

# Adventure

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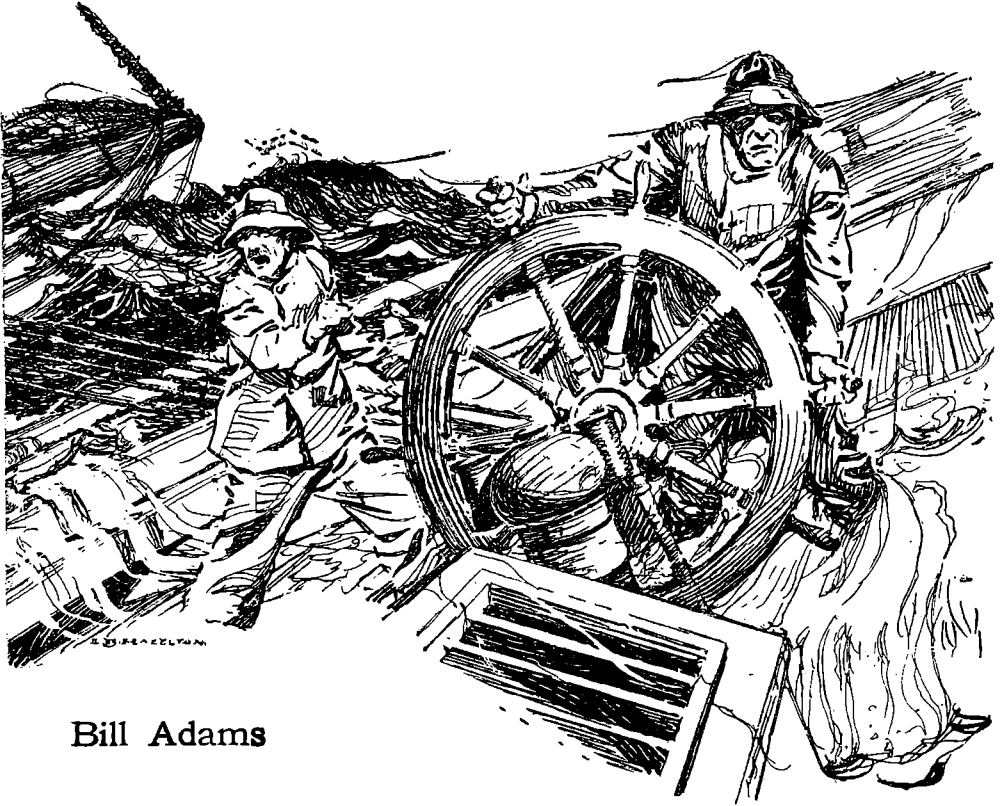
August 15, 1935

Twice a Month

<b>The Purple Pirate (a novelette) . . .</b>	<b>TALBOT MUNDY</b>	<b>2</b>
<p>Their battlefield was a sinking ship, and the fight was hopeless. One-eyed Conops leaped to the purple taffrail with the battle trumpet in his fist. "Lay aboard, all hands. Go in fast and gut her. Grapple before their arrows sweep our decks!" And from the quarter-deck Tros staggered to the thunder of crunching hulls and leaped down where the cymbals and the war-roar came. "Grappels—let go!"</p>		
<b>Road Runner . . . . .</b>	<b>HENRY HERBERT KNIBBS</b>	<b>55</b>
<p>Stumbling to the ambush on the Dragoon trail, young Hardesty saw the sun glint on the sawed-off Springfield of the Apache Kid. "What I want, I get," said the Kid. And young Hardesty knew it was murder he wanted.</p>		
<b>The Feud at Single Shot (Second of Five Parts) . . . . .</b>	<b>LUKE SHORT</b>	<b>65</b>
<p>"Pack your guns loose!" roared the mining man. "I'll kill you like a coyote the next time I see you." That night strange thunder rolled from the high peak of Old Cartridge.</p>		
<b>Gone Native . . . . .</b>	<b>WALT PEACHY</b>	<b>87</b>
<p>Some time toward evening, when the water jugs were broken and the native bullets were getting uncomfortably close to the loopholes in our mahogany hut, we heard a frantic voice from the jungle: "For God's sake, open up! I've come thirty miles on foot to help you."</p>		
<b>One Thing at a Time . . . . .</b>	<b>BILL ADAMS</b>	<b>100</b>
<p>The rain changed to mist, and the brig with the shifted cargo was lost to sight of the two in the longboat towed at her stern. Her skipper shouted, but his voice was drowned. "Cut!" said young Ross to the skipper's daughter, and the painter parted, leaving them alone on the dark and empty sea.</p>		
<b>Cowards Are Bravest . . . . .</b>	<b>PERRY ADAMS</b>	<b>106</b>
<p>The colonel dropped his hand. The great gate swung open. Giving his helmet a jaunty tap a captain stepped out among the besiegers—the bloodiest tribe of the hills. The colonel raised his hand. His own brother was next, and already he could see him under the torture knives.</p>		
<b>The Camp-Fire . . . . .</b>	<i>where readers, writers, and adventurers meet</i>	<b>117</b>
<b>Ask Adventure . . . . .</b>	<i>information you can't get elsewhere</i>	<b>122</b>
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<p><i>Cover by Walter Baumhofer</i>                      <i>Illustrations by Neil O'Keeffe, I. B. Hazelton, V. E. Pyles</i></p>		

Howard V. L. Bloomfield, Editor

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Bill Adams

## ONE THING AT A TIME

**O**ILSKINS hung on the bulkhead, with sea boots beside them. In a locker were tin plates, tin forks and tin spoons. Full of 'baccy smoke the forecastle was.

Broad John Aird rose of a sudden, his hair nigh touching the beams overhead, so tall he was.

"One thing at a time," said he. "What good's talking of women? What good'll they do ye here?"

"What good'll they do ye anywhere?" asked Connor.

"Aye! Answer that. will ye?" growled old Shaw.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed young Ross. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ye're a fool, Ross," growled old Shaw.

"T'would be so with you, were you not so old and crabby," said Ross.

"No one answers my question," said

Connor. "A place for everything, and everything in its place."

"There's room for a girl any place," said Ross.

Aird hunted in his pocket, and fetched out a picture.

"You'll be lucky do you see your woman again in a year, Aird," said Connor.

They turned into their bunks. Last, young Ross blew out the lamp.

"It's cold in my bunk," said Ross, pulling blankets to his chin.

"If it's cold ye are with your young blood, what d'ye suppose it is with me?" asked old Shaw.

"No girl could ever warm your blood," laughed Ross.

The forecastle door was opened. The mate looked in, striking a match and holding it high.

"Are you all here?" he asked.

"All here, sir. But no girl, worse luck," said young Ross.

The match went out. The mate said: "Tumble out lively when the tug-boat comes to take us to sea."



IN THE cabin the skipper bent over a girl who lay in her bunk. Her face was pale. Too thin she was, yet she was pretty despite it. Great gray eyes. Soft brown hair. Oval face. A slip of a girl, with the prettiest mouth and chin that ever you saw.

"You'll be all right soon," said the skipper. "A whiff of sea air's all you've been needing."

"I don't want to be a nuisance, father," said the girl.

"I'm captain here. If you're no nuisance to me, you're no nuisance to any one. That's that," said the skipper.



'T'WAS mid-forenoon of the next day. The brig was running down a sunny sea, white caps breaking from horizon to horizon, here and there a tumbled cloud drifting across the pale sky. Watching young Ross at work, the mate stood by the fore rigging. A little way up the rigging, Connor was tucking a splice.

"Send two men aft here, Mister Mate!" called the skipper.

The skipper led Connor and young Ross down the companion-way to the cabin, where, on a canvas cot, lay the girl.

"Carry that cot out to the deck and up to the poop, to the lee of the chart house," he ordered.

The skipper preceded them up the ladder to the poop, Connor at the head, Ross at the foot of the cot. The girl looked at Ross.

"I don't want to be a nuisance," she said. He made a gesture, as though to say: "I could carry you with one hand."

"It must be wonderful to be a sailor,"

said the girl, looking at Ross's strong shoulders. He made no answer, by voice or eye. At the head of the ladder, the skipper was looking down at them.

Old Shaw, at the wheel, looked up from his compass.

"So there's a woman aboard? Heaven help us then," he muttered.

"Keep your eyes on your compass, Shaw!" called the mate.

"There it starts. Trouble already," muttered Shaw to himself.

Connor and Ross set the cot down in the lee of the chart house, where no wind could reach it. Connor hurried off without looking at the girl. Ross touched his cap to her and followed.

"I feel better already, father," said the girl.

"The sea's the great healer. You'll be well in no time," said the skipper.

"She don't look like much," said Connor, starting into the rigging again.

"It'd make no difference to you what she looked like," said Ross.

"Of course not. She's the skipper's daughter," said Connor.

"I was not meaning that," laughed Ross.

"Quit talking! Get on with your work!" called the mate.

"There it is again. Trouble already," muttered old Shaw.

By and by the bell struck. Four bells. Ross went to take the wheel.

"When I'm better, may I learn to steer, father?" asked the girl.

"We'll see," answered the skipper, and went below.

The girl watched young Ross, now heaving the wheel up, now putting it down, making scarce an effort it seemed to her. When the brig lifted her bows, dipping her stern deep to the hollows, she could see the wake, a long swirling pathway trailing far astern. She drew long breaths, filling her bosom with the sea's pure wine.



IT was noon. The sailors sat at dinner.

"I wish I was skipper, so I could have me wimmen with me. What does she look like?" said Aird.

"I could lift her with one hand," said Connor. "What good's talking of it?"

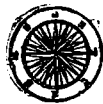
"I seen Ross looking at her. He touched his cap to her," said Aird.

"You're fools. There'll be trouble in this ship," growled old Shaw.

Presently, relieved at the wheel by Shaw, Ross entered. "Not so bad, eh? She says she's sorry," he said, grinning down at Connor and Aird.

"Sorry for what?" asked Connor.

"Sorry there's but one decent-looking lad in the ship," laughed Ross.



DAYS were gone by. Her canvas lightly filled by an easy trade wind, the brig sailed blue waters. At the wheel stood the girl, Aird at her side to teach her to steer.

"How long have you been at sea?" asked the girl.

"'Tis not well to talk at the wheel, miss. Your eyes on the compass, please," said Aird.

"A sailor thinks of nothing but the ship, it seems," laughed the girl.

"You'll be making me trouble if you let her get off her course," said Aird. "Your eyes on the compass, please."

"She's on her course. Why should I not speak then?" asked the girl.

"One thing at a time. 'Tis a rule of the seas," said Aird.

"Rules, rules, rules," said the girl.

"Need for rules if one's to get anywhere," said Aird.

The skipper looked from the chart room.

"You're there to attend to what you're doing, not to talk," he called to Aird.

"There. You've made me trouble, miss," said Aird.

"You, Shaw, go take Aird's place.

Keep your mouth shut," ordered the mate.

"What's the matter with Aird that he's so solemn, Mister Shaw?" asked the girl.

"There's been women in his life," said old Shaw.

The girl laughed and, to make the ship fall off her course, put the wheel up, a twinkle in her eyes. Instantly Shaw's hand was on the wheel.

"You remind me of Moses," said the girl.

"Never heard of him, miss," said old Shaw.

"He was a law-giver," said the girl.

"Then he never had no truck with women, miss," said old Shaw.

"Take your hand from the wheel, please. I'm steering, not you," said the girl.

Shaw kept his hand on the wheel. She tried to push it away. It stayed.

The mate said:

"Ross, go take Shaw's place. He's doing all the steering. Use your head."

"Hold her to her course, if you can. I doubt it," said Ross when Shaw was gone.

The girl kept her eyes on the compass. The brig sailed true. The wind freshened and shifted, coming from another quarter. The mate called the men to trim the sails. With the new wind, the brig steered harder.

"I'm getting tired," said the girl.

"You wanted to steer, didn't you? Go ahead and steer," smiled Ross.

The girl stared hard at Ross, her cheeks flushed, her eyes angry.

"You're a brute," she said.

"Sure, of course I'm a brute," said young Ross.

The skipper appeared.

"Why didn't you call me? Can't you see she's tired?" he asked Ross.

"I was obeying orders, sir," said Ross.

"Take the wheel and steer," ordered the skipper.

"No, father. I want to steer," said the girl.

"Obey orders," said the skipper, and led her away.

He re-entered the chart house. Seated on the skylight, she watched Ross steer. The wind came harder. He hove the wheel up and down easily.

"What brutes they all are. All they can think of is the ship," thought the girl. "One thing at a time. Always one thing at a time," she murmured.



DAYS were gone by. A misty drizzle hid the sea. A fresh wind was blowing. In oilskin jacket and trousers, the girl stood on the poop beside the skipper. Presently she started down to the deck, where the men were hauling on a rope. The skipper called her back.

"One thing at a time. You've not learned to steer yet," he said.

"I'm sick of your old rules, father," said the girl, and went down to join the sailors, despite him.

"She'll be running the ship yet. See if she don't," growled old Shaw to Aird beside him.

"See here, miss," said young Ross, and showed her how to pull on a rope.

"Watch out there!" called the mate.

The men braced themselves, ready for the big sea that was rolling toward the railing. Just as it came roaring aboard, young Ross put an arm around the girl, his other hand fast to a stanchion. While Shaw and Aird were swept from their feet, he held her safe. When the water was gone, she laughed up to him.

"Thank you," she said.

It was late evening, dark and drizzly, without stars. The men were sitting in their fore-castle when the girl entered. To old Shaw she said, as she sat down. "Take off my sea boots, please. They got full of water as I came forward. My feet are cold."

"Easy now, Shaw," said Aird. "A girl's foot ain't like a man's."

"You do it. You knows about women," said old Shaw. Aird drew her sea boots off. She drew off her stockings.

"Please rub my feet. They're cold," said the girl.

Aird shook his head.

"My hands is rough. They'd rub you to blisters," he said.

The bell struck. From the bows came the voice of young Ross, keeping lookout.

"All's well, sir."

"I'll go and ask Mister Ross to do it," laughed the girl, and ran barefoot up to the fore-castle head.

"Now there'll be trouble," said old Shaw.

"I can't rub your feet. No one's allowed to talk to the lookout man," said young Ross.

"I didn't ask you to talk. Just rub my feet, please," said the girl.

"I'm keeping lookout. One thing at a time," said Ross.

"Rules, rules, rules. You're just a brute," said the girl.

"Sure, I'm a brute," said young Ross.

The mate looked into the fore-castle and asked:

"Where's the skipper's daughter?"

"On the lookout wi' Ross, sir," said Aird.

"You, Ross! Where's that girl?" asked the mate, stepping to the fore-castle head.

"Here I am, rubbing my feet," said the girl from the gloom.

"Your father told me to give you a spanking if I found you forward," said the mate.

"I'd like to see you do it," said the girl.

"Aird!" called the mate, and when Aird came said: "You and me've got kids of our own, Aird. Lay her over the windlass."

"Aye, sir. They needs it once in a while," said Aird.

The girl wriggled free from Aird and ran down to the deck. From behind her she heard Ross's laughing voice say

to the mate, "You should have asked me to hold her, sir. I'd have held her all right."

"Brute," she exclaimed.

"Where've you been?" asked the skipper, when the girl came to the poop.

"Sailors are brutes," she replied. "They tried to spank me."

In the fore-castle Aird and the mate stood laughing. Old Shaw said: "We'll have trouble yet. See if we don't."



DAYS were gone by. It was blowing a heavy gale, the brig laboring in great sea, with sprays flying over her in clouds. At the wheel was Shaw. Now and again, despite him, she fell off into the sea, rolling horribly, her hull straining, her masts straining, her rigging jerking to her wild motion. The skipper entered the chart room. The mate followed, shutting the door behind him.

"She'll be all right—if the cargo doesn't shift," said the skipper.

"That's what's worrying me, sir," said the mate.

The girl made her way along the poop to old Shaw.

"What's going to happen?" she shouted to him.

"Here's wot comes of having a woman aboard," replied old Shaw.

A ray of light broke through the dark, scurrying clouds, and at that moment the skipper and mate came back to the poop deck.

"Good! The worst's over," shouted the skipper.

The brig lifted her bows high, high, and higher, her stern dipping so deep to a sea hollow that water came swirling 'round old Shaw's knees. "Steady! Steady her now, Shaw!" shouted the skipper.

Old Shaw hove with all his weight on the wheel spokes. The mate sprang to help him. Despite their efforts, the brig yawed, and took a roll so terrific that it seemed she must turn turtle. Aird, Con-

nor and young Ross ran from the fore-castle. And at that instant the wind fell suddenly. A ray of light broke from the clouds again.

While Shaw and the mate hove the wheel down, the brig came slowly up to the sea, but, instead of rolling to windward, remained lying far over.

Skipper and mate looked at each other. No need for words. That cargo had shifted.

"Get the boat into the water. She may go down at any minute," ordered the skipper.

"Get into the boat," the skipper ordered the girl. To Ross he said: "Go with her. Keep the boat astern. We'll try to trim cargo and save the ship. If she sinks while we're below decks, cut the painter so the boat drifts free." He added, "Pick us up if you can. If not—" and he nodded toward the girl as though to say, "Take care of her as best you can."

Leaning on the long steering oar, young Ross kept the boat astern of the brig, her bows facing the sea.

"See if there's food and water aboard," he called to the girl. She opened the locker.

"There's a little box of biscuit and a small keg of water," she called back.

A torrent of rain beat down. A squall whined over the sea. The brig was almost invisible in the driving rain and spray. Presently the rain changed to a dense mist. The brig was lost to view.

The boat jerked at her painter, so that her bows were almost drawn under the sea. Ross tossed his knife to the girl.

"Be ready to cut the painter when I shout," he called to her. Knife in hand, she knelt in the bow.

"Cut!" shouted Ross, presently.

From the invisible brig the skipper shouted: "Where are you, Ross?" The wind drowned his voice.

"What's going to happen to us?" called the girl.

"One thing at a time. Don't lose your head," he replied.

"Father's drowned," she said, and sat down and began to cry.

"I'm sorry," said Ross, and sat down beside her, taking her hand in his. "Keep your heart up. Maybe they're all right," he said.

She rested her head on his strong shoulder.

Hours passed. Ross fetched biscuit and water for the girl.

"What about you?" she asked.

"Go on and eat. I'll eat when I'm hungry," he replied.

She ate and drank.

"How long will our food last?" she asked.

"A long time. Till a ship picks us up," he answered.

Dusk fell. He laid her in the boat's bottom and drew a sail over her.

"Go to sleep. I'll keep watch," he said.

"You must eat," said the girl.

"Don't worry about me. A sailor can always take care of himself," he said.

Morning came. Ross handed her food and water.

"I ate while you slept," he told her, answering her question with a lie. At noon he gave her food and water again.

"Twice a day's enough for me. I'll eat this evening," he told her.

"I beg your pardon. You're not a brute," she said. He answered, smiling, "You don't know me yet."

"Keep watch while I snooze a while," he said, and slept till evening.

When he wakened, she was dozing. He woke her and passed her food and water.

"I ate while you slept," he lied, and pointed to a few crumbs he had purposefully dropped into the boat's bottom.

Two days dragged by, with heavy fog all the time. Always Ross pretended to have eaten while she had been asleep. Of water he took just enough to moisten his lips.

The third day broke clear, with a hot sun. Using the sail, he rigged an awning for her. He looked 'round the sea, seeking the brig. The sea was empty. She began to cry:

"Never give up hope," he said. She said: "You're very brave." Not daring to speak much, lest she note the hoarseness of his parched and tortured throat, he shrugged his shoulders.

Day came again. The biscuit was gone, the keg all but empty. Hour on hour dragged by, the sun blazing, the little sail affording shelter enough for the girl only. Ross drenched her clothes and his own, that they might thereby soak in a little moisture. That night the girl finished the last of the water, Ross holding the keg to her lips, lest a drop be wasted, and smiling into her frightened eyes.

"We're going to die," she whispered.

"One thing at a time. We're not dead yet," he whispered back, making the words audible only with bitter effort.

All that night he held her in his arms, her head on his breast. All night she dozed and wakened, dozed and wakened again, while, in agony of thirst, he gazed into the starlit emptiness.

Morning came. A light wind ruffled the sea. Ross soaked their clothing. Then, holding her tight, he looked 'round the sea again, everything a dim blur before his anguished eyes. She dozed away. His head nodded. With his chin upon her soft head, he also dozed away.

Wakened by loud voices, they looked up—at the skipper and mate, at Aird and Connor, staring down at them from the brig's rail. Old Shaw lowered the Jacob's ladder that they might climb aboard.

Ross rose on unsteady feet and lifted the girl.

"You first," he whispered.

The girl looked into the eyes of young Ross. He tried to smile.

"One thing at a time, dearest," she said, and pressed her lips to his.