

BLUE WATER

A TALE OF THE DEEP
SEA FISHERMEN

BY FREDERICK WILLIAM WALLACE

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CHAPTER SIXTEEN—(Cont'd.)

All went well until three in the morning, when they fetched well down St. Mary's Bay and had the Brier Island light astern. The breeze had hauled a little more southerly and was blowing athwart the now returning tide. There was some sea running south of the island, and the little vessel began to plunge and sweep her decks in the rips.

Uncle Jerry fastened the fo'c'sle slide and came aft, and Frank and he nursed the small craft among the breaking crests. It was black dark and blowing squally with rain, and when the puffs hit in they had to shoot the schooner up with sails slatting and booms snatching at the tackles.

"I'm scart o' this punt," bawled the older man. "She's old an' hardly able for a drag like this. Them o' sails o' hers ain't up to much, either."

Frank was not singing now. Both men knew the vagaries of the tide-whipped Bay of Fundy and the dangers of the whirling rips, and they realized that the breeze now blowing and the set of the tide would call for all their skill and seamanship. The wind would hardly have bothered a large fishing schooner, but an old forty-foot craft like Judson Morrell's was not to be driven through tide rips in squally weather.

"Lookin' dirty," remarked Captain Clark.

"Aye," returned Frank; "but thar's th' red flash o' th' Sou-west buoy to loo'ard. Once git clear o' that an' well down past Trinity an' I ain't worryin'. Up! wa-a-tch aout!"

A curling crest broke aboard and flooded the schooner in white water. Loggy with the weight of it on her deck, she shipped another, which hid the deck from sight, and Captain Clark yelled, "It's a-goin' t' be too much for her! We'd better shoot back inter Brier Island—"

"No! we'll drive her!" bawled Frank. "This ain't nawthin'—"
The whine of the wind and the roar of the breaking rips crowned his utterance, and with the spray and ram lashing them they hung aft by the wheel, while the little craft reared and tumbled among the turmoil.

The mournful hoot of the buoy whistle to leeward barely reached their ears, when the little boat rolled down to a puff and shot up into the wind with a slatting and banging of sails. Frank put the helm up again, but the schooner did not fall off and the slatting continued. "What's th' matter?" he shouted. "Jib sheet parted? Take aolt an' I go'n see." Handing the wheel over to his uncle, he clawed his way for'ard in time to see the jib rip itself into ribbons.

"Blazes!" he snapped out. "Jib's gone!" He tumbled aft again and communicated the intelligence to his uncle. "She'll never head up for Yarmouth now. Blest of that rotten o' mains'l ain't startin' t' split as well—"

"We can't make it now!" shouted the other. "In with th' mains'l and we'll run for Westport. Quick, or she'll swamp in this howlin' drink. We're most a-top o' th' blame' buoy!"

Ripping out healthy Bank anathemas on Judson Morrell's sails, Frank clawed the mainsail down and tied it up. "By the o' Judas!" he said bitterly. "Ef I ain't the original ring-tailed Jonah, I don't know who is!" He started the foresheet, and the schooner wore round and headed for Grand Passage. "Slam now, you ol' barge! You'll run home a sight quicker'n ye'll head th' way I want t' go!"

It was just breaking daylight when they shot into the eastern passage and glided in alongside one of the Westport wharves.

"What are ye plannin' t' do now?" enquired Uncle Jerry, after his nephew had slipped the mooring lines over the posts.

Frank wrung the water out of his coat before replying. He was drenched from head to foot, and the good suit of clothes he was wearing was visibly shrinking upon his stocky frame. Heaving the coat over a pile of lobster crates, he asked suddenly, "Who's that friend o' yours what owns that motor dory 'round here?"

"Bill Matheson, ye mean?"

"That's th' feller," said Westhaver.

"D'ye know whar' his place is?"

"Yes—but what d'ye want him for?" enquired Captain Clark, crawling painfully upon the wharf.

"I'll git him t' run me down t' Yarmouth. Come on, Uncle. Show me his house an' I'll rout him out. Heave ahead!"

The two men walked along the deserted water-front street, stumbling over lobster crates, buoys, and old broken-down dories. Everything was quiet, and as they strode along the road Frank shivered in his wet clothes. "Fine place t' die in is this Westport," remarked he. "I've h'ard nawthin' but a rooster a-crowin' sence we landed—"

"Here's Bill's place," interrupted the other, and they stepped up on to the porch of a neat shingled cottage. The lobsterman was roused out, and the two explained their errand.

"Run me down, Mr. Matheson, an' I'll make it worth yer while—"

"Oh, that's all right," said the other sleepily. "When d'ye want t' go?"

"Now—right now," replied Frank.

"I don't want t' waste any more time. We've bin all night a-comin' from Long Cove in a little bit of a vessel, but we bust our jib off th' Sou-west Ledge an' had t' make a shoot for here."

"Tain't a very nice mornin' for runnin' down," demurred the man. "Th' south cone is h'isted up to th' Signal Station thar—"

"I don't care a hoot for storm cones," ejaculated Westhaver. "You run the engine an' I'll steer yer boat."

Matheson laughed. "All right, skipper. Wait till I git my clothes on an' a bite to eat. Draw to th' stove thar an' dry yerselves. I'll git the ol' woman out t' make ye some hot tea."

Within half an hour he was ready, and Frank turned to his uncle and said, "Thar's no call for you t' go. Stay with th' boat 'til I come back, an' try an' git a new jib. I'll show up this afternoon or to-morrow mornin'."

"Go an' turn in, Cap'en," said Matheson. "Th' wife'll give ye a bed, an' dry yer clothes."

And Uncle Jerry, feeling his rheumatism, gladly availed himself of the offer.

It wasn't just the weather suited for a twenty-foot motor-dory to wrestle with, and when the little craft swung through the eastern passage she was met by a tumbling broil of sea which almost pitch-poled her as she swooped over their crests. Both men sat aft; Frank steering by the tiller, and Matheson, with the engine hatch drawn almost to, nursing the coughing motor as she plunged in the sea-way. The rain had ceased, but it was blowing stiff from the south-east, and when they left the bare loom of Brier Island astern all sight of land was shut out by a damp, fog-like mist.

Frank had never been in a motor-boat before, and he spoke to his companion. "How quick'll she make it?"

The other pondered before replying. "It's 'most thutty mile down to th' Cape, but with this south-easter an' tide settin' agin us we ain't a-goin' to make th' run in less'n five hours. I got a good strong engine here what kin shove her along 'bout ten mile in slack water, but with wind an' tide in our teeth we kain't make more'n six."

"Um! 'Tis five o'clock now. Waal, ef we git in by noon, I won't mind; but drive her, Matheson, as I'm in an awful hurry."

They laid a course over towards Cape St. Mary's to run down in the lee of the land, and it was ten miles of water which Matheson is not likely to forget. Twice the little dory was deluged in a sea, and only frantic bailing upon Westhaver's part saved them from sinking. Twice the lobsterman wanted to turn back, but Frank would not let him. "Jest a few minutes more, Bill," he would say, "an' we'll be out o' this. You keep that engine a-goin' an' I'll keep th' dory top o' th' water. She'll be all right!"

And even as he spoke the words she almost filled to the coamings. Luckily the engine was enclosed inside a water-tight bulkhead, and whatever water poured into the cockpit of the boat it failed to enter the engine compartment.

When at last they fetched up under the lee of the Cape, Matheson wiped the sweat off his face. "Blazin' Hades!" he ejaculated. "I jest about planned on never gittin' across, skipper. Lord Harry! I'll never be hauld out o' my bunk t' make a run like that again—not even ef th' King of England sh'd come an' ask me."

"Never mind, Bill! Ef he sh'd ever ask ye, ye kin send for me an' I'll help ye take him across. I'm a great hand at bailin', I am." And the other looked over at him in astonishment.

"I kin understand now," he murmured to himself, "how that young

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More Fog.

The teacher had been working very hard in order to impress a few elementary geographical facts upon her rather dull pupils. At the end of the lesson she asked a few questions.

"Now, Johnny," she said, "what is London noted for?"

It is noted for its stupidity, miss," answered Johnny, more brightly than usual.

"Whatever makes you think that?" inquired the teacher.

"Why, miss," was the reply, "you said yourself that the population of London is very dense!"

A Born Diplomat.

The shoe dealer was hiring a clerk. "Suppose," he said, "a lady customer were to remark while you were trying to fit her, 'Don't you think one of my feet is bigger than the other?' what would you say?"

"I should say, 'On the contrary, madam, one is smaller than the other.' 'The job is yours.'"

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Last Thing It Needs.

Father was annoyed. His expensive gold watch had failed him. It wouldn't go at all.

"I can't think what's the matter," he complained. "Maybe it needs cleanin'."

"Oh, no, daddy," objected four-year-old Henry. "'Cause baby and I had it in the bathroom washing it all day yesterday."

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