

gathering fog. "We're headed directly for Yokohama," says Van. I looked into the binnacle. The "Willowslip" was pointing her nose west, a quarter south by it all right. "But Tillamook Light ain't moveable," says I. "She ain't," puts in the sailor. "But she's been swinging all round and yet that compass says she's been headed all the time on one course. Stop her, I says."

"You're saying too much," says Hicks. "Did you fool with the gear?"

"No, sir, I ain't touched nothing," vows the man.

"Then," says Jimmy, "we're all right. Some current has fetched us along extra fast."

"It is," says Van. "We've been round the world and just got back!"

So we called Jimmy and told him. "It's not so," says he, squinting his eyes, which hadn't been shut, for he'd sat in the chart-room listening on his wedding night, to a patent pilot. "We passed it at sundown," says he.

"It's either Tillamook Light a-glimmering through this fog," says Van Olinda, determined, "or we're nine miles off Hakodate, which was thirty-seven hundred miles away three hours ago."

And it was Tillamook, as we discovered in an hour when we nearly ran into it along of the steering gear having notions. "We know where we are," says Van as we fetched seaward again with a

marks Van. "I'm going to call Serena. She oughtn't to miss 'em." But I knew Van was worried.

Van comes up with Serena and Jimmy explains how his gear worked by fastening the compass needle to the helm. "There's money in it," says he as Serena peeks down into the clutter.

"There'll be more money in picking up that lighthouse, captain," says Van real low. "There ought to be considerable salvage in it."

We all looked the way he pointed, and shimmering through the fog was a light, red and white flashes.

"It looks like North Head off the Columbia," says I.

"It does," says Van, "but we're some sixty miles south of it by the log. That's a lighthouse abandoned at sea."

Under our eyes the light travelled around on the beam and then disappeared. We all took a look at the compass, but the "Willowslip" was on her course by it. Van called me aside, "Look here, Twizzle," says he. "God only knows where we are."

"Then pray," says I.

"There's Serenta," pursues Van, "as nice a little woman as lives, skorampering round the Pacific on her wedding night behind a patent pilot. Man, we've raised every light, buoy and beacon on the Oregon, Californian and Japanese coasts, and several celestial planets I never knew were afloat, all in this last watch. It's got to stop. Let me off. I want to walk."

"Unhook the gear," says I. "Let's get a man at the wheel. We'll be in the city soon and without money for car fare."

"Well," says Jimmy, "maybe we better do that."

So he goes to the green box and fusses. Then he calls for a lantern and fusses some more. "Something's wrong," he says at last. "I can't ungear it."

And he couldn't, and the racket of that patent invention was awful to hear. In the meantime we fetched two or three buoys and nearly ran down a schooner.

Well, we couldn't disconnect the patent pilot though Van made it eight bells and bawled down to it that the other watch was called. Even Serena began to see something was real wrong, and when she cried Van got up his dander and addressed Jimmy immediate. "You forlorn rag of a Chinese stays!" says he. "You mud-eyed son of a turtle, you pigeon brained skimming of a cook's skillet, smash that gear and get a man at the wheel. Are we going to circumnavigate the sixty thousand oceans, not to speak of rivers, sounds and harbours, on a foggy night, at the bidding of an unconsecrated coffee mill? Look at your wife here, crying on her wedding night, and you driving this God-forsaken tub over the whole Pacific with a tinker's toy. Lemme have an ax; I'll fix it."

"No you don't!" hawls Jimmy. "It'll be all right in a minute."

"In a minute!" yells Van. "Hell got hot in such minutes. We've butted up against every obstruction to navigation and warning to mariners in the Western Hemisphere. Lemme at it!"

Van would sure have busted it, only the patent pilot got ahead of him, and landed the Willowslip hard on a shoal among the breakers.

"Thank Heaven, we're stopped, anyway," says Van, when we got to our

boat again from the throw. "I wish I knew where we are."

"It must be off Cape Lookout," says Jimmy, anxious.

"Cape Pinefeather!" snorts Van Olinda smelling the air. "We ain't ten miles from home, are we, Spiddles?" Spiddles was come up from his engines to get out of the wet and have a look round. He whiffs the air, peers over the side and lights his pipe. "Dunno," says he. "This is as far as we go, anyway. My engine room's full of ocean."

So we hangs about. Then daylight comes and presently a breeze wipes up the fog from the water.

"Why there's the Jetty!" cried Serena. And it was.

"Will you walk to Astoria?" asks Van of Jimmy who was staring at the bay we'd left not much over twelve hours before. "Or shall I signal that tug?"

I signalled the tug. She came close as she dared and put off a boat to take us aboard with Serena's wedding trunks.

"I'll stay on the Willowslip," says Hicks, "and see if I can't save her. I must have got that gear reversed."

Seeing he was captain, Van and me says nothing. But Serena does. "Look here, James Hicks," says she, waddling on her feet in the small boat, "you come right down and go home with me."

"But the money for the ranch is all in this gear and I—" Jimmy commences.

"Come down!" says Serena. "I've waited five years for a husband. I don't wait for this. Come down off that wreck."

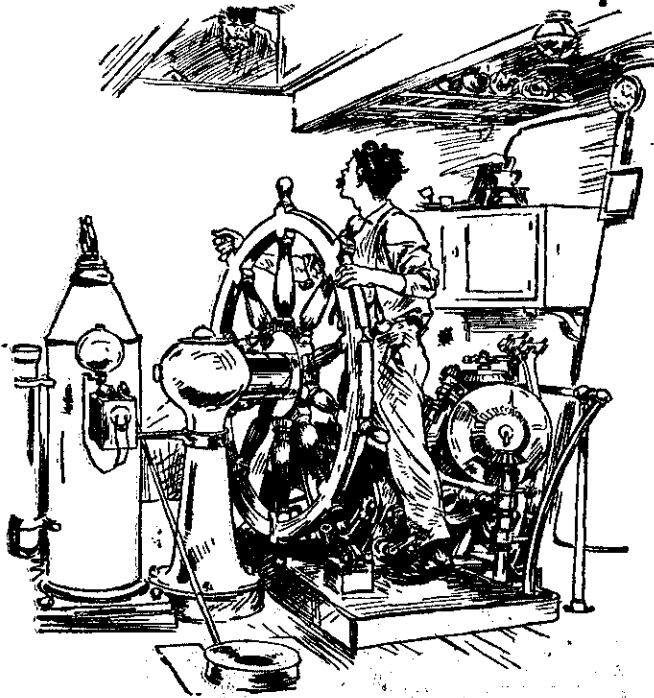
Jimmy comes, meek as a pup sheep, and Serena took him home and he ain't never been to sea since. He's wonderful attached to Serena and keeps books for the pilots and hoes the garden evenings.

Van and I never said much about that trip. A big English barque came in a few days later and reported that a steamer had collided with her and ran away after doing a terrific lot of damage. North Head telegraphed that a strange vessel had been seen near the rocks not under control. From Tillamook came word that seven steam schooners, all of a size, had gone by in the night with a terrific noise. The captain of the light-ship signalled that six dozen coasters had passed in every direction within four hours. "There ain't no need of us getting mixed up in any such scandals," said Van to me. "Let them as talk talk on, and them as keeps dark keep dark still, like the Bible says."

So we said the invention worked. Which it did—backwards. But Jimmy hoes his potatoes by hand.

A Big Dental Operation.

The greatest dental operation on record was performed upon an elephant in the city of Mexico. The aching tooth was twelve inches long and fourteen inches in diameter at the root. After the animal had been securely fastened with chains, his mouth was prised open, and a quantity of cocaine applied to deaden the pain. When this was done, a hole was bored through the tooth and an iron bar inserted. Then a rope was twisted around the bar, and four horses attached to drag it out.



"This is a sausage factory afloat."

That moment, Serena comes up, all worried. "Isn't everything all right?" she asks.

"It is," replies her husband. "This fool makes a fuss over nothing."

Van looks at the little woman's face and remarks gentle, "the chart's up side down, Serena, and we're chasing down half a million miles an hour. But don't worry. I think Tillamook Lighthouse has fetched loose from its moorings. Then Government engineers are too careless."

Then a barque heaves in view out of the fog dead ahead and I yell to put the helm over. "There's nobody at the wheel," Van bawls. So I jumped down and Jimmy disconnects his gear temporarily and we only scraped away about a thousand dollar's worth of standing rigging off that barque. Nothing to talk about the way her skipper did before we drifted clear and lost him in the dark.

"You better put a man at the wheel," says Van, wiping his eyes after it was all over. "I'll stand watch with Twizzle."

"No, sir," says Jimmy. "This patent pilot does the work," and he fusses over it till he connects it again.

"Lemme shoot a star anyway," pleads Van, "before it gets too thick. Let's see where we are."

"There's no need," says Jimmy Hicks, cross. "There's Tillamook Light to get our bearings by." And he gears up the invention again.

To cut matters short it was eleven o'clock that same night when we discover a light dead ahead, the fog clearing some. "There ain't none here," says Van.

"There wasn't last week when I came up with the 'Dawson,'" says I. "It's an invention."

"There's no money in it," retorts Van. "I don't like this. For God's sake let's find out where we are and then get somewhere undignificantly."

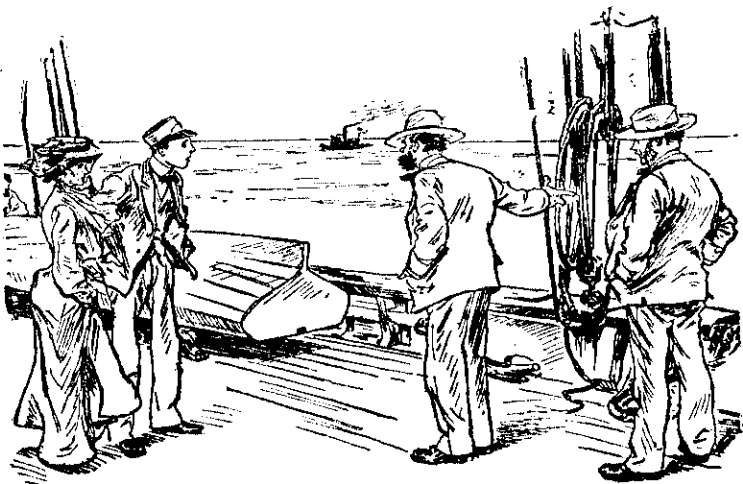
"Where are we?" I demands.

Neither of us knew till we got closer to the light and timed a flash. "It's Tillamook again," says I.

jerk of the patent, "which is a comfort so long as it's not Davy Jones."

At midnight we hear a bell-buoy to starboard. "We've made five hundred and odd miles the past hour," says Van quite solemn. "That's off Angel Island, San Francisco Bay." Then we no sooner fetched clear of this — by rights we had three thousand miles of open sea to starboard — when a glare shines through the mist and a huge, round light rides by. "The moon ought to be down on the chart," says Van. "Some one will hit it yet. No, that ain't the lightship. We're off Borneo."

At one o'clock, steering a straight course by the patent pilot, we makes one flare to port, and a few minutes later, when the first had gone, we makes another just like it to starboard. "This is a whole archipelago of comets," re-



"Will you walk to Astoria?"