

The Hermit of the Bay.

On a reef jutting out into New York Bay from the Jersey shore there is a lighthouse—an oasis in the water. It is built on a rock foundation and the walls rise straight from the water. There is no garden, no promenade, no picturesque surroundings, as are found in paintings of lighthouses. The reef lighthouse was built for service, not for appearance.

Old Croft had lived so long on the bay that he was sored on humanity. He talked with himself so long that he cared for conversation with no one else. Once every two weeks he rowed to the shore—it was a good two-mile pull over choppy water—and brought back his supplies. He also brought a cask of oil, a jug of whiskey and a pound of tobacco.

This was the one interruption to the solitary life of the hermit of the bay. He was a hermit in truth—more so than the man who lives alone in the woods.

One day a "The photograph was boat scraped that of his lodger." against old Croft's front door. A man past thirty years of age, well dressed, and evidently a nervous person, entered the lighthouse. Old Croft stared at him in surprise. It was his first visitor in many years.

"Well?" said Croft, at last.

"My name's Elkins," said the stranger. "I've come out to call on you." And he smiled in a regular manner.

"Well?" said old Croft, once more.

"You see, it's like this," said the stranger, or Elkins, as he should now be called. "I want to stay with you for awhile. Oh, I'll pay you well," he added hastily, as he saw the frown gathering on Croft's face. "I think two or three weeks in the middle of the bay would do me good, a run down in health—too much confinement and work."

"Can't do it," said Croft. "Against the rules. Nobody but a fool'd want to stay here anyhow."

"That's all right," said Elkins. "I'll pay you well for your trouble and no one will be the wiser. You see I get funny notions sometimes. I saw this light as I was riding on a ferryboat and the idea of living in the middle of the bay has taken such a hold on me that I can't shake it off. I've just got to live here."

Old Croft shook his head.

"See here," persisted Elkins. "I am prepared to fix you up all right. What would you say, now, to \$150 for two weeks' board in your house?"

Old Croft still shook his head, but the light of greed was beginning to show in his eyes. He was as much a miser as any recluse becomes while living alone.

"I'll make it double the amount," said Elkins. "You see I am determined. This may seem peculiar to you, but then I am a peculiar man."

"Well," said old Croft at last, "if you want to be a real fool I guess I might as well take advantage of your craziness. It's a risk, but I'll chance it."

Elkins brought in his suit case and made himself at home. For three days he did nothing but smoke and walk nervously from window to window in the lighthouse.

He made Croft nervous, but the old man was willing to put up with the inconvenience for the money. Elkins rarely slept. He just walked back and forth in the room and smoked incessantly.

At the end of a week he did not look well. He became feverish. The old man fixed him up in a bunk and gave him some simple remedies, but Elkins continued to grow worse. In another day he became delirious.

"He ought to have a doctor," scolded Croft, "but that means that I'll be found out and get fired for having a boarder. I guess quinine's what he needs, the dampness was too much for him."

So old Croft made his patient comfortable, barred the windows, and after locking the door from the outside, rowed to shore.

While waiting his turn in a drug store, Croft picked up a newspaper and casually glanced over it. A photograph on the front page caught his attention. He looked at it closely, then hastily read the article accompanying it. It told of the robbery of a New York trust company. The teller walked out with \$75,000 in a suit case.

Old man Croft's heart began to beat fast. The photograph was that of his lodger—the sick man in the lighthouse. And there was ten thousand dollars reward for his capture.

Croft was fairly dazed. After awhile his excitement cooled. He took his quinine and going to his boat sat down in the stern and thought over the whole matter.

Ten thousand dollars! That was a whole lot of money. He did not mind giving up another man and seeing him go to prison. Not if the recompense was ten thousand dollars.

Croft quickly made up his mind. He had a friend, a detective, who worked along the water front. He hunted him up and, first, in crafty manner, binding him to a division of the promised reward, told his story. The detective went with Croft at once.

They were in the middle of the bay, tossing along on the rough water, pounding the reef, planning just how they would take Elkins when they were interrupted by a long drawn out yell.

Croft paused on his ears and looked toward the lighthouse. Then, leaping to his feet he pointed to the platform in the top of the tower. There, dancing about and waving his arms, clearly out of his mind, was the sick man.

"I never thought of him climbing to the light," said Croft, as he bent to his oars. "We'll have to hurry."

Finally, when the boat was quite near, the sick man ceased his frenzied dancing and yelling, and regarded the man in the boat.

"Ho!" he shouted, laughing wildly. "You think you can catch me, eh? Well, you can't. See—there's the water and it's cool. My head is burning. The old man lit a fire in it as I slept. He wanted to use me as a torch in the tower. But I'll fool him."

"Crazy as a loon," muttered Croft, still rowing fiercely.

"I'm going to put out the fire," yelled Elkins, and with another unearthly howl of laughter, he leaped into the bay. His body was caught in the swirl of the tide and quickly carried away.

Croft and the detective were astounded. They rowed to the place where he had gone down and hovered over spot for a half hour.

Then they entered the "With a howl, he leaped into the bay."

The detective, purely professional, immediately began prowling through the effects left by Elkins. He forced open a suit case and bundles of green notes bulged out and fell upon the floor.

Both men were silent for a long time. They continued to stare at the wealth before their eyes.

"It's frightful, isn't it?" finally whispered old Croft.

The detective did not answer. He was narrowly eyeing Croft as well as the money.

"Croft," he said at last, in measured voice, "Croft, we're out in the middle of the bay."

"Yes?" said Croft.

"No one but we two saw that poor, crazy fellow jump."

"No one," said Croft, his face flushing and his features straining as he comprehended.

There was another long silence. "Croft," finally said the detective, "Croft, how would you like to quit tending lighthouse? Say—how would you?"

And that's how it came that the hermit of the bay resigned his position two weeks later. That's why the trust company never located its missing teller or the stolen property.

Abyss of Ocean.

More than half the surface of the globe is hidden beneath water two miles deep; 7,000,000 square miles lie at a depth of 18,000 feet or more. Many places have been found five miles and more in depth.

The greatest depth yet sounded is 31,200 feet near the Island of Guam.

If Mount Everest, the world's highest mountain were plucked from its seat and dropped into this spot, the waves would still roll 2,000 feet above its crest.

Into this terrible abyss the waters press down with a force of more than 10,000 pounds to the square inch. The sturdiest ship ever built would be crumpled under this awful pressure like an eggshell under a steam roller.

A pine beam fifteen feet long, which held open the mouth of a trawl used in making a cast at a depth of more than 18,000 feet, was crushed flat as if it had been pressed between rollers.

The body of a man who should attempt to venture to such depths would be compressed until the flesh was forced into the interstices of the bones and his trunk was no larger than a rolling pin. Still, the body would reach the bottom, for anything that will sink in a tub of water will sink to the uttermost depths of the ocean.

The Karite Tree Makes Butter.

In the search for new plants of utility attention has been drawn to the Karite tree of French West Africa and the adjacent territory to the eastward. This is not a forest tree but grows in open spaces and in gardens. Its fruit is edible. The hard shell contains a fatty substance used by the natives as butter and it is suggested that this substance should be valuable for other purposes. The gum—not like rubber—into which the sap congealates is another article of possible commercial value.

WHERE GUNDA FAILED.

A Lesson On Temperance Which the Pachyderman Did Not Relish.

Out of the kindness of its corporate heart a big brewing company sent a score of stout beer kegs to the New York Bronx Park Zoo recently, accompanied by an explanatory note to Director Hornaday that they were to be used for the humanitarian purpose of aiding the bears and a number of other of the larger animals to drive dull care away. Among those outside the immediate bruit family who were favored with the gifts were Gunda, the huge Indian elephant, and Pete, the youthful hippo.

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