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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. The two boys try their hand at dory fishing with success. A storm bursts with sudden fury. Frank's presence of mind saved the vessel from collision with a steamer. When Frank is twenty-one and Jules nineteen, they engage for a season with Capt. Watson. Frank calls on his boyhood sweetheart, Carrie Dexter, now nurse in training in a Boston hospital, who introduces him to the matron as Captain Westhaver. On the return trip Capt. Watson dies and Frank steers the vessel into Boston harbor through a heavy sea. Carrie speaks scornfully of life on a fishing vessel. Frank buys the *Mabel Kinsella* and gets his drunken crew on board. He rescues a man overboard in the storm and wins anew the deep devotion of his gang.

CHAPTER ELEVEN—(Cont'd.)

Below decks the men, with muscles aching with the jolting and knocking about, hung into their bunks—jammed in with rolled-up clothes, mattresses and pillow—and smoked plug after plug of tobacco until fore-cabin and cabin became opaque with the blue reek. Oil-clothes swung like pendulums from the hooks on the bulkheads, and boots and buckets clattered and rolled across the floors. Charley Costa—the Portuguese cook—worked around his stove in momentary danger of being hurled against it, and he prepared meals after a fashion. The bilge-water in the vessel's bottom swashed among the ballast, and the fumes made the lamps burn blue and blackened the fresh-painted woodwork lining of the cabin and fore-cabin, besides making many of the men seasick with the nauseating odor. Creaking and groaning in every beam, knee, and plank, the schooner wallowed, lurched, reared, and flung herself over the roaring crests with all the twists and lunges of an unbroken broncho. For four long and apparently interminable days the gale continued, and the *Kinsella*, hove-to all that time, drifted away to the eastward. "So far," as one of the gang remarked, "that it 'ud need a dollar's worth o' postage stamps on a post-card t' reach us." Needless to say, his joke was not appreciated by the scowling fishermen in the adjacent bunks.

With the dawn on the morning of the fourth day came signs that the storm was breaking. The snow had ceased, and the cold glint of a cloud-enveloped sun illuminated a waste of tumbling grey-blue sea, foam-

streaked and rearing white-capped heads in sullen fury. The sky was lightening up to windward, and when the ragged clouds, racing like smoke athwart the heavens, opened up a faint patch of blue, the watch hailed the news with delight. "Weather's liftin', skipper. That's a streak o' blue sky showin' now!"

All hands tumbled up to see it—a common, ordinary and unimportant sight to a landsman—but as beautiful as the sight of home to the sea-weary men with eyes jaded by the monotonous vista of restless sea and sullen, depressing snow-filled sky. They watched it spread as the strong nor-wester drove the fleecy storm-wrack away, and when the sun broke clear, the watery waste reflected the cobalt of the western heavens. Blue water! It was good to see it once again, and the whole aspect of things changed with the color, and Westhaver gave a joyous shout. "Come on thar, gullies. Put th' double-reefed mains'l on her! H'ist th' jumbo!" And while the men ran to execute his commands he heaved the lead over for a sound.

"Geewhittaker!" he said as the coils flaked out and he was forced to belay. "No bottom at a hundred fathoms! Callate we must ha' blown away outside th' hundred-fathom curve. Now, ef I only had a sextant an' knew how t' use it I'd know whar I was. As it is, I'll hev t' slam her to th' west'ard until we raise somethin' or git a position from another vessel."

A huge two-funnelled Atlantic liner overhauled them as they swooped to the westward under their scanty canvas, and the crowds thronging her spacious promenade decks crowded to the rails to gaze at the tiny "fish boat" plunging like a sea-bird in among the great rollers.

"Hev a look, consarn ye!" bawled a fisherman, unimpressed by the majesty of the rolling ocean palace towering above them. "Yer blame skipper hez shifted his course t' let ye see us. Ef it was thick he wouldn't shift his ruddy course an inch ef we was under yer bows." And carried away with the hereditary hatred of the Banks, he shook his fist at the wondering spectators on the liner's decks.

Westhaver, steering, glanced into the binnacle as she hauled ahead. "Now that craft's a New Yorker, that's evident, an' a New York boat on th' course she's steerin' means that we're south o' forty-two, so we'll jest haul th' *Mabel* a little more no'therly." And on this slight deduction the young skipper shifted the course. Aye! shifted more than the vessel's course—but there are some who will contend that the God of Luck has controlled the destinies of many lives; that a turn of Fate's wheel has upset the thrones of kings, the powers of empires, and while showering wealth on the beggar it has beggared the wealthy. It is blind luck, chance, destiny, or fortune? Or is it the hand of God—a God who sees all and knows all, and who holds the lives, the fortunes, and the destinies of all men in the hollow of his hand?

It was McCallum who roared the intelligence down into the cabin where Westhaver was reading. "Oh, skipper! There's a park or a tree-master

town to loo'ard looking fery distressful, sir. Wull ye pe for looking at her, skipper?"

It was a barque, and, as McCallum had said, she was "looking very distressful." The foretopgallant mast was gone, and she was evidently lying to under a goose-winged lower maintop-sail with the lee clew hauled out and a small rag of a mizzen staysail. The furling-up sails on the yards had broken free of the gaskets in many places and were bellying out in balloon-like knobs; the hull rode very low in the water, and it appeared that some of the seas were making a complete breach over her. As the *Mabel Kinsella* neared her a string of flags ran up to her spanker gaff, fluttered for an instant, and vanished.

"What's th' use of him flyin' International Code hoists to a fisherman," said Westhaver. "We don't know what they are, though I callate that was N.C. that went up—Thar! now! He's talkin' English." The British merchant ensign, union down, broke out half-way up the signal halliards. It had streamed out like a sheet of tin for but a few seconds when the wind whiffed it into nothingness.

"He's in distress," cried Frank to the crowd lounging aft. "Stand by the mainsheet, some o' you! Make th' tail-rope fast as I put th' wheel over! Ready? Helm's a'lee!" And jogging to windward of the loggy, sea-washed barque, the fishing schooner tumbled and rolled in the swells. The gang trooped aft while Westhaver scrutinized the barque with his binoculars.

"Humph!" he muttered as he laid them down. "She's a small craft loaded with deals. Thar's all her gang aft on top of the house. Whole main-deck's a-wash. Waal, I callate we kin git them. Off with th' gripes on yer lee nest an' put three dories over. I'll pick ye up down t' loo'ard—" The words were scarce out of his mouth before a rush was made by the whole crew for the dories nested amidships.

"Say!" shouted Westhaver, "I said th' lee dories—three o' them only. Come aft here, you other fellers what ain't asked t' go—"

They came aft, protesting and pleading. "Let me go!" "An' me!" "Jim Hudson kaint handle a dory like I kin!" "Tis my dory usually goes on that lee nest—I sh'd go by rights." "Three dories ain't enough, skipper." And so on, but Frank was firm. "Three's enough," he said. "Belay yer jaw now an' help them git them over 'thout stavin' them on th' rail." Westhaver went forward. "Now, you rescue fellers," he said. "Be careful goin' longside that hulks an' see she don't roll down on ye. Round up t' her lee quarter an' git her people off, an' make them lay in th' bottom o' th' dory. Be careful, fellers!" And in a minute they were clear of the schooner and reeling over the creaming, wind-lashed waves.

It was blowing very strong from the nor-west, and there was a heavy sea running, and if the rescue had been carried out from a steamer with similar conditions existing there would have been a call for volunteers—single men preferred—and they would have pulled away in the same spirit as a forlorn hope, while the steamer would have manoeuvred to windward of the thirty-foot lifeboat with oil dripping from the latrines to break the sea.

With the men of the deep-sea fishing fleets there were no such preparations. They are used to handling boats in rough water and heavy winds, and the six dory-mates from the *Mabel Kinsella* pulled away in their eighteen-foot dories with the supreme confidence of men who know what their boats can stand—for the dory, those ugly, cranky, flat-bottomed bronchos of the sea, will ride out a howling gale if not overloaded and improperly handled.

While the boats were rounding up under the barque's counter Westhaver drew away on the jumbo, started his sheets, and swung down to leeward, where he rolled with wild swoops among the debris-littered combers, while the gang lined the rail and watched the work of rescue with anxious eyes.

There were ten all told taken from the water-logged barque, and when the first dory pulled alongside the schooner willing hands lifted the benumbed members of the windjammer's crew over the rail. A boyish figure, slight in build but beautiful in the alabaster paleness of his features, dressed in seamen's oilskins, was lifted aboard by Westhaver, and when he glanced at the face in curious wonder, Jake Simms in the dory confirmed his suspicions. "Git her below, skipper! She's fainted—"

A girl! Westhaver leaped for the cabin gangway with the burden resting in his strong arms as lightly as a feather. "Git th' cook aft here!" he roared. "Tell him t' bring along coffee—tea—soup—anythin' hot. Jump, some o' ye!"

Clattering below, he laid the still form of the girl on a locker, and for a moment he pondered as to what he had better do to revive her. "Now I'll be hanged ef I know what t' do!" he muttered, when a grizzled old man clad in a long black oilskin coat stepped down the ladder.

"Is she all right?" he queried, giving Westhaver a piercing, anxious glance.

"Waal, I reckon she's jest fainted," returned the young skipper. "I've sent for th' cook t' come aft with somethin' hot—here he is, now. What ye got thar, Charley? Coffee? I callate ye'd better git some of it atween her lips—"

"Yes," said the old man, bending over the faintly breathing form. "Wait, an' I'll git them oil-clothes off'n her. Got a bunk, sir?" Shorty jumped to his own berth.

"She kin hev my berth," he said eagerly. "Jest a couple o' shakes 'til I fix it up." And he hove old newspapers, pipes, mittens, tobacco plugs, dirty collars, and old socks out of the coffin-like hole and smoothed out the sodden bilge-reeking pillow and blanket with a blush of shame for the hoggishness of his sea life.

"Put here in here, mister," he said when he had kicked the rubbish to one side, and between them they laid the sodden, girlish body into the bunk and rolled her up in the blankets.

"All aboard, skipper!" shouted someone down the hatch. Westhaver left the berth. "Th' steward here'll git ye anythin' ye want for her, sir," he said. "I'll hev t' leave ye for a few minutes."

On deck he saw the water-logged barque a good mile to windward; the rescuers had returned safely, and the dories were nested and the gripes over them.

(To be continued.)

How Much is a Shelter-Belt Worth?

How much a shelter-belt of trees about the buildings and garden on a prairie farm in Canada is worth has been under frequent discussion of late. In Bulletin No. 72, "Success in Prairie Tree Planting," issued by the Director of Forestry, Ottawa, forty farmers scattered over the prairies between Winnipeg and Edmonton estimate the value of shelter-belts they have planted on their farms at from \$500 to \$3,000, with an average of about \$1,000. That this is a reasonable valuation is confirmed by a recent decision of an Alberta court. In this case the tenant of a farm had allowed cattle to get into the tree belt with the result that they had almost destroyed it. The owner at the termination of the lease sued the tenant for damages. A number of witnesses were heard. One witness for the defendant contended that with good care and attention the planting of fifty to one hundred new trees the damage would soon be repaired. On the other hand witnesses for the plaintiff estimated the damage at from \$1,500 to \$2,000. After reviewing the evidence, the learned judge stated his conclusion as follows: "On the whole I think the proper amount to allow would be \$1,000. I think with the expenditure of quite a bit less than this sum, and with care and attention for a few years, the wind-break can be made practically as good as ever. But the value in the meantime will be lost, and, therefore, I think the amount mentioned is not excessive." Judgment was given on this basis.

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Music in the Home.

When your guests come, open the top of the piano. Your instrument then is receiving them, too. Music in its place, the suggestion of readiness to play—these are the touches of kinship which set life into the music room. Who, now, will disregard the music room? Who will let his home have no heart? I speak to you in the words of a great old man I once knew: "Where there is no music in the house, that house is a sad place. If you would know where real culture and genuine sympathy reside in the human heart, go find me a lover of music. And if a family would appear to be the cultured sort, even though they cannot confess a true love of melody, let them sham it, if they must. Let them follow the suit of the folk who attend opera merely to seem to like it. If the name of the family be off from the list of music-patrons, you wonder why, and wondering, cast a different glance at the missing persons."

I change all this by saying to you, that what you hear of music outside your doors, is not to compare with the simple kind of music you hear inside your own home. I would rather listen to the amateur notes of a man at home, than admire the marvels of a professional's technique on the concert stage.

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The Migrants.

I faintly hear, far up in the cold sky, The silver music of a hurrying host, The voice of winged armies as they fly Through cloud and star-lane to a distant coast.

Warbler and thrush, and finch and vireo, Clan linked to clan, they sweep in wild crusade—

Borne on the winds beyond the reach of foe, Wrapped in impenetrable mist and shade.

I strain each sense to catch the flaked notes

And vainly stare aloft to pierce the dark,

Wondering what rapture swells the pilgrims' throats,

What shore it is toward which they all embark,

Wishing I, too, could join the venturesome flight

To that strange clime that lies beyond the night!

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