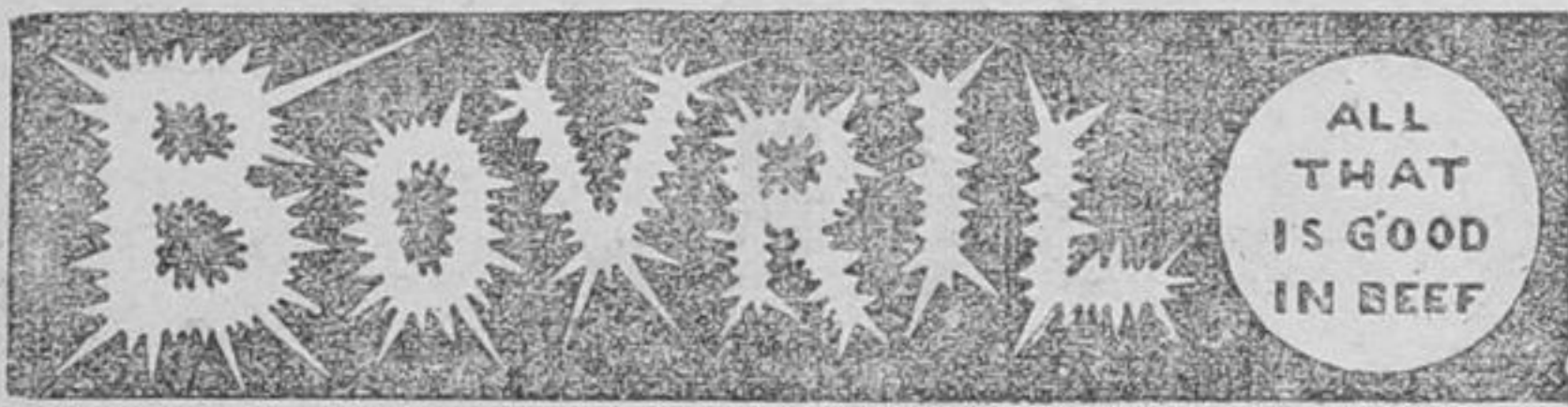


**BOVRIL FLAVORS STEWS AND HASHES**



**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 he "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. Frank checks up the ship's provisions accounts and enjoys his first breakfast at sea.

**CHAPTER FIVE—(Cont'd.)**

It was a strange sea-picture. The dim-lit fo'c'sle ranged on either side with two tiers of bunks which ran behind the pawl-post up into the dark recess of the peak; the narrow table, piled with steaming pots of potatoes, boiled beef, cabbage, and beans, bread, doughnuts, and stewed cranberries; the aproned cook standing by his stove at the after end of the fo'c'sle ladling out mugs of coffee to those who called for the beverage; the tousled bunks littered with suit-cases, ditty-bags, and vari-colored counterpanes and blankets; the oilskins hanging like dead men upon the bulkheads; and lastly, the men themselves, ruddy-faced and loud of speech, clad in odds and ends, sea-booted and rough-looking, all piling in to the food, while the whole apartment creaked and swayed to the rising lift of the sea under the Kastalia's forefoot.

A glance at the vessel's crew then would have confirmed a landsman in the belief that they were a gang of pirates. Gone were the nice table manners of the shore; gone were the trim clothes, collars and ties, shirts of linen and natty shoes; and gone also were the niceties of speech. Men passed their remarks cursefully, and conversation became painfully free and highly charged with the red-blooded talk of the sea. The environment had changed it all, and the kick of the surge underfoot had dissipated the shams and foibles of the land. At sea a man comes out in his true colors and he speaks as he thinks, and Shorty himself began to feel he had taken his place as a man and no longer as a fourteen-year-old boy.

When he came on deck again it was to see Cape Ann astern and the Kastalia scudding along and curtseying to the swell. The sun had risen clear of the sea to the eastward, and the day was sunshine and clouds with a fresh sou'-westerly breeze blowing. As soon as the first table gang emerged the skipper sung out sharply, "Set th' light sails." Spying his nephew, he called him. "Kin ye steer, Frank?" "Sure thing," answered the boy. "I kin steer Cap'n Daley's packet." Uncle Jerry laughed. "Huh! Waal, ef ye kin steer that barge I call late ye kin steer anythin'. Take th' wheel. East-no'th-east th' course!" "East-no'th-east, sir!" repeated

Shorty, and he grasped the spokes, while his uncle went forward for breakfast.

If ever a boy felt proud it was Shorty that morning. Standing at the wheel of the schooner he kept a vigilant eye on the compass and aloft at the gaff-topsail which was set. There was a spanking breeze blowing, and when the gang piled on the "kites" the Kastalia careened to the weight of the wind in them and buried her lee scuppers in a boiling of froth. Up went the great balloon jib, and the men swaying on the halliards were drenched in spray when she hefted the sail. "Hey y! Sheet her down!" And six brine-drenched fishermen laid their weight on the lee sheet and belayed it taut as a wire backstay.

The fisherman's staysail or main-topmast-staysail was sent aloft next and set to leeward, and then, having "dressed" the vessel with all the "patch" of four lowers, two topsails, balloon, and staysail, the gang trooped aft.

"Thar' now, son," cried a man, addressing Shorty. "We've hung out all her rags for ye. See ef ye kin tear th' patch off'n her. Drive her, son, drive her!"

The skipper came up from below with a polished brass instrument.

"See this, Frank," he said.

The other, intent on steering, nodded.

"This is a patent log. I'm a-goin' t' put it over now. We take our departure from here—five miles off Cape Ann and jest seven o'clock. Remember that, Frank."

Heaving the log over the stern, the skipper watched it for a few minutes, and then with a sigh of contentment lit up his pipe and began pacing the weather quarter. The gang were laying around in sunny places overhauling and rigging trawl gear, while some who had finished their work were lolling in their bunks below. After the sail is put on her there is very little work to be done on a fishing vessel except steer and keep a look-out.

The loom of the land faded from a streak of green, brown, and black into a silhouette of blue, and when they hauled the log at nine and found they had made twenty-two knots the vessel was alone on a sunlit circle of rolling blue sea. They were out on open water at last; the land had sunk below the horizon, and Shorty, as he steered, sniffed at the salt-laden air and glanced at the stretch of surrounding ocean with glad eyes. The long roll of the Atlantic could be felt now, and the Kastalia would rise easily over a hill of blue water and descend the slope with a crash of spray and the slam of sails and booms.

From the wheel the boy took in everything with his eyes. Ahead, the long, black bowsprit poked far out over the water—the standing gaskets upon it streaming out in the wind—and it seemed to be describing a continual see-saw with sea and sky, while from under the sharp forefoot came a ripping and tearing as the bows sheared through the water. Little steam-like clouds of spray came whisking up, and the windlass gear, anchors, and foredeck dripped and gleamed wet

in the sunshine. The vast stretches of canvas reared silently aloft, full with the wind and quietly doing their work with but a cheeping of mast hoops, the grinding of boom jaws, and the clink of sheet blocks fetching up against shackles when the vessel bowed to a surge. Amidships sat a few of the men overhauling trawls, and their voice floated aft in a growling monotone, while the rattle and clink of pans sounded from the fo'c'sle interjected by snatches of song from the cook.

With the letters "E.N.E." for ever before his eyes, Shorty was yet able to day-dream a little as he twirled the spokes to the swinging of the needle around the lubber mark, and his fancy pictured himself as a modern embodiment of Amyas Leigh steering on his mission of revenge to the Spanish Main. It was a delightful fancy, and the boy's imagination took a dreamer's license and wove the ancient story into a more modern conception, with Carrie Dexter as Rose Salterne and Bob Morrissey as the hated Don Guzman. Not that Shorty hated Bob as much as all that, but Bob was forced to take the part owing to the lack of a better, or worse, rival. At the wheel of his ship Shorty was steering to rescue his lady-love, and he had got to where he was hanging the wretched Bob from the cross-trees when his uncle stopped in his weather-alley pacing and sung out in the peculiar long-drawn shout common to all seafarers, "H-e-y thar! Sheet in an' jig up!" And when the men turned out to sweat up on the slackened halliards he relieved Shorty at the wheel. "Git all th' gang aft here, Frank," he said. "We'll set th' watches at noon." When the men were haled out from fo'c'sle, hold, and cabin he tossed a piece of chalk to John Ross, the oldest fisherman aboard. "Mark th' baitin' places, John," he said, and the man went around the house and kid marking the baiting positions.

Everything aboard a fisherman is drawn for at the beginning of the voyage, and by this means there is no squabbling afterwards, as each will stand by what he draws for. The top of the cabin house is capped around its edge by planks, upon which the men cut their bait, but there is not enough room for all the twenty men to cut bait and bait their trawls around these bait-boards, so some have to bait on the gurry kid—a huge box just forward of the cabin house—and down in the hold. Thus the reason why the favored spots are drawn for.

After this apportionment was satisfactorily carried out the skipper asked, "Who drew Number One dory?" Two men answered. "All right, boys. Set th' watch at twelve noon. One hour an' twelve minutes to watch." The positions for the fishing work were also portioned out, and the men were detailed off into "splitting gangs" consisting of a "throater," "gutter," and "splitter," while the best and oldest salt fishermen aboard were selected for the salting and "kencing" work in the hold. Shorty, as spare hand, was given no definite place, but he was competent enough to join a splitting gang if necessary, although he did not understand the science of salting fish. He did not have a watch to stand, but he was supposed to give a hand to anyone who wanted him.

The day passed quietly, and the schooner sped along at a steady eleven-knot clip. Hourly the log was hauled and the reading mounted by eleven sea miles on every sight. It was good going, the breeze was steady, the barometer "set fair," and the gang surmised that they'd be up with the "Cape" at daylight next morning. Even though the skipper had not told them, yet they all knew that the E.N.E. course would take them to Cape Sable, Nova Scotia—the point where most Eastern Bank-bound fishermen make for on their journey to the "grounds." Where the skipper was going to after that none knew, though in the fo'c'sle various surmises were made. Some said Halifax, others said Canso, and some ventured on the Magdalens or the Treaty Shore of Newfoundland, for the bait had yet to be procured ere they could start fishing.

Shorty turned in that night with all the sea noises acting as his lullaby, and the easy rise and swing of the vessel tearing over the dark-swathed sea cradled him into the forty-fathom slumber of blue water. When he awoke next morning at four the wheelman pointed with a mittened hand to a light gleaming over the port bow. "Cape Sable!" he said, and Shorty stared once more at the land of his birth until the sun quenched the flare of the lantern and illuminated the low-lying sandy shore, fringed with the dark green of spruce, past which they were tearing.

All day long they stood up the coast of Nova Scotia, dropping the land into a blue streak towards nightfall, when another light gleamed, star-like, in the darkness off the bow. "That's Ironbound," said the skipper in reply to his nephew's enquiry. "Th' next one jest barely showin' above th' horizon is Sambro Head at the entrance to Halifax harbor. We'll see th' lights all night long as we travel up th' coast. That is, ef it don't shut in thick o' fog."

When Sambro Head was passed Shorty turned in and fell asleep with his uncle's admonitions to the watch ringing in his ears. "Keep a good look-out an' call me ef it shuts in thick or th' wind shifts." It seemed but a few minutes ago that his uncle had spoken when the boy was awakened by the skipper's voice. "All out below! Git th' light sails in!" and he crawled on deck to find the vessel driving through a steaming wall of fog. The breeze had freshened and the Kastalia was driving ahead in lurching dives, while

from out the gloom for'ard came the drone of a horn.

The crowd were all up and mustered aft—their oilskins gleaming in the wet of the mist. "All right," cried the skipper, taking the wheel. "Clew up yer tops'ls an' tie them up. Down balloon an' stays'ls!" (To be continued.)

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**Too Bad.**

Little Horace was sent to his room as punishment for taking forbidden cake from the sideboard. His mother, thinking to make the punishment more impressive went up to his room, and after all was forgiven, said:

"Now, Horace, what did I punish you for?"

Horace looked at her in amazement, and his face wore a pained expression. "Well, mummie," he replied, "I like that! Here have I kept in bed all the afternoon, and now you can't remember what you did it for!"

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