The world is full of mystery, Which no one understands; What is before our eyes we see The work of unseen hands; But whence and when and why they wrought Escapes the grasp of human thought

There was a time when we were not, And there will be again, When we must cease and be forgot, With all our joy and pain-Gone like the wind, or like the snow

We live as if we should not die. Blindly, but wisely, too; For if we knew that death was nigh What would we say or do, But fold our arms and close our eyes, And care no more who lives or dies?

If death to each man in his turn Is coming soon or late. Be ours the soldier's nneoncern And his couragrous fate: Better to perish in the strife Than to preserve the coward's life

New Year, if you were bringing youth, As you are bringing age, I would not have it back: in sooth, I have no strength to wage Lost battles over. Let them be: Bury your dead, @ memory You can bring nothing will surprise,

No tears again in these old eyes, No darkness in my day. You might bring light and smiles instead If you could give me back my dead.

I have beheld your kin, New Year, I wept when it was done. Why should we weep when years depart, And leave their ashes in the heart?

Good-by, since you are gone, Old Year, And my past life, good-by! I shed no tear upon your bier, For it is well to die. New Year, your worst will be my best—

THE WRECK.

It was the 31st of December. I had breakfasted with my old friend George Garin. The servant brought him a letter covered with foreign stamps.

"You allow me?" George asked. "Certainly."

And he began to read the eight pages closely covered with an English hand. He read slowly and with serious attention; with the interest you take in that which touches you. Then he placed the letter upon the mantel and said:

That is a strange adventure of which I never told you; sentimental, however, and which happened to me. That was a singular New Year's day. It was twenty years ago. I was 30 then, and am 50 now. I was inspector of the insurance company of which I am now president. I was preparing to spend New Year's day in Paris, as it is the custom to make a holiday of it, when I received a letter from one of the directors ordering me to leave immediately for the island of Re, where a three decker from St. Nazaire, insured by us, was wrecked.

It was 8 o'clock in the morning. By 10 I was at the office for instructions, and that night I took the train and reached La Rochelle next morning, the 31st of December. I had two hours in which to visit the city before sailing for Re, and spent them admiring the odd, severe architecture, its crooked streets, the sidewalks covered with arcades, not unlike the Rue Rivoli, but lower, darker and more mysterious, that seem built for a scene of conspirators: the old and striking scenery of the religious wars, wars both savage and heroic.

When I left La Rochelle it was one of those dark, oppressive days, crushing thought, depressing the heart; a cold, gray day, darkened by a heavy fog. wet as rain, cold as ice, noisome as the smell of a sewer. Under this ceiling of low and sinister fog the yellow sea was without movement, without life, a sea of muddy, greasy, stagnant water. The Jean Ginton slid upon it, rolling slightly from habit, cutting the thick, smooth theet and leaving behind a few waves

which quickly subsided. I began talking to the captain, a small man, as round and well balanced as his boat. I wanted to learn the details of the accident I was going to investigate, and which I correctly inferred he would be able to furnish me. We were in the meantime sailing along the island of Re. Extending his hand he pointed out a small speck in the midst of the sea and said, "There is the vessel." "The Marie Joseph?" I asked. "Yes." I was astounded. The speck was fully three miles from shore. I resumed, "But, captain, there must be twenty feet of water there." He laughed. "Not two feet, I tell you. It is high tide now at 9 o'clock. Go along the beach after breakfasting and I promise that at 3 o'clock you will reach the wreck with dry feet; you will have two hours to spend there but no more, by the way, or you would be caught by the tide. The further the tide recedes the faster it returns. This coast is as flat as a bedbug."

I thanked the captain and went forward to watch the little city of St. Marin, which we were rapidly approaching. The city resembles all those miniature ports which serve as capitals for the mall islands fringing the continent. It

a large fishing village with one foot n water and one on land; supporting fe,on fish and chickens, vegetables and hell fish, radishes and mussels. It is low, but little cultivated, though thickly populated.

After breakfasting I crossed a small promontory; then, as the tide was going at, I continued across the sands in the lirection of a large black spot, far away. walked fast on this yellow plain, as lastic as flesh and seeming to sweat unler my feet. A minute ago the sea was pere; now I could no longer distinguish to line separating the sand from the

The Atlantic had disappeared like a cene down the trap door of a theatre, and now I walked in the midst of a desert. Only the salt smell remained; the smell of sea weed, the smell of the wave, the good and pungent smell of the coast. walked fast and looked at the wreck, which increased in size as I approached and now appeared like an immense whale,

It seemed to start from the ground, and on the yellow and extended plain took gigantic proportions. She lay upon one side, split, broken, showing like the ribs of an animal her broken bones, her bones of tarred wood pierced with immense nails. The sand had invaded her and held and possessed her, and would never let her go. She appeared to have taken root in the sand. The bow was deeply imbedded in the soft and treacherous bottom, while the stern seemed to throw against the sky, like a despairing cry for help, the words Marie Joseph written in white on a dark ground.

I climbed on this corpse of a ship on the lowest side, and, once on deck, went inside. The sun, entering through the open portboles and cracks in her side, lightened sally those long, dark caverns filled with broken woodwork.

I commenced taking notes upon the condition of the vessel. I sat upon an empty, broken barrel and wrote by the light entering a slit, through which I saw the limitless extension of beach. A shudder, born of the cold and solitude, ran through me from time to time, and I stopped writing occasionally to listen to the vague noises of the wreck, the noise of the crabs scratching the conlage with their crooked claws; of the numerous tiny animals of the sea already devouring this dead body; to the soft and regular sound of the ship worm gnawing the woodwork.

Suddenly I heard voices near me. started up. I thought for an instant l was in the presence of some drowned wretch who wanted to tell me of his death. I quickly climbed on deck and saw a tall gentleman with three ladies. They were even more startied than I at seeing me emerge upon the deck of the abandoned vessel. The youngest of the three rushed off; the others caught their father's arm; as to him, he opened his mouth, the only sign of emotion he showed. After a second he spoke.

"You must be the owner of this ship?" "Yes." "Can I visit her?" "Yes." He murmured a few words of thanks, and seeing he was looking for a place to climb I showed him the easiest, and assisted him up. He joined me and then we helped the young girls.

They were charming, particularly the eldest, a blonde of eighteen, as fresh as a rose; so delicate, so dainty. Really English women are like sea fruits. That one looked as if she might have sprung from the sand, and her hair had retained its color. They remind one, with their exquisite freshness, of delicate pink shells of mother of pearl, beautiful and mysterious, born in the depths of the ocean.

She spoke French more fluently than her father and acted as interpreter. I had to give the history of the wreck; many of the details I invented as if I had assisted at the catastrophe. Then the whole family went below. When they reached the gloomy gallery they took out their sketch books and began to draw the scene.

The eldest daughter while working spoke to me, and I learned that they had come from Biarritz expressly to see the wreck. They had none of the English haughtiness. They were simple enthusiasts; some of those eternal wanderers with which England covers the globe. The father, tall and wiry, his red face framed in white whiskers, a living sandwich, a slice of ham fashioned into a face between two pads of hair. The daughters little growing stilts, thin also, except the eldest; pretty all three, particularly the eldest. She had such a quaint way of speaking, of laughing, of understanding and not understanding, of raising her eyes to question me, eyes her drawing to guess, of resuming her work, of saying yes and no, that I could have staid there forever listening and looking.

After awhile she exclaimed, "I hear a noise." I listened and distinguished a slight sound, unusual and continuous. What was it? I rose to look through a crack and gave a loud cry. The sea was upon us. In no time we would be surrounded. We were on deck in an instant. It was too late. The water encompassed us and was rushing toward shore with great rapidity. The Englishman wished to rush forward. I held him back; flight was impossible on account of the deep pools that we had to avoid in coming, and into which we would probably fall in attempting to return. It was a moment of horrible agony. Then the young English girl exclaimed, "We are the ones who are wrecked!" I wanted to laugh, but I was strangled by fright; a cowardly, awful fright, low and treacherous. And this tide. I realized all the danger of our position and wanted to cry for help. To whom?

The youngest girls cowered against their father, who in consternation watched the boundless sea around us.

And night was coming as rapidly as the tide; a heavy, damp darkness. We remained there half an hour, an hour, I hardly know how long, looking at the yellow water which thickened and boiled and played upon the reconquered beach.

One of the girls complained of the cold, and we thought we would go in for protection against the light but cold breeze which stung our faces. I leaned over the trap door. The ship was full of water and we were obliged to crouch against the stern, which gave us some protection. Night was now upon us and we drew closer together, surrounded by water and darkness. I felt the shoulder of the young English girl, whose teeth chattered at times, tremble against mine. I also felt the soft warmth of her body, and that warmth was to me as delicious as a kiss. We no longer spoke; we were motionless, silent, crouching like ani-

mals in a ditch during a storm. And somehow, in spite of all; in spite of the darkness, in spite of the terrible and growing danger, I commenced to feel happy at being there, happy at the cold and danger, at the long hours of agony to be passed on those planks, so near that pretty delicate English girl. I wondered why this sensation of joy pene-trated me. Why? Who can say? Was it because she was there? Who was she? A little unknown English girl. I did not love her. I did not know her, and

cet I felt touched, conquered. I would have given my life for hers. Strange that the presence of a woman can so upset us! Is it the power of beauty which envelopes us? the allurements of youth that like wine makes us drunk? Or is it a touch of Love, the mysterious, who tries without cessation to unite two people? that tries his power as soon as he has brought man and woman together and penetrates them with an emotion, subtle and profound, as one moistens the earth to make flowers grow?

The silence of the darkness became trightful, and the silence of the heavens, for we heard around us the monotonous wash of the sen against the side of the ship. After awhile I heard a sob. The smallest of the girls was crying and her father tried to console. They spoke in English. I turned to my neighbor. "Are you cold?" "Yes, very." I wanted her to take my cloak. She refused. but I had taken it off, and wrapped it around her against her wish. In the slight struggle her hand toucked mine

and sent a delightful thrill through me. The wind had become sharper and the waves now broke with greater force against the sides of the ship. I raised myself up and felt a rush of air against

my face. The wind was rising! The Englishman noticed it at the same

time and remarked, "That is bad." It certainly was bad; it meant certain death if the waves, no matter how small, struck and shook the wreck, already so broken and disjointed that the first large one would demolish it.

Then our agony increased from second to second with the rise of the wind. Now the waves broke and I saw in the darkness the white line of foam appear and disappear, while every wave shook the frame of the Marie Joseph with a shudder that reached us.

I felt the English girl tremble against me. I was conscious of a wild impulse to take her in my arms.

Before us, to right, to left, behind us the lighthouses were shining on the coasts-white, red, yellow; revolving, like eyes of giants looking at us, watching eagerly for our destruction. One of them in particular irritated me. That one was a perfect eye, opening and shutting its fiery pupil.

From time to time the Englishman struck a match to look at the hour; then he would replace his watch in his pocket. Suddenly he said aloud and with perfect seriousness, "Sir, I wish you a happy New Year!"

It was midnight. I offered my hand, which he sho-k; then he said something in English to the girls, who began to sing "God Save the Queen." At first I felt like laughing; then I was seized by a strong, quaint emotion. There was something superb and sinister about this song of these wrecked people; something of prayer and also greater and comparable to the "Ave Casar, morituri te salutamus."

When the song was ended I asked my neighbor to sing alone, a ballad, anything she pleased, to help us forget our situation. She consented. Her fresh, pure voice rose upon the night. It was doubtless something sad as the notes lingered and rose slowly, like wounded birds, above the waves.

The sea had risen and now struck against the wreck. I thought of nothing but the voice and of the sirens. My tortured spirit was lost in dreams. Was she not a siren, this girl who had kept me on this rotten boat, and who in a minute would be ingulfed with me?

We all now rolled violently upon the deck. The Marie Joseph has turned upon the other side. The English girl fell on me, and seizing her in my arms, madly and without knowing it, without understanding, believing this was our last sec ond of life, I kissed her lips, her temples, her hair. The vessel no longer moved,

Her father called Kate, and she answered yes, and tried to free herself from my arms. I wanted the boat to open; 1 wanted to die with her.

I rose slowly and perceived a light near us. I called out and was answered. It was a boat hunting for us, the proprietor of the hotel having guessed our predica-We were saved. I was in despair. We

left the wreck and returned to St. Martin. The Englishman rubbed his hands and exclaimed, "What a supper we will eat." And we did. I was not gay. I regretted the Marie Joseph. The next morning we separated, with

many regrets and promises to write. They returned to Biarritz and I came very near following them.

I was hard hit and was near asking Kate in marriage. If we had remained lenger together I certainly would have done so. How weak and incomprehensible man is at times.

Two years passed without my hearing anything of them; then I received a letter from New York. She was married, and wrote to tell me. And since then we write to each other once a year, on the 1st of January. She speaks to me of her life, her children, her sisters, never of her husband. And I speak to her of the Marie Joseph. She is perhaps the only woman I ever loved-no-that I might have loved. Voila-does one ever know? Events carry us along— And then—then—everything fades— She must be old now- I would not know her-her of other days-her of the wreck- She writes me her hair is white. Mon dieu! that hurts me terribly-that blonde hair- No, there is not a trace of- How sad is-all that.

-Translated from the French of Maupassant for The New Orleans Picayune by Lak.

It Was a Mistake.

There is one young man connected with a prominent wholesale house who did not hire a carriage and make his usual round of calls on New Year's, 1890. He was in the store the day before when a friend called in.

"Hello, Brotherton; going to make any calls to-morrow?"

"No; can't," was the laconic reply, "Can't! Why?" "Well, you see Blanchard's going to be married to-morrow night, and I loaned him my dress suit without thinking. That's why. Guess I'll stay at home and smoke."-Chicago Herald.

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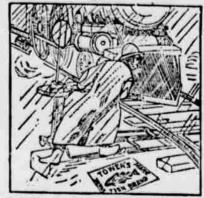
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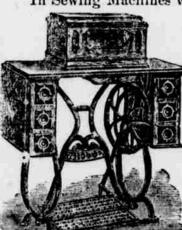
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