

#### WAR DE WATERMELON GROWS.

BY BURT ARNOLD.

I wuk's w'en I kin fur de white folks,  
So ter find out w'ar da sto's up dar co'n—  
I mosey at night w'en da all dun sleep  
An' fills up mer sack, shuh's yo' bo'n.  
I know'd de all de clothes in de oce'an,  
An' I know'd w'ar da's bacon in rows;  
But I doan neber boder erbout dem yore,  
W'en I git's w'ar de watermelon grows.

Er man will dun preach dot de Bible do tay  
It am wrong fur ter rob an' ter steal,  
An' be jes de man what'll shuh git cotted  
When de daugs da am loosed in de fiel'.  
I sin' gwine try fur ter keep out de patch  
W'ar de Meffodis' zortes goes—  
I only gits left w'en de fruit is ripe  
In de fel' w'ar de watermelon grows.  
—Arkansaw Traveler.

#### RUM AND GUNPOWDER IN THE HOLD.

BY FRANK H. CONVERSE.

The worst v'y'ge I ever made? You're asking me a hard one, my lad. For there's different degrees of hard voyaging, so to speak.

For instance, a sailor ships in one of these wild packets where the cap'n is a bully and his officers a couple of shades worse. From dock to dock it's a word and a blow, with the blow two minutes before the word. If you get ashore with a skin full of whole bones you haven't had as hard a v'y'ge as some others that goes to the hospital with smashed jaws or broken limbs.

Or mebbe, fool-like, you get inveigled aboard a deep-water whaler, though I will say no flag's A B in his sober senses gets caught that way often. Two and perhaps three years you're cruising after sperm, and finally get into port with part of a cargo of oil, your share not being enough to pay your outfit bill. That's a hard v'y'ge!

And so it goes, which, if the dog-watch wasn't nigh half spent, I might keep illustrating of. But I mind one particler v'y'ge that was hard enough for me. It was this way:

Being American born and bred, I've mostly sailed under my flag as a matter of principle, dye see? American sailors being scarce at best, and our ships' fo'c'sles full of dirty foreigners for nigh twenty years past, growing worse all the time.

I did make a cruise in a Chinee junk in '65, but that was entire accident, as some night I'll tell you about. But in '72 I got stranded in London with wages to the States two-pound-ten, and three-pound-five offered foreign. So it came about I shipped in the brig Clara Desmond bound for the west coast of Africa.

I knew tolerable well what part of the cargo was like to be, but I was a little took aback when come to get fairly aboard I see there was a youngish and an older gent which the steward said was missionaries, goin' out to a mission on the Gaboon River.

"The same old story; rum, gunpowder, and missionaries. I'd rather it were you than me was goin', for you're sure to come to grief somehow," says an old shipmate who came down to see me off.

But the missionaries wasn't to blame for the cargo, was they? In point of fact, as I found out after, they didn't know what the cargo was, passage having been engaged for 'em by other parties. But there's a certain class of folks always sneering at religion that likes to represent such things in the worst kind of light.

It was the middle of March, the toughest time in the year on the English coast, in my way of thinking.

We had a fairish wind through the Straits of Dover, and then it chopped round dead with half a gale blowing, and that thick you couldn't see the brig's length half the time.

There was eight of us before the mast, she being a lump of a brig, for English owners are more particular not to have their vessels sail short-handed, as well they may, considering the starvation wages. Four were Roosians or Roosian Finns, two Irish, and one—the one which begun trouble—hailed from Australia under the name of Boxer, which wasn't his right name any more than mine is Harry Hale. There's some of us fellows in the forecastle that ain't willing to carry a respectable fam'ly name along with us.

Boxer had been paid off from a deep-waterman and blown in something like fifty pounds inside of three weeks. So when he come aboard he was that shaky Cap'n Gore wouldn't send him aloft; besides, he was on the ragged edge of delirium tremens! Why, talk about selling one's soul for drink, after he'd been aboard six hours Boxer would have sold his and all his relations' to boot for a glass of liquor. Temperance lectures with illustrations! A vessel's fo'c'sle is where you'll hear and see 'em, and they ain't stereopticon views, either!

From the time Boxer found out there was rum in the hold, I think he grew crazier. He begged like a dog for Cap'n Gore to give him the least drop, but the old man was solid against it, and dosed Boxer with valerian and such. Boxer kept his bunk, and it was all hands on deck the biggest part of the time, so we never mistrusted what he was up to.

First I took much notice of either of the passengers was when we was three days out beating down channel under reefs, somewhere midway betwixt Cape La Hague on the French coast and Prawle Point off Devon. The oldest of the two, a Mr. King, was sick, of course, but this younger one, a Mr. Venn, didn't seem to have an idea of such a thing.

He was a slim, palish sort of chap,

but come to look close at him, I noticed he had considerable muscle and sinew under his white skin. And when all to once he sprung and grabbed hold of the tops'l halyards above the rest of our hands, and surged down on it with a regular sailor "sing out," "my fine fellow," I says to myself, "your fingers has been in a tarpot, or I lose my guess."

Being one hand short, Cap'n Gore, though he opened his eyes tolerable wide, made no manner of objection to the passenger taking hold for a pull whenever he liked. And seeing this, Mr. Venn came on deck an hour or two after, without his tail coat and white choker, wearing a regular sailor shirt and Scotch cap.

"I've been to sea some, Cap'n," he says, in a quiet sort of way, "and it'll do me good to stir round with the men a little—I'd like to."

Cap'n Gore stared, and smiled in his dry way, but said nothing. And Mr. Venn did stir round.

We had two reefing jobs before noon—first a single then a double, and both times I'm blessed if the young feller wasn't to the weather yard arm hanging on to the lift with his arrin' ready rove to haul out, before we men was fairly on the yard.

Yet he didn't forget his profession neither. It was Kelly, the worst swearing man aboard, stood next him, and when Kelly begun his reg'lar cursing, Mr. Venn says:

"Mr. Kelly, your own priest would tell you you were endangering your soul—and the sail doesn't pick up a bit easier, either."

"Right you are, parson," says Kelly, and Mr. Venn was the "sailor parson" after that with all hands. He knew just what to say and when to say it—and we fellows took to him mightily, 'specially as all but sleeping for'ard he filled Boxes place in the watch day and night.

But it was awful weather, and we were two days and nights beating to windward before the Eddystone light showed up. This was early Sunday forenoon, and when the watch was sent below, Boxer wasn't in his bunk.

Now there was only a board bulkhead 'twixt the fo'c'sle (which was below deck) and the for'ard hold. Then, somebody noticed one of the boards was loose, whilst there was a tremendous smell of rum in the fo'c'sle itself. We mistrusted what it meant in a minute. We shoved the board away—and the whole thing comes to me now like a photograph.

With the rolling and pounding, some of the upper tier of the cargo had shifted. Three or four of the powder kegs was stove atop of the puncheons and casks of rum, and there sat Boxer in the middle of 'em. One of the half empty kegs was jammed down into a heap of loose powder to stiddy it, and in the end bunghole was a lighted tallow dip with paper round the butt to keep it in place!

Boxer had somehow got a big gimlet from the carpenter's room and tapped a rum puncheon. And there he sat a-straddle of it like a seafaring Bacchus, drinking the raw liquor out of a tin pannikin as though it was water, while every time the brig rolled a little heavier than usual, you could see the powder-keg with the candle in it work back and forth in the powder heap.

I've been scart in my day, but never nothing like that. I only wonder my hair didn't turn white in a minute, as the story writers say.

I don't think as quick as some, and while I was standing staring, Peter, one of the Finns in my watch, had run aft to Cap'n Gore, and the next thing I saw was the old man standing right behind me with one of those Proshian army "needleguns" cocked and ready for'ard!

"Hullo, Cap," Boxer sung out, waving the pannikin round his head, crazy as a coot, "come on, and have just one drink before it's too late. Because," he said, going on quick and fast, "I'm a man of education, and this thing of sending rum and missionaries to Africa isn't quite the thing; so I'm going to send the whole kit of us skyhigh directly the candle gets burned a trifle lower!"

Passengers included, there were fourteen of us all told at the mercy of one sailor, crazy drunk! and as he lurched for'ard, having the idea of snuffing the candles with his fingers so we could see, Captain Gore jerked the gun to his shoulder.

"God forgive me!" I heard him say sort of under his breath, as he steadied himself and glanced along the barrel. "Wait one moment!"

It was the parson; and, as he spoke in a half whisper, he pulled the captain's finger away from the rifle's trigger guard.

"Step back," he whispered, and pushing himself in front of Captain Gore, who was struck aback for the minute, he sung out:

"Dacy—Charlie Dacy!"

Drunk and crazy—both, in fact—Boxer started back like he'd been shot, instead of being within a hair's breadth of it.

Before Boxer could speak the parson seized himself through the narrow place in the bulkhead and gripped Boxer's two wrists in his hands, which I never would have believed were so strong.

"Charlie," the parson says, solemn-like, "you aren't yourself, come—"

But "Charlie," as he called him, wasn't himself by no manner of means, and he grappled the parson with a yell that was awful. But the parson hung on with a death-grip, and we fellows broke through the bulkhead to help him.

It wasn't long before that candle was in safe hands, I can tell you, and then Boxer, lashed hand and foot, was carried into the fo'c'sle and tied in his bunk.

But all this while the mate was in charge of the deck, and the wind hauling further and further to the southward and eastward, was driving the brig to loc'ard. And just as Cap'n Gore run on deck the reefed foresail burst and blew into rags in a twinkling.

The brig's sails were old anyway, and the fore-staysail went flying after the foresail. And before we could get new ones bent the Clara Desmond was drifting to loc'ard to'ard Burr Island, where the breakers ran half masthead high as far as we could see.

There's a low water shoal of shifting sands within two cables' lengths of the island, and there the brig took bottom—for she would neither wear nor stand without headail, and in a wind and sea that was fearful, to put it mild. The mainmast went by the beam, and Captain Gore, with the mate, a Cornishman named Penryth, was swept away by the same sea, along of two of the crew.

One of our boats was stove, and the other was no good any way, though the parson, who was the coolest man aboard, tried to get us to put it over, for the second mate, Mr. Fields, was laying to wind'ard with a broken leg, and there was nobody to take charge.

But, speaking for myself and the rest as far as I could see, we were about used up, and sailor-like, couldn't see any chance of saving ourselves or being saved. Then, of a sudden, through the driving murk and spray, comes an English life-boat that had been towed from somewhere nigh Plymouth by one of those little sidewheel iron steamers that we Americans make fun of sometimes.

The brig was breaking up aft fast, but the lifeboat managed to get under the bows and somehow get a line to the cathead, and I'll say this—I never saw such work done before or since, for the ebbing tide made a sea that was perfectly awful.

It was the parson who was first to see the signals from the lifeboat's coxswain, and out he went on the stump of the bowsprit with a coil of the jib halyards.

"Now then, boys," he sung out, and while we made our way out and one from one slipped down into the boat, he got aft, dragged old King, who was half dead with fright, for'ard, and lowered him down.

"Come on, parson," we roared together, as we saw him dive down the fore peak, "Let that drunken Boxer drown!"

But Mr. Venn wasn't that kind of a man. Next thing we saw he had Boxer, who was dazed and stupid like, hauling him out on the bowsprit. Then he put the jib halyards in Boxer's hands, and down Boxer came in a heap in the bottom of the boat.

But no one paid attention to him. One of those awful green-cresting seas, higher than the foremast head, came sweeping down to wind'ard of the brig.

"Hold on all!" was the cry, and only for the lifeboat being one of those self-righting and self-reliing ones, I wouldn't be here telling this yarn.

We hung to the life-lines along the gunwale as she capsized, but the painter parted, and she was swept toward shore. Before the breakers were reached they righted the boat, and we were dragged up on the beach more dead than alive.

The parson! We never saw him again. Mr. King only said, in a feeble sort of way, after he knew the truth, something about "laying down one's life for a friend." But did Mr. King mean himself or did he mean Boxer, whom perhaps Mr. Venn had known as some one else?

I only know this—Mr. Venn preached the biggest missionary sermon on record, the night of March 13, 1872. Aye, aye—strike eight bells there, for'ard!

#### SOME MARITAL MUSINGS.

"Why do husbands drop their lover-like ways?" inquires a correspondent, who signs herself "Neglected Wife."

Permit us to answer the query, in a measure, by another marital conundrum:

"Why do wives cease to be sweethearts to their husbands?"

Usually human beings are so constituted that satiety is the complement of possession. The game is delightful while the pursuit continues, and a captured deer within the pale of the park is but a trifle more interesting than any other domesticated animal. This is said "A woman likes to be possessed," and she frequently is—possessed of the d—, but well let that pass.

On the other hand, a man likes to have and to hold. And sometimes he does have to hold pretty tightly to the dear of his choice lest she makes secret choice of some other dear.

Marriage is a lottery, especially when the husband comes home with a lot-o-rye on board.

Again, when frosty December is wed to blooming May, May, perhaps, will never love, though December May.

Moreover, the kiss of coming and going, so frequent and delightful during the honeymoon and for a short period after, falls to desuetude, for the hum of business and the drum of enterprise, in a paradoxical way, turn love and home hum-drum.

Then when infantile reduplications repeat in smaller pattern paternal features, each discovers that love, so fair in fiction allegoric, colic, cramps, and membranous croup turn paregoric, —Texas Siftings.

CAVENDISH, in 1766, discovered hydrogen, and between 1774 and 1779 Priestley discovered oxygen, azote, and nitrous gas.

POSTOFFICES were first established in Paris in 1462; in England, 1581; in Germany, 1641; in Turkey, 1740.

#### UNION VETERANS.

##### Work of the Grand Army National Encampment at St. Louis.

##### Official Reports—Columbus, O., the Next Place of Meeting.

General John P. Rea, of Minnesota, Chosen as Commander-in-Chief of the Organization.

Sketch of the New Commander-in-Chief.

Gen. John Patterson Rea was born in Chester County, Pennsylvania, Oct. 13, 1840, and enlisted in Piqua, Ohio, in Company B, Eleventh Ohio Volunteer Infantry, April, 1861, for three months. Aug. 18, 1861, he enlisted for three years in the First Regiment Ohio Cavalry, and was promoted Sept. 23, 1861, Second Lieutenant; March 12, 1862, First Lieutenant; April 1, 1863, Captain; was breveted Major for gallantry in battle Nov. 23, 1863. He joined the G. A. R. at Piqua, Ohio, in December, 1866, and was a member of the first department encampment of Ohio. He became a charter member of George H. Thomas Post, No. 84, Department of Pennsylvania, October, 1867, and was successfully Post Captain, Post Commander,

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