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THE REFUGEES
By A. CONAN DOYLE,
Author of "The Return of Sherlock Holmes"
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off from some ship or gone adrift from shore. Put her head down, Mr. Tomlinson, for it just so happens that I am in need of a boat at present."
Half a minute later the Golden Rod had swung round and was running swiftly down toward the black spot which still bobbed and danced upon the waves. As they neared her they could see that something was projecting over her side.
"It's a man's head!" cried Amos Green.
But Ephraim's grim face grew grim-mer. "It's a man's foot," said he.

our keg, and we were left with no rope save in him. And then he began to call to him, one at a time, first the child and then the woman and then the man, until I only am left, though I feel that my own time is not long. But, since ye are also of the faithful, may I not serve you in any way before I go?"
The merchant shook his head, and then suddenly a thought flashed upon him, and he ran, with joy upon his face, and whispered eagerly to Amos Green. Amos laughed and strode across to the captain.

think that you had best take the gal below to the cabin."
And a solemn hush they ran along-side this lonely craft which hung on, so sinister a signal.
She was a little thirteen foot cockle-shell, very broad for her length and so flat in the bottom that she had been meant evidently for river or lake work. Huddled together beneath the seats were three folk, a man in the dress of a respectable artisan, a woman of the same class and a little child about year old. The boat was half full of water, and the woman and child were stretched with their faces downward, the fair curls of the infant and the dark locks of the mother washing to and fro like water weeds upon the surface. The man lay with a slate colored face, his chin cocking up toward the whites and his mouth wide open, showing a leathern crinkled tongue like a rotting leaf. In the bows, all huddled in a heap and with a single paddle still grasped in his hand, there crouched a very small man clad in black, an open book lying across his face and one stiff leg jutting upward, with the heel of the foot resting between the rowlocks.
A boat had been lowered by the Golden Rod, and the unfortunates were soon conveyed upon deck. No particle of either food or drink was to be found or anything save the single paddle and the open Bible, which lay across the small man's face. Man, woman and child had all been dead a day at the least, and so, with the short prayers used upon the seas, they were buried from the vessel's side. The small man had at first seemed also to be lifeless, but Amos had detected some slight flutter of his heart, and the faintest haze was left upon the watch glass which was held before his mouth. Wrapped in a dry blanket, he was laid beside the mast, and the mate forced a few drops of rum every few minutes between his lips until the little speck of life which still lingered in him might be fanned to a flame. Meanwhile Ephraim Savage had ordered up the two prisoners whom he had entrapped at Honfleur.



Kneeling hand in hand before the dying pastor.

"It's time," said Ephraim Savage grimly.
Then the whisperers went to De Catinat. He sprang in the air, and his eyes shone with delight. And then they went down to Adele in her cabin, and she started and blushed and turned her sweet face away and patted her hair with her hands as woman will when a sudden call is made upon her. And so, since haste was needful and since even there upon the lonely sea there was one coming who might at any moment snap their purpose, they found themselves in a few minutes—this gallant man and this pure woman—kneeling hand in hand before the dying pastor, who raised his thin arm feebly in benediction as he muttered the words which should make them forever one.
Ere the stars had waned again one more toiler had found rest aboard of the Golden Rod, and the scattered flock from Isigny had found their pastor once more.

CHAPTER XVIII.
FOR three weeks the wind kept at east or northeast, always at a brisk breeze and freshening sometimes into half a gale. The Golden Rod sped merrily upon her way, with every sail drawing aloft and aloft, so that by the end of the third week Amos and Ephraim Savage were reckoning out the hours before they would look upon their native land once more.
"Tomorrow we should make land by my reckoning," said Captain Savage.
"Ah, tomorrow! And what will it be—Mount Desert, Cape Cod, Long Island?"
"Nay, lad; we are in the latitude of the St. Lawrence and are more likely to see the Acadia coast. Then, with this wind, a day should carry us south, or two at the most. A few more such voyages, and I shall buy myself a fair brick house in Green lane of north Boston, where I can look down on the bay or on the Charles or the Mystic and see the ships comin' and goin'. So I would end my life in peace and quiet."
The mate's watch that night was from 12 to 4, and the moon was shining brightly for the first hour of it. In the early morning, however, it clouded over, and the Golden Rod plunged into one of those dim, clammy mists which lie on all that tract of ocean. So thick was it that from the poop one could just make out the loom of the foresail, but could see nothing of the foretopmast staysail or the jib. The wind was northeast, with a very keen edge to it, and the dainty brigantine lay over, scudding along with her lee rails within hand's touch of the water. It had suddenly turned very cold—so cold that the mate stamped up and down the poop, and his four seamen shivered together under the shelter of the bulwarks. And then in a moment one of them was up, thrusting his forefinger into the air and screaming, while a huge white wall sprang out of the darkness at the very end of the bowsprit, and the ship struck with a force which snapped her two masts like dried reeds in a wind and changed her in an instant to a crushed and shapeless heap of spars and wreckage.
The mate had shot the length of the poop at the shock and had narrowly escaped from the falling mast, while of his four men two had been hurled through the huge gap which yawned in the bows, while a third had dashed

his head to pieces against the stock of the anchor. Tomlinson staggered forward to find the whole front part of the vessel driven inward and a single seaman sitting dazed amid splintered spars, flapping sails and writhing, lashing cordage. It was still as dark as pitch, and save the white crest of a leaping wave, nothing was to be seen beyond the side of the vessel. The mate was peering round him in despair at the ruin which had come so suddenly upon them, when he found Captain Ephraim at his elbow, half clad, but as wooden and serene as ever.

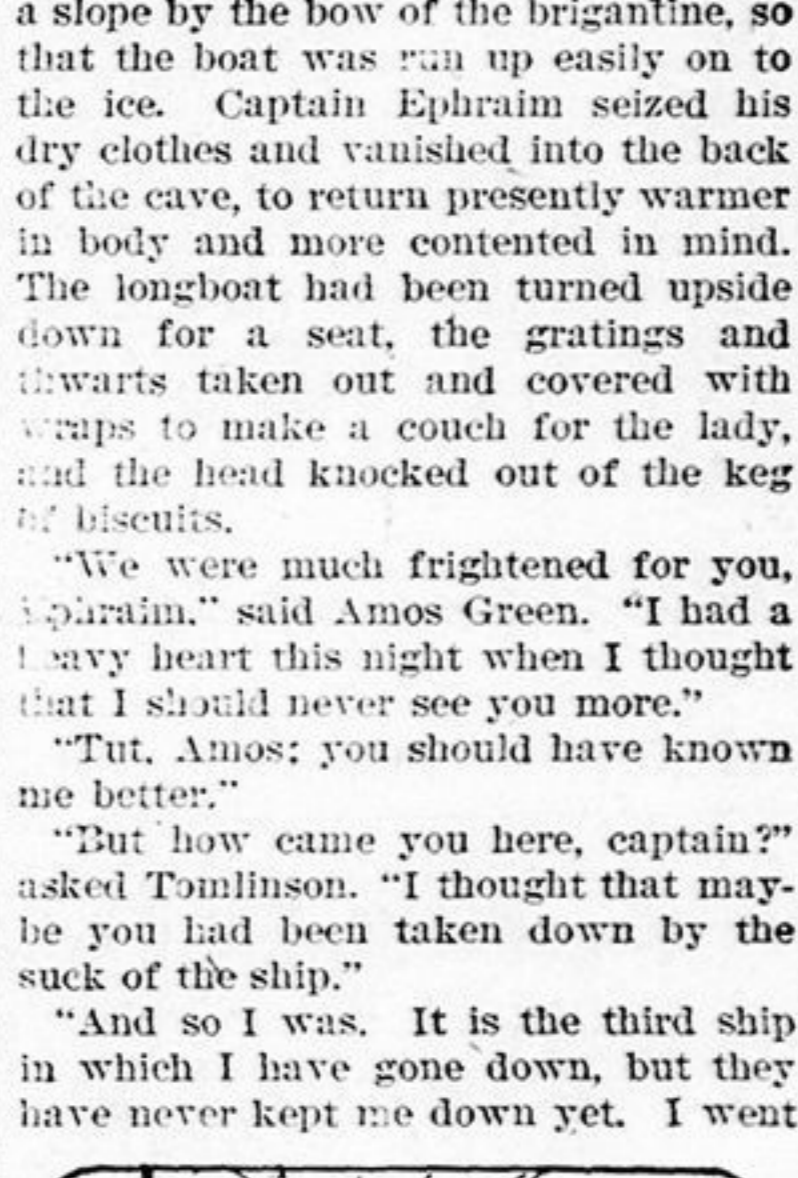
"An iceberg," said he, sniffing at the chill air. "Did you not smell it, friend Tomlinson?"
"Truly I found it cold, Captain Savage, but I set it down to the mist."
"There is a mist ever set around them, though the Lord in his wisdom knows best why, for it is a sore trial to poor sailor men. She makes water fast, Mr. Tomlinson."
The other watch had swarmed upon deck, and one of them was measuring the well. "There is three feet of water," he cried, "and the pumps sucked dry yesterday!"
"Hiram Jefferson and John Moreton, to the pumps!" cried the captain. "Mr. Tomlinson, clear away the longboat and let us see if we may set her right!"
"The longboat has stove two planks!" cried a seaman.
"The jolly boat, then!"
"She is in three pieces!"
"Where is Amos Green?"
"Here, Captain Ephraim. What can I do?"
"And I?" asked De Catinat eagerly.
Adele and her father had been wrapped in mantles and placed for shelter in the lee of the roundhouse.
"Tell him that he can take his spell at the pumps," said the captain to Amos. "And you, Amos, you are a handy man with a tool. Get into your longboat with a lantern."

For half an hour Amos Green hammered and the night milked.
"You've made a fine, Amos lad," said the captain, "but she's not quite water tight."
"Very good. Lower away. Keep up the pumping there, Mr. Tomlinson, see that provisions and water are ready, as much as she will hold. Come with me, Hiram Jefferson."
The seaman and the captain swung themselves down into the tossing boat, the latter with a lantern strapped to his waist. To other they made their way until they were under her mangled bows. The captain shook his head when he saw the extent of the damage. "Cut away the foresail and pass it over," said he.
Tomlinson and Amos Green cut away the lashings with their knives and lowered the corner of the sail. Captain Ephraim and the seaman seized it and dragged it across the mouth of the huge gaping leak. "How much in the well?" he asked.
"Five and a half feet."
"Then the ship is lost. I could put my finger between her planks as far as I can see back. Keep the pumps going there! Have you the food and water, Mr. Tomlinson?"
"Here, sir."
"Lower them over the bows. This boat cannot live more than an hour or two. Can you see anything of the berg?"
The mist had thinned away suddenly, and the moon glimmered through once more upon the great lonely sea and the stricken ship. There, like a huge sail, was the monster piece of ice upon which they had shattered themselves.
"You must make for her," said Captain Ephraim. "There is no other chance. Lower the gal over the bows. Well, then, her father first, if she likes it better. Tell them to sit still, Amos, and that the Lord will bear us up if we keep clear of foolishness. So! You're a brave lass for all your nipping pimply lingo. Now the keg and the barrel and all the wraps and cloaks you can find; now the other man, the Frenchman. Aye, aye, passengers first, and you have got to come! Now Amos, now the seamen, and you last, friend Tomlinson."

It was well that they had not very far to go, for the boat was weighted down almost to the edge, and it took the bailing of two men to keep in check the water which leaked in between the shattered planks. When all were safely in their places Captain Ephraim Savage swung himself aboard again, which was but too easy now that every minute brought the bows nearer to the water. He came back with a bundle of clothing, which he threw into the boat. "Push off!" he cried.
"Jump in, then."
"Ephraim Savage goes down with his ship," said he quietly. "Friend Tomlinson, it is not my way to give my orders more than once. Push off, I say!"
The mate thrust her out with a boat hook. Amos Green and De Catinat gave a cry of dismay, but the stolid New Englanders settled down to their oars and pulled off.
"The boat leaks like a sieve," said the mate. "I will take her to the berg, leave you all there if we can find footing and go back for the captain."
But they had not taken fifty strokes before Adele gave a sudden scream. "My God!" she cried. "The ship is going down!"
She had settled lower and lower in the water, and suddenly, with a sound of rending planks, she thrust down her bows like a diving waterfowl, her stern flew up into the air, and with a long sucking noise she shot down swifter and swifter, until the leaping waves closed over her high poop lantern. With one impulse the boat swept round again and made backward as fast as willing arms could pull it. But all was quiet at the scene of the disaster. Not even a fragment of wreckage was left upon the surface to show

where the Golden Rod had found her last harbor. For a long quarter of an hour they pulled round and round in the moonlight, but no glimpse could they see of the Puritan seaman, and at last, when in spite of the ballers the water was washing round their ankles, they put her head about once more and made their way in silence and with heavy hearts to their dreary island of refuge.

Desolate as it was, it was their only hope now, for the lead was increasing, and it was evident that the boat could not be kept afloat long.
The cliff which faced them was precipitous, and it glimmered and sparkled all over where the silver light fell upon the thousand facets of ice. Right in the center, however, on a level with the water's edge, there was what appeared to be a huge hollowed out cave, which marked the spot where the Golden Rod had, in shattering herself, dislodged a huge bowler, and so, amid her own ruin, prepared a refuge for those who had trusted themselves to her. This cavern was of the richest emerald green, light and clear at the edges, but toning away into the deepest purples and blues at the back. But it was not the beauty of this grotto, nor was it the assurance of rescue, which brought a cry of joy and of wonder from every lip, but it was that, seated upon an ice boulder and placidly smoking a long cornob pipe, there was perched in front of them no less a person than Captain Ephraim Savage of Boston.
"Friend Tomlinson," said he, "when I tell you to row for an iceberg I mean you to row right away there, d'ye see, and not to go philandering about over the ocean. It's not your fault that I'm not froze, and so I would have been if I hadn't some dry tobacco and my tinder box to keep myself warm."
Without stopping to answer his commander's reproaches the mate headed for the ledge, which had been cut into a slope by the bow of the brigantine, so that the boat was run up easily on to the ice. Captain Ephraim seized his dry clothes and vanished into the back of the cave, to return presently warmer in body and more contented in mind. The longboat had been turned upside down for a seat, the gratings and thwart taken out and covered with wraps to make a couch for the lady, and the head knocked out of the keg of biscuits.
"We were much frightened for you, Ephraim," said Amos Green. "I had a heavy heart this night when I thought that I should never see you more."
"Tut, Amos; you should have known me better."
"But how came you here, captain?" asked Tomlinson. "I thought that maybe you had been taken down by the suck of the ship."
"And so I was. It is the third ship in which I have gone down, but they have never kept me down yet. I went



Seated upon an ice boulder and placidly smoking a long cornob pipe.

deeper tonight than when the Speedwell sank, but not so deep as in the Governor Winthrop. When I came up I swam to the berg, found this nook and crawled in. Glad I was to see you, for I feared that you had foundered."
"We put back to pick you up, and we passed you in the darkness. And what should we do now?"
"Rig up that boat sail and make quarters for the gal, then get our supper and such rest as we can, for there is nothing to be done tonight."
In the morning Amos Green was aroused by a hand upon his shoulder and, springing to his feet, found De Catinat standing beside him. The latter's face was grave, and his friend read danger in his eyes.
"What is it, then?"
"The berg. It is coming to pieces. I have been watching it. You see that crack which extends backward from the end of our grotto? Two hours ago I could scarce put my hand into it. Now I can slip through it with ease."
Amos Green walked to the end of the funnel shaped recess and found, as his friend had said, that a green sinuous crack extended away backward into the iceberg, caused either by the tossing of the waves or by the terrific impact of their vessel. He roused Captain Ephraim and pointed out the danger to him.
"Well, if she springs a leak we are gone," said he. "She's been thawing pretty fast as it is."
They could see now that the whole huge mass was brittle and honey-combed and rotten.
"Hello!" cried Amos Green. "What's that? I could have sworn that I heard a voice."
"Impossible. We are all here."
"It must have been my fancy, then."
Captain Ephraim walked to the seaward face of the cave and swept the ocean with his eyes. "We should lie in the track of some ships," said he. "There's the codgers and the heretics"
To be continued.

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