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SPRYWHEEL

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# BLUE WATER

A TALE OF THE DEEP  
SEA FISHERMEN

BY FREDERICK WILLIAM WALLACE.

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### How the Story Started.

Frank Westhaver, known as "Shorty," lives at Long Cove on Bay of Fundy coast with his mother and his uncle, Captain Jerry Clark. He and his chum Lemuel Ring, drink a bottle of rum, whereupon Frank's uncle tells him the story of his father's fondness for drink and how the "Grace Westhaver" went down off Sable Island with ten of her crew and her skipper. This has the desired effect upon Frank. The two boys pilot an Italian vessel into Anchorville to the astonishment of Captain Spinney, harbor-master. Frank finishes school with credit to himself and spends the summer as an apprentice to "Long Dick" Jennings. In August Clark takes him to Gloucester as spare hand on the Kastalia.

### CHAPTER FOUR—(Cont'd.)

"Fine, fine," chuckled Captain Clark. "Tis better than old Clancy, th' clerk in the office, c'd ha' done it. Ye'll keep th' run o' all th' bills for me, Frankie, after this, an' I'll give ye charge o' all th' store tallyin' an' th' fishin' when we make th' grounds. Now shoot up to th' store an' ask them t' let ye have their account, an' see if they jibe with yer tally."

Shorty procured the store's account, checked it over, and discovered a few discrepancies in the prices of certain commodities. "Look here, Uncle," he said. "This feller has one hundred pounds o' butter at twenty and one-half cents a pound charged up as twenty-five dollars, an' it sh'd only come to twenty dollars fifty cents—four dollars fifty cents too much. He's got one dozen o' pickles at twelve and a half cents a bottle charged up as one dollar seventy-five cents, when it ought t' be one dollar fifty cents. Almost every item hez an overcharge of a few cents."

"But they gimme a discount, Frank, 'cause I allus pay cash afore I sail 'stead o' settlin' at the end o' th' trip."

Shorty was not satisfied. "Yes, an' they take their discount out o' you by these overcharges. Did you ever check up these bills afore?"

"Waal," replied the skipper hesitantly, "I tallied th' stuff as it came down, but I niver bothered t' check th' bill. I allus cal'ated they was honest."

His nephew smiled grimly. "Let's walk up to this store, Uncle. We'll hev a palaver with them."

Into the store they went, and Captain Clark was greeted effusively by the proprietor. Shorty, as a common boy on a fisherman, was ignored.

"About my bill—" began Uncle Jerry.

"Ah, yes, Captain. Just step into my office!" The storekeeper rubbed his fat hands together and smiled ingratiatingly.

Captain Clark wasn't looking pleased, and he turned to Shorty. "Frank, jest go in an' settle up with this feller. Whatever it is, I'll pay."

The other gazed upon the grimy little figure in jersey and sea-boots. "Who's this kid, Captain?" he asked in surprise.

"My nevvie," replied the skipper shortly. "He'll go over th' bill with ye an' show ye a few things." And he did.

The account was a long one, and Shorty went over every item, pointing out mistakes until the storekeeper was furious. It was very seldom that fishermen bothered checking up his figures, and the ignorant Jerry Clark was the last man he ever expected to doubt his honesty. When it was finished and Shorty had brought the bill down to some fourteen dollars less than originally charged, Captain Clark had his say.

"Now, sir, I've bin a-buyin' stores from you fur a consid'able time, an' I've allus paid cash afore sailin'. I took ye fur an honest man, an' now I find ye ain't. Ye knew I warn't much o' a hand at figgerin', an' ye've bin takin' advantage of it. I'll pay ye this bill, but no more business will ye git from me, an' I'll take dam' good care ye don't get a good many more vessel's bills. A word from me about this will queer you with most every skipper out o' Gloucester, I cal'ate. Frank, here's some money. Pay him, an' let's go."

The man was abject in his apologies and pleaded various excuses to account for the overcharges, but Captain Jerry was adamant. "Don't talk t' me," he rumbled. "Tell it to th' boy. He does all my business for me now."

They left the store at last, with the proprietor apologizing to the door. On their way down to the wharf Uncle Jerry spoke: "Now, Frank, that'll jest show ye how much good eddication does a man. Look at th' hundreds o' dollars I must ha' bin swindled out of, 'count of not bein' able t' keep track o' things. Ye did fine, my son, an' 'twas a proud man I was when I saw ye givin' that longshore shark his proper soundin'—"

Shorty strutted along proudly, and he winked knowingly at his uncle as he handed over the remainder of the money. "Yes, Uncle, an' I drew some o' th' shark's blood too! I made him gimme a discount o' fifteen per cent. off th' bill 'stead o' ten."

The big fishing skipper burst into a laugh. "Ye did? Waal, you little runt, ef you ain't th' limit! Ye Jewed him down, an' then took fifteen per cent. discount off'n him. Ha! ha! Oh, but you're a dog, Frank! A man'll need keep a-gripin' t' work t' wind'ard o' you afore ye're much older. Ha! ha! ha!" And Uncle Jerry chuckled all the way along the wharf.

That evening all the stores and gear were gotten aboard. The dories, re-fitted with thwarts, thole-pins, penboards, bow and stern becketts, painters, and oars, were brought alongside and nested upon the decks. After supper the gang, with but one or two exceptions, dressed themselves in their shore toggery and went up-town for a last "look around" and gossip before starting out on their long trip to the eastern Banks. Shorty wrote three letters—one to his mother, one to Miss Dexter, and one to Lem Ring—and, in company with his uncle, went up to the post office and mailed them. The balance of the evening was spent listening to a band concert in East Gloucester, and Shorty strolled among the crowds thoroughly enraptured with the beauty of the night. The soft wind from the sea, the moonlight, the gaily dressed summer visitors, laughing and chattering, and the

band made an impression upon him which he dreamed over with subconscious pleasure as he lay in his bunk in the Kastalia's cabin. Since he had left Long Cove his eyes had seen many strange things, and as he turned them over in his retrospective mind he began to feel that life was good and well worth living.

### CHAPTER FIVE.

Shorty was in the midst of a delightful dream, wherein he had got command of a vessel like the Kastalia, and he was taking the admiring Miss Dexter down to have a look at her when the pleasant fancy was rudely disturbed by the roar of his uncle's voice. "Tumble out, all hands! Get underwa-a-ay! Come on now, fellers! Show a leg! Shake a stockin'!"

In the light from the cabin lamps the gang emerged yawning from their bunks and proceeded to don coats and sea-boots. Blinking at the clock, Shorty noted the hour—half-past three—and he pulled on rubber boots, coat, cap, and mittens and joined the mob shivering on deck. It was a dark morning; the moon had gone down, but the stars were shining, and a light breeze was ruffling the waters of Gloucester harbor. Captain Clark was standing upon the dock, and when the crowd mustered he gave the word. "Get her down to the end o' th' wharf. Slack away yer starn-lines. Haul away for'ard."

Warping the vessel down to the wharf end, they tugged and strained at the hawsers until she was far enough. The skipper then jumped aboard. "That'll do," he said. "Up on yer mains'l now!" Shorty cast the stops off, and when the great roll of canvas had dropped on to the cabin house the whole gang of twenty men tallied on to the peak and throat halliards. "Now then, up she goes!" And with three men fore-all to each halliard, the rest strung along the quarter alleys and hauled in unison to the encouraging shouts of some of their number. The mighty sail slowly climbed the mast to the creaking of blocks and the panting barks of "Walk her up now, bullies!" "Give it to her, fellers!" "Heave an' walk away with her!" While Captain Clark stood well aft and directed the operation with a "Hold yer throat, an' up on yer peak!" "Hold yer peak, an' up th' throat!" until the big mainsail was hoisted as taut as the halliards would take it.

"Come up yer slack!" cried the gang at the fire-rail. The fore-all trio held on while the pin-man took a turn and belayed, then all straightened up for a breather after the haul. "All right," cried the skipper. "Jig her up now!" The jigs or peak and throat halliard purchases were manned, and they took up all the slack until the mainsail luff rope set up "bar taut" and the great canvas was stretched until the wrinkles ran from peak to tack.

"Well yer mains'l. Come up on yer lift now. Unship th' crotch an' tend th' sheet, some o' you!" On the order the fisherman's topping lift, which belays on the boom, was manned and the boom topped up and out of the crotch.

"Well th' lift. Up on yer fores'l now, fellers!" The foresail was soon hoisted and jugged, then the skipper sang out, "Up on yer jumbo, boys!" Make th' tail-rope fast t' wind'ard. Let go bow-line!" The forestaysail or jumbo was quickly hauled up and the tail-rope—an auxiliary sheet—was made fast to windward, and the Kastalia's bow swung out into the stream. Captain Clark took the wheel and spun the spokes over. "Cast off yer starn-line! Hist yer jib! Draw away yer jumbo!" The stern-line was cast off the bollard by a dock lumper, the tail-rope was slacked away, and the jib hoisted. Under her four lowers the Kastalia worked her way out the harbor with the fresh morning breeze in her sails.

Shorty had been busy tailing on to halliards and casting off stops, and, as spare hand, it was his duty to pick up the gaskets, strops, heaver, and boom guys and stow them away until called for again. When he had put them in the cabin lockers he came on deck and looked back at the town fading into the half-darkness astern.

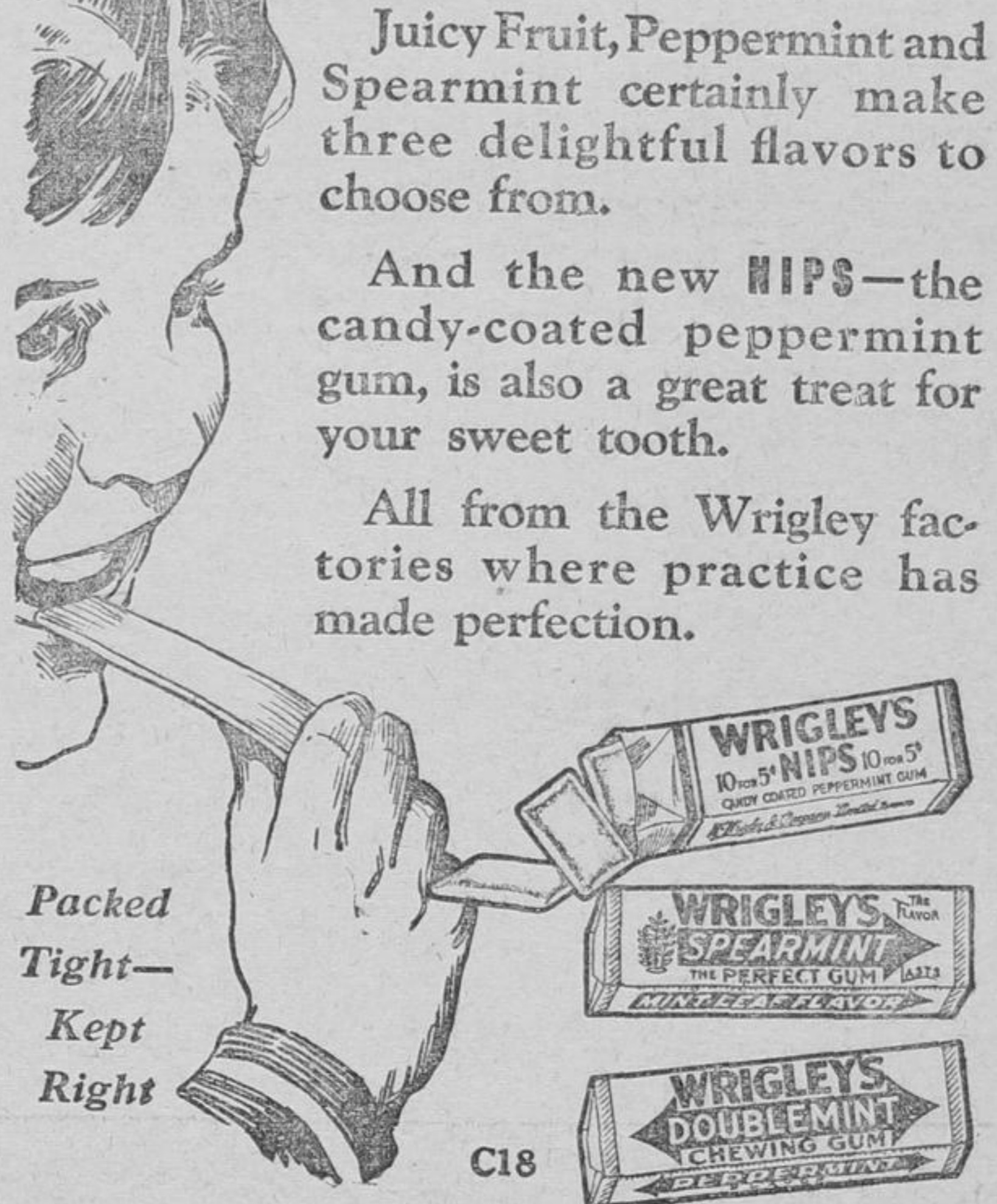
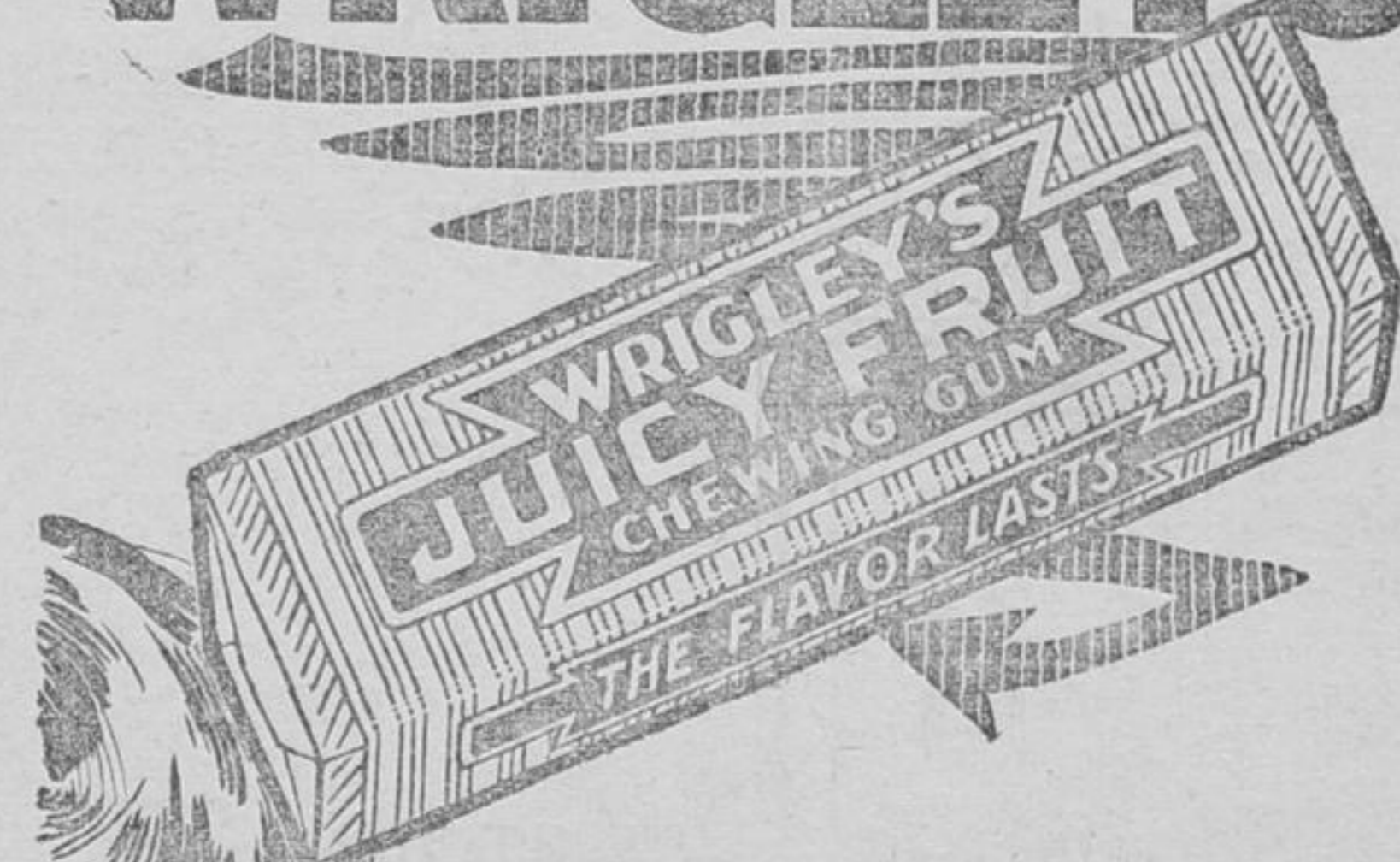
"Waal, son," said a man, slapping him on the back, "you're in for it now. No seein' Glo'ster agin 'til th' salt's wet an' th' hold's full, so pray like blazes for full decks an' fishin' weather."

Up to the present Shorty had no idea where they were going, and neither his uncle nor the men had volunteered any information. Captain Clark made it a point of never telling anybody his intentions, and the men never asked him. If they did, his invariable reply was, "To the east'ard!" The successful Bank skipper is the one who keeps ears and eyes open, but mouth shut, and Jerry Clark was one of the successful ones.

With a breeze freshening with the dawn they rounded Eastern Point and passed the twin towers of Thatcher's Island, when the cook's whistle sounded for the "first half" to go down for breakfast. Shorty was among this gang, and regretfully he left the deck to take his place at the triangular fo'c'sle table, which had its base at the foremast and its apex at the pawlpost, both of which timbers had their massive sides festooned with becketts for the sauce, vinegar, pepper, and salt bottles. The "grub" was placed upon the oilcloth in great enamel-ware pots, and armed with knife, fork, spoon, plate, and mug, each man "dug in" until hunger was satiated. (To be continued.)

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And Christ who died upon a tree  
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—David Morton.

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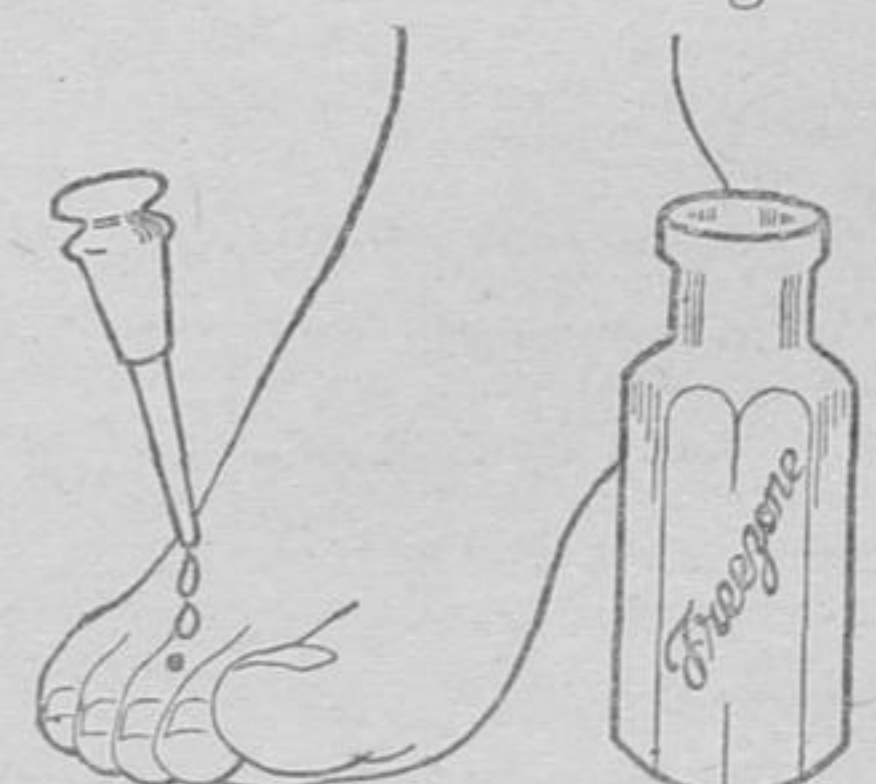
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