

# Over the Side

... By ...  
W. W. JACOBS

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William W. Jacobs

OF all classes of men those who follow the sea are probably the most prone to superstition. Aboard upon the black water of waters, at vast depths and strange creatures below them, a belief in the supernatural is easier than ashore under the cheerful gas lamps. Strange stories of the sea are plentiful, and an incident which happened within my own experience has made me somewhat chary of dubbing a man fool or coward because he has encountered something he cannot explain. There are stories of the supernatural with prosaic sequels; there are others which the sequel has never been published.

I was fifteen years old at the time, and as my father, who had a strong objection to the sea, would not apprentice me to it I shipped before the mast on a sturdy little brig called the Endeavor, bound for Riga. She was a small craft, but the skipper was as fine a seaman as one could wish for and, in fair weather, an easy man to sail under. Most boys have a rough time of it when they first go to sea, but with a strong sense of what was good for me, I had attached myself to a brawny, good natured infant named Bill Smith, and it was soon understood that whoever hit me struck Bill by proxy. Not that the crew were particularly brutal, but a sound cuffing occasionally is held by most seamen to be beneficial to a lad's health and morals. The only really spiteful fellow among them was a man named Jim Dadd. He was a morose, sallow looking man of about forty, with a strong taste for the supernatural and a stronger taste still for frightening his fellows with it. I have seen Bill almost afraid to go on deck of a night for his trick at the wheel after a few of his reminiscences. Rats were a favorite topic with him, and he would never allow one to be killed if he could help it, for he claimed for them that they were the souls of drowned sailors; hence their love of ships and their habit of leaving them when they became unseaworthy. He was a firm believer in the transmigration of souls, some idea of which he had no doubt picked up in eastern ports, and gave his shivering auditors to understand that his arrangements for his own immediate future were already perfected.

We were six or seven days out when a strange thing happened. Dadd had the second watch one night, and Bill was to relieve him. They were not very strict aboard the brig in fair weather, and when a man's time was up he just made the wheel fast and, running forward, shouted down the fore'sle. On this night I happened to awake suddenly in time to see Bill slip out of his bunk and stand by me, rubbing his red eyelids with his knuckles. "Dadd's giving me a long time," he whispered, seeing that I was awake. "It's a whole hour after his time."

He pattered up on deck, and I was just turning over, thankful that I was too young to have a watch to keep, when he came softly down again, and, taking me by the shoulders, shook me roughly.

"Jack," he whispered, "Jack!"

I raised myself on my elbows and, in the light of the smoking lamp, saw that he was shaking all over.

"Come on deck," he said thickly.

I pulled on my clothes and followed him quietly to the sweet, cool air above. It was a beautiful clear night, but, from his manner, I looked nervously around for some cause of alarm. I saw nothing. The deck was deserted except for the solitary figure at the wheel.

"Look at him," whispered Bill, bending a contorted face to mine.

I walked a few steps, and Bill followed slowly. Then I saw that Jim Dadd was leaning forward clumsily on the wheel, with his hands clinched on the spokes.

"He's asleep," said I, stopping short. Bill breathed hard. "He's in a queer sleep," said he. "Kind of trance more like. Go closer."

I took fast hold of Bill's sleeve, and we both went. The light of the stars was sufficient to show that Dadd's face was very white and that his dim, black eyes were wide open and staring in a very strange and dreadful manner straight before him.

"Dadd," said I softly, "Dadd!"

There was no reply, and with a view of arousing him I tapped one slony hand as it gripped the wheel and even tried to loosen it.

He remained immovable, and suddenly, with a great cry, my courage deserted me, and Bill and I fairly bolted down into the cabin and woke the skipper.

Then we saw how it was with Jim, and two strong seamen forcibly loosened the grip of those rigid fingers and, laying him on the deck, covered him with a piece of canvas. The rest of the night two men stayed at the wheel and, gazing fearfully at the outline of the canvas, longed for dawn.

It came at last, and, breakfast over, the body was sewed up in canvas, and the skipper held a short service complied from a Bible which belonged to the mate and what he remembered of the burial service proper. Then the corpse went overboard with a splash, and the men, after standing awkward-

ly together for a few minutes, slowly dispersed to their duties.

For the rest of that day we were all very quiet and restrained, pity for the dead man being mingled with a dread of taking the wheel when night came.

"The wheel's haunted," said the cook solemnly. "Mark my words, there's more of you will be took the same way Dadd was."

The cook, like myself, had no watch to keep.

The men bore up pretty well until night came on again, and then they unanimously resolved to have a double watch. The cook, sorely against his will, was impressed into the service, and I, glad to oblige my patron, agreed to stay up with Bill.

Some of the pleasure had vanished by the time night came, and I seemed only just to have closed my eyes when Bill came and, with a rough shake or two, informed me that the time had come. Any hope that I might have had of escaping the ordeal was at once

dispelled by his expectant demeanor and the helpful way in which he assisted me with my clothes, and, yawning terribly, I followed him on deck.

The night was not so clear as the preceding one, and the air was chilly, with a little moisture in it. I buttoned up my jacket, and thrust my hands in my pockets.

"Everything quiet?" asked Bill as he stepped up and took the wheel.

"Aye, aye," said Roberts, "quiet as the grave," and, followed by his willing mate, he went below.

I sat on the deck by Bill's side as with a light touch on the wheel he kept the brig to her course. It was weary work sitting there, doing nothing, and thinking of the warm berth below, and I believe that I should have fallen asleep but that my watchful companion stirred me with his foot whenever he saw me nodding.

I suppose I must have sat there, shivering and yawning, for about an hour, when, tired of inactivity, I got up and went and leaned over the side of the vessel. The sound of the water gurgling and lapping by was so soothing that I began to doze.

I was recalled to my senses by a smothered cry from Bill, and, running to him, I found him staring to port in an intense and uncomfortable fashion. At my approach he took one hand from the wheel and gripped my arm so tightly that I was like to have screamed with the pain of it.

"Jack," said he, in a shaky voice, "while you was away something popped his head up and looked over the ship's side."

"You've been dreaming," said I in a voice which was a very fair imitation of Bill's own.

"Dreaming," repeated Bill, "dreaming! Ah, look there!"

He pointed with outstretched finger and my heart seemed to stop beating as I saw a man's head appear above the side. For a brief space it peered at us in silence, and then a dark figure sprang like a cat on to the deck and stood crouching a short distance away.

A mist came before my eyes, and my tongue failed me, but Bill let off a roar such as I have never heard before or since. It was answered from below, both aft and forward, and the men came running up on deck just as they left their beds.

"What's up?" shouted the skipper, glancing aloft.

For answer Bill pointed to the intruder, and the men, who had just caught sight of him, came up and formed a compact knot by the wheel.

"Come over the side, it did," panted Bill. "Come over like a ghost out of the sea."

The skipper took one of the small lamps from the binnacle and, holding it aloft, walked boldly up to the cause of alarm. In the little patch of light we saw a ghastly black bearded man, dripping with water, regarding us with unblinking eyes which glowed red in the light of the lamp.

"Where did you come from?" asked the skipper.

The figure shook its head.

"Where did you come from?" he repeated, walking up and laying his hand on the other's shoulder.

Then the intruder spoke, but in a strange fashion and in strange words. We leaned forward to listen, but even when he repeated them we could make nothing of them.

"He's a furriner," said Roberts. "Best if I've ever 'eard the lingo afore," said Bill. "Does anybody recognize it?"

Nobody did, and the skipper, after another attempt, gave it up, and, falling back upon the universal language of signs, pointed first to the man and then to the sea. The other understood him and in a heavy, slovenly fashion portrayed a man drifting in an open boat and clutching and clambering up the side of a passing ship. As his meaning dawned upon us we rushed to the stern and, leaning over, peered into the gloom, but the night was dark, and we saw nothing.

"W. I." said the skipper, turning to Bill, "th' a mighty yawn, 'take him below and give him some grub and the next time a gentleman calls on you don't make such a confounded row about it."

He went below, followed by the mate, and after some slight hesitation Roberts stepped up to the intruder and signed to him to follow. He came stolidly enough, leaving a trail of water on the deck, and after changing into the dry things we gave him felt to, but without much appearance of hunger, upon some salt beef and biscuits, regarding us between bites with black, lackluster eyes.

"He seems as though he's a-walking in his sleep," said the cook.

"He ain't very hungry," said one of the men. "He seems to mumble his food."

"Hungry?" repeated Bill, who had just left the wheel. "Course he ain't finished. He had his tea last night."

The men stared at him in bewilderment.

"Don't you see?" said Bill, still in a hoarse whisper. "Ain't he ever seen them eyes afore? Don't you know what he used to say about dying? It's Jim Dadd come back to us. Jim Dadd's got another man's body, as he always said he would."

"Rot!" said Roberts, trying to speak bravely, but he got up and, with the others, huddled together at the end of the fore'sle and stared in a bewildered fashion at the sodden face and short, squat figure of our visitor. For his part, having finished his meal, he pushed his plate from him and, leaning back on the locker, looked at the empty tanks.

Roberts caught his eye and with a nod and a wave of his hand indicated the bunks. The fellow rose from the locker and, amid a breathless silence, climbed into one of them—Jim Dadd's!

He slept in the dead sailor's bed that night—the only man in the fore'sle who did sleep properly—and turned out heavily and lumpyish in the morning for breakfast.

The skipper had him on deck after the meal, but could make nothing of him. To all his questions he replied in the strange tongue of the night before, and, though our fellows had been to many ports and knew a word or two of several languages, none of them recognized it. The skipper gave it up at last, and, left to himself, he stared about him for some time regardless of our interest in his movements, and then, leaning heavily against the side of the ship, stayed there so long that we thought he must have fallen asleep.

"He's half dead now!" whispered Roberts.

"Hush!" said Bill. "Mebbe he's been in the water a week or two, and can't quite make it out. See how he's looking at it now."

He stayed on deck all day in the sun, but, as night came on, returned

his fear sufficiently to give him water occasionally, called softly to us.

"Come and look at him," said he. "What's the matter with him?"

"He's dying!" said the cook, with a shudder.

"He can't be going to die yet!" said Bill blankly.

As he spoke the man's eyes seemed to get softer and more lifelike, and he looked at us piteously and helplessly. From face to face he gazed in mute inquiry, and then, striking his chest feebly with his fist, uttered two words.

We looked at each other blankly, and he repeated them eagerly, and again touched his chest.

"It's his name," said the cook, and we all repeated them.

He smiled in an exhausted fashion, and then, rallying his energies, held up a forefinger; as we stared at his new riddle, he lowered it, and held up all four fingers, doubled.

"Come away," quavered the cook. "He's putting a spell on us."

We drew back at that, and back farther still, as he repeated the motions. Then Bill's face cleared suddenly, and he stepped toward him.

"He means his wife and you-knowers!" he shouted eagerly. "This ain't no Jim Dadd!"

It was good then to see how our fellows drew round the dying sailor and strove to cheer him. Bill, to show he understood the finger business, nodded cheerily and held his hand at four different heights from the floor. The last was very low—so low that the man set his lips together and strove to turn his heavy head from us.

"Poor devil!" said Bill. "He wants us to tell his wife and children what's become of him. He must have been dying when he come aboard. What was his name again?"

But the name was not easy to English lips, and we had already forgotten it.

"Ask him again," said the cook, "and write it down. Who's got a pen?"

He went to look for one as Bill turned to the sailor to get him to repeat it. Then he turned round again and eyed us blankly, for by this time the owner had himself forgotten it.

Otto von Gottberg, the German journalist, went to Venezuela when the asphalt troubles were interesting. One day he made arrangements to go to the castle to talk to President Castro.

He was received by a man in a gaudy uniform covered with gold braid. Gottberg knows a little Spanish and talked with this man about the internal and external affairs of Venezuela.

He noticed that the other gold laced people in the room watched him curiously. Finally one of them came to Gottberg and touched him on the shoulder.

"My friend," he said, "I can tell you of a much better one."

"Much better what?" asked Gottberg, mystified.

"Much better barber," said the gold laced one.

"But I want no barber."

"Pardon me, sir. Then why spend your time conversing with one?"

And Gottberg soon discovered that the man he had been interviewing was President Castro's barber. Castro had made him a general, so he would not have to pay him out of the Castro private purse.—Saturday Evening Post.

It beats me" remarked the clerk in the hardware store, "how old fashioned steelyards hold their own. I can remember how popular they were with certain farmers' wives when I was a boy in the country and what delight it was to me to be allowed to try my hand at weighing a roll of butter or a bag of wool. But even then the women and children were the only ones who seemed to take much stock in steelyards. The tradesmen who bought our produce very flatly said that the figures they represented not only could, but did, tell lies, and they proceeded to weigh all our stuff over again on scales that were supposed to have the quality of truthfulness.

"Up to the present day steelyards have had the reputation of being unreliable, but in spite of their ill repute people still buy them. Just why so many householders and tradesmen retain their fondness for an antiquated style of weighing machine when there are so many new and approved contrivances on the market is a puzzle; but, even though mystified, I keep a supply on hand for the benefit of those who stick to the old way of doing things."—New York Post.

Took the Hint.

A young man once came to Lord Rothschild with letters of introduction which stated that he was thrown entirely on his own resources on account of the death of his father, a much respected man, who died from grief on account of his bankruptcy. It was further stated that the young man was very clever and smart, and Lord Rothschild was asked if he could do something for him.

The millionaire took him by the arm and marched him through the city and past the Stock Exchange, introducing him to several well known brokers on the way, and then bade him farewell.

"But," said the young man, who expected great things, "are you not going to do something for me?"

"My dear fellow," replied the other, "if you are as clever as I am told you are you will know what to do yourself."

The young man was smart enough to take the hint and by the prestige his apparent friendship with Lord Rothschild gave him obtained unlimited credit. He soon made headway and became one of the most successful brokers on the exchange.—London Tit-Bits.

MARRIED.

The marriage of Charles Nathan Griswold to Miss Freda Lorraine Peterson took place at the home of the bride's parents, Mr. and Mrs. A. A. Peterson, on Olive street, Saturday evening at 6 o'clock, Dean E. C. Sanderson, of the Divinity School, officiating. The wedding was a very quiet affair, only the immediate relatives of the young people being present. Mr. and Mrs. Griswold left for Portland and other points north on a short honeymoon trip, after which they will go to housekeeping in rooms in the Hall block on East Ninth street. Mr. Griswold is the popular second deputy at the county clerk's office, and his bride has been employed for several years as bookkeeper for S. H. Friendly, the dry goods merchant. Both have hosts of friends who tender sincere congratulations.

In Eugene this morning by Justice of the Peace B. J. Fred Shepard and Emma Etchison, both of Wendling.

POVERTY RIDGE ITEMS

(Special Correspondence.)

Miss Maud Lemon is visiting friends in this vicinity.

Will Frost expects to leave shortly to help dig the Panama canal. We wish him goodspeed, and sincerely hope he will not get the "resignation" habit and resign the first week.

Dan Stephens, our mixologist, has migrated eastward, where he intends to take a course in a training school for nurses.

Harry Taylor is hard at work on a new ox yoke.

"The Goat Shearer's Revenge, or a Tale of the Flexible Shaft" is the title of a short story dealing in the experiences of a goat shearer which we are told will soon be written by one of the budding literary geniuses of the ridge.

Bill Wheeler, our perambulating encyclopedia of agricultural lore, has purchased a blooded hog. Price not given, but rumor has it several yards of blue ribbon won in various livestock exhibitions.

HONEST PACK.

CURED LUMBER.

A. B. Canman, Chicago, writes March 4, 1903: "Having been troubled with Lumbago, at different times, I tried one physician after another, then different ointments and liniments, gave it up altogether. So I tried once more, and got a bottle of Ballard's Snow Liniment, which gave me almost instant relief. I can cheerfully recommend it, and will add my name to your list of sufferers."

For sale by Linn Drug Company.

Notice for Publication.

United States Land Office, Roseburg, Or., Nov. 23, 1906.

Notice is hereby given that in compliance with the provisions of the act of congress of June 3, 1878, entitled an act for the sale of timber lands in the states of California, Oregon, Nevada, and Washington Territory, as extended to all the public land states by act of August 4, 1892, Emma L. Hopkins, of Eugene, Oregon, county of Lane, state of Oregon, has this day filed in this office her sworn statement No. 7624 for the purchase of the NE 1/4 of SW 1/4, E 1/2 of NW 1/4 and NW 1/4 of NE 1/4 of Section No. 34, in Township No. 17 south, range No. 8 west, W. M., and will offer proof to show that the land sought is more valuable for its timber or stone than for agricultural purposes, and to establish her claim to said land before W. W. Calkins, U. S. Commissioner, at his office in Eugene, Oregon, on Saturday, the 6th day of April, 1907.

He names as witnesses: John H. Dick, of Eugene, Oregon; William Neely, of Meadow, Oregon; Harold L. Hopkins, of Albany, Oregon, and Giles Fowler, of Meadow, Oregon.

Any and all persons claiming adversely the above described lands are requested to file their claims in this office on or before said 6th day of April, 1907.

BENJAMIN L. EDDY, Register.

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