

CURFEW TIDE.

"THE LONG DAY CLOSES."
The thrushes sing in every tree;
The shadows long and longer grow;
Broad sunbeams lie athwart the lea;
The oxen low.
Round roof and tower the swallows slide,
And slowly sinks the sun
At curfew tide,
When day is done.
Sweet sleep the nightmare's fairest child,
O'er the world her pinions spreads,
Each flower beneath her influence mild,
Fresh fragrance sheds;
The owls, on silent wings and wide,
Steele from the woodlands one by one
At curfew tide,
When day is done.
No more the clanging rookery rings
With voice of many a noisy bird,
The startled wood dove's chattering wings
No more are heard.
With sound like whispers faintly sighed,
Soft breezes through the tree tops run
At curfew tide,
When day is done.
So may it be when life is spent,
When ne'er another sun can rise,
Nor light one other joy present
To dying eyes.
Then softly may the spirits glide
To realms of rest, disturbed by none,
At curfew tide,
When day is done.

—Chambers' Journal.

**AN ADVENTURE IN
THE SPANISH MAIN.**

"The folks in Barbadoes used to say, sir, that whenever a Liverpool steamer was signaled the police always got out their striped handkerchiefs. Well, that ain't very polite to us, mayhap; but if I was to see in irons, hard and fast, half a dozen chaps that I could show you aboard this very craft, it'd be a deal safer for us all!"

"Is it really as bad as that then?" asked I, startled in spite of myself by the grim emphasis of our veteran second officer's tone and manner.

"Ay, ay, it's as bad as that—and worse, too, maybe, as you'll be finding out for yourself 'fore long, I fancy."

Our outward-bound steamer from England to the West Indies was a very cosmopolitan affair, with a Cornish captain, a Scotch first officer, a "Geordie" second from the Tyne, a Welsh purser, an Irish doctor and two Lancashire engineers. Nor was the crew less motly than its officers. In addition to half a dozen Englishmen of the ordinary merchant-seaman type, we had a big Swede, a giant in strength and a child in simple good nature, who was one of the best men aboard; two French half-breeds from the Channel Islands, merry little fellows, as brisk and active as cats; a dark, sinewy, brigandlike Maltese; two stalwart Dutchmen, and a nimble Manx lad from Peel in the Isle of Man.

Startling as it was, the officer's gloomy prediction did not take me wholly by surprise; for anyone who has travelled much soon gets to know whether the men with whom he has to deal are to be trusted, and I could easily see that our present crew were not. Under ordinary circumstances they might have worked along well enough, heterogeneous though they were; but unluckily we had been forced to slip at the last moment, in order to make up the number of our hands, a couple of those "sea lawyers" who are always fatal to good discipline—fellows who, partly from mere restless love of meddling, and partly from their desire to thrust themselves forward and be as important as possible, find fault with whatever is done on board, know everything better than anyone else, and, in the homely but expressive phrase of a popular proverb, "teach a duck to swim and crow to caw."

The presence of these worthies soon made itself felt. Several of the men began to do their work sulkily, and as if under protest; and on the fifth day out a number of them came aft in a body, with some groundless complaint about their food, which was evidently intended to try the captain's mettle, and see whether he were made of yielding stuff or not. The brave Cornishman—who, though one of the kindest-hearted men alive, could be steadfast as a rock in the case of need—met them with quite firmness, promptly looked into their alleged grievance, and finding it utterly baseless, ordered them forward again at once.

After this all went quietly for a time; but I could see that there was mischief brewing nevertheless. Many of the hands wore that sullen, dangerous look which the Americans emphatically term "spoiling for a fight"; and I more than once heard muttered threats vented against the second officer, who, being a staunch disciple of that "good old school" which held that the only way of dealing with poor Jack was and oath a knockdown blow, was naturally anything but a favorite with the men.

On our way to Jamaica we touched at one or two of the smaller islands, and each time I fully expected an outbreak of some kind, but my friend the "second" flatly negated the idea.

"It ain't their game to try it on when we're in port and can bring down the police on 'em any minute," he growled, with a menacing shake of his iron-gray head. "They'll wait till we're well out on the blue water again, and then they can have an easy penn'orth of us. The skipper's a deal too soft with 'em, he is. I wanted him to hand over the whole kit of 'em to the police at the first place we touched at, and ship a fresh crew instead; but he says he couldn't do that without 'sufficient reason.' Sufficient reason, indeed! When he wakes up some fine night and finds his throat cut mayhap he'll think that sufficient! But I know what's the matter with the old man he don't want his ship to get the name of havin' mutinies aboard, for fear of scarin' away the passengers."

"Well, there don't seem to be many to scare away," said I, "for I'm the only one on board this time."

"This time, yes—but we carry plenty at some seasons; and if they get wind of any such games as this they wouldn't go by our line while they could find anything else to go by. So far the skipper's right, but it will end in our all gittin' our heads broke, as sure as a gun! You've got a revolver, haven't you? Well, that's a good job, for I fancy it's

the only firearm in the ship; but mind you keep it handy, for it's bound to be wanted before long!"

The hint was a startling one, but I took it with some reserve, knowing that Mr. B—, like other men of his class, was very apt to "show cause" for his own hardness by finding matter of offense where none existed. At the same time I could not help seeing that the threatening aspect of the crew grew more and more marked every day; and what with this, and what with the "Job's comfort" administered by my friend Mr. B—, the undefined but ever-increasing sense of danger weighed upon me until it became a perfect nightmare. A dozen times in a night I used to wake up with a start, thinking that I heard the rush of the mutineers come trampling over the planks overhead; and the steward never knew what a narrow escape he had of getting a bullet through him by mistake when he came tumbling into my cabin at daybreak one morning with a sudden roll of the ship.

That mischief was a foot there could no doubt be. For the last day or two before we sighted Jamaica I never went forward without finding myself eyed with sharp, suspicious glances by the sailors, who evidently supposed me to be playing the spy upon their proceedings; and when I stopped to exchange a few words with the big Swedish seaman (in whose native town I had once spent several days) I caught sight of a shadowy figure sneaking up behind us, and manifestly doing its best to overhear all that we said.

All this was certainly anything but encouraging. I had indeed heard of plenty of people declaring confidently that mutiny is in these days as impossible as piracy, except, perhaps, in the loneliest parts of the Pacific. But this comfortable theory hardly squared with the fact that quite recently, on a trading schooner upon the most frequent route across the North Atlantic, the captain and first mate had been forced to barricade themselves in the deckhouse, and to hold it with their revolvers against the entire crew till a passing vessel bore down to the rescue; while, on the very steamer in which I had myself returned from South America barely three years before, eight of the crew, while lying in the Rio de la Plata below Buenos Ayres, had seized one of the ship's boats and gone ashore in her, after telling off two of their number (as was afterward discovered) to fall upon and kill the officer of the watch if he should detect and interfere with them. "Facts is stubborn things," said the famous alderman; and in the face of such facts as these I could only follow Mr. B—'s advice, and "keep my revolver handy," for a Central Asian fever does not increase a man's fighting power, and, as I was then, any one of the ship's boys could have "thrashed" me with one hand.

But, as always happens in such cases, the fight came just when we least expected it.

Night fell soon after we cast anchor in Port Royal harbor, and the lights of Kingston glittered like a swarm of fireflies through the deepening gloom along the dark shore line, while the rising moon cast a weird, unearthly splendor over the shadowy outline of the Jamaica mountains. Early in the year though it still was, I was glad to sleep on deck; for it was one of those stifling nights, fully as hot as the day itself, which everyone who has sailed the Spanish Main knows to his cost.

But the vague foreshadowings of evil which had haunted my sleep for weeks past haunted me still. I dreamed that we were boarded by pirates, whose fierce faces and wild figures seemed horribly real as they came pouring in over our bulwarks, cutlass in hand. I heard their trampling rush across the deck—the stamping and shouting of a hand-to-hand fight—the mingled clamor of yells, groans, curses and heavy blows—and then I awoke.

Awoke—to what? To find the grim vision true, apparently, for the shouts and stamping still rang in my ears, and not five paces from me lay the captain, prostrate on the deck, with a man kneeling upon his chest and clutching his throat with both hands. Close beside them our brave little Scotch mate was rolling on the deck in a fierce grapple with an adversary a head taller than himself. A little to the right my friend Mr. B— was keeping at bay with an iron belaying pin a gaunt, active fellow (whose lean, dark, wolfish face looked quite unearthly in the fitful moonlight) who was attempting to run in and stab him with a long knife; while just behind them, in the shadow of the bulwarks, another man, who appeared to have been struck down somewhat earlier in the affray was slowly raising himself to his feet.

For a moment I stared blankly at this strange scene, hardly knowing whether I were awake or still dreaming. Then the truth flashed upon me—the mutineers were up at last!

There was not a moment to lose, and weak though I was, there was still one way in which I might be of service. My revolver was hanging in my berth close by, and I at once made a dart for it; but ere I could snatch it out the fight turned in a very unexpected way.

There was a sudden shout—a quick tramping of heavy feet—and two tall figures came bursting into the fray. In a trice the half-strangled captain's assailant was torn from him, and dashed upon the deck with such force that he lay stunned and motionless where he had fallen; and the heavy thud of his fall was instantly answered by another, as the man beside the bulwarks (who was just about to assail B—in the rear) went down beneath a blow of which he bore the mark for many a day after.

Then our new allies (who were no other than the sturdy Lancashire engineers) helped to secure the two other men, not without difficulty; for in clapping the irons on the first mate's assailant the second engineer's ill-judged zeal squeezed the mate's thumb into the handcuff along with the mutineer's wrist.

One of the prisoners was an Irishman, who called out to us, as we bound him to the mast, "British subjects do ye call yourselves? I call you British objects!"

Half an hour afterward a dozen sturdy blacks in the uniform of the native police came on board and marched off with the four disturbers of our peace.

At first I was puzzled to guess why we had

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been attacked by these four men only, and not by the whole crew at once. But I afterward learned that, very fortunately for us, the mischief had exploded prematurely. The two ringleaders and a couple of their cronies had gone ashore without leave, and had returned late at night, heated with the fiery rum of the island; and being stopped and called to account by the captain and officers, had fallen upon them like furies. Happily, most of their comrades were asleep, and the few who did see what was going on, being taken completely by surprise, ended by doing nothing at all.

But the punishment of the poor wretches fully matched their offense; for those who know what a West Indian "lockup" really is can judge for themselves what a night of misery would be spent in one by any man with his hands tied. When they were brought into court next morning their faces were so swollen and inflamed that we hardly knew them; and when to this was superadded their sentence of several weeks' hard labor upon the public roads beneath a West Indian sun, and—worse still for any Englishman—under the supervision of a "nigger" policeman, even our implacable second officer was fain to admit that the claims of justice were fully satisfied.

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Centreville, March 16, '95.

Captive Eagles.

Geo. Foss, of Oromocto, near Fredericton, caught four eagles, alive, in a trap one day last week. Two of them are on exhibition in Fredericton. Each measures ten feet from tip to tip.

General S—, in congress, while delivering one of the long, prosy speeches for which he was noted, said to Henry Clay:—"You speak, sir, for the present generation, but I speak for posterity." "Yes," replied the great Kentuckian, "and it seems you are resolved to speak until your audience arrives."

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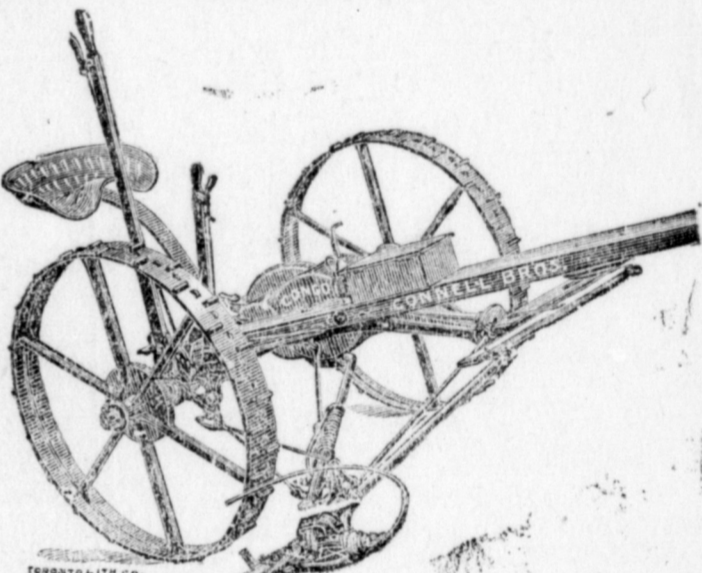
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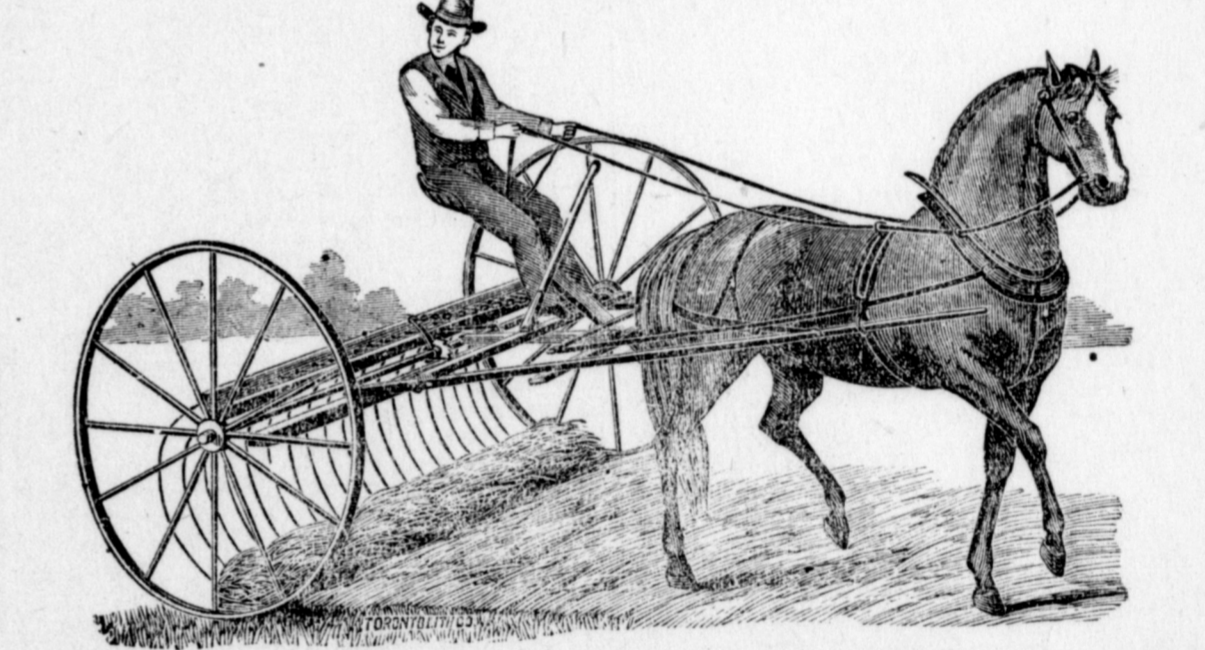


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