

IN THE NIGHT WATCH

A Yuletide Story of Love and Peril on the High Seas

It was real Christmas weather in Lat. 45 deg. North, Long. 20 deg. West; and through a north-east gale triumphantly crested with blinding snow, the Angmeric bored a tumultuous way. Eight o'clock on Christmas Eve it was, and the spray that slashed interminably over the rails of the liner froze where it fell, so that already the decks were slippery with ice; and the lifeboats looked like weird hummocks. Robert Merrill, second officer, dragged the storm-collar of his greatcoat about his ears as he hurried past the gleaming port-holes of the saloon accommodation to the bridge-ladder.

"Oh, yes, a very merry Christmas," he growled. A spray cut him in the teeth; and, turning his head, he found himself abreast of the saloon scuttles. They were holding high revelry in these—celebrating Christmas Eve in old-fashioned style. Since the primary objective of such as control the Atlantic Lines is to make pampered passengers forget they are at sea; the big apartment had been decorated to look as little like a ship's saloon as possible. There were rare flowers in abundance; there was much bunting—but Merrill had no eyes for the decorations. The swung-back curtain of the scuttle permitted him to see the face of Myra Carlisle quite clearly—and also the somewhat flushed face of her immediate neighbor, who was leaning towards her with a lifted glass and a smile on his lips.

"Brighter!" gasped Merrill. "If you were only—!" Another scater of icy spindrift rattled on his shoulders; and to a lurch of the speeding hull, the port-curtain swung back into place, hiding the tantalizing glimpses of comfort and enjoyment. Merrill waited, but the curtain remained closed; presently he clambered up the ladder to Mount Misery, and reported himself to his senior there.

"Bit late, aren't you?" grunted Mr. Smaller. "Eight bells went five minutes since. North 86 degrees East's the course; and we're steaming eighteen knots. Keep a good look-out—captain's in the chart-room, handy. Perishing weather! Christmas Eve, by gosh!" He handed over the destiny of the Angmeric to Robert Merrill, and after notifying the captain of the change of watch, stumped below to thaw out. From a ventilator not far distant from the bridge came sounds of music from the saloon below. It was tantalizing. Merrill thrust his hands deeply into his pockets and commenced a step-dance in time with the music, peering with winking eyes through the driving snow. He went into the wheelhouse to study the compass, returned to his position in the wing, continued his dance. Bennett, his junior watchkeeper, joined him there, with an excuse for companionship.

"Rotten night!" he vouchsafed.

"Poisonous!" blurted out Merrill, speaking gloomily. "Look out the old man doesn't twig you over here. A lee look-out's necessary tonight—you can't see your hand before you."

"Old man stopped the fog-horn during dinner—said the passengers complained of the din. Wish I was a passenger!" Merrill had been wishing that all the voyage, ever since he had seen Myra Carlisle board the ship in New York. But according to the rules officers were not encouraged to associate with passengers aboard the Angmeric, and so, through force of circumstance, Myra Carlisle might as well have been in another planet.

"Lord, and don't!" grunted Merrill. He needed an outlet for his feelings. "It makes me sick to see that grinning beggar making up to the nicest girl in the world!" he stormed.

"After her money, of course—with his title and all! Seen him just now—making eyes at her over a glass of bubbly—Christmas wishes and all the rest! Sickening!"

"I'll bet her money is a magnet," sympathized Bennett, who was already married.

"Not to me; I'd go wild over that girl if she hadn't a red cent. But what chance has a man? Get over to leeward!"

Bennett trudged across to the lee wing, just in time, for the captain came from the chart-room and joined Merrill to windward. He stumped from foot to foot for some time, humming the tune that came up the ventilator; and, evidently moved by a Christmas impulse, said: "Punty man for sixteen years. Just my luck! They're having a party in the cabin tonight; so we won't blow the siren any more than's necessary—passengers get scared when the whistle blows. Keep a good look-out, Merrill—I'll nip down and see them enjoy themselves."

UNSEEN PERILS.

Merrill envied him outrageously as he went down the ladder. Christmas at sea was a rotten business! By right the Angmeric ought to have been at home; but engine-room defects had postponed Christmas at home was anything to brag about either—seeing how things stood: a man hopelessly in love with a girl who didn't care two condemned hoots whether he lived or died.

"Don't be a fool!" Merrill chided himself. "With her money and everything, she deserves something better than you. Forget her!" The trouble was, he couldn't forget her. He'd never in all his life seen a girl to hold a candle to Myra Carlisle: it was one of those cases of love at first sight. As she came over the gangway their eyes had met—and lingered. Then he'd been privileged to help her with a troublesome deck chair, before the hard weather began; and they'd spoken half a dozen words together. He didn't know then that she was the Miss Carlisle whose uncle had died in Chicago and left her a cool million dollars. He was glad he had fallen in love with her before he knew that. He dwelt on his feelings for the girl during three bleak hours of driving sleet and hammering spindrift, with the Angmeric roaring through the smother like a maniac ship. Occasionally she took big water over forward; she lurched ugly, and she shouldered her purposeful way through tumultuous waves, which towered high, and poised, and fell with monotonous persistence. He got colder and more miserable with every succeeding minute, and his thoughts grew gloomier. Twice the captain had climbed to the bridge and remained there for long spells to feast his eyes on Myra Carlisle's radiance, if he so desired. Merrill felt he had everyone so privileged.

"How's she doing now?" asked the skipper, once more mounting to the scuttle.

"It's clearing a bit, sir—"

"My God—what's that?" It was a thin, scared hail from the bow look-out, and following it came a sick shudder that shook the ship throughout her hurrying length. She seemed to pause in her stride, stagger, and then race forward with added impetus as though angry at the check.

"Wreckage!" came from the look-out forward. That gave an answer to the immediate problem. It couldn't be floating ice—the floss and bergs were all locked up in the icebound Arctic. It couldn't be an ordinary collision; the impact was not harsh enough. A derrick, of course—a sinking, stealthy enemy, too, then ruthlessly underfoot—but hanging as it went under, too. For through the riot of sound two ears had distinctly heard the screech of torn metal.

"Half-speed—slow!" ordered the captain. "See if we're damaged, Merrill." Merrill immediately applied himself to the engine-room telephone and sent the spare quartermaster to rouse out the carpenter. With action at hand, he was the keen seaman, no longer the dreamer.

"She's holed forward of the boilers, sir," he reported. Music still sounded from the ventilator, and with it a burst of happy laughter. "That'll be Santa Claus showing up," said the skipper. "Midnight, isn't it? Funny! Send the hand to boat stations quietly, in case. No panic, see? We can't sink all at once—plenty of time. All hands—quietly!" He was a good man, in command of the situation that might be terribly desperate. He was in mid-Atlantic, with a ship whose bottom plating had been torn away like wet paper; it was blowing a blizzard and down below were a thousand human beings, relying on him for continued existence. As Merrill slipped away, the captain said to Bennett: "Go below, find the pruner—tell him to keep the fun going." On his way below Bennett passed the carpenter carrying his sounding-rod.

"Stokehole's already awash," reported the tradesman. Already the engineers on watch had started the pumps; and in addition were getting up steam on the donkey boiler, which was situated a deck higher than the main stokehole. If the water gained below it would drown out the fire—steam was a vital necessity. Presently, after getting the carpenter's report, the captain stopped the engines, hoping that the beat of the pumps would take the place of the thud of the main machinery and lull any suspicions the passengers might have, to rest. He didn't fear the sea, but he did fear a panic; for he had seen one before, when men lost their manhood and fought like wolves about the boats. The chief officer came to the bridge and took orders—the other officers went to their places. About the boats the crews gathered—and picks were brought into play to free them of accumulated ice.

Falling off into the trough of the sea the Angmeric began to roll wildly, and the captain ordered a little headway to help the ship ride across the combers. In obedience to his command the wireless sent out an urgent S.O.S.—an operator reported on the bridge that it had been received by six ships. The nearest was eighty miles away—a fifteen-knotter; she was already hurrying to the scene.

"Six hours, allowing for this sea—let's hope we float long enough," said the captain. "Wish it would clear!" But the blizzard seemed disposed to increase in violence, and the snow was thicker than ever.

The life-boats under Merrill's control were ranged along the deck abreast the saloon portholes and as he let a davit fall clear he glanced through a scuttle. He saw Myra Carlisle quite near him—almost within touching distance. She had a fancy cap on her head, and Lord Bradley, also wearing a cap, was grimacing for her benefit. Yet—the girl's face was not smiling; it was serious, and her eyes seemed to be looking into the far distance. The merriment within had not subsided to any degree—apparently the passengers had no idea what was happening. To Merrill the situation was ironic. He turned to his immediate boat—feeling curiously sick at heart. As he did so the companion-way door opened; and Lord Bradley and Myra emerged on deck.

She had thrown a cloak over her evening frock; but Bradley was coatless.

"Let's have a look at the jolly old night!" Merrill heard him say in his high-pitched voice. "By jove—I say—look here—what's happening?" The deck lights showed his face whitening, his mouth opening. Merrill made a quick leap, his arm outstretched; but he missed the rabbit-faced youngster as he dashed back into the cabin—screaming: "I say—they're clearing the boats away!"

"Damned fool—damned fool!" said Merrill; and turned to meet Myra's gaze.

"Is there danger?" she asked. She seemed a girl who could bear the truth.

"Might be!" he said curtly. "I'll look after you, though. Best go below, though—plenty of time!" He opened the companion-way door—as he did so he was thrust aside by a suddenly panicked mass of humanity, led by Bradley. There is nothing so contagious as fear—and terror ran broadcast through the Angmeric that midnight.

"Wait!" he said; and burst his way to the boat, returning with some blankets, which he draped about her. "Don't be scared."

"I don't think I am," she said—"now!" She looked squarely at him as she spoke; and something in her eyes made Merrill proud of her.

RESCUE.

A child ran blindly past, screaming—a rush of humanity overtook it—as the ship rolled it tumbled towards the side, where the boats had hung protectively, but where now was a gap. Myra saw it—and casting off her blankets, she ran, caught the mite just as it tumbled on the brink; brought it back to her alcove, and draped it in the blankets.

"Oh, good girl!" cried Merrill, and dashed away, to help restore order. He saw Bradley attempting to climb into a boat, his mouth wide open and his eyes staring. He saw a quartermaster in the boat lift a stretcher threateningly; and the menace of the impending blow caused Bradley to miss his hold; he emitted a high-pitched shriek, and disappeared between the boat and the ship's side—down into the Atlantic. His scream pierced the tumult—and Merrill, planning round, saw Myra's face ashen white in the glow of the decklights. She had seen Bradley go overboard.

"So that's it," he thought. "Well—he didn't hesitate. To the quartermaster who had threatened the blow he yelled: 'Lifebuoy!' and, joining his hands, he dove overboard into the roiling water. The lifebuoy smacked the sea beside him as he emerged from the dive, but he gave it no immediate heed. He could see a dark speck in the froth; he swam towards it, and caught Bradley as he was going under. Bradley clawed at him wildly; Merrill hit him under the jaw so that he fell limp. Then he gripped him and swam strongly for the lifebuoy, to which was attached a line. They were hauled aboard roundly—and cheers from those calm enough to estimate that rescue at its worth.

"All right—secure those boats!" sounded from the bridge. It was all right; the double bottom was holding; the pumps were coping with the inrush. Only a small portion of the plating had been torn away. Care fully handled there was nothing to prevent the Angmeric continuing her voyage—with one of the hurrying-rescue ships standing by for emergency. Merrill dragged Bradley across the deck towards Myra, who still hugged the child in her blankets.

"There you are, then—his safe!" he said.

"Don't be silly!" said Myra; "what does his safety matter to me? But when you went after him—" Merrill was a sailor and an opportunist. It might have been something in her face that encouraged him—drenched and icy cold though he was.

"I thought it was him," he said ungrammatically. "That's why I saved him—for you! But—I'm just a sailor."

"And I'm just a woman!" she said, with a pale laugh. "If we're safe you must get dry—you'll catch your death of cold!" Already she was womanly possessive.

"Do you mean—" said Merrill, suddenly glowing.

"I've been wondering when you were going to ask me!" she said, and her smile was no longer pale. "And this child will perish of cold—"

She fled below, leaving Merrill grinning vacantly into the snow-filled night.

"Topping Christmas!" he rejoiced; "Oh—topping!"

From "Ideas."



A FAT MAN'S TROUBLES
 "Ready for the holidays, Bill!"
 "Holidays me eye. I'm jes gettin' ready for some real work."
 "Wazzamatter, ain't the plant closin' down?"
 "Yeh, but every year I gotta play Santa Claus for the Church."

SAYS LINDBERGH'S FEAT BLINDS FRENCH TO OWN Aeronautics Chief Criticizes Press for Underemphasizing Costes and Lebric Flight

Paris.—Complaint that the French newspapers are giving too much publicity to Colonel Lindbergh's achievements, and are disregarding the flights of Dieudonne Costes and Joseph Lebric in South America, is made by Arthur Fontant, Inspector General of Aeronautics and Aerial Transportation.

M. Fontant, in a letter to Franz Reichel, President of the Association of Sporting Writers, says:

"While numerous Paris newspapers are printing on the first page a very interesting and deserving (it is true) flight of Lindbergh from Washington to Mexico, the 3,500 kilometer flight of Costes and Lebric from Rio Janeiro to Santiago, Chile, including the crossing of the Andes range, is disposed of on the third page by a few lines inserted between the police news."

"France's aeronautics suffer from such a state of affairs. I leave you to judge what impression is created abroad by the apparent indifference of our large dailies to the great deeds of our pilots."

The French Aeronautic League, which opened a subscription a few days after Lindbergh's New York-to-Paris flight for "The man who succeeded and also those who had failed, paying with their lives," announced that the flying colonel will receive as a Christmas present from the French, through the American Embassy in Paris, the Grand Plaque of gold of the Aeronautic League of France, and also a golden book bearing the signatures of all subscribers.

The book is several inches thick. After deduction of the cost of the book and plaque, the rest of the money collected will be used to build a monument to Nungesser and Coll, the French aviators who were lost on a transatlantic flight shortly before Lindbergh's feat, and to Commander Mouneyres and Captain St. Roman, who also lost their lives in a transatlantic flight.

Christianity is not a philosophy but a religion; not a doctrine but a life.

The Romance of the Mistletoe

"We'll twine the fresh green holly wreath
 And make the Yule log glow;
 And gather gaily underneath
 The glistening mistletoe."

A plant that was the object of veneration by the Druids before ever the Romans set foot in Britain; that was later regarded as a heal-all—a panacea for all ills; that was worn as an amulet against witchcraft and kindred evils, has certainly a claim to be considered romantic, quite apart from its present-day significance. The days of which Sir Walter Scott wrote when:

"Forth to the woods did merry men go
 To gather in the mistletoe."

are over as far as most of us are concerned, for the golden bough comes to us from afar in crates of a hundred-weight each. It is a case of faring forth to the market nowadays and bargaining for a bunch of "mistle."

True, a good many parties of merry-hearted young folk get a good deal of pleasure out of their Christmas Eve expedition to buy seasonal greenery but it is nothing to compare with the joy of cutting it for oneself. Alas! for a romance of the mistletoe, this age is a prosaic one and yet perhaps, after all, there is little romance left in it yet, for quaint old custom serves still as a stepping-stone to other things. This has been expressed by a modern versifier:

"Many a manly heart is light,
 Many a rose-decked bosom heaves
 Under the gleam of the berries bright
 Set in the cluster of spear-shaped leaves.
 What is the use of the mistletoe now?
 What can its purpose be? Only
 this—
 Honor the old Druidical bough,
 It gives such a charming excuse
 for a kiss"

Ignoring altogether the Druid and Norse mythology, in which the mistle-

Poultry Notes

Soft Shelled Eggs.

Probably one of the most annoying things in the poultry business is the frequent laying of soft shelled eggs by a group or hens, or even only one hen. It is a sign that something is wrong with the hens—something that should be rectified immediately. And as for the eggs themselves, they are perfectly useless and merely represent a loss in good food.

In nine cases out of ten, a hen lays soft shelled eggs because there is a lack of calcium carbonate in her diet. This mineral is really pure eggshell material. Therefore, its absence from the diet results in either thin shelled eggs or eggs with no shell at all. Of course, calcium carbonate is generally present in the food and water given to the hen, but there is seldom enough to satisfy her needs.

The best and only way to make sure that one's hens are obtaining sufficient calcium carbonate is to keep crushed oyster shell before them all the time. If the hens have been laying soft shelled eggs, it will correct this condition and result in marketable eggs with thick, tough shells. If the hens have been producing only a normal number of eggs, it will probably increase the egg yield—30 eggs or so more is the average annual increase per hen.

By the way, the fact that no soft shelled eggs have been perceived is not a guarantee that one's hens have not been laying them. Many hens, and roosters, too, seem to be possessed of cannibalistic instincts, and have been known to devour soft shelled eggs directly after they were laid.

Straw Loft For Poultry House.

One of the interesting developments in poultry housing is the rapid progress the straw loft poultry house has made within the last year or two. A great many of the poultry specialists have approved this type of house and it is gaining in favor rapidly. Almost any shape of house can be adapted to this type, the essential thing being to have an open ceiling or mow about 6 1/2 to 7 1/2 feet above the floor and have this covered with 12 to 18 inches of clean straw. It is usual to have a tight floor above the roosts, with the straw loft above the rest of the floor.

The covering of straw lets the foul air and moisture go out slowly and escape through gratings or louvers in the ends of the attic above, while sufficient fresh air comes in through cracks and other parts of the straw loft, and thus a very satisfactory amount of ventilation is obtained and still the house kept a little warmer than the outside air. Users have observed that the straw loft house is warmer in winter and cooler in summer than where it is not used and those who have tried it are quite enthusiastic. So far no trouble has been reported as to its harboring mites where the house is sprayed with a germicide and the straw is changed once a year or so. It is a very good method for remedying a house that is damp or cold or for converting an old building into a satisfactory poultry house.

Preventing Scaly Legs.

I have a flock of chickens that have terrible scurvy legs. I would like to know if there is anything that could be done to cure it.—E. W.

Scaly legs are caused by parasites which burrow under the scales on the hen's legs. The irritation caused by their biting produces small blisters which break and the serum in the blisters dries on the legs. The constant accumulation of this scaly material finally gives out the scales on the legs and bulges the enlarged diseased appearance.

A common remedy is to take an old tooth brush and scour the legs with warm soapy water to remove as much as possible of the incrustation. Then rub kerosene oil or commercial coal tar dip under the scales to destroy the parasites. The scaly leg mites spread from bird to bird along the roosts and when the roosts are constantly protected from red mites with oil or disinfectant, it also seems to retard or prevent the appearance of scaly legged birds in the flock.

Nut Dishes

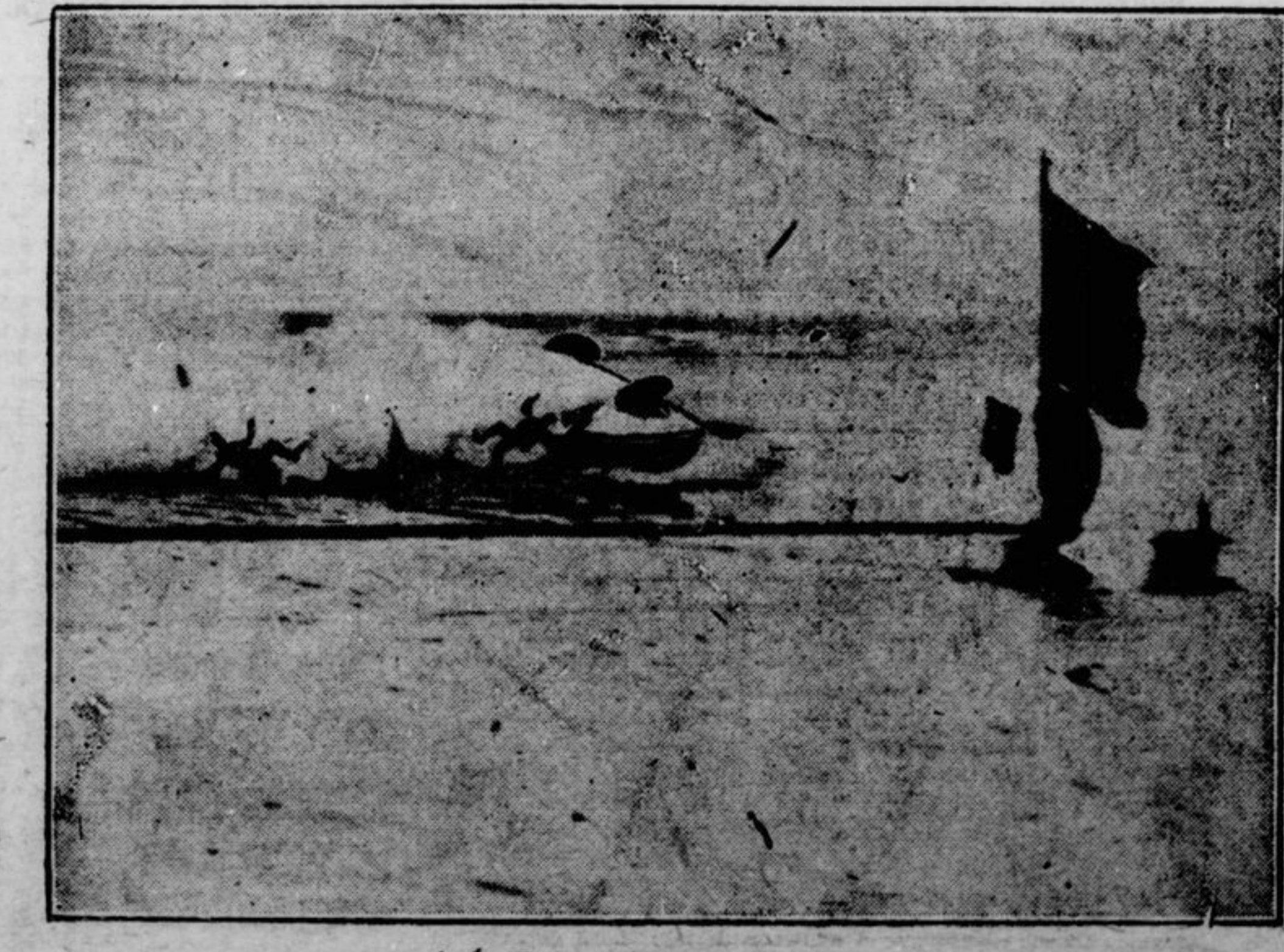
This is the time to cook with nuts. The height of the nut season brings walnuts, pecans and chestnuts to street stands and market houses. On a crisp, frosty morning this dish is welcome for breakfast. Sift together one cup of cornmeal, half a cup of fine grits and a scant teaspoon of salt, then scatter gradually into a quart of fast boiling water. Stir until smooth and cook in a double boiler two hours, then stir in one cup and a half of chopped nuts—pecans, chestnuts or walnuts—and pour into a greased pan. When cold and firm slice and fry and serve a piece of fried apple on the top of each slice. Nut scrapple and enough for five or six servings.

Pecan Cutlet.

Put enough nuts through the food chopper to make two cups, add to them an equal quantity of bread crumbs, two beaten eggs, one cup of milk or cream, a teaspoon of salt and pepper to taste. Make into one large or smaller cutlets, flour and cook in hot fat. Serves five or six. Serve with overlapping slices of peeled orange previously heated in the pan in which the cutlet was cooked.

Nut Chowder.

Put half a pound of mixed nut meats through the food chopper and allow them to simmer in a quart of water for an hour and a half. Peel and dice three medium-sized potatoes and turnips and a good-sized onion. Have ready two cups of canned tomatoes. Strain the nut meats, saving the water in which they boiled. Line the bottom of a kettle with a layer of potatoes, add a layer of turnips and onion with a sprinkling of thyme, sweet marjoram, chopped parsley and salt, then a layer of tomatoes and last of all a layer of nuts. Continue the layers in this order until the ingredi-



A Spill At 150 Miles Per Hour
 SENOR FORESTI, OF ITALY, FAILS TO LOWER SPEED RECORD
 He was trying for a speed record at Pendine, England, when his car crashed and turned over. It was completely wrecked, but he and his mechanic escaped with a few scratches and bruises.