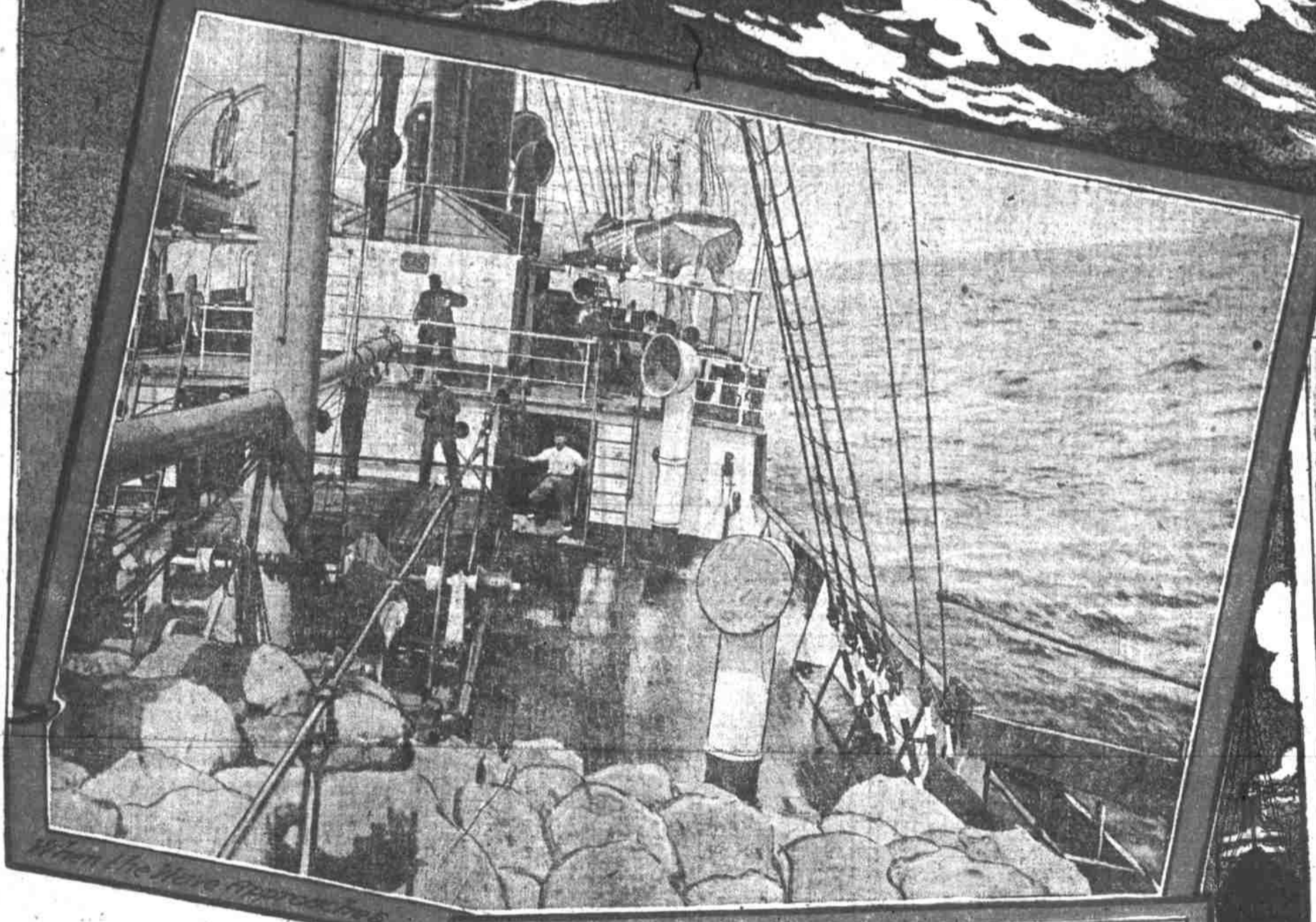


GRIPPING POWER in MERE PLAY



How the Camera Catches Old Ocean's Rolling Waves

HE stood on the forward deck, his arms folded. Surging her heavy way through the waters, the great ocean carrier was rolling and lifting to the long, heaving billows that stretched away as far as the eye could see.

"It's wonderful, that water, isn't it?" he remarked to his companion. He was an engineer, and things appealed to him in terms of force, active or latent.

"Yes," assented the other, "the ocean always impresses me. It is the one unsubdued element in the world, possibly."

"This bulk of iron," said the engineer, "would be a feather in a good gale. Tremendously impressive is the ocean's wrath, as the poets call it. Even at rest it fills one with awe. Does it not breathe power in repose, suggestion of terrific latent energy?"



IN ancient times the people of Greece and other lands believed that the monarch of the ocean was Neptune, an old man of gigantic stature, with a gnarled, powerful visage, who rode through the bounding waves with trident in the air, followed—the Hellenes were a poetic people—by pale, lovely nereids and mermaids.

Of all the gods, Neptune was one of the most powerful, and even in a gracious mood his might was something to be reckoned with.

The power of the ocean! The terrific force beneath the calm serenity of a summer day at sea! The charm, the beauty of the waters inspired poets long before the days of Homer, as they inspire wonder and admiration, awe and fear today.

In one of his poems Algernon Charles Swinburne likens the sea and the wind to lovers, both eternally striving with the other:

For the heart of the waters is cruel,
And the kisses are dire of their lips,
And their waves are as fire is to fuel,
To the strength of the seafaring ships,
Though the sea's eye gleam as a jewel
To the sun's eye back as he dips

Of the wind, the lover of the ocean, caressing at times, anon wild in his persistent wooing of the waves, the poet writes:

Though hence come the moan that he borrows
From darkness and depth of the night,
Though hence be the spring of his sorrows,
Hence, too, is the joy of his might—
The delight that his doom is forever
To seek, and desire, and rejoice,
And the sense that eternity never
Shall silence his voice.

Now of the ocean, mistress of the winds, he writes:

What is fire that its flame should consume her?
More fierce than all fire are her waves,
What is earth that its gulls should entomb her?
More deep are her own than their graves,
Life shrinks from his pinions that cover
The darkness by thunders bedded;
But she knows him, her lord and her lover,
The godhead of wind.

The engineer and his companion, pondering on the ocean waves on a recent trip abroad,

were in the mood that comes upon most persons when on the sea. And the mood is never so overwhelming as when it comes for the first time—to the voyager making his first trip across.

Caught in the vortex of some furious storm, his feeling is one of terror. But this is almost a surface emotion compared with the deep, calm reverence, the profound awe, the soul-stirring sense of the boundless immensity of the sea which fill him as he watches the heaving of that mighty breast when the storm winds have passed on and left a clear, bright day to watch the swell of the sea.

Surging from the distance, the waves come rolling on smoothly, as though covered with oil. It was on such a day that the photographs on this page were taken. Sinking down, down into a dark green valley of water, the great ship slowly rights herself as she begins to feel the lift of another wave.

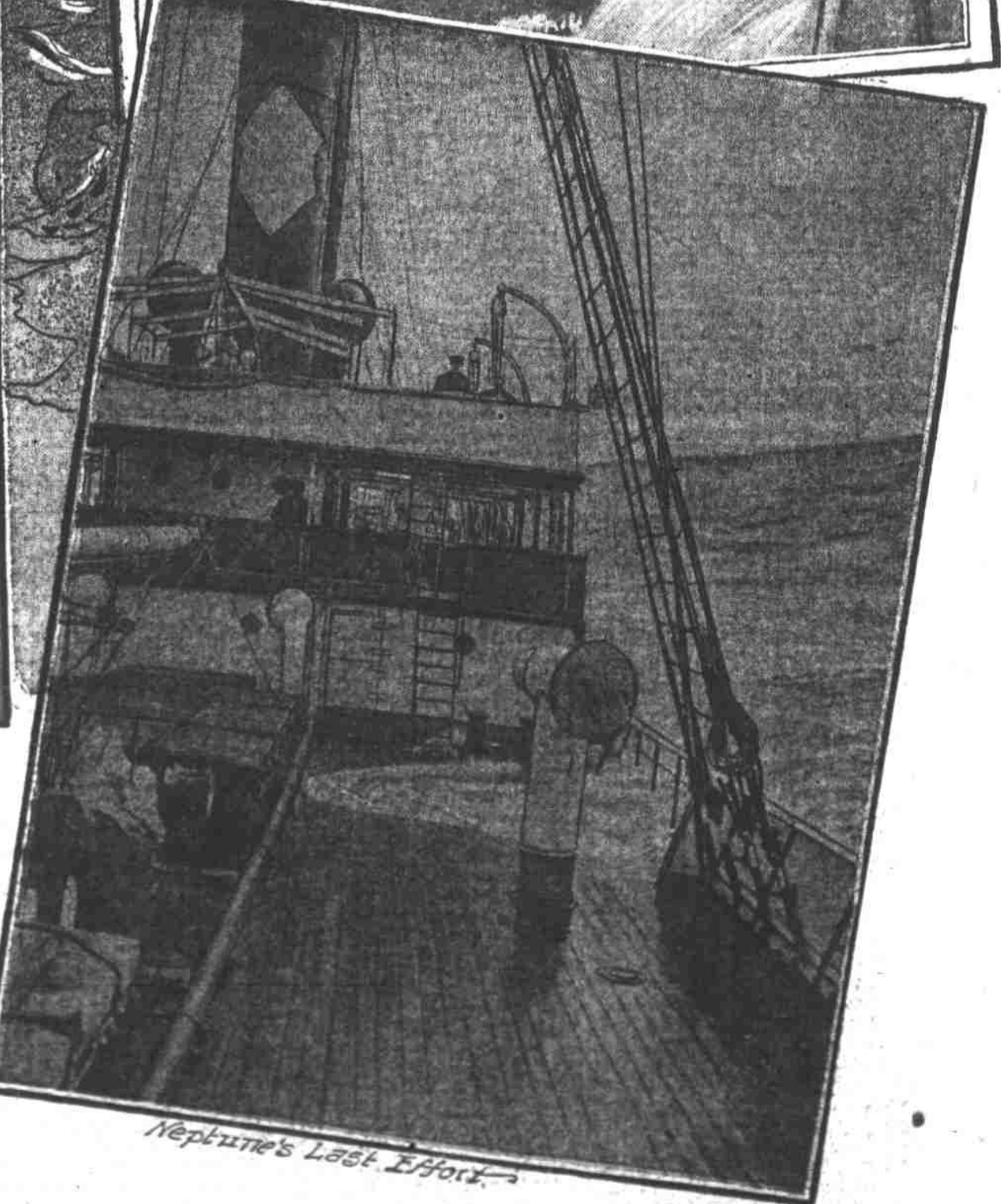
Noiselessly, but with the power of a thousand giants, its huge shoulder rises under the vessel and lifts it as though it were a toy. Then, as its crest surges up the iron side, boils over the rail and sends a great white and green swash foaming over the deck, one almost fancies

old Neptune may be heard chuckling in his lair.

The wave goes quietly on its way, the ship slides noiselessly down the further side into another wonderful valley, only to feel another titanic shoulder under her keel and another resistless force lifting her once more to the mountain top of the waters.

And then one ponders on the demon-fury hidden down in the fathomless depths, of the anger that often crosses the smiling face of the ocean, and how the waves leap and toss mountain high as though to reach the rent clouds, and how the universe crashes, roars, thunders and rumbles in one deafening tumult and warfare of wind and sea.

The highest storm waves ever measured, it is stated, were between 44 and 48 feet high, while the average storm height is not more than 30 feet. Possibly one could not gauge the force of these waves. Some years ago, however, during a storm a rock weighing five and one-half tons was lifted from a spot near the Skerryvore



lighthouse, England, and hurled seventy-two feet above sea level, while a mass weighing thirteen and one-half tons was torn from a cliff seventy-four feet high.

In the face of such force how futile all man's efforts seem! And how one must recognize old Neptune's power even in his playful moods!