

THE PRINCE OF SONG.

He'd offered many poems
On melancholy themes,
Some dealt with metaphysics,
And some were ghostly dreams—
On life and death and judgment,
And on the distant spheres;
A dirge for one who went away
And left him all in tears.

The great world did not heed them—
What cared it for his dole?
For sorrow, dark, obtrusive,
Is guest of every soul.

His few sweet notes of love and faith
He sang the wavering throng;
They wore him fadless chaplets,
And hailed him Prince of Song.

—Henry Jerome Stockard in Kate Field's Wash-
ington.

TALBOT'S LAST VOYAGE.

On a surf fringed island of the Pacific, where the smoldering twin volcanoes frown on flower strewn plains, and the cocoanut palms nod drowsily to the rhythm of the sea, there is set a memorial tablet which bears the legend: "Greater love than this hath no man, that he lay down his life for his friend," and the name above it is that of John G. Talbot, of Kentucky.

His story is only one of duty done, and therefore is lost to the great public, although it still lives in the memory of his comrades and in the faithful records of the navy department, but it has in it elements of such heroism and pathos that it must touch all hearts till glory forgets to honor Valor and Love lays down his golden rose.

He was a junior lieutenant in the United States navy, and was one of the officers of the United States steamship Saginaw at the time she broke her back on the reef of Ocean Island in the October of 1870, which wreck was, curiously enough, the result of a bit of practical humanity on the part of her commanding officer.

In the winter of 1868-9 congress approved a bill for deepening the cut in the harbor of Midway island, and for more than a twelvemonth after the appropriation was made the work was carried on by Capt. (now Commodore) Sicard and a large force of men. The task, however, was a very thankless one, and as the appropriation ran out before it was finished, and the winter was setting in early with unusually boisterous winds and heavy rains, the dredges and cutting machinery were promptly taken up and stowed, the engines fired and the Saginaw's nose turned homeward. San Francisco was the objective point, but before shaping a course for the Golden Gate Capt. Sicard determined to run down to a lonely island about seventy miles to the westward of Midway to look up any castaways who might have found refuge there. This island, or rather coral reef, is so far out of the track of vessels that such visits are made not only with the approval of the department, but by its command, at intervals of as few years as is practicable.

That the trip was fraught with the usual dangers incident on navigating unknown waters is at once apparent, but the first hour out developed a new and strange source of anxiety that proved unconquerable. The machinery piled on deck affected the compass so sensibly that no reliance could be had upon its accuracy, and the stars went out so early in the night that they had to run by dead reckoning.

The sea was heavy and the set of the current was so unusual that the captain gave the strictest orders about the rate of speed and the lookout to be maintained, and as the ship was due alongside the island about daybreak he took the deck himself at 2 a. m.

At this hour, the log showing a distance of thirty-five miles made since 5 o'clock of the afternoon preceding, he ordered the mainsail close reefed and the engines to be kept just turning over, but as the dead reckoning shows twelve miles still to run the topsails were left standing, and this unfortunately gave the ship a decided headway, for she was running with the trade winds, and it was a case of

The ship was lively and the wind was free. Suddenly out of the night sprang a roar under our very bows, and a wall of white fire barred the way. High in the air played a spray of phosphoric brightness, and the sudden boom of the surf was like the ominous detonations of a minute gun.

It was the reef!

The shrill cry of the lookout, "Breakers ahead!" seemed to deprive the men of both speech and motion. They stood as if paralyzed, and it was only when the officers leaped to the ropes, tagging like madmen, that they followed; and even then they moved heavily—"like in a dream," the captain said; and though they heaved and reefed, mechanically, their eyes were fixed gloomily on the line of leaping surf, and their ears were filled with the sound of the death blows raining on the ship's sides.

The engines were reversed on the echo of that awful cry, the watch tumbled up, and all hands struggled and strained at the topsails, while the air resounded with the hoarse voices of the officers giving and transmitting orders, and the piercing shriek of the boiler's pipe cut the air like a scimitar.

For a few minutes the balance of chances hung even. But the pressure of steam was too light as against the pull of the topsails, and just as the canvas was clewed up she rose on the crest of a great wave and fell on the ridge of the reef.

In ten minutes she bilged—she had flooded her holds at once—and yet so good was the discipline that not only was every soul landed safely on the island, through wind and rain and smothering seas, but a few stores were saved as well.

Here was a cruel reversal of situations. From rescuers they were become objects of rescue, and of this last the chances seemed too remote to be entertained, except as a hope.

The island was absolutely sterile. There was neither wood nor fresh water. There was no place to shelter, and the nearest attainable land was 1,400 miles away, Midway being impracticable for a

sailboat at that season on account of the trade winds.

But all this had to be seen in glimpses by the men, and recognized by the officers only as it came up in the course of official routine, for no sooner did day dawn than the seamen were told off in messes, water was distilled by means of an old boiler, two boats' crews were detailed to travel between the wreck and shore to save whatever they could, an exploring party was sent out to do the island, and charts were eagerly examined by the officers.

The wind was squalling in gustily from a flying sea, the rain added its quota to the discomfort of all hands, and just as Black Care was solidly mounted on every man's shoulder, Talbot stepped out on the beach, and with as cheerful an air as if he were proposing a lark ashore volunteered to take one of the ship's boats, and attempt the trip to the Hawaiian islands.

Think of it.

But I believe if you give a sailor a single plank he will see material for a flotilla, and so, after a pause of a few minutes—a tribute to discipline—the young officer was almost lost in the wave of sailor men that surged around him, asking, urging, pleading to go with him, although every man jack of them knew it was almost certain death he volunteered for. And then, when the choice fell on the coxswain Halford and three able seamen named Andrews, Muir and Francis, the others almost fought about it.

The crew picked, Talbot passed in review of all the boats that had survived the wreck, selecting the white boat, which was raised on rude stocks—made from the Saginaw's drift—and work began on her that very day.

The seals and otters, sole occupants of the island for several peaceful years, made off in dismay before the swarm of two legged intruders, who brought such active life and intolerable sounds to their tranquil retreat; for not only did the hammers and caulker's mallets play on the whale boat, but Sicard, to hearten up the men, set them to building a schooner of the Saginaw's planks and beams in which to sail to safety if Talbot's efforts failed.

Through days of dreary weather the work was pushed, and on the 17th of November the whale boat was ready for her venture. She was well prepared as far as the limited supplies of the shipwrecked permitted, but, compared with the elemental forces against which she must battle, and considering the season of the year, it seemed as though she could not outlive the first day.

The gunwales were raised eight inches and she was decked over; two masts were shipped and a bowsprit mounted; she had a full set of new sails and oars—from the ship's stores—and was stocked with canned goods.

In the choice of these latter they had to be guided by guesswork entirely, for all the labels had washed off in the wreck, and although the best looking and the largest were selected, and the supply was lavish, the contents of many of them proved so unsuitable for such a journey that they not only jeopardized its success, but actually precipitated the disaster.

On the morning of the 18th of November, for the first time since the vessel's loss, the sun shone on the castaways, lifting up their hearts and filling both parting crew and those left behind with an almost unreasonably joy and hope.

The first hours of the day were occupied in giving the last touches to the boat, and then Talbot stepped aside with the captain to receive his final instructions. These were:

"Beat up against the Trades, through the Belt of Calms and the Variables, to (a given) latitude east of the Hawaiian islands, and thence run west with the Trades."

This route was advised not only because it was in the track of ships, but also because the islands cover an area of about a hundred miles, which greatly increased the chances of their being sighted, no matter how the calculations faulted, and that they would fault was inevitable, for in a small boat the motion is so very lively that an accurate reckoning is almost impossible. Then, too, the mountain peaks are lofty, and the smoke of the twin volcanoes can be seen long before the islands themselves are raised.

A tracing of the chart and some navigation instruments were given him, and then, in the sparkling light of full noon, the little craft put out through the opening of the reef and danced joyously off on her mission.

A deep throated cheer followed them, and as its echoes pealed over the lonely waters an answer came drifting back ready and thin with distance, and keyed to the same exultant note of confidence.

The day's sunshine was like the rose thrown to the martyr; in the arena—the last token of friendship from the skies; for, beginning with the next morning, the little boat battled with storms until the end came. The fifth day out the waves, which had been snapping and snarling at her heels since the second day, rolled into mountains under the fierce wind; the deck began to leak, the cooking apparatus was washed over-board, the provisions already opened were ruined and they hove to with a sea anchor.

Fancy a twenty foot boat hove to in a November gale in mid-ocean.

This was a specimen of the weather they met. When the wind and the sea were not actually grappling in savage conflict, clouds obscured the sun and blotted out the stars; the navigation instruments proved absolutely useless, and the dead reckoning was so faulty that it was a miracle the islands were sighted at all. In the second heavy gale the sea anchor was lost, and a three oared drag fetched away. In still another, a square sail and two more oars, with which they had made a second drag, and successfully claved off the storm's edge for three hours.

Flint, steel and matches were ruined, so fire was out of the question, and the raw food, exposure and cold soon brought on grave physical disorders that

crippled the little crew by half. Muir and Andrews were on the sick list for three weeks. Talbot was also ill, but his cheery spirit and powerful will kept him about, and even when wrung blue with anguish his courage was still strong enough to hold up the fainting hands of the men who prayed to heaven for help.

Once the sun shone for a few hours, and by means of the lenses of an opera glass they got a light and built a fire—the first warmth of the journey. They cooked some food, but there was too little of it to do much good, and the boisterous waters still drenched them and a keen wind searched their bones, and all too soon a bursting roller quenched the friendly blaze.

On the 16th of December, Friday, a conical cloud rose on the horizon—rose, but lay still instead of scudding away with ruin in its breath as the others did.

Then Halford shouted, "Land ho!"

He had been to the islands once before, and recognized Kaunahuia rock, the most extreme southwest point of the group.

As the boat rose and fell on the rollers the misty smudge of Nihoa and even Kaia hove in sight, but the wind shouldered the forlorn boat's crew back from the shore, and beat and tack as they would her head fell away again and again, and the last they could do was to hang quivering between hope and the deep sea.

The tragedy now drew to a rapid close. Sunday night they were off Hanelei harbor, and still the wind with its mighty flail winnowed out their strength and patience.

At midnight they hove to. Then the slope of heaven touched 1 o'clock—the last day had come.

Two o'clock was marked by the wheeling stars—half-past, and then, like a panther, the wind leaped out to sea, and, crouching back of its quarry, blew in shore as fiercely as it had before blown seaward.

Dreading another change, they decided not to wait for morning, but to make harbor at once, and when the boat's head was put on Talbot drew his first breath of assured safety for those in his charge and the shipmates left behind in the lonely Pacific.

As the water shoaled toward the ridge of the reef Halford came up from below.

He says as he got in the cockpit a wave broke abaft, and Talbot called out: "Steady, there. Bring her by the wind."

Both Francis and Andrews sprang to obey him, but a heavy wave burst against the boat's side, upsetting her and washing them both away to the mysterious death of the sea. They were never seen again.

Talbot managed to catch and cling to the bilge of the boat as she floated keel up, and Halford—who was hanging to the stern and casting off his clothing—called to him to come astern and climb up on her. But, drowning his words, came a third wave, and when it passed he was alone.

In the pause of the gathering sea he scrambled on the boat's bottom, and clinging there, rode naked through the glittering death that beat and broke about him. And the first line of breakers was passed in safety.

In the second the boat rolled over, but righted herself head on to land, and drifted ashore near Kilihi-Kai, five miles from Hanelei.

As she drifted there rose groans from the cockpit, and the sailor, Muir, who had been below during all these scenes, came out on deck, a hopeless madman.

As the boat touched the beach Halford took what papers he could save and helped Muir ashore, then fell exhausted and slept or fainted until daybreak.

When he awoke Muir was gone, and he saw the natives taking something from the sea. Hoping it was his beloved commander, he dragged himself to the spot; but the purple face, starting eyeballs and foam covered lips were those of his messmate, horrible in death.

After securing the boat and getting some food and clothing from the kindly Kanakas he began to patrol the beach, waiting to see whether the incoming tide would give up its dead.

At 7 o'clock the rollers heaved into sight and tossed from crest to crest a dark object, and rushing into the surf Halford drew out Talbot's body; and although his reason told him it would be useless, his love impelled him to work for hours to revive him. When forced to admit the futility of his efforts he rode to Hanelei to deliver up his trust, ask burial for the dead and to beg the immediate dispatch of help to those his officer had died to save.

On Christmas eve the relief steamer was sent out, but the young Kentuckian, who had gained the battle, although he died before the strong wine of victory touched his lips, had then slept five days in his foreign grave, and this grave is the spot on which the tablet stands.

But his loyal dust keeps the watch below under the green billows of his native churchyard, and there may his rest be sweet until

The great Captain Christ
Shall pipe all hands aloft.
—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Household Lines.
Sheets, pillowcases, tablecloths and napkins should not be hemmed until they have first been shrunken; but before the shrinking process each one should be made into its proper length. If this is done they will always fold evenly when ironed, which is not the case if made up without shrinking, or if shrunken in the piece, and then made into proper lengths. Sheets and pillowcases should be torn by a thread; tablecloths and napkins should be cut by a thread.—Ida A. Mills in Good Housekeeping.

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