

"All hands abandon ship," he yelled through the blackness, and the crew answered with a cheer.

The one and only boat that the Uriah B. Juggins carried, was unlashd and thrown overboard. Jinks reckoned they were not more than ten miles from land now, and considered it was unnecessary to provision the boat with any great care but the crew objected strenuously. They said they hadn't had a decent meal since the voyage began and they weren't going to lose this chance. But half an hour saw the work completed, and with a trembling voice Jinks, who held the tiller, gave the word to shove off. The Uriah B. Juggins was left alone to sink at her own sweet will.

They rowed on through the night, and Jinks, desiring to cheer the men at the oars, began to sing a cheerful song. The bo'sun, who was pulling stroke oar, suddenly laid down his tool, and swore violently.

"What's the matter?" asked Jinks in wonder.

"Ain't it bad enough to be adrift in a small boat like this 'ere, without bein' slowly tortured to death?" asked the seaman.

"Who's torturing you now?" asked the "Wily, you are. That voice o' yours is enough to make a man drown hisself. Besides, it gives me a pain in my stumnick." Jinks shut off steam, and the men pulled away in grim silence. It was drawing on towards winter now, and the day was long in coming.

Suddenly a dark shape loomed up ahead, and Jinks' heart went into his mouth.

"It's a ship," he cried with a quaver in his voice. "We're saved."

"Never been lost wot I knows on," said the mate, with mocking emphasis; "leastways, I haven't, but I don't know about you."

Jinks declined to reply, and hallowed his hands, through which he bellowed manfully: "Ship ahoy!" There was no reply from the mysterious shape ahead of the boat.

"Pull a bit more," commanded the skipper; "p'raps they haven't heard me."

"They've got good ears if they 'ave," said the mate. "Why, my mother's canary could make more noise nor that." And he too followed his hanks, and let out a roar that seemed to cow the very gale itself.

There was still no answer from the darkness, though now they could make out the dim sheen of a green light above their heads. Evidently all hands aboard the craft were asleep or—but there was no time for surmises. Before they could haul again, the boat was rasping against the barnacle-covered copper of a big schooner, which floated very low in the water. Thomas reached up his hand, and grasped the main chains, lifted his face high, and sprang aboard. The men followed him like shadows, while Jinks, brought up the rear.

The grey day was beginning to break now, and they looked about them with wondering eyes. The schooner was under shortened canvas, and looked as though

she had experienced rough weather. No one challenged them, however, and Jinks, taking the midlight from its screen, led the way aft. A lamp burned dimly in the cabin, but that too was deserted. The wheel swung idly to and fro, answering to the kick of the rudder, and—the boat was gone.

"She's a derelict," said Jinks, "must have been abandoned too. Well, since the weather's getting better, we'll take her into port. She'll make up for the Uriah B."

Thomas did not answer at the moment. He had opened a locker in what was evidently the skipper's room, and was juggling out something that clinked.

"They had beer aboard this ship," he said, "Buss, too. I wish I'd been mate of 'er. There wouldn't have been any left for chance comers." Jinks watched him while he skillfully knocked off the neck, and drained the contents.

"When you've finished guzzling like a hog," he remarked severely, "perhaps you'll attend to your business."

"My business is to attend to this beer," said Thomas, finding another bottle and knocking its neck off too. "I ain't the man to waste 'Evin's gifts, no, not me."

Jinks left the cabin and went on deck. The men were in the forecastle, investigating the clothes left behind by the departed crew. The bo'sun and the cook were having a hot argument over a pair of trousers, when Jinks put his face in at the door, and the start the two men gave caused the pants to tear in two pieces. Each man was left with a leg in his hand.

"We'll set sail, and get her under weigh," said the skipper gently. "Then we'll make for Mulhaven. We ought to get there in an hour and a half or so. The gale's dying away, so there's no danger."

The men followed him on deck, and soon the schooner set her wings to the fresh breeze, and leaned over manfully as the helm was put up, and the prow turned in towards the land.

Jinks decided to say nothing about his discovery for awhile. He had it in mind that he would keep the schooner, point out her name, and rig her out as a brigantine as soon as he got an opportunity, and thus make up for the loss of his own ship. That would save a lot of unnecessary questioning, and would prove beneficial all round. Therefore the schooner made no disturbance as she slid into the shallows off the river Mud, which leads to the port of Mulhaven.

The vessel was moored in her place, and the crew turned in to get what sleep they could. Jinks flung himself down on the locker in the end, and dreamed soft dreams of various females, and it was not until early sunup that he aroused himself and went on deck. He cast a glance about him, but for the moment there was nothing to be seen. Then his eyes were drawn towards the mouth of the river, and there, stealing gently up with the tide, he saw a ship making its way into port. There was something familiar about her, even at that distance, and the skipper's eyes widened. He watched her breathlessly as she sailed slowly on, towards the eye of the setting

sun, and when she came to an anchor abreast of his schooner, he could restrain himself no longer.

"Brigantine ahoy," he yelled, "what ship's that?"

"Blest if I know," said a tall man with whiskers, on the poop. "I found her."

"She's mine," said Jinks. "She's the Uriah B. Juggins."

"Well, if you go losing ships in that promiscuous way," said the tall man, "you must expect to see them turning up unexpectedly. Come to think of it, that craft of yours seems familiar to me. What's her name?"

The crews of both ships were leaning over the rails, passing audible comments on each other's appearance. They listened to the dialogue with keen interest.

"The Lucy Anne," said Jinks, after he had glanced over the stern.

"Then what are you doing aboard my ship?" roared the big man in a tremendous voice. "What are soiling that ship's decks for, you red-whiskered fright?"

"I found her too," said Jinks. "Talking about red whiskers, I'd a jolly sight sooner have them than a face like a street corner on a wet day. It's worse than that—it's like a navy's teacake that's been trodden on. Yah, that got you!" The big man was gasping with consternation, and made no reply for a moment. Then he walked over to the rail, and got as close to Jinks as he could.

"Look here," he said mildly, "tell us how it happened."

"My ship got waterlogged," explained Jinks, "and we abandoned her last night. We found this thing floating about, and as there was no one to claim her for wreckage he brought her into port. Thought she might sell for firewood," big man. "She's as dry as a bone."

"This ship isn't waterlogged," said the big man. "She's as dry as a bone."

"But," remonstrated Jinks, "she is, I know, because I sounded her. She had nine feet of water in the well."

"Better come aboard," said the big man solemnly, "and we'll talk this over quietly. Bring some of my beer with you, because I'm as dry as a bone. This ship's a Blue Ribboner, ain't she?"

Jinks scrambled on board his own ship, and dragged the mate after him. The big man met him halfway, and held out a hand. Jinks grasped it in a friendly manner.

"It wasn't that," said the man, "I want that beer."

"Oh, it's there," said Jinks, nodding towards Thomas. "I brought it with me, but I don't see how you're going to get it back. He's a thirsty man, is Thomas." Thomas leered wildly about him, and hiccupped slightly.

"Ship'sh dry'sh bone," he said solemnly. The big man looked his disgust, but strove to repress his words.

The two captains went ashore in the falling light, and wended their way towards the Spotted Cow. Over a glass of hot rum and water, they came to a compromise. Each man was to go back to his ship, was to transfer his crew,

and no questions were to be asked. It was a marvellous coincidence that both ships should have been abandoned at the same time, but it was still more marvellous that each ship's company should have found the other's craft. Still, both were in the same boat, and any claim by the one would be met by a corresponding claim on the part of the other.

So they shook hands over the brigantine, and went back aboard the brigantine and the schooner. . . .

It was early in the morning that Jinks walked about the deck of his newly-recovered craft, and scanned her with proprietary eyes.

"But I can't understand how it was she had nine feet of water in her hold," he said ruminatively. "That man said she was as dry as a bone, and I believe it, too."

The bo'sun put his head out of the forecastle, and seeing the skipper, came towards him on tiptoe.

"I've just been remembering," he said slowly, "we had the fresh water tank shifted last voyage and the pipe that used to lead to the well, leads to the fresh water. That's why we got nine feet last night but one." The truth slowly dawned in Jinks' mind. Unwittingly, and forgetting the changes that had been made, he had sounded the fresh-water tank. He felt in his pockets.

"Here bo'un," he said tentatively, "I've got half a sovereign here that I don't want. Tell them all that you and I got up early and pumped her out, will you?" The bo'sun grinned ed in acquiescence

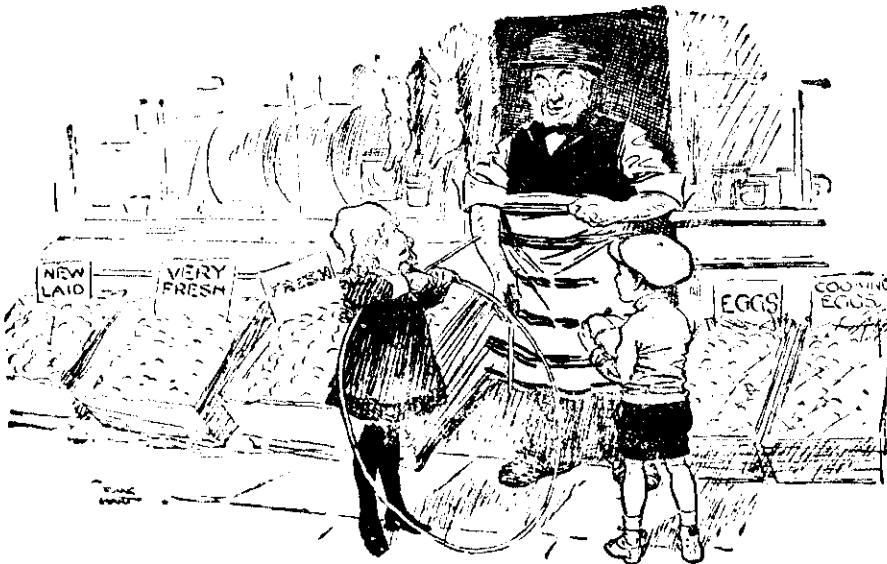
My "Joints are all cold," said the cook; "The back of my "tongue" is quite "raw." I'm just "overdone," I feel terribly crook. With a pain like a "bolt" on my jaw. My "flesh" is quite "chilled," it's the "flu." I'll not take "pot" luck, said this steward; I'll get what is best, old or new. That's Woods' Great Peppermint Cure.

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