

DO YOU REMEMBER?

Do you remember how that night was sweet?
You called it sweet and something more so
well.
The fine white moonbeams drifted all over
And nestled in each flower's trembling bell.
The hollowed waves came creeping to the
beach,
And broke there with a joyous sound at last.
Do you remember how there was no speech?
No need for that. Our hearts throbb'd
too fast.
A small white falling star shot through the
gray.
You bid me "wish!" before it could depart:
Do you remember how I answered, "Nay?"
Because there was no wish left in my heart.
—Corra Fabrizi.

THE YOUNG SKIPPER.

"Is that the chap we shipped under?
Why, he hasn't grown a beard yet?"
"Nevertheless he is the skipper of this
craft, and a right smart one, too, as
you'll find out if you cruise many months
aboard of her."
"That may be, but I'd rather see a
man on the quarter deck than a boy."
"What's the difference, if the boy has
a man's head on his shoulders? It
isn't always those who have lived the
longest in this world that know the
most, as I have found out. Now here
are you and I; we have been following
the sea these twenty years, and I'm not
afraid to say that we could handle a
vessel in any weather, but if we were
asked to take a ship from New Bedford
to Cape Horn, do you suppose we could
do it? I tell you, Tom, no. That's be-
cause when we were young we wasted
our time in skylarking instead of study.
It was different with our skipper, as
I know well, for he and I were ship-
mates together on the voyage that he
jumped from before the mast to the
quarter deck."
"Don't see how he could do it," grum-
bled the one addressed as Tom.
"Well, I'll tell you, mate, when we
get below," replied Bill Beckett, one of
the boat steers of the whaling ship
Grampus, which had just left her home
port for a three years' cruise in the Pa-
cific.
"It was this way," began Bill that
same evening in the "dog watch" when
he and his companion Tom, who was
also a boat steerer, were leaning idly
over the weather rail, gazing out on
the vast expanse of waters over which their
vessel was bounding before a fair wind.
"It's little over four years now since I
joined the *Race Horse* down in one of
the Kanaika islands. I had run away
from another ship and had 'beach
combed' it (nautical parlance for tramp),
until I got a chance in the *Race Horse*.
We were going north to cruise in the
Ochotok sea. The skipper was before
the mast then; he was a chap that didn't
have to see a thing done more than twice
before he could do it himself.
"I handled the harpoons in the mate's
boat, and little Blue Fin, as we called
our cap'n that is now, pulled the bow
oar in the same craft. One morning,
just a little after daylight, the lookout
in the cross-trees raised a school of sperm
whales. We had a pretty stiff breeze
the night before and the sea was still
running high. We lowered away, how-
ever, our three boats—mate's, second
mate's and third's."
"I'll take that fellow up to wind'ard,"
called our officer, as he pointed to a big
whale that was playing around on the
outside of the school, as though he was
placed there to protect the cows and
calves that were huddled together in the
middle from any danger.
"Look out, Bill," says the mate to me
as he stood grasping the steering car.
"Look out, man, and don't miss him.
There's a good hundred barrels there."
"Ay, ay, sir," said I. "Lay me on
close enough and I'll drive both 'irons"
into him clear to the beakets."
"There was no danger but what he'd
do it, for the fellow didn't know what
it was to be afraid of a whale. I wasn't
going to take any chances, so I waited
till the boat almost touched the big
brute, then I let fly both harpoons, one
after another, and sung out, 'Stern all'
When the boys were backing so as to
give the whale room to play, I went aft
to change places with the mate, and he
walked forward to his station in the bow
to kill the fish with a lance.
"Now this whale was one of those
kind of fellows that takes his medicine
easy at first, but fights like fury before
he hits his red flag. He didn't 'sound,'
but lay and wallowed for a minute or
two, then began to swing 'round so as
to get sight of us.
"He's going to give us a tussel," called
the mate.
"Ay, ay, he's a fighter," says I.
"Then I caught sight of Blue Fin's
face. All the other chaps were glancing
over their shoulders and beginning to
get a little shaky, but he sat on his
thwart with his hand grasping the oar,
just as quiet and unconcerned as if he
were in a skiff on a mill pond, and not
within half a cable's length of a mad
all-egern that threatened to send him
and his shipmates to Davy Jones' locker
at any minute.
"Stand by to jump," called the mate.
"He's coming for us."
"Now you know there's no boat quick
enough to get out of the way of a whale
when he makes a rush, so the only thing
to do is to leave her. The other men
sprang to their feet, but the boy still sat
there and I began to think he was par-
alyzed with fright.
"Stand up to jump, Blue Fin," I
called. "And when you go leap straight
for the beggar, and not from him."
"The lad smiled and nodded his head,

and standing up, unshipped his oar from
the thole pin, held it ready and faced
about.
"Then the whale started.
"Jump!" yelled the mate.
"The next instant we were all flound-
ering around in the water, while the
bull caught the boat in his mouth,
crushed it to pieces and sounded.
"The third mate, who had just killed
one small chap, was not far away, so he
came and picked us up—all but the
mate; we never saw him afterward. He
must have been fouled in the lines and
gone down.
"We got two out of the school, but all
hands felt sad at the loss of the officer. I
couldn't help telling our skipper how cool
Blue Fin was through the whole thing,
and when he shoveled the officers aboard
he rated his own boat steerer third mate
and ordered Blue Fin to take charge of
the irons in his craft.
"I tell you the boy was proud enough,
but he had nerve and good luck, both of
which are everything to a whaler. This
was destined to be an unfortunate voy-
age for the *After Guards*. The whales
were plenty in the Ochotok sea, and
there was hardly a day but what we
were outing in or trying out blubber.
"One afternoon the cap'n lowered
away for a 'right' whale. Our boat was
close alongside, but the skipper sang out:
"Don't you meddle with him, he's
my fish." So of course we hung back,
only standing by to lend a hand in case
we were needed.
"Blue Fin made a pretty dart. He
hurled his first iron about six feet aft
of the bow hole, and the other he planted
in the belly as the fellow rolled. It was
a death blow, but before the whale be-
gan to spout blood he brought his flukes
around, caught the boat before the boys
could back out of the way and stove
her to pieces. We pulled in and picked
up the crew. I grabbed the 'old man'
just as he was going down, and when I
hauled him up I saw that he was hurt
badly and was unconscious. He was
smashed up in a frightful manner and
never recovered.
"Next morning at eight bells we
launched the dead body of the captain
from the starboard gangway, while the
fish that had killed him was moored
with chains to the port side of the ship.
Poor Blue Fin felt awful bad, and he
kept mourning as the mate read the
burial service, saying:
"Oh, if I hadn't struck the whale
that last blow. 'Twas the second iron
that touched his 'life,' and our cap-
tain's too."
"But, shipmate," went on the boat
steerer, "it was to be, and it's the way
of the world, I suppose. One man
mounts to a position through the death
of another, just as a new ship is built
to take the place of a craft that has found
a bed on the rocks."
"Yes, there's a great deal of truth in
what you say, Bill. But how was it
that your cap'n's loss rated Blue Fin
skipper?"
"He wasn't skipper in every sense of
the word, but 'twas this way: The off-
icers that were left were the same as you
and I—good sailors and good whalers—
but they knew nothing of navigation.
Blue Fin, of all our company, was the
only one who could handle a quadrant or
"work up a sight." As I said, the
whales were plenty, and we didn't want
to leave the grounds till the ice drove us
out, for we were making money, so we
finished our cruise, and when we reached
Honolulu were full to the hatches with
oil and bone.
"There was some talk of shipping
another man to take the vessel home,
but the agent and the American consul
said, 'If that young man knew enough
to bring the craft safely out of the
Ochotok sea, he knows enough to find
his way to New Bedford.' They just
engaged another mate 'by the run' who
was a navigator, and gave the boy
charge of the ship.
"We made a quick passage around
the Horn, and the owners were so much
pleased with Blue Fin that they gave
him command of the *Race Horse* on the
next voyage, and while away on that
cruise they built him this one here, the
Grampus, and that's how the lad be-
came skipper so young. It goes to prove
the truth of what I said a few moments
ago, that 'It's not always gray hairs
which cover the wisest head.' A boy is
sometimes more fit to command than a
man who has seen twice or thrice his
number of years."—True Flag.

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