There's going to be a railroad up in Iceland,
In Iceland,
And what a funny railroad it will be!
I would never think of Iceland as a nice land,
A nice land,
For week ends at a cottage by the sea.
For the trains will very likely go on runners like a sleigh,
And they'll harness up the engine in a jingle bells array.
At least, I cant' imagine it in any other way,
In Iceland,

You won't need your thermometers in Iceland,
In Iceland,
And you won't have any fretful vis a vis;
For up there in that anything but spice land,
But spice land,
The cars are always cold as they can be.
Oh, they'll have to dig the sleepers out a dozen times a day,
Or perhaps they'll tunnel through the great big icebergs in the bay,
And that will be just bully till the icebergs move away,
In Iceland,

A journey will be jolly up in Iceland,
In Iceland,
The scenery's so wonderful to see;
It will seem like nothing short of paradise land,
Paradise land,
As the open cars go whirling o'er the lea.
They won't have any schedule so there'll never be delay,
The rates will be so low that almost anyone can pay,
For in that curious climate it is Christmas every day,
In Iceland.

Little Baby Beth

By Caroline H. Stanley.

IT was New Year's eve. Downstairs in the parlor was Baby Beth's Christmas tree, just as it had been arranged a week ago—bisque doll, toys, glittering balls, marvelous sugar dogs and bears and "elphunts," candy apples and hearts, popcorn, colored tapers just ready to be lighted—and upstairs Baby Beth was dying. All week long, with the fierceness of a tigress fighting for her young, Margaret Thorne had fought for her child's life. From the moment that the first hoarse cough smote upon her ear and Beth had said, "Mamma, it hurts me here when I toff," she had lost no time. All that doctors, nurses, servants, friends—mother love—could do had been done, and now in her darkened chamber the mother sat with her baby on her knees and waited. Toward night a change had come. The harsh cough ceased, the panting breath came more quietly.

"Didn't she seem easier?" she had asked, and the doctor had answered briefly, "Yes." Then, after an interval of waiting, "Wasn't her breathing less labored?" The doctor made no reply.

"Doctor," piteously, "don't you think she is better?"

Dr. Lemoyne turned away. He had practiced many years, and witnessed many a scene like this, but to his kind heart each one was new.

"My child," he said, "she will never be any better—she is dying."

Margaret Thorne made no outcry, shed no tear—she would have "to-morrow and all after life for tears," to-day she had—her baby. She bent over the child and half stretched out her arms with the impulse to take her and go somewhere—anywhere—away from everybody. It was the instinct of the wounded animal. Then she fell into the monotonous swinging motion of the knees, familiar to mothers, patting her little one softly the while as if she were putting her to sleep.

It was heart-breaking. The women to whom the child was only a dear little baby who "would be better off in heaven," as the phrase goes, crept about the room weeping softly with aching hearts. After a time Margaret looked up.

"Doctor," she asked, "how long?"

"I can hardly tell," he answered, "but only a few hours at best, I think."

She turned to the women.

"Send for her father," she said briefly.

There was a slight stir of surprise. Significant glances passed from one to another behind her bowed head. Then they went out to do her bidding.

The message was quickly sent and as quickly answered. The case brooked no delay. Margaret Thorne heard the familiar step in the hall, then in the room below. A moment later he came in. The women spoke to him in the sympathetic key of the sick room and the doctor silently wrung his hand. Margaret looked up with a slight movement of the head, but did not offer him her hand.

"Margaret," he said, "it was very good of you to send for me."

"It was only right," she said, her voice hardening in her efforts to steady it; "she is your child, too."

He made no effort at conversation, and so they sat, the silence of death upon them. It grew oppressive. The women, one by one, stole out of the room, and the doctor finally muttered something about going into the library to lie down, telling them to call him if there should be any change. The two were left alone with the dying child.

It was a strange scene. Each held a baby hand; each with a burden of grief unutterable bent over the little form and watched the flickering life go out; and each shut up and double-locked and bolted the heart that the other should not know what was therein. They were but a hand's breadth apart, but between them was a great gulf fixed.

John Thorne had not seen his child since that never-to-be-forgotten day when he gave her and his home into Margaret's hands and went forth alone. How he had longed for a sight of the baby face, for a touch of the baby hands, none but himself would ever know. But he had been too proud to ask to see her, and Margaret had said in bitter scorn, "It is the way of the sex. A woman would never have forgotten her own child." And she had clasped Beth passionately to her heart and cried out, "I will be father and mother both to you, my baby, my poor, forsaken baby."

As he bent over her now, all his heart in his eyes, a strange feeling of doubt began tugging at her heart. Had he really loved the child like this? Uncomfortable regrets took possession of her. Could she have misjudged him? She might have sent Beth to see him occasionally, it seemed to her now, when she had her all the time. He had been more generous than she.

She glanced furtively at him. He rested his head on his right hand, his left clasping Beth's. His eyes were fixed on the child as if he would in these few moments left feast his famished heart upon that which had been so long withheld. Something in his position made Margaret think of one other night when they had sat like this and watched Beth through the croup, and how they had felt that if God would only spare her they could have nothing in life to trouble them again. How gentle and tender John had been that night!

And then there was the time that Beth was burned and John had walked with her the whole night long and would not even let the mother rest him, because "she was weak and he was strong," he had said. How the memories came thronging upon her! Oh, if she could only wake and find that this year had been a dream—a horrible dream—and there had been no quarrel!

The clock ticked on, the fire sputtered fitfully, but the silence of the vigil was unbroken. John Thorne raised his head and looked at Margaret as she lay with closed eyes. Her white, suffering face touched his heart. How much older she looked. It was only four years since she had stood a bride of nineteen and given herself to him. Why, could it be only four years? It seemed like an eternity.

The breath comes slowly. The little hands are very still, and yet, O baby fingers, through the solemn watches of this night, thou'rt gathering up the tangled, broken threads of these two lives, and with a touch no other hand might use, art weaving them together, deftly, surely, with heaven-sent skill!

There was a slight stir. The mother and father felt a quiver pass through the little form. With startled faces they bent over her. There was a gasp, a sudden throwing up of the little hands—then all was still.

In an instant his arms were around her, her head on his breast.

"Margaret, my wife!"

"O John, John!" she said.

The clock struck twelve. A New Year had dawned.

* * * * * * *

In the twilight of a summer day a man and woman stand beside a little grave. There is an air of subdued sadness about them that tells to whom the little mound belongs, and yet when they speak it is hopefully and cheerfully. It is a tiny grave—"only a baby," a stranger would say—but we who have stood beside such know that love and grief are not measured by feet and inches.

The glory of the setting sun fills the place. It lights up the faces of father and mother as they lay, with loving hands, forget-me-nots upon the green turf, and then, hand in hand, go forth. A stray sunbeam falls across the white stone. We stoop to read the inscription. It is a very simple one:

BABY BETH.
AGED THREE.

"And a little child shall lead them."
—The Housewife.

CHRISTMAS IN DIXIE.

A Quaint Custom the Survival of Slavery Days.

In some parts of the South, notably Alabama, the observance of Christmas is kept up after the manner of slavery days. Two weeks before the festival brawny colored men in the employ of the plantation owner search out a timber tract, fell the tree of greatest size, cut off the trunk where the circumference is greatest, big enough to admit of it filling the space of the open hearth, fasten heavy chains to it by driving in spikes, haul it to the nearest river or pond, sink it and anchor it well below the surface. On Christmas eve it is drawn up, taken to the owner's mansion and in the presence of his family, relatives and friends the dripping log is placed on a roaring fire in the hearth. To reduce the water-soaked wood to ashes is a slow process and sometimes a week elapses before this is accomplished. In the meantime the plantation darkies do not work while the incineration is in progress. On Christmas eve the hostess serves the company with eggnog and she supplies them with eatables while the log sizzles in the fire place. The banjo and guitar are brought into play and the old melodies are sung and jigs and other dances are gone through with zest. The white folks take a hand in the fun making, too, and with song and story make the colored folks happy. At some of these gatherings 300 persons take part, the old, capacious mansion giving ample room for all.

That Costly Season.

"What makes your father look so blue to-night?"

"S—s—sh! Somebody thoughtlessly mentioned the fact that Christmas is coming."—Chicago Post.

LET'S KEEP SANTA CLAUS.

Memory of Happy Days of Long Ago Protects St. Nick.

THE memory of happy days long ago should ever protect Santa Claus. When your boy looks you squarely in the eye and says: "Papa, Clarence McGuffy said there isn't any Santa Claus and I punched him, for I know there is," what are you going to do? Forgive the blow and cling to a happy myth or destroy your boy's faith in Santa Claus, and, incidentally in a good many other things he believes in, but doesn't understand?

"Why discuss the matter at all?" is a natural question. Because it is a question that always arises at Christmas time. An Eastern preacher is discussing it from the pulpit and holds that deceit is sin and that the truth and only the truth is the best steady diet for both young and old.

The man or woman who would take from a child his sublime faith in a Mysterious Being, who rewards all the good children and skips the bad ones on his annual tour of countless chimneys, has a shriveled heart. We want more happiness; not less. We need more good influences in the lives of our children, not fewer. Nothing but good ever came from the Santa Claus Myth. He is a glorious ghost, a delicious impossibility, is this friend of the children. He teaches kindness, charity, goodness. He inspires and encourages. He brightens the lives of millions of little ones with the joy of anticipation and the gladness of receiving. He is a companion of brownies and elves and fairies, and flowers that speak.

When we abolish Merry Old St. Nick lets burn all the story books, the fairy tales, and all the make-believes that wield an influence for good in the lives of children. But Santa Claus is in no danger, for if the children love him, so do the parents. Memory of happy days of long ago protects him. A century hence he will be making his rounds and laughing, with the children, at those who would destroy him.—Cincinnati Post.

The Week Before.

'Tis the week before Christmas, and all through the place
Each woman goes shopping, with worn, weary face;
And held in her hand is a long, fearsome list
Of names that could simply by no means be missed—
So shopping, and shopping, and shopping they go
Bumped, shoved, pushed, and tangled in squad and in row.

'Tis the week before Christmas, and father is sad
Though mother and sisters are all of them glad.
Poor father reflects on the state of his wealth
And broods on expenses that tell on his health—
But once in the year come the glad Christmas Day;
The rest of the year's for poor father to pay.

'Tis the week before Christmas—and now the coy girl
Puts on her glad garments, adjusts her cute curl
And sends for the lover with whom she has fussed,
To tell him she knows he's the one she should trust,
And he—he forgives her. The gas is turned low—
And—this is the week before Christmas, you know.

'Tis the week before Christmas, and all through the home
The children are watched as they aimlessly roam,
And when they approach any wardrobe or chest
They are told they must stop—and obey the behest;
And O, the sweet children! So faith ful are they
At Sunday school—Santa will come Christmas Day.

'Tis the week before Christmas, and all through the land
Each poet is toiling with pen in his hand
At work on the parody based on the rhyme
That somebody jingled out once on a time—
But where is the prophet who wishes to sing
The row that the week after Christmas will bring?
—W. D. Nesbit, in Chicago Tribune.

Plum Pudding.

One pound of grated bread, one and a quarter pounds of grated suet, one pound of raisins, one pound of brown sugar, twelve eggs, well beaten; two wineglassfuls of brandy, one-quarter pound of citron, cut fine. Mix all these the night before. In the morning before putting it in the cloth stir two tablespoonfuls of wheat flour, beat the cloth and sprinkle with flour. Tie tightly and boil four hours. Put a plate turned on the under part in the pot under the pudding, add cinnamon and nutmeg if liked.

Strange Origin of Christmas Tree.

Most of us know that the Christmas tree comes to us direct from Germany. And we know of the tree worship of the Druids which obtained in England and France, and which probably had some influence on the later use of the tree in the Christian festival. But we do not all know that a similar festival with the tree as a crowning feature is observed among many heathen nations, and that it comes from sun worship, which is older than history. The revival of the sun after the winter solstice has ever been the subject of rejoicing and of celebration by ceremonies which represent the new light brought back to the world. Our tree, with its small candles, its gilded knicknacks and toys for the children, is a direct descendant of this old festival in honor of the sun.

Traces of it exist in Iceland, where the "service tree" is found adorned with burning lights during Christmas night. The English yule log is a faint survival of this festival. But it is beyond these that I wish to draw your attention, back further even than the Druid mysteries of the Gallic forests. It is to China, that home of all wonders and of all history. It has been shown that as long ago as 247 B. C. a tree with a hundred lamps and flowers was placed on the steps of the audience hall. This appears again in the records of Princess Yang, who lived 713-755 A. D., and who caused a hundred-lamp tree eighty feet high to be erected on a mountain. It was lighted during New Year's night, and the illumination was seen for hundreds of miles, eclipsing the light of the moon. This candle tree is no longer lighted in China, being replaced by an unusual number of lanterns, which are hung everywhere. A suggestion of the tree, however, still survives in Japan. At the New Year two evergreen trees are placed without, on either side of the door. Their tops are tied together with the sacred band of straw, and various objects, dried lobsters and oranges are fastened to their branches.—Woman's Home Companion.

Curious Custom of Oxfordshire.

In some places in Oxfordshire, England, it was the right of every maid servant to ask the hired man for a bit of ivy to trim the house. If he turned a deaf ear to her importunities or forgot her request she would steal a pair of his breeches and nail them to the gate in the yard or on the highway. This was supposed to debar him from all privileges of the mistletoe.

Easy to Be Happy.

Mrs. Nexdoor—Aren't you always worried half to death when it comes to buying a Christmas present for your husband?

Mrs. Sunshine—Mr, no! I buy my husband something I want for myself, and he buys me something he wants for himself, and then we trade.

Tommy Got One.

Tommy (on Christmas morning)—Where does Santa Claus get all his stuff, mamma?

Mamma—Oh, he buys it.

Tommy—Well, he must be a jay to let anyone palm off a tin watch on him!—Town Topics.

Blow the trumpet, beat the drum,
Glad am I that Santa's come!

THE IRON PIRATE

A Plain Tale of Strange Happenings on the Sea

By MAX PEMBERTON

CHAPTER II.—(Continued.)

"That, Mister Black," he said, putting a miniature of exquisite finish against the white fur on the floor, "is a portrait of the Emperor Napoleon, sometime in the possession of the Empress Josephine; that is a gold chain—he was eighteen carat—once the property of Don Carlos; here is the pen with which Francis Drake wrote his last letter to the Queen Elizabeth—beautiful goods as ever was, and cost moosh money!"

"To the dead with your much money," said the Captain with an angry gesture, as he snatched the trinkets from him, and eyed them to my vast surprise with the air of a practiced connoisseur; "let's handle the stuff, and don't gibber. How much for this?" He held up the miniature, and admiration betrayed itself in his eyes.

"He was painted by Sir William Ross, and I sell him for two hundred pounds, my Captain. Not a peny less, or I'm a ruined man!"

"The Jew a ruined man! Hark at him! Four-Eyes"—this to a great lanky fellow who lay asleep in the corner—"the little Jew can't sell 'em under two hundred, I reckon; oh, certainly not; why, of course. Here you, Splinters, pay him for a thick-skinned, thieving shark, and give him a hundred for the others."

The boy Splinters, who was a black lad, seemingly about 12 years old, came up at the word, and took a great canvas bag from a hook on the wall. He counted three hundred gold pieces on the floor—pieces of all coinages in Europe and America, as they appeared to be by their faces, and Hall picked them up.

"Mister Captain," he said, "I shall have waiting for me at Plymouth to-morrow a relic of the great John Hawkins, which, as I'm alive, you shouldn't miss. I have heard them say that it is the very sword with which he cut the Spaniards' beards. Since you have told me that you sail to-morrow, I have thought, if you put me on your ship across to Plymouth, I could show you the goods, and you shall have them cheap—beautiful goods, if I lose by them."

Now, instead of answering this appeal as he had done the others, with his great guffaw and banter, Captain Black turned upon Hall, and his face lit up with passion. I saw that his eyes gave one fiery look, while he clenched his fist as though to strike the man as he sat, but then he restrained himself.

"You want to come aboard my boat, do you?" drawled the Captain, as he softened his voice to a fine tone of sarcasm. "The dealer wants a cheap passage; so-ho, what do you say, Four-Eyes; shall we take the man aboard?"

Four-Eyes sat up deliberately, and struck himself on the chest several times as though to knock the sleep out of him. He seemed to be a brawny, thick-set Irishman, gigantic in limb, with a more honest countenance than his fellows. I thought him a man of some deliberation, for he stared at the Captain and at Hall before he answered the question put to him. When he did give reply, it was in a rich, rolling voice, which would have given ornament to the veriest commonplace.

"Ol'd take him aboard," he shouted, leaning back as though he had spoken wisdom, and then he nodded to the Captain, and the Captain nodded to him.

"We sail at midnight, tide serving," said the Captain, as he picked up the miniature and the other things; "you can come aboard when you like—here, boy, lock these in the chest."

The boy put out his hand to take the things, but in his fear or his clumsiness, he dropped the miniature, and it cracked upon the floor. As the lad stood quivering and terror-struck, Black turned upon him, almost foaming at the lips.

"You clumsy young cub, what d'ye mean by that?" he asked; and then, as the boy fell on his knees to beg for mercy, casting one pitiful look towards me—he kicked him with his foot, crying:

"Here, give him a dozen with your strap, one of you."

He had but to say the words, when a colossal brute seized the boy in his grip, and held his head downward to the table board, while another stripped his shirt off and struck him blow after blow with the great buckle, so that the flesh was torn, while the blood trickled upon the floor.

When the lad fainted they gave him a few kicks with their heavy boots, and he lay like a log on the floor, until the ruffian named "Roaring John" picked him up and threw him into the next room. The incident was forgotten at once, and Captain Black became quite merry.

Food was put upon the table. It was rich food, stews, with a profuse display of oysters, chickens, boiled, roast, fine French trifles pastles ices. I wished to be away from a place whose atmosphere poisoned me. I whispered this thought to Hall and he said, "Yes," and rose to go, but the Captain pulled him back, crying:

"What, little Jew, you wouldn't eat at other people's cost! Down with it, man, down with it; fill your pockets, stuff 'em to the top. Let's see you laugh, old wizen-face, a great sixty per cent croak coming from your very boots—here, you, John, give the man who hasn't got any money some food."

The men were becoming furiously offensive. One of them held Hall while the others forced food down his throat, and the man "Roaring John" attempted to pay me a similar compliment, but I struck his hand, and he drew a knife, turning on me. The action was foolish, for in a moment a tumult ensued. I heard fierce cries, the smash of overturned boards and lights, and remembered no more than some terrific blows delivered with my left, a sharp pain in my right shoulder as a knife went home, the voice of Hall crying, "Make for the door—the door," and the great yell of Captain Black above the others. His word, no doubt, saved us from greater harm; for when I had thought that my foolhardiness had undone us, and that we should never leave the place alive, I found myself in the street with Hall at my side, he torn and bleeding as I was, but from a slight wound only.

"That was near ending badly," he said, looking at the skin-deep cut on my shoulder.

"Hall, what does it mean?" I asked. "Who are these men, and what business carries you amongst them?"

"That you'll learn when you open the papers. Did you hear him ask me to sail with him from Dieppe to-morrow?"

"I did, and I believe you're fool enough to go."

"I must risk that and more, as I have risked it many a time. Once aboard his yacht I shall have the key which will unlock six feet of rope for that man."

It was light with the roseate, warm light of a late summer's dawn as we reached the hotel. Paris slept. I was hungry for sleep, and too tired to think more of the strange dream-like scene I had witnessed; but Hall followed me to my bedroom and had yet a word to say.

"Before we part I want to ask you to do me yet one more service. Your yacht is at Calais. Will you go aboard this morning and take her round to Plymouth? There ask for news of the American's yacht—he has only hired her, and she is called La France. News of the yacht will be news of me, and I shall be glad to think that someone is at my back in this big risk. If you should not hear of me, wait a month; but if you get definite proof of my death, break the seal of the papers you hold and read."

So saying, he left me with a hearty handshake. Poor fellow, I did not know then that I should break the seal of his papers within three days.

CHAPTER III.

The next morning while I was at breakfast a servant of the hotel entered to tell me that a man who wished to speak with me was waiting outside. I said, "Send the man here," and presently he entered, when to my intense surprise I found him to be no other than one of the ruffians—the one called "Four-Eyes," I had met on the previous evening. He walked into the room with a seaman's lurch. His first words were somewhat unexpected:

"Oi was priest's boy in Tipperary," said he, and then he looked round as if that information should put him on good terms with us.

"Will you sit down, please?" was my request as he stood fingering his hat.

"Thanking yer honor, it's meself that ain't alay on them land craft. I'll be standin', sure, an' gettin' to the writin' which is fur yer honor's ear alone as me instruckthshuns goes."

He gave me a letter, well written on good paper. I write it here:

"Captain Black presents his compliments to Mr. Mark Strong, and hopes that it will be his privilege to receive him on his yacht La France, now lying ove ragninst the American vessel Portland, in Dieppe harbor, at 11 to-night."

Now, that was a curious thing, indeed. Not only did it appear that my pretense of being Hall's partner in trade was completely unmasked by this man, but he had my name. Whether such knowledge was good for me I could not then say; but I made up my mind to act with cunning and to shield Hall in so far as was possible.

"Did your master tell you to wait for any answer?" I asked suddenly.

"Is it for the likes of me to be advisin' yer honor? 'Sure,' says he, 'if the gentleman has the moind to wroite he'll wroite, if he has the moind to come aboard, he'll come aboard.'"

"Tell your master, with my compliments," I said, "that I will come another time—I have business in Paris to-day."

He looked at me earnestly, and when he spoke again his voice had a fatherly ring. "If I make bold, it's yer honor's forgiveness I ask—but, if it was me that was in Paris I'd stay there."

When he was gone, the others, who had not spoken, turned to me, their eyes asking for an explanation.

"One of Hall's friends," I said, trying to look unconcerned, "the mate on the yacht La France—the vessel he joins to-day."

Roderick tapped the table with his fingers; Mary was very white, I thought.

"He knows a queer company," I added, with a grim attempt at jocularity, "they're almost as rough as he is."

"Do you still mean to sail to-night?" asked Roderick.

"I must; I have made a promise to reach Plymouth without a moment's delay."

"Then I sail with you," said he, being very wide-awake.

"Oh, but you can't leave Paris; you promised Mary!"

"Yes, and I release him at once," interrupted Mary, the color coming and going in her pretty cheeks. "I shall sail from Calais to-night, with you and Roderick."

"We mean to come," added Roderick. "Go and pack your things, Mary; I have something to say to Mark."

We were alone, he and I, but there was between us the first shadow that had come upon our friendship.

"Well," said he, "how much am I to know? I distrust Hall, who seems to me a perfect madman. He'll drag you into some mess, if you'll let him. I suppose there's no danger yet or you wouldn't let Mary come?"

"There can be no risk now—we are going for a three days' cruise in the Channel, that is all."

I went at once to the office of the police, and laid as much of the case before one of the heads as I thought needful to my purpose. He laughed at me; the yacht La France was known to him as the property of an eccentric American millionaire, and he could not conceive that anyone might be in danger aboard her. As there was no hope from him, I drove to the embassy, where one of the clerks heard my whole story; and while inwardly laughing at my fears, as I could see, promised to telegraph to a friend in Calais, and get a message delivered that might call Hall back to Paris.

I had done all in my power, and I returned to the hotel, but the others had left for the station. Thither I followed them, instructing a servant to come to me if any telegram should be sent; and so reached the train. It was not, however, until the very moment of our departure that a messenger raced to our carriage, and thrust a paper at me; and then I knew that my warning had come too late. The paper said:

"La France has sailed, and your friend with her."

CHAPTER IV.

It was on the morning of the second day; the wind playing fickle from east by south, and the sea agold with the light of an August sun. The yacht lay without life in her sails, the flow of the swell beating lazily upon her, and the great mainsail rocking on the boom. We had been out twenty-four hours, and had not made a couple of hundred miles. The delay angered every man aboard the Celais, since every man aboard knew that it was a matter of concern to me to overtake the American yacht, La France, and that a life might go with long-continued failure.

The morning passed, a long morning, with a sea like a mirror, and the sun as a great circle of red fire in the haze. Hour after hour we walked from the fore-hatch to the tiller, from the tiller to the fore-hatch, varying the exercise with a full inspection of every craft that showed above the horizon. At six bells some dark and dirty clouds rose up from the south, and twenty hands pointed to them. Half an hour later there was a shrill whistling in the shrouds, and the rain began to patter on the deck, while the booms fretted, and we relieved her in part of her press of sail. When the squall struck us at last, the Channel was foaming with long lines of choppy seas; and the sky southward was dark as ink.

During one hour, when we must have made eleven knots, the wind blew strong, and was fresh again after that. Nor did the breeze fall, but stiffened towards night, so that in the first bell, when we came up from dinner, the Celsis was straining and foaming as she bent under her press of canvas, and it needed a sailor's foot to tread her decks. We had hardly come above when we heard Dan hailing:

"Yacht on the port bow."

"What name?" came from twenty throats.

"La France," said Dan, and the words had scarce left his lips when the skipper roared the order:

"Stand by to go about!"

For some minutes the words "'bout ship" were not spoken. The schooner held her course, and rapidly drew up with the yacht we had set out to seek. From the first there was no doubt about her name, which she displayed in great letters of gold above her figurehead. When she had made some few hundred yards towards the coast, she jibbed round of a sudden, with an appalling wrench at the horse; and there being, as it appeared, no hand either at the peak halyards or the throat halyards, the mainsail presently showed a great rent near the luff, while the foresail had torn free from the bolt ropes of the stay, and was presenting a sorry spectacle as the yacht went about, and away towards France again.

The obvious fact that the yacht we had sought and run down was without living men upon her decks had taken the lilt from the seamen's merry tongues, and a gloom settled on us all. Perhaps it was more than a mere surmise, for an uncanny feeling of something dreadful to come took hold of me.

"Skipper," said I, "order a boat; I'm going aboard her."

"When the wind falls, perhaps; but now!" and he shrugged his shoulders.

As the dark began to fall and the night breeze to blow fresh, while the yacht ahead of us swung here and there, almost making circles about us, we hove to for the time and watched her. I begged Mary to go below, but she received the suggestion with merriment.

"Go below, when the men say there's fun coming! Why should I go below?"

"Because it may be serious fun."

The skipper called presently for a blue flare, which cast a glowing light for many hundred yards, and still left us uncertain.

"Flash again," said the skipper, and as the blue light flashed we saw right ahead of us the wanderer we sought; but she was bearing down upon us.

(To be continued.)

CREDIT WITH PETER.

How a Church-Goer put 75 cents in Contribution Box.

Being an occasional church-goer, he was supposed to be able to behave properly and preserve his equanimity through any ordinary service. His family was therefore somewhat curious when he returned from church one Sunday noon with a most disconsolate air, says the Providence Journal.

"Didn't like the sermon?" asked his wife.

"Oh, the sermon was all right, I guess,' said he, glumly.

"Well, what's the matter?" she persisted.

"Nothing's the matter," he retorted sharply. "Can't a man look solemn when he gets back from a solemn religious service without causing a riot in his own home?"

His wife said nothing for a time, and then, with a happy inspiration, asked casually:

"How much did you put in the contribution box to-day?"

There was a pronounced pause, and then the reply came with serious deliberation:

"Seventy-five cents."

"Wasn't that rather liberal?" she inquired, knowing that he usually played a quarter limit.

"Rather," he answered. "Rather liberal, it struck me. Rather too liberal."

Then he chuckled and went on without further urging.

"You see, it was this way: Was sitting alone in a back seat on the other aisle. When the deacon started down for the contribution I felt for some change and found I had just two pieces, a quarter and a half. Somehow, I felt pretty good-natured and was thinking of putting in the half instead of the quarter, as usual. While I was deliberating I'm blessed if the half didn't slip out of my fingers and roll out into the aisle, close to the second pew in front. I didn't want to scramble for it then and figured I could get it at the close of the service. So I sat back and waited for the box to come along, dropping in the quarter.

"Just as he got to me, the deacon noticed that he was half a lap ahead of the deacon on the other side, and stopped there to wait. And naturally, while he was waiting, his eye lit on the half-dollar lying in the aisle in front of him.

And what did that old sinner do but grab for it, look around curiously a minute and then drop it into the box. And I didn't have the nerve to breathe a word. Just sat like a dummy and watched the half go with the quarter. Seventy-five cents gone to the angels and me without another cent in my clothes, having to walk home instead of taking a trolley. Wouldn't that make you mad?"

Then he added, chuckling again: "What I'm wondering now is whether I get credit from St. Peter for giving the whole 75 cents or just a quarter."

"You won't get credit for any of it," observed his wife. "St. Peter'll check off the credit for the quarter to cover your wicked feelings when you saw the half-dollar go, too."

"That'd be a mean trick," he responded, as he reached for his Sunday paper.

Inherited Heroism.

"Did he get all those medals for saving people?"

"No; he got them by inheritance. His father did the saving."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.