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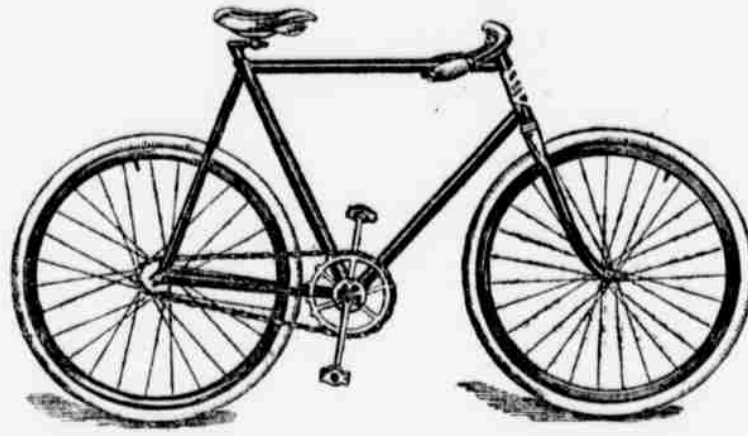
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The Skipper of the Phantom Tug.

From Answers.

I.
A dark-eyed girl was standing on the starboard side of a cutter rigged smack. Her gaze was fixed upon a small black object that danced on the choppy waters a boat's length ahead. A young seaman was leaning over the helm. He was dividing his attention between the girl and the black object.
"Ready?" said he.
"Ay!"
She had held her brown, rounded arms to the bows and adjusted her red cap that held in check her unruly hair, and she now bent over the bulwark, her hand outstretched in readiness to seize the floating thing as the smack hurried by.
"A black bottle," she cried, and the next moment she had it in her grasp and was holding it aloft, the water dripping from her arm. "Look, Stevie! I wonder if there's anything inside?"
"Stop a bit, Lottie; we'll soon see." Stephen Armstrong fixed the tiller and then sat down upon the deck at Lottie's side. The splendor of the sunset fell slantingly upon their eager faces. The man looked at the bottle and then at the girl.
"It's tightly corked," said he.
"Then he held it up between his bright eye and the golden light.
"It's a letter!" said Lottie, peering over Armstrong's shoulder through the glass. "Why don't you break it?"
He struck the bottle against the bulwark and a slip of paper fell upon the deck at their feet. At this moment an edge of the tarpaulin that lay across the bow was cautiously raised and a red-bearded man looked out at them with drowsy eyes.
"The girl picked up the crumpled slip of paper, hurriedly unfolded it, and read as follows:
"In another half-hour I shall be drowned. Here I'm a-lyin', drove ashore in a dense fog on the East Saltwin Sands, with a fresh breeze a-blowing from the southeast. She was drove on to these sands at 4.30 a. m., about low water. The tide is rising now and breaking over my craft, and I'm alone aboard. The man what finds this document I solemnly make him my sole heir. In the cupboard of the aft cabin he'll find a pile of golden sovereigns. For I'm an old miser—God pardon me—and I've hoarded my thousands for no earthly good. A just punishment has fallen upon me at last.
"Ben Tarbuck, Captain."
Armstrong stared at his sweetheart, Lottie Sanderson, in blank amazement. For a moment he was unable to utter a word. At last he whispered:
"It's the phantom tug—hush!" and he glanced toward the tarpaulin. "No word to anyone and our fortune's made."
He buttoned up the scrap of paper in the breast pocket of his pilot coat, and cast the broken bottle overboard. Then he resumed his place at the helm, and the smack went lumbering on its tacking course toward the shore.
The man beneath the tarpaulin lay seemingly sound asleep until the smack neared the entrance to Saltwin harbor, when Armstrong shouted:
"Belay there, Redshaw! Harbor lights!"
The night had nearly closed in.

II.
As soon as the smack had run into the small harbor and brought alongside the stone quay, Armstrong went ashore with his girl, leaving Redshaw aboard. They made their way through the town, and entering a lane behind the shoreward sand dunes, presently came to the light of a cottage where a light shined in the window as if to welcome them.
"Lottie," said the seaman, "the Warren farm's for sale. I was just-a thinking what a snug home it'd be for me and you."
"Ah, that was granddaddy's once," said the girl, "and now I come to think of it, granny prophesied years ago that the farm would be mine some day; and she's a wonderful gift of prophesying, ain't she, Stevie?"
Lottie had slipped her hand carelessly into Stevie's arm, and now talked of all the surprising things they would accomplish if this dream of wealth were only realized.
Presently they reached the cottage door, and Lottie, raising the latch, led the way into a well-furnished kitchen, where a fire glowed on a cheerful blaze. An old woman was crouching in an armchair beside the hearth. She turned her blind eyes searchingly toward them. Lottie ran forward, and bending down greeted her tenderly.
As Armstrong took his seat at the table, where the girl made all haste to lay supper, the young couple exchanged a glance and a nod.
"Granny," the seaman began, "I've brought you a bit of news—strange news what me and Lottie's just picked up at sea."
Granny Sanderson's face became animated. She craned her neck toward the speaker and said:
"Good news, I reckon! It's in the 'ing of your voice, Stephen, plain as be. What is't, my lad?"
Armstrong hastened to relate the incident of the black bottle, and then he read the amazing document which had come to light.
The woman listened intently, and when he had concluded sat silent for a while. At last she said:
"Who knows o' this?"

III.
Redshaw lingered aboard the smack after Lottie Sanderson and Armstrong had gone.
He sat on deck smoking his short clay pipe and looking yearningly to seaward. As soon as it was fairly dusk, however, he began to bestir himself, lighted a ship's lantern, and collected together a few articles needful for a short sea trip. These articles he carried on board a skiff almost alongside. Then he loosened the ropes, adjusted the oars noiselessly and glided out of the harbor into the open sea. He now hoisted sail and turned his boat's head in the direction of Saltwin Sands.
The wind had freshened and the skiff rose and fell and ran forward over the dark waters with increasing speed. At first the clouds overhead were dense and lowering, but scarce had Redshaw got out of harbor when the night showed signs of brightening and the curious moon occasionally looked down upon the little craft out of black, ragged clouds.
The gleam lit up Redshaw's face, revealing a look of intense greed. Once or twice the man glanced over his shoulder like one who half dreads pursuit; but his more frequent look was directed to seaward with an untiring search.
An hour—two hours went by, when a faint ray of light fell athwart the water a short distance ahead.
At the same instant Redshaw sprang to his feet and peered eagerly over the bow. Presently the boat's keel grated upon a sandbank, bringing the skiff to a gradual stop. The man found himself in two feet of water, and with his seaman's knowledge of the bearings there was no reason to doubt that his boat had run upon the sandbank for which he had designedly steered.
It was low tide, and the moment he had made the skiff secure, he began to wade through the surf toward the light which now glimmered hard by. He soon grew convinced that it came from a ship's cabin. Suddenly he stopped.
"Wait a bit!"
He pulled a bowie knife from his pocket, opened the dagger-shaped blade, and clinched the handle between his teeth. Then he stepped forward with a look of purpose. The light soon proved to be one that came from a cabin window on the pier side of an old tugboat. Redshaw caught at a bit of rope, and hauled himself hand over hand up the boat's side until he could peer into the cabin.
A strange sight met his glance. The light of a wax lamp fell upon a small, wrinkled man in a pilot cap.
He stood in water up to his knees, and he laughed with a shivering sort of laugh, and plunged his hands into the water and fished up handfuls of sovereigns that glittered the more through being wet. The old skipper scooped over each handful, as he flung the coins with a clinking sound upon a shelf in a cupboard, on a level with his head.
Redshaw clung to the rope, staring like one spell-bound at the weird figure. Then he climbed noiselessly on deck, and crept round to the cabin door. He found it open. With stealthy tread he descended the ladder, the bowie knife now behind his back, tightly clutched in his right hand, a villainous look in his eyes.
But of a sudden—at the very moment that Redshaw crouched down with intent to make his spring—the grim old mariner fixed his glittering eye fearlessly upon him.
The man paused, once more completely aghast, deprived of all volition.
"Ah! You've come, have you—come to claim it—my gold?" cried the skipper, as he shivered and laughed again. "No, no—I bawn't dead yet, mate. The tide's been and turned, just in the nick o' time. It were a washing clean over the deck at nightfall, when I sent that 'ere bottle a-drift, and I thought as how I was a drowned man. But it's been raining down ever since, and the tide has, mate—running out, till it's give me the chance to touch my gold—touch it once more!"
He broke into a wilder fit of shivering laughter now, and bending down,

"Nobody," said Armstrong, "cept us three what are here together."
"Nobody? Was you and Lottie alone aboard?"
"Redshaw was aboard, of course. But he don't count," said Armstrong; "sides, he was asleep, weren't he, Lottie?"
Granny Sanderson shook her head absently.
"There's them what sleeps with one eye open," said she. "I knows 'em."
"What do you mean?" retorted Armstrong. "My mate arn't one o' that sort! Whatever's put such a thought into your head?"
"Ah, my lad! I've allus held as you was too confiding. It's in your natur'. Now, lookee here! If you takes my advice you'll not lose a minute putting to sea. Why, bless me," said she, "it wouldn't surprise me if Redshaw were there afore you. Mark me!"
Stephen Armstrong had pushed away his plate while Mrs. Sanderson still spoke. He now rose hastily and said:
"I'm not afeerd. I've a mind to take Redshaw alonger me tonight. Why not? I'll need a hand, I'm thinking."
"Go alone," said Granny Sanderson. "Leastways, don't you trust Redshaw in this business, Stevie, if you hope to steer back into Saltwin harbor alive!"
Armstrong turned angrily away and put his hand upon the latch. Lottie sprang toward him.
"Let me come with you!" said she.
"No!" the woman interposed, rising and taking a step gropingly toward them. "I forbid it. You stay alonger me."
Armstrong went out, enraged beyond measure at the thought that his old mate, with whom he had put to sea almost daily, in fair weather and foul, for ten years and more, should be suspected of treachery. He had always put implicit trust in Redshaw, though he could not deny that the man had his faults. He was given to drinking at times more than was good for him, and his mates were not always the men Armstrong would have chosen. Still he had never known Redshaw to act in a way that he could call underhand, and he would not mistrust him now.
He had reached the edge of the sand dunes, where he could gain a clear view of the moonlit sea. He cast a glance toward the harbor.
"What!" the exclamation came like a cry from his lips, and the next moment he was running in wild haste toward the shore.

plunged both hands into the water. At the same instant Redshaw regained his will power and leaped forward. But as he lifted his knife with the thought to strike, a masterful grip was put upon his wrist, and he was thrown back upon the ladder, crushed and stunned by the fall.
When Redshaw recovered consciousness he found himself lying in the bow of the little skiff, still at anchor upon Saltwin Sands. A gray, foggy dawn was breaking over a calm sea. He raised himself upon his elbow and looked around. A dismantled craft was drifting before his eyes upon the flood tide. Her stern was turned directly toward him, and upon it he read, painted in large, white letters:
"PHANTOM TUG,"
as it vanished into the mist.

It was Armstrong who had saved Ben Tarbuck from his mate's treacherous blow. The Phantom was subsequently towed into Saltwin Harbor. But Tarbuck never fully recovered from that night upon the sands; and before Lottie had become Stephen Armstrong's wife the skipper died, leaving the bulk of his wealth to his preserver. Redshaw never showed his face inside Saltwin harbor again; though, had he acted honestly, he might possibly have shared his mate's good luck; but in his over-reaching after Tarbuck's gold, he had lost all.

PAST WAR SCARES.

Historic Instances Wherein Uncle Sam Deemed It Expedient to Put on His Fighting Boots.

From the Philadelphia Press.
The United States as an organized government has been in existence 109 years only, but during that time it has fought two foreign wars, one war on its own soil and been subjected to a number of war scares. With the wars everybody is familiar. The war scares, however, are not so well known. They began soon after the government was organized and have continued to occur since with more or less frequency. The first war scare was the result of the French Revolution. The French government formed on the fall of the monarchy wished the sympathy and support of the United States government and sent to this country as its minister the well-known Genet. His design was to form an offensive and defensive alliance between France and the United States and embroil this country into a war with all the enemies of the French republic. The enthusiastic reception given Genet by the people of this country, who were eager to express their sympathy for a nation struggling for liberty, turned his head and he imagined that he could override the government and take whatever liberties he chose. He had privateers fitted out in the ports of the United States and the British merchant vessels captured by these privateers were confiscated by French consuls in this country, notwithstanding the neutrality proclamation issued by this government. It was only the firmness and decision of Washington, whose demand for the recall of Genet was promptly complied with that saved the country from a war with England at that time.

This is the best known war scare this country has experienced, probably because it was the first and one of the most acute. There were two other French war scares. The second one arose from the delay France showed in making compensation for the American vessels seized in French ports during the time of the first Napoleon. The controversy over these seizures dragged along until near the close of the second presidential term of General Jackson when he preemptorily demanded reparation. The two countries were dangerously near to war on this occasion and diplomatic relations between them were stopped for a time. But England mediated and the war cloud blew over. The interference of France in Mexico during the war for the Union was a cause of great irritation to this country, but beyond protest nothing was done until rebellion in the Southern states ended. Then an emphatic demand for the withdrawal of the French was made and had it not been complied with war would have resulted. Louis Napoleon saw the need of prompt action and quickly withdrew the French army from Mexico and another war scare was dissipated.

British war scares have been frequent, but with the exception of the War of 1812 they have all ended without hostilities. One of the first of these was caused by the refusal of England to surrender the Western forts as agreed upon the Revolutionary War ended. But this difficulty was settled by the Jay treaty. England and the United States were very near to war in 1807 when the British warship Leopard fired upon and boarded the United States frigate Chesapeake. This trouble was quieted by English disavowing the act and making reparation. The settlement of the Oregon boundary line loomed up on the horizon for a time as a probable cause of war but the question was settled amicably in 1846. Great Britain's course during the war for the Union was the occasion for much unfriendly feeling in this country. The fitting out of the Alabama and other privateers in English ports gave rise to what were known as the Alabama claims, which might have caused a conflict had not England's aid damages to the amount of \$15,500,000. The Venezuela war scare growing out of Great Britain's claim to territory in South America is too recent to need explanation.
Spanish war scares were numerous as long as Spain held possession of any part of the North American continent. Her hold on the mouth of the Mississippi river was a constant irritation to the American people until Louisiana was sold to this country, and later her possession of Florida and the disputes as to its boundaries were a perennial source of wars. For causing some of these scares the people of the country are not wholly free, for the South was not over-scrupulous about observing Spanish rights. Since Spain's hold on the continent was released Cuba has been a fertile source of war fevers. In 1854 the famous Ostend manifesto advising the Pierce administration to buy Cuba from Spain might easily have led to war. The Cuban rebellions have also brought the United States and Spain near to war. Some delicate questions had to be settled during the Cuban insurrection beginning in 1895 and much patience exercised to prevent war. The notorious Virginia affair in 1873 almost precipitated a conflict.

Valued Sarcasm.

Foreign Count—They tell me there are a great many cases of insanity among the men in your country.
American—It is useless to deny it. A great many of our men do marry for love.—Chicago News.

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