

'I should be glad to hear it,' I replied, taking a seat on a cotton bale next to him.

'It was the last trip I ever made as a blockade runner,' he began, 'and it was in the smallest craft I was ever in—a schooner of 100 tons, called the 'Jeanette.' There were four of us all told aboard of her, including the skipper, who was also part owner; it was a bit short-handed for the work we had to do, but as we were all strong, active men, we managed all right. Well, we had made the outward passage without mishap, and were returning from Havana, our destination being the Brazos River. For two days the weather had been thick and the sky overcast, and we weren't too sure of our bearings, but we judged we must be getting near the coast, though as it lies low, you can't see it at any great distance. The night fell as black as pitch, but we kept on under easy sail, hoping to catch a glimpse of some light that would give us an idea of our position. In those days, you know, sir, lighthouses were neither so good nor so numerous as they are at present. You had to feel your way along the coast in thick weather.

'Just before midnight, and while I was on the look-out, the outline of a big vessel suddenly loomed up not more than two cable lengths ahead. I ran aft and pointed her out to the skipper, the helm was shifted, and we passed silently under her stern, with our hearts beating fast. I can tell you, for she was evidently a Northern cruiser. We were not seen in the darkness—for we didn't show a speck of light anywhere—and presently she faded away again out of sight. Then we saw a glimmer of a couple of lights low down on the water, to port, and by their position we knew they were the lights at the river entrance. But before we reached the bar a thick bank of fog came rolling up and shut out everything from view. It was like a solid wall of blackness, and standing on the fo'c's'le I could not see the stern even of our little craft. But we stood on.

'Suddenly I heard the splash of oars ahead, and before I could warn the helmsman we had crashed into a boat. I heard the splintering of wood, the shouts and curses of men, and then several dim figures scrambled on board over the bows. I helped one over the bulwarks, and in so doing discovered that he was a Federal

officer. Of course, he crossed at once, when he saw the pile of cargo on the deck, the sort of craft he was aboard of, and he ordered his men to take charge and shorten sail.

'But our skipper was determined not to be taken when so near home, especially by such a handful of men—there were only five of them. He sang out that the first one of them that touched sheet or halliards aboard his vessel would be pitched overboard.

'This was too much for the Helmsman. He drew his sword, and calling on his men to follow made a rush for the main deck. But he didn't get far. His weapon was sent flying from his grasp by the blow of a handspike; he staggered backwards for a couple of steps, and before he could recover himself fell overboard. Then I felt a hand as my throat, and the next moment I was rolling on the deck fighting for my life with an enemy whose features I could not distinguish for the darkness. But that he was an enemy I knew by the feel of his clothes. None of us wore uniform. It was an uneasy experience that fight in the murky gloom. Over and over we rolled, each trying to force the other over the side, for neither of us were armed. But I was a powerful man in those days, and at length I gained the upper hand of him. A minute later I was alone in the forecastle, which seemed strangely silent all at once; but far away astern I heard the cries of a drowning man.

'Presently the sails began to shake, and I made my way aft over the deck cargo as fast as I could, for I guessed there was no one looking after the steering. The wheel was jerking from side to side with the swing of the ship. I put it hard over, and then when the sails were clean full again I stood and watched two shadowy forms struggling together by the cabin skylight. Neither of them spoke. But for their deep laboured breathing, one might have easily fancied they were phantoms, they looked so dim and unreal through the fog.

'For two or three minutes they kept writhing and twisting in each other's grip, then one of them gave a short gasp, staggered forward a few paces, and dropped with a thud almost at my feet. The other stood still for a moment as if dazed, then he flung something overboard, and came and sat down on the wheel grating, on the op-

posite side to where his late opponent had fallen. It was the skipper.

'"I had to use my knife," he said, as soon as he had recovered breath; "or he would have had me overboard. Is he dead?"

'I bent down over the motionless figure, and placed my hand upon his heart. The warm blood was soaking through his shirt.

'"Quite dead," I whispered.

'Nothing more was said. The 'Jeanette' sailed on through the sullen darkness, with the water sobbing against her side. Presently the wind freshened and the fog rolled away; and the first of the dawn began to show in the east.

'The dead man was lying on his back, and in the grey light his features were for the first time distinctly visible. Somehow his face seemed strangely familiar to me. I glanced towards the skipper. He had risen, and was leaning over the binnacle gazing down upon the corpse with such an indescribable expression of horror in his eyes that I feared for the moment he had gone mad.

'Then I suddenly remembered that he had a brother in the Federal Navy, and an awful suspicion flashed through my mind, and when I looked again at the face of the two men—the living and the dead—the suspicion became a certainty.

'The old blockade runner rose from his seat on the cotton bale and buttoned his disipated coat across his chest.

'It's civil war that brings about such meetings as that,' he said.

'Then he bade me good-night, for darkness was coming on, and the mists were rising from the yellow boom of the Mississippi.

that tends to throw the blood to the brain, and to accumulate in there, should be avoided. This is a vital matter, and prevention is better than cure. Tights or ill-fitting articles of dress, especially about the neck or waist, and tight boots and shoes, should be discarded; the feet should be kept warm, so that the circulation may be promoted. Wearing cork soles in the boots or shoes and changing the socks every day are excellent means to this end, and strongly recommended. Apart, however, from physical causes, there are various moral causes acting on the brain equally inimical to sleep—whatever keeps the blood vessels of the brain distended—and the consequences of that we know. On the other hand, when the mind is quieted the tendency of the vessels is to contract and for sleep to follow.

JOHN CHINAMAN 'DONE.'

A CHINAMAN conceived a plan not peculiarly Chinese, of riding on the railway without a ticket. With this object in view he crawled into an empty box beside a pile of luggage. He had previously labelled the box and placed in it a good supply of boiled rice, also he had bored a number of holes as a means of ventilation. He journeyed thus for many hundreds of miles, without molestation, and was congratulating himself upon his success when he was discovered.

A lynx eyed porter spied him and pounced upon him without ceremony.

'Stamp up, or out you come!' he shouted, emphasizing the demand by punching Lon Wah in the stomach with a stick poked through the airholes of the box.

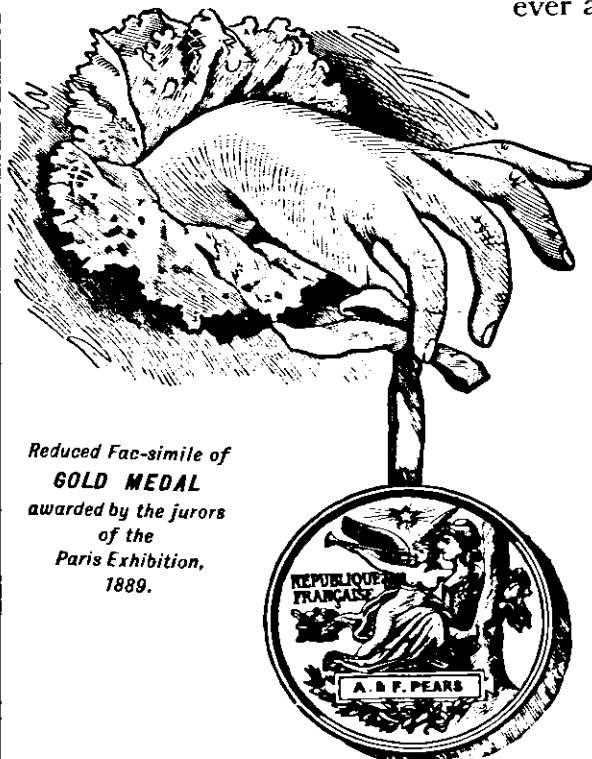
Lon Wah explored the recesses under his enveloping shirt, and produced a small coin, a very small coin. But the porter was inexorable, and after another punch or two Lon Wah fished up another coin. A third of larger denomination satisfied the porter as far as his personal wants were concerned, but he passed the word along so thoroughly that by the time John Chinaman reached his destination he hadn't as much as would pay a car fare. Lon Wah is now a sadder and a wiser man.

KEEPING INSOMNIA AT BAY.

EVERYTHING which increases the amount of blood ordinarily circulating through the brain has a tendency to cause wakefulness. If the brain is often kept for long periods on the stretch, during which the vessels are filled to repletion, they cannot contract even when the exciting causes cease. Wakefulness as a consequence results, and every day the condition of the individual becomes worse, because time brings the force of habit into operation. Everything

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