

Southward Bound!

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from the helm, the ship raced up into the wind, shipping huge seas as she did so. Crash, bang, crash, and the fore-royal and gallant mast went over the side, taking the yards and jibboom.

This was followed by the main topmast, which fell on deck with a dreadful crash. Then the huge mizzen mast, the heaviest spar on board, carried away about forty feet from the deck, and with a thunderous roar came down on deck, bringing with it the spanker with its heavy gaff and boom. It was a hell of a mess.

What with the crash of spars breaking and the thunder of the heavy canvas blowing away, and the roar of the sea as it came aboard in huge masses, and the intense darkness, the whole position was indescribable. Then our captain showed his calibre.

Under his orders the yards were braced up and the main sheet hauled in. The vessel came right to the wind and we commenced to look about us. We were a lame duck, indeed—no rudder, two-thirds of our spars broken or damaged, and nearly every sail gone or split. The mainsail, the lower topsail, and fore topmast staysail were the only sails left. We cleaned the ship up as best we could, and close-reefed the mainsail. She was now on the starboard tack, reaching away toward the southward, making about three or four knots. We had little or no control over her. We quickly secured what was left of the mizzenmast, and secured everything else about the decks. Two heavy wooden water tanks which were 16 feet long each had broken from their beds, bursting their heavy iron bands, and had crashed through the lee bulwarks. We were in a holy mess, all hands being more or less injured.

We tried to get her around as we were making about true south, nearly 100 miles a day, but she would not stay. The latitudes of forties soon became fifties, and things were looking serious, for at this rate she would soon make the region of ice and eventually the Ice Barrier. It was cold and miserable and there was always the danger of ice.

When we were well into the fifties the weather cleared up and the sea became smoother. We often tried to get her around, but she seemed determined to investigate the Ice Barrier. It was in lat. 62 deg. south that we eventually succeeded. We had been trying nearly all day to get her around, but she wouldn't come, and toward evening the wind had grown light and finally died away. About 10 p.m. we noticed that she was slowly getting around to the eastward. By 11 p.m. she was around to N.E., and a light breeze came up from the N.W. We braced her up to this. She was now heading about N.N.E., and the wind increasing it backed to the westward. We now put on all sail that we could and away she went to the north. We bent a trysail on the mizzen, and she was now under foresail and fore-lower-topsail, fore-topmast staysail, main staysail, mainsail, and mix-trysail. By skilful trimming of sheets and braces we kept her to the northward, and she was now doing about five knots. We still had no rudder.

We raced across the Roaring Forties, and you can imagine our feelings of thankfulness when we crossed into the

Thirties and after a few days with no sights we found we were in 37 S. We had made fifteen hundred miles of latitude with no rudder. "Thank God," said the Old Man.

Being now in fine weather, we proceeded with the construction and shippling of a jury rudder, and under the captain's direction we made a good job of it. A spare spar was cut into various

lengths, which were fastened together by driving lengths of rod iron through them. This rod iron we got out of the cargo. Now we had to wait for a quiet day to ship it, and it soon came.

The sea was dead calm, so we got our rudder with its rigging and guys into position and hove it over the side. We hauled it through the rudder trunk, and the various guys being hauled

tight, we soon had it into position. We now fixed it on to the wheel and were set.

Soon we got a nice breeze, and we set a course for Port Louis, Mauritius. We had light winds all the way, which was lucky for us, with our jury rudder. We finally arrived off the lightship at Port Louis Mauritius, and were towed in. It was November 15, and we had been nearly one hundred and eighty days at sea. Here we discharged our cargo and underwent repairs, but we did not get either a new mizzen-mast or main-topmast. We had repaired the sails on the drift, and the ship was clean. The captain put three of us in hospital for a week or two really to have a rest. It was here discovered that I had two ribs fractured. This was probably due to the mate's and second mate's kind attentions, and I registered a vow. Of course, the doctor told the captain, and the captain asked me if I would make a complaint, but I refused, saying that I would "butter my own bread."

He seemed pleased at this. When I went back to the ship I found there had been trouble, and the captain had decided to discharge the second mate. When I found that he had gone I asked permission to go ashore. It was granted, and I found the second mate in the bar of the Harbour Lights, a sailors' resort, kept by a Greek. He was bragging about what he had done to the crew of the vessel he had just left. When he saw me he tried to get away, but I wouldn't let him. When he had finished I had fulfilled half of my vow.

We stayed in Port Louis till just before Christmas. Mauritius is a lovely island, famous for its sugar and its hurricanes. It is also the resort of all vessels who suffer in these hurricanes. It is indeed the home of the Lame Duck. It is also noted as the scene of that wonderful book, "Paul and Virginia." Its fruit and gardens are wonderful.

Well, we left this paradise of the tropics the day before Christmas, bound for our original port. We had done certain repairs, but not everything, the expense being too great.

Five days after we left we struck a hurricane, and more trouble ensued. We lost the royal yard, a few more sails, and sprung the fore lower mast. We finished this and proceeded. We were now crippled once more, and it was under very easy sail we again made our way along the roaring forties. About the end of March we made Port Chalmers, over ninety days from Port Louis. The tow boat met us at the Heads, and towed us up to Dunedin. Here I fulfilled the other portion of my vow, as far as the mate was concerned.

This trip broke our captain's heart. He was too old to stand this sort of thing. While here we learned that the Kathleen Hilda had comfortably run out in ninety-eight days, not losing a rope yarn on the way, whilst we had taken 307 days to do nearly the same trip, and had made our port crippled. Our captain paid up all right, but he was a sore man.

The Elinor Vernon was sold to John Mills, Port Chalmers, who sold her to the U.S.S. Company, who used her for many years as a coal hulk. She was burnt at one of the islands outside Auckland Harbour about eighteen months ago.

The Kathleen Hilda ran intercolonial for many years. J. J. Craig, Ltd., bought her, and changed her name to the Alexander Craig. She, too, finished up as a coal hulk, and was broken up and burnt about four years ago.

Prize Poem Competition

(Conducted by "John O'Dreams")

THE prize of half a guinea in the current competition is awarded to "The Swimmer," in which imaginative conception is pursued with swift rhythmic cadences that are admirably appropriate. The author, "Quando," together with the prize-winning poem, sent an interesting sheaf of verses couched in authentic modern form, poetic perceptiveness and command of metre being outstanding. Another poet with a definite point of view and some originality is G.H.W., who in "On the Wharf at Night" gets right away from the hackneyed, and presents vivid impression of a dark hour very near to oblivion.

"Design Antique" finds expression with that skill and effect of completeness which one expects from R.B.C., who never, never sinks into the groove. D.A.S. can write, "Across Many Seas" being yet another example of his able jugglery with words and remarkable knowledge of differing literary forms.

Lucibel Lee is very aware of beauty of dawn and dusk, and her delight materialises in facile, lilting lines.

D.G.M.: Of your poems, we prefer the delicate sentiment of "Enchantment." M.K.: If at all possible, room will be found for the Christmas poem. In any case, congratulations on a charming effort.

"The Forsaken Room" has some appeal, but lacks distinction.

V.S.J.: Thanks for poems. Hope to publish one or other, but can't promise.

A.J.R., in a song of the South Wind, uses singularly appropriate metre. "Contentment" is another example of our contributor's graceful versatility.

J.H.Q. finds in Mount Ruapehu inspiration for some easily-flowing and felicitous lines.

"1933": Pleasant enough rhymes, breathing faith and hope.

"Candlelight": A small, sweet poem by one who can pen nothing ungraceful or commonplace.

O.E.H.'s poem is called forth by the old beautiful story of the Virgin Mother and Holy Babe. Sorry, space can't be found to publish these lines on a "Peace" of which the world stands in such deadly need.

"Broken Silences" etches vivid impression of sylvan solitudes invaded by rush and roar of machinery of civilisation. Very well done.

A.E.W.: Your verses incline to the obvious, though in "To a Mortal" some imaginative quality is apparent.

J.R. is somewhat lute in a eulogy on the Silver Lining, these days so hard to discover.

Wayfarer: By all means try another non de plume if it so pleases you. The quaint poem forwarded, attractive in its opening lines, rather peters out as it goes on, fourth and fifth verses being signally weak in construction.

Flotsam: First and last word in dullness.

... The Swimmer ...

Does not each river cry its unknown name,
In triumph, in defiance, in despair?
No throat alike, no water voice the same
As its far fellow's . . . still, the word is there!
Is it not more than shrouds in darkness flowing?
Than cloakings that a hurried shoulder's flinging,
Embroidered in the midnight of its swift and spuncy going
Enchanted into silence by the splendour of its singing?
Oh, aboriginal voice by shallows broken . . .
Clear call around a bend, long undiscovered,
Heroic name, unwritten and unspoken,
Dark lip by sedge and starry crêsses covered!
Does not each river cry its unknown name?
Weeds, water shaken, falter it, but still
Their stammers tie our tongues. We cannot frame
The word cried by the swimmer from the hills.

—Quando.