

TWICE-A-MONTH

# Sea Stories Magazine

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By  
A Hyatt Verrill

# Jury Rig

All sailors are aware of the conscious air of superiority with which the man who has spent all of his time in the deep-water trade looks down upon the man whose life has been spent in steamers, or upon the coast. Much can and has been said about this, pro and con; much of it we are forced to admit is con. Captain Asa Weaver, however, was one man who proved his superiority by deeds. After reading this you will admit that, in spite of his bluster, Captain Weaver was every inch a sailor.

**H**UMPH!" snorted Cap'n Asa Weaver as he tipped back in his chair and puffed at his short black pipe in the smoking room of the Seamen's Club. "Humph, I tell ye, as long's a ship'll float there ain't no 'arthly excuse fer desartin' on her or bein' towed inter port."

Lem Perkins flushed a deeper shade of red under his weather-beaten skin. "Meanin' you're referrin' to me, I s'pose," he remarked.

"Not pertick'lerly, not pertick'lerly," rumbled Cap'n Weaver. "But I'm sayin' that I've been to sea—man an' boy—nigh onto twenty-five years an' I ain't never asked nor took help from any blasted steam tea kittle yit. No, sir, long's the ol' *Orion* ain't stove an' don't spring a leak what the pumps can't keep under I'll git her into port, by gum."

"Like to ha' seen ye git the *Sachem* in," muttered Lem. "All four sticks gone plum outen her lessen ten foot above decks. 'Spect ye could ha' done

it o'course. Mebbe ye'll be willin' to offer a bit o' advice, seein' as how ye're such an all fired better seaman than I be."

"I don't aim to be l'arnin' seamanship to others," replied Cap'n Weaver hotly. "But ye don't catch me payin' salvage to no towboat robbers these hard times. No, sir, bad enough to have to pay 'em for towin' out an' in port."

"'Spect ye'd have fitted her with sweeps or sculled her in," retorted Lem sarcastically.

"Might ha' put jury rig onto her," declared the other. "Though I don't 'spect cap'ns o' fore'n afters could do sech things."

Lem burst into a hearty laugh. "Jury rig!" he cried. "Sure, set up the crew's breeches an' a couple o' han'kerchiefs an' get into port 'bout a year later. Y're forgettin' time's money these days."

"Wall, ain't I jury rigged with this here timber leg o' mine?" exploded old Asa. "An' I calc'late I get about as

lively as most on ye. An' I'm sayin' again," he continued, "that any skipper what'll give a line to a towboat 'slong's his hooker'll float's no deep water seaman. By Godfrey! I could slam a jury rig onto the *Orion* what'd shove the ol' hooker along better'n that there tub o' your'n could make under full sail." Knocking the ashes from his pipe, the old skipper arose, stretched himself and stumped off.

Two days after this verbal set-to with Cap'n Lem, the one-legged old mariner stood upon the broad and spotless quarter deck of the bark *Orion* as, in tow of a fussy tug, she dropped down Boston harbor. To the rousing chantey of "Whiskey Johnny" the great topsail yards rose slowly from the caps, sheets were manned and one by one the huge sails were spread. Then, as with a parting toot of her whistle, the tug cast off the line, the men tallied on the braces and under a lofty pyramid of snowy canvas the *Orion* headed for the open sea.

She was bound for Matanzas, Cuba, and Cap'n Asa expected to see the hazy coastline of the Pearl of the Antilles rising beyond the soaring tip of his flying jibboom within ten days after passing Provincetown light. The wind was fair, the weather perfect, the sea a vast crinkled sheet of glue, and everything promised a quick and easy run. But the Atlantic, even in mid summer, is capricious, and fate had other plans for the *Orion* and boastful Cap'n Asa. Two days after rounding the Cape and heading southward, the barometer dropped rapidly, an ominous swell came out of the south, the sky became overcast, brownish-gray scud drifted in ragged wisps from below the horizon and the air took on a curious sickly-yellow tint.

Cap'n Weaver had been too long at sea and had made far too many voyages to the tropics not to realize what was in store. He knew that a West Indian

hurricane was racing up from the Caribbean and while he did not possess the latest types of instruments and scoffed at scientific theories and government publications on hurricanes, yet he realized that the *Orion* was in for a "rip snorter" as he put it.

Sharp orders were bawled out, rapidly sails were furled and made snug, movable objects on deck were secured with double lashings, and soon the bark was wallowing along under lower topsails, jib and close reefed fors'l. There was little wind, and the sea ran in long oily rollers, the *Orion*, without enough canvas to steady her, rolled horribly. But old Asa was not one to take any chances or carry sail until too late. He was owner as well as master of the *Orion*, all his savings of a lifetime of toil, hardship and danger were invested in the bark, and he believed in shortening sail while the shortening was good.

"Derned sight easier to put canvas onto her if it don't blow than 'tis to shorten if it does," he remarked to his mate, a young Gloucester man named Haskell. "An' looks to me like it's goin' to blow fit to take the whiskers offen ye."

And had any of the *Orion's* crew worn such facial adornments, Cap'n Weaver's remark might well have been verified, for blow it did with a vengeance. Out of the west it came, a screeching, howling, maniacal blast, a savage, roaring eighty-mile gale that picked up the sea and flung it in tons of green water with the force of a battering ram upon the bark and, catching the heavily laden ship broadside on, forced her over until her port rail was buried in the hissing seas, and green water surged over her decks to the hatches. For a space it seemed as though she would go on her beam ends, as if she would never right, and then, with a crash like thunder, her main lower topsail split and was instantly torn to ribbons. Relieved of the pressure the *Orion* slowly staggered

up, shook the cataracts of water from her decks and with two men straining at her wheel, swung on the crest of a huge comber and tore off before the hurricane.

She was a stanch, well-built Yankee ship, a fabric of good white oak and Maine pine, a ship of whom her Boothbay builders might well have been proud and Cap'n Asa had no fear of her weathering the fearful storm sweeping up from the Antilles and driving the bark eastward with the speed of a liner. Great, curling green seas reared to half the height of the crojack yard, their crests sheared off by the terrific gale that was now blowing nearly one hundred miles an hour. Equally great combers reared ahead, but as long as a stitch of canvas held, the *Orion* would outrun the seas, the captain felt sure, and even if the bits of remaining canvas were torn from the boltropes he had little doubt that his ship, under bare poles would drive fast enough to avoid being pooped. The mizzen topsail had long ago followed the main and only a bit of jib and fore tops'l showed, sodden gray, and hard as sheet iron against the flying scud and murk. But no canvas ever woven by man could stand the awful strain, the onslaught of the hurricane for long, and within an hour from the time the gale had burst the fore tops'l flew, like some huge frightened bird, into the turmoil, leaving a few streaming, snapping shreds of canvas attached to spars and mast. Quickly the jib followed and the *Orion* drove on under bare poles that bent and strained and swayed like whips to the wild pitching, staggering motions of the bark. There was nothing to be done. No human being could move across the wave-swept, tossing deck. The few men above hatches had lashed themselves fast, and Cap'n Weaver and his mate had secured themselves to the mizzen rigging to port and starboard.

For hour after hour the *Orion* raced

on, but gradually the wind fell, it came in screaming, uneven gusts, the sky lightened, and while the seas ran even higher than before, their crests curled and broke less spitefully.

Apparently the worst of the storm was past and late in the afternoon the skipper went below for a hasty meal and a quart of steaming coffee. Then, having smoked and after roughly calculating his position by dead reckoning, and knowing by the motion of the bark that she was making as good weather of it as could be expected, he turned in for a few hours' rest.

He was aroused by being rolled unceremoniously from his bunk on to the floor. Instantly wide awake and with all his faculties on the alert, he clawed his way across the room to the door which seemed, somehow, to be near the ceiling. He half crawled, half scrambled through the main cabin and gained the companionway. That his ship was in dire straits he knew the moment he rolled from his bunk, for the slope of the deck told him she was practically on her beam ends. Dimly through the thick planking came the roar of the wind and the thunderous pounding of seas, and as he gained the companion stairs there came a muffled, rending crash, a blow that shook the bark from stem to stern, and with a jerk that all but threw the skipper from his feet the bark heaved herself up to a nearly level keel.

"Some gosh-dinged thing carried away," was his mental comment, and the next moment he was straining, tugging, exerting all his great strength to open the companionway doors. As he did so he staggered, grasped the casings for support and ducked his head as a demoniacal blast of wind and brine struck him with the force of a solid thing. It was impossible to stand upright, and dropping on hands and knees he literally dragged himself against the wind onto the deck as the doors slammed to with a resounding, splintering bang behind him. Hold-

ing for dear life to the skylight gratings he peered about. It was inky black, the noise was deafening, great white masses of roaring foam rose on every side and vivid lightning split the night incessantly. By its glare he could see the men, drenched, buffeted, but straining, at the wheel. He caught a glimpse of Haskell, half buried in swirling water against the starboard rail, and he took a swift glance forward. Beyond the main mast no spars loomed black against the lightning's flash, only a tangle of wreckage strewn across the deck remained of the foremast and its rigging, and above the roar of wind and seas there came a dull, echoing, crashing sound at regular intervals. The mast, still fast to the bark by stays and shrouds, was driving like a battering ram against the ship's planking, and at any instant the hull might be stove. To cut free the wreckage, even to cross the decks, seemed an utter impossibility and yet it must be done; must somehow be accomplished if the bark was to be saved.

Waiting until the ship poised on a wave crest, the skipper, with a sudden rush, gained the mate's side and quickly passed a bight of rope about his own body. Then, bending his head, he placed his mouth to Haskell's ears and belated his orders.

"Got to clear away that spar," he roared. "Kin ye get for'ard to the men?"

"Don't know. I'll try," screamed back the mate.

Rapidly uncoiling a line from a belaying pin, and making the end fast about his waist, the mate grasped the mizzen rigging, worked inch at a time around it, secured a grip on the rail and slowly, watching his chances, taking advantage of each momentary lull in the bark's mad plunging, edged forward. Safely he gained the main rigging and was about to start on the most perilous part of his journey when a huge comber burst over the bulwarks, tore him from the rail, and

hurled him with a sickening thud across the slanting deck against the port rail. Instantly the skipper began hauling in the halliards, dragging the inert body of the mate through the streaming brine across the decks, until he could reach down and raise him to his feet. He had regained his senses, but his face was covered with blood from a deep gash across his forehead, and he staggered uncertainly. He was in no condition to attempt the hazardous trip again, and Cap'n Asa, without hesitation, lashed the befuddled man to the rigging, knotted the line about his own waist and started forward. He was no young man, and was handicapped by a wooden leg, but grim determination was in his set face. He was strong and powerfully built and the safety of the bark, the lives of the men and the savings of a lifetime, were at stake.

A dozen times he was all but wrenched from the rail; seas broke over him, beating him to his knees and half smothering him. A bit of broken spar, hurled by an onrushing sea, struck his shoulder and, like a javelin, tore through his garments and left a jagged, bleeding cut in his flesh. Ropes and rigging whipping, coiling, writhing like serpents, as the water surged back and forth across the decks, tripped him and all but threw him down, but still he kept doggedly on.

And at last he triumphed. He reached the tangled, rent and broken forestays; gained the shelter of the break of the fo'c's'le, and with a belaying pin pounded loudly on the fo'c'sle door. Cursing the men under his breath for cowards, he kept up his crashing blows until at last the door opened and in the flickering light a man's head appeared.

"Get on deck!" bellowed the skipper. "All hands on ye. Fo'mast's gone an's a-stavin' o' the plankin'. Get axes an' tumble out."

Knowing their lives depended upon obeying, realizing that if the skipper could be on deck so could they, although

the watch had been swept overboard as the bark had careened ere the mast gave way, the men hurried to do the skipper's bidding. Armed with knives and choppers they came crowding out, the bo'sun leading.

"Where's the secon', Mr. Johnson?" roared the captain.

"Gone!" screamed back the bo'sun with his mouth to the captain's ear. "Went overboard fust thing, along with four of the men."

"Get busy," yelled the skipper, lashing himself to the bitts. Then, under the old seaman's eye and bellowed orders the crew, risking life and limb each second, working like madmen, hacked and cut and slashed at the tangled ropes and twisted rigging. It was fearful, desperate work. The seas rushed at them, broken spars seemed possessed of a maniacal, fiendish desire to slay and the wire rigging, as it parted, lashed viciously with razor-edged strands at the men's bodies. But, one by one, the shrouds and stays that bound the fallen spars and mast were severed, the wreckage was clear of the ship, the massive sticks no longer pounded cruelly at the planks and only the steel wire backstays bound the tangle to the *Orion*.

"Don't cut no more," bellowed the skipper. "Get out a three-inch cable an' bend it onto that there stay. Take a turn o' cable 'round the fo'must and pass it 'round the capstan. Then cut away the stay an' pay out 'bout fifty fathom o' cable."

Quickly his orders were carried out. The huge hempen cable was bent onto the straining stay, a turn was taken about the stump of the mast, it was led about the capstan and through the forward chocks and, snubbing it, the men braced themselves as two of their number cut through the wires of the stay. Then, as the strands parted, and the full weight of the drifting, floating spars and rigging, with the tons of wet furled sails upon the broken yards, came upon the

hawser, they slowly paid it out until the skipper ordered them to make fast. Already the bark was riding easier, taking less water on board, and as she swung slowly to the drag of the improvised sea-anchor her bow came into the wind and waves, and the weary, exhausted, panting men breathed a sigh of relief. Unless the wind increased or shifted suddenly the bark would ride in safety as long as the cable held and there was nothing to be done save wait for the storm to blow itself out.

"Get below if ye mind to," roared the captain when he saw that everything possible had been done. Then, as the men gladly did so, he freed himself from the bitts and worked his way aft. Dawn was now breaking, and half carrying, half dragging Haskell, the skipper entered the companionway, first gruffly telling the men at the wheel they were no longer needed and could shelter themselves in the lee of the deck house, but to keep watch and notify him if the sea-anchor broke loose or anything went wrong.

A nip of brandy and a cup of coffee brought Haskell around and, having bound up the mate's and his own wounds, the skipper filled and lit his pipe. "Take a rest," he advised the mate as he started once more for the deck. "I'll call ye if I want ye. Mr. Johnson's gone—went over with four hands."

When at last the dull day dawned across the wind-swept, tossing sea, and Haskell came on deck, he glanced about and uttered a short laugh.

"Looks like a pretty good wreck," he remarked.

Cap'n Asa wheeled. "Wrack!" he exploded. "Ain't no wrack about it. Soon's ever this gale lets up a mite we'll be gettin' erlong."

Rapidly the wind fell, the second gale had been but the outer edge—the back kick—of the hurricane, and by noon the sun was shining brightly, the bark was riding the long oily waves easily, and

Cap'n Weaver ordered the men to heave in on the cable and bring the wrecked foremast under the lee of the bark. Then, for hours, the men toiled and sweated, rigging tackles, whipping up the huge foreyards, the foretopgallant mast and foreroyal mast and following the orders of Haskell and the skipper. From the salvaged spars, shears were rigged; by dint of herculean labors the foretopgallant mast was raised and secured to the foremast stump; it was stayed fast and rigid, and as darkness fell the useless wreckage was cut adrift and the *Orion* rode to the wind and seas by a trysail on the mizzen.

At daybreak the tired men were at work once more. The foreroyal mast was run up and fished and stayed in place, the yards were hoisted, sails bent on, and before nightfall the bark was ploughing slowly but steadily toward far distant Cuba under a jury foremast and with shortened after sails adjusted to a nicety to balance her dwarfed canvas forward.

Cap'n Asa was well pleased with the two days' work, as well he might be. He rubbed his big calloused hands together, cast an appraising eye at the wake and chuckled. "Wish't' Lem could see the ol' *Orion* now," he remarked to Mr. Haskell. "By Godfrey, I've seed worse lookin' hookers than she be that was rigged that way."

"Splendid job," agreed the mate, "but 'twouldn't stand much of a blow. Guess their ain't much likelihood of another hurricane though."

"Never kin tell," declared Cap'n Weaver. "I've knowed 'em to come in bunches. Course there mayn't be another for years an' then ag'in we may run slam bang into one o' the dod-gasted things to-morrer."

"Ain't makin' over five knots," commented the mate. "Guess we'll be eatin' Thanksgivin' dinner in Cuby at this rate."

"Wall, consarn it, it's a heap sight

better to be eatin' of it in Cuby than to be providin' a meal for the fishes," replied the old skipper. "An' don't ye fret 'bout Thanksgivin'. We ain't but six hundred mile to the east'ard o' our course at that."

Back in Salem, the hurricane which had swept the North Atlantic had been reported and incoming ships had brought tales and vivid proofs of its severity. Shattered rails, smashed boats, stove deckhouses, were almost universal on steamers that had passed through the savage storm, and all up and down the coast there were anxious waiters for tidings of sailing craft that had been in or near the path of the hurricane.

"'Spect Asa got a touch of it," commented Cap'n Lem as he and his friends discussed the storm.

"He'll pull through, right enough," declared Cap'n Small. "The *Orion's* a right good ship and Asa's as good a seaman as ever stumped a deck. No need for worryin'. Might ha' blowed him a bit offen his course though."

But when two weeks had passed and the *Orion* had not been reported, either by incoming ships or from any port, Cap'n Weaver's friends commenced to be a bit anxious. Cap'n Small, however, still insisted the *Orion* was safe, that she had simply been blown off her course, that she might have had sails carried away, but that she would turn up all right eventually.

But day after day slipped by and there were no tidings of the bark. Two weeks passed and she was posted as overdue. Three weeks went by and those who knew Cap'n Weaver shook their heads and when forty-five days had come and gone since the *Orion* sailed out of Boston and no word had come of the bark, or of wreckage which might have been from her, she was posted as missing, and the old seamen in the club spoke of Cap'n Asa as of one deceased. All, that is, but Cap'n Small.

"Must ha' went down with all hands," declared Lem lugubriously. "Mebbe turned turtle first time the gale hit her, or got pooped. Too bad, too bad! Fine man, Asa. Well, we all got to go some day, I s'pose."

Cap'n Small glanced up from the paper he was reading, peered over the rims of his spectacles and stroked his gray beard. "I'll bet you the *Orion* turns up right as a trivet," he declared. "Yes, sir, you'll be arguin' with Asa right here in this here room afore long, I'll bet."

"Mebbe, mebbe," muttered Lem. "By hookey, I hope ye're right, Sam'l."

The following afternoon Lem fairly burst into the club room. "By glory!" he shouted. "Seed the news? *Orion's* been spoken!"

"No!" exclaimed an old salt.

"Yes, sir, here 'tis, right in the *Herald*. Look here!"

Wrinkling his forehead, Lem ran a stubby forefinger along the columns of the paper while the others gathered about, reading over his shoulders.

"Here it be," announced Lem at last. "'Steamship *José Larrinaga*, Spanish, Captain Jimenez, Cadiz for New York, arrived yesterday. Captain Jimenez reports that on September 14th, latitude 38°-10' N., longitude 37°-15' W., he sighted the bark *Orion*, Weaver, Boston for Matanzas, thirty-eight days out, proceeding under jury rig. When spoken Captain Weaver declined assistance, stating that he would make port under his own sail. He requested fresh water and provisions, which were supplied, and asked that he be reported all well with exception of the second officer, Mr. Johnson, and four seamen, washed overboard in the hurricane that dismasted him.'"

"Didn't I tell you?" cried Cap'n Small triumphantly. "Catch old Asa taking any help from a steamer. I'll bet he makes Matanzas at that. Shouldn't be surprised to hear from him any day."

"Wall, it'll be some days yit," Lem reminded him. "This Spaniard spoke him the 14th, and he was a dumb sight closer to Africa than to Cuba then—long about the lat'tude o' the Azores an' 'bout two thousand mile offen shore. Putty consid'able o' a voyage from there to Cuby under jury rig."

"Humph," muttered the other. "What gets me is where in blazes he's been twixt the time that hurricane hit him and the 14th. Thirty-eight days out of Boston then. Must have run into the blow 'bout four days after clearing. Smotherin' herrin's, he could most have sailed acrost the Atlantic under bare poles in thirty days!"

"Dunno," replied Lem and then, Cap'n Asa's taunts regarding seamanship still rankling in his mind, he added sarcastically, "Mebbe seein' as how he's sech a all-fired fine seaman he anchored in mid ocean an' waited fer it to ca'm down. Anyhow, I'm a takin' the *Sachem* out to Cuby nex' week an' mebbe I'll see him down there. Guess I'll git a rise outen him—his talkin' 'bout the time he kin make under jury rig."

But instead of waiting for it to calm down as Lem had jocularly suggested, Cap'n Weaver had been bucking the wildest and most tempestuous weather that had swept the Atlantic in the memory of the oldest seamen. Under her jury rig the *Orion* had proceeded remarkably well, and as the wind had dropped to a steady stiff breeze her skipper had cautiously added more and more canvas to her. Fore and maintopgallant and mizzen staysails were spread and the main-topgallant sail set and though her canvas was, of necessity, mainly low, yet the bark did very well and sailed steadily on her course at a good six knots. The fact that she was more than half a thousand miles to the eastward of where she should have been was a small matter, for on the long slant which would bring her to Cuba, the offing amounted to little and



was, in her partially crippled condition, an advantage if anything, as it brought the wind fair on her beam, which was her best sailing point.

But, as Cap'n Asa had said, hurricanes are uncertain things, and on the fourteenth day after her jury foremast had been rigged, and with the lookout on the main crossrees straining his eyes for the hoped-for smudge that would be the low-lying Bahamas, the wind dropped suddenly and left the *Orion* drifting motionless upon a flat shimmering sea.

"Danged if I like the look o' this," declared the skipper to Mr. Haskell, as he paced the deck in undershirt and trousers. "Glass's droppin' like blazes an' the's a dead feelin' in the air. An' look at that there sun. Jest like a' ol' copper kittle a hangin' up there. Bet ye we're in fer another blow."

Cap'n Asa was taking no chances, the canvas was stripped from yards until only a scrap of sail showed on main and mizzen, and not any too soon.

With sundown the blow came, and by eight bells it was a living gale. The skipper knew another hurricane was near and had the *Orion* not been crippled forward the captain might have scudded far enough to the east to have run out of the worst of the storm. But he dared not spread sail on the jurymast and without headsails it was a terrific struggle to keep the bark from broaching to and coming up into the wind, to say nothing of working an easting. Each time a huge sea would sweep under her counter and lift her stern soaring on a wave crest she would swing as on a pivot, and although her helm was hard over and the weight of two men strained at the wheel, the *Orion* seemed determined to take the bit in her teeth.

And this time the whirling, raging, cyclonic storm was not content with following up the Gulf Stream and blowing itself out off the New England coast. Instead, it veered eastward off Hatteras, tore off across the Atlantic as if bound

to wreak its fury on the Azores and, directly in its path was the crippled *Orion*. It drove her like a mad thing, buffeted and spun her like a teetotum, hurled her plunging into the green troughs, bore her down until her yardarms were buried in the waves, overwhelmed her with tons of hissing green seas, ripped boats from davits, wrenched the greenheart rails free, battered deck houses and then, having done its worst, sped screaming, screeching, howling like a demon, on its way, to lose itself in the vast reaches of the North Atlantic.

And when it had passed, the *Orion* rose and fell heavily upon the tortured sea, a battered, sodden, broken thing—little more than a hulk—with only three splintered stumps standing above her decks where once had towered the lofty spars and maze of rigging. A hopeless wreck she seemed, a water-logged derelict. But Cap'n Asa Weaver, despite his age and his wooden leg, was not beaten even yet. The moment it was possible for a human being to stand upon the deck the pumps were manned, and while the gang sweated and worked at the brakes and the water gurgled and streamed from the scuppers, Haskell, the skipper and the rest of the crew, labored desperately to clear away the wreckage and to salvage what they could. To everyone's surprise and relief the pumps gained on the water in the hold, at last they sucked and the *Orion* floated as buoyantly as ever. Only a few spars remained this time, the greater part having been swept clear away by the hurricane, but below hatches were spare yards and royalmasts, as well as a complete suit of sails. Spurred on by the indomitable captain and by Haskell, the men worked incessantly, rigging shears, splicing rigging, hoisting spars, until at last, above the pathetic stumps of masts, rose the jury rig—low, outlandish and bizarre—but a rig that would carry sail, that would urge the bark onward and that would weather any ordinary blow.

"Dunno what ye'd call the ol' hooker now," remarked Cap'n Asa as he surveyed his handiwork. "Sort o' 'maphrodite barkentine I reckon, with them there yards for'ard an' for'naft on mizzen and main. Don' recollect ever seein' a barkentine with lug sails though. By Judas, I'd like to have Lem here now!"

But whatever the weird rig of the *Orion* might have been called in maritime parlance, it served its purpose, and to a fair breeze and over a reasonably calm sea the *Orion* once more forged ahead toward far distant Cuba. Far to the east and north, she had driven—more than halfway across the Atlantic—and back to the latitude of Boston, and Haskell, absolutely amazed at the skipper's course, voiced his surprise.

"Ain't you puttin' into port for repairs?" he asked. "It's a fair wind for Boston or New York, and Funchal's pretty close."

The skipper slowly looked the mate over from top to toe as if studying some strange new specimen. "Puttin' inter port!" he exclaimed at last. "Yep, puttin' inter Matanzas. Sufferin' Jonah, d'ye think I'd be a-puttin' back to Boston after thirty-six days out an' weatherin' o' two o' the dod-gastedest hur'canes whatever took the sticks outen a ship? No, by glory! I ain't a-flyin' in the face o' Providence I hope—like the Flyin' Dutchman—but by the grace o' God an' that there jury rig I'm a-goin' fer to make Matanzas if it takes me all winter."

Haskell shook his head but said nothing. He knew the old skipper too well to argue, but he was beginning to think that Asa had taken leave of his senses. He was forced to admit to himself, however, that, barring accidents or severe storms, there was no reason why the *Orion* should not make Cuba under her jury rig, although he dared not hazard a guess as to when she would arrive. However, it was not his affair,

and like a proper seaman and mate he used his best skill and knowledge in getting the most out of the plodding old bark.

Two days later a faint smudge of smoke showed on the eastern horizon. Presently masts and funnel rose above the rim of the sea and rapidly a dingy tramp steamer bore down toward the wallowing *Orion*.

Evidently she thought the bark in need of assistance and up to her masthead ran a string of bright bunting.

"Wants to know if you want help an' askin' your name an' information," said Haskell as he slowly deciphered the code flags in the thumb-worn book in his hands.

Cap'n Asa snorted. "When I want help from any greasy ol' steam tank I'll set signals," he retorted. "Reckon I'll git him to report us, though. No use lettin' the folks at home get a-frettin' an' thinkin' we've all gone to Davy Jones. An'," he added as an afterthought, "'pears like we might be some consid'able spell gettin' to Matanzas an' ye might ask him fer water an' salt po'k. Guess we've got enough else."

So, the pork and water having been duly delivered, the *José Larrinaga* once more churned on her interrupted way toward New York, and her bearded officers shrugged shoulders and made various comments on the crazy Yankees.

Three weeks after the *Larrinaga* had left the *Orion* astern a man peered forth across the indigo sea from the lighthouse at Matanzas and rubbed his eyes. Never in his life had he seen such a craft as was now approaching the harbor. Above her long, weather-beaten hull rose three short slender spars. Upon the foremast was a single square sail; upon the others rectangular areas of canvas that seemed a cross between lugsails and staysails, and, fluttering from her rigging, was the Stars and Stripes. The *Orion* had arrived.

"Reckon I bust all records fer long

v'ges twixt Boston an' Cuby," chuckled Cap'n Asa to the consul, who was also the skipper's agent. "Fifty-nine days outen Boston, but here safe an' soun'. Yes, sir, I allers did allow there wa'nt no excuse fer not gettin' inter po't's long's a ship wa'nt sinkin'."

"Of course you'll refit here," said the consul, after expressing his admiration and amazement at Cap'n Asa's accomplishment and complimenting him upon it. "I can easily secure spars from Havana or even from the States while your discharging and loading."

"Refit nothin'," ejaculated the skipper. "Look a-here. I've brung the ol' gal dumb nigh two thousan' mile under that there misfit rig an' by glory I'm a-goin' fer to take her home with it. Yes, sir, I've busted all records for takin' time a-gittin' here an' derned if I don't break another gittin' back. Sufferin' codfish, I'm a-gittin' everlastin'ly stuck on that there jury rig. Yes, sir, slow but sure, an' I'm aimin' fer to prove to some ol' shellbacks to home jus' what a real seaman kin do under jury rig."

The morning following this declaration of the captain's, Haskell glanced seaward to see a trim three-masted schooner slipping into port. The next instant he bawled down the companionway to Cap'n Asa. "Look who's here," he shouted. "The *Sachem's* a-coming into port!"

"Wall I vow!" exclaimed the skipper, as he studied the oncoming schooner. "Derned ef 'taint Lem at that."

But upon the *Sachem's* deck captain, officers and crew stood in absolute amazement as they recognized, in the weird and battered craft in the harbor, the bark *Orion*. Hardly had the anchor plunged over before Lem was being pulled rapidly to the bark and despite their differences of opinion and heated arguments the two old salts blew their noses loudly and wiped suspicious moisture from their eyes as they grasped hands once more upon the *Orion's*

decks. But soon they were at it hammer and tongs again.

"Didn't I tell ye I'd git the old *Orion* into po't under her own canvas even if all three sticks was took outen her?" crowed Cap'n Asa as, in the bark's cabin, they sat smoking and chinning. "Like fer to see ye ha' done it with that there three sticker o' yourn."

"Huh," snorted Lem. "An' took fifty nine day a-gettin' here. Why, by gum, the *Sachem* could ha' drifted here without nary a stick or stitch in three months. Didn't I tell ye time was money these days? Why, ye ol' shellback, ye could ha' made a dozen v'yages back and forth in that time. Where's the savin' or the sense in what ye done? An' now ye're aimin' to temp' Providence by a sailin' back under these here contraptions. I vow, Asa, I'm beginnin' fer to think ye're plumb crazy."

Asa fairly bristled. "Dod gast ye, Lem!" he retorted hotly. "Ain't ye got no respect fer seamanship? By Judas, 'pears like all ye thought on was money same's them consarned steam skippers. An' ye're a-sayin' that there wall-sided ol' canal boat o' yourn could ha' done better, eh? I swan, I—I—by glory, I'll bet ye the *Orion* kin outsail ye right now, jury rig an' all."

Lem fairly roared with laughter. For once he had gotten a "rise" out of old Asa and he thoroughly enjoyed it. "Want me to take home a message for ye?" he asked. "I'm a-clearin' nex' Tuesday an' ye might want ter let the folks to home know ye won't be home to Christmas."

"Clearin' Tuesday be ye?" cried Asa, ignoring the other's facetious suggestion. "Waal, by Judas, I'm a-clearin' Sat'rday. An' by glory I'll take any messages ye min' to send. Think that there dumb swizzled barge ye call a ship kin sail do ye? An' think I'm crazy, eh? By the eternal, I'll—yes, sir—I'll bet ye a hundred dollars the *Orion's* into Boston afore the *Sachem* now!"

"Now I *know* ye're plumb looney," declared Lem chuckling. "But idjits hadn't oughta have so derned much money to throw away, an' I'll take ye up jus' to l'arn ye a lesson, Asa, an' I'll bet ye another hundred ye don't sight Minot's Ledge lessen two weeks arter I'm docked."

Two days later the *Orion* cleared and as she slipped seaward, Lem stood on the *Sachem's* quarter deck and cupped his hands to his lips. "I'll heave ye a towline some'eres nor'ard o' the Bahamas," he yelled. "Hate to have ye missin' Thanksgivin' an' Christmas to home."

But neither north of the Bahamas or elsewhere on the homeward voyage did those on the *Orion* sight the *Sachem*. With a fair steady wind and a calm sea the bark kept steadily on, and while old Asa, once he had cooled off, realized that he had as good as thrown away his hundred dollars—with a fair likelihood of losing the second hundred as well—yet he consoled himself with the thought that he had not knuckled under to Lem and that he was upholding the traditions of the old Yankee seamen. And the *Orion* made wonderfully good time considering her jury rig. Sixteen days after clearing from Matanzas she was off Monomoy, and Haskell, gazing shoreward through his glasses, described two slender masts rising above the horizon and canted at a sharp angle.

"Reckon some craft's taken the ground yonder," he remarked as Cap'n

Asa came up the companionway. "Think we'd better run in a bit an' see if she wants help?"

"Humph, 'spect we might as well have a look," assented the skipper, and the *Orion's* course was shifted a trifle.

Gradually the masts of the stranded vessel grew more distinct and presently a powerful tug was standing by.

"Don't guess we can help none," announced the mate. "Must ha' struck pretty derned hard—took the fo-must outen her."

Cap'n Asa was studying the vessel, whose hull, wedged fast in the sand and canted over, was now visible. "By Judas!" he burst out suddenly. "Derned if 'tain't. Yep, I'll be eve'lastin'ly b'iled if 'tain't the *Sachem*! By glory, Mr. Haskell, I'm aimin' fer to collec' two hundred dollars from that there Lem, by Godfrey!"

Ten minutes later the yawl boat was dancing shoreward with Cap'n Weaver, his weater-beaten face wreathed in a broad grin, in the stern. Approaching close to the stranded schooner he stood up, waved a hand to the figure on the *Sachem's* after deck and bellowed out: "Want a tow line, Lem? Waal, I'll be a waitin' fer ye up to the club an' I kin use two hundred dollars fer Christmas, I reckon. Guess ye got to admit there's suthin' in seamanship arter all—an' don' fergit time's money, Lem. 'Pears like ye got a-plenty o' the fust an' that there salvage tug's goin' fer to git a chunk o' t'other. So long, Lem!"