

A CONQUEROR.

A castle there is all grim and gray, Surrounded by high walls, And many a knight Waged bitter fight To enter its lordly halls.

But fast and firm were the massive gates 'Gainst all who would through them win.

While the old stone pile Seemed with scorn to smile At each failure to enter in.

There came a day when a maiden sweet Crept up and did patiently wait; No bar could withstand The touch of her hand, And wide flew the frowning gate

No more the walls echo with sounds of the fray, No more comes the clash of strife; For that the voice of— For that the castle strong Was my heart, and the maid is my wife.

CAPTAIN DICK'S SWEETHEART

By Adele Ferguson Knight. When Captain Dick came home from his last whaling voyage and settled down in his trim country home with his wife and two pretty daughters, he had the pleasant consciousness of a man who had fought his way in spite of all obstacles to an honest competence, and may spend his old age untroubled by debts and duns.

But Mrs. Dick was a progressive woman and she soon began to plan ways and means to double their modest fortune, while Captain Dick smilingly agreed to all her proposals with the boyish carelessness of his old sailor days. But, also, for human confidence in stock and bonds! Poor Captain Dick awoke one morning to find his fortune dwindled to a pittance and old age so close at hand that, like a worn-out cruiser, he could no longer sail the seas.

The winter was a hard one, but with summer came brighter days, for it had been agreed that "boarders" would add considerably to the family exchequer, and the first of June brought Mrs. Mervin and her little daughter Elsa, a bonnie, brown-eyed lassie, to occupy the hitherto rarely opened "best chamber."

The captain was a walking storehouse of sea stories and salt-water lore, and from the hour of her arrival, Elsa and he became close friends. Every day found the brown curls and the gray ones close together over some newly found shell or sea treasure, or perched gravely behind the old horse Dolly, both the captain and Elsa watching with anxious care each passing team, or meek-eyed cow, for in her youth, Dolly had been known to shy at these creatures.

There was an amiable fiction in the family regarding the sportiveness of this aged animal whose years had long ago become her crown of glory, and Elsa shared the fears, as she did the captain's pride in the sleek lazy roundness of the little brown mare. "Dolly can't be hurried, she has too much spirit," he often explained, "she always was a lively little critter and we must keep our eye on her."

So Dolly drew them day after day (at her own discretion) to the beach, a mile or more away, where the captain would spin long yarns as they sat at the foot of the sand-dunes and watched the white sails glimmer in the distance or the sun linger to say good night before he went to visit those wonderful countries whither the sails were going and where Captain Dick had really been, Elsa lived in a world of adventure that he painted for her and soon grew deft in naming parts and rigging tiny vessels the captain made for her, and which they sailed on hot afternoons from reedy corners of Old Mill Pond.

The captain had come to call her Sweetheart in his quaint fashion, "For all sailors have sweethearts," he explained. "But I must learn to go to sea then," she argued, "so we must find a boat and you must teach me to make it go."

After diligent search an old flat-bottomed row-boat was exhumed from among the rushes of the Old Mill Pond, and for nearly a week the captain worked with hammer and nails, oakum and paint pot, until the old boat seemed a new creature. At last came a glorious day when she was launched, with the captain at the oars and Sweetheart unseated in the stern. It was not quite like sailing on the "raging main" but Captain Dick assured her that all sailors knew how to row, and Sweetheart was determined to be a sailor.

They named her the "Falcon" after Captain Dick's old vessel, and the very next day Sweetheart began to paddle about with one oar, making queer little dabs one moment, then dipping the left stroke so deep that she nearly lost her oar. But perseverance worketh wonders, and before the end of the week she had been promoted to two oars and by August she was able to row herself about the quiet waters of the pond, while the captain applauded from the bank, or lay in the grass under the tress peering out beneath his tilted hat at the pretty figure swaying about in the queer bark, back and forth in the bright sunshine.

Now Old Mill Pond was long and narrow, running from the village nearly to the sea, a small strip of sand the only barrier between them. On the southern bank were meadows where cattle grazed or gardens of houses half hidden among the trees, while the northern shore was lined with reeds and dwarf bushes, the outpost of the marsh land behind them. A thin border of firm soil, however, edged the morass, terminating at the Outlet near the village where a rickety bridge permitted the more venturesome spirits occasional passage. At the seashore end crabs abounded and one hot afternoon

Dolly drew the pair to this familiar hunting-ground.

"Seem's if the storm last night done considerable damage," soliloquized the Captain, as his practised eye noted the unusually high tide mark and the pretty rustic arbor awry on its frail supports. "Hi, look there Sweetheart! See them bathing-houses! A Sou'-Easter don't do much coddling and petting, does it?" and he eagerly pointed to the debris of some dozen bathing-houses which had been wrenched from their foundations and cast in a heap at the foot of one of the dunes.

"I tell you one of them storms at sea ain't no joke, and the sailors have to call out all their grit when they see one coming. Why, I remember one voyage when we were just off Hatteras"—and the Captain settled himself comfortably on a pile of sand to spin his yarn while he disentangled Sweetheart's line from among the nets. Sweetheart listened with rapt attention and as he finished she heaved a great sigh. "Oh, if I could be brave like that," she said, "but I couldn't be for I am afraid even of mice."

"Now don't you think that way," Captain Dick said encouragingly, "cause just you get the chance and I'll cast a belaying pin if you don't show true colors like a man. There ain't anything like a good bit of danger for showing what a man's made of, and a brave fellow forgets all about himself and jests lays out to obey orders no matter what they may be when he knows there's a life depending on him may be."

Sweetheart pondered "I do not believe I even want the chance to come," she said soberly. "I'm sure I would not be brave enough."

Well, well, let's wait 'till it comes along," the Captain said cheerily. "Tain't time to fret about what we will do with our crabs 'till we catch 'em," and with a laugh they fell to work. But the crabs were not hungry and before long Sweetheart abandoned her net and began to flit about over the hard brown sand while the Captain strode bravely into the water after shy crabs, with the courage born of the security of his rubber boots. The afternoon sun was hot and after a while he sat down in a hollow leaning against a ruined sand fort that they had built several days before. He was drowsy, and before many minutes the line slipped from his fingers and Captain Dick was fast asleep. He dreamed he was once more in command of the "Falcon" bound for the North and its whales. At the start the weather was glorious but before many days a sudden fall of temperature denoted the presence of icebergs, which soon became visible off the port quartered forward, and all hands were piped to quarters—when the Captain awoke with a start to find a large brook running beside him over arm and leg. He scrambled to his feet only to find himself on a small sandy island between two rivers, which each moment increased in volume and rolled merrily along in the sparkling sunshine, rapidly devouring his island as they ran. One glance showed him that the storm having eaten away the beach, this unusually high tide had leaped the slender barrier between ocean and pond and the sea was pouring its brine into the pond with an ever-increasing volume which it seemed nothing could stay. Already the rivers were too wide and deep for him to wade across and rheumatism had stiffened his muscles until swimming was an impossibility. Suddenly he remembered Sweetheart and a sickening despair filled his heart as he turned toward the spot where he had last seen her, and could discover no trace of her. But as he eagerly scanned the northern border of the pond a bright spot further down gave him sudden courage. Yes, she was there, but all unconscious of the suddenly rising water behind her, for she was digging about the roots of an old tree. He made a trumpet of his hands and shouted as he had never shouted before, "Sweetheart, Sweetheart! Run! Run for your life!"

He saw her turn quickly and glance about in a dazed fashion for a moment then begin to run toward him. Again he shouted: "No! No! Run to the village! Quick! You haven't a second to lose!" She stopped hesitatingly and then the clear little voice sounded shrilly over the fast widening waves between them: "What are you going to do?"

He glanced rapidly about him. Not a person in sight—and with a quick breath he faced his fate bravely. Clearly there was no chance for him, but that little heart yonder must be saved at all costs, if indeed it were not even now to late, for should the water creep over the low land near the village, carrying away the flimsy bridge, even Sweetheart's slender chance would be lost.

"Never mind me," he called, "run to the village!" Then as she stood there facing him, "Sweetheart, you must! Run! Run!"

She did not move. He wrung his hands in his impotence. Suddenly a bright thought struck him, born of their play together. The water was already flowing over his feet and half way to his knees, but he drew himself proudly erect as he called— "Sailors must obey orders: I command you to run!"

To his surprise he saw her turn immediately and fly toward the village along the slender beach path that led to safety. His heart beat joyfully, yet no marvel that a device so simple should have won the day.

"Lesser brave little heart! She didn't want to leave me," he murmured as he watched the bright dress flit along the shore and the sturdy little legs fairly fly. Suddenly she stooped down and began apparently to grope about for something among the reeds near an old fallen tree, and he turned faint with the realization of the precious time she was losing. His voice could not reach her now and his terror

for her aged hip years in those few moments. Then he saw her rise and vanish behind the drooping branches. Another second of awful waiting, and then his face lightened with great joy, for out into the sunlight came Sweetheart in the old "Falcon" rowing toward him bravely and steadily in spite of the short strokes and the panting haste. How strange he had not remembered the boat in the rushes where they had moored it only yesterday, while they searched the borders of the swamp for frogs. Stroke by stroke, nearer and nearer she came though it seemed hours to the stout old heart waiting for her, for already the rapidly rising flood had nearly reached his shoulders, and he realized with the unerring certainty born of many years experience with Old Ocean, that even to spin his yarn while he disentangled Sweetheart's line from among the nets, Sweetheart listened with rapt attention and as he finished she heaved a great sigh. "Oh, if I could be brave like that," she said, "but I couldn't be for I am afraid even of mice."

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CABLE SPARKS.

China has consented to enter the postal Union. One-half of Colon was destroyed by fire March 23. It is denied in London that a big steel trust has been formed.

A fight was reported between the Italians at Cassala and the Derivishes. The British government is taking steps to send \$5,000 troops to the Cape of Good Hope. The Cuban insurgents burned a number of tobacco houses and the village of Alfonso Rojas.

Not much credence is given to the report of the death of Maxim Gomez, the Cuban leader. The activity of the authorities in Matabeleland has done much to prevent the spread of the rebellion.

The foreign policy of the French government was endorsed by the Chamber of Deputies by a vote of 399 to 213. King Menelik of Abyssinia sent his regrets to the czar because of his inability to send a delegation to the coronation ceremony.

T. Simon Sam, formerly minister of war for Hayti, has been elected President to succeed the late President Hippolyte. Another earthquake shock has been felt in the province of Calabria, in Italy, causing panic there. The disturbance was also felt at Messina and Milazzo.

The commissioners of the Cassa of the Egyptian debt paid out the remaining £3,000 for the Nile expedition. Advice was received by Cubans in Wilmington, Del., of the arrival at Cuba of another filibustering expedition, which sailed from New York March 25, making the seventh expedition from the United States to safely reach the island in six weeks.

The British schooner Robin Hood, from S. Johns, N. F., for Lisbon, was found drifting at sea with only two helpless children aboard, their father, the only man on the little vessel, having been dead eight days. The schooner was taken into Cadix.

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ABOUT NOTED PEOPLE.

Prof. Sylvester, F. R. S., of Oxford, the mathematician, who earlier held professorship at the University of Virginia and at Johns Hopkins, has been elected a foreign member of the Turin Royal Academy of Sciences.

Mary Ann Foley is the Jane Cakebread of Gotham. She is probably not quite so hardened or abandoned as the famous London drunkard who Lady Somerset failed to reclaim. There are many others in New York worse than Mary Ann, but none get arrested with more regularity.

J. B. Darnell, of Odessa, Ky., is 61 years old and is splitting rails every day that weather permits, with an iron wedge 200 years old, which his grandfather brought from Scotland with him. He hauls the rails with his well-known mule, Katy, who is 24 years old. He shaves once a week with his razor, which is 42 years old, and has a resp-look that is 45 years old.

Emile Zola has written an open letter to the young men of letters who disavow the new literary reviews the influences of his works upon them. He says: "If you could see how you make me laugh! If you could see with what sardonic smiles I read your reviews! They are grayish, dull and dead, your reviews. Our antique unguines, which are copious and grave, are light and gay in comparison with yours."

Alexander Freeman, the colored centurion of the New York Sailors' Regatta Harbor, the pride of the institution, and the oldest person, it is said, in New York State, has been laid low by old age at last, and now lies in the hospital of the institution. Freeman is believed to be in his 110 year. He is a short, stocky built man, and a remarkable thing about him is that his face shows scarcely a trace of a wrinkle, although his body and arms are greatly shrunken. He gives the visitors a hearty grasp of the hand, and says smilingly that he is good for a number of years yet.

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