

HALF A CHANCE

By Frederic S. Isham,
Author of "The Strollers," "Under the Rose," "The Lady of the Mount," Etc.

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CHAPTER II.
A MESSAGE TO THE ADMIRALTY.

THE following night Captain Macpherson, in his cabin, rolled up carefully the chart he had been scanning, deposited it in a copper cylinder and drew from his pocket a small pipe. The weather had turned nasty again; above the wind sounded loudly. Now it descended on the ship like a fierce scolding virago, then rushed on with wild, shrieking dissonance. Suddenly something happened that caused him to change his mind; abruptly hurried to the other end of the cabin, he found himself lying half stunned on the floor. A hubbub of noises filled the air—snappings, crashings, the rending of woodwork.

Captain Macpherson staggered to his feet and, swaying like a drunken man, stood a few moments holding his hand to his brow. Then his fist clinched, and he shook it at the cylinder that had fallen from the table.

"Ye viperous, lying thing!" he cried and ran from the cabin to the deck.

A single glance told all: two of the ship's giant spars had gone by the board; entangled in her own wreckage, the vessel thumped and pounded with ominous violence against some sunken reef. Captain Macpherson groaned.

"Mr. O'Brien!" he called loudly.

"Aye, aye, sir."

"How long do you give her?"

"Half an hour, sir."

The master shook his head. "She'll see last that long."

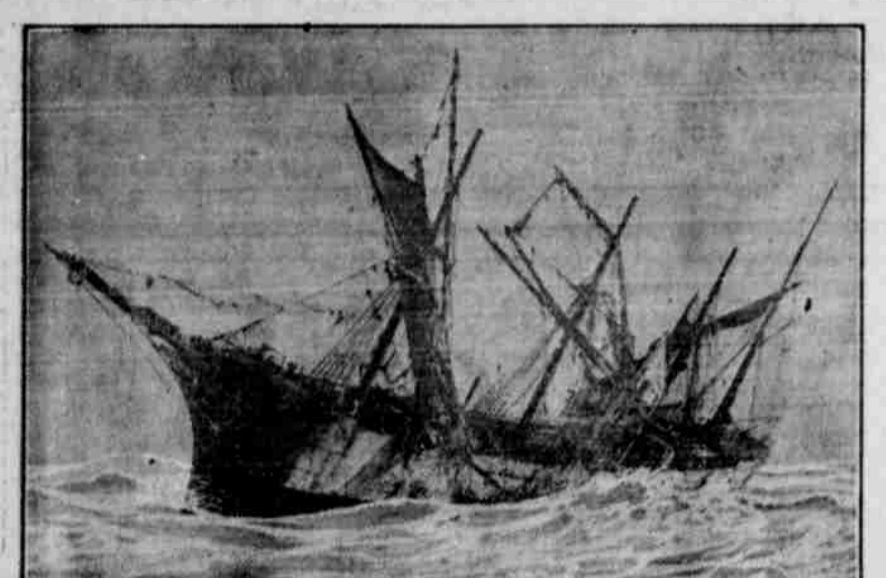
"Any orders, sir?" asked the chief mate.

Captain Macpherson recovered himself; his tone became once more quick and incisive. "Ye're right; I'm gone daffy. We'll get this business over in a decorous and decent manner." A number of orders followed.

As the chief mate disappeared to execute the commands he had received the harsh noises of the breaking ship, the seething of the sea about her, the flapping of canvas like helpless, broken wings, was supplemented by a babel of new and terrifying sounds, the screaming and cursing of the convicts below, their blasphemous shrieking to be let out! To this turmoil and uproar were added the frantic appeals and inquiries of the passengers who, more or less dressed, had hurried to the deck and who were now speaking to the master of the ill-starred vessel. He answered them briefly. What could be done would be done.

"It's a question of the boats, I suppose?" Sir Charles, one of the calmest of the ship's cabin party, asked quickly.

"In ten minutes they'll be ready for the launching with nae lack of water



ENTANGLED IN HER OWN WRECKAGE THE VESSEL THUMPED AND POUNDED.

and provision. Get plenty of wraps and greatcoats. It'll be a bit disagreeable nae doubt out yon in the wee craft."

The boat was soon overhauled, the lockers and water butt were filled, and the passengers, one by one, set into it. On the whole, at that moment for leaving the ship their conduct left little room for criticism. One or two of the women who had appeared on the verge of hysterics now restrained audible manifestation of emotion. Sir Charles proved a monument of helpfulness, assisted in placing the women here and there and extended a helpful hand to Lord Ronald, who had become somewhat dazed and inert. Total darkness added to the difficulties of their task, for the moon, which until then had shone with much lustre, now went behind a curtain of cloud. But Captain Macpherson coolly called out by name the men to handle the lifeboat, and with no evidence of disorder they crowded in, none too soon. As the boat with its human freight hung in readiness for the lowering the remaining spar of the Lord Nelson fell with a mighty crash.

"Remember the name of your ship,"

AEROPLANE FLIGHT ACROSS ATLANTIC

Hamilton Says It Can Be Done in 24 Hours, But Is Expensive as It Would Require a Large Machine With Much Fuel.

NEW YORK, June 3.—Charles K. Hamilton, the aviator, who was the first to suggest the offering of a \$25,000 prize for an aeroplane flight between New York and Chicago, and who volunteered a subscription of \$2000 toward the project, believes the time will soon come when some aviator will succeed in crossing the Atlantic in an aeroplane. This prophesy he made following his statement that he would be a competitor for the New York-Chicago prize, which he says he does not consider too difficult.

"The trans-Atlantic problem will come next," he continued, "and crossing the Atlantic in the air would be a far greater feat than that of Columbus. The expense of a trip across the Atlantic rather than the risk of life involved is the one factor which is keeping aviators from attempting the passage.

"It would require a large machine with capacity for a great quantity of gasoline. The Atlantic could be crossed at its narrowest point in 24 hours. One of the requisites for such a trip is a fast boat built especially for such a trip which could develop and sustain a speed of 40 to 50 miles an hour. While such a motor boat could not keep up with the aeroplane, the latter could make circles in the air and fly back every time it got too far ahead," said Hamilton.

Hamilton, who will go to Chattanooga later in the month for a series of government aeroplane tests, is 29 years old and possessed of an independent fortune. He is a graduate of the Sheffield Scientific school of Yale and is a lineal descendant of Alexander Hamilton.

AVIATION PRIZES NOW TOTAL OVER \$100,000

NEW YORK, June 3.—Aviation prizes totaling \$110,000 are offered today to daring aviators seeking to establish new long distance records. It is expected that the total will be greatly increased in the near future.

Among the prizes offered are \$10,000 for a flight from Kansas City to Denver, offered by the Denver Post; \$5,000 for a flight from Indianapolis to Chicago, offered by an Indianapolis manufacturing company; \$20,000 for a flight from Washington to New York offered by the Washington Chamber of Commerce and the Aero Club of America.

Among the aviators who intend to compete for the prizes are Curtiss, Mars, Harmon, Hamilton and Willard. It is believed that Louis Paulhan, the Frenchman, may compete in the machine with which he won the London-Manchester prize.

The Wrights today said that the terms of the New York-St. Louis flight should allow a week's time in which to make the journey.

NEW DEMOCRATIC LEADER IN LITTLE OLD NEW YORK

NEW YORK, June 3.—William J. Connors, retired as chairman of the New York Central committee and John A. Dix of Washington county was elected to succeed him.

The change was the most important step taken today at the meeting of the Democratic leaders: here who meet to prepare for the coming state campaign at which they hope to elect a majority of members of the legislature and send a Democrat to the United States senate to succeed Dewey.

Charles Murphy, Tammany leader, and Connors greeted each other cordially and their show of "harmony" was commented on by the committee members present.

Murphy recently denounced Connors but his friends brought about a peace pact.

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