

that sort of thing is tabooed by common consent, and there are only good natured rebuffs forthcoming for him who tries to lift the conversation reminiscenceward. "Romance?" snorted a pilot, an old sailor who has travelled the seas in quest of the dangerous cachelot and chased away many a bow head whale up the Pacific side of the Arctic. "Romance—in a pilot's life? Romance, rot! It's plain humdrum, I call it."

Then I heard a dry recital of the dull routine of cruise and docking, of weary days in the harbour station, of long, rainy days in the pilot boat, tossing on a choppy sea, or rolling about in a "white ash" breeze beneath a copper sun.

knowledge of a list of casualties that would fill several newspaper columns. "Yes"—doubtfully. "Not as it used to be. Well, I dunno, either. Yes—no." And then an argument was started, which was just the thing for a despairing interviewer.

Over on the wall was a chart showing the high sea's limit and the pilot's domain within. New York lies at the inner point of a wide funnel; and in the old days, when pilots were autocrats and snubbed captains and broke heads ad libitum, they patrolled the outer rim of this funnel from Hatteras on the south as far north as the Georgian Banks. They went out often five hundred miles,

self, and it was "steal a ship" if you could. Since 1895 the bar pilots have existed as a profit sharing association under a Pilot Commission, which is State appointed. The old pilot fleet has all but disappeared, and the patrol lines have been drawn in almost to Sandy Hook. Three of the old time schooners, with the big numerals on their sails, are still used in the Southern Ground (for vessels from the West Indies and South America), but the bulk of the cruising is done by two fine steamers, the New York and New Jersey, owned by the Pilot's Association, and built at a respective cost of 90,000 dollars and 73,000 dollars.

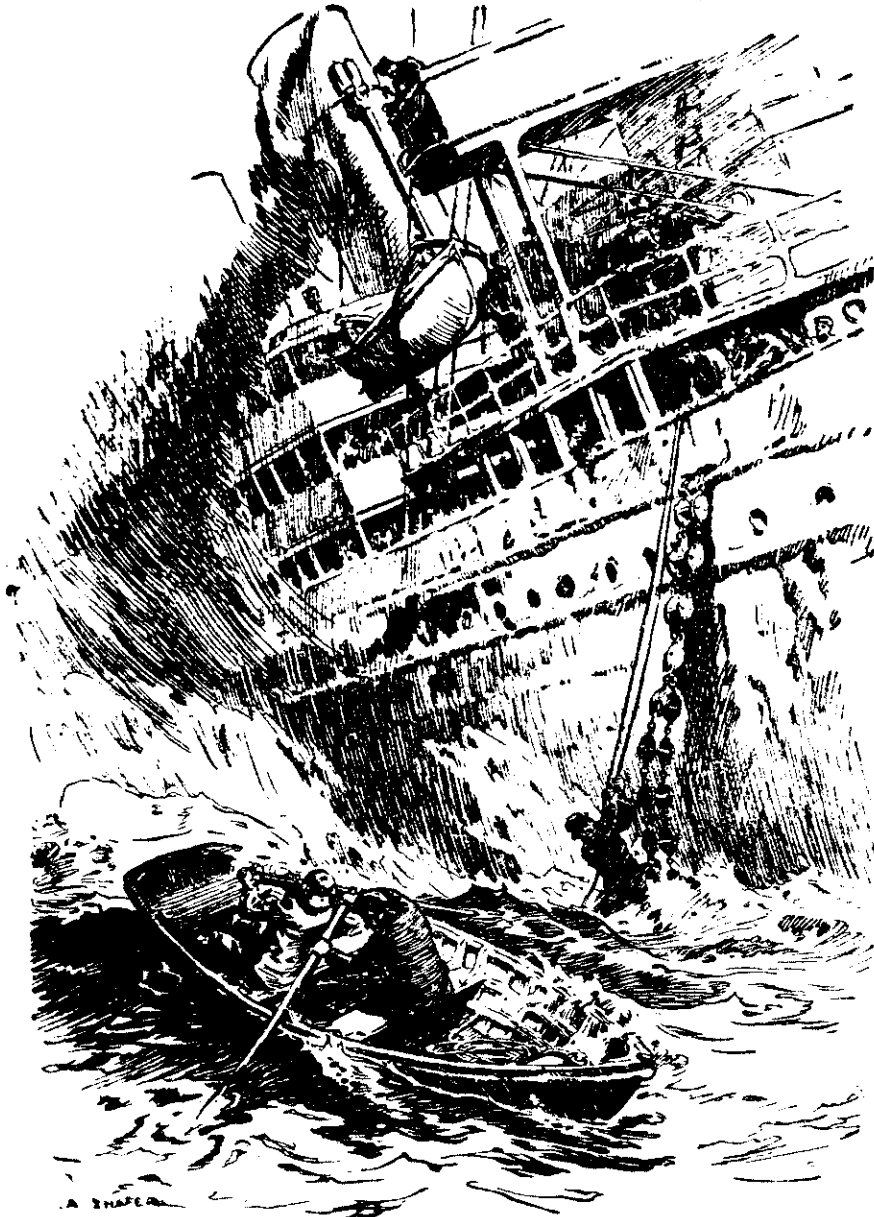
"They're all right inside, with their

fell back off the ladder and disappeared like a sack of shot."

"But how did you climb the Cedric?" "Skated," said he.

All in all, the present day peril side had the best of the argument. There are the same wintry blasts to-day that froze Pilot Bob Mitchell to death as he stood at his post on the good ship Sting-ray; the same smother of sea and snow that engulfed the Columbia when the Alaska cut her in two, and then, backing with full speed astern, sucked the wreckage and four men down with her churning propeller.

The pilot is the stormy petrel of the sea. Blow high or low, come sun or snow, blue sky or sleet, his post is there on the outer bar, ready to shake hands in all weather with a saucy windjammer or a big four-piper and then feel them in through the long, narrow ship lane, with its hundred danger spots, past rock and treacherous shoal, on and up to the pier of "All's well? Ay, ay, sir!"



"ALL I COULD SEE ABOVE ME WAS A ROOF OF ICE."

And unintentionally then the record ran on into wintry seas and vessels reached by a flimsy, twisting rope ladder in waves that stove in wooden hulls, of ice floundered boats and boats capsized on icy lee shores, of waiting in a fog right in the path of the sharp nosed ocean leviathans, "with a siren screeching at you, now in your ears, it seems, now this way and then a mile off, and then all of a sudden a big, black hull looms up and goes swa-hing by so near that you can look in the port holes, and see what they have for dinner, while a hollow voice on the deck 'way over your head, says suddenly:

"D—n! What's that?"

**Dangerous Life.**

"Then your life is dangerous," I suggested, with conviction, for I had fore-

were gone as long as two months—and sometimes never came back.

"That was no fun," growled an old pilot, "floundering off Sable Island in an eighty-footer, with a terrible nor-wester blowing" snow, and zero cold. I saw a yawl leave the boats once in answer to a blue signal on a freighter—and it was two days before we found her."

"And the pilot?"

"Frozen, of course."

"In the famous blizzard of '88—aw, the wind was cold," said the old pilot with a reminiscent shiver, "as cold as a step-mother's breath." Two pilot boats were wrecked and two went down, with all hands lost. Up to 1895, in fact, the death roll shows a boat and crew lost for almost every year.

That was in the old days of competi-

tion, when every pilot was out for him-

steam heat and electric lights," said a pilot, arguing for present day peril, "but the weather has not changed any that I notice."

**Plunged into Icy Sea.**

"Take the Cedric last winter, when she came in a floating iceberg in a terrible sea. When I caught her ladder she pitched over me till all I could see above was a roof of ice, and I went down in the water up to my armpits. Then up she lifts—full thirty-five feet in the air—and I swung in against the hull with a bump, I can tell you—"

"That bumping is bad. It knocked the hearts out of John Convin and Alf Bandier."

"Hearts out?"

"Well, yes, Convin dropped dead as he shook the captain's hand, and Bandier

**BOILS BANISHED.**

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