

BILLY HANFORD of the SAGINAW

By Stephen Allen Reynolds

A 2000-Mile Cruise in a Small Open Boat Which Resulted in Death for Four Men and Life for Ninety-One of Their Messmates.

IT'S a little blue booklet of a hundred pages or so issued by the Navy Department of these United States, but it's a remarkable little booklet after all, for it contains the boiled-down official information relating to 653 gallant deeds in times of war and peace—deeds which have won medals of honor for our bluejackets and marines, both ashore and afloat.

The dedication upon its flyleaf rises far above the formal cold-typed introductory matter usually found in our public documents, for it runs:

ROLL OF HONOR.

This record of the enlisted men who have shed luster upon the service by upholding the honor of the flag in storm and battle, by their devotion to the country and to each other, and by their unselfishness in risking their own lives to save others, is especially commended to the attention of American seamen, that they may emulate the deeds of their heroic predecessors and maintain that high standard of gallantry which has always characterized the personnel of the United States naval service.

Well said!

And in looking over this blue booklet it occurs to the writer that of these 653 heroes Coxswain William Halford, of the ill-fated U. S. S. Saginaw, traveled the farthest and suffered the most in his successful effort to fetch relief for his starving officers and shipmates.

The record in the blue book is brief, reading as it does:

WILLIAM HALFORD.

Coxswain on board of the U. S. S. Saginaw; sole survivor of the boat's crew sent to the Sandwich Islands for assistance after the wreck of the Saginaw, October, 1879. Promoted to acting gunner.

Fortunately for posterity, however, other records more voluminous are at hand, and the sufferings of "Billy" Halford during his 2000-mile cruise may be told again "just as we forgot."

As Coxswain of the ship's gig, Halford was serving on board of the Saginaw during the Summer and Fall of 1879, while that vessel was engaged in surveying the lagoon entrance of Midway Island, a United States possession a little to the eastward of where the International Date Line slashes the Pacific. Upon the evening of October 28, the season being late and supplies having run low, Commander Seward decided to steam for San Francisco.

Barely had the Saginaw gotten up a full head of steam, however, before her commander gave orders to head for Ocean Island, an atoll some 80 miles to the westward.

"It's an out-of-the-way spot," explained Commander Seward. "We might find a shipwrecked crew there, for all we know."

Fires were banked and sails set. With a fair wind blowing the Saginaw stood off to the westward, fully expecting to "raise" Ocean Island soon after daybreak. But a strong current seized the unfortunate ship, carrying her westward much faster than her navigators reckoned. At least an hour before dawn the lookout espied breakers ahead, and before the crew could put the ship "about" she crashed heavily upon the coral reef encircling Ocean Island.

The Saginaw's back was broken, her bottom stove in, her boilers shifted.

All seemed lost. Raised and lowered alternately by the mighty swells of the Pacific the doomed vessel pounded upon the jagged coral and began to break up. The weather boats having been swept away, the crew gave its undivided attention to the lowering of the lee boats, and after some difficulty succeeded in getting three of them inside the lagoon. A dinghy, a condemned cutter and a stanch rig were thus saved, and after a few trips between the wreck and the beach all hands found themselves safe on shore; that is, safe for the time being.

Ninety-six men eyed each other in dismay, for the island was but a desolate strip of sand, with not even a cocoanut tree to shield or feed them. It was late in the year, and they were out of the track of trans-Pacific craft. Their future seemed indeed black.

Fortunately for these castaways some

AN EXPLOIT of A FIRST CLASS NAVY MAN.



To the Rescue in an Open Boat.

Finally five men were chosen for the executive officer, was placed the desperate cruise. Lieutenant Tal-

and one other man constituted the crew. They were fully aware of the dangerous nature of the proposed cruise, and knew without being told that in order to cover the 1800 miles which lay between them and Honolulu they would have to sail, beat and pull fully 2000 miles in all.

The gig was hauled out of water and looked over, then launched and stored with 30 days' provisions—on the quarter-ration plan. Farewells were said, and upon the 18th of November the crew pulled out of the lagoon and hoisted sail.

Although the boat's crew were in no immediate danger of starvation they failed to consider that fully two-thirds of their provisions consisted of a mixture of wheat, rice, beans and peas, which had been cooked and put up in tins. Souring and fermenting it caused sickness, and before a week had expired the mess had to be cast over the side.

Then followed a three-day storm, which cost the expedition its lantern and a precious keg of water. Nothing remained but another keg of water, five gallons of sperm oil and a small supply of desiccated potatoes. Dealt out twice a day—a spoonful morning and evening—the unfortunate soaked the potatoes in the scant allowance of water until a paste was formed. They would then lick up the unpalatable mass and crave for more.

Thus the pitiable struggle for Honolulu went on for 25 days. Added to their sufferings was the knowledge that not only were their own lives at stake, but that upon them depended the precious lives of the 91 on Ocean Island.

Upon the twenty-sixth day after setting sail the last crumb of potato had been eaten. But a few quarts of water remained—and the oil.

"The other men were so weak that I advised them to drink a little of the oil," said Halford, in telling of their plight. "It was certainly nourishing, even if it didn't taste good. But they couldn't stomach it. I had the whole five gallons to myself. I ate it straight, three times a day, and I guess that's why I had strength enough left to go through what happened afterward."

Upon the morning of the twenty-seventh day, while Halford was at the tiller steering while his mates slept, a large sea booby fluttered alongside and perched itself upon the gunwale of the gig. Like a flash the arm of the half-starved seaman shot out and grasped the bird. He wrung its neck, stripped it of feathers, cut it up into five pieces and awoke his companions. They ate the warm and bloody flesh just as it was. There were no matches, no flint and steel, no means of making a fire, yet they were indifferent.

The twenty-eighth day passed by—a day of hunger. No birds flew near the gig. No land was in sight. But the following morning at daybreak a school of flying fish flew over the boat. Six of them struck the sail and dropped into the boat. The starving crew ate them, tails and all—but it was the last meal.

When the sun was well up lads

ran to his assistance, but none of them spoke English. Later he found an interpreter in the person of a half-breed, and learned that he was on the island of Kahoolawe, 90 miles distant from Honolulu.

An American planter named Bent provided Halford with clothing and engaged a schooner to take him to Honolulu. For two days, while a messenger went for the schooner, the planter nursed his charge and dressed his wound.

A few days later the United States Consul was surprised to see a skeleton of a man limp into his office, bearing a dispatch box. Explanations followed, and the good Consul stirred himself. Upon the same morning a 250-ton schooner loaded with food and medicines set sail for Ocean Island. She was the fastest schooner in the interisland trade, but she wasn't fast enough to suit the resident United States Minister.

"We must send a steamer," said he. Two days after the schooner sailed a steamer was started. Steam beat, as a matter of course, and long before the schooner raised Ocean Island the siren of the steamer was gladdening the ears and hearts of the castaways. They could not have existed another week.

And Billy Halford? He was promoted to a gunneryship and given the Congressional Medal of Honor. He has more than 1000 miles in a small open boat suffered untold hardships, and had he not survived to hear the message from the castaways 91 American sailors would have perished and assistance could possibly have reached them.

Use of the Divining Rod

Considered as a Factor in the Finding of Water.

The United States Geological Survey states in Water Supply Paper 355, entitled "Underground Waters for Farm Use," just released, that no appliance, either mechanical or electric, has yet been devised that will detect water in places where plain common sense and close observation will not show its presence. Just as well. Numerous mechanical devices have been proposed for detecting the presence of underground water, ranging in complexity from the simple forked branch of witch hazel, peach or other tree to more or less elaborate mechanical or electric contrivances. Many of the operators of these devices, especially those who use the home-cut forked branch, are entirely honest in the belief that the working of the rod is influenced by agencies usually regarded as electric currents. Following underground streams of water—that are entirely independent of their own bodies, and many people have made a faith in their own and others' ability to locate underground water in this way. In experiments with a rod made from a forked branch it seemed to turn downward at certain points independent of the operator's will, but more complete tests showed that this downturning resulted from slight and unnoted causes, for unconscious muscular action, the effects of which were communicated through the arms and wrists to the rod. No movement of the rod from causes outside of the body could be detected, and it soon became obvious that the view held by other men of science is correct—the operation of the "divining rod" is generally due to unconscious movements of the body or of the muscles of the hand. The experiments made show that these movements occur most frequently at places where the operator's experience has led him to believe that water may be found.

The uselessness of the divining rod is indicated by the facts that it may be worked at will by the operator, that he fails to detect strong water currents in tunnels and other channels that afford no surface indications of water, and that his locations in limestone regions, where water flows in well-defined channels, are almost as successful as those dependent on mere guess. In fact, its operators are successful only in regions in which ground water occurs in a definite bed of porous material or in more or less clayey deposits, such as pebbly clay or till. In such regions few failures can occur, for well-diggers can get water almost anywhere.

The only advantage of employing a "water witch," as the operator of the divining rod is sometimes called, is that of saving money. The rods are thus occasionally obtained, for the men so employed, if endowed with any natural aptitude, become thorough experts in locating wells shrewd, if sometimes unconscious, observers of the occurrence and movements of ground water.—Indianapolis News.

TEN MINUTES WITH THE FUNNY MEN

SOME of the QUIPS and JESTS FROM PENS of the NEWSPAPER HUMORISTS.

Terse Tales From Humorous Pens

WHAT IT COMES TO.

Dr. Harvey W. Wiley, reports the Minneapolis Journal to the effect that in Washington a story apropos of food adulteration.

"There is a man," he said, "who manufactured so-called silver spoons. A dealer bought largely from him, but was always clamoring for a lower price. 'But I can't lower the price,' the manufacturer would say, 'unless I put in more lead.'"

"All right—more lead, by all means," thus the dealer would reply.

"The other week the dealer wired that he would take an enormous consignment of spoons if the price were cut a further 16 per cent."

"I can't cut the price another penny," the manufacturer wired back.

"Put in more lead," wired the dealer. "Impossible," was the manufacturer's reply. "Last let I shipped you were all lead."

"MOO-HONK."

"Why are those people flocking down to Hiram Hardapple's barn?" asked the old farmer on the hay wagon.

"He's got a curiosity down there," chuckled the village constable. "That's so? What kind of a curiosity is it?"

"Why, He's old red and white Jersey cow. The other night the old critter had the colic and I went down with his lantern to give her a dose of cow medicine. Blamed if he didn't make a mistake and give her a pint of gasoline."

"Do tell! Didn't kill her, did it?"

"No, but by heck, it had a funny effect. Now, instead of going 'Moo-moo' like the other sensible cows, she goes 'Honk-honk' like one of them blamed automobiles."—National Monthly.

HARD ON THE DOGS.

A gentleman living in Wales, who was spending a month at Brighton, went to London for a few days' visit.

He had his wife and daughter and plenty of money with him.

The daughter after buying whatever she wanted, decided that she must also have a bulldog. The entire family went to help her select the dog, but they could not agree in their choice so the gentleman bought three—the selection of each.

He had the three dogs sent to Brighton, then changed his plans after going back there and took his family. A few days later he received the following letter from the stableman at Brighton:

"Dear Sir: Your three bulldogs arrived all right last night on the same train. I looked them up together last night in a loose box. Yours truly, J. J."

"P. S.—We have only one loose box left. You will have to buy some more dogs."—Weekly Telegram in Exchange.

HER THROW.

The New York Sun relates that Joseph H. Choate, at the Three Arts Club benefit at the Republic Theater, in New York, told after his witty speech:

Two young girls were drinking tea when a young man passed. As he passed the first girl blushed, displaying a beautiful ring on her white hand and murmured:

"Well, Jack and I are to be married."

"But," said the other girl, "I thought you had thrown Jack over."

"Oh, so I did," the first replied, "but you know how a girl throws."

AN EVEN BREAK ABSOLUTELY.

Arthur Teele, rear commodore of the Atlantic Yacht Club of New York, claims to have attended a funeral once where, just as the services were getting fairly under way, an intoxicated person wandered into the chapel and staggered up the aisle to a seat near the front, says the Saturday Evening Post.

The sexton rose to eject him; but as the stranger seemed to have fallen in to a doze, he deemed it best to leave

him alone until the last sad rites were concluded. The clergyman proceeded with the ritual until he reached the passage:

"And after darkness there shall be light."

The intoxicated party straightened up.

"There," he said, addressing the gathering generally, "could anything on earth be fairer than that?"

FINE FOOD, FINE WORDS.

"Oh, I just love cake, and it's awfully nice," cried little Dorothy, regarding her chocolate-frosted dessert with high approval, says the Youth's Companion.

"You should not say you love cake," reproved her mother; "say you 'like' it; and don't say 'awfully'; say 'very.' Don't say 'nice,' but 'good.' And, by the way, the word 'just' should be omitted, and also the 'oh.' Now, my dear, repeat the sentence correctly."

"I like cake; it is very good," repeated Dorothy.

"That is much better," said her mother.

But Dorothy was far from being satisfied. "It sounds as if I was speaking of bread," she said, with an air of disgust.

SLOW CHAP.

"Yes," laughed the girl with the pink parasol, "he is the slowest young man I ever saw."

"In what way, dear," asked her mother.

"Why, he asked for a kiss, and I told him I wore one of those knotted veils that takes so long to loosen."

"And what did he do?"

"Why, the goose took time to untie the knot."—Mack's Monthly.

EASILY UNDERSTOOD.

Host—Excuse me. That's my phone. At phone. Oh, yes. What's that? You can't give me the hour you promised I could have tomorrow? Oh, that's all right. No, no; it doesn't incommode me in the least. Any other time will do. Don't mention it. Good-by.

Friend—That must have been your dentist.

Host—It was.—Detroit Free Press.

Quips and Flings

"How's your son getting on in college?"

"Great. They put him in as a pinch hitter the other day and he cleared the bases with a three-bagger."—Detroit Free Press.

Claude—They say Miss Justine is going into a convent for life.

Jack—Yes, she has promised to be a sister to so many of us that she is going to adopt it as a profession.—Toronto Globe.

Mrs. Youngwife (in clear store)—I wish to buy some cigars for a Christmas present for my husband. What kinds have you?

Dealer—Well, here are our Cuban Specials at \$4.25 a box, our Havana Key-Vestorados at \$2.25 and our Tootferno Impura Maduros with gold label on each one, at 99 cents, for a box of 50.

Mrs. Youngwife—Let me have a box of the last. I always knew that my husband was paying more than necessary for cigars.

"I never could understand why people dock their horses' tails," said Dubbleigh.

"Tight cost of living," said Jorrocks. "Got to dock something these times."—Harper's Weekly.

Uncle John—Willie, if you could have your way, who would you rather be than anybody else?

Small Willie—Just me—if I could always have my way.—Chicago News.

"It did Jack no good to marry his stenographer, for she continued the habit of the office in her home."

"How so?"

"When he starts to dictate she takes him down."—Baltimore American.

The two friends were exchanging confidences. "Whatever induced you to accept Toady Johnson, Mabel?" said Annette. "Oh—why—well," said Mabel.

"You see Toady put his—his arm around my waist, and to tell the truth, I yielded under pressure."—Harper's Weekly.

"It's strange, isn't it?"

"What?"

"That nobody ever discovered an Italian singer who wasn't a laborer a few years ago."—Chicago Record-Herald.

Ted—Do you believe that woman should hold the reins?

Ned—It is all right when you have the girl out in a sleigh.—Judge.

"I understand your wife is doing her own cooking?"

"You are mistaken."

"Oh, that was just for a little while. Jinks was making us a visit and I guess she thought he had stayed long enough."—Houston Post.

Book Canvasser—In those volumes you have the whole sum of human knowledge in convenient form.

Mr. Meek—Thanks, its no use to me.

Book Canvasser—But your wife, perhaps.

Mr. Meek—Oh, she knows it all already!—Sydney Bulletin.

Fond Mamma—Here's a photo of my little boy when he was a baby, and I want you to make one of him as he is now.

Photographer—But haven't you brought him with you?

Fond Mamma—No, I thought you could make an enlargement from this.—Pelo Mele.

"I am very uneasy; I am sure my wife has gone out without her umbrella."

"Oh, she will certainly seek refuge in a department store."

"That's what makes me uneasy."—Pelo Mele.

"Judge, why did you adjourn court for five minutes just now?"

"I felt that I had to sneeze."

"And I feared that if I sneezed on the bench the lawyers would make that the basis for a new trial."—Kansas City Journal.

Among the Poets of the Daily Press

THE BABY'S FEET.

Pinker than the roses that enrich a Summer's day,
Splashing in the bathtub or just kicking them in play,
Nothing in the skies above or earth below as sweet,
As fascinating to me as a baby's little feet.

Every toe a rosebud, on a chubby, dimpled tree,
Little legs as rounded and as plump as Peeping through the nighties, or kicking in the air,
Angel wings aren't prettier than baby's feet, I swear.

Not a sign of travel, not a sign of care,
Not a sign of burdens they have had to bear,
Just the pinkest pinkness and the plumpiest plumpness known
Kicking in their gladness when the covers back are thrown.

Little feet that never yet have stepped aside to sin,
Never trampled others down in selfishness to win,
Never felt the bruises or the weariness of strife,
Aren't they good to look at as they're starting out in life?

Little feet, I wonder, as I watch you kick in play,
Peeping through your nightie as the ending of the day,
Wonder where you'll wander in the years that lie ahead,
And I pray the Lord to guard you o'er the paths that you must tread.

HER SORROWS.

Ho! my lady bought a hat,
Trimmed with—oh, well, this and that,
It was chic, high priced, becoming—quite a gem in every way.

But how short lived was her pride
For her new hat was soiled and dyed
She saw another like it—then there was the deuce to pay.

For a pair of shoes she went;
All the afternoon she spent;
And chose a natty dressy pair—the sweetest she could buy.
They were comfortable, yes,
But you'll never, never guess
What she suffered when she found the heels a full eighth inch too high!

She, in choosing her gown,
Turned the city upside down,
And brought home a small creation,
Worth not quite its weight in gold.

Ah! that gown! She prized it so—
But was torn 'twixt wrath and woe
When a friend persuaded her the style was all of four weeks old!

She is fured to change—
To her fancy away and range—
That is matters touching life's affairs on constant wing is she.
So ill luck was her's again
When she chose among the men;
She thrice has tried the Remy route—yet chafes at being free!

—New York Globe.

A NEW VERSION.

Fleishy Miss Muffet
Sat down on Tuffet.
A very good dog in his way;
When she saw what he'd done,
She started to run—
And Tuffet was buried next day.
—Lippincott's Magazine.

FITTED WITH A NAME.

"What kind of a fellow is Badger?"

"Well, I call him an auto-philanthropist."

"And what is that, pray?"

"An auto-philanthropist is one who exerts all his philanthropy upon himself."—Boston Transcript.