

THE DEAD SHIP.

The following narrative is taken verbatim from a manuscript left by the late Geoffrey Pemberton, sometime master of the letter of marque Misery, who died at the age of 90 in 1798, and who lies buried in the churchyard of St. Mary's at Shrewsbury.

In the month of January, 1793, being then in my fifty-fourth year and having followed the sea all my life, I obtained command of the letter of marque Misery, a ship of 500 tons burden, that mounted 16 guns on the broadside and a long brass swivel on the quarter deck, and that had been fitted out by some merchants of Bristol to cruise against the Spaniards in the West Indies.

It was not without much labor that I got a crew, all the better men having been pressed for the king's service, and when I did get one I had no great cause to be pleased, for a more raffish and unsteady set I never met eyes upon. Yet I had with me as master an old and tried shipmate, Warren Hodges, and there was also with me my dear son Humphrey, who 17 years later was killed, lieutenant of the Ruby, at the gallant capture of the French frigate La Presidente off Goree.

At the time of which I speak he was no more than 18, yet he was so brave and determined a lad and so good a seaman that with him and Warren Hodges I thought to make shift to do my business and to manage my rattle in the forecastle.

It was on the 31st of the month that we weighed anchor and dropped down the river with the tide and with a pleasant breeze from the northeast. There being then a convoy coming down channel and bound for Jamaica, I lay to all the 23d and 24d to the southward of St. Mary's, and only on the morning of the 24th I sailed the king's frigate Rainbow, which, with the Gosport and Biddford, had under her charge not fewer than 60 sail of merchantmen.

To my chagrin, the captain of the Rainbow, a young buck who, I make no doubt, was more at home in St. James park than on his own quarter deck, and who was scented like a French dancing master, pressed nine of my best men. Yet, there being then many Spanish frigates and ships of the line off our coast, I could not disdain the company of the king's ships and was forced to bear with it, even though it cost me so dear.

With them I sailed until Feb. 9, when, being as nearly as I could reckon in longitude 40 degrees west and latitude 27 degrees 30 minutes south—for, by cause of the foul weather, we had taken no observation for two days—a storm scattered the fleet, and we, with only three of the merchantmen still in sight, were driven by the force of the gale to the southward.

The storm abated somewhat on the 11th, and we were enabled to bear up again for Jamaica, but my men, having now no fear of the king's ships, put on foot that instant a mutinous disposition and soon began to carry themselves so outrageously toward me that I perceived they were minded to stick at nothing in order to seize the Misery for their own ends.

Being plainly assured of this as well by my own sight and hearing as by the reports of my faithful servant, Richard White, a blackamoor whom I had brought nine years before out of Guinea, I took counsel with my son and Warren Hodges to prepare for the worst. I caused the arm chest to be removed into the great cabin, the door of which I fortified from within. I ordered the brass swivel on the quarter deck to be kept loaded with a keg of bullets, so that I might be able to sweep all the deck forward, and I made Richard White sleep every night under the gun, with a dark lantern beside him and a match in his hand.

But those and the other provisions that I took were of no avail against the treachery of the crew, and to add to my uneasiness I had the mortification of finding that we lost sight one by one of the three remaining merchantmen, and that by the middle of the month we had but ourselves for company.

One morning, hearing a noise upon the forecastle, I ran up on deck. Warren Hodges, who had the morning watch, was not to be seen, but I could hear his voice call in anger and the voices of some of the crew threatening him. He returned, returning to the cabin for a pistol and a dagger, went forward and found that the mutineers had seized both Warren Hodges and the blackamoor and had already bound them and thrown them into the chains, where they lay crying lustily for help.

I whipped out my dagger to cut the ropes with which they were bound, and at a great man named Morton, the ring-leader, as I now knew him to be of the mutiny, stepped out from among the men and declared that if I dared to interfere I should pay the penalty with my life; that he and his friends had determined to seize the ship and to cruise with it on their own account against the Spaniards, and that I might either stay where I was and serve under him or take the consequences.

Angered at the fellow's insolence, I raised my pistol with the intention of shooting him as he stood, but the powder flashing in the pan, and in an instant I was seized from behind, flung upon the deck and bound as securely as Warren Hodges and the blackamoor. My first thought was for the safety of my dear son. I now had the mortification of seeing him lie bound, from the cabin, where during all this time he had been asleep, and with us he was put under close guard in the hold.

As for those who fed, they were never again heard of, and I doubt not they perished either of the sickness or of hunger and privation.

The ship carried when we found her only her foremast, mizzen and fore and main topsails, and I dared not hoist more, knowing not what might befall as if the fine weather should fall. We did not, therefore, make much progress, and it was seven weeks ere we were in the longitude of Cape Clear. During all that time the wind held, and although the wind shifted many times it never blew hard, a thing which in these latitudes and in the early part of the year seemed to me so marvellous that I could not but look upon it as the work of Providence, for had a gale sprung up we could have done nothing to save the ship.

My son Humphrey and I never were together in the cabin or below. We kept watch in turn, we ate our food alone, and we made shift to do with so little sleep that I have often since wondered that men so weak did not sink under the load of deprivation and anxiety.

On the 6th of March we sighted a smack, the master of which ran along side, after we had put out our colors, and asked for the news. Perceiving him to come on board, I learned that he belonged to Castletown, a fishing village in the bay of Bantry, in the kingdom of Ireland, and being taken by the honesty of his countenance I confided with him and his mate to ship with me as far as Plymouth, whither I had made up my mind to take the galleon, for I would not trust myself in the channel as we were, seeing that even if I had not chanced upon bad weather I should have been at the mercy of the first king's cruiser that might choose to take me in tow, upon the plea that I could not manage the ship, and I had no mind to share my prize with all the world.

The fishermen, therefore, to the number of six, came on board upon my engagement that upon arriving at Plymouth I would pay to each of them 100 guineas, and to the master 200 for his pains, which engagement I most faithfully observed. And so, with their smack in tow, we made our way up channel and without further adventure dropped anchor on April 21 in Plymouth sound, very weary of our voyage, yet happy withal in having come so well out of it.

Upon anchoring we entered so small a cove that no ship of so great a burden having yet been taken since the beginning of the war. Nor were there many finer ships even in the king's navy, but the countenance of the great admiral, the officers of the fleet having banded up and made an examination of the galleon, it was known—which I myself had not till that moment suspected—that we had in her bullion and pieces of eight to the value of 2388,000, besides a costly cargo of tobacco and other produce of the West Indies.

Hear Admiral his Royal Highness the Duke of York himself paid me the honor of a visit, coming in his barge from the Princess Amelia, and a week later I was commanded to attend upon King George, who was pleased most graciously to offer my son Humphrey a commission in the navy and me the honor of a knighthood for what he deemed to call our unequalled exploit of taking and bringing home the galleon. As for the knighthood, I had no mind for it, although the N. Senora del Carmen provided me with money enough worthily to support that dignity. For the commission, Humphrey thankfully accepted it, and afterward, as I have said, fell honorably in his country's service. Poor lad! I have often wished since that he had refused the commission and I had accepted the knighthood, for then it might have happened that he might have lived to inherit the wealth which is but a sorry burden to a childless old man.

The Misery never again anchored in an English port after getting rid of us. Morton, the leader of the mutineers, cruised with some success for two or three months about the islands. He took a Spanish brig, the S. Isidro, and several smaller vessels, but was at last chased by the Spanish frigate Thetis, and to avoid capture ran ashore. The crew, being unable to reach the land by reason of the surf, were taken off by the frigate boats and made prisoners.

A fortnight later, on June 2, the Thetis, after a sharp action, was captured by the English frigate Alarm, Captain James Alms, which formed part of Admiral Sir George Pocock's fleet destined for the reduction of the Havana. The English prisoners on board the Thetis endeavored to prove that I, as well as they, had been engaged with the Spaniards, but the admiral, the Misery having by this time been reported to Sir George from England, he, on the day after the capitulation of the town, hanged every one of the pirates on board his flagship, the Namur.

This I learned from Captain the Hon. A. J. Hervey, who was sent by the Earl of Dragon with dispatches, and who on his passage had the good fortune to take a French ship valued at 230,000. He was so polite as to bring the intelligence in person, and I am not ashamed to say that I was very pleased to know that the rascals had got their deserts.—William Laird Cowie.

Not a Popul, but a Master. Despite "a nipping and an eager air," that reddened the noses and moistened the eyes of the loungers in City Hall park that afternoon, the bright sunshine and green grass had a singularly summer-like appearance, and when a well grown, wheezy, green frog hopped from the foot of a tree into the full glare of public observation, a farmer's boy, "doing" the city for a day, would not have considered him greatly out of place had he seen a French bootblack, many of whom had been seen before, he was a curiosity of the first water.

Some of them said he was a legged snake, and others, who had read mythological literature with more zeal than discretion, were inclined to think that he was a very young dragon. A sparrow policeman protested that he was only a frog, and taking him in his gloved hand, he announced his intention of dropping him into the full basin of the fountain behind the postoffice.

"He's a-going to drown him!" yelled a boy, and exclamations of pity and dismay were heard on all sides.

The policeman was incoercible, and the frog was plunged into the water. Merrily he swam around with the fine old fashioned breast stroke and strong rear kick of his kind, while the crowd of boys looked at him in stupefied amazement.

"Broke!" the policeman that chap to swim!" said one of them at last.

"Well, why didn't he show him the overhand tip while he was about it?" replied another contemptuously.

"Perhaps," said an old man, "the frog did the teachin'. We used to think so when I was a boy; but that's a long time ago."

It was a remark pregnant with reflection, and as the frog held it he dived into the cold recesses of the basin and was seen no more.—New York Sun.

"Save Me from My Friends." This saying is commonly attributed to Voltaire, who at Ferney, when pestered by professions of business friendship, said: "I pray God to deliver me from my friends; I will defend myself from my enemies." The thought, however, is attributed by the French to Marcial Villars, while Kant declares it is an Italian proverb, and a German collection of proverbial wisdom gives it in a modified form. Antiquus, one of the generals of Alexander the Great, offered sacrifice to the gods, and the gods might protect him from his friends, and at the same time declaring he could look after his enemies.

Churchill has something of the idea in the lines: Greatly his foes he dreads, but most his friends; He hurts the most who lavishly commend.

—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

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