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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. He finishes school with credit to himself and spends the summer as an apprentice to "Long Dick" Jennings. In August his uncle takes him on a fishing trip as spare hand aboard the Kastalia. While at anchor in Canso after the first fishing trip, Frank rescues a French boy from ill-treatment by his fellow-sailors and a fight ensues.

CHAPTER FIVE—(Cont'd.)

It was but the affair of a minute before the Frenchmen wavered and ran, and the Anglo-Saxons, who had been reinforced by a gang of Judique men—great six-foot Scotchmen, who had seen the fight from their vessel and pulled ashore in order to participate—followed the retreating St. Malo men in a roaring, vengeful mob. Over the rail of the brigantine they piled—McTavishes, McDonalds, and McCallums in the lead and thirsting for French blood, and it only ceased when the vanquished barricaded themselves in the fore-castle and refused to come out.

Rory McTavish—a huge Judique fisherman, six feet four and broad in proportion—pleaded pitifully for the Frenchmen to come and renew the combat, but his entreaties fell upon ears which heeded not. "No? Ye wullna come?" he growled. "Well, lads, ah cal'late we'll hae tae burst in th' fo'c'sle door an' pull them oot! Stand back some o' ye! Ah'll juist knock this wee bittie door in!" And with a lunge of his powerful shoulder he caused the barricade to split from top to bottom. "Another wee bit dunt 'ull dae th' trick! Stand by tae clip them as a throw them oot tae ye!" And gathering his breath he made another onslaught on the door and disappeared with a splintering crash of planks into the yelling mob inside.

The Frenchmen must have thought that the red-headed McTavish was the devil himself. They covered away from the grasp of his enormous hands, and, ludicrous as it may seem, he grabbed them like so many children and hove them out on deck. As they came staggering through the door the Canadians, Newfoundlanders, and Americans laid violent hands upon them and beat them unmercifully, and to the accompaniment of many objurgations—"Take that, you infernal skate-eater!" "You little boy bullies!" "You soft-hook men!" "Fish hogs!" "Stay on yer own side o' th' water an' don't be pokin' round on aour grounds!" And so on.

After the Judique men had satisfied themselves that not a man of the brigantine's crew would stand up to them they tore up all the deck fittings and piled on to the wharf again, the big McTavish putting a finish on "a ground fecht" by casting off the ves-

sel's mooring ropes and letting her drift out into the harbor. Here the brigantine let go her anchor, and the men scattered to their several vessels to yarn and gossip over the "finest fracas that ever happened in Canso."

When Shorty saw his uncle some time later the latter looked at him with a severe frown on his brow and a twinkle in his eyes. "Waal," he said, as he scrutinized the stocky, sun-burnt youngster in front of him, "ef you ain't jest bound t' raise hades whar' ever ye go."

"It warn't my fault, Uncle Jerry," pleaded Shorty. "I saw that big brute of a Frenchman kickin' th' boy aboard th' vessel, so I jest clips him over th' head with a pin an' brings th' lad ashore with me—"

"Aye," interrupted the other, "an' raises th' biggest fight in Canso at th' same time. Oh, Frank, but ye're a dog! An' whar's th' kid ye were fightin' about?"

"He's down for'ard, sir."

"Down for'ard is he? An' whar are ye goin' t' do about him?"

"Take him along with us," answered Shorty without any hesitation.

"Oh, ye are, are ye? An' whar do I come in? Ain't I got no say in th' matter? What am I goin' t' do with two kids aboard this craft?"

"Oh, he'll be useful, Uncle. Do let him stay. They'd kill him ef he was t' go back to th' Frenchy; an' he wouldn't go anyway. He's a nice boy, even ef he is a Frenchy!"

Uncle Jerry pondered and broke into a laugh. "All right, Frank. Have it your own way. Go git th' gang up an' get under way. We'll git our ice an' bait an' swing out."

CHAPTER SIX

Shorty's French friend proved to be a bright little twelve-year-old Paimpol boy. He could not speak a word of English and seemed rather afraid of the Kastalia's crew at first, until one of the gang, Johnny Leblanc—a French Canadian—took him in hand. The lad's delight at being addressed in his native tongue was evident, and, surrounded by a curious gang of kind-hearted trawlers, Leblanc acted as interpreter to the questionings of the men.

"He has no father nor mother," said Johnny. "Said his father was drowned at sea by the capsizing of a boat, and when his mother died an uncle took him to the Grand Banks on the Miquelon craft. He says his uncle was very cruel to him—look at th' marks on his face an' arms, will ye? Look how thin he is? Take off your shirt, sonny, and let me see where they beat and kicked you." The latter command was spoken in French, and the boy hastened to obey. A low growl of rage went up from the crowd when they viewed the great bruises and red welts upon the little fellow's pinched body, and it would have boded ill with any Frenchman who fell foul of them then. Though originally of French descent himself, Johnny Leblanc regarded the old-country Frenchmen as being foreigners, and he was as loud in his condemnation as anyone. "Sacre! look at dat!" he growled. "Mo' Dieu! I'd like to have bin in dat fight ashore! Asseyes-vous la, mon petit garcon. I will rub the bruises with some medicine. Whar's that 'liniment, fellers?"

A dozen bottles of Fisherman's Painkiller were routed out from under bunk mattresses, and selecting one, Leblanc tenderly rubbed the ugly bruises and welts with his horny fist; and after drawing on his shirt, the little French waif was placed into a bunk and told to sleep.

"Sleep as long as you have a mind to, sonny," said Leblanc, "and if you feel hungry ask the cook here and he'll give you all you want. I cal'late we'll put some fat on them little bones o' your'n afore ye're much older. In a day or so you an' that other imp what pulled you aboard 'ull be plaguin' th' life outer us."

Leblanc's words were prophetic. Under the good treatment of the American and Canadian trawlers and the ministrations of the cook little Jules Galarneau frisked up and put on flesh visibly. He adored the aggressive, swaggering Shorty Westhaver, and jumped about to do him favors, and the latter in turn looked upon the French boy as his especial property. Shorty taught him English—taking him around the vessel and naming each article he pointed to, and the French boy, repeating after him, soon picked up a number of words. The men, of course, thought it was their privilege to teach the boy to swear, but Frank tabooed Jules' learning

from anybody but himself; and, contrary to the usual manner, little Sabot, as the men called him, picked up a conversational English without profanity.

As they made their berths and fished on Canso, Quero, Sable Island, and up to the southern edge of St. Peter's Bank during the shortening September days Shorty and his companion worked around the vessel together and each learned many things. Little Sabot made himself useful in a hundred ways. He could hook up, bait, and overhaul trawl as good as Shorty, and helped the men out in many ways by overhauling their gear for them, cutting bait, sharpening knives, as well as relieving the overworked and harassed cook from the job of tending dories. Shorty relieved his uncle at the wheel when the dories were out and gave the worthy skipper a chance to snatch a nap before they came alongside again. He also learned to use of the lead—that wonderful fisherman's instrument by which they feel the bottom and determine their position upon the shoaling Atlantic waters, and in off moments he studied the charts and gained an idea of how the courses were laid out upon it.

His tally sheet was mounting up when, at the end of September, they shot into Canso for a last baiting. Down in the hold pens a good fifteen hundred quintals of fish were stacked, and the men, as they checked up the count, smiled with satisfaction and calculated the future share that would be coming to them. Another five hundred quintals and then they would swing off for home.

It was a fine fall, and they had had no bad weather to speak of. A little fog and a bit of a twelve-hour westerly blow, but good fishing weather all round; and out on Banquereau they set their trawls for the last few sets, each man spitting on his bait for luck. Then came a morning when the sun rose upon a sea oily calm, and when the gang had been turned out to bait up for the set, one of the dory-mates found he had a poisoned hand, which prevented him from going out in the dory. Though it could not be helped, yet the skipper regretted the loss of a dory during the last hauls, and as he dressed the man's swollen fingers he said so.

"I don't see how th' dickens, Asa, how you sh'd go'n git p'izened jest about now. Th' bad weather'll be comin' along 'most any minute now, an' ef we're goin' t' git a trip at all we need every dory out. However, boy, don't think I'm sore on ye 'cause o' somethin' ye can't help. I wouldn't ask any man to haul trawls with a hand like that—"

Shorty came out from the shack locker, where he had been stuffing himself with cranberry pie—a speciality of the cook's and a favorite with the boys. "Waal, Uncle," he said. "How about me? How about yer spare hand? Let me'n Sabot take Asa's dory. We'll make th' set—"

Sabot crawled out, licking his lips. "Yaas, m'sieu Capitan! Frankee an' me make de set tres bon. Bon pecheur, Frankee an' me. I lak to go in doree."

The big skipper laughed. "Will ye look at th' trawlers!" he guffawed. "A couple o' minims! Both o' them c'd be stowed in a trawl tub. Ha! ha!"

Shorty frowned with disapproval upon his uncle's unseemly mirth. "Huh!" he snorted. "We may be small, but it ain't allus th' big fisherman that makes th' big sets. Let me'n Sabot take th' dory, an' Asa's dory-mate kin take a spell at shippin' pen-boards an' catchin' painters. I'm sick o' that work."

Captain Clark pondered for a moment. "All right, Frank," he said finally. "Bait up a couple of tubs, an' set them one at a time. It'll be as much as yer little backs kin stand haulin', I cal'late. Off ye go, now!"

With a whoop of delight, both boys scrambled up on deck and proceeded to cut bait for two tubs of trawl. With deft fingers each boy garnished the six hundred odd hooks of the seven-shot trawl with a portion of bait, and when the baiting-up was finished they got the dory ready for launching.

"Give us th' water an' th' bearings!" cried Shorty, as he hooked the dory tackles into the "bow and stern beackets."

"Forty-five fathom," replied the skipper. "Make yer set t' wind'ard thar—just atween Jim Rolston an' Westley Carson. Hev ye got all th' gear in? Gurdy winch? Ye might need that a' wind yer trawl in, ha! ha! All right, swing her up!" And tallying on to the dory tackles, the dory was quickly swung over into the water.

The boys jumped in, while Captain Clark handed the two tubs of trawl down to them. "Away ye go, now," he said, "an' see'n come back high dory. Look out ye don't git over th' side!" (To be continued.)

His Overtime.

The master of a mill near Halifax gave strict orders that no overtime was to be worked until further notice.

He was further surprised at the end of the week when he found one claim for an hour's overtime. He asked how it was, when the man reminded the master that he had been sent to his home to help the servants to shake the carpets.

"Yes, but you weren't there after six o'clock," said the master.

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