

struck the spritsail, and they sat watching her open mouthed, lifting dripping on the waves and darting to right and left. The sight awed them. They did not think of their own danger, until the long iron hull squatted in a stretch of smooth water and darted straight on them, with angry, churning screw.

"She's struck her gait! Swing out o' the road!" Jetsam yelled, trying to loosen the dory's sail. Flotsam with his steering paddle worked madly. But the dory, wallowing broadside on to the coming terror, hadn't a chance to escape her—two boats always come together at sea!

The iron prow struck the dory fairly amidships. It bored right under Jetsam's small body and heaved him, wriggling, on the decked over hull. Flotsam, clinging to the steering paddle, jumped for the slippery deck, sprawling on top of the covered cockpit as the powerful little boat bore the dory under water, swamping it under the heavy iron hull.

"Now we done it—she's bound for 'cross the pond!" Jetsam yelled.

"Hold hard—and hang onto the spar!" Flotsam shouted. "She'll only ride us out an' in again."

The motorboat, settling deeper with her screw under their weight, tore through the water like a real torpedo. They were dazed by the sudden attack and blinded by salt water. When they got their bearings, they were hurtling seaward on top of the boat, with the runaway motor crackling and pounding somewhere inside of her, and over them swung the wreckage of the aerial wires, torn loose by the collision. The wireless plant on shore had no chance to work her now!

"Out o' control, she is!" Flotsam gasped. "Runnin' away with us! Are ye all right, Sam?"

"I lef' my knife in the dory—you had it last," Jetsam said. "Say, she can go some, can't she?"

"All her works are inside too, tiller and all," Flotsam grumbled. "They'll be a shindy w'en those Washin'ton buttons know what we done!"

She hit them when they weren't looking—they agreed on that. And—

*Thr-rum!* Something blew up inside—smoke burst up round the hatch cover. The cockpit was battered down, to meet the requirements of the Government trial trip.

"Dickens of a automatic boat!" Flotsam gasped. "Gimme the old surfboat every time!"

"Me too!" said Jetsam, choking, half drowned by the wash of the water.

The automatic torpedoboot had broken loose from wireless control. She was jumping like a porpoise playing leapfrog. She had gone on strike.

Scared for once in their lives, Flotsam and Jetsam could only hang to the spar, wrapping their arms and legs around it. A strange sight, and a strange pair on that runaway craft, in the misty, spray blinding ocean!

Rubbing the salt spray from their eyes, coughing in the gasoline fumes, the boys stared round, their hearts in their throats. Shoreward the fog was banked up, and to north and south. The iron boat snored seaward. Something had to happen to them—short of the British Isles.

Suddenly Flotsam flapped out the sleeve of his pilot coat, doubling over his short arm. "Ship ahoy!" he piped. "Yon's the Flying Dutchman, Sam!"

OLD OCEAN juggles men and ships like a Chinese top or a child's toyhouse, where every little block drops into place.

It was a long fling, on that storm brooding afternoon, at two bells from the watch tower of Ships Bottom, a strange prank of Fate, that drew a lifeline between two little boys on a runaway iron motorboat, like striped mermen on a porpoise, and a solemn assembly of frock coated Britishers in top hats, who thronged Lloyd's board of trade room, three thousand miles over the water—all silently watching an old warship's bell, the bell of H. M. S. Lutin, which for a hundred years had tolled the passing of lost ships to the big marine insurance corporation of London.

"Two bells, Greenwich time, and all bets off on the Rotterdam tramp Mynheer Vanderdecken, two months overdue from Hongkong, with matting, rattan chairs, and other light stuff. Reported lost in the Sargasso Sea. The Flying Dutchman belongs to anybody who salvages her now."

"Boom!" said the bell. "Finders keepers!" Neither Ships Bottom nor the boys of Barnegat knew of that scene that stripped the lost Vanderdecken of insurance that very day and put her in pawn for salvage; but Fate was fixing up a finish job, as she always does.

"She's the Flyin' Dutchman, an' she's der'lick!" Flotsam cried, his spirits swelling with sudden excitement, like a wet sponge. "We're the lifeboat, goin' off to the rescue!" "Rescue nothin'! She's a Dutch tramp—look at her flag, capsized!" spluttered Jetsam. "Mebby they's salvage in her, though."

A low lying, yellowish steamship, her stack rusty red,

streaming with salt, her propeller feebly beating the water, struggling to face the storm and keep her off the lee shore, the strange craft sprang out of the ocean smother and mist like an apparition.

Stern first, she came to meet the rush of the wireless boat; growing steadily plainer as the little craft snored through the swells, her rounded stern rising higher and higher. The boys' sharp eyes picked out the rusty hull, plastered with shellfish and trailing seaweed.

"Barnaced sinful, she is!" said Flotsam. "An' look, Sam, look!" On her stern, in tarnished gold, the name, MYNHEER VANDERDECKEN—ROTTERDAM.

"What'd I tell you!" said Flotsam, his flesh crawling. "That was the skipper's name o' the Flying Dutchman—Vanderdecken!"

Jetsam's hair couldn't crawl, account of the big son'wester,—his dad's sea cover, it was,—but he made up by rattling his teeth. After all, they were only boys, and the gruesome shape of that Dutch deep-waterman might have staggered a man. Over all sounded the crackling of the motor, the creaking of the old sea wagon, and the moan of the wind in her cordage. The storm was rising.

"She ain't hardly movin'—making sternway, if anything," Flotsam gulped.

"Couldn't link her up in a Paddy's hurricane?" Jetsam said, growing bolder. "What ye goin' to do, Sam, steer her in?"

"Run for it—nix! We'll jump that Flyin' Dutchman 'fore she goes on the Gridiron. Cap Casco would, or Long Johnson. It's the only chance anyhow, maybe, we'll get at life saving," Flotsam said desperately. "Tommy Welsh'd be wheelin' that old hooker home 'fore now—like he done the filibuster."

With the mention of their heroes of Ships Bottom, fear and superstition fell from them. The Mynheer Vanderdecken was in distress. Whatever the automatic boat, or others like her, might do to Barnegat

under!" he panted, as the torpedoboot swung toward the ship.

IT was a job not many men would care to tackle. Boarding a wheeling ship in a rising seaway; but, squirming and laboring, they worked the little iron boat into the steamer, rising on the swells to the level of her rail, then dipping deep in the hollows. The prow struck, grating along the ship's side. The gasoline flared up again; the motor started churning. But Flotsam and Jetsam were scrambling up the big chain blocks and over the side. Paddle and breeches buoy boat went hurtling out to sea together.

Done up, their strength wrung out, weighed down by hat and apple laden pea-jacket, holding to each other like a pair of dressed up monkeys, they struggled for their sea legs on the high-up rolling deck. There wasn't a thing these boys didn't know about ships. Like sailors they were; seeing no one around, their first instinct was to size up the weather.

They sprang on a roll of matting, to see over the freighter's bow. From 'midships aft, the deck was littered with such rolls, to the low bridge and engine house in the stern, where a big hole was burrowed out as though by giant rats. "That's what they been burning for fuel—no wonder she couldn't claw off shore!" said Flotsam.

"Chink stuff, this is," said Jetsam. "She's from China ports, with matting and stuff—Gee!"

Burning cargo explained the condition of the ship; but it was the storm in the east'ard appalled the boys. Black as a hat the ocean was, with big rolling thunderclouds on the lashing sea, as though every blessed one of them was making for the wretched old China boat. Every timber in the old sea wagon squeaked in pain.

"She can't make off shore—we got to run for it!" Flotsam cried.

"Where?" said Jetsam, staring at the black sea.

"Barnegat Inlet!" said Flotsam, sprinting for the bridge, fast as his little legs could carry the heavy pea-jacket. Life savers they were; the Flying Dutchman scare was all forgotten. Another scare awaited them up in the wheelhouse.

CLOSE by the lashed wheel a big, square faced man was sitting, doubled up in a rattan armchair, with a mewling cat snuggling round the legs. The cat put up his tail, and the skipper looked at them with yellow eyes.

"I watch you poys coming," he quavered like a sick foghorn. "Two little mermans on the porpus riding—it is der madness!"

"Thinks he's off his head. Gee! I don't wonder," Flotsam said, digging down in his stuffed pockets, like he was mad himself. He was good and scared; but for all that he gripped himself bravely. "Scurvy aboard!" he said. "I knowed it. All hands disabled on this old lime-juicer."

"Cap'n, crew, engineer, und cook!" the skipper mumbled like a ghost's chorus.

"Say, that's a Chinese tomcat, Sam!" Flotsam fetched a long, wondering breath. "You remember the Vanderdecken, Hongkong tramp? She was posted in Ships Bottom—"

"Three months overdue—last spoke off the Sargasso Sea," Jetsam said, quoting the Ships Bottom bulletin board, which all coast guard stations keep of lost and overdue craft. "Workin' north, she was, and refused help."

"So! Dot would cost money. Und I am her owner," the Dutch skipper mumbled. "But, little boy, what haf you dere?" he lurched up, goggled eyed. Flotsam was spilling apples all over the wheelhouse, wriggling his toes, wild with excitement, with the cat chasing them,—big, red cheeked apples, as every sailor knows, a specific for scurvy.

"Pick 'em up in your hat, Sam, an' take 'em below," he snapped to Jetsam. "Then fellows in the engine room'll need 'em bad, or worse!"

Those Barnegat apples were mighty real to the big sick skipper. He waked up and pounced on them. "Yess," he boomed, mumbled between bites, "Schneider, der engineer, can no longer burn the matting nor work. We burn half the cargo. All night she blow in-

shore, so weak she iss. She is lost!"

"Dickens she is!" said Life Saver Flotsam stoutly. He grabbed up the cat in his arms, sized up the ocean, and took command, did little Flotsam, just as if he was Big Cap Casco and Long Johnson and the whole Ships Bottom life crew rolled into one. And either of those boys could hardly see over the wheelhouse window!

"She's thick shore'ard," said Skipper Flotsam; "but she's a whole lot thicker sea'ard. And this old tub's getting weaker an' weaker. We're goin' to turn her round an' wheel her right in. You got to hustle, Sam!" Jetsam didn't need the warning, with that hollow

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Apples Act on Men of a Limejuicer Like Chloroform.

beachmen of the future, they were real life savers now, despite the Flying Dutchman and her ghostly crew.

"Steer her along," said Jetsam bravely. "I'll hold you." Their courage was bucking up, now that professional work was at hand. They hadn't thought of the paddle before.

"Freeze onto me!" said Flotsam, and dug in the steering oar.

Jetsam gripped him grimly, both arms round his waist, his stumpy legs twisted round the mast. The breeches buoy boat rocked and floundered. Jetsam's son'wester flopped over his face.

"Darn it, ye're heavy, Sam!" he said.

"It's the apples. Watch out her screw don't suck us