

THE TALE OF A BLACK CAT.

"I don't say it wouldn't have happened anyway if there had been a black cat about, for the crew was a run lot, but certain it is that the brig never had an accident until that voyage, and never had another after the beast was dropped overboard with 10 pounds of lead tied about her neck.

A group of old sailors gathered in the bar of the Sailor's Happy Home were talking of the superstitions of sea, and Sam Dawson told the story of the mutiny on board the brig Nancy Jones, which resulted, so the captain believed, from the vessel having shipped a black cat as a stowaway.

"It was in the days of the gold fever in California, I am not sure of the year," Dawson went on, "that the staunch brig Nancy Jones, named for the wife of the captain, put out from Portland bound for 'Frisco, around the horn. She carried a cargo that was expected to make a small fortune for all interested. It consisted of guns, pistols, knives, powder, lead, mining tools and rum, stuff that could be sold at big prices and for gold as soon as we reached port. I was a young fellow then but was made first mate for the voyage, because all the others of the crew were new men to the captain and he was afraid to trust them very much.

The crew were a mixed lot, half a dozen nationalities being represented, and they were a tough lot. We had not been out ten days when some of them were talking openly of deserting the ship as soon as we landed to try their luck at mining. There were two young fellows among them, more boys, but honest Americans, who kept the captain posted as to the talk that went on below. Every man aboard had signed for the voyage out and return, for the captain knew that it would be impossible to ship a crew from 'Frisco.

We had good weather and fair winds, and had rounded the Horn without incident, for it was yet too early for the crew to show their hand. One day when I was at the wheel the captain came up from below with a troubled look on his face and shook his head with a warning glance when I attempted to question him. At the first opportunity he called me into the cabin and closing the door said: 'Sam, there's a devil's witch aboard, and here'll be the devil to pay before this voyage is ended.'

I looked at him in surprise. 'I don't know how it got on the ship, but some of those devils below found it stowed away among the cargo and have been taking care of it.'

'What is it, Captain?' I asked.

'A devil's witch, a black cat.'

I was not much afraid of signs and superstitions in those days, but I'll confess that I felt a thrill of horror pass over me when the captain spoke. It startled me to see the fearless, bluff old sailor so taken back by the presence of a black cat on board the ship.

I suggested to him that we throw the animal overboard at once, but he shook his head. That would only bring on the trouble so much the sooner," he said. "The best we can do is to wait and keep a sharp lookout, for we can't tell yet from what direction the storm will come."

That was all the captain said about the matter at the time, but when I had occasion to enter his cabin again a few days later I found that he had converted it into an arsenal and fort combined. He had brought up a score of guns and pistols from the hold, and they were all carefully loaded and placed where they could be easily reached. The furniture and luggage of the cabin was so placed that it would be easily available for use in barricading the doors and windows.

The same day I learned that the captain had not taken these precautions a moment too soon. The crew were growing more and more restive of discipline, and when I saw Joe, one of the boys, coming up from below with a white, scared face and slip into the captain's cabin, I knew that a crisis was at hand.

Shortly after the night watch went on duty that night the captain called me into the cabin. His face was a trifle pale and he was very grave and quiet, but there was a light in his eyes that meant trouble for any one who opposed him.

"I told you there would be trouble before the end of the voyage, and it has come," he said, when I entered. Joe tells me they are talking mutiny now, and threaten to take possession of the ship tonight."

"What can you do, captain?" I asked.

"Fight!" said the old sailor grimly, as he picked up a rifle and tried the lock to see if it was in good condition.

Just then there was a knock at the door and in response to the captain's summons, a half-breed Portuguese who was acting as second mate entered the cabin.

There was a evil light in the yellow eyes of the fellow, and he shifted uneasily on his feet when he met the unflinching gaze of Captain Jones.

"What is it, Mike?" asked the captain.

The fellow began to stammer out something in broken English about the crew wanting more pay and a share in the profits of the voyage. The captain listened quietly, and drew the fellow out until he nattered courage to unfold the whole plot.

To be brief the crew proposed to mutiny and take possession of the ship and cargo. They would complete the voyage, sail ship and cargo, pecked the proceeds and then try their luck in the gold digging. They were willing to let the captain and

myself go in with them, share and share alike.

While the captain and the fellow were talking, the two lads Ben and Joe, had quietly slipped inside the door behind him and stood there awaiting orders from the captain.

"What will you do, Mike, if the mate and I refuse to join in this plot?" asked the captain.

"We take de ship, we take you! We thirty, you, two, maybe four!" The real savage stood unmasked at last and I saw his hand reach under his coat and clasp the handle of a knife. At the same time the captain gave a signal and the two boys and myself leaped on the mutineer, and in a minute we had him disarmed and securely bound.

"To the forward deck house with him; we will put him in irons at once!" shouted the captain.

As soon as we started across the deck with our prisoner he uttered a shrill cry, and a moment later we heard the rush of feet on the gangway and the sailors rushed on deck to aid their leader in the mutiny.

Back to the cabin! shouted the captain, and the four of us dropped our prisoner, and took refuge inside the improvised fort. With cries like a lot of wild animals, the half-savage crew, all armed to the teeth, were after us in a moment. At the door the captain turned and ordered them to throw down their arms and go back to their quarters.

Cries of "Kill him!" were all the answer he got, and the leaders of the mutiny rushed forward with drawn knives. The captain sprang inside the door, and at the same time drew a pistol in each hand and fired at the men in front.

The two lads and I had guns in our hands and in the excitement of the moment I suppose we must have fired. There was a roar of firearms, shouts and shrieks from the deck, and the smoke cleared away six of the leaders of the mutiny lay on the deck, dead or wounded. The others after releasing Mike, had retired with him for a consultation.

We made use of this brief respite to barricade the doors and windows of the cabin as well as we could, reload the empty guns and otherwise prepare for a renewal of the fight. The captain had cut a small hole in the door, and we left openings at the tops of the window large enough for us to fire through. Armed and barricaded as we were, the mutineers could only carry our stronghold by a determined charge, and then we would be sure to kill a number of them before they could reach us.

It was plain that the determined resistance of the captain and his preparations for a fight had surprised the mutineers. They hesitated to return the attack. The captain was cool and cautious, and the two boys were getting nervous. Blood from the killed and wounded trickled under the door and a pool of it formed on the floor of the cabin. It was not a sight to steady the nerves of young fellows.

The sea was smooth, there was a wind and as the wheel was lashed in place, the ship kept in her course. The moon was shining brightly across the deck, so that peering through our port holes we could see the mutineers gathered in a group forward. They finally decided to renew the attack at long range. Those who did not have guns already brought them up from below, and at a signal from Mike they opened fire on the cabin.

Most of them were unaccustomed to the use of firearms and their shots went wild. The bullets that struck the cabin lodged in the walls or in bedding or in the furniture that had been placed there for that purpose. By keeping away from the port holes we were in no danger.

After a short sharp fusillade the firing ceased and Mike stepped forward and called to the captain. The latter answered and again the mutineers proposed the surrender of the ship to them. By this time the fighting blood of the captain was up, and the only answer he gave the sounder was a pistol shot that broke one of his arms and sent him back to his companions yelling with pain.

It was clear now that as long as the moonlight remained we could hold them at bay without wasting much ammunition, but we knew that when the moon went down and dark settled over the deck they would be able to creep up close, make a sudden rush, break down the door of the cabin, and then we would have to fight them hand to hand. They still outnumbered us six to one, and the outlook was not a cheerful one.

We held a council of war, and decided that the only chance for us was to fire on them at every opportunity while the moonlight remained, reduce their number as much as possible and probably drive them below. We realized that it was now a fight to the death. If we were overpowered the half-savage brutes would make short work of us. They knew that if they were beaten a half-acre at the yard arm waited them.

In two hours the moon would be down and then it would be a fight in the dark, with the advantage on their side. At a signal from the captain we again opened fire on them, and three more of them dropped. The others hurriedly scattered, some taking refuge below, others lying flat on the deck, and occasionally firing a shot at us. They all managed to get out of range and half an hour passed without a shot being fired from either side. The silence was oppressive and we began to fear that they were planning a surprise.

While we were watching and listening intently we heard a slight noise just outside the door of the cabin. We could not make out what it was, but we heard a sound like an empty keg being rolled across the deck, then a dark form sprang out of the shadow of the cabin and disappeared down the gangway.

Again all was still on deck. Capt. Jones opened the door of the cabin a few inches and peered out. By the light of the lantern that swung down from the ceiling we saw on the deck just in front of the cabin door a pile of something that looked like black sand. The captain reached out and picked up a handful of it.

"Powder!" exclaimed the captain, when he had examined it by the light.

The cause of the noise was now clear enough. One of the mutineers had crept up close to the cabin door and emptied there a keg of gunpowder from the cargo. It was evidently their intention to wreck the cabin and put us out of the way by exploding this powder. The flame from our own guns, if we fired on them again, would probably set fire to the pile of powder, and then the fight would be over.

The horror of such a fate and the devilish cunning of the plan caused the captain face to grow a trifle pale but the flash of his eyes and the firm set of his jaws showed that he would be blown up rather than surrender to such a crew of pirates.

Again we held a council of war. The moon was nearing the western horizon, and if we were to get out of the trap in which we had been caught we must act quickly. The captain had just suggested making a dash for the wheel house when we were startled by the most unearthly shriek I ever heard. The cries of maniacs, wild beasts, tortured humans and lost souls all mingled in one, could not exceed that cry in the intensity of its expression of pain and terror.

We sprang to the port holes of our little fort and looked out. The sight was enough to strike terror to the stoutest heart that ever beat in a seaman's breast. Running wildly about the deck, and at every bound uttering a horrible cry, was a flaming beast. At first glance it seemed to be an animal of flame, breathing blue and white fire and staring wildly about with eyes that looked like live coals.

Almost overcome by the horrible fascination of the sight, we were yet able to make out that the burning animal was the black cat that had come aboard as a stowaway. Now it indeed looked like a devil's witch, as the captain had called it.

The savage mutineers had poured oil and rum over it and set fire to it. Then they turned it loose on the deck so that it would run into the powder at our cabin door and blow us into eternity.

For several minutes the mad animal circled around the mainmast. Then it turned suddenly and with a cry louder than before, it started straight toward the cabin door and the mass of loose powder.

"God help us," cried the captain as he put his rifle through the port hole.

A sharp report, a blood curdling cry from the still blazing cat, and silence again.

No explosion followed. The captain's aim had been true but when we four prisoners in that little cabin looked at one another and breathed a prayer of thanks for life, drops of cold perspiration stood thick on every man's face.

The captain turned and opened the door a little way to give us fresh air. Looking out we saw nearly half the mutineers throwing their arms overboard, falling prostrate on the deck and praying aloud for mercy. The captain took in the situation at a glance. Most of the crew had not understood the horrible plot of the leaders to blow us up, and the sight of the flaming cat had frightened them out of their wits.

Calling us to follow, the captain ran out on deck and engaged in a hand to hand struggle with the few remaining mutineers who still showed fight. In less time than it takes to tell it, they were securely bound and the others had gone down on their knees before the captain and begged for life.

As many of the men as the captain thought he could trust, he sent about the work and the leaders of the mutiny he put in irons and sent below. When the excitement had subsided some what I looked for the cat. It could not be found, and one of the sailors afterwards confessed that he had tied a bar of lead about the neck of the animal and threw it overboard.

Next day Mike and two other leaders of the mutiny were tried and sentenced to swing at the yard-arm in the presence of the entire crew. The sentence was carried out at once.

A light rain fell that night, and was followed by a white mist and fog. Near midnight a startled cry from the lookout brought the captain and me on deck armed to face another mutiny.

We found the lookout and two other sailors standing on the deck, dumb with fear looking up at the yard-arm. Following the direction of their eyes I could see through the white mist the outline of a black cat stalking back and forth above the spot where the leaders of the mutiny had paid the penalty of their crime.

When the fog lifted the black specter had disappeared. The Nancy Jones completed her voyage without further incident and continued to sail the sea for many years, earning fortunes for her owners, but whenever she cleared from the port afterwards there was no black cat aboard.

HOW THE WORD "TESTOTALE" WAS COINED.

The late Rev. Joel Jewell, of Troy, Pennsylvania is said to have originated the word "testotale." The story goes that at a public temperance meeting in Hector, New York, in 1828, he introduced into the pledge the letters "O. P." for "old pledge" which pledged against distilled liquors, and "T." for "total," including both distilled and fermented liquors. When names were being added a young man in the gallery said: "Add my name and a 'T' for I am a 'T-totaler.'" Mr. Jewell adopted the word in speeches and writings. Some four years later an Englishman named Dick Turner employed the word, and its origin has also been claimed for him.—June Ladies' Home Journal.

Did you ever think how easily the blood is poisoned by constipation? Bad blood means bad health and premature old age. De Witt's Little Early Risers, the famous little pills, overcome obstinate constipation. W. E. Brock.

WOMAN'S RIGHTS IN LOVE.

Woman's rights! Why the very first right we expect is to be treated better than any body else—better than men treat each other as a body, and better by the individual man than he treats all other women. I abominate the idea of equality and to be mentally slapped on the shoulder and told that I am a "good fellow." I shrink from the idea of independence and cold, proud isolation with my emancipated sister-woman, who struggle into their own coat unassisted, and get red in the face putting on their own scarves, and hang on a strap in the street or in the proud consciousness that they are independent and the equal of men. I never worry myself when a man is on his knees in front of me putting on my over-shoes, as to whether he considers me his equal politically or not. It is sufficient satisfaction for me to see him there. If he hadn't wanted to save me the trouble I suppose he wouldn't have offered. He may even think I am not strong enough for such an arduous duty. That wouldn't hurt my feelings either. I have an idea that he likes it better to think that I cannot do anything troublesome for myself than to believe that I could get along perfectly without him. In fact—here's heresy for you, ye emancipated—I do not in the least mind being dependent on men—provided the men are nice enough. Let them give us all the so-called rights they want to. I shall never get over wanting to get behind some man if I see a cow. Let them give us a vote if they will. I shall want at least three men to go with me to the polls—one to hold my purse, one to hold my gloves, and a third to show me how to cast my vote.—LILLIAN BELL in June Ladies' Home Journal.

One swallow does not make a spring, but one swallow of One Minute Cough Cure brings relief. W. E. Brock.

The Tribune, "founded by Horace Greeley," still retains the original characteristics and personality of its founder under Whitelaw Reid, who gained his early training under Horace Greeley and imbued his newspaper fact, and experience from his great tutor. The paper is still recognized as "Greeley's Tribune."

Mrs. R. DeYoung, Middleburg, Ia., writes: I have used One Minute Cough Cure for six years, both for myself and children, and I consider it the quickest acting and most satisfactory Cough Cure I have ever used. W. E. Brock.

Some one ironically asks a democratic Boston paper to republish the editorial of nine months ago on "The Disappearance of the Deficit." The time for the disappearance is coming, and it will be as soon as the republicans get into working trim in all departments of the government.

De Witt's Star-sparilla cleanses the blood, increases the appetite, and tones up the system. It has benefited many people who have suffered from blood disorders. It will help you. W. E. Brock.

In this country \$8,000,000,000 are in the savings banks and a like amount is covered by life insurance policies. The silver party will have a hard time to convince the multitude interested in these items that they should vote for payment in 50c dollars.

A Monkey and Policeman Time. Patrolman Dundon, of the Central District, had an experience last Friday night which will be likely to remember for many a day. He heard that certain men of vicious habits for whom he had been looking could be found in the basement of Ada Mason's resort on Clark avenue.

It was late when the off he entered the back yard of the premises, and so very dark that he had great difficulty in finding the basement door. Noisily he opened it for fear that if his presence became known there would be an escape. He passed inside and then closed the door and locked it.

All was very still, while the darkness was so intense as to be almost felt. The patrolman concluded he would light a match, and as he thrust his hand into his pocket for one something sprang upon his back and, wrapping its long arms around his throat, commenced to choke him. A warm-sickening breath struck his face. A foot away shone two small eyes which darted rapidly from side to side whenever he struck at them. The officer's helmet twisted on his upraised hair and his face was bathed in a cold, clammy sweat. He

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Children Cry for Pitcher's Castoria.

struggled, struggled desperately, to free himself, but without success. This was kept up until the patrolman was almost exhausted, but finally his club struck the dark object and it released its hold and jumped to the floor. It immediately gave vent to a series of cries very much like those of a spanked child, and soon all the inmates were attracted to the basement.

"Poor Jocko! See how he is bleeding," said one of the party, holding a lamp up so that the light fell upon a shivering monkey in the corner.

"Come, Jocko," said another, picking him up, "tell me what naughty man hurt you."

The monkey blinked its eyes at the patrolman, who explained the circumstances briefly, and with an expression such as patrolman sometimes wear when in an embarrassing predicament, Dundon took his departure.

President Buchanan gave the republican party a hard financial problem, but it was solved promptly and ably. The unpleasant inheritance from the Cleveland administration will be disposed of with equal ability.

It may be said of McKinley that he is the only presidential candidate for a first term since Grant in 1868 with personal popularity enough to change a nominating convention into a ratification meeting.

Since the swindle known as filled cheese made its appearance in this country the exports of cheese have declined 40 per cent. The adulteration of food is injurious to health and ruinous to commerce, and ought to be stamped out as one of the worst frauds of the times.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE GREAT BATTLE

Of November 3d are Already Well Under Way. A New

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