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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. The two boys try their hand at dory fishing with success.

CHAPTER SIX—(Cont'd.)

Removing the pen-boards, thwart, buoy, anchors, and gurdy winch, they pulled out the plug and sluiced the boat with a few buckets of water. "Thar' now," observed Shorty when the dory had been drained and the gear stowed away, "that's th' way you fellers ought t' go a-fishin'." Ninety-eight fish for one tub, an' all runnin' large; th' gear nicely coiled, an' th' dory drained clean. Ef some o' you lazy shackers 'ud take a lesson from Sabot an' me, ye'd become good fishermen in time. As it is, ye're a very ornery bunch o' trawl-haulers. Jud Haskins and Joe Milligan especially. Cod ain't big enough for them—they must go a-settin' for whales!"

There was a roar of laughter from the group, and the indignant Haskins reached for a stray piece of buoy-line. "Infernal imps!" he growled. "I'll tan ye, my sons."

"Let th' boys be, Jud, or th' fust thing you know they'll be cuttin' ye down to yer boot-straps. Ha! ha! That's a good one. Settin' for whales! Ho! ho!" And Haskins, though vexed over the loss of a tub of gear, laughed with the rest.

The skipper's voice rolled from aft. "Heave short on th' cable! Frank and Jules! Come aft here an' git th' stops off th' mains'!"

The boys obeyed the call. "What's goin' on, Uncle?" asked Shorty, as he stepped into the cabin with an armful of stops. Captain Clark was regarding the barometer attentively.

"See here, Frank." The boy stepped forward. "Look at th' glass. D'ye see what it says?"

"Yes," answered the youngster. "Twenty-nine an' three-tenths. Very low, Uncle—"

"Yes, it is," assented the other, "an' when ye git a big swell runnin' up from th' south-east an' a greasy, dirty-lookin' sky, what would you opine?"

"Dirty weather, Uncle."

"Yes, dirty weather; an' it's liable t' come quick an' sudden. That's why I called th' dories back afore they started making another set. We've had fine weather all September, an' when ye carry it well inter October ye're most bound t' git a snorter t' make up for't. Th' Western Ocean never gives ye too much of a good thing. Go up on deck now an' take a sound afore we break the anchor out."

Shorty was ack in a few minutes to find his uncle poring over a chart.

"Well?" he interrogated.

"Forty-seven fathom—fine sand an' small stones."

"Huh! Come over here an' look on this chart. D'ye know what ye are?"

Shorty glanced over the soiled, pencil-marked map. "Lemme see," he muttered, opening a pair of dividers. "We made our first berth after leavin' Canso last time jest on this spot here. Then we hauled out a bit more th' next set an' made a berth twenty-five miles to th' south-east o' that; then forty miles to th' north-east there, and another twenty to the east'ard o' that, which puts us twenty miles to th' north'ard o' Sable Island. Fifteen miles east o' that puts us on Quero here, an' forty-seven fathoms fine sand an' small stones 'ud put us here, I cal'late. Am I right?"

The skipper nodded. "Ye're quite right, Frank, that's exactly what we are. Now fetch yer tally sheets. How much have we got in th' pens in th' hold?"

"Bout nineteen hundred an' fifty

quintal—more or less, an' there's ten thousand o' fish to be dressed yet."

"Um!" The skipper nodded. "All right, Frank. Go'n give a hand in gettin' sail on her. Th' swell's kickin' up more'n ever. H'ist th' mains'!"

Shorty jumped on deck. "H'ist th' mains'!, he says!" And the gang, lolling over the windlass brakes, came trooping aft.

"Is he swingin' off, Shorty?" enquired a dozen men.

"Don't know," replied the boy. "He ain't told me yet what he's a-goin' t' do. When he does, I'll let ye know!" And he winked saucily at the crowd.

"Listen to th' shrimp!" cried a man. "Lord Harry! ye'd think he owned th' vessel by the airs o' him."

"Ef I owned her, Tom Cantley, I wouldn't carry you for ballast." And in the roar of laughter which followed, Tom Cantley looked foolish and shook his fist at the saucy freckled youngster lolling lazily over the spokes of the wheel.

"Come on thar! Git that mains'! up, you loafers!" he shouted. "Me'n Sabot ain't a-goin' t' wait all day on ye—"

"Shorty's in a hurry t' git back to that girl o' his up th' Bay Shore. What's her name, fellers?"

"Carrie Dexter, I cal'late," answered Cantley, smiling at the blushing Frank.

"Oh, yes, Carrie Dexter, that's th' name! Nice girl—too good fer sich a hard-drinkin', drivin' dog like Shorty. I cal'late he's a-goin' t' git spliced as soon as he draws th' share for that dory load o' cod he cotched this mornin'. Ha! ha!" And the men, heaving on the halliards, roared with laughter, while Shorty glowered at them under pent brows.

Frank Westhaver was too quick-witted a boy to be "strung" for any length of time, and it was not long before he had turned the laugh upon some other member of the Kastalia's gang. Upon a fishing vessel, joking and chaffing predominate in the conversation, and the foibles and idiosyncrasies of each person aboard, except the skipper and the cook, are made the topic for banter and fun. A stout man is made aware of the fact that he is fleshly in almost everything he does, and the lean ones are ragged in turn. Any person afflicted with a huge appetite for sleep soon hears about it; while the escapades, scrapes, and amours of every man aboard becomes a topic for general conversation. Idle talk is peculiar to fishermen—"scandalizin'" being a fine source for fo'c'sle gossip. It is harmless though, and rarely carried ashore, as most fishermen when their feet are on the dry land cut themselves adrift from the rough-talking crudity of their sea life and change their manners with their environment.

Getting the anchor aboard, they hoisted sail and lurched into a long swell under four lowers. There was very little wind, and during the afternoon, while the men dressed and salted the fish of the morning set, the schooner wallowed and rolled with the slatting of sails and the thunderous crashing of booms fetching up on the tackles. The sky became obscured with a greyish pall which could be seen scudding athwart the heavens before some air motion in the upper strata of atmosphere. Around the horizon the sealine stretched in an undefinable circle of slaty mist, while the southerly swell rolled up in ever-increasing undulations.

The last fish had been stacked away, and the men had retired below for a lay-off, when the skipper's voice hailed from the deck. "Oh, below! All up an' stand by for squalls!"

The south-eastern sky had taken on a darker hue; a feeling of sultriness pervaded the air, and the oilskinned gang, coming out of fo'c'sle and cabin, cast apprehensive glances to the south'ard. The skipper stood on the weather quarter staring at the leaden pall to windward; the men lounged around the house aft, smoking and talking in low tones, while the vessel rolled and pitched thunderously into the almost windlass swell.

"Stand by!" cried the skipper. A low hissing was heard; the murk to windward changed to a light grey, while the horizon stretched as a black line under it. A blast of heated air struck the vessel—a mere puff which belled the listless sails for an instant.

"Did ye feel that?" growled a man. "Jest like openin' a furnace door—Ah, here she comes!"

Another puff, sharp, sudden, and strong, struck the schooner and she rolled down until the lee rail went under. The wind whined in the rigging, and as the vessel gathered way upon her she headed close-hauled into the puffs and drove the spray over her bow in steam-like clouds.

"This ain't nawthin'," ejaculated a fisherman. "Th' real dirt'll come in a minute." He had hardly spoken before sea and sky were blotted out in a whirl of white, which hissed and roared as it rushed across the water. Instantly the vessel was headed into it—a wild, howling inferno of wind and hail. Hail which slashed like shoe upon the decks and caused the men to cower and hide their faces from its stinging lash, and wind—what a wind! The schooner rolled her lee deck under, while all hands hung on the rail to windward. The head-sails flapped in thunderous reports, the foresail slatted and fetched up on the tackles with nerve-rendering shocks, while the sea pounded on the bluff of the bow and burst over the vessel in sight-defying clouds of spray.

Captain Clark was standing by the man at the wheel, his hat gone, and his face red with the sting of the hail; Shorty and Jules were clinging, bat-like, to the weather main rigging, while the rest of the gang clung to the house, mainmast, or by the weather dories. For several minutes the squall lasted, then came a lull which allowed the vessel to lift her deluged lee-rail.

"Wa-a-a-tch aout!" bawled the skipper. Crash! Swish! An enormous cresting sea came thundering over the bows, and it swashed aft, submerging the oilskinned figures which hung to rail, gear, bait-boards, and pins. Jules was coughing and sputtering after it had passed.

"What's th' matter?" asked Shorty, flickering the water out of his eyes.

"My mou't was open—"

"Wa-a-a-tch aout!" Men turned apprehensively and tightened their grip when they glanced at the curling wall of water lifting above the rail. Crash! All hands held their breath; the water roared in their ears; it plucked at their bodies and caused the arms to crack with the strain of resisting the pull; then it sluiced away, and the skipper roared in a voice which sounded above the shriek of the wind and the hissing crashes of the rapidly rising and cresting sea! "Take in th' mains'!"

Detaching themselves from the gear to which they were hanging, the gang staggered aft along the reeling, seawashed decks and laid hold of the mainsheet while the skipper eased the wheel down. "Now then! Heave her in!" shouted the mob as they snatched up all the slack in the fluttering, slatting sail. "Walk away with her!" "Bring her aboard, th' rag!" The boom was sheeted aboard as far as it would come with the sail full of wind, the crotch was shipped, and the boom tackles hooked in.

"Lower away peak an' throat!" cried the skipper. "Man yer gaft downhaul. Steady now!"

Getting that mainsail on—six hundred odd square yards of canvas with a seventy-foot boom—was quite a job, even for twenty men. The wind was blowing so hard that it filled the sail like a balloon, and when lowered it trailed all over the lee quarter. The men, hanging on to the gaff, jumped and stamped on the refractory canvas with their heavily booted feet, but they were absolutely unable to make an impression upon it. For the present the mainsail had "taken charge."

"Never mind her jest now," said the skipper. "Hook on yer boom guys an' belay that gaft downhaul. Get th' jib in an' sing out when ye're ready t' roll her up!"

For'ard went the gang, and, ducking their heads to the spray, they slacked away the jib halliards and manned the downhaul. "Now! drag her down!" The jib came reluctantly down the stay, and in a whirling, flapping bundle it slashed around, thumping the bowsprit with the heavy chain-sheets.

"Run her off, skipper!" The vessel was driving her bowsprit into the sea, and it would have been as much as a man's life was worth to have attempted to roll up the jib while the schooner was close-hauled.

Someone started the foresheet, and the schooner sped before the fury of the blast, lurching and diving as she overran the seas. In a veil of spray the men clambered out on the footropes of the bowsprit and laid hold of the slatting jib. With growls and oaths they fisted the wind out of it, while a lonly oilskinned figure, growling as loudly as the rest, clambered up the jib-stay and stamped the hanks down with his feet.

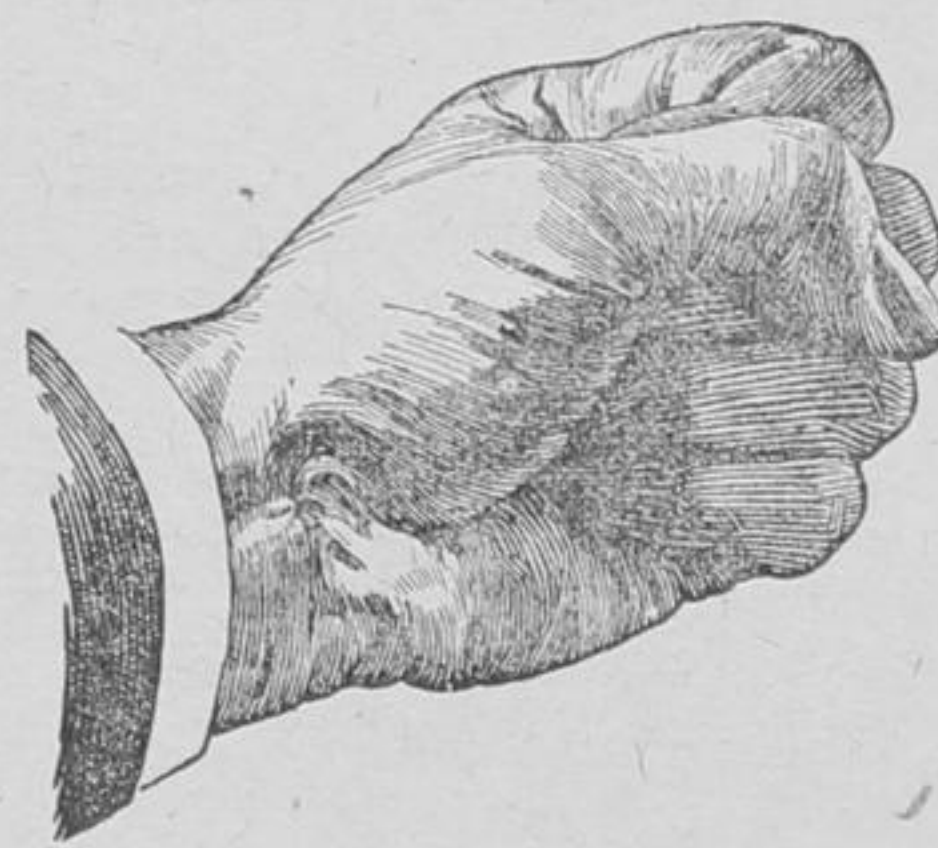
(To be continued.)

Quaint Chinese Oratory in Prince's Welcome.

Quaintly worded was the address of welcome to the Prince of Wales from the Chinese community of Hongkong during his visit there. It spoke of him as drawing nigh in princely array, and said: "Long have we looked up to your Royal Highness and now we welcome you as plants the rain; with one accord we show forth our feelings of gladness and fashion our hymn of praise." Referring to the fact that the heir apparent of the British throne was on his first visit to the East, the address stated: "Tis meet that the streets and the lanes resound with song; high and low, the people dance with gladness; the willows that droop their heads along the banks joyfully

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