

# The Strumpet Sea

By BEN AMES WILLIAMS

## CHAPTER XI—Continued

Richard's boat was near the dead whale, moving to and fro, Richard standing high in the bow and pointing this way and that to guide Pip at the steering oar; and Mary could see now and then a man lean over-side and pick something up out of the water with both hands. Mary looked around for information. Peter was aft; but Isaiah was here with them, his elbows on the rail, squinting at the boats yonder. Mary asked him what they were doing.

"A...s cutting a hole in the small so's he can tow her in."

"I mean, what's Richard picking up?"

"Oh, might be grease," he suggested. "You see it sometimes, where a whale's cove." "

Mary, looking down into Richard's boat, saw that it was half full of some strange stuff, noisome in appearance, a mass of gouts and chunks and fragments deep gray in color, from which an unpleasant odor rose. The stuff was piled around the feet of the men, the whole whaleboat messed with it. Peter came here beside them; and he called down to his brother:

"What's all that gurry, Dick?"

Richard looked up at them with calm eyes; but then his own excitement made him grin like a proud, triumphant boy. He threw up his hand. "Greasy luck today, Peter. It's ambergris!" he cried.

Mary remembered vaguely having heard someone at some time speak of "ambergris." She had an obscure impression that it was valuable, and she decided now with an amused grimace that it must be, or Richard would not have brought his boatload of ill-smelling stuff back to the Ventura. He leaped to the deck beside them, dripping with his exertions, and drunk with the hot taste of victory; and as the men swung the whaleboat aboard he spoke to Peter.

"What's ambergris good for, Richard? It smells awful."

Richard chuckled reassuringly. "It'll get over that as soon as it dries out. They use it to make perfumes!"

"Where does ambergris come from?"

"I guess nobody knows just what it is. A whale gets rid of it while he's dying, just the way a trout will clean out its stomach on the hook. You'll see chunks of squid hair as big as a man floating around a whale after he's fin out; and sometimes you find ambergris the same way."

Mary watched him, her eyes still as woodland pools, remembering what she had seen this tall young man do a while ago. When he came toward her again, she could not face him, and like one waking she looked around, and realized for the first time that George was no longer here beside her. She saw him by the cabin skylight aft.

Richard returned past her. "Got to go get dry," he said. She followed him toward where George stood; and George stopped Richard, said in unstinted praise:

"That's the finest thing I ever saw or heard of, Cap'n Corr."

Richard flushed with pleasure; and Mary linked her arm through her husband's and held tight to it, and echoed: "Did you ever see anything so wonderful?"

Richard grinned. "It was a pretty good fight," he admitted.

"It was great," George agreed. "I didn't take a full breath for ten minutes." He smiled. "If that's whaling, Cap'n Corr, I'll stick to the ministry."

Richard chuckled in shy pleasure. "Shucks, most times it's like beefing a steer. Nine whales out of ten just make a little run and then take it; and the bowheads don't even do that."

"A bowhead killed Uncle Tom," Mary remembered.

"Oh, sometimes they'll act bad." The business of cutting in the dead whale was pushed at top speed to beat the threat of weather. Mary watched the long spades slice through blubber and flesh and gristle as easily as hot butter. Peter, she saw, was shrewd and skillful at this business.

Mary watched the whole operation, from the first cut into the black carcass scarred white by the sharks. The sharp blades the men used fascinated her. Hiram was kept busy grinding them, Tommy turning for him. She and George watched proceedings together; and once when Richard stopped near them, she said:

"All these spades and harpoons and lances are pretty deadly, aren't they. I should think you'd be nervous, having them around."

"Well, they're our tools," he reminded her. "We get used to them." And he said:

"You know, Peter's the best I ever saw on the cutting stage." She thought he wished to restore Peter's stature in her eyes, and said agreeably:

"I could see that. He knows just where to cut, doesn't he?"

All that night the decks were a red-lighted inferno of smoke and flame, and the smell of hot oil penetrated every part of the ship.

It would be days before the Ventura was spick and span again. The whale, beside the ambergris, added sixteen barrels of spermaceti and forty-odd of oil to their cargo; but the ambergris had captured the imagination of every man aboard.

That single small barrel which a strong man could lift and carry away was worth thousands of dollars. No one could be sure exactly how much, and every man aboard was wondering.

After they found the ambergris, Richard, who had till then maintained a careful dignity, as though to support his new part as Captain of the Ventura, became more expansive. Mary thought his luck had given him a sense of his own powers on which now he could build. At table he was more ready to talk about himself, and about the things he had seen in his ten years of seafaring. When he spoke of whales and whaling, even George was interested and attentive; but sometimes, chuckling at his memories, Richard spoke of brawling days ashore.

One day he related a rather gay tale of wine and women that nettled George. Leaving Richard in the outer cabin he stalked out, Mary quick on his heels. George led Mary into her own cabin and closed the door and he said at once:

"Mary, I don't like that talk! Captain Corr ought to mind his tongue."

She hesitated, seeing how anger shook him, wondering in embarrassment whether Richard could hear. Then she heard Richard go on deck. "Don't you think you're a little unreasonable, George?" she pleaded. "Of course, you're a minister, and

He said hoarsely, his lips against her ear: "I could do anything, with a woman like you."

He was pressing her down. She had to fight away, to fight to her feet in a sort of blind panic, to face him with blazing eyes, scrubbing at her lips which again now he had kissed, crying in low tight tones:

"Stop it, Peter! Stop it! Get out of here!"

She flung him back. He stood against the door, muttering brokenly. "I'm sorry. I couldn't help it. You're so sweet! I lost my head!"

"Get out of here!"

He said in sudden sullen wrath: "You're not fooling me, you know! You're always been crazy about Dick! You never would look at me!"

She took a quick step toward him, so angry that he recoiled; and he opened, behind him, the cabin door. She said: "If you ever come in here again, I'll . . ."

He exclaimed in quick alarm: "Sh-h! Don't yell, Mary. George will hear . . ." He turned and ran up the companionway to the deck.

After that whale which Richard killed had been tried out, and the decks scoured clean again, there were long lazy days when the ship and those aboard her seemed asleep. Sometimes Mary, looking up at the men on watch at the cross-trees, saw them nodding on their lofty perch. When the Ventura was on whaling ground, she carried at night only enough sail to make her handy; but now Richard was making a passage, counting on picking up enough oil to fill their casks off the coast of South America.

Richard for the sake of warm weather did not yet turn southward and the sun shone fair and fine, and the winds were favoring. The watch on deck might be busy with scrimshaw, listening perhaps to one of Corkran's yarns; and the squawk of the parrot sometimes came aft. Richard, standing with Mary one day, watching Corkran and his listeners, said:

"He's a good man, a good sailor; and a story-teller in the fo'c's'le helps keep the men contented. Someone to tell 'em stories keeps 'em amused."

Mary reflected thoughtfully: "You know, Corkran's really fond of George. That's why he deserted the Sunset at Gilead, in case George needed him."

"George is a fine fellow, Mary. I like him too."

"The queer part is, he likes Corkran," she said. "Corkran lived with the natives on the island and George knows it, and yet he doesn't seem to blame him."

Richard looked at her. "You know, you may not understand George yourself," he said. "He's about the bravest man I ever saw. He's pretty small, and frail; but he's never afraid." He added: "He wants to go in one of the boats next time we strike whales."

She was astonished. "Honestly? After seeing that fight the other day? He said then he'd stick to being a preacher, don't you remember?"

He chuckled. "That was partly to make me feel good, and partly because he saw how—impressed you were, and he was trying to please you by agreeing with you. George is a grown man, Mary, small as he is."

"Will you let him go in a boat?" "Maybe."

George had long since made his peace with Mary after that ugly hour in her cabin when by defending Richard she roused his anger. He was humble and contrite and ashamed of his harsh word. Peter too came to her with apologies; and Mary guardedly forgave him, as a woman can always forgive a man for loving her; but sometimes when she looked at him suddenly she surprised a sultry hunger in his eyes that made her wary. She tried not to be left alone with him again.

There were other reasons too why her nerves drew tight and tighter. She saw much low-pitched conversation among the men forward.

Even Corkran was changed. Mary, when he had the wheel, sometimes talked with him, puzzled by the difference in his bearing. She and George discussed it too.

Mary asked Corkran straightforwardly one day why he had changed. He was, he confessed, uneasy. "I don't like the looks of things forward," he said. "Nor the talk I hear."

"What talk?"

"They're saying there's a packet of pearls aboard this ship that's worth a fortune." His eyes touched hers. "You mind, pearls made trouble enough back there at the island, for himself and you. I don't like the pretty little things."

He bent close above her so that she could not rise; and he whispered hotly: "I knew darned well you'd be crying! Blast him! If he were man's size I'd take him apart!"

She shook her head from side to side on the pillow. "He's all right,

Peter. I was just tired, that's all. I don't know why."

She tried to sit up, put her hand against his chest to thrust him aside; but he did not move. He laughed, in a comforting fashion. "Poor little Mary! You always were a sweet kid. I was crazy about you, at home."

"You were sort of mean to me, always teasing."

"Sure. That's the way boys dol that's the way they show it." He said quickly: "I'd do a lot to see you happy."

And he bent and kissed her.

## CHAPTER XII

He said hoarsely, his lips against her ear: "I could do anything, with a woman like you."

He was pressing her down. She had to fight away, to fight to her feet in a sort of blind panic, to face him with blazing eyes, scrubbing at her lips which again now he had kissed, crying in low tight tones:

"Stop it, Peter! Stop it! Get out of here!"

She flung him back. He stood against the door, muttering brokenly. "I'm sorry. I couldn't help it. You're so sweet! I lost my head!"

"Get out of here!"

He said in sudden sullen wrath: "You're not fooling me, you know! You're always been crazy about Dick! You never would look at me!"

She took a quick step toward him, so angry that he recoiled; and he opened, behind him, the cabin door. She said: "If you ever come in here again, I'll . . ."

He exclaimed in quick alarm: "Sh-h! Don't yell, Mary. George will hear . . ." He turned and ran up the companionway to the deck.

After that whale which Richard killed had been tried out, and the decks scoured clean again, there were long lazy days when the ship and those aboard her seemed asleep. Sometimes Mary, looking up at the men on watch at the cross-trees, saw them nodding on their lofty perch. When the Ventura was on whaling ground, she carried at night only enough sail to make her handy; but now Richard was making a passage, counting on picking up enough oil to fill their casks off the coast of South America.

Richard for the sake of warm weather did not yet turn southward and the sun shone fair and fine, and the winds were favoring. The watch on deck might be busy with scrimshaw, listening perhaps to one of Corkran's yarns; and the squawk of the parrot sometimes came aft. Richard, standing with Mary one day, watching Corkran and his listeners, said:

"He's a good man, a good sailor; and a story-teller in the fo'c's'le helps keep the men contented. Someone to tell 'em stories keeps 'em amused."

Mary reflected thoughtfully: "You know, Corkran's really fond of George. That's why he deserted the Sunset at Gilead, in case George needed him."

"George is a fine fellow, Mary. I like him too."

"The queer part is, he likes Corkran," she said. "Corkran lived with the natives on the island and George knows it, and yet he doesn't seem to blame him."

Richard looked at her. "You know, you may not understand George yourself," he said. "He's about the bravest man I ever saw. He's pretty small, and frail; but he's never afraid." He added: "He wants to go in one of the boats next time we strike whales."

She was astonished. "Honestly? After seeing that fight the other day? He said then he'd stick to being a preacher, don't you remember?"

He chuckled. "That was partly to make me feel good, and partly because he saw how—impressed you were, and he was trying to please you by agreeing with you. George is a grown man, Mary, small as he is."

"Will you let him go in a boat?" "Maybe."

George had long since made his peace with Mary after that ugly hour in her cabin when by defending Richard she roused his anger. He was humble and contrite and ashamed of his harsh word. Peter too came to her with apologies; and Mary guardedly forgave him, as a woman can always forgive a man for loving her; but sometimes when she looked at him suddenly she surprised a sultry hunger in his eyes that made her wary. She tried not to be left alone with him again.

There were other reasons too why her nerves drew tight and tighter. She saw much low-pitched conversation among the men forward.

Even Corkran was changed. Mary, when he had the wheel, sometimes talked with him, puzzled by the difference in his bearing. She and George discussed it too.

Mary asked Corkran straightforwardly one day why he had changed. He was, he confessed, uneasy. "I don't like the looks of things forward," he said. "Nor the talk I hear."

"What talk?"

"They're saying there's a packet of pearls aboard this ship that's worth a fortune." His eyes touched hers. "You mind, pearls made trouble enough back there at the island, for himself and you. I don't like the pretty little things."

He bent close above her so that she could not rise; and he whispered hotly: "I knew darned well you'd be crying! Blast him! If he were man's size I'd take him apart!"

She shook her head from side to side on the pillow. "He's all right,

Peter. I was just tired, that's all. I don't know why."

She tried to sit up, put her hand against his chest to thrust him aside; but he did not move. He laughed, in a comforting fashion. "Poor little Mary! You always were a sweet kid. I was crazy about you, at home."

"You were sort of mean to me, always teasing."

"Sure. That's the way boys dol that's the way they show it." He said quickly: "I'd do a lot to see you happy."

And he bent and kissed her.

## FARM TOPICS

### WILLOWS SAVE STREAM BANKS

#### Dense Growth Protects Soil On Curves.

An improved labor-saving method of protecting stream banks with a mat of growing willow shoots has been worked out by the soil conservation service. It is particularly effective where small streams are cutting into their banks at the outside of curves or where streams that normally flow gently rise to destructive heights in rainy seasons. The willows throw up a dense growth that furnishes first-class protection.

The first step is to grade steep banks to about a 45-degree angle. Then cut willow poles and prune them roughly. The poles should be long enough to extend from below low water in the stream to the top of the sloped bank and should be laid about two feet apart the day they are cut to prevent drying. Cover the poles with a 6 to 12-inch layer of brush—using the willow prunings and other brush if needed.

Anchor the brush mat with old woven wire laced together with smooth wire. Set stout posts in the bank and tie the mat down with wires from the posts to heavy stones sunk in the stream below the mat. Provide occasional vertical anchors of logs laid up and down the slope and held by stout stakes.

Poles cut in fall and winter when the willow are dormant will live and in spring will root in the bank and send up growing shoots that form a living mat.

Willows have long been popular as bank protectors, but the new method economizes labor, gets a dense growth with minimum effort, and the work can be done in winter when farm work is slack.

### Use Abundance of Nails When Erecting Buildings

In the erection of farm buildings, poor nailing of joints is often the cause of later damage to these buildings by windstorms. Skipping of the number of nails often means increased upkeep costs. A poor job of nailing in the construction or repair of farm buildings and the use of too few or too small nails result in weaknesses at the joints. Many farm buildings are blown down or sag because not enough or too small nails were used in their construction and while small nails do not crack the lumber so much as larger ones, they are not so effective in holding the building rigid.

Good nailing practice consists mainly in using the proper kind, size, and number of nails for each particular part of a wooden structure. In order to get the full strength of the common wire nail under a side-ways pull, it must be driven at least two-thirds of its length into the piece receiving the point if light-weight wood is being nailed. When it is not possible to get this much penetration, more nails should be used because the strength increases directly with the number of nails.

For wall sheathing and roof boards of the ordinary kind, two eight-penny nails at each nailing point are usually enough. In assembling rafters it is well to consider that a severe storm may lift the roof as a whole. Therefore at least three or four nails of the proper length should be used to fasten each rafter to the top of the side walls. The proper number of nails in such places sometimes seem to be more than necessary but they may mean the difference between a wrecked roof or one in place after a storm.

### Farmers Prepared For U. S. Defense

Agriculture is prepared for national defense better than any other industry, according to N. E. Dodd, western regional director of the AAA.

Farmers are better trained to produce all the nation needs without damaging the land as was done during the World war, and there is enough food and fiber for every use.

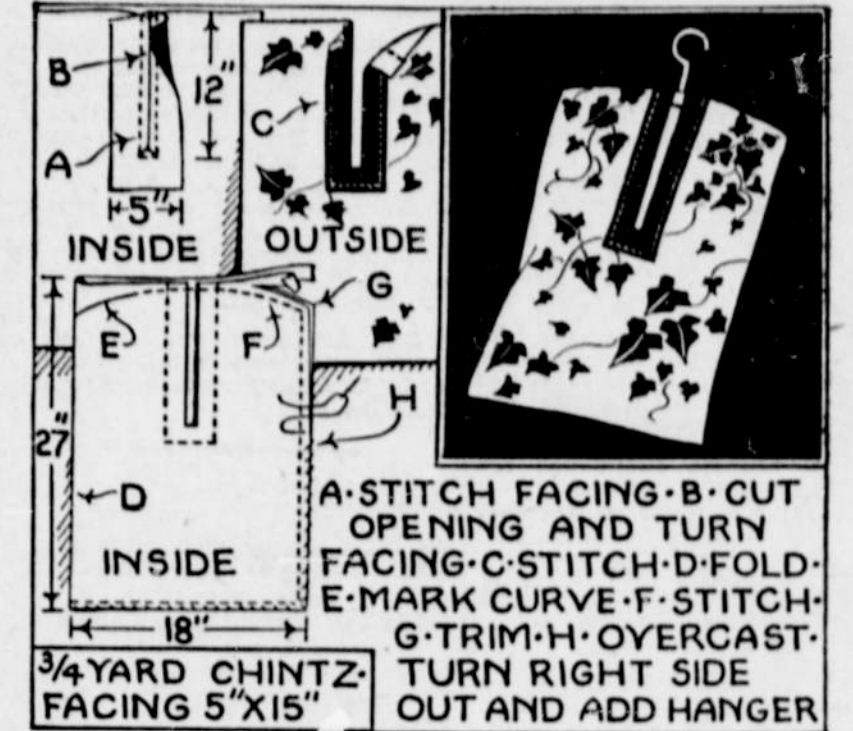
There is enough wheat stored on farms and in elevators to feed the people next year if no more wheat is grown. We have enough cotton in storage for a two-years' supply if we don't raise another bale. And there is a half billion bushels of corn in storage so there will be plenty of grain for live-stock feed.

### Figuring Acreage

An acre contains 43,560 square feet or, what is more commonly used, 160 square rods. A square acre measures 208 feet, 8 1/2 inches on each side. A strip of land 1/2 rod wide; 1 mile in length equals an acre. To find the number of acres in a rectangular field, multiply the length by the width in feet and divide by 43,560 or, multiply the length and width in yards and divide by 4,840 or, the length by the width in rods and divide by 160.

# HOW TO SEW

by Ruth Wyeth Spears



ARE you planning to go to a Fair or Bazaar? Or is this the season that you catch up on odds and ends of sewing for the house? In either case you will like to stitch up a bag like this one. Everyone seems to have a special use for one of these bags on a hanger. I have one that I use for laundry when I go traveling. Men and boys like them for closet laundry bags too, as they are plenty big enough for shirts. A little girl I know has a small version of one of these in which she keeps doll clothes scraps. I have also seen them used for everything from dress patterns to dust rags.

A boy would like that. Each step in making the bag is shown in the sketch.

In SEWING Book 3 there are directions for still another type of bag on a hanger; also a pocket for the pantry door. This book contains directions for the spoon shelves; stocking cap; "The rug that grew up with the family," and many other of your favorites among articles that have appeared in the paper. Send order to:

MRS. RUTH WYETH SPEARS  
Bedford Hills, New York  
Enclose 10 cents for Book No. 3.  
Name .....  
Address .....

### Miss Had Another Chance After the Final Good-By

The fellow threatened to commit suicide every time a certain girl turned him down. She refused him again the other night, and the next morning a messenger boy called with this note:

"Darling—By the time you read this, my body will be floating down the river. Life without you is not worth while. Shed no tears over me, but just remember that I have always loved you. Good-by for ever."

The girl went white and nearly fainted. Then she noticed that the messenger boy was still there.

"What are you waiting for?" she asked.

"The man who gave me that note said I was to wait for an answer," said the boy.

### HOUSEHOLD QUESTIONS

Save the peels of oranges and tangerines, dry them in the oven and store in glass jars. They give puddings and custards a delicious flavor.

When making peppermints drop them onto a piece of waxed paper instead of onto a pan. They are more easily removed from waxed paper.

Hard sauce, highly flavored with cinnamon, grated orange and lemon peels and a little fruit juice, gives just the proper finish to hot fruit puddings.

Plant bulbs close to the window panes and away from the heat of the room instead of starting them in a dark room. You will get better results.

When a splinter has gone very deep into the flesh, try extraction by steam. Heat a wide-mouthed bottle and fill it two-thirds full of very hot water and place under the injured spot. The suction in a few minutes removes both splinter and inflammation. This method is particularly good when the splinter has been in for some time.

Brass knockers and doorknobs that are exposed to the weather will stay clean and bright longer if rubbed with paraffin after they are cleaned and polished with a soft, dry cloth.

### THE CHEERFUL CHERUB

The people who talk of their worries Make everyone's troubles increase. A policeman should simply arrest them Because they're disturbing the peace.

WNU Service.

GOOD REASONS WHY QUINTUPLETS use MUSTEROLE for CHEST COLDS

Mother—Give YOUR Child This Same Expert Care!

At the first sign of a chest cold the Quintuplets' throats and chests are rubbed with Children's Mild Musterole—a product made to promptly relieve the DISTRESS of children's colds and resulting bronchial and croupy coughs.

Relief usually comes quickly because Musterole is MORE than an ordinary "salve." It helps break up local congestion. As Musterole is used on the Quints you may be sure you are using just about the BEST product made. Also in Regular and Extra Strength for those preferring a stronger product.

CHILDREN'S MUSTEROLE MILD

Place for Money A wise man should have money in his head, but not in his heart.—Swift.

"I'M NOT AFRAID NOW Sometimes after eating too much I had gas pains. ADLERIKA quickly relieved me and my doctor says it's all right to use." (S. R.-Minn.) Get ADLERIKA today.

## CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

HAVE YOU anything around the house you would like to trade or sell? Try a classified ad. The cost is only a few cents and there are probably a lot of folks looking for just what- ever it is you no longer have use for

Classified Ads Get Results