nothing is more dreadful to the mind of a sailor, I think, than a possible encounter with a hungry shark.

A number of birds were always about; occasionally one poised on the mast to look the *Spray* over, wondering, perhaps, at her odd wings, for she

now wore her Fuego mainsail, which, like Joseph's coat, was made of many pieces. Ships are less common on the southern seas than formerly. I saw not one in the many days crossing the Pacific.

My diet on these long passages usually consisted of potatoes and salt cod and biscuits, which I made two or three times a week. I had always plenty of coffee, tea, sugar and flour. I carried usually a good supply of potatoes, but before reaching Samoa I had a mishap which left me destitute of this highly prized sailors' luxury. Through meeting at Juan Fernandez the Yankee Portuguese named Manuel Carroza, who nearly traded me out of my boots, I ran out of potatoes in mid-ocean, and was wretched thereafter. I prided myself on being something of a trader; but this Portuguese from the Azores by way of New Bedford, who gave me new potatoes for the older ones I had got from the *Colombia,* a bushel or more of the best, left me no ground for boasting. He wanted mine, he said, 'for changee the seed'. When I got to sea I found that his tubers were rank and unedible, and full of fine yellow streaks of repulsive appearance. I tied the sack up and returned to the few left of my old stock thinking that maybe when I got right hungry the island potatoes would improve in flavour. Three weeks later I opened the bag again, and out flew millions of winged insects! Manuel's potatoes had all turned to moths. I tied them up quickly and threw all into the sea.

Manuel had a large crop of potatoes on hand, and as a hint to whalemen, who are always eager to buy vegetables, he wished me to report whales off the island of Juan Fernandez, which I have already done, and big ones at that, but they were a long way off.

Taking things by and large, as sailors say, I got on fairly well in the matter of provisions even on the long voyage across the Pacific. I found always some small stores to help the fare of luxuries; what I lacked of fresh meat was made up in fresh fish, at least while in the trade winds, where flying fish crossing on the wing at night would hit the sails and fall on deck, sometimes two or three of them, sometimes a dozen. Every morning except when the moon was large I got a bountiful supply by merely picking them up from the lee scuppers. All tinned meats went begging.

On 16 July, after considerable care and some skill and hard work, the *Spray* cast anchor at Apia, in the kingdom of Samoa, about noon. My vessel being moored, I spread an awning, and instead of going at once on shore I

sat under it till late in the evening, listening with delight to the musical voices of the Samoan men and women.

A canoe coming down the harbour, with three young women in it, rested her paddles abreast the sloop. One of the fair crew, hailing with the naive salutation, '*Talofa lee*' ('Love to you, chief'), asked:

'Schoon come Melike?'

'Love to you,' I answered, and said, 'Yes.'

'You man come 'lone?'

Again I answered, 'Yes.'

'I don't believe that. You had other mans, and you eat 'em.'

At this sally the others laughed. 'What for you come long way?' they asked.

'To hear you ladies sing,' I replied.

'Oh, *talofa lee*!' they all cried, and sang on. Their voices filled the air with music that rolled across to the grove of tall palms on the other side of the harbour and back. Soon after this six young men came down in the United States consul-general's boat, singing in parts and beating time with their oars. In my interview with them I came off better than with the damsels in the canoe. They bore an invitation from General Churchill for me to come and dine at the consulate. There was a lady's hand in things about the consulate at Samoa. Mrs Churchill picked the crew for the general's boat, and saw to it that they wore a smart uniform and that they could sing the Samoan boatsong, which in the first week Mrs Churchill herself could sing like a native girl.

Next morning bright and early Mrs Robert Louis Stevenson came to the *Spray* and invited me to Vailima the following day. I was of course thrilled when I found myself, after so many days of adventure, face to face with this bright woman, so lately the companion of the author who had delighted me on the voyage. The kindly eyes, that looked me through and through, sparkled when we compared notes of adventure. I marvelled at some of her experiences and escapes. She told me that, along with her husband, she had voyaged in all manner of rickety craft among the islands of the Pacific, reflectively adding, 'Our tastes were similar.' Following the subject of voyages, she gave me the four beautiful volumes of sailing directories for the Mediterranean, writing on the flyleaf of the first:

TO CAPTAIN SLOCUM. These volumes have been read and re-read many times by my husband, and I am very sure that he would be pleased that they should be passed on to the sort of seafaring man that he liked above all others.

FANNY V. DE G. STEVENSON.

Mrs Stevenson also gave me a great directory of the Indian Ocean. It was not without a feeling of reverential awe that I received the books so nearly direct from the hand of Tusitala, ‘who sleeps in the forest’. Aolele, the *Spray* will cherish your gift.

The novelist’s stepson, Mr Lloyd Osbourne, walked through the Vailima mansion with me and bade me write my letters at the old desk. I thought it would be presumptuous to do that; it was sufficient for me to enter the hall on the floor of which the ‘Writer of Tales’, according to the Samoan custom, was wont to sit.

Coming through the main street of Apia one day, with my hosts, all bound for the *Spray,* Mrs Stevenson on horseback, I walking by her side, and Mr and Mrs Osbourne close in our wake on bicycles, at a sudden turn in the road we found ourselves mixed with a remarkable native procession, with a somewhat primitive band of music, in front of us, while behind was a festival or a funeral, we could not tell which. Several of the stoutest men carried bales and bundles on poles. Some were evidently bales of *tapa* cloth. The burden of one set of poles, heavier than the rest, however, was not so easily made out. My curiosity was whetted to know whether it was a roast pig or something of a gruesome nature, and I inquired about it. ‘I don’t know,’ said Mrs Stevenson, ‘whether this is a wedding or a funeral. Whatever it is, though, captain, our place seems to be at the head of it.’

The *Spray* being in the stream, we boarded her from the beach abreast, in the little razeed Gloucester dory, which had been painted a smart green. Our combined weight loaded it gunwale to the water, and I was obliged to steer with great care to avoid swamping. The adventure pleased Mrs Stevenson greatly, and as we paddled along she sang, ‘They went to sea in a pea-green boat.’ I could understand her saying of her husband and herself, ‘Our tastes were similar.’

As I sailed farther from the centre of civilisation I heard less and less of what would and what would not pay. Mrs Stevenson, in speaking of my

voyage, did not once ask me what I would make out of it. When I came to a Samoan village, the chief did not ask the price of gin, or say, ‘How much will you pay for roast pig?’ but, ‘Dollar, dollar,’ said he, ‘white man know only dollar.’

‘Never mind dollar. The *tapo* has prepared *ava*; let us drink and rejoice.’

The tapo is the virgin hostess of the village; in this instance it was Taloa, daughter of the chief. ‘Our taro is good; let us eat. On the tree there is fruit. Let the day go by; why should we mourn over that? There are millions of days coming. The breadfruit is yellow in the sun, and from the cloth tree is Taloa’s gown. Our house, which is good, cost but the labour of building it, and there is no lock on the door.’

While the days go thus in these southern islands we at the north are struggling for the bare necessities of life.

For food the islanders have only to put out their hand and take what nature has provided for them; if they plant a banana tree, their only care afterward is to see that too many trees do not grow. They have great reason to love their country and to fear the white man’s yoke, for once harnessed to the plough, their life would no longer be a poem.

The chief of the village of Caini, who was a tall and dignified Tonga man, could be approached only through an interpreter and talking man. It was perfectly natural for him to inquire the object of my visit, and I was sincere when I told him that my reason for casting anchor in Samoa was to see their fine men, and fine women, too. After a considerable pause the chief said, ‘The captain has come a long way to see so little; but,’ he added, ‘the tapo must sit nearer the captain.’

‘*Yack*,’ said Taloa, who had so nearly learned to say yes in English, and suiting the action to the word, she hitched a peg nearer, all hands sitting in a circle upon mats.

I was no less taken with the chief’s eloquence than delighted with the simplicity of all he said. About him there was nothing pompous; he might have been taken for a great scholar or statesman, the least assuming of the men I met on the voyage. As for Taloa, a sort of Queen of the May, and the other tapo girls, well, it is wise to learn as soon as possible the manners and customs of these hospitable people, and meanwhile not to mistake for overfamiliarity that which is intended as honour to a guest. I was fortunate

in my travels in the islands, and saw nothing to shake one's faith in native virtue.

To the unconventional mind the punctilious etiquette of Samoa is perhaps a little painful. For instance, I found that in partaking of *ava*, the social bowl, I was supposed to toss a little of the beverage over my shoulder, or pretend to do so, and say, 'Let the gods drink,' and then drink it all myself; and the dish, invariably a coconut shell, being empty, I might not pass it politely as we would do, but politely throw it twirling across the mats at the tapo.

My most grievous mistake while at the islands was made on a nag, which, inspired by a bit of good road, must needs break into a smart trot through a village. I was instantly hailed by the chief's deputy, who in an angry voice brought me to a halt. Perceiving that I was in trouble, I made signs for pardon, the safest thing to do, though I did not know what offence I had committed. My interpreter coming up, however, put me right, but not until a long palaver had ensued. The deputy's hail, liberally translated, was: 'Ahoy, there, on the frantic steed! Know you not that it is against the law to ride thus through the village of our fathers?'

I made what apologies I could, and offered to dismount and, like my servant, lead my nag by the bridle. This, the interpreter told me, would also be a grievous wrong, and so I again begged for pardon. I was summoned to appear before a chief; but my interpreter, being a wit as well as a bit of a rogue, explained that I was myself something of a chief, and should not be detained, being on a most important mission. In my own behalf I could only say that I was a stranger, but, pleading all this, I knew I still deserved to be roasted, at which the chief showed a fine row of teeth and seemed pleased, but allowed me to pass on.

The chief of the Tongas and his family at Caini, returning my visit, brought presents of *tapa* cloth and fruits. Taloa, the princess, brought a bottle of coconut oil for my hair, which another man might have regarded as coming late.

It was impossible to entertain on the *Spray* after the royal manner in which I had been received by the chief. His fare had included all that the land could afford, fruits, fowl, fishes and flesh, a hog having been roasted whole. I set before them boiled salt pork and salt beef, with which I was well supplied, and in the evening took them all to a new amusement in the

town, a rocking horse merry-go-round, which they called a ‘*kee-kee’*, meaning theatre; and in a spirit of justice they pulled off the horses’ tails, for the proprietors of the show, two hard-fisted countrymen of mine, I grieve to say, unceremoniously hustled them off for a new set, almost at the first spin. I was not a little proud of my Tonga friends; the chief, finest of them all, carried a portentous club. As for the theatre, through the greed of the proprietors it was becoming unpopular, and the representatives of the three great powers, in want of laws which they could enforce, adopted a vigorous foreign policy, taxing it 25 per cent on the gate money. This was considered a great stroke of legislative reform!

It was the fashion of the native visitors to the *Spray* to come over the bows, where they could reach the headgear and climb aboard with ease, and on going ashore to jump off the stern and swim away; nothing could have been more delightfully simple. The modest natives wore *lava-lava* bathing dresses, a native cloth from the bark of the mulberry tree, and they did no harm to the *Spray.* In summerland Samoa their coming and going was only a merry everyday scene.

One day the head teachers of Papauta College, Miss Schultze and Miss Moore, came on board with their ninety-seven young women students. They were all dressed in white, and each wore a red rose, and of course came in boats or canoes in the cold-climate style. A merrier bevy of girls it would be difficult to find. As soon as they got on deck, by request of one of the teachers, they sang ‘The Watch on the Rhine’, which I had never heard before. ‘And now,’ said they all, ‘let’s up anchor and away.’ But I had no inclination to sail from Samoa so soon. On leaving the *Spray* these accomplished young women each seized a palm branch or paddle, or whatever else would serve the purpose, and literally paddled her own canoe. Each could have swum as readily, and would have done so, I dare say, had it not been for the holiday muslin.

It was not uncommon at Apia to see a young woman swimming alongside a small canoe with a passenger for the *Spray.* Mr Trood, an old Eton boy, came in this manner to see me, and he exclaimed, ‘Was ever king ferried in such state?’ Then, suiting his action to the sentiment, he gave the damsel pieces of silver till the natives watching on shore yelled with envy.

My own canoe, a small dugout, one day when it had rolled over with me, was seized by a party of fair bathers, and before I could get my breath,

almost, was towed around and around the *Spray,* while I sat in the bottom of it, wondering what they would do next. But in this case there were six of them, three on a side, and I could not help myself. One of the sprites, I remember, was a young English lady, who made more sport of it than any of the others.

CHAPTER XIII

Samoan royalty—King Malietoa—Goodbye to friends at Vailima—Leaving Fiji to the south—Arrival at Newcastle, Australia—The yachts of Sydney—A ducking on the *Spray*—Commodore Foy presents the sloop with a new suit of sails—On to Melbourne—A shark that proved to be valuable—A change of course—The ‘Rain of Blood’—In Tasmania.

At Apia I had the pleasure of meeting Mr A. Young, the father of the late Queen Margaret, who was Queen of Manua from 1891 to 1895. Her grandfather was an English sailor who married a princess. Mr Young is now the only survivor of the family, two of his children, the last of them all, having been lost in an island trader which a few months before had sailed, never to return. Mr Young was a Christian gentleman, and his daughter Margaret was accomplished in graces that would become any lady. It was with pain that I saw in the newspapers a sensational account of her life and death, taken evidently from a paper in the supposed interest of a benevolent society, but without foundation in fact. And the startling headlines saying, ‘Queen Margaret of Manua is dead’, could hardly be called news in 1898, the queen having then been dead three years.

While hobnobbing, as it were, with royalty, I called on the king himself, the late Malietoa. King Malietoa was a great ruler; he never got less than forty-five dollars a month for the job, as he told me himself, and this amount had lately been raised, so that he could live on the fat of the land and not any longer be called ‘Tin-of-salmon Malietoa’ by graceless beachcombers.

As my interpreter and I entered the front door of the palace, the king’s brother, who was viceroy, sneaked in through a taro patch by the back way, and sat cowering by the door while I told my story to the king. Mr W—— of New York, a gentleman interested in missionary work, had charged me, when I sailed, to give his remembrance to the king of the Cannibal Islands,

other islands of course being meant; but the good King Malietoa, notwithstanding that his people have not eaten a missionary in a hundred years, received the message himself, and seemed greatly pleased to hear so directly from the publishers of the *Missionary Review,* and wished me to make his compliments in return. His Majesty then excused himself, while I talked with his daughter, the beautiful Faamu-Sami (a name signifying ‘To make the sea burn’), and soon reappeared in the full dress uniform of the German commander-in-chief, Emperor William himself; for, stupidly enough, I had not sent my credentials ahead that the king might be in full regalia to receive me. Calling a few days later to say goodbye to Faamu-Sami, I saw King Malietoa for the last time.

Of the landmarks in the pleasant town of Apia, my memory rests first on the little school just back of the London Missionary Society coffee house and reading rooms, where Mrs Bell taught English to about a hundred native children, boys and girls. Brighter children you will not find anywhere.

‘Now, children,’ said Mrs Bell, when I called one day, ‘let us show the captain that we know something about the Cape Horn he passed in the *Spray,*’ at which a lad of nine or ten years stepped nimbly forward and read Basil Hall’s fine description of the great cape, and read it well. He afterward copied the essay for me in a clear hand.

Calling to say goodbye to my friends at Vailima, I met Mrs Stevenson in her Panama hat, and went over the estate with her. Men were at work clearing the land, and to one of them she gave an order to cut a couple of bamboo trees for the *Spray,* from a clump she had planted four years before, and which had grown to the height of sixty feet. I used them for spare spars, and the butt of one made a serviceable jib-boom on the homeward voyage. I had then only to take *ava* with the family and be ready for sea. This ceremony, important among Samoans, was conducted after the native fashion. A Triton horn was sounded to let us know when the beverage was ready, and in response we all clapped hands. The bout being in honour of the *Spray,* it was my turn first, after the custom of the country, to spill a little over my shoulder; but having forgotten the Samoan for ‘Let the gods drink’, I repeated the equivalent in Russian and Chinook, as I remembered a word in each, whereupon Mr Osbourne pronounced me a confirmed Samoan. Then I said ‘*Tofah!*’ to my good friends of Samoa, and all wishing

the *Spray bon voyage,* she stood out of the harbour, 20 August 1896, and continued on her course.

A sense of loneliness seized upon me as the islands faded astern, and as a remedy for it I crowded on sail for lovely Australia, which was not a strange land to me; but for long days in my dreams Vailima stood before the prow.

The *Spray* had barely cleared the islands when a sudden burst of the trades brought her down to close reefs, and she reeled off 184 miles the first day, of which I counted forty miles of current in her favour. Finding a rough sea, I swung her off free and sailed north of the Horn Islands, also north of Fiji instead of south, as I had intended, and coasted down the west side of the archipelago. Thence I sailed direct for New South Wales, passing south of New Caledonia, and arrived at Newcastle after a passage of forty-two days, mostly of storms and gales.

One particularly severe gale encountered near New Caledonia foundered the American clipper ship *Patrician* farther south. Again, nearer the coast of Australia, when, however, I was not aware that the gale was extraordinary, a French mail-steamer from New Caledonia for Sydney, blown considerably out of her course, on her arrival reported it an awful storm, and to inquiring friends said: ‘Oh, my! we don’t know what has become of the little sloop *Spray.* We saw her in the thick of the storm.’ The *Spray* was all right, lying to like a duck. She was under a goose’s wing mainsail, and had had a dry deck while the passengers on the steamer, I heard later, were up to their knees in water in the saloon. When their ship arrived at Sydney they gave the captain a purse of gold for his skill and seamanship in bringing them safe into port. The captain of the *Spray* got nothing of this sort. In this gale I made the land about Seal Rocks, where the steamship *Catherton,* with many lives, was lost a short time before. I was many hours off the rocks, beating back and forth, but weathered them at last.

I arrived at Newcastle in the teeth of a gale of wind. It was a stormy season. The government pilot, Captain Cumming, met me at the harbour bar, and with the assistance of a steamer carried my vessel to a safe berth. Many visitors came on board, the first being the United States consul, Mr Brown. Nothing was too good for the *Spray* here. All government dues were remitted, and after I had rested a few days a port pilot with a tug

carried her to sea again, and she made along the coast towards the harbour of Sydney, where she arrived on the following day, 10 October 1896.

I came to in a snug cove near Manly for the night, the Sydney harbour police boat giving me a pluck into anchorage while they gathered data from an old scrapbook of mine, which seemed to interest them. Nothing escapes the vigilance of the New South Wales police; their reputation is known the world over. They made a shrewd guess that I could give them some useful information, and they were the first to meet me. Someone said they came to arrest me, and—well, let it go at that.

Summer was approaching, and the harbour of Sydney was blooming with yachts. Some of them came down to the weatherbeaten *Spray* and sailed round her at Shelcote, where she took a berth for a few days. At Sydney I was at once among friends. The *Spray* remained at the various watering places in the great port for several weeks, and was visited by many agreeable people, frequently by officers of HMS *Orlando* and their friends. Captain Fisher, the commander, with a party of young ladies from the city and gentlemen belonging to his ship, came one day to pay me a visit in the midst of a deluge of rain. I never saw it rain harder even in Australia. But they were out for fun, and rain could not dampen their feelings, however hard it poured. But, as ill luck would have it, a young gentleman of another party on board, in the full uniform of a very great yacht club, with brass buttons enough to sink him, stepping quickly to get out of the wet, tumbled holus-bolus, head and heels, into a barrel of water I had been coopering and, being a short man, was soon out of sight, and nearly drowned before he was rescued. It was the nearest to a casualty on the *Spray* in her whole course, so far as I know. The young man having come on board with compliments made the mishap most embarrassing. It had been decided by his club that the *Spray* could not be officially recognised, for the reason that she brought no letters from yacht clubs in America, and so I say it seemed all the more embarrassing and strange that I should have caught at least one of the members, in a barrel, and, too, when I was not fishing for yachtsmen.

The typical Sydney boat is a handy sloop of great beam and enormous sail-carrying power; but a capsize is not uncommon, for they carry sail like vikings. In Sydney I saw all manner of craft, from the smart steam launch and sailing-cutter to the smaller sloop and canoe pleasuring on the bay.

Everybody owned a boat. If a boy in Australia has not the means to buy him a boat he builds one, and it is usually one not to be ashamed of.

The *Spray* shed her Joseph's coat, the Fuego mainsail, in Sydney, and wearing a new suit, the handsome present of Commodore Foy, she was flagship of the Johnstone's Bay Flying Squadron when the circumnavigators of Sydney harbour sailed in their annual regatta. They 'recognised' the *Spray* as belonging to 'a club of her own', and with more Australian sentiment than fastidiousness gave her credit for her record.

Time flew fast those days in Australia, and it was 6 December 1896 when the *Spray* sailed from Sydney. My intention was now to sail around Cape Leeuwin direct for Mauritius on my way home, and so I coasted along towards Bass Strait in that direction.

There was little to report on this part of the voyage, except changeable winds, 'busters' and rough seas. The 12th of December, however, was an exceptional day, with a fine coast wind, northeast. The *Spray* early in the morning passed Twofold Bay and later Cape Bundooro in a smooth sea with land close aboard. The lighthouse on the cape dipped a flag to the *Spray*'s flag, and children on the balconies of a cottage near the shore waved handkerchiefs as she passed by. There were only a few people all told on the shore, but the scene was a happy one. I saw festoons of evergreen in token of Christmas, near at hand. I saluted the merrymakers, wishing them a Merry Christmas, and could hear them say, 'I wish you the same.'

From Cape Bundooro I passed by Cliff Island in Bass Strait, and exchanged signals with the lightkeepers while the *Spray* worked up under the island. The wind howled that day while the sea broke over their rocky home.

A few days later, 17 December, the *Spray* came in close under Wilson's Promontory, again seeking shelter. The keeper of the light at that station, Mr J. Clark, came on board and gave me directions for Waterloo Bay, about three miles to leeward, for which I bore up at once, finding good anchorage there in a sandy cove protected from all westerly and northerly winds.

Anchored here was the ketch *Secret*, a fisherman, and the *Mary* of Sydney, a steam ferryboat fitted for whaling. The captain of the *Mary* was a genius, and an Australian genius at that, and smart. His crew, from a sawmill up the coast, had not one of them seen a live whale when they

shipped; but they were boatmen after an Australian's own heart, and the captain had told them that to kill a whale was no more than to kill a rabbit. They believed him, and that settled it. As luck would have it, the very first one they saw on their cruise, although an ugly humpback, was a dead whale in no time, Captain Young, the master of the *Mary,* killing the monster at a single thrust of a harpoon. It was taken in tow for Sydney, where they put it on exhibition. Nothing but whales interested the crew of the gallant *Mary,* and they spent most of their time here gathering fuel along shore for a cruise on the grounds off Tasmania. Whenever the word 'whale' was mentioned in the hearing of these men their eyes glistened with excitement.

We spent three days in the quiet cove, listening to the wind outside. Meanwhile Captain Young and I explored the shores, visited abandoned miners' pits, and prospected for gold ourselves.

Our vessels, parting company the morning they sailed, stood away like seabirds each on its own course. The wind for a few days was moderate, and, with unusual luck of fine weather, the *Spray* made Melbourne Heads on 22 December, and, taken in tow by the steamtug *Racer,* was brought into port.

Christmas day was spent at a berth in the river Yarrow, but I lost little time in shifting to St Kilda, where I spent nearly a month.

The *Spray* paid no port charges in Australia or anywhere else on the voyage, except at Pernambuco, till she poked her nose into the custom house at Melbourne, where she was charged tonnage dues; in this instance, sixpence a ton on the gross. The collector exacted six shillings and sixpence, taking off nothing for the fraction under thirteen tons, her exact gross being 12.70 tons. I squared the matter by charging people sixpence each for coming on board, and when this business got dull I caught a shark and charged them sixpence each to look at that. The shark was twelve feet six inches in length, and carried a progeny of twenty-six, not one of them less than two feet in length. A slit of a knife let them out in a canoe full of water, which, changed constantly, kept them alive one whole day. In less than an hour from the time I heard of the ugly brute it was on deck and on exhibition, with rather more than the amount of the *Spray*'s tonnage dues already collected. Then I hired a good Irishman, Tom Howard by name—who knew all about sharks, both on the land and in the sea, and could talk

about them—to answer questions and lecture. When I found that I could not keep abreast of the questions I turned the responsibility over to him.

Returning from the bank, where I had been to deposit money early in the day, I found Howard in the midst of a very excited crowd, telling imaginary habits of the fish. It was a good show; the people wished to see it, and it was my wish that they should; but owing to his overstimulated enthusiasm, I was obliged to let Howard resign. The income from the show and the proceeds of the tallow I had gathered in the Strait of Magellan, the last of which I had disposed of to a German soap-boiler at Samoa, put me in ample funds.

On 24 January 1897 found the *Spray* again in tow of the tug *Racer,* leaving Hobson's Bay after a pleasant time in Melbourne and St Kilda, which had been protracted by a succession of southwest winds that seemed neverending.

In the summer months, that is, December, January, February, and sometimes March, east winds are prevalent through Bass Strait and round Cape Leeuwin; but owing to a vast amount of ice drifting up from the Antarctic, this was all changed now and emphasised with much bad weather, so much so that I considered it impracticable to pursue the course farther. Therefore, instead of thrashing round cold and stormy Cape Leeuwin, I decided to spend a pleasanter and more profitable time in Tasmania, waiting for the season for favourable winds through Torres Strait, by way of the Great Barrier Reef, the route I finally decided on. To sail this course would be taking advantage of anticyclones, which never fail, and besides it would give me the chance to put foot on the shores of Tasmania, round which I had sailed years before.

I should mention that while I was at Melbourne there occurred one of those extraordinary storms sometimes called 'rain of blood', the first of the kind in many years about Australia. The 'blood' came from a fine brick-dust matter afloat in the air from the deserts. A rainstorm setting in brought down this dust simply as mud; it fell in such quantities that a bucketful was collected from the sloop's awnings, which were spread at the time. When the wind blew hard and I was obliged to furl awnings, her sails, unprotected on the booms, got mud-stained from clue to earing.

The phenomena of dust storms, well understood by scientists, are not uncommon on the coast of Africa. Reaching some distance out over the sea,

they frequently cover the track of ships, as in the case of the one through which the *Spray* passed in the earlier part of her voyage. Sailors no longer regard them with superstitious fear, but our credulous brothers on the land cry out ‘Rain of blood!’ at the first splash of the awful mud.

The rip off Port Phillip Heads, a wild place, was rough when the *Spray* entered Hobson’s Bay from the sea, and was rougher when she stood out. But, with sea-room and under sail, she made good weather immediately after passing it. It was only a few hours’ sail to Tasmania across the strait, the wind being fair and blowing hard. I carried the St Kilda shark along, stuffed with hay, and disposed of it to Professor Porter, the curator of the Victoria Museum of Launceston, which is at the head of the Tamar. For many a long day to come may be seen there the shark of St Kilda. Alas! the good but mistaken people of St Kilda, when the illustrated journals with pictures of my shark reached their newsstands, flew into a passion, and swept all papers containing mention of fish into the fire; for St Kilda was a watering place—and the idea of a shark *there*! But my show went on.

The *Spray* was berthed on the beach at a small jetty at Launceston while the tide driven in by the gale that brought her up the river was unusually high; and she lay there hard and fast, with not enough water around her at any time after to wet one’s feet till she was ready to sail; then, to float her, the ground was dug from under her keel.

In this snug place I left her in charge of three children, while I made journeys among the hills and rested my bones, for the coming voyage, on the mosscovered rocks at the gorge hard by, and among the ferns I found wherever I went. My vessel was well taken care of. I never returned without finding that the decks had been washed and that one of the children, my nearest neighbour’s little girl from across the road, was at the gangway attending to visitors, while the others, a brother and sister, sold marine curios such as were in the cargo, on ‘ship’s account’. They were a bright, cheerful crew, and people came a long way to hear them tell the story of the voyage, and of the monsters of the deep ‘the captain had slain’. I had only to keep myself away to be a hero of the first water; and it suited me very well to do so and to rusticate in the forests and among the streams.

CHAPTER XIV

A testimonial from a lady—Cruising round Tasmania—The skipper delivers his first lecture on the voyage—Abundant provisions—An inspection of the *Spray* for safety at Devonport—Again at Sydney—Northward bound for Torres Strait—An amateur shipwreck—Friends on the Australian coast—Perils of a coral sea.

The first day of February 1897, on returning to my vessel I found waiting for me the letter of sympathy which I subjoin:

> A lady sends Mr Slocum the inclosed five-pound note as a token of her appreciation of his bravery in crossing the wide seas on so small a boat, and all alone, without human sympathy to help when danger threatened. All success to you.

To this day I do not know who wrote it or to whom I am indebted for the generous gift it contained. I could not refuse a thing so kindly meant, but promised myself to pass it on with interest at the first opportunity, and this I did before leaving Australia.

The season of fair weather around the north of Australia being yet a long way off, I sailed to other ports in Tasmania, where it is fine the year round, the first of these being Beauty Point, near which are Beaconsfield and the great Tasmania goldmine, which I visited in turn. I saw much grey, uninteresting rock being hoisted out of the mine there, and hundreds of stamps crushing it into powder. People told me there was gold in it, and I believed what they said.

I remember Beauty Point for its shady forest and for the road among the tall gum trees. While there the governor of New South Wales, Lord Hampden, and his family came in on a steam yacht, sightseeing. The *Spray*, anchored near the landing pier, threw her bunting out, of course, and probably a more insignificant craft bearing the Stars and Stripes was never

seen in those waters. However, the governor's party seemed to know why it floated there, and all about the *Spray,* and when I heard his Excellency say, 'Introduce me to the captain', or 'Introduce the captain to me', whichever it was, I found myself at once in the presence of a gentleman and a friend, and one greatly interested in my voyage. If any one of the party was more interested than the governor himself, it was the Honourable Margaret, his daughter. On leaving, Lord and Lady Hampden promised to rendezvous with me on board the *Spray* at the Paris Exposition in 1900. 'If we live,' they said, and I added, for my part, 'Dangers of the seas excepted.'

From Beauty Point the *Spray* visited Georgetown, near the mouth of the river Tamar. This little settlement, I believe, marks the place where the first footprints were made by whites in Tasmania, though it never grew to be more than a hamlet.

Considering that I have seen something of the world, and finding people here interested in adventure, I talked the matter over before my first audience in a little hall by the country road. A piano having been brought in from a neighbour's, I was helped out by the severe thumping it got, and by a 'Tommy Atkins' song from a strolling comedian. People came from a great distance, and the attendance all told netted the house about three pounds sterling. The owner of the hall, a kind lady from Scotland, would take no rent, and so my lecture from the start was a success.

From this snug little place I made sail for Devonport, a thriving place on the river Mersey, a few hours' sail westward along the coast, and fast becoming the most important port in Tasmania. Large steamers enter there now and carry away great cargoes of farm produce, but the *Spray* was the first vessel to bring the Stars and Stripes to the port, the harbour-master, Captain Murray, told me, and so it is written in the port records. For the great distinction the *Spray* enjoyed many civilities while she rode comfortably at anchor in her port-duster awning that covered her from stem to stern.

From the magistrate's house, 'Malunnah', on the point, she was saluted by the Jack both on coming in and on going out, and dear Mrs Aikenhead, the mistress of Malunnah, supplied the *Spray* with jams and jellies of all sorts, by the case, prepared from the fruits of her own rich garden—enough to last all the way home and to spare. Mrs Wood, farther up the harbour, put up bottles of raspberry wine for me. At this point, more than ever before, I

was in the land of good cheer. Mrs Powell sent on board chutney prepared ‘as we prepare it in India’. Fish and game were plentiful here, and the voice of the gobbler was heard, and from Pardo, farther up the country, came an enormous cheese; and yet people inquire: ‘What did you live on? What did you eat?’

I was haunted by the beauty of the landscape all about, of the natural ferneries then disappearing, and of the domed forest trees on the slopes, and was fortunate in meeting a gentleman intent on preserving in art the beauties of his country. He presented me with many reproductions from his collection of pictures, also many originals, to show to my friends.

By another gentleman I was charged to tell the glories of Tasmania in every land and on every occasion. This was Dr McCall, MLC. The doctor gave me useful hints on lecturing. It was not without misgivings, however, that I filled away on this new course, and I am free to say that it is only by the kindness of sympathetic audiences that my oratorical bark was held on even keel. Soon after my first talk the kind doctor came to me with words of approval. As in many other of my enterprises, I had gone about it at once and without second thought. ‘Man, man,’ said he, ‘great nervousness is only a sign of brain, and the more brain a man has the longer it takes him to get over the affliction; but,’ he added reflectively, ‘you will get over it.’ However, in my own behalf I think it only fair to say that I am not yet entirely cured.

The *Spray* was hauled out on the marine railway at Devonport and examined carefully top and bottom, but was found absolutely free from the destructive teredo, and sound in all respects. To protect her further against the ravage of these insects the bottom was coated once more with copper paint, for she would have to sail through the Coral and Arafura seas before refitting again. Everything was done to fit her for all the known dangers. But it was not without regret that I looked forward to the day of sailing from a country of so many pleasant associations. If there was a moment in my voyage when I could have given it up, it was there and then; but no vacancies for a better post being open, I weighed anchor 16 April 1897, and again put to sea.

The season of summer was then over; winter was rolling up from the south, with fair winds for the north. A foretaste of winter wind sent the *Spray* flying round Cape Howe and as far as Cape Bundooro farther along,

which she passed on the following day, retracing her course northward. This was a fine run, and boded good for the long voyage home from the antipodes. My old Christmas friends on Bundooro seemed to be up and moving when I came the second time by their cape, and we exchanged signals again, while the sloop sailed along as before in a smooth sea and close to the shore.

The weather was fine, with clear sky the rest of the passage to Port Jackson (Sydney), where the *Spray* arrived 22 April 1897, and anchored in Watson's Bay, near the heads, in eight fathoms of water. The harbour from the heads to Parramatta, up the river, was more than ever alive with boats and yachts of every class. It was, indeed, a scene of animation, hardly equalled in any other part of the world.

A few days later the bay was flecked with tempestuous waves, and none but stout ships carried sail. I was in a neighbouring hotel then, nursing a neuralgia which I had picked up along shore, and had only that moment got a glance of just the stern of a large, unmanageable steamship passing the range of my window as she forged in by the point, when the bellboy burst into my room shouting that the *Spray* had 'gone bung'. I tumbled out quickly, to learn that 'bung' meant that a large steamship had run into her, and that it was the one of which I saw the stern, the other end of her having hit the *Spray.* It turned out, however, that no damage was done beyond the loss of an anchor and chain, which from the shock of the collision had parted at the hawse. I had nothing at all to complain of, though, in the end, for the captain, after he clubbed his ship, took the *Spray* in tow up the harbour, clear of all dangers, and sent her back again, in charge of an officer and three men, to her anchorage in the bay, with a polite note saying he would repair any damages done. But what yawing about she made of it when she came with a stranger at the helm! Her old friend the pilot of the *Pinta* would not have been guilty of such lubberly work. But to my great delight they got her into a berth, and the neuralgia left me then, or was forgotten. The captain of the steamer, like a true seaman, kept his word, and his agent Mr Collishaw handed me on the very next day the price of the lost anchor and chain, with something over for anxiety of mind. I remember that he offered me twelve pounds at once; but my lucky number being thirteen, we made the amount thirteen pounds, which squared all accounts.

I sailed again, 9 May, before a strong southwest wind, which sent the *Spray* gallantly on as far as Port Stevens, where it fell calm and then came up ahead; but the weather was fine, and so remained for many days, which was a great change from the state of the weather experienced here some months before.

Having a full set of admiralty sheet-charts of the coast and Barrier Reef, I felt easy in mind. Captain Fisher, RN, who had steamed through the Barrier passages in HMS *Orlando,* advised me from the first to take this route, and I did not regret coming back to it now.

The wind, for a few days after passing Port Stevens, Seal Rocks and Cape Hawk, was light and dead ahead; but these points are photographed on my memory from the trial of beating round them some months before when bound the other way. But now, with a good stock of books on board, I fell to reading day and night, leaving this pleasant occupation merely to trim sails or tack, or to lie down and rest, while the *Spray* nibbled at the miles. I tried to compare my state with that of old circumnavigators, who sailed exactly over the route which I took from Cape Verde Islands or farther back to this point and beyond, but there was no comparison so far as I had got. Their hardships and romantic escapes—those of them who escaped death and worse sufferings—did not enter into my experience, sailing all alone around the world. For me is left to tell only of pleasant experiences, till finally my adventures are prosy and tame.

I had just finished reading some of the most interesting of the old voyages in woebegone ships, and was already near Port Macquarie, on my own cruise, when I made out, 13 May, a modern dandy craft in distress, anchored on the coast. Standing in for her, I found that she was the cutter-yacht *Akbar,* which had sailed from Watson’s Bay about three days ahead of the *Spray,* and that she had run at once into trouble.* No wonder she did so. It was a case of babes in the wood or butterflies at sea. Her owner, on his maiden voyage, was all duck trousers; the captain, distinguished for the enormous yachtsman’s cap he wore, was a Murrumbidgee whaler before he took command of the *Akbar*; and the navigating officer, poor fellow, was almost as deaf as a post, and nearly as stiff and immovable as a post in the ground.* These three jolly tars comprised the crew. None of them knew more about the sea or about a vessel than a newly born babe knows about another world. They were bound for New Guinea, so they said; perhaps it

was as well that three tenderfeet so tender as those never reached that destination.

The owner, whom I had met before he sailed, wanted to race the poor old *Spray* to Thursday Island *en route.* I declined the challenge, naturally, on the ground of the unfairness of three young yachtsmen in a clipper against an old sailor all alone in a craft of coarse build; besides that, I would not on any account race in the Coral Sea.

'*Spray* ahoy!' they all hailed now. 'What's the weather goin' t' be? Is it a-goin' to blow? And don't you think we'd better go back t' r-r-refit?'

I thought, 'If ever you get back, don't refit,' but I said: 'Give me the end of a rope, and I'll tow you into yon port farther along; and on your lives,' I urged, 'do not go back round Cape Hawk, for it's winter to the south of it.'

They purposed making for Newcastle under jury-sails; for their mainsail had been blown to ribbons, even the jigger had been blown away, and her rigging flew at loose ends. The *Akbar,* in a word, was a wreck.

'Up anchor,' I shouted, 'up anchor, and let me tow you into Port Macquarie, twelve miles north of this.'

'No,' cried the owner; 'we'll go back to Newcastle. We missed Newcastle on the way coming; we didn't see the light, and it was not thick, either.' This he shouted very loud, ostensibly for my hearing, but closer even than necessary, I thought, to the ear of the navigating officer. Again I tried to persuade them to be towed into the port of refuge so near at hand. It would have cost them only the trouble of weighing their anchor and passing me a rope; of this I assured them, but they declined even this, in sheer ignorance of a rational course.

'What is your depth of water?' I asked.

'Don't know; we lost our lead. All the chain is out. We sounded with the anchor.'

'Send your dinghy over, and I'll give you a lead.'

'We've lost our dinghy, too,' they cried.

'God is good, else you would have lost yourselves,' and 'Farewell' was all I could say.

The trifling service proffered by the *Spray* would have saved their vessel.

‘Report us,’ they cried, as I stood on—‘report us with sails blown away, and that we don’t care a dash and are not afraid.’

‘Then there is no hope for you,’ and again ‘Farewell.’

I promised I would report them, and did so at the first opportunity, and out of humane reasons I do so again. On the following day I spoke to the steamship *Sherman*, bound down the coast, and reported the yacht in distress and that it would be an act of humanity to tow her somewhere away from her exposed position on an open coast. That she did not get a tow from the steamer was from no lack of funds to pay the bill; for the owner, lately heir to a few hundred pounds, had the money with him. The proposed voyage to New Guinea was to look that island over with a view to its purchase. It was about eighteen days before I heard of the *Akbar* again, which was on 31 May, when I reached Cooktown, on the Endeavour River, where I found this news:

> 31 May, the yacht *Akbar,* from Sydney for New Guinea, three hands on board, lost at Crescent Head; the crew saved.

So it took them several days to lose the yacht, after all.

After speaking to the distressed *Akbar* and the *Sherman,* the voyage for many days was uneventful save in the pleasant incident on 16 May of a chat by signal with the people on South Solitary Island, a dreary stone heap in the ocean just off the coast of New South Wales, in latitude 30° 12′ south.

‘What vessel is that?’ they asked, as the sloop came abreast of their island. For answer I tried them with the Stars and Stripes at the peak. Down came their signals at once, and up went the British ensign instead, which they dipped heartily. I understood from this that they made out my vessel and knew all about her, for they asked no more questions. They didn’t even ask if the ‘voyage would pay’, but they threw out this friendly message, ‘Wishing you a pleasant voyage,’ which at that very moment I was having.

On May 19 the *Spray,* passing the Tweed River, was signalled from Danger Point, where those on shore seemed most anxious about the state of my health, for they asked if ‘all hands’ were well, to which I could say, ‘Yes.’

On the following day the *Spray* rounded Great Sandy Cape, and, what is a notable event in every voyage, picked up the trade winds, and these

winds followed her now for many thousands of miles, never ceasing to blow from a moderate gale to a mild summer breeze, except at rare intervals.

From the pitch of the cape was a noble light seen twenty-seven miles; passing from this to Lady Elliott Light, which stands on an island as a sentinel at the gateway of the Barrier Reef, the *Spray* was at once in the fairway leading north. Poets have sung of beaconlight and of pharos, but did ever poet behold a great light flash up before his path on a dark night in the midst of a coral sea? If so, he knew the meaning of his song.

The *Spray* had sailed for hours in suspense, evidently stemming a current. Almost mad with doubt, I grasped the helm to throw her head off shore, when blazing out of the sea was the light ahead. ‘Excalibur!’ cried ‘all hands’, and rejoiced, and sailed on. The *Spray* was now in a protected sea and smooth water, the first she had dipped her keel into since leaving Gibraltar, and a change it was from the heaving of the misnamed ‘Pacific’ Ocean.

The Pacific is perhaps, upon the whole, no more boisterous than other oceans, though I feel quite safe in saying that it is not more pacific except in name. It is often wild enough in one part or another. I once knew a writer who, after saying beautiful things about the sea, passed through a Pacific hurricane, and he became a changed man. But where, after all, would be the poetry of the sea were there no wild waves?

At last here was the *Spray* in the midst of a sea of coral. The sea itself might be called smooth indeed, but coral rocks are always rough, sharp and dangerous. I trusted now to the mercies of the Maker of all reefs, keeping a good lookout at the same time for perils on every hand.

Lo! the Barrier Reef and the waters of many colours studded all about with enchanted islands! I behold among them after all many safe harbours, else my vision is astray. On 24 May, the sloop, having made 110 miles a day from Danger Point, now entered Whitsunday Pass, and that night sailed through among the islands. When the sun rose next morning I looked back and regretted having gone by while it was dark, for the scenery far astern was varied and charming.

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* Akbar was not her registered name, which need not be told.

* The Murrumbidgee is a small river winding among the mountains of Australia, and would be the last place in which to look for a whale.

CHAPTER XV

Arrival at Port Denison, Queensland—A lecture—Reminiscences of Captain Cook—Lecturing for charity at Cooktown—A happy escape from a coral reef—Home Island, Sunday Island, Bird Island—An American pearlfisherman—Jubilee at Thursday Island—A new ensign for the *Spray*—Booby Island—Across the Indian Ocean—Christmas Island.

On the morning of the 26th Gloucester Island was close aboard, and the *Spray* anchored in the evening at Port Denison, where rests, on a hill, the sweet little town of Bowen, the future watering place and health resort of Queensland. The country all about here had a healthful appearance.

The harbour was easy of approach, spacious and safe, and afforded excellent holding ground. It was quiet in Bowen when the *Spray* arrived, and the good people with an hour to throw away on the second evening of her arrival came down to the School of Arts to talk about the voyage, it being the latest event. It was duly advertised in the two little papers, *Boomerang* and *Nully Nully*, in the one the day before the affair came off, and in the other the day after, which was all the same to the editor, and, for that matter, it was the same to me.

Besides this, circulars were distributed with a flourish, and the ‘best bellman’ in Australia was employed. But I could have keelhauled the wretch, bell and all, when he came to the door of the little hotel where my prospective audience and I were dining, and with his clattering bell and fiendish yell made noises that would awake the dead, all over the voyage of the *Spray* from ‘Boston to Bowen, the two Hubs in the cartwheels of creation’, as the *Boomerang* afterward said.

Mr Myles, magistrate, harbour-master, land commissioner, gold warden, etc., was chairman, and introduced me, for what reason I never knew, except to embarrass me with a sense of vain ostentation and embitter my life, for Heaven knows I had met every person in town the first hour

ashore. I knew them all by name now, and they all knew me. However, Mr Myles was a good talker. Indeed, I tried to induce him to go on and tell the story while I showed the pictures, but this he refused to do. I may explain that it was a talk illustrated by stereopticon. The views were good, but the lantern, a thirty-shilling affair, was wretched, and had only an oil lamp in it.

I sailed early the next morning before the papers came out, thinking it best to do so. They each appeared with a favourable column, however, of what they called a lecture, so I learned afterward, and they had a kind word for the bellman besides.

From Port Denison the sloop ran before the constant trade wind, and made no stop at all, night or day, till she reached Cooktown, on the Endeavour River, where she arrived Monday, 31 May 1897, before a furious blast of wind encountered that day fifty miles down the coast. On this parallel of latitude is the high ridge and backbone of the trade winds, which about Cooktown amount often to a hard gale.

I had been charged to navigate the route with extra care, and to feel my way over the ground. The skilled officer of the royal navy who advised me to take the Barrier Reef passage wrote me that HMS *Orlando* steamed nights as well as days through it, but that I, under sail, would jeopardise my vessel on coral reefs if I undertook to do so.

Confidentially, it would have been no easy matter finding anchorage every night. The hard work, too, of getting the sloop under way every morning was finished, I had hoped, when she cleared the Strait of Magellan. Besides that, the best of admiralty charts made it possible to keep on sailing night and day. Indeed, with a fair wind, and in the clear weather of that season, the way through the Barrier Reef channel, in all sincerity, was clearer than a highway in a busy city, and by all odds less dangerous. But to anyone contemplating the voyage I would say, beware of reefs day or night, or, remaining on the land, be wary still.

‘The *Spray* came flying into port like a bird,’ said the longshore daily papers of Cooktown the morning after she arrived, ‘and it seemed strange,’ they added, ‘that only one man could be seen on board working the craft.’ The *Spray* was doing her best, to be sure, for it was near night, and she was in haste to find a perch before dark.

Tacking inside of all the craft in port, I moored her at sunset nearly abreast the Captain Cook monument, and next morning went ashore to feast

my eyes on the very stones the great navigator had seen, for I was now on a seaman's consecrated ground. But there seemed a question in Cooktown's mind as to the exact spot where his ship, the *Endeavour,* hove down for repairs on her memorable voyage around the world. Some said it was not at all at the place where the monument now stood. A discussion of the subject was going on one morning where I happened to be, and a young lady present, turning to me as one of some authority in nautical matters, very flatteringly asked my opinion. Well, I could see no reason why Captain Cook, if he made up his mind to repair his ship inland, couldn't have dredged out a channel to the place where the monument now stood, if he had a dredging machine with him, and afterward fill it up again; for Captain Cook could do most anything, and nobody ever said that he hadn't a dredger along. The young lady seemed to lean to my way of thinking, and following up the story of the historical voyage asked if I had visited the point farther down the harbour where the great circumnavigator was murdered. This took my breath, but a bright schoolboy coming along relieved my embarrassment, for, like all boys, seeing that information was wanted, he volunteered to supply it. Said he: 'Captain Cook wasn't murdered 'ere at all, ma'am; 'e was killed in Hafrica: a lion et 'im.'

Here I was reminded of distressful days gone by. I think it was in 1866 that the old steamship *Soushay,* from Batavia for Sydney, put in at Cooktown for scurvy grass, as I always thought, and 'incidentally' to land mails. On her sicklist was my fevered self; and so I didn't see the place till I came back on the *Spray* thirtyone years later. And now I saw coming into port the physical wrecks of miners from New Guinea, destitute and dying. Many had died on the way and had been buried at sea. He would have been a hardened wretch who could look on and not try to do something for them.

The sympathy of all went out to these sufferers, but the little town was already straitened from a long run on its benevolence. I thought of the matter, of the lady's gift to me at Tasmania, which I had promised myself I would keep only as a loan, but found now, to my embarrassment, that I had invested the money. However, the good Cooktown people wished to hear a story of the sea, and how the crew of the *Spray* fared when illness got aboard of her. Accordingly the little Presbyterian church on the hill was opened for a conversation; everybody talked, and they made a roaring success of it. Judge Chester, the magistrate, was at the head of the gam, and

so it was bound to succeed. He it was who annexed the island of New Guinea to Great Britain. ‘While I was about it,’ said he, ‘I annexed the blooming lot of it.’ There was a ring in the statement pleasant to the ear of an old voyager. However, the Germans made such a row over the judge’s mainsail haul that they got a share in the venture.

Well, I was now indebted to the miners of Cooktown for the great privilege of adding a mite to a worthy cause, and to Judge Chester all the town was indebted for a general good time. The matter standing so, I sailed on 6 June 1897, heading away for the north as before.

Arrived at a very inviting anchorage about sundown, the 7th, I came to, for the night, abreast the Claremont light-ship. This was the only time throughout the passage of the Barrier Reef Channel that the *Spray* anchored, except at Port Denison and at Endeavour River. On the very night following this, however (the 8th), I regretted keenly, for an instant, that I had not anchored before dark, as I might have done easily under the lee of a coral reef. It happened in this way. The *Spray* had just passed M Reef light-ship, and left the light dipping astern, when, going at full speed, with sheets off, she hit the M Reef itself on the north end, where I expected to see a beacon.

She swung off quickly on her heel, however, and with one more bound on a swell cut across the shoal point so quickly that I hardly knew how it was done. The beacon wasn’t there; at least, I didn’t see it. I hadn’t time to look for it after she struck, and certainly it didn’t much matter then whether I saw it or not.

But this gave her a fine departure for Cape Greenville, the next point ahead. I saw the ugly boulders under the sloop’s keel as she flashed over them, and I made a mental note of it that the letter M, for which the reef was named, was the thirteenth one in our alphabet, and that thirteen, as noted years before, was still my lucky number. The natives of Cape Greenville are notoriously bad, and I was advised to give them the go-by. Accordingly, from M Reef I steered outside of the adjacent islands, to be on the safe side. Skipping along now, the *Spray* passed Home Island, off the pitch of the cape, soon after midnight, and squared away on a westerly course. A short time later she fell in with a steamer bound south, groping her way in the dark and making the night dismal with her own black smoke.

From Home Island I made for Sunday Island, and bringing that abeam, shortened sail, not wishing to make Bird Island, farther along, before daylight, the wind being still fresh and the islands being low, with dangers about them. Wednesday, 9 June 1897, at daylight, Bird Island was dead ahead, distant two and a half miles, which I considered near enough. A strong current was pressing the sloop forward. I did not shorten sail too soon in the night! The first and only Australian canoe seen on the voyage was encountered here standing from the mainland, with a rag of sail set, bound for this island.

A long, slim fish that leaped on board in the night was found on deck this morning. I had it for breakfast. The spry chap was no larger around than a herring, which it resembled in every respect, except that it was three times as long; but that was so much the better, for I am rather fond of fresh herring, anyway. A great number of fisher-birds were about this day, which was one of the pleasantest on God's earth. The *Spray,* dancing over the waves, entered Albany Pass as the sun drew low in the west over the hills of Australia.

At 7.30 p.m. the *Spray,* now through the pass, came to anchor in a cove in the mainland, near a pearl fisherman, called the *Tarawa,* which was at anchor, her captain from the deck of his vessel directing me to a berth. This done, he at once came on board to clasp hands. The *Tarawa* was a Californian, and Captain Jones, her master, was an American.

On the following morning Captain Jones brought on board two pairs of exquisite pearl shells, the most perfect ones I ever saw. They were probably the best he had, for Jones was the heart-yarn of a sailor. He assured me that if I would remain a few hours longer some friends from Somerset, nearby, would pay us all a visit, and one of the crew, sorting shells on deck, 'guessed' they would. The mate 'guessed' so, too. The friends came, as even the second mate and cook had 'guessed' they would. They were Mr Jardine, stockman, famous throughout the land, and his family. Mrs Jardine was the niece of King Malietoa, and cousin to the beautiful Faamu-Sami ('To make the sea burn'), who visited the *Spray* at Apia. Mr Jardine was himself a fine specimen of a Scotsman. With his little family about him, he was content to live in this remote place, accumulating the comforts of life.

The fact of the *Tarawa* having been built in America accounted for the crew, boy Jim and all, being such good guessers. Strangely enough, though,

Captain Jones himself, the only American aboard, was never heard to guess at all.

After a pleasant chat and goodbye to the people of the *Tarawa*, and to Mr and Mrs Jardine, I again weighed anchor and stood across for Thursday Island, now in plain view, mid-channel in Torres Strait, where I arrived shortly after noon. Here the *Spray* remained over until 24 June. Being the only American representative in port, this tarry was imperative, for on the 22nd was the Queen's diamond jubilee. The two days over were, as sailors say, for 'coming up'.

Meanwhile I spent pleasant days about the island. Mr Douglas, resident magistrate, invited me on a cruise in his steamer one day among the islands in Torres Strait. This being a scientific expedition in charge of Professor Mason Bailey, botanist, we rambled over Friday and Saturday islands, where I got a glimpse of botany. Miss Bailey, the professor's daughter, accompanied the expedition, and told me of many indigenous plants with long names.

The 22nd was the great day on Thursday Island, for then we had not only the jubilee, but a jubilee with a grand corroboree in it, Mr Douglas having brought some four hundred native warriors and their wives and children across from the mainland to give the celebration the true native touch, for when they do a thing on Thursday Island they do it with a roar. The corroboree was, at any rate, a howling success. It took place at night, and the performers, painted in fantastic colours, danced or leaped about before a blazing fire. Some were rigged and painted like birds and beasts, in which the emu and kangaroo were well represented. One fellow leaped like a frog. Some had the human skeleton painted on their bodies, while they jumped about threateningly, spear in hand, ready to strike down some imaginary enemy. The kangaroo hopped and danced with natural ease and grace, making a fine figure. All kept time to music, vocal and instrumental, the instruments (save the mark!) being bits of wood, which they beat one against the other, and saucer-like bones, held in the palm of the hands, which they knocked together, making a dull sound. It was a show at once amusing, spectacular and hideous.

The warrior Aborigines that I saw in Queensland were for the most part lithe and fairly well built, but they were stamped always with repulsive features, and their women were, if possible, still more ill favoured.

I observed that on the day of the jubilee no foreign flag was waving in the public grounds except the Stars and Stripes, which along with the Union Jack guarded the gateway, and floated in many places, from the tiniest to the standard size. Speaking to Mr Douglas, I ventured a remark on this compliment to my country. ‘Oh,’ said he, ‘this is a family affair, and we do not consider the Stars and Stripes a foreign flag.’ The *Spray* of course flew her best bunting, and hoisted the Jack as well as her own noble flag as high as she could.

On 24 June the *Spray,* well fitted in every way, sailed for the long voyage ahead, down the Indian Ocean. Mr Douglas gave her a flag as she was leaving his island. The *Spray* had now passed nearly all the dangers of the Coral Sea and Torres Strait, which, indeed, were not a few; and all ahead from this point was plain sailing and a straight course. The trade wind was still blowing fresh, and could be safely counted on now down to the coast of Madagascar, if not beyond that, for it was still early in the season.

I had no wish to arrive off the Cape of Good Hope before midsummer, and it was now early winter. I had been off that cape once in July, which was, of course, midwinter there. The stout ship I then commanded encountered only fierce hurricanes, and she bore them ill. I wished for no winter gales now. It was not that I feared them more, being in the *Spray* instead of a large ship, but that I preferred fine weather in any case. It is true that one may encounter heavy gales off the Cape of Good Hope at any season of the year, but in the summer they are less frequent and do not continue so long. And so with time enough before me to admit of a run ashore on the islands *en route,* I shaped the course now for Keeling Cocos, atoll islands, distant 2700 miles. Taking a departure from Booby Island, which the sloop passed early in the day, I decided to sight Timor on the way, an island of high mountains.

Booby Island I had seen before, but only once, however, and that was when in the steamship *Soushay,* on which I was ‘hove-down’ in a fever. When she steamed along this way I was well enough to crawl on deck to look at Booby Island. Had I died for it, I would have seen that island. In those days passing ships landed stores in a cave on the island for shipwrecked and distressed wayfarers. Captain Airy of the *Soushay,* a good man, sent a boat to the cave with his contribution to the general store. The

stores were landed in safety, and the boat, returning, brought back from the improvised post office there a dozen or more letters, most of them left by whalemen, with the request that the first homeward-bound ship would carry them along and see to their mailing, which had been the custom of this strange postal service for many years. Some of the letters brought back by our boat were directed to New Bedford, and some to Fairhaven, Massachusetts.

There is a light today on Booby Island, and regular packet communication with the rest of the world, and the beautiful uncertainty of the fate of letters left there is a thing of the past. I made no call at the little island, but standing close in, exchanged signals with the keeper of the light. Sailing on, the sloop was at once in the Arafura Sea, where for days she sailed in water milkywhite and green and purple. It was my good fortune to enter the sea on the last quarter of the moon, the advantage being that in the dark nights I witnessed the phosphorescent light effect at night in its greatest splendour. The sea, where the sloop disturbed it, seemed all ablaze, so that by its light I could see the smallest articles on deck, and her wake was a path of fire.

On 25 June the sloop was already clear of all the shoals and dangers, and was sailing on a smooth sea as steadily as before, but with speed somewhat slackened. I got out the flying jib made at Juan Fernandez, and set it as a spinnaker from the stoutest bamboo that Mrs Stevenson had given me at Samoa. The spinnaker pulled like a sodger, and the bamboo holding its own, the *Spray* mended her pace.

Several pigeons flying across today from Australia towards the islands bent their course over the *Spray.* Smaller birds were seen flying in the opposite direction. In the part of the Arafura that I came to first, where it was shallow, sea snakes writhed about on the surface and tumbled over and over in the waves. As the sloop sailed farther on, where the sea became deep, they disappeared. In the ocean, where the water is blue, not one was ever seen.

In the days of serene weather there was not much to do but to read and take rest on the *Spray,* to make up as much as possible for the rough time of Cape Horn, which was not yet forgotten, and to forestall the Cape of Good Hope by a store of ease. My sea journal was now much the same from day to day—something like this of 26 and 27 June, for example:

26 June, in the morning, it is a bit squally; later in the day blowing a steady breeze.

On the log at noon is.....	130 miles
Subtract correction for slip.....	10"
	120"
Add for current.....	10"
	130"

Latitude by observation at noon, 10° 23′ S. Longitude as per mark on the chart.

There wasn't much brainwork in that log, I'm sure. June 27th makes a better showing, when all is told:

First of all, today, was a flying fish on deck; fried it in butter.
133 miles on the log.
For slip, off, and for current, on, as per guess, about equal—let it go at that.
Latitude by observation at noon, 10° 25′ S.

For several days now the *Spray* sailed west on the parallel of 10° 25′ S., as true as a hair. If she deviated at all from that, through the day or night—and this may have happened—she was back, strangely enough, at noon, at the same latitude. But the greatest science was in reckoning the longitude. My tin clock and only timepiece had by this time lost its minute hand, but after I boiled her she told the hours, and that was near enough on a long stretch.

On 2 July the great island of Timor was in view away to the nor'ard. On the following day I saw Dana Island, not far off, and a breeze came up from the land at night, fragrant of the spices or what not of the coast.

On the 11th, with all sail set and with the spinnaker still abroad, Christmas Island, about noon, came into view one point on the starboard bow. Before night it was abeam and distant two and a half miles. The surface of the island appeared evenly rounded from the sea to a considerable height in the centre. In outline it was as smooth as a fish, and a long ocean swell, rolling up, broke against the sides, where it lay like a

monster asleep, motionless on the sea. It seemed to have the proportions of a whale, and as the sloop sailed along its side to the part where the head would be, there was a nostril, even, which was a blowhole through a ledge of rock where every wave that dashed threw up a shaft of water, lifelike and real.

It had been a long time since I last saw this island; but I remember my temporary admiration for the captain of the ship I was then in, the *Tanjore*, when he sang out one morning from the quarterdeck, well aft, ‘Go aloft there, one of ye, with a pair of eyes, and see Christmas Island.’ Sure enough, there the island was in sight from the royal-yard. Captain M—— had thus made a great hit, and he never got over it. The chief mate, terror of us ordinaries in the ship, walking never to windward of the captain, now took himself very humbly to leeward altogether. When we arrived at Hong Kong there was a letter in the ship’s mail for me. I was in the boat with the captain some hours while he had it. But do you suppose he could hand a letter to a seaman? No, indeed; not even to an ordinary seaman. When we got to the ship he gave it to the first mate; the first mate gave it to the second mate, and he laid it, michingly, on the capstan-head, where I could get it!

CHAPTER XVI

A call for careful navigation—Three hours' steering in twenty-three days—Arrival at the Keeling Cocos Islands—A curious chapter of social history—A welcome from the children of the islands—Cleaning and painting the *Spray* on the beach—A Mohammedan blessing for a pot of jam—Keeling as a paradise—A risky adventure in a small boat—Away to Rodriguez—Taken for Antichrist—The governor calms the fears of the people—A lecture—A convent in the hills.

To the Keeling Cocos Islands was now only 550 miles; but even in this short run it was necessary to be extremely careful in keeping a true course else I would miss the atoll.

On the 12th, some hundred miles southwest of Christmas Island, I saw anti-trade clouds flying up from the southwest very high over the regular winds, which weakened now for a few days, while a swell heavier than usual set in also from the southwest. A winter gale was going on in the direction of the Cape of Good Hope. Accordingly, I steered higher to windward, allowing twenty miles a day while this went on, for change of current; and it was not too much, for on that course I made the Keeling Islands right ahead.

The first unmistakable sign of the land was a visit one morning from a white tern that fluttered very knowingly about the vessel, and then took itself off westward with a businesslike air in its wing. The tern is called by the islanders the 'pilot of Keeling Cocos'. Farther on I came among a great number of birds fishing, and fighting over whatever they caught. My reckoning was up, and springing aloft, I saw from halfway up the mast coconut trees standing out of the water ahead. I expected to see this; still, it thrilled me as an electric shock might have done. I slid down the mast, trembling under the strangest sensations; and not able to resist the impulse,

I sat on deck and gave way to my emotions. To folks in a parlour on shore this may seem weak indeed, but I am telling the story of a voyage alone.

I didn't touch the helm, for with the current and heave of the sea the sloop found herself at the end of the run absolutely in the fairway of the channel. You couldn't have beaten it in the navy! Then I trimmed her sails by the wind, took the helm, and flogged her up the couple of miles or so abreast the harbour landing, where I cast anchor at 3.30 p.m., 17 July 1897, twenty-three days from Thursday Island. The distance run was 2700 miles as the crow flies. This would have been a fair Atlantic voyage. It was a delightful sail!

During those twenty-three days I had not spent altogether more than three hours at the helm, including the time occupied in beating into Keeling harbour. I just lashed the helm and let her go; whether the wind was abeam or dead aft, it was all the same: she always sailed on her course. No part of the voyage up to this point, taking it by and large, had been so finished as this.*

The Keeling Cocos Islands, according to Admiral Fitzroy, RN, lie between the latitudes of 11° 50′ and 12° 12′ S., and the longitudes of 96° 51′ and 96° 58′ E. They were discovered in 1608-9 by Captain William Keeling, then in the service of the East India Company. The southern group consists of seven or eight islands and islets on the atoll, which is the skeleton of what some day, according to the history of coral reefs, will be a continuous island. North Keeling has no harbour, is seldom visited, and is of no importance. The South Keelings are a strange little world, with a romantic history all their own. They have been visited occasionally by the floating spar of some hurricane-swept ship, or by a tree that has drifted all the way from Australia, or by an ill-starred ship cast away, and finally by man. Even a rock once drifted to Keeling, held fast among the roots of a tree.

After the discovery of the islands by Captain Keeling, their first notable visitor was Captain John Clunis-Ross, who in 1814 touched in the ship *Borneo* on a voyage to India. Captain Ross returned two years later with his wife and family and his mother-in-law, Mrs Dymoke, and eight sailor-artisans, to take possession of the islands, but found there already one Alexander Hare, who meanwhile had marked the little atoll as a sort of Eden for a *seraglio* of Malay women which he moved over from the coast

of Africa. It was Ross's own brother, oddly enough, who freighted Hare and his crowd of women to the islands, not knowing of Captain John's plans to occupy the little world. And so Hare was there with his outfit, as if he had come to stay.

On his previous visit, however, Ross had nailed the English Jack to a mast on Horsburg Island, one of the group. After two years shreds of it still fluttered in the wind, and his sailors, nothing loath, began at once the invasion of the new kingdom to take possession of it, women and all. The force of forty women, with only one man to command them, was not equal to driving eight sturdy sailors back into the sea.*

From this time on Hare had a hard time of it. He and Ross did not get on well as neighbours. The islands were too small and too near for characters so widely different. Hare had 'oceans of money', and might have lived well in London; but he had been governor of a wild colony in Borneo, and could not confine himself to the tame life that prosy civilisation affords. And so he hung on to the atoll with his forty women, retreating little by little before Ross and his sturdy crew, till at last he found himself and his harem on the little island known to this day as Prison Island, where, like Bluebeard, he confined his wives in a castle. The channel between the islands was narrow, the water was not deep, and the eight Scotch sailors wore long boots. Hare was now dismayed. He tried to compromise with rum and other luxuries, but these things only made matters worse.

On the day following the first St Andrew's celebration on the island, Hare, consumed with rage, and no longer on speaking terms with the captain, dashed off a note to him, saying: 'Dear Ross: I thought when I sent rum and roast pig to your sailors that they would stay away from my flower garden.' In reply to which the captain, burning with indignation, shouted from the centre of the island, where he stood, 'Ahoy, there, on Prison Island! You Hare, don't you know that rum and roast pig are not a sailor's heaven?' Hare said afterward that one might have heard the captain's roar across to Java.

The lawless establishment was soon broken up by the women deserting Prison Island and putting them-selves under Ross's protection. Hare then went to Batavia, where he met his death.

My first impression upon landing was that the crime of infanticide had not reached the islands of Keeling Cocos. 'The children have all come to

welcome you,' explained Mr Ross, as they mustered at the jetty by hundreds, of all ages and sizes. The people of this country were all rather shy, but, young or old, they never passed one or saw one passing their door without a salutation. In their musical voices they would say, 'Are you walking?' ('*Jalan, jalan?*') 'Will you come along?' one would answer.

For a long time after I arrived the children regarded the 'one-man ship' with suspicion and fear. A native man had been blown away to sea many years before, and they hinted to one another that he might have been changed from black to white, and returned in the sloop. For some time every movement I made was closely watched. They were particularly interested in what I ate. One day, after I had been 'boot-topping' the sloop with a composition of coal tar and other stuff, and while I was taking my dinner, with the luxury of blackberry jam, I heard a commotion, and then a yell and a stampede, as the children ran away yelling: 'The captain is eating coal tar! The captain is eating coal tar!' But they soon found out that this same 'coal tar' was very good to eat, and that I had brought a quantity of it. One day when I was spreading a sea-biscuit thick with it for a wide-awake youngster, I heard them whisper, '*Chutchut*!' meaning that a shark had bitten my hand, which they observed was lame. Thenceforth they regarded me as a hero, and I had not fingers enough for the little bright-eyed tots that wanted to cling to them and follow me about. Before this, when I held out my hand and said, 'Come!' they would shy off for the nearest house, and say, '*Dingin*' ('It's cold'), or '*Ujan*' ('It's going to rain'). But it was now accepted that I was not the returned spirit of the lost black, and I had plenty of friends about the island, rain or shine.

One day after this, when I tried to haul the sloop and found her fast in the sand, the children all clapped their hands and cried that a *kpeting* (crab) was holding her by the keel; and little Ophelia, ten or twelve years of age, wrote in the *Spray*'s logbook:

> A hundred men with might and main On the windlass hove, yeo ho!
> The cable only came in twain; The ship she would not go; For, child,
> to tell the strangest thing, The keel was held by a great *kpeting.*

This being so or not, it was decided that the Mohammedan priest, Sama the Emim, for a pot of jam, should ask Mohammed to bless the

voyage and make the crab let go the sloop's keel, which it did, if it had hold, and she floated on the very next tide.

On 22 July arrived HMS *Iphegenia,* with Mr Justice Andrew J. Leach and court officers on board, on a circuit of inspection among the Straits Settlements, of which Keeling Cocos was a dependency, to hear complaints and try cases by law, if any there were to try. They found the *Spray* hauled ashore and tied to a coconut tree. But at the Keeling Islands there had not been a grievance to complain of since the day that Hare migrated, for the Rosses have always treated the islanders as their own family.

If there is a paradise on this earth it is Keeling. There was not a case for a lawyer, but something had to be done, for here were two ships in port, a great man-of-war and the *Spray.* Instead of a lawsuit a dance was got up, and all the officers who could leave their ship came ashore. Everybody on the island came, old and young, and the governor's great hall was filled with people. All that could get on their feet danced, while the babies lay in heaps in the corners of the room, content to look on. My little friend Ophelia danced with the judge. For music two fiddles screeched over and over again the good old tune, 'We Won't Go Home Till Morning'. And we did not.

The women at the Keelings do not do all the drudgery, as in many places visited on the voyage. It would cheer the heart of a Fuegian woman to see the Keeling lord of creation up a coconut tree. Besides cleverly climbing the trees, the men of Keeling build exquisitely modelled canoes. By far the best workmanship in boat building I saw on the voyage was here. Many finished mechanics dwelt under the palms at Keeling, and the hum of the band-saw and the ring of the anvil were heard from morning till night. The first Scotch settlers left there the strength of northern blood and the inheritance of steady habits. No benevolent society has ever done so much for any islanders as the noble Captain Ross, and his sons, who have followed his example of industry and thrift.

Admiral Fitzroy of the *Beagle,* who visited here, where many things are reversed, spoke of 'these singular though small islands, where crabs eat coconuts, fish eat coral, dogs catch fish, men ride on turtles, and shells are dangerous man-traps', adding that the greater part of the sea-fowl roost on branches, and many rats make their nests in the tops of palm trees.

My vessel being refitted, I decided to load her with the famous mammoth tridacna shell of Keeling, found in the bayou nearby. And right here, within sight of the village, I came near losing ‘the crew of the *Spray*’—not from putting my foot in a man-trap shell, however, but from carelessly neglecting to look after the details of a trip across the harbour in a boat.

I had sailed over oceans; I have since completed a course over them all, and sailed round the whole world without so nearly meeting a fatality as on that trip across a lagoon, where I trusted all to someone else, and he, weak mortal that he was, perhaps trusted all to me. However that may be, I found myself with a thoughtless African negro in a rickety bateau that was fitted with a rotten sail, and this blew away in midchannel in a squall, that sent us drifting helplessly to sea, where we should have been incontinently lost. With the whole ocean before us to leeward, I was dismayed to see, while we drifted, that there was not a paddle or an oar in the boat! There was an anchor, to be sure, but not enough rope to tie a cat, and we were already in deep water. By great good fortune, however, there was a pole. Plying this as a paddle with the utmost energy, and by the merest accidental flaw in the wind to favour us, the trap of a boat was worked into shoalwater, where we could touch bottom and push her ashore. With Africa, the nearest coast to leeward, 3000 miles away, with not so much as a drop of water in the boat, and a lean and hungry negro—well, cast the lot as one might, the crew of the *Spray* in a little while would have been hard to find. It is needless to say that I took no more such chances. The tridacna were afterward procured in a safe boat, thirty of them taking the place of three tons of cement ballast, which I threw overboard to make room and give buoyancy.

On 22 August, the *kpeting,* or whatever else it was that held the sloop in the islands, let go its hold, and she swung out to sea under all sail, heading again for home. Mounting one or two heavy rollers on the fringe of the atoll, she cleared the flashing reefs. Long before dark Keeling Cocos, with its thousand souls, as sinless in their lives as perhaps it is possible for frail mortals to be, was left out of sight, astern. Out of sight, I say, except in my strongest affection.

The sea was rugged, and the *Spray* washed heavily when hauled on the wind, which course I took for the island of Rodriguez, and which brought

the sea abeam. The true course for the island was west by south, one quarter south, and the distance was 1900 miles; but I steered considerably to the windward of that to allow for the heave of the sea and other leeward effects. My sloop on this course ran under reefed sails for days together. I naturally tired of the neverending motion of the sea, and above all, of the wetting I got whenever I showed myself on deck. Under these heavy weather conditions the *Spray* seemed to lag behind on her course; at least, I attributed to these conditions a discrepancy in the log, which by the fifteenth day out from Keeling amounted to 150 miles between the rotator and the mental calculations I had kept of what she should have gone, and so I kept an eye lifting for land.

I could see about sundown this day a bunch of clouds that stood in one spot, right ahead, while the other clouds floated on; this was a sign of something. By midnight, as the sloop sailed on, a black object appeared where I had seen the resting clouds. It was still a long way off, but there could be no mistaking this: it was the high island of Rodriguez. I hauled in the patent log, which I was now towing more from habit than from necessity, for I had learned the *Spray* and her ways long before this. If one thing was clearer than another in her voyage, it was that she could be trusted to come out right and in safety, though at the same time I always stood ready to give her the benefit of even the least doubt. The officers who are oversure, and ‘know it all like a book’, are the ones, I have observed, who wreck the most ships and lose the most lives. The cause of the discrepancy in the log was one often met with, namely, coming in contact with some large fish; two out of the four blades of the rotator were crushed or bent, the work probably of a shark. Being sure of the sloop’s position, I lay down to rest and to think, and I felt better for it.

By daylight the island was abeam, about three miles away. It wore a hard, weatherbeaten appearance there, all alone, far out in the Indian Ocean, like land adrift. The windward side was uninviting, but there was a good port to leeward, and I hauled in now close on the wind for that. A pilot came out to take me into the inner harbour, which was reached through a narrow channel among coral reefs.

It was a curious thing that at all of the islands some reality was insisted on as unreal, while improbabilities were clothed as hard facts; and so it happened here that the good abbé, a few days before, had been telling his

people about the coming of Antichrist, and when they saw the *Spray* sail into the harbour, all feather-white before a gale of wind, and run all standing upon the beach, and with only one man aboard, they cried, ‘May the Lord help us, it is he, and he has come in a boat!’ which I say would have been the most improbable way of his coming. Nevertheless, the news went flying through the place.

The governor of the island, Mr Roberts, came down immediately to see what it was all about, for the little town was in a great commotion. One elderly woman, when she heard of my advent, made for her house and locked herself in. When she heard that I was actually coming up the street she barricaded her doors, and did not come out while I was on the island, a period of eight days. Governor Roberts and his family did not share the fears of their people, but came on board at the jetty, where the sloop was berthed, and their example induced others to come also. The governor’s young boys took charge of the *Spray*’s dinghy at once, and my visit cost his Excellency, besides great hospitality to me, the building of a boat for them like the one belonging to the *Spray.*

My first day at this Land of Promise was to me like a fairytale. For many days I had studied the charts and counted the time of my arrival at this spot, as one might his entrance to the Islands of the Blessed, looking upon it as the terminus of the last long run, made irksome by the want of many things with which, from this time on, I could keep well supplied. And behold, here was the sloop, arrived, and made securely fast to a pier in Rodriguez. On the first evening ashore, in the land of napkins and cut glass, I saw before me still the ghosts of hempen towels and of mugs with handles knocked off. Instead of tossing on the sea, however, as I might have been, here was I in a bright hall, surrounded by sparkling wit, and dining with the governor of the island! ‘Aladdin,’ I cried, ‘where is your lamp? My fisherman’s lantern, which I got at Gloucester, has shown me better things than your smoky old burner ever revealed.’

The second day in port was spent in receiving visitors. Mrs Roberts and her children came first to ‘shake hands’, they said, ‘with the *Spray’*. No one was now afraid to come on board except the poor old woman, who still maintained that the *Spray* had Antichrist in the hold, if, indeed, he had not already gone ashore. The governor entertained that evening, and kindly invited the ‘destroyer of the world’ to speak for himself. This he did,

elaborating most effusively on the dangers of the sea (which, after the manner of many of our frailest mortals, he would have had smooth had he made it); also by contrivances of light and darkness he exhibited on the wall pictures of the places and countries visited on the voyage (nothing like the countries, however, that he would have made), and of the people seen, savage and other, frequently groaning, ‘Wicked world! Wicked world!’ When this was finished his Excellency the governor, speaking words of thankfulness, distributed pieces of gold.

On the following day, I accompanied his Excellency and family on a visit to San Gabriel, which was up the country among the hills. The good abbé of San Gabriel entertained us all royally at the convent, and we remained his guests until the following day. As I was leaving his place, the abbé said, ‘Captain, I embrace you, and of whatever religion you may be, my wish is that you succeed in making your voyage, and that our Saviour the Christ be always with you!’ To this good man’s words I could only say, ‘My dear abbé, had all religionists been so liberal there would have been less bloodshed in the world.’

At Rodriguez one may now find every convenience for filling pure and wholesome water in any quantity, Governor Roberts having built a reservoir in the hills, above the village, and laid pipes to the jetty, where, at the time of my visit, there were five and a half feet at high tide. In former years well-water was used, and more or less sickness occurred from it. Beef may be had in any quantity on the island, and at a moderate price. Sweet potatoes were plentiful and cheap; the large sack of them that I bought there for about four shillings kept unusually well. I simply stored them in the sloop’s dry hold. Of fruits, pomegranates were most plentiful; for two shillings I obtained a large sack of them, as many as a donkey could pack from the orchard, which, by the way, was planted by nature herself.

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* Mr Andrew J. Leach, reporting, 21 July 1897, through Governor Kynnersley of Singapore, to Joseph Chamberlain, colonial secretary, said concerning the *Iphegenia*’s visit to the atoll: ‘As we left the ocean depths of deepest blue and entered the coral circle, the contrast was most remarkable. The brilliant colours of the waters, transparent to a depth of over thirty feet, now purple, now of the bluest sky-blue, and now green, with the white crests of the waves flashing under a brilliant sun, the encircling…palm-clad islands, the gaps between which were to the south undiscernible, the white sand shores and the whiter gaps where breakers appeared, and, lastly, the lagoon itself, seven or eight miles across from north to south, and five to six from east to west, presented a sight never to be

forgotten. After some little delay, Mr Sidney Ross, the eldest son of Mr George Ross, came off to meet us, and soon after, accompanied by the doctor and another officer, we went ashore. On reaching the landing stage, we found, hauled up for cleaning, etc., the *Spray* of Boston, a yawl of 12.70 tons gross, the property of Captain Joshua Slocum. He arrived at the island on 17 July, twenty-three days out from Thursday Island. This extraordinary solitary traveller left Boston some two years ago single-handed, crossed to Gibraltar, sailed down to Cape Horn, passed through the Strait of Magellan to the Society Islands, thence to Australia, and through the Torres Strait to Thursday Island.'

* In the accounts given in Findlay's *Sailing Directory* of some of the events there is a chronological discrepancy. I follow the accounts gathered from the old captain's grandsons and from records on the spot.

CHAPTER XVII

A clean bill of health at Mauritius—Sailing the voyage over again in the opera house—A newly discovered plant named in honour of the *Spray*'s skipper—A party of young ladies out for a sail—A bivouac on deck—A warm reception at Durban—A friendly cross-examination by Henry M. Stanley—Three wise Boers seek proof of the flatness of the earth—Leaving South Africa.

On 16 September, after eight restful days at Rodriguez, the mid-ocean land of plenty, I set sail, and on the 19th arrived at Mauritius, anchoring at quarantine about noon. The sloop was towed in later on the same day by the doctor's launch, after he was satisfied that I had mustered all the crew for inspection. Of this he seemed in doubt until he examined the papers, which called for a crew of one all told from port to port, throughout the voyage. Then finding that I had been well enough to come thus far alone, he gave me *pratique* without further ado. There was still another official visit for the *Spray* to pass farther in the harbour. The governor of Rodriguez, who had most kindly given me, besides a regular mail, private letters of introduction to friends, told me I should meet, first of all, Mr Jenkins of the postal service, a good man.

'How do you do, Mr Jenkins?' cried I, as his boat swung alongside.

'You don't know me,' he said.

'Why not?' I replied.

'From where is the sloop?'

'From around the world,' I again replied, very solemnly.

'And alone?'

'Yes; why not?'

'And you know me?'

'Three thousand years ago,' cried I, 'when you and I had a warmer job than we have now' (even this was hot). 'You were then Jenkinson, but if

you have changed your name I don't blame you for that.'

Mr Jenkins, forbearing soul, entered into the spirit of the jest, which served the *Spray* a good turn, for on the strength of this tale it got out that if anyone should go on board after dark the devil would get him at once. And so I could leave the *Spray* without the fear of her being robbed at night. The cabin, to be sure, was broken into, but it was done in daylight, and the thieves got no more than a box of smoked herrings before 'Tom' Ledson, one of the port officials, caught them red-handed, as it were, and sent them to jail. This was discouraging to pilferers, for they feared Ledson more than they feared Satan himself. Even Mamode Hajee Ayoob, who was the day-watchman on board—till an empty box fell over in the cabin and frightened him out of his wits—could not be hired to watch nights, or even till the sun went down. 'Sahib,' he cried, 'there is no need of it,' and what he said was perfectly true.

At Mauritius, where I drew a long breath, the *Spray* rested her wings, it being the season of fine weather. The hardships of the voyage, if there had been any, were now computed by officers of experience as nine tenths finished, and yet somehow I could not forget that the United States was still a long way off.

The kind people of Mauritius, to make me richer and happier, rigged up the opera house, which they had named the 'Ship *Pantai*'.* All decks and no bottom was this ship, but she was as stiff as a church. They gave me free use of it while I talked over the *Spray*'s adventures. His Honour the mayor introduced me to his Excellency the governor from the poop deck of the *Pantai*. In this way I was also introduced again to our good consul, General John P. Campbell, who had already introduced me to his Excellency. I was becoming well acquainted, and was in for it now to sail the voyage over again. How I got through the story I hardly know. It was a hot night, and I could have choked the tailor who made the coat I wore for this occasion. The kind governor saw that I had done my part trying to rig like a man ashore, and he invited me to Government House at Reduit, where I found myself among friends.

It was winter still off stormy Cape of Good Hope, but the storms might whistle there. I determined to see it out in milder Mauritius, visiting Rose Hill, Curipepe, and other places on the island. I spent a day with the elder Mr Roberts, father of Governor Roberts of Rodriguez, and with his friends

the Very Reverend Fathers O'Loughlin and McCarthy. Returning to the *Spray* by way of the great flower conservatory near Moka, the proprietor, having only that morning discovered a new and hardy plant, to my great honour named it 'Slocum', which he said Latinised it at once, saving him some trouble on the twist of a word; and the good botanist seemed pleased that I had come. How different things are in different countries! In Boston, Massachusetts, at that time, a gentleman, so I was told, paid thirty thousand dollars to have a flower named after his wife, and it was not a big flower either, while 'Slocum', which came without the asking, was bigger than a mangel-wurzel!

I was royally entertained at Moka, as well as at Reduit and other places —once by seven young ladies, to whom I spoke of my inability to return their hospitality except in my own poor way of taking them on a sail in the sloop. 'The very thing! The very thing!' they all cried. 'Then please name the time,' I said, as meek as Moses. 'Tomorrow!' they all cried. 'And, aunty, we may go, mayn't we, and we'll be real good for a whole week afterward, aunty! Say yes, aunty dear!' All this after saying 'Tomorrow'; for girls in Mauritius are, after all, the same as our girls in America; and their dear aunt said 'Me, too' about the same as any really good aunt might say in my own country.

I was then in a quandary, it having recurred to me that on the very 'tomorrow' I was to dine with the harbour-master, Captain Wilson. However, I said to myself, 'The *Spray* will run out quickly into rough seas; these young ladies will have *mal de mer* and a good time, and I'll get in early enough to be at the dinner, after all.' But not a bit of it.

We sailed almost out of sight of Mauritius, and they just stood up and laughed at seas tumbling aboard, while I was at the helm making the worst weather of it I could, and spinning yarns to the aunt about sea serpents and whales. But she, dear lady, when I had finished with stories of monsters, only hinted at a basket of provisions they had brought along, enough to last a week, for I had told them about my wretched steward.

The more the *Spray* tried to make these young ladies seasick, the more they all clapped their hands and said, 'How lovely it is!' and 'How beautifully she skims over the sea!' and 'How beautiful our island appears from the distance!' and they still cried, 'Go on!' We were fifteen miles or more at sea before they ceased the eager cry, 'Go on!' Then the sloop

swung round, I still hoping to be back to Port Louis in time to keep my appointment. The *Spray* reached the island quickly, and flew along the coast fast enough; but I made a mistake in steering along the coast on the way home, for as we came abreast of Tombo Bay it enchanted my crew. ‘Oh, let’s anchor here!’ they cried. To this no sailor in the world would have said nay. The sloop came to anchor, ten minutes later, as they wished, and a young man on the cliff abreast, waving his hat, cried, ‘*Vive la Spray!*’ My passengers said, ‘Aunty, mayn’t we have a swim in the surf along the shore?’ Just then the harbour-master’s launch hove in sight, coming out to meet us; but it was too late to get the sloop into Port Louis that night. The launch was in time, however, to land my fair crew for a swim; but they were determined not to desert the ship. Meanwhile I prepared a roof for the night on deck with the sails, and a Bengali manservant arranged the evening meal. That night the *Spray* rode in Tombo Bay with her precious freight. Next morning bright and early, even before the stars were gone, I awoke to hear praying on deck.

The port officers’ launch reappeared later in the morning, this time with Captain Wilson himself on board, to try his luck in getting the *Spray* into port, for he had heard of our predicament. It was worth something to hear a friend tell afterward how earnestly the good harbour-master of Mauritius said, ‘I’ll find the *Spray* and I’ll get her into port.’ A merry crew he discovered on her. They could hoist sails like old tars, and could trim them, too. They could tell all about the ship’s ‘hoods’, and one should have seen them clap a bonnet on the jib. Like the deepest of deep-water sailors, they could heave the lead, and—as I hope to see Mauritius again!—any of them could have put the sloop in stays. No ship ever had a fairer crew.

The voyage was the event of Port Louis; such a thing as young ladies sailing about the harbour, even, was almost unheard of before.

While at Mauritius the *Spray* was tendered the use of the military dock free of charge, and was thoroughly refitted by the port authorities. My sincere gratitude is also due other friends for many things needful for the voyage put on board, including bags of sugar from some of the famous old plantations.

The favourable season now set in, and thus well equipped, on 26 October, the *Spray* put to sea. As I sailed before a light wind the island receded slowly, and on the following day I could still see the Puce

Mountain near Moka. The *Spray* arrived next day off Galets, Réunion, and a pilot came out and spoke to her. I handed him a Mauritius paper and continued on my voyage; for rollers were running heavily at the time, and it was not practicable to make a landing. From Réunion I shaped a course direct for Cape St Mary, Madagascar.

The sloop was now drawing near the limits of the trade wind, and the strong breeze that had carried her with free sheets the many thousands of miles from Sandy Cape, Australia, fell lighter each day until 30 October, when it was altogether calm, and a motionless sea held her in a hushed world. I furled the sails at evening, sat down on deck, and enjoyed the vast stillness of the night.

On 31 October a light east-northeast breeze sprang up, and the sloop passed Cape St Mary about noon. On the 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th of November, in the Mozambique Channel, she experienced a hard gale of wind from the southwest. Here the *Spray* suffered as much as she did anywhere, except off Cape Horn. The thunder and lightning preceding this gale were very heavy. From this point until the sloop arrived off the coast of Africa, she encountered a succession of gales of wind, which drove her about in many directions, but on 17 November she arrived at Port Natal.

This delightful place is the commercial centre of the ‘Garden Colony’, Durban itself, the city, being the continuation of a garden. The signalman from the bluff station reported the *Spray* fifteen miles off. The wind was freshening, and when she was within eight miles he said: ‘The *Spray* is shortening sail; the mainsail was reefed and set in ten minutes. One man is doing all the work.’

This item of news was printed three minutes later in a Durban morning journal, which was handed to me when I arrived in port. I could not verify the time it had taken to reef the sail, for, as I have already said, the minute-hand of my timepiece was gone. I only knew that I reefed as quickly as I could.

The same paper, commenting on the voyage, said: ‘Judging from the stormy weather which has prevailed off this coast during the past few weeks, the *Spray* must have had a very stormy voyage from Mauritius to Natal.’ Doubtless the weather would have been called stormy by sailors in any ship, but it caused the *Spray* no more inconvenience than the delay natural to head winds generally.

The question of how I sailed the sloop alone, often asked, is best answered, perhaps, by a Durban newspaper. I would shrink from repeating the editor's words but for the reason that undue estimates have been made of the amount of skill and energy required to sail a sloop of even the *Spray*'s small tonnage. I heard a man who called himself a sailor say that 'it would require three men to do what it was claimed' that I did alone, and what I found perfectly easy to do over and over again; and I have heard that others made similar nonsensical remarks, adding that I would work myself to death. But here is what the Durban paper said:

> As briefly noted yesterday, the *Spray,* with a crew of one man, arrived at this port yesterday afternoon on her cruise round the world. The *Spray* made quite an auspicious entrance to Natal. Her commander sailed his craft right up the channel past the main wharf, and dropped his anchor near the old *Forerunner* in the creek, before anyone had a chance to get on board. The *Spray* was naturally an object of great curiosity to the Point people, and her arrival was witnessed by a large crowd. The skilful manner in which Captain Slocum steered his craft about the vessels which were occupying the waterway was a treat to witness.

The *Spray* was not sailing in among greenhorns when she came to Natal. When she arrived off the port the pilot-ship, a fine, able steam tug, came out to meet her, and led the way in across the bar, for it was blowing a smart gale and was too rough for the sloop to be towed with safety. The trick of going in I learned by watching the steamer; it was simply to keep on the windward side of the channel and take the combers end on.

I found that Durban supported two yacht clubs, both of them full of enterprise. I met all the members of both clubs, and sailed in the crack yacht *Florence* of the Royal Natal, with Captain Spradbrow and the Right Honourable Harry Escombe, premier of the colony. The yacht's centreboard ploughed furrows through the mudbanks, which, according to Mr Escombe, Spradbrow afterward planted with potatoes. The *Florence,* however, won races while she tilled the skipper's land. After our sail on the *Florence* Mr Escombe offered to sail the *Spray* round the Cape of Good Hope for me, and hinted at his famous cribbage board to while away the hours.

Spradbrow, in retort, warned me of it. Said he, ‘You would be played out of the sloop before you could round the cape.’ By others it was not thought probable that the premier of Natal would play cribbage off the Cape of Good Hope to win even the *Spray.*

It was a matter of no small pride to me in South Africa to find that American humour was never at a discount, and one of the best American stories I ever heard was told by the premier. At Hotel Royal one day, dining with Colonel Saunderson, MP, his son, and Lieutenant Tipping, I met Mr Stanley. The great explorer was just from Pretoria, and had already as good as flayed President Krüger with his trenchant pen. But that did not signify, for everybody has a whack at Oom Paul, and no one in the world seems to stand the joke better than he, not even the sultan of Turkey himself. The colonel introduced me to the explorer, and I hauled close to the wind, to go slow, for Mr Stanley was a nautical man once himself—on the Nyanza, I think—and of course my desire was to appear in the best light before a man of his experience.[†] He looked me over carefully, and said, ‘What an example of patience!’

‘Patience is all that is required,’ I ventured to reply. He then asked if my vessel had watertight compartments. I explained that she was all watertight and all compartment. ‘What if she should strike a rock?’ he asked.

‘Compartments would not save her if she should hit the rocks lying along her course,’ said I; adding, ‘she must be kept away from the rocks.’

After a considerable pause Mr Stanley asked, ‘What if a swordfish should pierce her hull with its sword?’ Of course I had thought of that as one of the dangers of the sea and also of the chance of being struck by lightning. In the case of the swordfish, I ventured to say that ‘the first thing would be to secure the sword’. The colonel invited me to dine with the party on the following day, that we might go further into this matter, and so I had the pleasure of meeting Mr Stanley a second time, but got no more hints in navigation from the famous explorer.

It sounds odd to hear scholars and statesmen say the world is flat; but it is a fact that three Boers favoured by the opinion of President Krüger prepared a work to support that contention. While I was at Durban they came from Pretoria to obtain data from me, and they seemed annoyed when I told them that they could not prove it by my experience. With the advice

to call up some ghost of the dark ages for research, I went ashore, and left these three wise men poring over the *Spray*'s track on a chart of the world, which, however, proved nothing to them, for it was on Mercator's projection, and behold, it was 'flat'. The next morning I met one of the party in a clergyman's garb, carrying a large Bible, not different from the one I had read. He tackled me, saying, 'If you respect the Word of God, you must admit that the world is flat.'

'If the Word of God stands on a flat world—' I began.

'What!' cried he, losing himself in a passion, and making as if he would run me through with an *assagai.* 'What!' he shouted in astonishment and rage, while I jumped aside to dodge the imaginary weapon. Had this good but misguided fanatic been armed with a real weapon, the crew of the *Spray* would have died a martyr there and then. The next day, seeing him across the street, I bowed and made curves with my hands. He responded with a level, swimming movement of his hands, meaning 'the world is flat'.

A pamphlet by these Transvaal geographers, made up of arguments from sources high and low to prove their theory, was mailed to me before I sailed from Africa on my last stretch around the globe.

While I feebly portray the ignorance of these learned men, I have great admiration for their physical manhood. Much that I saw first and last of the Transvaal and the Boers was admirable. It is well known that they are the hardest of fighters, and as generous to the fallen as they are brave before the foe. Real stubborn bigotry with them is only found among old fogies, and will die a natural death, and that, too, perhaps long before we ourselves are entirely free from bigotry. Education in the Transvaal is by no means neglected, English as well as Dutch being taught to all that can afford both; but the tariff duty on English schoolbooks is heavy, and from necessity the poorer people stick to the Transvaal Dutch and their flat world, just as in Samoa and other islands a mistaken policy has kept the natives down to Kanaka.

I visited many public schools at Durban, and had the pleasure of meeting many bright children.

But all fine things must end, and on 14 December 1897, the 'crew' of the *Spray,* after having a fine time in Natal, swung the sloop's dinghy in on deck, and sailed with a morning land-wind, which carried her clear of the bar, and again she was 'off on her alone', as they say in Australia.

* Guinea hen.

† Nyanza: Lake Victoria.

CHAPTER XVIII

Rounding the ‘Cape of Storms’ in olden time—A rough Christmas—The *Spray* ties up for a three months’ rest at Cape Town—A railway trip to the Transvaal—President Krüger’s odd definition of the *Spray*’s voyage—His terse sayings—Distinguished guests on the *Spray*—Coconut fibre as a padlock—Courtesies from the admiral of the Queen’s navy—Off for St Helena—Land in sight.

The Cape of Good Hope was now the most prominent point to pass. From Table Bay I could count on the aid of brisk trades, and then the *Spray* would soon be at home. On the first day out from Durban it fell calm, and I sat thinking about these things and the end of the voyage. The distance to Table Bay, where I intended to call, was about 800 miles over what might prove a rough sea. The early Portuguese navigators, endowed with patience, were more than sixty-nine years struggling to round this cape before they got as far as Algoa Bay, and there the crew mutinied. They landed on a small island, now called Santa Cruz, where they devoutly set up the cross, and swore they would cut the captain’s throat if he attempted to sail farther. Beyond this they thought was the edge of the world, which they too believed was flat; and fearing that their ship would sail over the brink of it, they compelled Captain Diaz, their commander, to retrace his course, all being only too glad to get home. A year later, we are told, Vasco da Gama sailed successfully round the ‘Cape of Storms’, as the Cape of Good Hope was then called, and discovered Natal on Christmas or Natal day; hence the name. From this point the way to India was easy.

Gales of wind sweeping round the cape even now were frequent enough, one occurring, on an average, every thirty-six hours; but one gale was much the same as another, with no more serious result than to blow the *Spray* along on her course when it was fair, or to blow her back somewhat when it was ahead. On Christmas, 1897, I came to the pitch of the cape. On

this day the *Spray* was trying to stand on her head, and she gave me every reason to believe that she would accomplish the feat before night. She began very early in the morning to pitch and toss about in a most unusual manner, and I have to record that, while I was at the end of the bowsprit reefing the jib, she ducked me under water three times for a Christmas box. I got wet and did not like it a bit: never in any other sea was I put under more than once in the same short space of time, say three minutes. A large English steamer passing ran up the signal, ‘Wishing you a Merry Christmas.’ I think the captain was a humorist; his own ship was throwing her propeller out of water.

Two days later, the *Spray,* having recovered the distance lost in the gale, passed Cape Agulhas in company with the steamship *Scotsman,* now with a fair wind. The keeper of the light on Agulhas exchanged signals with the *Spray* as she passed, and afterward wrote me at New York congratulations on the completion of the voyage. He seemed to think the incident of two ships of so widely different types passing his cape together worthy of a place on canvas, and he went about having the picture made. So I gathered from his letter. At lonely stations like this hearts grow responsive and sympathetic, and even poetic. This feeling was shown towards the *Spray* along many a rugged coast, and reading many a kind signal thrown out to her gave one a grateful feeling for all the world.

One more gale of wind came down upon the *Spray* from the west after she passed Cape Agulhas, but that one she dodged by getting into Simons Bay. When it moderated she beat around the Cape of Good Hope, where they say the *Flying Dutchman* is still sailing. The voyage then seemed as good as finished; from this time on I knew that all, or nearly all, would be plain sailing.

Here I crossed the dividing-line of weather. To the north it was clear and settled, while south it was humid and squally, with, often enough, as I have said, a treacherous gale. From the recent hard weather the *Spray* ran into a calm under Table Mountain, where she lay quietly till the generous sun rose over the land and drew a breeze in from the sea.

The steam tug *Alert,* then out looking for ships, came to the *Spray* off the Lion’s Rump, and in lieu of a larger ship towed her into port. The sea being smooth, she came to anchor in the bay off the city of Cape Town, where she remained a day, simply to rest clear of the bustle of commerce.

The good harbour-master sent his steam launch to bring the sloop to a berth in dock at once, but I preferred to remain for one day alone, in the quiet of a smooth sea, enjoying the retrospect of the passage of the two great capes. On the following morning the *Spray* sailed into the Alfred drydocks, where she remained for about three months in the care of the port authorities, while I travelled the country over from Simons Town to Pretoria, being accorded by the colonial government a free railroad pass over all the land.

The trip to Kimberley, Johannesburg and Pretoria was a pleasant one. At the last-named place I met Mr Krüger, the Transvaal president. His Excellency received me cordially enough; but my friend Judge Beyers, the gentleman who presented me, by mentioning that I was on a voyage around the world, unwittingly gave great offence to the venerable statesman, which we both regretted deeply. Mr Krüger corrected the judge rather sharply, reminding him that the world is flat. ‘You don’t mean *round* the world,’ said the president; ‘it is impossible! You mean *in* the world. Impossible!’ he said. ‘Impossible!’ And not another word did he utter either to the judge or to me.

The judge looked at me and I looked at the judge, who should have known his ground, so to speak, and Mr Krüger glowered at us both. My friend the judge seemed embarrassed, but I was delighted; the incident pleased me more than anything else that could have happened. It was a nugget of information quarried out of Oom Paul, some of whose sayings are famous. Of the English he said, ‘They took first my coat and then my trousers.’ He also said, ‘Dynamite is the cornerstone of the South African Republic.’ Only unthinking people call President Krüger dull.

Soon after my arrival at the cape, Mr Krüger’s friend Colonel Saunderson, who had arrived from Durban some time before, invited me to Newlands Vineyard, where I met many agreeable people.* His Excellency Sir Alfred Milner, the governor, found time to come aboard with a party. The governor, after making a survey of the deck, found a seat on a box in my cabin; Lady Muriel sat on a keg, and Lady Saunderson sat by the skipper at the wheel, while the colonel, with his Kodak, away in the dinghy, took snapshots of the sloop and her distinguished visitors. Dr David Gill, astronomer royal, who was of the party, invited me the next day to the famous Cape Observatory. An hour with Dr Gill was an hour among the stars. His discoveries in stellar photography are well known. He showed me

the great astronomical clock of the observatory, and I showed him the tin clock on the *Spray*, and we went over the subject of standard time at sea, and how it was found from the deck of the little sloop without the aid of a clock of any kind. Later it was advertised that Dr Gill would preside at a talk about the voyage of the *Spray*: that alone secured for me a full house. The hall was packed, and many were not able to get in. This success brought me sufficient money for all my needs in port and for the homeward voyage.

After visiting Kimberley and Pretoria, and finding the *Spray* all right in the docks, I returned to Worcester and Wellington, towns famous for colleges and seminaries, passed coming in, still travelling as the guest of the colony. The ladies of all these institutions of learning wished to know how one might sail round the world alone, which I thought augured of sailing mistresses in the future instead of sailing masters. It will come to that yet if we menfolk keep on saying we ‘can’t’.

On the plains of Africa I passed through hundreds of miles of rich but still barren land, save for scrubbushes, on which herds of sheep were browsing. The bushes grew about the length of a sheep apart, and they, I thought, were rather long of body; but there was still room for all. My longing for a foothold on land seized upon me here, where so much of it lay waste; but instead of remaining to plant forests and reclaim vegetation, I returned again to the *Spray* at the Alfred docks, where I found her waiting for me, with everything in order, exactly as I had left her.

I have often been asked how it was that my vessel and all appurtenances were not stolen in the various ports where I left her for days together without a watchman in charge. This is just how it was: the *Spray* seldom fell among thieves. At the Keeling Islands, at Rodriguez, and at many such places, a wisp of coconut fibre in the door-latch, to indicate that the owner was away, secured the goods against even a longing glance. But when I came to a great island nearer home, stout locks were needed; the first night in port things which I had always left uncovered disappeared, as if the deck on which they were stowed had been swept by a sea.

A pleasant visit from Admiral Sir Harry Rawson of the Royal Navy and his family brought to an end the *Spray*’s social relations with the Cape of Good Hope. The admiral, then commanding the South African Squadron, and now in command of the great channel fleet, evinced the greatest interest

in the diminutive *Spray* and her behaviour off Cape Horn, where he was not an entire stranger. I have to admit that I was delighted with the trend of Admiral Rawson's questions, and that I profited by some of his suggestions, notwithstanding the wide difference in our respective commands.

On 26 March 1898, the *Spray* sailed from South Africa, the land of distances and pure air, where she had spent a pleasant and profitable time. The steam-tug *Tigre* towed her to sea from her wonted berth at the Alfred docks, giving her a good offing. The light morning breeze, which scantily filled her sails when the tug let go the towline, soon died away altogether, and left her riding over a heavy swell, in full view of Table Mountain and the high peaks of the Cape of Good Hope. For a while the grand scenery served to relieve the monotony. One of the old circumnavigators (Sir Francis Drake, I think), when he first saw this magnificent pile, sang, ''Tis the fairest thing and the grandest cape I've seen in the whole circumference of the earth.'

The view was certainly fine, but one has no wish to linger long to look in a calm at anything, and I was glad to note, finally, the short heaving sea, precursor of the wind which followed on the second day. Seals playing about the *Spray* all day, before the breeze came, looked with large eyes when, at evening, she sat no longer like a lazy bird with folded wings. They parted company now, and the *Spray* soon sailed the highest peaks of the mountains out of sight, and the world changed from a mere panoramic view to the light of a homeward-bound voyage. Porpoises and dolphins, and such other fishes as did not mind making a hundred and fifty miles a day, were her companions now for several days.

The wind was from the southeast; this suited the *Spray* well, and she ran along steadily at her best speed, while I dipped into the new books given me at the cape, reading day and night. March 30th was for me a fastday in honour of them. I read on, oblivious of hunger or wind or sea, thinking that all was going well, when suddenly a comber rolled over the stern and slopped saucily into the cabin, wetting the very book I was reading. Evidently it was time to put in a reef, that she might not wallow on her course.

March 31st, the fresh southeast wind had come to stay. The *Spray* was running under a single-reefed mainsail, a whole jib, and a flying jib besides, set on the Vailima bamboo, while I was reading Stevenson's delightful

Inland Voyage. The sloop was again doing her work smoothly, hardly rolling at all, but just leaping along among the white horses, a thousand gambolling porpoises keeping her company on all sides. She was again among her old friends the flying fish, interesting denizens of the sea. Shooting out of the waves like arrows, and with outstretched wings, they sailed on the wind in graceful curves; then falling till again they touched the crest of the waves to wet their delicate wings and renew the flight. They made merry the livelong day. One of the joyful sights on the ocean of a bright day is the continual flight of these interesting fish.

One could not be lonely in a sea like this. Moreover, the reading of delightful adventures enhanced the scene. I was now in the *Spray* and on the Oise in the *Arethusa* at one and the same time. And so the *Spray* reeled off the miles, showing a good run every day till 11 April, which came almost before I knew it. Very early that morning I was awakened by that rare bird, the booby, with its harsh quack, which I recognised at once as a call to go on deck; it was as much as to say, ‘Skipper, there’s land in sight.’ I tumbled out quickly, and sure enough, away ahead in the dim twilight, about twenty miles off, was St Helena.

My first impulse was to call out, ‘Oh, what a speck in the sea!’ It is in reality nine miles in length and 2823 feet in height. I reached for a bottle of port wine out of the locker, and took a long pull from it to the health of my invisible helmsman—the pilot of the *Pinta*.

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* Colonel Saunderson was Mr Krüger’s very best friend, inasmuch as he advised the president to avast mounting guns.

CHAPTER XIX

In the isle of Napoleon's exile—Two lectures—A guest in the ghost room at Plantation House—An excursion to historic Longwood—Coffee in the husk, and a goat to shell it—The *Spray*'s ill luck with animals—A prejudice against small dogs—A rat, the Boston spider, and the cannibal cricket—Ascension Island.

It was about noon when the *Spray* came to anchor off Jamestown, and 'all hands' at once went ashore to pay respects to his Excellency the governor of the island, Sir R. A. Sterndale. His Excellency, when I landed, remarked that it was not often, nowadays, that a circumnavigator came his way, and he cordially welcomed me, and arranged that I should tell about the voyage, first at Garden Hall to the people of Jamestown, and then at Plantation House—the governor's residence, which is in the hills a mile or two back—to his Excellency and the officers of the garrison and their friends. Mr Poole, our worthy consul, introduced me at the castle, and in the course of his remarks asserted that the sea serpent was a Yankee.

Most royally was the crew of the *Spray* entertained by the governor. I remained at Plantation House a couple of days, and one of the rooms in the mansion, called the 'west room', being haunted, the butler, by command of his Excellency, put me up in that—like a prince. Indeed, to make sure that no mistake had been made, his Excellency came later to see that I was in the right room, and to tell me all about the ghosts he had seen or heard of. He had discovered all but one, and wishing me pleasant dreams, he hoped I might have the honour of a visit from the unknown one of the west room. For the rest of the chilly night I kept the candle burning, and often looked from under the blankets, thinking that maybe I should meet the great Napoleon face to face; but I saw only furniture, and the horseshoe that was nailed over the door opposite my bed.

St Helena has been an island of tragedies—tragedies that have been lost sight of in wailing over the Corsican. On the second day of my visit the governor took me by carriage road through the turns over the island. At one point of our journey the road, in winding around spurs and ravines, formed a perfect W within the distance of a few rods. The roads, though tortuous and steep, were fairly good, and I was struck with the amount of labour it must have cost to build them. The air on the heights was cool and bracing. It is said that, since hanging for trivial offences went out of fashion, no one has died there, except from falling over the cliffs in old age, or from being crushed by stones rolling on them, from the steep mountains! Witches at one time were persistent at St Helena, as with us in America in the days of Cotton Mather. At the present day crime is rare in the island. While I was there, Governor Sterndale, in token of the fact that not one criminal case had come to court within the year, was presented with a pair of white gloves by the officers of justice.

Returning from the governor's house to Jamestown, I drove with Mr Clark, a countryman of mine, to 'Longwood', the home of Napoleon. M. Morilleau, French consular agent in charge, keeps the place respectable and the buildings in good repair. His family at Longwood, consisting of wife and grown daughters, are natives of courtly and refined manners, and spend here days, months and years of contentment, though they have never seen the world beyond the horizon of St Helena.

On 20 April the *Spray* was again ready for sea. Before going on board I took luncheon with the governor and his family at the castle. Lady Sterndale had sent a large fruitcake, early in the morning, from Plantation House, to be taken along on the voyage. It was a great high-decker, and I ate sparingly of it, as I thought, but it did not keep as I had hoped it would. I ate the last of it along with my first cup of coffee at Antigua, West Indies, which, after all, was quite a record. The one my own sister made me at the little island in the Bay of Fundy, at the first of the voyage, kept about the same length of time, namely, forty-two days.

After luncheon a royal mail was made up for Ascension, the island next on my way. Then Mr Poole and his daughter paid the *Spray* a farewell visit, bringing me a basket of fruit. It was late in the evening before the anchor was up, and I bore off for the west, loath to leave my new friends. But fresh winds filled the sloop's sails once more, and I watched the

beacon-light at Plantation House, the governor's parting signal for the *Spray,* till the island faded in the darkness astern and became one with the night, and by midnight the light itself had disappeared below the horizon.

When morning came there was no land in sight, but the day went on the same as days before, save for one small incident. Governor Sterndale had given me a bag of coffee in the husk, and Clark, the American, in an evil moment, had put a goat on board, 'to butt the sack and hustle the coffee beans out of the pods'. He urged that the animal, besides being useful, would be as companionable as a dog. I soon found that my sailing companion, this sort of dog with horns, had to be tied up entirely. The mistake I made was that I did not chain him to the mast instead of tying him with grass ropes less securely, and this I learned to my cost. Except for the first day, before the beast got his sea-legs on, I had no peace of mind. After that, actuated by a spirit born, maybe, of his pasturage, this incarnation of evil threatened to devour everything from flying jib to stern-davits. He was the worst pirate I met on the whole voyage.

He began depredations by eating my chart of the West Indies, in the cabin, one day, while I was about my work for'ard, thinking that the critter was securely tied on deck by the pumps. Alas! there was not a rope in the sloop proof against that goat's awful teeth!

It was clear from the very first that I was having no luck with animals on board. There was the tree crab from the Keeling Islands. No sooner had it got a claw through its prison box than my sea jacket, hanging within reach, was torn to ribbons. Encouraged by this success, it smashed the box open and escaped into my cabin, tearing up things generally, and finally threatening my life in the dark. I had hoped to bring the creature home alive, but this did not prove feasible. Next the goat devoured my straw hat, and so when I arrived in port I had nothing to wear ashore on my head. This last unkind stroke decided his fate. On 27 April the *Spray* arrived at Ascension, which is garrisoned by a man-of-war crew, and the boatswain of the island came on board. As he stepped out of his boat the mutinous goat climbed into it, and defied boatswain and crew. I hired them to land the wretch at once, which they were only too willing to do, and there he fell into the hands of a most excellent Scotchman, with the chances that he would never get away.

I was destined to sail once more into the depths of solitude, but these experiences had no bad effect upon me; on the contrary, a spirit of charity and even benevolence grew stronger in my nature through the meditations of these supreme hours on the sea.

In the loneliness of the dreary country about Cape Horn I found myself in no mood to make one life less in the world, except in self-defence, and as I sailed this trait of the hermit character grew till the mention of killing food-animals was revolting to me. However well I may have enjoyed a chicken stew afterward at Samoa, a new self rebelled at the thought suggested there of carrying chickens to be slain for my table on the voyage, and Mrs Stevenson, hearing my protest, agreed with me that to kill the companions of my voyage and eat them would be indeed next to murder and cannibalism.

As to pet animals, there was no room for a noble large dog on the *Spray* on so long a voyage, and a small cur was for many years associated in my mind with hydrophobia. I witnessed once the death of a sterling young German from that dreadful disease, and about the same time heard of the death, also by hydrophobia, of the young gentleman who had just written a line of insurance in his company's books for me. I have seen the whole crew of a ship scamper up the rigging to avoid a dog racing about the decks in a fit. It would never do, I thought, for the crew of the *Spray* to take a canine risk, and with these just prejudices indelibly stamped on my mind, I have, I am afraid, answered impatiently too often the query, 'Didn't you have a dog?' with, 'I and the dog wouldn't have been very long in the same boat, in any sense.' A cat would have been a harmless animal, I dare say, but there was nothing for puss to do on board, and she is an unsociable animal at best. True, a rat got into my vessel at the Keeling Cocos Islands, and another at Rodriguez, along with a centipede, stowed away in the hold; but one of them I drove out of the ship, and the other I caught. This is how it was: for the first one with infinite pains I made a trap, looking to its capture and destruction; but the wily rodent, not to be deluded, took the hint and got ashore the day the thing was completed.

It is, according to tradition, a most reassuring sign to find rats coming to a ship, and I had a mind to abide the knowing one of Rodriguez; but a breach of discipline decided the matter against him. While I slept one night, my ship sailing on, he undertook to walk over me, beginning at the crown

of my head, concerning which I am always sensitive. I sleep lightly. Before his impertinence had got him even to my nose I cried ‘Rat!’, had him by the tail, and threw him out of the companionway into the sea.

As for the centipede, I was not aware of its presence till the wretched insect, all feet and venom, beginning, like the rat, at my head, wakened me by a sharp bite on the scalp. This also was more than I could tolerate. After a few applications of kerosene the poisonous bite, painful at first, gave me no further inconvenience.

From this on for a time no living thing disturbed my solitude; no insect even was present in my vessel, except the spider and his wife, from Boston, now with a family of young spiders. Nothing, I say, till sailing down the last stretch of the Indian Ocean, where mosquitoes came by hundreds from rainwater poured out of the heavens. Simply a barrel of rainwater stood on deck five days, I think, in the sun, then music began. I knew the sound at once; it was the same as heard from Alaska to New Orleans.

Again at Cape Town, while dining out one day, I was taken with the song of a cricket, and Mr Branscombe, my host, volunteered to capture a pair of them for me. They were sent on board next day in a box labelled, ‘Pluto and Scamp’. Stowing them away in the binnacle in their own snug box, I left them there without food till I got to sea—a few days. I had never heard of a cricket eating anything. It seems that Pluto was a cannibal, for only the wings of poor Scamp were visible when I opened the lid, and they lay broken on the floor of the prison box. Even with Pluto it had gone hard, for he lay on his back stark and stiff, never to chirrup again.

Ascension Island, where the goat was marooned, is called the Stone Frigate, RN, and is rated ‘tender’ to the South African Squadron. It lies in 7° 55′ south latitude and 14° 25′ west longitude, being in the very heart of the southeast trade winds and about 840 miles from the coast of Liberia. It is a mass of volcanic matter, thrown up from the bed of the ocean to the height of 2818 feet at the highest point above sea level. It is a strategic point, and belonged to Great Britain before it got cold. In the limited but rich soil at the top of the island, among the clouds, vegetation has taken root, and a little scientific farming is carried on under the supervision of a gentleman from Canada. Also a few cattle and sheep are pastured there for the garrison mess. Water storage is made on a large scale. In a word, this

heap of cinders and lava rock is stored and fortified, and would stand a siege.

Very soon after the *Spray* arrived I received a note from Captain Blaxland, the commander of the island, conveying his thanks for the royal mail brought from St Helena, and inviting me to luncheon with him and his wife and sister at headquarters, not far away. It is hardly necessary to say that I availed myself of the captain's hospitality at once. A carriage was waiting at the jetty when I landed, and a sailor, with a broad grin, led the horse carefully up the hill to the captain's house, as if I were a lord of the admiralty, and a governor besides; and he led it as carefully down again when I returned. On the following day I visited the summit among the clouds, the same team being provided, and the same old sailor leading the horse. There was probably not a man on the island at that moment better able to walk than I. The sailor knew that. I finally suggested that we change places.

'Let me take the bridle,' I said, 'and keep the horse from bolting.'

'Great Stone Frigate!' he exclaimed, as he burst into a laugh, 'this 'ere 'oss wouldn't bolt no faster nor a turtle. If I didn't tow 'im 'ard we'd never get into port.'

I walked most of the way over the steep grades, whereupon my guide, every inch a sailor, became my friend. Arriving at the summit of the island, I met Mr Schank, the farmer from Canada, and his sister, living very cosily in a house among the rocks, as snug as conies, and as safe. He showed me over the farm, taking me through a tunnel which led from one field to the other, divided by an inaccessible spur of mountain. Mr Schank said that he had lost many cows and bullocks, as well as sheep, from breakneck over the steep cliffs and precipices. One cow, he said, would sometimes hook another right over a precipice to destruction, and go on feeding unconcernedly. It seemed that the animals on the island farm, like mankind in the wide world, found it all too small.

On 26 April, while I was ashore, rollers came in which rendered launching a boat impossible. However, the sloop being securely moored to a buoy in deep water outside of all breakers, she was safe, while I, in the best of quarters, listened to well-told stories among the officers of the Stone Frigate. On the evening of the 29th, the sea having gone down, I went on board and made preparations to start again on my voyage early next day, the

boatswain of the island and his crew giving me a hearty handshake as I embarked at the jetty.

For reasons of scientific interest, I invited in midocean the most thorough investigation concerning the crew list of the *Spray.* Very few had challenged it, and perhaps few ever will do so henceforth; but for the benefit of the few that may, I wished to clench beyond doubt the fact that it was not at all necessary in the expedition of a sloop around the world to have more than one man for the crew, all told, and that the *Spray* sailed with only one person on board. And so, by appointment, Lieutenant Eagles, the executive officer, in the morning, just as I was ready to sail, fumigated the sloop, rendering it impossible for a person to live concealed below, and proving that only one person was on board when she arrived. A certificate to this effect, besides the official documents from the many consulates, health offices and customhouses will seem to many superfluous; but this story of the voyage may find its way into hands unfamiliar with the business of these offices and of their ways of seeing that a vessel's papers, and, above all, her bills of health, are in order.

The lieutenant's certificate being made out, the *Spray,* nothing loath, now filled away clear of the sea-beaten rocks, and the trade winds, comfortably cool and bracing, sent her flying along on her course. On 8 May 1898, she crossed the track, homeward bound, that she had made on 2 October 1895, on the voyage out. She passed Fernando de Noronha at night, going some miles south of it, and so I did not see the island. I felt a contentment in knowing that the *Spray* had encircled the globe, and even as an adventure alone I was in no way discouraged as to its utility, and said to myself, 'Let what will happen, the voyage is now on record.' A period was made.

CHAPTER XX

In the favouring current off Cape St Roque, Brazil—All at sea regarding the Spanish-American war—An exchange of signals with the battleship *Oregon* —Off Dreyfus's prison on Devil's Island—Reappearance to the *Spray* of the north star—The light on Trinidad—A charming introduction to Grenada —Talks to friendly auditors.

On 10 May there was a great change in the condition of the sea; there could be no doubt of my longitude now, if any had before existed in my mind. Strange and long-forgotten current ripples pattered against the sloop's sides in grateful music; the tune arrested the ear, and I sat quietly listening to it while the *Spray* kept on her course. By these current ripples I was assured that she was now off St Roque and had struck the current which sweeps around that cape. The trade winds, we old sailors say, produce this current, which, in its course from this point forward, is governed by the coastline of Brazil, Guiana, Venezuela and, as some would say, by the Monroe Doctrine.

The trades had been blowing fresh for some time, and the current, now at its height, amounted to forty miles a day. This, added to the sloop's run by the log, made the handsome day's work of 180 miles on several consecutive days. I saw nothing of the coast of Brazil, though I was not many leagues off and was always in the Brazil current.

I did not know that war with Spain had been declared, and that I might be liable, right there, to meet the enemy and be captured. Many had told me at Cape Town that, in their opinion, war was inevitable, and they said: 'The Spaniard will get you! The Spaniard will get you!' To all this I could only say that, even so, he would not get much. Even in the fever-heat over the disaster to the *Maine* I did not think there would be war; but I am no politician. Indeed, I had hardly given the matter a serious thought when, on 14 May, just north of the equator, and near the longitude of the river

Amazon, I saw first a mast, with the Stars and Stripes floating from it, rising astern as if poked up out of the sea, and then rapidly appearing on the horizon, like a citadel, the *Oregon*! As she came near I saw that the great ship was flying the signals ‘C B T’, which read, ‘Are there any men-of-war about?’ Right under these flags, and larger than the *Spray*’s mainsail, so it appeared, was the yellowest Spanish flag I ever saw. It gave me nightmare some time after when I reflected on it in my dreams.

I did not make out the *Oregon*’s signals till she passed ahead, where I could read them better, for she was two miles away, and I had no binoculars. When I had read her flags I hoisted the signal ‘No’, for I had not seen any Spanish men-of-war; I had not been looking for any. My final signal, ‘Let us keep together for mutual protection,’ Captain Clark did not seem to regard as necessary. Perhaps my small flags were not made out; anyhow, the *Oregon* steamed on with a rush, looking for Spanish men-of-war, as I learned afterward. The *Oregon*’s great flag was dipped beautifully three times to the *Spray*’s lowered flag as she passed on. Both had crossed the line only a few hours before. I pondered long that night over the probability of a war risk now coming upon the *Spray* after she had cleared all, or nearly all, the dangers of the sea, but finally a strong hope mastered my fears.

On 17 May, the *Spray,* coming out of a storm at daylight, made Devil’s Island, two points on the lee bow, not far off. The wind was still blowing a stiff breeze on shore. I could clearly see the dark grey buildings on the island as the sloop brought it abeam. No flag or sign of life was seen on the dreary place.

Later in the day a French bark on the port tack, making for Cayenne, hove in sight, close-hauled on the wind. She was falling to leeward fast. The *Spray* was also closed-hauled, and was lugging on sail to secure an offing on the starboard tack, a heavy swell in the night having thrown her too near the shore, and now I considered the matter of supplicating a change of wind. I had already enjoyed my share of favouring breezes over the great oceans, and I asked myself if it would be right to have the wind turned now all into my sails while the Frenchman was bound the other way. A head current, which he stemmed, together with a scant wind, was bad enough for him. And so I could only say, in my heart, ‘Lord, let matters stand as they

are, but do not help the Frenchman any more just now, for what would suit him well would ruin me!’

I remembered that when a lad I heard a captain often say in meeting that in answer to a prayer of his own the wind changed from southeast to northwest, entirely to his satisfaction. He was a good man, but did this glorify the Architect—the ruler of the winds and the waves? Moreover, it was not a trade wind, as I remember it, that changed for him, but one of the variables which will change when you ask it, if you ask long enough. Again, this man’s brother maybe was not bound the opposite way, well content with a fair wind himself, which made all the difference in the world.*

May 18th, 1898, is written large in the *Spray*’s logbook: ‘Tonight, in latitude 7° 13′ N., for the first time in nearly three years I see the north star.’ The *Spray* on the day following logged 147 miles. To this I add thirty-five miles for current sweeping her onward.

On 20 May, about sunset, the island of Tobago, off the Orinoco, came into view, bearing west by north, distant twenty-two miles. The *Spray* was drawing rapidly towards her home destination. Later at night, while running free along the coast of Tobago, the wind still blowing fresh, I was startled by the sudden flash of breakers on the port bow and not far off. I luffed instantly offshore, and then tacked, heading in for the island. Finding myself, shortly after, close in with the land, I tacked again offshore, but without much altering the bearings of the danger. Sail whichever way I would, it seemed clear that if the sloop weathered the rocks at all it would be a close shave, and I watched with anxiety, while beating against the current, always losing ground.

So the matter stood hour after hour, while I watched the flashes of light thrown up as regularly as the beats of the long ocean swells, and always they seemed just a little nearer. It was evidently a coral reef—of this I had not the slightest doubt—and a bad reef at that. Worse still, there might be other reefs ahead forming a bight into which the current would sweep me, and where I should be hemmed in and finally wrecked. I had not sailed these waters since a lad, and lamented the day I had allowed on board the goat that ate my chart.

I taxed my memory of sea lore, of wrecks on sunken reefs, and of pirates harboured among coral reefs where other ships might not come, but

nothing that I could think of applied to the island of Tobago, save the one wreck of Robinson Crusoe's ship in the fiction, and that gave me little information about reefs. I remembered only that in Crusoe's case he kept his powder dry. 'But there she booms again,' I cried, 'and how close the flash is now! Almost aboard was that last breaker! But you'll go by, *Spray*, old girl! 'Tis abeam now! One surge more! and oh, one more like that will clear your ribs and keel!' And I slapped her on the transom, proud of her last noble effort to leap clear of the danger, when a wave greater than the rest threw her higher than before, and, behold, from the crest of it was revealed at once all there was of the reef.

I fell back in a coil of rope, speechless and amazed, not distressed, but rejoiced. Aladdin's lamp! My fisherman's own lantern! It was the great revolving light on the island of Trinidad, thirty miles away, throwing flashes over the waves, which had deceived me! The orb of the light was now dipping on the horizon, and how glorious was the sight of it! But, dear Father Neptune, as I live, after a long life at sea, and much among corals, I would have made a solemn declaration to that reef! Through all the rest of the night I saw imaginary reefs, and not knowing what moment the sloop might fetch up on a real one, I tacked off and on till daylight, as nearly as possible in the same track, all for the want of a chart. I could have nailed the St Helena goat's pelt to the deck.

My course was now for Grenada, to which I carried letters from Mauritius. About midnight of 22 May I arrived at the island, and cast anchor in the roads off the town of St George, entering the inner harbour at daylight on the morning of the 23rd, which made fortytwo days' sailing from the Cape of Good Hope. It was a good run, and I doffed my cap again to the pilot of the *Pinta.*

Lady Bruce, in a note to the *Spray* at Port Louis, said Grenada was a lovely island, and she wished the sloop might call there on the voyage home. When the *Spray* arrived, I found that she had been fully expected.

'How so?' I asked.

'Oh, we heard that you were at Mauritius,' they said, 'and from Mauritius, after meeting Sir Charles Bruce, our old governor, we knew you would come to Grenada.'

This was a charming introduction, and it brought me in contact with people worth knowing.

The *Spray* sailed from Grenada on 28 May, and coasted along under the lee of the Antilles, arriving at the island of Dominica on the 30th, where, for the want of knowing better, I cast anchor at the quarantine ground; for I was still without a chart of the islands, not having been able to get one even at Grenada. Here I not only met with further disappointment in the matter, but was threatened with a fine for the mistake I made in the anchorage. There were no ships either at the quarantine or at the commercial roads, and I could not see that it made much difference where I anchored. But a negro chap, a sort of deputy harbour-master, coming along, thought it did, and he ordered me to shift to the other anchorage, which, in truth, I had already investigated and did not like, because of the heavier roll there from the sea. And so instead of springing to the sails at once to shift, I said I would leave outright as soon as I could procure a chart, which I begged he would send and get for me. ‘But I say you mus’ move befo’ you gets anyt’ing ‘tall,’ he insisted, and raising his voice so that all the people alongshore could hear him, he added, ‘An’ jes now!’ Then he flew into a towering passion when they on shore snickered to see the crew of the *Spray* sitting calmly by the bulwark instead of hoisting sail. ‘I tell you dis am quarantine,’ he shouted, very much louder than before.

‘That’s all right, general,’ I replied; ‘I want to be quarantined anyhow.’

‘That’s right, boss,’ someone on the beach cried, ‘that’s right; you get quarantined,’ while others shouted to the deputy to ‘make de white trash move ‘long out o’ dat’.

They were about equally divided on the island for and against me. The man who had made so much fuss over the matter gave it up when he found that I wished to be quarantined, and sent for an all-important halfwhite, who soon came alongside, starched from clue to earing. He stood in the boat as straight up and down as a fathom of pump-water—a marvel of importance.

‘Charts!’ cried I, as soon as his shirt-collar appeared over the sloop’s rail; ‘have you any charts?’

‘No, sah,’ he replied with much-stiffened dignity; ‘no, sah; cha’ts do’sn’t grow on dis island.’

Not doubting the information, I tripped anchor immediately, as I had intended to do from the first, and made all sail for St John, Antigua, where I arrived on 1 June, having sailed with great caution in mid-channel all the way.

The *Spray,* always in good company, now fell in with the port officers' steam launch at the harbour entrance, having on board Sir Francis Fleming, governor of the Leeward Islands, who, to the delight of 'all hands', gave the officer in charge instructions to tow my ship into port. On the following day his Excellency and Lady Fleming, along with Captain Burr, RN, paid me a visit. The courthouse was tendered free to me at Antigua, as was done also at Grenada, and at each place a highly intelligent audience filled the hall to listen to a talk about the seas the *Spray* had crossed, and the countries she had visited.

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* The Bishop of Melbourne (commend me to his teachings) refused to set aside a day of prayer for rain, recommending his people to husband water when the rainy season was on. In like manner, a navigator husbands the wind, keeping a weather-gauge where practicable.

CHAPTER XXI

Clearing for home—In the calm belt—A sea covered with sargasso—The jibstay parts in a gale—Welcomed by a tornado off Fire Island—A change of plan—Arrival at Newport—End of a cruise of over 46,000 miles—The *Spray* again at Fairhaven.

On 4 June 1898, the *Spray* cleared from the United States consulate, and her licence to sail single-handed, even round the world, was returned to her for the last time. The United States consul, Mr Hunt, before handing the paper to me, wrote on it, as General Roberts had done at Cape Town, a short commentary on the voyage. The document, by regular course, is now lodged in the Treasury Department at Washington, D.C.

On 5 June 1898, the *Spray* sailed for a home port, heading first direct for Cape Hatteras. On 8 June she passed under the sun from south to north; the sun's declination on that day was 22° 54′, and the latitude of the *Spray* was the same just before noon. Many think it is excessively hot right under the sun. It is not necessarily so. As a matter of fact the thermometer stands at a bearable point whenever there is a breeze and a ripple on the sea, even exactly under the sun. It is often hotter in cities and on sandy shores in higher latitudes.

The *Spray* was booming joyously along for home now, making her usual good time, when of a sudden she struck the horse latitudes, and her sail flapped limp in a calm. I had almost forgotten this calm belt, or had come to regard it as a myth. I now found it real, however, and difficult to cross. This was as it should have been, for, after all of the dangers of the sea, the dust storm on the coast of Africa, the 'rain of blood' in Australia, and the war risk when nearing home, a natural experience would have been missing had the calm of the horse latitudes been left out. Anyhow, a philosophical turn of thought now was not amiss, else one's patience would have given out almost at the harbour entrance. The term of her probation

was eight days. Evening after evening during this time I read by the light of a candle on deck. There was no wind at all, and the sea became smooth and monotonous. For three days I saw a full-rigged ship on the horizon, also becalmed.

Sargasso, scattered over the sea in bunches, or trailed curiously along down the wind in narrow lanes, now gathered together in great fields, strange sea animals, little and big, swimming in and out, the most curious among them being a tiny seahorse which I captured and brought home preserved in a bottle. But on 13 June a gale began to blow from the southwest, and the sargasso was dispersed again in windrows and lanes.

On this day there was soon wind enough and to spare. The same might have been said of the sea. The *Spray* was in the midst of the turbulent Gulf Stream itself. She was jumping like a porpoise over the uneasy waves. As if to make up for lost time, she seemed to touch only the high places. Under a sudden shock and strain her rigging began to give out. First the mainsheet strap was carried away, and then the peak halyard-block broke from the gaff. It was time to reef and refit, and so when ‘all hands’ came on deck I went about doing that.

The nineteenth day of June was fine, but on the morning of the 20th another gale was blowing, accompanied by cross-seas that tumbled about and shook things up with great confusion. Just as I was thinking about taking in sail the jibstay broke at the masthead, and fell, jib and all, into the sea. It gave me the strangest sensation to see the bellying sail fall, and where it had been suddenly to see only space. However, I was at the bows, with presence of mind to gather it in on the first wave that rolled up, before it was torn or trailed under the sloop’s bottom. I found by the amount of work done in three minutes’ or less time that I had by no means grown stiff-jointed on the voyage; anyhow, scurvy had not set in, and being now within a few degrees of home, I might complete the voyage, I thought, without the aid of a doctor. Yes, my health was still good, and I could skip about the decks in a lively manner, but could I climb? The great King Neptune tested me severely at this time, for the stay being gone, the mast itself switched about like a reed, and was not easy to climb; but a gun-tackle purchase was got up, and the stay set taut from the masthead, for I had spare blocks and rope on board with which to rig it, and the jib, with a reef in it, was soon pulling again like a ‘sodger’ for home. Had the *Spray*’s mast not been well

stepped, however, it would have been ‘John Walker’ when the stay broke. Good work in the building of my vessel stood me always in good stead.

On 23 June I was at last tired, tired, tired of baffling squalls and fretful cobble-seas. I had not seen a vessel for days and days, where I had expected the company of at least a schooner now and then. As to the whistling of the wind through the rigging, and the slopping of the sea against the sloop’s sides, that was well enough in its way, and we could not have got on without it, the *Spray* and I; but there was so much of it now, and it lasted so long! At noon of that day a winterish storm was upon us from the nor’west. In the Gulf Stream, thus late in June, hailstones were pelting the *Spray,* and lightning was pouring down from the clouds, not in flashes alone, but in almost continuous streams. By slants, however, day and night I worked the sloop in towards the coast, where, on 25 June, off Fire Island, she fell into the tornado which, an hour earlier, had swept over New York city with lightning that wrecked buildings and sent trees flying about in splinters; even ships at docks had parted their moorings and smashed into other ships, doing great damage.

It was the climax storm of the voyage, but I saw the unmistakable character of it in time to have all snug aboard and receive it under bare poles. Even so, the sloop shivered when it struck her, and she heeled over unwillingly on her beam ends; but rounding to, with a sea anchor ahead, she righted and faced out the storm. In the midst of the gale I could do no more than look on, for what is a man in a storm like this? I had seen one electric storm on the voyage, off the coast of Madagascar, but it was unlike this one. Here the lightning kept on longer, and thunderbolts fell in the sea all about.

Up to this time I was bound for New York; but when all was over I rose, made sail, and hove the sloop round from starboard to port tack, to make for a quiet harbour to think the matter over; and so, under short sail, she reached in for the coast of Long Island, while I sat thinking and watching the lights of coasting vessels which now began to appear in sight.

Reflections of the voyage so nearly finished stole in upon me now; many tunes I had hummed again and again came back once more. I found myself repeating fragments of a hymn often sung by a dear Christian woman of Fairhaven when I was rebuilding the *Spray.* I was to hear once more and only once, in profound solemnity, the metaphorical hymn:

By waves and wind I’m tossed and driven.

And again:

But still my little ship outbraves The blust’ring winds and stormy waves.

After this storm I saw the pilot of the *Pinta* no more.

The experiences of the voyage of the *Spray,* reaching over three years, had been to me like reading a book, and one that was more and more interesting as I turned the pages, till I had come now to the last page of all, and the one more interesting than any of the rest.

When daylight came I saw that the sea had changed colour from dark green to light. I threw the lead and got soundings in thirteen fathoms. I made the land soon after, some miles east of Fire Island, and sailing thence before a pleasant breeze along the coast, made for Newport. The weather after the furious gale was remarkably fine. The *Spray* rounded Montauk Point early in the afternoon; Point Judith was abeam at dark; she fetched in at Beavertail next. Sailing on, she had one more danger to pass—Newport harbour was mined. The *Spray* hugged the rocks along where neither friend nor foe could come if drawing much water, and where she would not disturb the guard ship in the channel. It was close work, but it was safe enough so long as she hugged the rocks close, and not the mines.

Flitting by a low point abreast of the guard ship, the dear old *Dexter,* which I knew well, someone on board of her sang out, ‘There goes a craft!’ I threw up a light at once and heard the hail, ‘*Spray,* ahoy!’ It was the voice of a friend, and I knew that a friend would not fire on the *Spray.* I eased off the main-sheet now, and the *Spray* swung off for the beacon-lights of the inner harbour. At last she reached port in safety, and there at 1 a.m. on 27 June 1898, cast anchor, after the cruise of more than 46,000 miles round the world, during an absence of three years and two months, with two days over for coming up.

Was the crew well? Was I not? I had profited in many ways by the voyage. I had even gained flesh, and actually weighed a pound more than when I sailed from Boston. As for ageing, why, the dial of my life was turned back till my friends all said, ‘Slocum is young again.’ And so I was,

at least ten years younger than the day I felled the first tree for the construction of the *Spray.*

My ship was also in better condition than when she sailed from Boston on her long voyage. She was still as sound as a nut, and as tight as the best ship afloat. She did not leak a drop—not one drop! The pump, which had been little used before reaching Australia, had not been rigged since that at all.

The first name on the *Spray*'s visitors' book in the home port was written by the one who always said, 'The *Spray* will come back.' The *Spray* was not quite satisfied till I sailed her around to her birthplace, Fairhaven, Massachusetts, farther along. I had myself a desire to return to the place of the very beginning whence I had, as I have said, renewed my age. So on 3 July, with a fair wind, she waltzed beautifully round the coast and up the Acushnet River to Fairhaven, where I secured her to the cedar spile driven in the bank to hold her when she was launched. I could bring her no nearer home.

If the *Spray* discovered no continents on her voyage, it may be that there were no more continents to be discovered; she did not seek new worlds, or sail to powwow about the dangers of the seas. The sea has been much maligned. To find one's way to lands already discovered is a good thing, and the *Spray* made the discovery that even the worst sea is not so terrible to a well-appointed ship. No king, no country, no treasury at all, was taxed for the voyage of the *Spray,* and she accomplished all that she undertook to do.

To succeed, however, in anything at all, one should go understandingly about his work and be prepared for every emergency. I see, as I look back over my own small achievement, a kit of not too elaborate carpenters' tools, a tin clock, and some carpet tacks, not a great many, to facilitate the enterprise as already mentioned in the story. But above all to be taken into account were some years of schooling, where I studied with diligence Neptune's laws, and these laws I tried to obey when I sailed overseas; it was worth the while.

And now, without having wearied my friends, I hope, with detailed scientific accounts, theories or deductions, I will only say that I have endeavoured to tell just the story of the adventure itself. This, in my own

poor way, having been done, I now moor ship, weather-bitt cables, and leave the sloop *Spray,* for the present, safe in port.

APPENDIX

LINES AND SAIL-PLAN OF THE *SPRAY*

Her pedigree so far as known—The lines of the *Spray*—Her self-steering qualities—Sail-plan and steeringgear—An unprecedented feat—A final word of cheer to would-be navigators.

From a feeling of diffidence towards sailors of great experience, I refrained, in the preceding chapters as prepared for serial publication in the *Century Magazine*, from entering fully into the details of the *Spray*'s build, and of the primitive methods employed to sail her. Having had no yachting experience at all, I had no means of knowing that the trim vessels seen in our harbours and near the land could not all do as much, or even more, than the *Spray,* sailing, for example, on a course with the helm lashed.

I was aware that no other vessel had sailed in this manner around the globe, but would have been loath to say that another could not do it, or that many men had not sailed vessels of a certain rig in that manner as far as they wished to go. I was greatly amused, therefore, by the flat assertions of an expert that it could not be done.

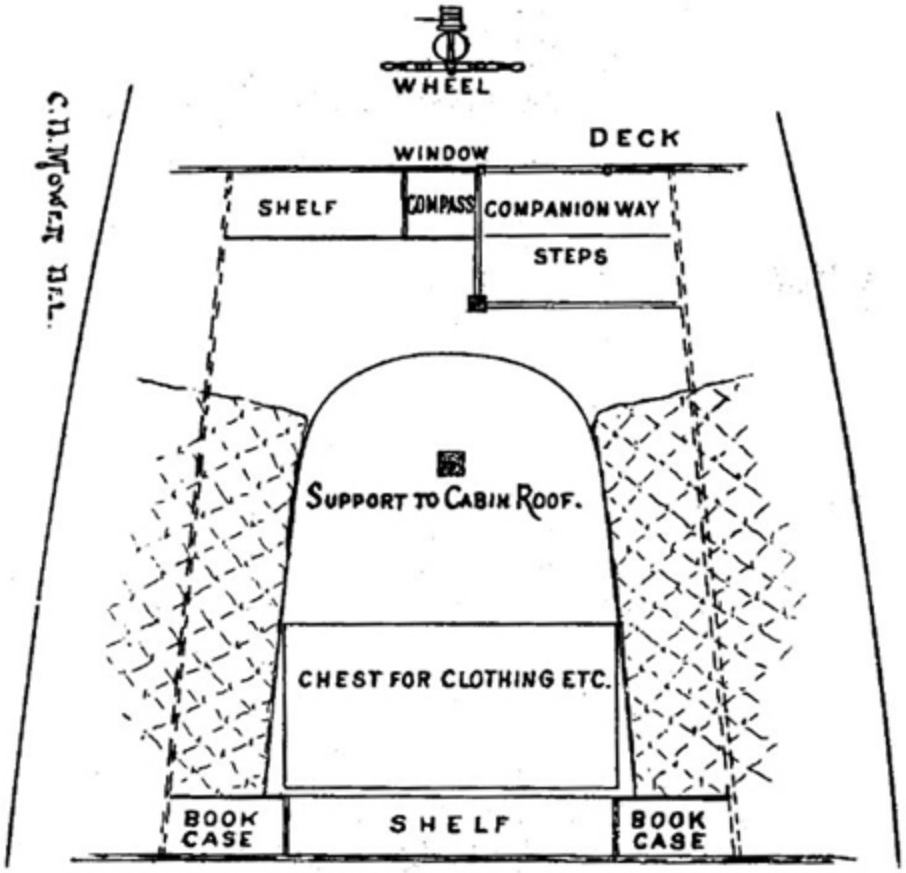
The *Spray,* as I sailed her, was entirely a new boat, built over from a sloop which bore the same name, and which, tradition said, had first served as an oysterman, about a hundred years ago, on the coast of Delaware. There was no record in the custom house of where she was built. She was once owned at Noank, Connecticut, afterward in New Bedford and when Captain Eben Pierce presented her to me, at the end of her natural life, she stood, as I have already described, propped up in a field at Fairhaven. Her lines were supposed to be those of a North Sea fisherman. In rebuilding timber by timber and plank by plank, I added to her freeboard twelve inches amidships, eighteen inches forward, and fourteen inches aft, thereby increasing her sheer, and making her, as I thought, a better deepwater ship. I will not repeat the history of the rebuilding of the *Spray,* which I have

detailed in my first chapter, except to say that, when finished, her dimensions were thirty-six feet nine inches over all, fourteen feet two inches wide, and four feet two inches deep in the hold, her tonnage being nine tons net, and twelve and seventy one-hundredths tons gross.

I gladly produce the lines of the *Spray,* with such hints as my really limited fore-and-aft sailing will allow, my seafaring life having been spent mostly in barks and ships. No pains have been spared to give them accurately.

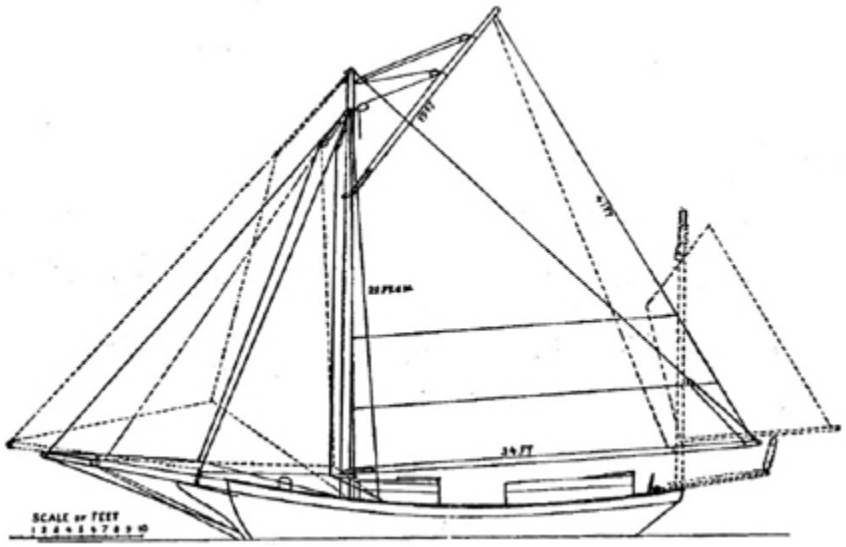
The *Spray* was taken from New York to Bridgeport, Connecticut, and, under the supervision of the Park City Yacht Club, was hauled out of water and very carefully measured in every way to secure a satisfactory result. Captain Robins produced the model. Our young yachtsmen, pleasuring in the ‘lilies of the sea’, very naturally will not think favourably of my craft. They have a right to their opinion, while I stick to mine. They will take exceptions to her short ends, the advantage of these being most apparent in a heavy sea.

Some things about the *Spray*’s deck might be fashioned differently without materially affecting the vessel. I know of no good reason why for a party boat a cabin trunk might not be built amidships instead of far aft, like the one on her, which leaves a very narrow space between the wheel and the line of the companionway. Some even say that I might have improved the shape of her stern. I do not know about that. The water leaves her run sharp after bearing her to the last inch, and no suction is formed by undue cutaway.



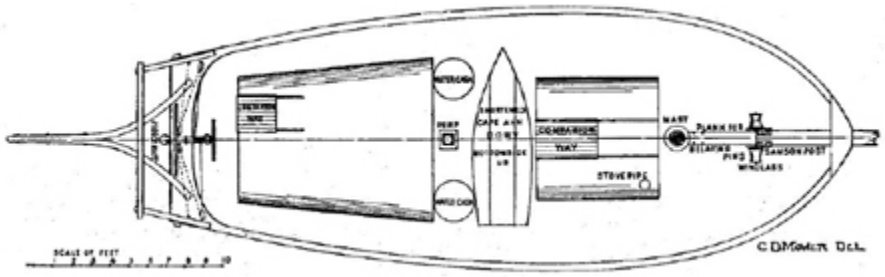
Plan of the after cabin of the *Spray*

Smooth-water sailors say, ‘Where is her overhang?’ They never crossed the Gulf Stream in a nor’easter, and they do not know what is best in all weathers. For your life, build no fantail overhang on a craft going offshore. As a sailor judges his prospective ship by a ‘blow of the eye’ when he takes interest enough to look her over at all, so I judged the *Spray,* and I was not deceived.



Sail-plan of the *Spray*

The solid lines represent the sail-plan of the *Spray* on starting for the long voyage. With it she crossed the Atlantic to Gibraltar, and then crossed again southwest to Brazil. In South American waters the bowsprit and boom were shortened and the jigger-sail added to form the yawl-rig with which the rest of the trip was made, the sail-plan of which is indicated by the dotted lines. The extreme sail forward is a flying jib occasionally used, set to a bamboo stick fastened to the bowsprit.

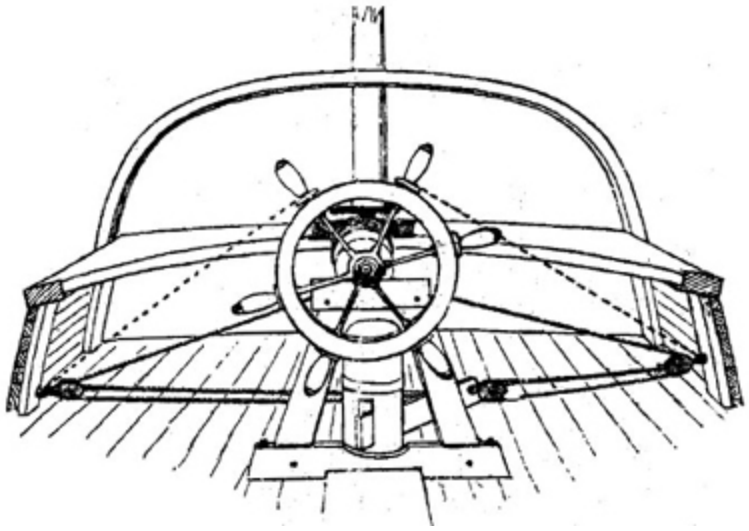


Deck-plan of the *Spray*

In a sloop rig the *Spray* made that part of her voyage reaching from Boston through the Strait of Magellan, during which she experienced the greatest variety of weather conditions. The yawl rig then adopted was an improvement only in that it reduced the size of a rather heavy mainsail and slightly improved her steering qualities on the wind. When the wind was aft the jigger was not in use; invariably it was then furled. With her boom broad off and with the wind two points on the quarter the *Spray* sailed her truest course. It never took long to find the amount of helm, or angle of

rudder, required to hold her on her course, and when that was found I lashed the wheel with it at that angle. The mainsail then drove her, and the main-jib, with its sheet boused flat amidships or a little to one side or the other, added greatly to the steadying power. Then if the wind was even strong or squally I would sometimes set a flyingjib also, on a pole rigged out on the bowsprit, with the sheets hauled flat amidships, which was a safe thing to do, even in a gale of wind. A stout downhaul on the gaff was a necessity, because without it the mainsail might not have come down when I wished to lower it in a breeze. The amount of helm required varied according to the amount of wind and its direction. These points are quickly gathered from practice.

Briefly I have to say that when close-hauled in a light wind under all sail she required little or no weather helm. As the wind increased I would go on deck, if below, and turn the wheel up a spoke more or less, relash it, or, as sailors say, put it in a becket, and then leave it as before.



Steering gear of the *Spray*

The dotted lines are the ropes used to lash the wheel. In practice the loose ends were belayed, one over the other, around the top spokes of the wheel.

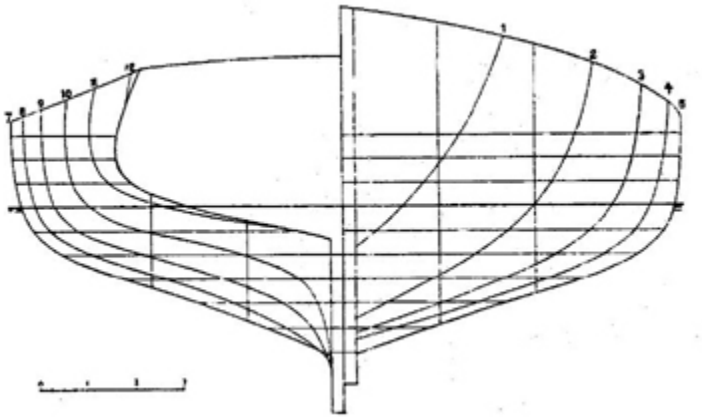
To answer the questions that might be asked to meet every contingency would be a pleasure, but it would overburden my book. I can only say here that much comes to one in practice, and that, with such as love sailing, mother-wit is the best teacher, after experience. Labour-saving appliances?

There were none. The sails were hoisted by hand; the halyards were rove through ordinary ships' blocks with common patent rollers. Of course the sheets were all belayed aft.

The windlass used was in the shape of a winch, or crab, I think it is called. I had three anchors, weighing forty pounds, one hundred pounds, and 180 pounds respectively. The windlass and the forty-pound anchor, and the 'fiddle-head', or carving, on the end of the cutwater, belonged to the original *Spray.* The ballast, concrete cement, was stanchioned down securely. There was no iron or lead or other weight on the keel.

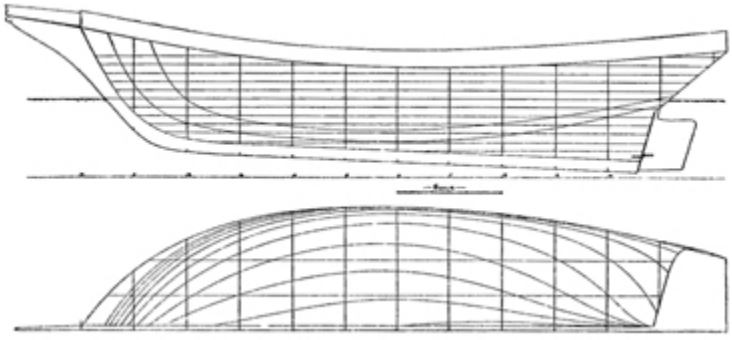
If I took measurements by rule I did not set them down, and after sailing even the longest voyage in her I could not tell offhand the length of her mast, boom or gaff. I did not know the centre of effort in her sails, except as it hit me in practice at sea, nor did I care a rope yarn about it. Mathematical calculations, however, are all right in a good boat, and the *Spray* could have stood them. She was easily balanced and easily kept in trim.

Some of the oldest and ablest shipmasters have asked how it was possible for her to hold a true course before the wind, which was just what the *Spray* did for weeks together. One of these gentlemen, a highly esteemed shipmaster and friend, testified as government expert in a famous murder trial in Boston, not long since, that a ship would not hold her course long enough for the steersman to leave the helm to cut the captain's throat. Ordinarily it would be so. One might say that with a square-rigged ship it would always be so. But the *Spray,* at the moment of the tragedy in question, was sailing around the globe with no one at the helm, except at intervals more or less rare. However, I may say here that this would have had no bearing on the murder case in Boston. In all probability Justice laid her hand on the true rogue. In other words, in the case of a model and rig similar to that of the tragedy ship, I should myself testify as did the nautical experts at the trial.



Body-plan of the *Spray*

But see the run the *Spray* made from Thursday Island to the Keeling Cocos Islands, 2700 miles distant, in twenty-three days, with no one at the helm in that time, save for about one hour, from land to land. No other ship in the history of the world ever performed, under similar circumstances, the feat on so long and continuous a voyage. It was, however, a delightful midsummer sail. No one can know the pleasure of sailing free over the great oceans save those who have had the experience. It is not necessary, in order to realise the utmost enjoyment of going around the globe, to sail alone, yet for once and the first time there was a great deal of fun in it. My friend the government expert, and saltest of salt sea captains, standing only yesterday on the deck of the *Spray,* was convinced of her famous qualities, and he spoke enthusiastically of selling his farm on Cape Cod and putting to sea again.



Lines of the *Spray*

To young men contemplating a voyage I would say go. The tales of rough usage are for the most part exaggerations, as also are the stories of sea danger. I had a fair schooling in the so-called ‘hard ships’ on the hard Western Ocean, and in the years there I do not remember having once been ‘called out of my name’. Such recollections have endeared the sea to me. I owe it further to the officers of all the ships I ever sailed in as boy and man to say that not one ever lifted so much as a finger to me. I did not live among angels, but among men who could be roused. My wish was, though, to please the officers of my ship wherever I was, and so I got on. Dangers there are, to be sure, on the sea as well as on the land, but the intelligence and skill God gives to man reduce these to a minimum. And here comes in again the skilfully modelled ship worthy to sail the seas.

To face the elements is, to be sure, no light matter when the sea is in its grandest mood. You must then know the sea, and know that you know it, and not forget that it was made to be sailed over.

I have given in the plans of the *Spray* the dimensions of such a ship as I should call seaworthy in all conditions of weather and on all seas. It is only right to say, though, that to ensure a reasonable measure of success, experience should sail with the ship. But in order to be a successful navigator or sailor it is not necessary to hang a tar-bucket about one’s neck. On the other hand, much thought concerning the brass buttons one should wear adds nothing to the safety of the ship.

I may some day see reason to modify the model of the dear old *Spray,* but out of my limited experience I strongly recommend her wholesome lines over those of pleasure-fliers for safety. Practice in a craft such as the *Spray* will teach young sailors and fit them for the more important vessels. I myself learned more seamanship, I think, on the *Spray* than on any other ship I ever sailed, and as for patience, the greatest of all the virtues, even while sailing through the reaches of the Strait of Magellan, between the bluff mainland and dismal Fuego, where through intricate sailing I was obliged to steer, I learned to sit by the wheel, content to make ten miles a day beating against the tide, and when a month at that was all lost, I could find some old tune to hum while I worked the route all over again, beating as before. Nor did thirty hours at the wheel, in storm, overtax my human endurance, and to clap a hand to an oar and pull into or out of port in a calm

was no strange experience for the crew of the *Spray.* The days passed happily with me wherever my ship sailed.

Strange, but True: Life and Adventures of Captain Thomas Crapo and Wife

ACROSS THE ATLANTIC OCEAN IN A DORY BOAT

As I began to make preparations to rig my boat with her masts and sails, my wife was all anxiety about my intended trip, and the idea preyed on her mind until at last she informed me that if I went she should go too.

This was something I had not thought of for a moment; and, again, how could two go with such a small craft, with hardly room for one and turn around? But there I was, face to it, and I knew my wife's courage, as I had seen it tested, and I knew, without argument, that when she said she was going she meant it, and that settled it. There was no use trying to dissuade her, as it would only be wasting breath, so I took the matter as coolly as possible. Had I known things would have taken such a turn I would have had my boat built a trifle larger on her account; but it could not be done now, as she was all built.

My readers can see how cramped we would be for room, as I had the boat built just nineteen feet and seven inches long, six feet and two inches wide, and thirty inches deep, and she only drew thirteen inches of water, with us and everything on board. Her foremast was twenty-one and one-half feet long, and the mainmast was twenty and one-half feet long. Her main boom was about ten feet long, the foresail contained fifteen yards of light duck, and the mainsail ten yards. Just twenty-five yards of sail to carry two people across the Atlantic Ocean! Just think of it! Her measurements were one ton and sixty-two one hundredths of a ton, her actual weight being about five hundred pounds. She was decked over on top, and had two scuttles, one forward and one aft. The one aft I had to sit in to steer, so my readers can see plainly what a large amount of room we had to eat, drink and sleep in. It was a vast difference between our limited accommodations and the comforts of a palatial steamer to cross to England.

I rigged her as I intended…I then launched her, and the following Monday put my kegs which were supposed to contain fresh water for

drinking purposes on board in position. I gave it out that I with my wife would start on the 28th of that month (May). My intentions were to have a trial trip in her, but I did not get a chance. I kept her moored at Fish Island, and the following Sunday the Reverend James Butler, of the Seamen's Bethel, held religious services on the island, which were largely attended, as it looked as though the whole city had turned out.

The next day I put on board our provisions, which consisted of ninety pounds of biscuits, seventy-five pounds of canned meats, and one hundred gallons of fresh water for drinking purposes and for making tea or coffee. We also carried a sufficient quantity of tea, coffee, sugar and other light articles. The two scuttles I mentioned were eighteen by twenty-four inches in size, and the one where Captain Crapo would sit to steer was to be used for a dining table (meaning, of course, the sliding cover).

The report of our intended voyage spread like wildfire, and the papers everywhere published more or less in regard to it, and I will give my readers the benefit of one which appeared in the *New York Times,* which read as follows:

A BRAVE MAN

> A few days since a bold New Bedford sea captain and his wife sailed for Europe in a boat of a little less than two tons measurement. Of course, he has been called by every newspaper in the country a wonderfully bold and reckless man. There is no doubt that these epithets rightly belong to him; but, nevertheless, the mere fact that he has attempted to cross the Atlantic in a small sailboat does not prove that he is exceptionally brave. If his boat is properly built for the special service required of her, she will probably carry him safely across the Atlantic…
>
> He will be a long time at sea, but that he will safely reach his port of destination there is little doubt. His boat is much better fitted to navigate the Atlantic than were the vessels of Columbus, and in point of safety is probably quite the peer of a modern Atlantic steamship. He is certainly the boldest man now living; but the mere fact of his going to sea in a small boat does not prove him to be such. It is when we reflect that he has voluntarily shut himself up with his wife for at least

forty days on board a boat twenty feet long, that we are compelled to recognise his unique bravery, and to perceive in this wife a woman of unexampled and utter recklessness.

We may grant that the captain and his wife are extremely devoted one to another, and have hitherto lived together in perfect peace. Still, they have never tried the experiment of living together for forty days without the possibility of escaping from one another's presence. While residing in New Bedford, the captain could always walk to the post office and refresh himself with cloves whenever there was the slightest cloud on the domestic horizon, and in like manner, his wife could always visit a neighbour when her husband showed a disposition to express those views in regard to buttons which have a tendency to cast a gloom over the happiest home. Whenever the captain sat and silently drummed with his fingers on the table until his wife felt as if she 'could perfectly fly', the backyard was always open to her…Married people living on shore can always avoid serious disputes by timely flights. When Nature placed men's stores and offices down town and their homes up town, she evidently intended to furnish those occasions for the temporary separation of man and wife which render wedded love possible. It may be confidently said that there is no real necessity for a man to shoot his wife, or for a wife to poison her husband, so long as they live where the man can flee from the shadow of the coming stove-lid, and the woman can escape to her neighbour's at the first crackling that betokens a crash of the Third Commandment…

The New Bedford captain has laid in full supplies of food and water, but it is impossible for him to provide those frequent absences from the society of his wife which could alone save both him and her from entertaining homicidal thoughts. When, goaded by the refusal of the galley fire to burn, she begins an exhaustive analysis of the captain's character, and gradually shows that he is a brutal and loathsome tyrant, he will be compelled to listen. There is not a nook or corner of the boat to which the clear tones of an earnest woman will not penetrate. When, in his turn, he finds the coffee somewhat cold and thereupon expresses, with all the resources of forcible language at the command of an experienced sailor, the conviction that there is no

> crime, from murder up to frying beefsteak, of which she is not capable, she must either listen or jump overboard.
>
> It may be urged that an affectionate couple will never proceed to such lengths of argument, even in the confined space of a sailboat. Of course, they will not suddenly and simultaneously perceive each other's extreme atrocity, but will reach that point in time. For the first two days they will be affectionate and happy. On the third day the captain will find that a sunburnt nose does not add to his wife's attractiveness, and she will ask herself if it is possible for a woman to respect a man who uses tobacco. On the fourth day they will feel that married life is a failure, and before the first week of the voyage is over they will even wish that they were dead. Having once entered upon an enterprise which demands an amount of bravery never yet displayed by any married man, the captain will doubtless bring his wife safe to land, but as soon as the little vessel reaches the dock a man and a woman will be seen flying in opposite directions; the man seeking the shortest route to Siberia and the wife taking passage in the first steamer that will bring her back to the land where there is room enough for successful matrimony, and where there are divorce laws that soothe the broken heart.†

The *New York Times* therefore predicts that the journey will not be made, and pictures the travellers returning to the starting place after a short absence, when the husband will spring to land and make straight for Siberia by the shortest route; and the wife will rush to torrid zones with at least equal rapidity, after, perhaps, having had one final claw at the departing mariner.

As the greater portion of our food was cooked and in cans, we merely had to warm it up when required to serve. As cooking to any extent would be entirely out of the question, as our stove was a small kerosene lamp stove made to hold a pint of oil, so my readers can plainly see what disadvantages we were about to undergo, but our accommodations were limited, so of course we had to get along the best we could. And again, we were more or less afraid of an explosion, as the boat, in heavy weather especially, would jump and roll about so as to make it unsafe to put much oil in at a time, so we never put in more than a gill at any time.

This being the day set for sailing, we had to hurry in order to make our start without disappointing the multitude of people collected on the wharves and vessels, and especially in row- and sail-boats, which were very numerous. In fact, I never before or since saw so many boats on the river on any occasion. And as it had been published in the papers, many people came on the noon train to see us. Ladies, especially, would force themselves through the crowd in order to get near enough to shake hands with my wife, and many there were more than surprised to see the miniature boat we were going in. Surprise and wonder could be pictured on their faces, and no doubt a great many of them were saying to themselves, they will not go far on that little boat and will soon be back again, the laughing stock of the community. The most noticeable of all at this time was an old lady that I think arrived on the train who forced her way to the side of my wife. Her grey hair denoted the passing of many summers and as many dreary winters. She shook the hand of my wife in a very affectionate manner, saying: ‘My dear child, are you not afraid to trust yourself in such a small boat, on such a dangerous undertaking? You are young and very brave, and I earnestly hope you will merit what you deserve.’

My old father was as near us and our boat as he could possibly get, crying and wringing his hands in a manner pitiful to see in an old man of his years, and constantly saying, ‘The two foolish children, I shall never see them again.’ All this time I was getting our things on board, and as it was nearing our time of starting I did not have time to stow things as they should be. My drogue, line and anchor, compass and water kegs and many other smaller articles were presented to me by friends. Many of my wife’s friends were trying to persuade her from making the attempt, but to no avail. She was as determined as I was. All this time the crowd was growing larger, as many quit work to see us off.

At last I was ready to cast off, and was about to do so when Captain Humphrey Seabury, of New Bedford, a well known and respected citizen, appeared and presented me with a compass that had probably been used on more than one whaleship, and was a reliable one at all times, and I was more than pleased to receive it. He also gave me two charts and an old-fashioned square lantern, the fore side of glass fitted to slide out when necessary to clean. It was fitted to burn candles in, and he also gave me a quantity of candles to burn in it. He, being an old sea captain, knew what

would be the most essential at such a time, and I was very thankful to him for them.

As soon as I cast off our line a general hurrah was given and handkerchiefs were waving everywhere. The yachts at their moorings fired a salute as we passed, and many boats sailed down the bay in company with us, the boats in the harbour being so thick as to make it almost impossible to get through, and all of them wanted to keep as near to us as they possibly could.

As my boat was so small the Custom House officials could not issue marine documents to me, so I carried the following letter:

Custom House, New Bedford, Mass.
Collector's Office, 28 May 1877

Captain Thomas Crapo and his wife, both of this city, being about to sail from this port in a boat called the *New Bedford*, measuring 162/100 tons, bound for London, England, requests me to give him a letter, as, on account of the small size of his vessel, I cannot issue 'marine documents'.

I, therefore, desire to make it known to 'all whom it may concern' that Captain Crapo is well known here, and his purpose is entirely legitimate, and he has the good wishes of this community that his voyage may be successfully accomplished.

J. A. P. Allen
Collector of Customs

As we had hurriedly put our things on board they were not stowed as we intended to have them, as at present they were all in a heap. While we must make some preparations for trimming the boat I found I should have to anchor or run in to some port, and as I perceived she was leaking considerable on account of not having been in the water long enough to swell her tight, I decided to run in at Vineyard Haven for the night. In crossing the bay the wind blew quite fresh from the southwest and the boat

behaved very creditably. As we arrived off Woods Holl the wharves everywhere were black with people, as telegrams had been sent to them to be on the lookout for us, and cheer upon cheer rent the air while hats and handkerchiefs were waving from every available point.

We continued on to Vineyard Haven and ran up alongside of the wharf, when I found that the boat had leaked more than a foot of water, and had wet our bedding and other things. A very enthusiastic crowd of people met us and gave us a hearty welcome. It was about six o'clock in the afternoon when we arrived, and as night was fast approaching and I wanted to get away as soon as possible I began taking things out to dry, and after they were removed I had a tin pump made to pump her out with…

We arose about daylight, and after partaking of a breakfast we walked down towards our little boat, followed by a very eager throng of people. On arriving we found that many of our things were still damp, so we waited for them to dry. About nine o'clock I found that our things were about dry, so we put them on board again, and was about to cast off, when the Reverend L. R. Wait, of Vineyard Haven, delivered a short speech, and at the close of his remarks he handed my wife a letter, telling her to open it at sea.

This was on 29 May 1877. We then cast off our lines and hoisted our sails, amid cheers from the crowd assembled on the wharf. The wind was from the southward and westward, and was blowing quite fresh. Handkerchiefs and hats continued to wave nearly as long as we could see the wharf. Quite a fleet of vessels were at anchor in the harbour, the crews of which also cheered us lustily as we passed them. We headed direct towards Chatham, on Cape Cod, by crossing Vineyard Sound close in towards the north shore. We had comparatively calm water. Our colours flying informed the people on shore who we were, and those that did see us cheered as we passed by them. Our leg of mutton sails, were, no doubt, a strange sight to many, as none of that make are used around here or there; but they are used extensively by the inhabitants of islands in mid-ocean, as they hold the wind below, instead of aloft, therefore they are considered far safer.

The report of our coming seemed to have preceded us, as on our arrival, about four o'clock in the afternoon, we were met by a multitude of people. When running in we struck several times on sandbars, but did not do any damage to our boat. As we stepped on shore we were surrounded by

a large number of inquiring people, that asked all manner of questions relative to our intended trip across the Atlantic. We could only answer them civilly, and Captain Darius Hammond extended an invitation to us to make his home ours during our stay, which must be short at best, as we were anxious to be on our way…

The next morning the captain and myself went around to find a carpenter, as I wanted to make a few alterations to my boat. The two scuttles which I spoke of were cut out eighteen by twenty-four inches, and the top was rather too low to suit us, as we wanted them somewhat higher and fitted so they would slide. We were at last fortunate in finding a man that could do it at once, so he set to work and put combings around each, and fitted them as we wanted them. After this was completed I also had two hundred pounds of iron put in for ballast, as what we had was not sufficient to keep her steady. After this was completed, I had a painter paint her a good thick coat, to make her watertight, if possible, as I did not care about having too much water inside, as we did not have any room for it, and it was not to our liking, as there would be plenty all around us, in case we needed it for anything.

Repairs and painting were finished on the first day of June, and the next day, 2 June, at two o'clock in the afternoon, we hove up our anchor, and as we would have to proceed through a very narrow passage, a man volunteered to tow us out with his dory. The crowd on shore gave three rousing cheers as we started, and hats and handkerchiefs were waving all along the shore…

On arriving in deep water, our pilot left us, with our thanks for his favour, and we then squared off for our destination, England. From this time until our arrival we were to undergo what we had never dreamed of. Just imagine to yourself what it would be in pleasant weather, to be several miles out of sight of land, in a small boat, just for one day and night. You would think it the longest night you had ever seen. Yet here we were, sailing across the boundless waste of waters, all the time going farther and farther away, and whatever the weather should be—rain, thunder and lightning, or a heavy gale of wind—we would have to grin and take it as it came; the thought was not very inviting, to say the least.

We started on our course with a moderate south wind and a comparatively smooth sea. Land faded from our view about five o'clock,

and the sun soon began to draw close to the horizon, which plainly told us that night was fast approaching. At last it sank below the surface, and darkness soon settled over us. I found it hard work to keep awake, but I knew that I must exert myself to do so. Mrs Crapo retired early, which left me alone with nothing but water in sight. The wind was blowing about what is called a three-knot breeze, and the little boat skimmed over the surface of the water like a duck.

Mrs Crapo's apartments were not large enough for her to lose herself in when she lay down to sleep. Her feet rested on the water kegs, and should she desire to turn over she would first have to rise; so my readers can form an idea what limited accommodations we were subjected to, and must put up with for a considerable length of time.

At last signs of daylight appeared, and as the black pall of night was lifted nothing but a dreary waste of water could be seen on every hand. Soon the welcome voice of my partner, bidding me good morning, was heard, which was pleasant to hear at such a time. Soon the glorious orb of day rose in all its majestic splendour, and it was a pretty sight to see bright rays along the water glistening and sparkling like burnished gold.

We soon began preparations for our first breakfast. Mrs Crapo put a gill of oil in our lamp stove, and lighted it, preparatory to making coffee. She then unearthed our monster coffee pot, which, when full, held but a pint, and very soon the pleasant aroma of boiling coffee greeted our nostrils, and it made us hungry to think of it. My appetite was somewhat sharpened, and as soon as all was in readiness I was ready to do justice to it by eating a good hearty meal; and we both felt in better trim to endure whatever it was our lot to face, as nothing excels a full stomach on any occasion, especially as we were alone, and as you may say had nothing to do but eat, drink and sleep. Yet I had to steer the boat as straight towards our destination as possible, at all times; even while eating I kept her on her course.

I wish further to inform my readers how we had to make our coffee. As the motion of the boat rendered it unsafe to leave a lighted lamp stove anywhere unattended, my wife placed it between my feet, so the motion of the boat would not have any effect upon it, as no one knows when they will explode. It would, I am sure, make a person laugh to see us preparing our meals; but it was our only source, as our kitchen, pantry, sitting room, dining room, and parlour, were all connected, and it did not take us long to

go to any part of the house. Should my wife be reading in the sitting room or parlour, I could summon her at any time by merely whispering, so we had no use for speaking tubes.

After we had finished our morning meal, the utensils for preparing it were again put away, and we passed the long hours of the morning (we did not expect any callers so did not put ourselves out any in making any useless preparations) in relating little incidents connected with our attempted voyage. Thus the day wore on, and as the only reading matter we had with us was a Bible and a few tracts, we had to converse on different subjects, as the time began to hang heavy as the sun passed over our heads. This being 3 June, and about four o'clock in the afternoon, I concluded to heave the boat to and have a short nap, as I had steered from our starting the day previous, making a total of twenty-six consecutive hours without rest, and tired nature began to assert her rights. So I lowered the foresail and hauled aft the main sheet, and then curled myself up for a snooze, and it did not take me long to pass the portals of sweet sleep, as I was very tired, as there was not much chance to move my limbs while steering.

While I was sleeping the vessel was in charge of my mate, who had proven herself to be an accomplished sailor. I slept until about eight o'clock, when I hoisted my foresail and slacked off my main sheet and again headed for England, the land of roses, which lay about east by north from us. The weather continued to be fair but the nights were very chilly. My mate again retired early, which left me monarch of all I surveyed, and with a good four-knot breeze we went skimming along; the only thing to break the monotony was the noise of the boat cutting through the water. I eagerly watched for signs of daylight, as I knew that a cup of good hot coffee would not only refresh but drive the chilly, numb feeling away. As I sat cramped all up in such a small space so long it was a luxury to get a chance to stretch my legs and arms.

At last the morning of 4 June greeted us with a fourknot wind and water about the same as on the preceding day. On casting our eyes about we sighted a number of fishing vessels anchored on what is called the 'George's Banks'. We ran up to one, which proved to be the schooner *A. J. Chapman*, of New London, Conn., fishing for halibut. The crew at the time were absent in the dories attending to their trawls, so the captain was the only one we saw on board. He asked us where we were bound and

numerous other questions. He also coaxed us to come on board and get a cup of good hot coffee, but as we had just had some we respectfully declined the invitation with thanks. He then proposed for us to come on board and stretch our limbs, but this we also declined. So we bade him goodbye and sailed on our course.

In the afternoon we sighted two vessels on the wind making to the southward and westward and about four miles from us. About four o'clock in the afternoon I again hove the boat to and took another nap until eight in the evening, which made another twenty hours of steering without rest. About this time my wife began to feel a little qualmish, as the motion of the boat was considerably quicker than a large vessel, and as the boat had begun to dance considerably it had the abovementioned effect on her…

When I awoke we again made sail and sailed on our course, and as my wife was getting quite nervous she remained up instead of going to bed. She kept me company until nearly daylight, when tired nature gave way and she lay down to sleep, and after a short time I hove the boat to and took a nap myself. The wind still held to the westward and the sea was quite calm. This was on the fifth day of June, our third day from Chatham. We sailed along all day without seeing anything more than gulls and porpoises, which were quite numerous… The next day, 6 June, the sun rose in all its splendour. It was a pleasing sight to watch it rise, seemingly from out the ocean, and soar aloft to cast its pleasant rays on land and sea. As there was no sail in sight I again hove the boat to and took a nap until about eight o'clock when I again made sail and proceeded on our course. We saw a great many storm petrel, better known as Mother Carey's chickens. After we had got well under way we decided to open the letter handed to us at Vineyard Haven, which we were to open and read at sea. We broke the seal and on opening it the following met our eyes:

> Brother and Sister Crapo
> When you are at sea remember you have the prayers of millions to cheer you on your perilous journey. We commend you to the God who watches over you on sea as well as on land. Commit your ways to Him and be calm in times of danger. You go with the good wishes of many.
> Yours in good feeling,
> Lyman R. Wait, Minister

This was encouraging, indeed, to think that, away from the bustle of the busy world, alone on the broad expanse of water many miles away from home and friends, these kind words were felt with an intense longing to shake the hands of those who would eagerly watch for reports from us from time to time, yet could they but realise what we must endure before reaching the goal we so eagerly sought their anxiety would be far greater for our safety. As many, many times large vessels go to sea and are never heard from again, either burned at sea or wrecked in a gale. And for us two persons to venture in such a frail craft was what set the millions of people to wondering what the result would be. So we talked over that letter for quite a length of time, as it was a good subject for us; thus the day passed and night again spread her mantle over the world.

We did not mind the voyage by daylight but after night set in it was far from pleasant, as in the daylight we could see whatever was within reach of our sight, but darkness hid everything; and it is very surprising, when we realise what quantities of grampus, porpoise, blackfish, school killers, whales, and other large monsters there are in the ocean, that we were not smashed in pieces in the night or that none of them came up to the surface under our boat, which as they cannot breathe under water they come to the surface to do so. Yet we are pleased to say nothing of the kind happened, and we earnestly hoped the balance of our perilous journey would be as safe for us…

My wife began to feel decidedly better, as she had now got used to the motion of the boat, which made it far pleasanter for both of us. Nothing appeared in sight at daylight, or when I awoke from my usual nap, and after we had partaken of our breakfast we continued on, with a four-knot breeze from the southwest. About one o'clock in the afternoon we sighted a sail, and as it appeared to be coming our way we continued on our course, and very soon we could see her hull very plainly. She continued to draw closer, so we headed for her, and as we drew close up with her I spoke to her. She proved to be the ship *Gustave and Oscar,* from Bremen, bound for New York. After informing the captain of our intended voyage, I asked him what our position was. He informed us that we were about two hundred miles due south from Liverpool, Nova Scotia. We requested him to report us, which he promised to do…We then parted company, receiving hearty cheers from the crew, and the ship's colours were dipped to us as a parting

salute, and as we were sailing in opposite directions it was not long before she was entirely out of sight…

Shortly after she disappeared, night again spread her mantle over us. The wind died down and left the sea in a dead calm, and to make things more uninviting, a thick fog set in, which made us very uncomfortable; as my readers can imagine what a cold, damp fog in the night is, especially out at sea in a small boat. About nine o'clock we were given a surprise party, which at the time was not received with much enthusiasm, as we were put to considerable inconvenience, both in mind and body, the participants being a large school of sperm whales, which forced their company upon us uninvited.

This was a bad predicament to be in, as sperm whales are very dangerous at all times; and if one of them should by chance touch our boat he would slash it into fragments with his flukes. They have very small eyes, and as they are quite a distance back from the end of the head, they can only see on each side of them; so my readers can just imagine one of them swimming along, with his large flat nose bunting into our little boat, which would undoubtedly have tipped her over and left us to the mercy of the whales and sea.

My wife was very much frightened…She asked me if there was any danger, and of course I did not want to make her any worse by telling her just what danger we were in. She wanted me to shoot them, or anything to drive them away; and as a splash in the water or a strange noise will sometimes scare them off, I decided to try to get rid of them, as many times they came so close that the vapour they blow out, which is their breath, would blow over us and the boat, like steam from the spout of a teakettle, so I made a noise with my rudder which soon had the desired effect. My fear was that in sounding one of them might rise to the surface under the boat, in case of which our fate would never have been known, as we would have been thrashed to pieces in their fury. And we were both easier in mind when they left us, and we surely did not extend to them an invitation to call again, as they had forced their company upon us for nearly seven hours, which had caused us to dislike them very much, and their continued puffing was not a pleasing sound in our ears as there was not much music to it, their voices not being properly cultivated.

We looked for their reappearance until daylight, and were pleased to be disappointed. The fog still hung heavy around us and a light breeze sprang up from the southeast, and as the whales were not to be seen or heard, I took my usual nap. This was on June 8th.

When I awoke we had our breakfast and pulled in our drogue and squared away on our course. Everything went well considering the thick fog, which kept us busy listening for the fog horns of passing vessels. I had used mine until it was played out and practically useless, which made us more on the alert as we were in danger of being run down, as we could only use our lungs, providing we heard a vessel's warning of her approach.

Early in the afternoon it began to rain very hard. This was more than we wished for as I was drenched to the skin, and to sit all cramped up and keep her on her course was not very pleasant at best. One does not dread a rainstorm on shore, as by bundling up and with an umbrella they can get along very comfortably, but I could do neither, as I had to sit still and let the rain beat on my unprotected body as it pleased. I was not afraid of taking cold, as that is a very unusual thing at sea, yet in years to come it is liable to cause rheumatism…Towards night the rain ceased, but the fog still hung on and darkness soon settled around us. Another tedious night was upon us…

The morning of the 14th opened with a heavy wind from the southwest. The wind increased so much that during the afternoon I hove to and put out my drogue to steady her. The seas ran mountains high, and I soon found that my drogue was insufficient to hold the boat steady, it being too light. Oh, how I wished I had something to make a heavier one, but I did not have the necessary articles to do so, so I must make it answer in some way.

We laid to until daylight of the 15th, when the wind moderated and we again started on our course. On figuring up by dead reckoning I found we were in lat. 43.46, lon. 58.54. During the day we were again surrounded by a school of whales, and I found it hard work to steer clear from them. Again night spread her mantle over us, and with the fog still holding on we passed the dreary night. In the early morning I took a nap, the first sleep I had had for twenty-four hours. As we were having more or less heavy weather regular meals were out of the question, so we ate whenever we chose. This was 16 June. We sailed along until about eight o'clock in the evening, when we hove to under our drogue and took catnaps through the night, at all times

realising our danger on account of the thick fog, yet the night passed without accident…

As we again hauled in our drogue about eleven o'clock on the morning of 18 June, we again set sail and proceeded on our course, before the wind. The seas were running so heavy that the boat laboured very hard, and it often looked as though we would be swamped; as the high seas came up behind us it looked as though it would completely envelop us from sight. When in the trough of the sea it looked like a large wall in front and back with no chance of escape, but we would rise on top again like a duck and shoot ahead ready to surmount the next one. By dead reckoning we were in lat. 43.43, lon. 55.30…

The 20th was ushered in with the wind still increasing and blowing from the south and a heavy rain set in. I managed to catch a small pitcher full, while laid to under our drogue. Late in the day the wind took a slant to the west and moderated, when we again started, steering east-southeast by the compass. The wind again increased, so I furled the mainsail and ran before the wind under the foresail with a heavy sea running from the west. I had occasion to go forward, and when I returned I accidentally stepped on my compass and broke the glass, but did not do any other damage to it. I then took two of the glasses from my lantern and fitted it as best I could, as the small one I had was no good at all.

June 21st opened with a heavy gale from the westward. We ran under foresail, and about two in the afternoon we sighted a fisherman at anchor with a storm trysail up, as the sea was running very heavy on the Grand Banks (Banks of Newfoundland). We were then running under our foresail so we ran down and spoke to her, and on inquiry we were informed that we were in lat. 43.43. The vessel proved to be a fisherman from Provincetown, but as she had so many boats around her we could not get her name. It was about three o'clock in the afternoon when we spoke to her…About five in the afternoon, while under our drogue, an English bark named the *Amenori* ran down and spoke to us. She was from Baltimore, bound for Glasgow, Scotland. The captain asked if we wanted any assistance, and as we replied in the negative they proceeded after giving us the longitude, 50.1. As they passed they gave us a rousing cheer, and cries of good luck to you…

The 23rd was ushered in with a fresh breeze from the south, and it continued to increase. As we were sailing along with wind on our beam we

nearly capsized, and as I saw it would probably prove dangerous to continue I hove to under the drogue. Soon a heavy tempest set in and continued with very heavy rain nearly all night. My readers all know what a heavy thunderstorm is on shore, but it is nothing compared to a thunderstorm at sea; the sky settles as black as ink, when the thunder fairly shakes one's whole being and flashes of lightning nearly blind you. Simple words cannot adequately describe it. Every flash that dashes across the blackened heavens is plainly seen as there is nothing above the surface to break off the view, and the constant roll of the thunder, coupled with the drenching rain, was enough to make the strongest man quail.

Thunderstorms, as everybody knows, are never very pleasant, as they are almost always coupled with more or less danger. Many times the lightning strikes houses, trees or human beings, and for us two alone in a little boat hundreds of miles from land and nothing but water in sight no wonder we were more or less frightened, and we were more than pleased when it passed over, as I was as wet as a drowned rat and had to keep a sharp lookout for fear of being run down by some ocean steamer or sailing vessel.

As I before stated, the drogue I had was far from being heavy enough to hold the boat steady, and really I class it as an interposition of Providence as I chanced to see a keg floating towards us, which I lost no time in securing, when I knocked the hoops off and cut them off with a hatchet, leaving them about fifteen inches in diameter. I then put three of them together and fastened them with rope yarns. I then took an old canvas hammock I had on board and cut it in the shape of a draw water bucket and sewed it to the hoops with rope yarns. I then fastened it with spun yarn so it would pull even, about the same as a bail to a water pail, only I put on two, one opposite to the other. After completing it I fastened it to a line five fathoms longer than the one I had and put it out, and it was a godsend indeed as it, coupled with the other, held us very nicely.

During the night, and especially the early hours of the morning, I was kept busy hauling in on the drogue line when I saw a very large sea coming and ease it off when it passed, which was tedious work. This was the morning of the 24th. Early in the forenoon we sighted a sail heading towards the westward and we were expecting she would get by without seeing us, but when she was within about a mile of us, she veered from her

course and ran down towards us. She proved to be an ocean steamship, *Batavia*, from Liverpool for Boston, under command of Captain John E. Moreland.

As she came close to us the captain hailed us and asked if we wanted any assistance, to which I replied ‘No’. He asked where we were bound, when I replied ‘to England’. He then said that when he sighted us he thought it was a boat with survivors from some wrecked vessel. I then stood on deck holding on to my mainmast. He then asked if we wanted to be taken off, to which I again replied ‘No’, but I said I should like to be reported. All this time handkerchiefs were waving from nearly every deadlight on the steamer. The captain gave us the lat. 44, lon. 48.20. We then parted company as the steamer proceeded on her course, dipping her flags as a salute to us to which we responded by dipping ours…

The gale continued through the night with the seas running mountains high with the wind from the westward. The boat laboured very hard and the seas were continually breaking over her, which showed the velocity of the wind. About nine o’clock on the morning of the 25th I hauled in the drogue, which I had tended for the past eighteen hours, and proceeded on our course, steering east-southeast by the compass. We continued on through the day and the following night until daylight of the 26th, when I hove to and took a nap.

When I awoke the sky was still very heavy and overcast, and no signs of the sun breaking through. The wind had moderated but the seas were still running very high; nothing but gulls and porpoises in sight, the porpoises many times coming so close to our boat that I could touch them. Later in the day the wind increased and again blew quite heavy, but we continued to run under our foresail.

Along towards night we sighted a Swansea brig, which ran down and spoke to us. The captain says, ‘Give us a line and we will tow you.’

‘We are not crossing the ocean that way,’ I replied.

The seas were running so high and her name was so badly painted we could not make it out, all we could make out was the word Swansea. About an hour after speaking to the brig, we saw a very large sunfish, which measured, I should judge, all of three feet across the back. The sunfish are very queer-looking fish, the under part very much resembling a scallop. They are not good for eating purposes; the only part I ever heard of being

put to use was the liver which is very much sought for, as the oil from it is claimed to be very good for the relief of that painful disease, rheumatism…

During the early hours of the night the wind took a slant to the northwest and increased in its fury but moderated again towards morning, so much so that about seven o'clock of the 28th I hauled in our drogue and proceeded on our course with the wind from the west. About nine o'clock in the forenoon we sighted a sail heading to the westward, and we were probably seen by them about the same time. We sighted them as they changed their course and headed for us, and as she arrived within hailing distance the captain hailed us. She proved to be the Bremen bark *Amphitrite*, from Bristol, England, bound to Quebec, under command of Captain Geares. He invited us to come on board, but we respectfully declined; but as the captain's wife urged us so hard we at last consented to go on board for a short time.

The captain then ordered the sailors to get down in our boat to fend her off and keep her from pounding against the side of the ship, and we then went on board. And what a relief that was to our tired and cramped limbs; simple words cannot adequately describe the sensation, as we had been cramped into a small compass where we could scarcely turn around for twenty-six days, and to once more be permitted to walk, run or jump was pleasure indeed. As we stepped on board we were greeted with applause from all on board, and the captain and his wife, who were a newly married couple, escorted us down into their cabin; at that time issuing orders to haul aback the vessel's yards to keep her from sailing along.

We were pleasantly entertained while on board, and dinner was served and we all sat down, which also was very pleasing for us to have a chance to sit down and quietly partake of a well-prepared meal placed on a table and comfortable chairs to sit in.

We remained on board about three-quarters of an hour. While on board I wrote two letters directed to New Bedford, which the captain was to mail for me upon his arrival in port. We then made preparations to go aboard of our boat again, and we were prevailed upon to accept two bottles of choice wine which we were very grateful for. We then went aboard and our lines were cast off, goodbyes were said, and amid cheers from all we parted company and sailed on our course. The crew were waving handkerchiefs

and hats as long as we could see them, to which we responded by dipping our colours.

During our conversation at dinner I requested the captain to report us upon his arrival, and to prove that he did the following show, which was printed in the papers:

> Captain Geares of the barque *Amphitrite*, from Bristol, England, reported that June 26th, in lat. 44.39 north, lon. 43 west, met the twenty-foot boat (schooner rigged whaleboat) *New Bedford*, twenty-two days out, with Mr and Mrs Crapo on board. Hove to and the two voyagers boarded the *Amphitrite*. They remained to dinner and expressed themselves well satisfied so far with the voyage to Europe, and stated that they had enjoyed good health. At parting Captain Geares provided them with wine and water and a few small articles, when the two vessels separated, the *New Bedford* steering east-northeast, and the ship's company gave them three cheers and wished them Godspeed.*

We watched her until she disappeared from view, and we were again alone upon the broad Atlantic with nothing but water in sight. While on board the *Amphitrite* I noticed that according to her compass mine was about two points out, no doubt caused by my stepping on it. This being so would be liable to carry us considerably farther to the southward than we wanted to go, but I was now on my guard and could steer accordingly…

The morning of the 30th dawned clear and beautiful, but the wind soon began to blow quite heavily. The seas made fast and the wind continued to increase so that the little boat laboured very heavily, and the seas were continually breaking over her and I at last deemed it advisable to heave to. Our bedding was completely saturated and everything very wet. And to make it more uncomfortable, about four in the afternoon a very heavy rainstorm set in and continued through the night…

Daylight of 2 July found us surrounded by heavy stormclouds and the rain falling in torrents, and whales appeared all around us. About nine o'clock I lay down to sleep and told my wife to keep awake and keep a sharp lookout. And I will here state just as she explains it. Her story is this:

‘I kept awake all night until about eleven o’clock, when my eyes grew so heavy that I put fresh water on them to try to keep them open; I then put on salt water, as the fresh did not appear to do any good, and this made them awful sticky, but as they continued to draw together I lay down and was asleep in a moment. Somewhat about one o’clock I awoke with a start; something seemed to be pulling me, and I jumped up at once and looking out saw a large steamer heading directly for us. I hallooed to my husband to wake up at once, which he did and grabbed our lantern, which was burning, and waved it aloft. The steamer, as was lucky for us both, had a competent person on lookout, as the minute he waved our lantern we could see the steamer sheer to one side. We hailed but could not understand their language; we supposed she was a German but do not know.’

My readers can readily picture to themselves what our danger was, lying to without any breeze right in the track of passing vessels and both of us asleep. And it was fortunate for us that she awoke as she did, as it would only have been but a few seconds before she would have struck us, and no one aboard the large steamer would have been any the wiser. But thank heaven we were permitted to proceed without any accident, but I made up my mind to do no more sleeping nights… About five o’clock rain squalls set in, and about ten in the forenoon we sighted the English barque *Ontario* of Windsor, Nova Scotia, from Hamburg for New York. We ran alongside and got a keg of fresh water as ours had become unfit for use, and we talked with them and they seemed to be pleased to see us…

Thus we continued on, and about one in the early morning of the 8th the weather settled very cloudy, but the wind still held to the southward and the sea still held its own. During the forenoon the sea began to moderate. About ten o’clock of the same morning we sighted a steamer coming astern of us and approaching very fast. As she drew near she ran close and spoke us. She proved to be the ocean steamer *Denmark*, from New York to London, England. The engines were stopped and we were asked to come on board, which we did not see fit to do, but I ran towards her and as we drew near a line was thrown to us which I caught and made fast around our foremast and we were drawn alongside. Two of the crew were then ordered down to pass us provisions, which it seemed were all prepared for us unsolicited. They also presented us with a keg of water which I lashed to my mainmast for the time being. The captain and crew were very good to us

and seemed to think they could not do enough for us. We thanked them all for the favours shown us, and with well wishes for our safe arrival we cast off and proceeded, amid cheers from all on board. The captain also gave us the correct longitude as 27.26, and the steamer's engines were again put in motion and thus we parted…

At daylight 11 July I took a short nap. When I awoke we again started, with a moderate breeze and a heavy sky and sea, steering east-southeast by the compass; light baffling winds prevailed. I now found time to put the water given to us by the captain of the *Denmark* into our water kegs, so after doing so I threw the keg overboard. After doing so I glanced around and saw a vessel in the distance, and as she was not a great distance off I headed for her, expecting of course that we were seen by those on board. As I neared her I hailed her, when a dog on board began to bark. I hailed several times, and at last made myself heard, when all hands came to the side of the vessel and appeared thunderstruck to see us in such a small boat. At last the captain found his voice and hailed, when I asked what the longitude was. He asked us to come alongside, but I told him we could not as we were in a hurry, so we sailed on, and as we drew apart he shouted the longitude, 25, so I thanked him, and the crew cheered lustily.

Light baffling winds continued until about three in the morning of the 12th, when I again took a nap. Started again about eight o'clock, with a light breeze from the northwest. We sailed along very pleasantly until about eight in the evening, when the wind canted to the westward and it soon settled very cloudy, which made the sky as black as ink. Then rain began to fall in torrents and the wind howled… About one in the morning of the 14th heavy squalls set in, and about three I hove to for a nap, and started again about nine in a heavy rainstorm…

My wife had begun to feel quite bad. I suppose the change from canned goods to fresh meat and vegetables given to us from the *Denmark* was the cause. This made it very uncomfortable for both of us, as we were not provided with a supply of medicines, and a doctor was out of the question. Sickness is not pleasant at any time, even when a doctor lives next door to you, and to be where one cannot be had for love or money was decidedly bad.

We both thought it would soon pass off, but it did not seem to do so, as she complained of feeling worse as the time passed on. I was dead tired, so

I took a short nap, after which we again proceeded. The wind canted to the north-northwest, and the weather cleared. About eleven the wind increased and the sea made very fast, and as it grew worse all the time I deemed it advisable to heave to, as our little boat laboured very heavy. The seas were terrible and I had grave fears for our safety, as the seas were continually breaking over her.

The morning of the 16th found us in the same predicament, and no signs of the gale abating. About seven o'clock in the morning, the Bremen bark *Astronom* spoke to us and asked if we wanted any assistance, or if we wanted to come on board, as we appeared to be in a sad condition; but we had stood it thus far, and I thought we could stand it a little longer. Yet I could not but help thinking of my wife, who grew decidedly worse each day. A terrible weakness had taken hold of her, and she often said she did not care whether she ever reached England or not. Yet in the face of all this we declined to accept any assistance, and thanked them very courteously for their proffered help; so we parted and were soon out of sight of each other, as it did not take her long in the strong wind, as she was scudding before it, while we had to lay to.

Shortly after she left us our rudder head was twisted off, which was a bad go for us, but luckily I had a spare one and could replace it as soon as the weather would permit, but at the present time the boat was rolling and pitching about like an eggshell…There was no apparent change in the weather until about five o'clock in the morning of the 18th, when the wind canted to northnorthwest and moderated. As the signs held good about six o'clock the same morning, I got out my spare rudder and rigged it and made sail and started again, steering east by north by the compass. The seas were still running very high and the waves dashed across the boat at every jump. The sky cleared, which made it a little more inviting for us; yet it was not much pleasure at best. Mrs Crapo was still very much under the weather, and was unable to render any assistance whatever.

About four o'clock in the afternoon the wind changed to west-southwest, and fog and rain again set in. I don't remember in all of my going to sea and crossing the Atlantic Ocean so many times, of seeing a period of time that we had been on our passage with so many gales and so much fog and rain; and I have thought a great many times since that if I had taken a more northerly course I probably would have had a better passage.

The Atlantic Ocean is a very rough place during the winter months, but is generally quite good during the summer. Yet we were having nearly as rough a passage as if it were winter instead of in the summer…

At all times, especially in heavy weather, my thoughts would turn to my wife, who was bearing up bravely under the ordeal, especially as sick as she was and, as she grew worse instead of better, plagued me more, I think, than it did her. Of course all I could do under the circumstances was to cheer her up all I possibly could.

If she had had a good, dry, comfortable bed to lie on it would have been far better, but our readers can see how limited our accommodations were. It was bad enough for her to be obliged to put up with it when she was feeling well and happy, but now the thought was as wormwood, and I must make all possible haste to reach land where medical aid could be had for her, as she was growing very despondent, and made the remark a great many times that she did not believe she would live to see or reach land again, and also that she did not care whether she did or not. But the Lord was merciful to us all through, and we put our trust in Him and sailed on…

Very soon a thick fog set in and rain began to fall very heavily, which continued until about half past six o'clock in the evening, when the fog lifted a little. As the fog lifted we sighted a bark which proved, as we drew up to her, to be an English bark from Baltimore to Hamburg. The captain gave us the latitude as 48.20, lon. 11.50. Cheers from the crew rent the air to which we heartily responded; we continued on our way, and again the weather began to moderate. About three o'clock in the morning of the 20th it again settled foggy, and remained so until about ten o'clock, when it lifted and the sun broke through, with the wind from the westward and blowing quite heavily.

Several vessels were in sight and we ran close to one, a brig named *Susan,* and the captain gave us the lat. 49.32, lon. 7.30, also the distance as fifty-five miles from Scilly. He wanted us to run alongside, but the wind blew so hard and the seas ran so high I did not dare to attempt it, but continued on towards our destination, first thanking the captain for the desired information. This was very encouraging to us. We were nearing our long-looked-for destination, and with good luck we would soon enter a safe anchorage, and my wife could then have medical attention.

When daylight of the 21st appeared it was very foggy, which held on until about ten o'clock, when it lifted. As it lifted we sighted a steamer. We ran towards her, and as we drew near I asked the captain how Scilly Island bore, and he answered by pointing for me, and as I looked I could see the land.

Oh! what a welcome sight.

Words cannot adequately express the delight we felt upon seeing it before our eyes, and we lost no time in heading for it, but owing to a strong current and wind we were about five miles to the leeward when we got abreast of them, so I kept off for Land's End, and as we passed the lighthouse about four o'clock in the afternoon the keeper dipped his colours to us and rang his bell. We continued on, saluting him in return as we passed.

We arrived in Newland, Penzance, at eleven o'clock in the night and ran alongside of a fishing boat which I hailed, but got no reply, as there was no one on board, so I made my boat fast and told Mrs Crapo we would have some good hot coffee.

So, although it was late and I was tired, having steered the boat without any rest for the past seventytwo hours, I felt so encouraged to think our perilous voyage was over I lit our oil stove and put on our little giant coffeepot. We both sat down watching it, and both fell fast asleep as we sat there and did not wake up until daylight had broke.

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† This extract is taken from the *New York Times*, 1 June 1877. In *Strange, but True*, Captain Crapo paraphrases a few paragraphs from the article, yet the *Times*'s intense speculation on the relationship of Crapo and his wife is irresistible.

* I wish here to call the attention of my readers to the fact that the above report claims that the vessel spoke to us on 26 June, when in reality, according to my log, it was 28 June. Yet it does not matter which it is, only I don't wish to make any false statements if possible.

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