THE RAJAH MUTINY.

It was at West Hartlepool that we shipped mate, and I judge you the basest word of all an old sea dog that a grimmer set of galoots never before walked the decks of the clipper ship Rajah of Cochin, that famous old East Indiaman. The ship had been loaded with cast iron "sleepers" for the great Johnson Jos Jolden railway and was forced to ship her crew at that port. They had, it is true, passed through a little maritime experience in the collier brigs that plied between London and the ports on the northeast coast of England, but they were utterly ignorant of everything appertaining to a "fine packet," as ships going deep sea voyages were then called.

"I shall have a lot of trouble with that crew of lubbers," said the chief mate as the awkward gang tumbled over the side and went into the topgallant forecastle with their dunnage.

The Rajah was a big vessel of about 2,000 tons. She carried three royal yards aloft and her stern gallery took up a big portion of the poop. Her captain was a devil to drive her and the harder it blew the better he liked it, so long as it carried the wind was any way fair.

I was third mate of her and was busy on the poop superintending some repairs to the wheel chains when the crew arrived from the shipping office. They were in charge of a gang of boarding house runners who had cashed their advance notes at £1 10s. each and were bound to see that they left port in the vessel. The shipper stood on the break of the poop taking in the spectacle. There were thirty five of them, and out of all those only nine the boarding house had caused the line. They seemed to have a peculiar fascination for the captain, who regarded them as a cat would a colony of rouge nice, knowing well that when they were plump enough and ripe enough, in the regular way of business, they would come into his clutches. After he had got every man jack of them shanghaied in his mind's eye he walked off and sat down on the wheel grating, chuckling almost impolitely and showing a magnificent set of teeth, which contrasted so the grinders of a dead horse.

The skipper was a gentleman by birth and education. He had served in the royal navy and been dismissed from the service because he fought a duel with his superior officer, the corpse of the quarrel being a lovely Creole girl of dusky, who was believed by both. The buried scene of disorder seemed to have proved his ruin. His disposition, once amiable, became cynical and embittered. He had no sympathy with the human race, and his only claim was Satan, a pet mongoose that he had picked up at Mazulipatam.

After leaving the navy he had no trouble in holding the commander of an East India clipper, for he was an expert navigator and the best seaman I ever sailed with. But God have mercy on the Bloss dropper's apprentice who shipped under the false profession that he was a sailor man, for the skipper had none. He would make his life a hell upon sea and drive him to desertion, or perhaps suicide.

I am talking of the time when a sea captain had some real power, before Plimsoll and the English board of trade took up the British sailor's side of the question and proposed and petted how till now he is neither useful nor ornamental. I have always had to work hard for my living at sea, and like my old captains, now dead and gone, had no sympathy with sea lawyers or lazy pasters of that ilk. But now, being in my old age and wonderful not loved by religion and rheumatism I am free to confess that the "old skipper" I sailed with were, perhaps a little bit too severe with their crews.

After bringing himself to an anchor on the grating and meditating mischief for awhile, the skipper called an apprentice to him.

"Boy Jack, go and tell the mate I want him."

"Boy Jack," a little Londoner, who was always in a state of deadly terror of the skipper's tongue, hopped forward as lively as a cricket. The mate was standing on the forecastle, close by the knight heads, yelling vociferously to the men on the upper foretopsail yard who were engaged in furling the sail. This was the song he sang:

"You lubbers, dash your eyes and bobs, don't you know enough to furl the rubbidy stop fast before you land on the earring? Wait till I get you to sea and you shall smell hell."

"Boy Jack" at this moment told him that the captain wanted him on the poop. He chipped a skipper on his jaw tackle and swiftly strode aft.

"Sir, Robinson," softly said the skipper, "please reserve the handsome of your language until you get clear of the land. You know we must go to sea in the morning. If you bully those lubbers now, half of them will desert tonight. I really gave you credit for a little more in brilliance. Go forward now and attend to your duty and mind you exercise more discretion in future or I shall be forced to engage another chief officer."

I tell you, Captain Corcoran knew how to use his words. The sailors were accustomed to say that he "swallowed the bookkeeper."

The mate touched his hat respectfully and went forward. At the time I am speaking of it was not customary to salute the captain when he gave an order, but our skipper, with his moral education, and instincts took care that the etiquette of her majesty's service was properly maintained on board the Rajah of Cochin, a mere hautman and a lone junior.

All that afternoon Mr. Robinson spoke in another language to the crew. He was meek and nearly mouthed. He didn't even resent the action of a Northumbrian sailor who had the cheek to address him familiarly as "Bill." The man sacrificed, for Mr. Robinson was not aware that it was the usual thing for the sailors of roamers to address the mates as Tom, Dick or Harry in place of the inevitable "Mr." or "Sir" on board deep water craft. But a dark, angry flush darted across his countenance like a catspaw ruffling a quiescent lake, and a demoniac gleam showed that his serene temper had been touched to the quick.

I thought to myself that I would not stand in that sailor's shoes for a whole voyage's wages.

At 6 o'clock next morning, before the rug towed in out to sea, all hands mustered aft and answered to their names. There was not a single deserter. The captain himself was present at the roll call, and his faithful mongoose perched on his shoulder. He did not say a word, but loudly gloated on them as Mr. Wolf would if he had been hired to shepherd a fat and juicy flock of ewes and no questions asked.

The mongoose, too, winked with his starboard eye. It was evident that he and his master understood each other.

The ship was towed out past the bar, and we spread every stitch of plain sail to the fresh northeasterly breeze which blew with sure vigor. Our pilot was surprised to see the old craft overhaul a fleet of seagoing coasting brigs that could scarcely put out of their own way. In a very few hours we had passed outside Yarmouth road, and in three days we put the pilot adrift off the Isle of Wight. Then with a sparkling southwester, we spread down the channel, taking our departure from the Lizard.

Until the pilot left Captain Corcoran behaved like a gentleman. He was as polite as fifty to blowed. But after we had squared our yards and filled away on our course he began to show his true colors. The crew of coasting colliers that we carried had never learned to obey by degrees and were ignorant of the niceties of amplitudes and azimuths. When the skipper went aft and told the lubber at the helm to keep her north, 67 degs. west, the fellow was flabbergasted.

"North, 67 degs. west," repeated he. "I don't know what you mean."

"You don't, eh? You impudent, filthy scum, you teach you," and with his useful cudgel he felled the man with a belaying pin. "Take hold of the wheel," he said to me, and I grasped the spokes. The skipper kicked the dazed lubberman off the poop. This was but a mere taste of the old mate's quality. From that time on the crew never once got an afternoon watch below, and were worked and driven like slaves under the sharp lash of an overseer. The men were at first cowed. They had not been accustomed to such treatment. They sulked about the decks like so many whipped curs with their tails between their legs, and seemed to have utterly lost their manhood.

And the skipper rejoiced with a great big gladness. He was in his element. Gratified spite and malice gleamed from his sinister eyes. The mongoose, too, enjoyed himself. He lived in the captain's cabin. The steward said they both occupied the same bunk. Every morning the skipper would feed his pet. He used to take a bowl out of the messroom pantry, hold it between his knees to keep its wings from flapping. Then he would scare its head and stretch its neck out. This was the mongoose's opportunity. With its fur standing on end and all the bloodthirstiness of its nature gleaming out of its devilish eyes it used to dart at the neck of the fowl and suck its blood.

The fowls came to an end about the time we reached latitude 50 degs. south. Then the skipper led his pet on nuts which he caught in the bare nutte, having a dozen traps of the most approved variety. He would take his mongoose out of his pocket and put it in the trap with the nut and glad over the spectacle. The mongoose would dart like lightning at the neck of the nut and make instantaneous work of it. No terrier that ever lived was half so smart as the captain's chum. At last there came a time when the rats refused to be caught, and Satan came near dying of starvation.

A mongoose will touch nothing that it hasn't killed. Blood warm from the veins is the only palatium it will take. Satan grew thin as a herring, and Captain Corcoran was in despair. One afternoon, however, when the ship was within sight of a flock of cape pigeons swarmed around, and the captain caught a dozen of them with fine hooks baited with salt pork. This meant a new lease of life for Satan. In a few days he was as thick and fat as ever.

Three weeks afterward we were "running our easting down," in latitude 44 degs. south. A westerly gale was blowing with fury. We were under three lower topsails, a reefed foresail and a foretopmast staysail. Enormous seas pursued us, and the fear as they broke under our stern and swelled and boiled as they raced after the old packet, threatening to poop her, was quite disturbing to our greenhorn crew, who had never before even the north Atlantic disturbed by a tempest. Two men were at the wheel, and although it was bitterly cold they were in their shirt sleeves and sweating, too, at that, so hard was the work of keeping the Rajah of Cochin on her course. It was the dawn of a tempestuous day. The sky to the east was a mass of cold, dull gray, lightened up here and there by tinted shades of lurid red. The waves that followed were almost black, save where the crests of snowy foam topped over in white.

It was the second mate's watch on deck. He was at the poop rail close by the wheel, ready to lend a hand should the old packet threaten to broach to or be brought by the lee. The skipper came on deck at eight bells. The chief mate and I were about to relieve the second mate, when the captain beckoned to Mr. Robinson and said:

"Mr. Robinson, go into the forecastle and tell Tom Wiley that I want him for a jackstraw. My mongoose is dying, and sailor that I should lose him I would sink the ship."

I glanced at the captain and read that he was insane. There was a demoniac glare in his eyes and a fiendlike expression on his concave face. He was hugging the hungry mongoose to his breast.

The chief mate, accustomed to obeying the captain blindly, touched his cap, said, "Aye, aye, sir," and hurried forward as quickly as the rolling of the vessel would permit.

While he was on his way to the forecastle he met a sailor named Tom Wiley, was a super Yankee Indiaman, sailing from Boston (Bean's town). He was one of the few men that the captain hadn't maltreated. When he came on board at West Hartlepool he brought with him a pet jackdaw in a wicker cage. The bird had been his companion on many a voyage and he loved it. The jackdaw could talk a little and would hop around the forecastle and frateniize with all hands. I knew that Wiley would never allow the bird to become the prey of the mongoose.

In a few minutes the chief mate returned with Tom Wiley's answer that if the captain wanted the jackdaw he was to go forward and get him.

The captain's face grew gray with savage passion. "With an oath he ordered forward to the forecastle, followed by the chief mate. Johnson and I remained on the poop. There was a scuffle, and before one could say a word the skipper and the mate were thrown overboard.

You should have seen the skipper's face as he went whirling down, kicking his heels together over his head, into the black water. Or maybe you would rather not here seen it. It is as unreal fair to remember. As he went down he tried to grab the boom tackle and the boom was entangled together for an instant on the crest of a wave. Then the tackle hit the skipper between the eyes. It was an ideal in a second.

Then the whole ship's company, led by the boatswain, rushed aft and took charge. The second mate and I were seized and bound, but no unnecessary harshness was used. It was quite a dramatic scene, that so suddenly of mutineers on the poop, with the wild gale blowing and the southing seas singing their wild war cry, as they passed past the ship's sharp black sides.

"See here, said Tom Wiley "we don't mean to do you two men any harm if you listen to reason. The old man and the chief mate we sent to hell. The mongoose that wanted my jackdaw has gone with them to served them right. We ye mutinied, and we know the penalty. What you ye got to do is to navigate the ship to some port in the Bay of Bengal and allow us to get ashore and shift for ourselves. If you don't agree to this logic of yes can, 2,000 those bloody devils below."

Of course we consented. What else to do? We had to deal with a body of determined men driven to desperation by tyranny. I couldn't help contrasting their demeanor at that time with their cowardly conduct of a few hours before. The mongoose was the bad spirit.

The men behaved well during the rest of the voyage. All the work they did was to trim sail and make necessary repairs to the rigging. They feasted high on cabin stores and made short work of the rum cask.

When we got off Cochin they hauled the cabin up out of the chain lockers and hoisted the anchors over the side. They had no spite against the ship or grudge against us. Next day a Chinese junk hove in sight. The boatswain, the only deep water sailor aboard, called a council of the mutineers on the forecastle. In a little while he came aft and informed the second mate that the crew had determined to capture the junk and go in her to some port of Sumatra or the Malay archipelago. They trimmed the yards and chased the junk, soon overhauling her.

They fired a gun at her and she hove to. The boatswain and ten men took possession of her and the sea being smooth, hailed her alongside the Rajah. The Chinaman fired, pipe tailed sailors in charge of the crew waited to death. Several crates of pork and beef, bags of biscuit and plenty of fresh water were transferred from the ship to the junk, and the mutineers were gathered on the bulwark or her when the second mate came on deck and said to the boatswain:

"Boatswain, you are a sailor, and you know very well that if the ship is caught in a gale of wind with all sail set we two men and the six apprentices can do nothing with her. Now, like a good fellow, fetch everything but the three lower topsails and the foretopmast staysail and then I shall feel easy."

He consented, and in half an hour the ship was sing for a hurricane.

Then our crew left us in the junk, setting all sail and giving us three cheers. We barely moved through the water under the short canvas spread to the breeze.

"Johnson," said I, "why, in the name of heaven, did you shorten sail to three lower topsails?"

"I will tell you," he said. "When I went below to get a chart and compass for the lieutenants, I looked at the barometer and noticed that it had fallen nearly half an inch. This is the time for the change of the monsoon, and in less than six hours a cyclone will strike us."

And it did. For sixty hours it blew with hurricane force. Owing to the second mate's foresight we were prepared for it. The ship was borne to on the starboard tack all the time. When it came on to blow so hard that it was not safe to carry the lower and mizzen topsails, we let go the sheets, and with a long line fastened to a cannon away they went up to be cured.

When the cyclone was over we managed to set our upper topsails and, by taking the halyards to the winch and heaving hard all day. Under the canvas we reached Negapatam, signaling for assistance when in sight of shore. A number of Lascars came off in a Moorish boat and with their aid we let go anchor and prepared to discharge cargo. The second mate went to Madras next day by bullock wagon and told the whole story to the consuls. They promptly sent a crew down by the schooner to take charge of the ship. I never heard what became of the junk. I think she foundered in the cyclone.—A. J. K. in Detroit News.

"August Flower"

Mr. Lorenzo P. Sleeper is very well known to the citizens of Appleton, Me., and neighborhood. He says: "Eight years ago I was taken sick, and suffered as no one but a dyspeptic can. I then began taking August Flower. At that time I was a great sufferer. Everything I ate distressed me so that I had to throw it up. Then in a few moments that horrid distress would come on and I would have to eat and suffer again. I took a little of your medicine and felt much better, and after taking a little more "August Flower my "Dyspepsia disappeared, and since that time I have never had the first sign of it. I can eat anything without the least fear of distress. I wish all "that are afflicted with that terrible "disease or the troubles caused by "it would try August Flower, as I "am satisfied there is no medicine "equal to it."

For that Horrid Stomach Feeling.

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