

The Dead Man's Boots

"It was just this way—have you any tobacco with you?—It was just the way I am telling you. I don't know if he was a German or an Englishman, or he may have been Dutch, for he couldn't talk, at least not that I know of."

As usual there were several people talking at once in the little fisherman's cabin, but when Old Yverson began the others stopped to listen. One of them shoved himself along the bench, saying, "What is it, Ole?"

"You might have listened, and you would have known," said Ole, "but have you any tobacco?"

He had. Ole got his tobacco and filled his pipe. Then he began at the beginning again.

"It was the dead man that washed ashore here, what we call a beach-washer. It is a long time ago, thirty years I should say, and at that time there was codfish right outside here. I was out in the boat with Jens Split and a fellow called Hans, who went to America and was drowned there afterward. Jens and I were standing aft and hauling at the nets, and Hans was rowing. All at once the lines tightened."

"New haul away," I said.

"She's heavy," said Jens. "What the deuce is it?"

"Haul away," I said, "and you'll find out."

"He pulled, and I got the trough ready, for I thought it was a very large fish."

"Look at him," said Jens, who was pulling with all his might. I turned my head, and there was first the crook of an arm with a hand rising out of the water, then the breast and a bit of the chin with a beard under it. Then the chin and the breast went down again, for there was another hook that had caught the breeches, and then a pair of boots knocked against the side of the boat.

"What became of him?" said Jens, who had loosed the lines.

I told him to pull in again, but carefully. Then the thing came up for the second time, stiff and long, standing almost straight up and down in the water.

"Let him go," cried Hans from his place.

"Shall we let him go?" asked Jens, who was still holding the line.

"I looked at him and then I looked at the boat, and I said: 'After all, he is a human being.'

"Well, we got him to the edge of the boat and pulled him in. A great deal of water ran from him, and he was a little hard to handle.

"There he sat. The sun was low, and it shone right into his face. While we were pulling at the lines and every once in awhile took a fish from the hook, we could not help turning our heads to look at him, sitting there with his face turned on us.

"Hans, who was rowing, got a queer itching feeling in the back of his head. He shoved himself back and forth and every little while he looked forward over his shoulder.

"What are you looking at, Hans?" I asked.

"Hans did not answer, but began to whistle.

"A fisherman doesn't whistle in his boat," I said.

"Jens said: 'It seems to me the fellow over there is staring at us.'

"Nonsense," I said; "how can a dead man stare?"

"A little later Jens again said that the dead man was staring at us, and Hans began to shuffle again. Then, just as we had pulled in the last part of the lines, Hans bent down and grabbed a large starfish from the bottom of the boat, turned and slapped it right in the face of the beach-washer.

"You shouldn't have done that, Hans," I said.

"Perhaps not," he said, "but you hadn't needed to take him on board. Every time I have looked over my shoulder I have seen him staring at me, and it isn't a pleasant sensation at all, especially not when you feel it in the back of your head."

"Well, at sunset we got in to the landing place, and there were people standing there, and they cried to us: 'What kind of a fellow have you got there?'

"We didn't answer before we had turned the boat. Then we jumped out and pulled it in, and the others lent a hand, for we always help each other where there is no harbor. When we had the keel upon the sand I said to those who were standing around: 'Now you can see for yourselves.'

"They all wanted to know, and old Niel's cook asked if he had a watch or anything like that.

"We never thought of that," I said, and tried to unbutton his jacket, but the pilot-master told me that I must not do that before the police or anyway the customs collector had been there.

"I didn't suppose there was any duty on such a one," said Hans, lifting him a little. People began to laugh, and that made Hans so frisky that he began to do all kinds of monkey tricks with him.

"I don't like to see you do that, and I think you will be sorry for it," I said.

"Then Hans left him alone. The controller of customs came steaming like a horse with the coat of his uniform buttoned away over his stomach, he was in such a hurry. It was not often that there was anything for him to stick his nose in.

"What merchandise have you on board?" he cried.

"You can see for yourself, sir," I said. But Jens had thrown a tarpauln over the man in the boat when the pilot-master said that we didn't dare touch him. The controller of customs came right up to the boat, snorting like a whale, sneezing and spitting and wiping his face with the stiff red handkerchief that was always hanging out behind his uniform.

"Well, my men, what kind of pickings have you got to-day?" he said quite pleasantly.

"Nonsense, Ole. I suppose you have been smuggling a little, but when the king gets what is coming to him and you show the proper respect for the law, there is no harm in that."

"Nor was there. So the controller of customs pulled away the tarpauln and there he stood with it in his hand looking at the stranger in the boat. The beach-washer didn't say a word. He had a good excuse. The man of law didn't say anything, either; he kicked the tarpauln over him again. That was not particularly polite, I thought, for he was a human being, after all, even if he was dead.

"The controller of customs said we must put a watch over him and send for the police or the town judge or the district judge or the magistrate or the clerk or the deuce knows whom else to see that the man was quite dead and everything else as it should be that he did not bring the cholera, and if he had love letters or mortgages by which he could tell who he was.

"So we kept watch over him with two muskets and a sword in a sheath. As evening came people disappeared from the beach. About 9:30 the controller of customs came along to inspect us before he went to bed. I was the oldest, so I had the sword and made the other two stand at attention with the muskets when he hoove in sight, and that pleased him. I asked him if I might send Hans to the inn for something in a bottle.

"In a bottle—the watch? Are you crazy?" he cried.

"Well, all right," I said quietly. "Then we won't, but the night is long and chilly at this time of the year."

"When you are on watch you don't feel the cold," he said.

"The minute he was out of the way Jens and Hans stuck their muskets down in the boat where the beach-washer was sitting and got ready to go.

"Where are you off to?" I said, holding out my sword in front of them.

"Take away that butter spoon," said Hans. "You might know I am going for something to keep us awake."

"When he came back we divided up so that the two of us had watch below, while the third walked up and down with the sword. I took the first watch, and the other two snuggled on the lee side of a sand dune and covered up with a piece of a sail. It would have been more comfortable in the boat under the tarpauln, but somehow they did not feel like it on account of the stranger fellow there.

"The moon rose and shone on the water and on the beach and on the tarpauln that covered the beach-washer. I walked up and down with the sword under my arm and my hands in my pockets. I looked out to sea and wondered about what kind of wind we would get in the morning, and then I looked at the boat and the fellow under the tarpauln, and I thought of the troubles of this life, especially for the sailor, who is never sure of the end when he is at the beginning. The more I thought of it, the more my task seemed to weigh on me, and I was glad Hans had got the bottle filled so I could get something to hearen me up. I went over to him and pulled the bottle out of his coat pocket. I took a swallow and was going to return when Hans opened his eyes and said:

"Help yourself; don't be bashful."

"I thought you slept, Hans," I said.

"It's a cold night. How do you like your bed?"

"It's confounded uncomfortable," said Hans, "and it's all on account of that beach-washer. Why didn't you let him go, as I told you to?"

"But Lord bless you, Hans, I've got human feelings."

"If he could only do us some good," said Hans, "and then he sat straight up, and we looked at each other. "Do you know what I have been lying here and thinking of?" said Hans.

"May be I can guess. Do you know what I am thinking of, Hans?"

"Not his boots, is it?" said Hans. He got up and began to slap his arms together.

"We went over to the boat, and Hans lifted the tarpauln. "They are good boots," he said.

"Don't."

"I would take my oath that no one has noticed whether he had boots or not," said Hans.

"I went over to Jens to see if he was still sleeping, and when I came back to the boat and saw the boots wet and shiny in the moonlight, I don't deny that I thought they were good boots.

"No, it won't work," said I. "He is a human being, even if he is dead, and his clothes are his own, and when we take them we are stealing."

"Is he a human being?" cried Hans. "No, a human being is one that is alive like you and me. When you're dead you're nothing—dust and clay, as the minister says, and nothing can't possibly own anything."

"I stood and pondered over this for a few moments, but I couldn't get my bearings.

"See here," said Hans. "If we took his watch or his papers—if he has any—that would be stealing. Those things belong to the big-bugs that are coming to-morrow to poke their noses into all that. But a beach-washer must be buried in the clothes he is wearing. If you don't know that much,

I do, and why should we let the worms eat those good new boots?"

"I rubbed the back of my head and then I said: 'But who should have the boots, you or I? It wouldn't do any good to divide them, surely.'

"Hans looked at me. "We might raffle them." He picked up a handful of pebbles. "Odd or even?"

"No, I don't want to," I said, and left him.

"Then I want to," said Hans. "Give me your bottle, Hans."

"I took a good swallow, and then we went over to the boat and tackled him. Hans took off the tarpauln, and I grabbed his leg.

"Do you suppose we can get it off?" I whispered to Hans.

"What in thunder are you doing?" said Jens behind us.

"We both jumped up and looked at Jens, who was sitting up on the sand. "It won't do," I whispered to Hans. "Jens is as leaky as a new tub."

"We are looking at the beach-washer," I said.

"I went over to Hans, but he was just as scared as I was. He lay down by the side of Jens without saying anything. When I went to put the tarpauln over the beach-washer again the moon was shining right into his face just as the sun had done before, and it seemed to me as if he was looking at me and saying, "You thief, you thief." It made me feel very queer, for I had never in my life before thought of robbing any one or what belonged to him, nor have I done it since, but this seemed a peculiar case, for, after all, he had no use for the boots. Anyway I bent over him and I said:

"I am sorry, shipmate, for what I meant to do. You keep your boots, and good-night to you. If the cod-fishing is tolerable this year I guess I will make enough to get a pair of new boots without stealing from a dead comrade."

"Then I put back the tarpauln, and I felt somehow as if he must be resting better, now that he was sure of keeping what belonged to him.

"When my watch was over I waked Hans. "What about the boots?" he said.

"What God has united let no man put asunder," said I. And I believe that made an impression on him, for there were no boots lost that night. When the controller of customs came in the morning we stood at attention in the bright sunlight.

"Anything happened on the watch?" he asked.

"Nothing worth mentioning," I answered, and Hans and I looked at each other with our tongues in our cheeks and one eye pinched together.

"At noon the magistrate came in a carriage with a clerk and some gentlemen with him. The magistrate pointed to us and explained that we were fishermen, and one of the gentlemen took a watch glass from his pocket and stuck it in his eye and stared at us. The magistrate asked questions and explained to the gentlemen, who seemed very fine gentlemen indeed. I thought they must be foreigners, since they had to have everything explained, but they spoke Danish just like the rest of us, so I suppose they had never seen fishermen before. One of them wrote something in a book, so I suppose he had a poor memory.

"We turned all his pockets, but found nothing but a leather purse so wet that it was falling to pieces. The magistrate put gloves on and turned it over. There was a German bank-note worth about seven Danish dollars, a piece of an English letter which the magistrate said there was no sense in and some Dutch copper coins.

"That wasn't much," said the magistrate, and it wasn't. Then he gave orders about the funeral and drove away.

"In the afternoon the beach-washer was buried on the beach. The curate threw three shovelfuls of dirt at him, and we fishermen took our caps off and looked down and said nothing. I remember feeling glad that he had his boots, though perhaps they would not do him much good in the place where he was going to. Then the curate went away, but it seemed to me a pity that a poor shipwrecked sailor should be sent away without a word. Jens was pulling at his breeches and looking around, and I could see that he was thinking of the same thing, so I said, "Lift your rudder."

"So Jens stepped forward with his cap in his hand and said: "Listen to me, boys. I may get in trouble for this, but I am going to say it anyway that I think he who is anchored here ought to take with him a good word from those who towed him into harbor and from those who saw him made fast to the wharf. A farmer has the bed where he is to give up his breath right before his eyes all his life, but a sailor or a fisherman never knows where he will lie. And he who is moored here we don't know where he came from, but we can give him a kind thought and maybe a little wooden cross and a fence around his grave if we each do our part. And when I or Hans or Ole or Pete get into trouble and are drifted on a strange shore we hope that other sailors or fishermen will do the same to us as we are doing to him—though we don't know who he is and may never get thanks for it; for that is the way it ought to be between fishermen. And now may God rest his soul."

"Amen," said the pilot-master, and we all repeated "Amen."

"So he was buried. And Jens always got along very well, and the year after Hans was drowned off the American coast. And I have been dragging along with my rheumatism ever since. But I have often thought of the beach-washer and his boots!"—San Francisco Argonaut.

A GAME OF BALL.

Maybe You Can Tell Just What the Reporter Meant.

The possibilities of the English language have frequently been taxed to describe the great American game of baseball, but for striking illustration this from the Herald, of Quincy, Illinois, has rarely been equaled.

"The glass-armed toy soldiers of this town were fed to the pigs yesterday by the vadeverous Indian grave-robbers from Omaha. The flabby, one-lunged Reubens who represent the Gem City in the reckless rush for the baseball pennant had their shirts toasted by the basilisk-eyed cattle-drivers from the West. They stood around with gaping eyeballs, like a hen on a hot nail, and suffered the grizzly yawns of Omaha to run the bases until their necks were long with thirst. Hickey had more errors than Con's Financial School, and led the rheumatic procession to the morgue. The Quincys were full of straw and scrap-iron. They couldn't hit a brick-wagon with a pick-ax, and ran bases like pallbearers at a funeral. If three-base hits were growing on the back of every man's neck they couldn't reach 'em with a feather duster. It looked as if the Amalgamated Union of South American Hoodoos were in session for work in the thirty-third degree. The geezers stood about and whistled for help, and were so weak they couldn't lift a glass of beer if it had been all foam. Everything was yellow, rocky and whangblasted, like a stigmatose full of doggie-gammon. The game was whiskered and frost-bitten. The Omahos were bad enough, but the Quincy Brown Sox had their fins sewed up until they couldn't hold a crazy quilt unless it was tied around their necks."

AHEAD OF TIME.



"You told me the boat for the island left at four o'clock, and I've waited now till after five!"

"Yes, but she doesn't start running again till next summer."

Poor Uncle Ed.

A Baltimore man was recently showing his nice new opera hat to his little nephew, and when he caught the top-piece to spring open three or four times the youngster was delighted.

A few days thereafter the uncle, during a visit to the same household, brought with him a silk hat of the shiny, non-collapsible kind. When he was about to leave the house he encountered the aforesaid youngster running down the hall with what looked like a black accordion.

"Uncle Ed," observed the boy, "this one goes awfully hard. I had to sit on it, but even then I couldn't get it more than half-shut."

What Ruined Adam.

A young English suffragette tells the following incident that recently happened at a meeting in the Scotch Highlands.

Speeches had been made to a large crowd. Questions had been replied to, amid applause. Imbecile young men making remarks about minding babies and mending socks had been silenced. Then, just as there was a temporary lull before the putting of a resolution, a great buccic Scotch voice from the back of the crowd rasped slowly in with the inquiry, obviously the result of prolonged rumination:

"Wha made a mess of Adam?"

Could Have Been Worse.

Damocles was intently watching the sword suspended over his head by a single hair.

"Oh, well," he chuckled, "it might be worse. Just suppose my wife had found that long golden hair on my toga."

Whereupon he ate his meal with great composure and hilarity.

The Honorable Milkman.

Mrs. Youngbride—Mrs. Smith says there is lots of cream on her milk bottles every morning. Why is there never any on yours? The Milkman—I'm too honest, lady, that's why. I fill my bottles so full that there ain't never no room left for cream.

A Lot Anyway.

First Small Boy—My favior is very rich.

Second Small Boy—How much has he got?

First Small Boy—It's either a thousand or a million dollars, I forget which.

Blundered.

"He's always getting himself in wrong."

"What's he done now?"

"Told that young mother, when she showed him her baby, that his slate had had three just like it."

AROUND THE FARM

Building Up the Soil.

During farmers' week in Burlington, Vt., says a correspondent of the American Cultivator, an expert of the United States department of agriculture, L. B. Dodge, spoke on the management of the dairy farm. He said New England farms did not produce as heavily as they should. This he attributed to lack of rotation of crops and to heavy feeding and cropping of pastures and meadows without adequate return of plant food; also to the waste of stable manure and its improper application.

A good rotation is corn, grain, clover. Hay land should be top dressed with stable manure, and best results are obtained by applying this little and often. Where land remains in grass a long time a light seeding of clover from time to time is beneficial, reseeding in summer after the hay crop has been removed.

Pastures may be top dressed and should not be grazed too early in spring nor too heavily. Where pastures can be plowed it is advisable to plow and reseed occasionally.

The raising of clover, corn and forage crops furnishes a larger amount of protein for cattle, and less feed will need to be purchased.

The more fodder the more cattle can be kept, and there will be an increased amount of fertilizer to apply to the land.

Crops should not be sold that will carry a large amount of fertilizing elements off the farm.

Feeding Calves in Summer.

In warm weather calves should be kept in during the daytime and turned out during the evening, so as to avoid the hot sun and the flies. Whole or chopped oats should be fed or a mixture of whole and chopped oats. About a cupful twice a day for an ordinary sized calf that is on good pasture will be sufficient. For fall pasture until the roots are harvested there is nothing equal to green corn run through the cutting box and mixed with some chopped oats.

The main point in feeding is never to allow calves to stop growing and to keep beef animals always in good flesh. In feeding calves, as in every system of feeding, the extremes of over and under feeding are to be avoided. Continuous, regular, liberal feeding always brings the most profit and the best practical results.—D. C. Anderson.

Poultry Jottings.

A lack of clean, sharp grit is responsible for half the cases of bowel disease.

If eggs are the object don't overfeed on meat, but allow all the green food the hens will consume.

Poultry houses and runs that are kept clean the year around, disinfected often and never overcrowded with fowls are seldom infested with lice or other vermin.

A tablespoonful of sweet oil poured into the bird's mouth will often relieve a case of crop bound. After giving the oil gently knead the crop with the hand until it is softened.

An early morning meal will prevent many of the hens from stealing their nests out. The earlier the meal the better. Many of the hens will then visit the nests before starting out to forage.

Sugar Beets as a Stock Feed.

Stockman have long been of the opinion that a ration of mangels or sugar beets in some way causes kidney or bladder stones when fed for any length of time. To shed some light on this subject the Iowa experiment station has been carrying on some experiments in feeding mangels and sugar beets to rams. The results of these experiments show conclusively that such feeding is attended with considerable danger and is almost sure to prove fatal if continued for any considerable period of time. For short fattening periods there is no particular danger, and the roots make a valuable addition to the ration.—Country Gentleman.

Amount of Grain on Pasture.

Growing or fattening pigs cannot be produced satisfactorily on pasture alone, but a grain ration is necessary. The Montana experiment station found that hogs fed a full grain ration on pasture gained on an average 1.39 pounds per hog per day and required 412 pounds of grain for 100 pounds of gain. Hogs fed a half ration of grain gained .98 pound per hog per day and required 291 pounds of grain for 100 pounds of gain. Thus it will be seen that the hogs fed a full grain ration on pasture made more rapid gains, but consumed much more grain for every 100 pounds of gain.

Spray For Potato Blight.

Potato blight is often very destructive to Irish potatoes. The plants should be sprayed every three weeks during growing season where blight is prevalent. A good formula for this purpose is copper sulphate (blue vitrol) four pounds, lime five pounds, water fifty gallons. Paris green may be added at the rate of one pound to fifty gallons of the mixture, when potato beetles and flea beetles will be destroyed as well as blight.—Farm and Ranch.

Treatment For Limberneck.

Limberneck in chickens and hens is usually caused from eating poisoned food, such as spray mixtures, decayed meat, etc. It can be more easily prevented than cured. It results from paralysis of the nerves caused by trouble in the intestines. Give the fowls gruel made from flaxseed or white of an egg with milk seasoned slightly with ginger.—Farm and Ranch.

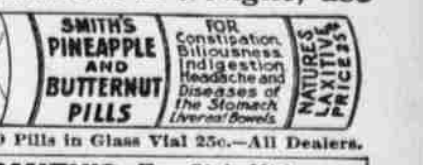
How's Your Stomach?

Undue enlargement of the stomach indicates a dangerous condition. It is often caused by overeating and drinking. The muscles which propel the food to the intestines become weak. The food accumulates, is improperly digested, and the stomach is distended to enormous size. An inactive liver is one of the causes, and constipation and nerve trouble is sure to result.

Smith's Pineapple and Butternut Pills give tone to the weak propelling muscles of the stomach and intestines. They produce a natural movement of the bowels and avoid the formation of gas, which, if retained, produces symptoms of self-poisoning.

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OFFICE OF THE HONESDALE CONSOLIDATED LIGHT, HEAT AND POWER COMPANY—SPECIAL NOTICE TO STOCK-HOLDERS.

The Board of Directors of this Company have called a special meeting of its stockholders to be held at the General office of the company, in the Borough of Honesdale, Pennsylvania, on the 14th day of July, 1910, at 3 o'clock, for the purpose of voting for or against an increase of the indebtedness of said company.

M. B. ALLEN, Secretary.

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