

The Free Press Short Story

LUCK AND

BY DEBELA MONROE

JED THINKER pushed savagely away from the wharf and dropped in his seat. His oars, biting deep, thrust the dory through the black water of the rising tide, that stole gradually up beneath the fog to fill the pocket-like harbor of Matinicus Island and cover the odoriferous mud and eel-strewn rocks. It was scarcely three o'clock, and there was no sign of the sun or of the usual morning breeze. Muffled sounds showed that Jed was not the only early riser...

"First man out of the harbor," he said as he bent over the rusty little motor. There was no pride in his voice, in spite of the fact that far behind him other fishermen, all older than he, were still groping their way, fearing the jagged rocks that waited for incautious boats. Without compass, taking no soundings, with no aid other than his ears, Jed had carried through the rocky channel to the sea.

He had inherited that keen hearing from his father and little else to be sure. At the death of Old Jed, the ne'er-do-well, two years before, Young Jed had been left with a rotting dory, strength and a self-reliance far above his sixteen years and—his ears. "Member, Jeddie," Old Jed used to say, "the Thinker family has ears, if nothin' else. Use your ears, sonny, an' you won't go wrong."

So it was that Young Jed, ahead of his fellows, set the nose of his dory into the fog and chugged out to the fishing banks. The dory slid over the rollers that rose silently and unceasingly from the mist. Free of Matinicus and its smells, Jed sniffed in delight the wet salt air and began to whistle, interspersing the melody with bits of talk. Like many others who are much alone, Jed had the habit of talking, not to himself, but—himself, giving himself the advice and encouragement that the indifferent inhabitants of Matinicus did not offer.

"You're goin' to get a whopper to-day," he whistled a few bars of Annie Laurie. "It's not 't' be over fifty pounds to win the prize. That twenty dollars'll just make the hundred for Sam's boat." He tried a few notes of the Fishermen's Lament. "Took two years 't' save eighty, an' that's some boat for a hundred dollar. Sam's lucky to be goin'. He's got enough to buy in on a schooner over to the coast. Mebbe with that boat I can do it too some day."

Jed looked at his lanky craft, which was racked by the puny force of its little engine, and shook his head. His thoughts were on the prize of twenty dollars for the largest cod caught on a hand line during the two summer months. Each fisherman had contributed fifty cents to make up the prize. The twenty dollars would give Jed a real dory that no weather would keep at home. He fell into a long silence as he dreamed of leaving Matinicus. He hated the smell, the inexpressible filth. The boat chugged doggedly ahead. Suddenly Jed looked round him.

"Good fishin' here," he said as he shut off the engine. He tossed over the anchor and after making sure that the rope was fast to the cleat in the bow bustled himself with his tackle. He examined the lead sinker and then tested the largest steel hooks with his thumb. He covered the hooks with two chunks of fish and slid them into the water.

Scarcely had the sinker touched bottom and been lifted two or three feet when there was a sharp tug. Jed gave a jerk and began to haul in. Up came sixty feet of line, three pounds of sinker and twenty pounds of struggling fish. As he unhooked the flopping cod the quirk at the corners of Jed's mouth broke into a quick smile. He baited again and cast over the line.

An hour went by, two hours, three hours, and the bottom of the dory was covered with fish. And still they were biting! They had changed the fog into a gray mist that eddied listlessly, still impenetrable. A fog-horn roared in the distance as a steamer cautiously felt its way through the dangerous waters that are typical of that part of the coast between Matinicus and the coast of Maine, fifty miles away. Jed wiped his moist face on the back of a woolen sleeve and looked at his catch. The tide had turned and was now flowing out. The

linker hardly carried the hooks to the bottom. The line sung and vibrated in his hand. "About ten minutes an' we'll have 't' leave," said Jed thoughtfully. His light brown eyes clouded; no rook-broking fish this summer; the contest closed that night. If Sam didn't get his money in two weeks, there would be no boat for Jed. Twenty dollars in two weeks—that was impossible. Ready money comes hard on Matinicus Island. The boy slowly paid out more line, for the hooks were being carried far from the bottom.

"Couldn't tell a bite now if I had one," murmured Jed, "unless—well!" Four brown knuckles cracked against the gunwale as the line gave a sharp tug. In a moment Jed was exultantly heaving against a fish that had decided to stay in the water. Foot by foot the line came in; Jed braced himself against the gunwale of his boat. A huge swell, taking the boat sideways, threw him off his balance, and still clinging to the line, he fell into a squirming mass of fish. His feet sought something solid and came against the cleat to which the anchor rope was tied. There was a rattling crack, a splash, and the rope disappeared from its slanted support. The boat swung free and went dipping along with the tide.

"Rotten ol' dory," muttered Jed, lurching to his feet. But his eyes glowed, and at the other end of his line a fish still fought for his freedom. Five feet ten of bone and muscle would conquer any fish in that part of the ocean, no matter how much harder a racing tide and a drifting boat made the task. Soon the grandfather of all codfish lay floundering in the bottom of the boat. "A hundred pound if he's an' gurnet!" gasped Jed. "A real dory, a real engine an'—!" Jed sat down, and gazed lovingly at his prize. Jed was young, and wanted that dory badly. He smiled broadly. "Guess we'll crank 'er an' start after that twenty. That was some lift, ol' boy!" Jed prodded the fish with his boot.

Still smiling, he bent over the engine and spun the wheel. There was no response. The boat still swept along, rising and falling. The fog pressed close. Whistling unperceptibly, Jed spun the wheel, which clanked mournfully with never a cough of life. Engrossed in his task, the boy did not notice a sound that ordinarily he could not have missed—a low sigh that drifted in with the fog, a sigh as of some one in great sorrow, half suppressed, choking, dying away to begin more painful than ever. He lifted his head and started to wipe the moisture from his face. The woolen sleeve paused in mid-air. Like lightning the oars went out, and Jed strained every muscle to pull away from the sighs that sounded just ahead.

"The Widow!" he groaned, and his lips were drawn into a thin straight line. Half a mile off Matinicus Island, where the tide runs its maddest as it sweeps round the craggy shores, lies the Widow, no gentle, suffering woman, but a vast rock that only at high tide is sufficiently covered to permit small boats to pass and then only in calm weather. Shortly after the turn of the tide the current jutting away from the island sweeps directly over the rock. On days without wind the swells slide over it greedily and, receding, suck round its seaweed-covered top, producing a choking sigh, horrible to hear, and so human that the rock received the name of the "Widow." On calm days the Widow sighs; on stormy days she shrieks. But no matter what the weather, she is deadly to any boat that comes too close. For as the swells sweep over they form fearful eddies that swirl this way and that, fifty yards on each side, throwing whatever they catch from one to another until it finally crashes against the solid rock. Driewood beats against it for hours, is cast forth, whirled about, drawn back, until the flood tide brings a release—to the splinters.

Jed's face was white as he struggled against the current. His one chance was to clear the whirlpools at one side, but another, louder sigh told him that he was too late. For a moment his arms were numb as he fought against his fear; then he whirled the dory round and headed straight for the sighs. The fog from which came the choking gurgle seemed to grow more dense. "You have your ears, Jeddie," old Jed's voice seemed to ring in Young Jed's ears as he rowed straight ahead. At the very centre of the Widow there is, a slight depression perhaps six feet wide—a groove running from one side to the other. Over it at certain heights of the tide the swells roll unbreaking to merge beyond into deep water where slight eddies do not menace. Elsewhere are hungry rock and the fatal maelstrom that yields its prey only once in twelve hours. To the history of Matinicus, or at least in its recent history, only one man had traversed the Widow and lived.

"I come in on a roller, aimed her straight and prayed. 'Twarn't no fun, an' I ain't a prayin' man." The explanation visibly impressed the man's hearer with the terrors of such a moment. But then it had been a clear

day; now the fog was shutting in closer and closer. Jed could not see his oars. A coughing sigh followed by a muffled bubbling and sucking sounded only a few yards ahead. Whippers seemed to come out of the mist. Another sigh; the dory quivered and started to swing. Jed held it straight and pushed back with his oars. At that moment the grandfather of all codfish gave a desperate flop. "Praps I ain't so lucky, ol' boy," muttered Jed through clenched teeth.

He was listening, straining his ears to catch the slightest change of note in all that hushed turmoil. Not close enough, a little to the left, not too far—a sigh, almost from beneath the boat—gurglings—the swell rose. "Now!" Jed took two or three violent sprints. The dory seemed to whisk out of his grasp; the boy slowed, but he managed to turn it back. He held himself rigid with eyes closed. A slight grating; Jed's heart-lumped; then his oars caught the water in mighty strokes. A gurgling sigh rose behind, more despairing than ever. The Widow had missed her prey.

Towards midday a motor dory chugged into Matinicus Harbor. An industrious breeze had dispelled the fog and was struggling with the never-ending smell of dead fish. A group of fishermen gazed idly at the boat as it drifted to the wharf. "Eh late, Jed, ain't you?" one of them drawled. Then his eyes lit on the fish and on one fish in particular. His jaw moved up and down, but he uttered no word. The others gathered round and also stared silently. "Eggin' for your boat t'night, Sam," said Jed. He calmly hoisted the huge codfish to his shoulder and swung it to the wharf. A dozen pairs of eyes followed the fish, almost unbelieving. Finally Sam spoke: "The boat's yours, Jed, and you do be lucky 't' catch him the last day."

"You bet," was all Jed said, but no one knew how very lucky he felt himself to be. Strangled with Asthma is the only expression that seems to convey what is endured from an attack of this trouble. The relief from Dr. J. D. Kellogg's Asthma Remedy is beyond measure. Where all was suffering there comes comfort and rest. Breathing becomes normal and the bronchial tubes completely cleared. This unequalled remedy is worth many times its price to all who use it.

REWARD FOR KINDNESS

A soldier one day called at the shop of a hatter and asked for relief, saying that he had outstayed his leave of absence, and that unless he could get on the coach, fatigue and severe punishment awaited him. The hatter offered him a guinea. "Sir," exclaimed the soldier, astonished at the amount, "how can I repay you? I have nothing in the world but this," pulling out a dirty piece of paper from his pocket. "It is a recipe for making blacking. It is the best that ever was seen. Many a half-guinea have I had for it from the officers. May you be able to get something for it to repay you for your kindness to a poor soldier." That dirty piece of paper proved worth half-a-million pounds to the hatter. It was no less than the recipe for Day and Martin's blacking. It generally pays to lend a charitable ear to need.

A FEMINE TWIST

Wise: "I saw Mary out, with Bob last night. Thought she had thrown him over." Wiser: "She did—but you know how a girl throws."

YOUR GROCER HAS THIS SUNNY WAY TO BETTER HEALTH

Check Common Constipation with a Delicious Cereal

Food has a lot to do with how you feel and how you look. For instance, you need plenty of "bulk" with your meals to avoid the risk of common constipation. This ailment frequently causes headaches, loss of appetite and energy. Yet, in most cases, it can be overcome pleasantly and safely by eating a delicious cereal. Kellogg's ALL-BRAN furnishes "bulk" in convenient and concentrated form. Laboratory tests show the "bulk" in ALL-BRAN is safe and effective. In fact, it is much like that found in leafy vegetables. Within the body, the fiber of ALL-BRAN absorbs moisture, and forms a soft mass. Certainly, this clears out the intestinal wastes. In addition, ALL-BRAN provides vitamin B and iron.

Isn't this sunny way better than taking patent medicines—so often harmful? Two tablespoonsful of ALL-BRAN daily are usually sufficient. Chronic cases, with each meal, if seriously ill, see your doctor. ALL-BRAN makes no claim to be a "cure-all." Enjoy ALL-BRAN as a cereal, or cook into appetizing recipes. Be sure you get Kellogg's ALL-BRAN. It contains much more needed "bulk" than part-bran products. In the red and green packages. Made by Kellogg in London, Ontario.

DOMINION EXPERIMENTAL FARMS Weekly News Letter

Progress in Breeding Rust-Resistant Wheats

A study of the data accumulated by the Experimental Farms Branch of the Dominion Department of Agriculture in co-operation with the Grain Research Laboratory at Winnipeg and the Universities of Saskatchewan and Alberta in connection with field and laboratory tests of a group of the most promising rust-resistant varieties of spring wheat clearly indicates that certain varieties are quite outstanding. About a half dozen of these will be increased immediately, although not more than one or two will be released ultimately. As to which of these will be the final choice will depend upon the results obtained in the next couple of years' tests.

Successful Sowings of Vegetables

Growers of vegetables should plan to have a succession of crops. Successful sowings of seed for the second early and main crop of cabbage and cauliflower should be made. Now is the time to sow the seed for the second crop in a cold frame using Copenhagen Market or Enkhuizen Glory cabbage and Snowball cauliflower and about the middle of May the seed for the main or late crop should be sown thinly in a broad row in the garden using Danish Balhead (short-stem) cabbage and Snowball cauliflower or Autumn Giant (Veltch).

The late or main crop of celery plants should be started in a mild hotbed any time now. Sow seed reasonably thin to allow for proper development of the plants. To avoid plants going to seed or bolting maintain the temperature in the beds at 65 to 70 degrees F. The best results are obtained from plants grown steadily. The best varieties to use are Golden Plume and Phenomenal. By placing barrels with the ends

knocked out, over a few rhubarb hills now, very tender, pink rhubarb can be had much in advance of the regular crop. A piece of gunny sack should be placed over the open, upper opening in the barrel.

Successional sowings of lettuce, radish, beets, spinach and carrots, made at intervals of fifteen days apart, will provide fresh, tender products as required.

HOW'S THIS ONE?

A city man down in Mississippi got a job as appraiser for a federal farm loan organization. Knowing nothing about farms and rural life, he obtained all the literature he could get about agriculture and crammed day and night, like a college boy preparing for examination.

When he went out to make his first inspection, the first animal he ran into was a "billygoat." He tried hard to recall the description of farm animals printed in the books on agriculture, but could not classify the species. The goat simply did not fit in.

Ashamed to display his ignorance, at headquarters, he telephoned to a friend, giving a description of the animal, and asking what it might be.

"He had large, sad eyes, a strangely long-beard, rough and unkempt hair, and his behind was bare," the appraiser explained. "Hock," man, that wasn't an animal!" his friend shouted back. "That was the farmer who applied for the loan."

PROVEN

"Patience and perseverance will accomplish all things," said a passenger in a railway compartment. "Nonsense, sir!" said a fellow-passenger. "Will patience and perseverance enable you to carry water in a sieve?" "Certainly!" "I would like to know how?" "Simply by waiting patiently for the water to freeze."

FACTS ABOUT HYDRO—No. 3 of a series of official announcements by the Ontario Municipal Electric Association, representing the Municipalities who own the Hydro-Electric System of Ontario.



Why Hydro Buys Power

Hydro has always obtained its power supplies from whatever source has, from time to time, been determined to be most economical.

In the earlier years of Sir Adam Beck's administration, 98% of the power distributed to Hydro municipalities was purchased from private sources. Then it became economical to build or acquire generating stations. At the present time Hydro owns forty power-producing plants.

Power demands must be provided for—years in advance. The Commission was prevented, by international and other circumstances, from further development of Ontario's large power resources on the Niagara, St. Lawrence and Ottawa rivers. The only economical course left was to purchase—as the Commission did—low-cost power from available sources.

The following table sets forth the growth of your great Hydro undertaking through the years:

Growth of Municipalities and Consumers Served and Electric Power Generated and Purchased

Table with 5 columns: PERIOD, AVERAGE NUMBER OF MUNICIPALITIES CONSUMERS, PEAK DEMAND ALL SYSTEMS, POWER GENERATED HORSEPOWER PER CENT, POWER PURCHASED HORSEPOWER PER CENT. Rows show data for periods 1910 to 1914, 1915 to 1919, 1920 to 1924, 1925 to 1929, and 1930 to 1933.

It is the considered opinion of this Association that Hydro has pursued a cautious, business-like, and far-sighted policy in the purchase of supplementary power and that present power reserves are not excessive.

The general policy of the Commission respecting purchased power has been initiated with the approval of the municipalities and endorsed by the Hydro associations. These Hydro municipalities know the power requirements, and are obligated to supply the ever-growing demand for low-cost Hydro service in their respective districts.

ONTARIO MUNICIPAL ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

PUBLICITY COMMITTEE: Chairman, Controller James Simpson, Toronto; Frank L. Mason, Oshawa; T. W. McFarland, London.

Keep this informative statement and watch for further statements by the Publicity Committee.