

A SEA CHANCE.

By MORGAN ROBERTSON.

At the age of twenty-five, John Dorsey possessed few attributes of mind or body that would distinguish him from other seafaring men, unless it was the deep resonance of his voice and a strong memory for faces, facts, and places—which latter made him a wonderful pilot, his mind retaining a vivid picture of every harbor, island, rock or shoal that he had once seen. His strong lungs, with his pilotage and a general intelligence, raised him early to the quarter-deck.

Born at Nassau, in the Bahamas, where his mother still lived, he had obtained such education as the island schools afforded, had followed "wrecking" until his brain was a comprehensive chart of the whole West India group, and had then made four long voyages—one in the engine-room. The closing years of the Civil War found him engaged in blockade-running, which had grown to be a prosperous—though risky—and, from his insular standpoint, a legitimate business. Long, low, speedy steamers were built, painted slate color, loaded with munitions of war, and sent to dodge their way past Federal cruisers into Southern ports, to return with cotton. In one of these—the "Petrel"—he occupied the position of first mate, and stood aft near the taffrail, one dark night, watching the indefinite loom of a sloop-of-war about a mile astern.

At intervals a gleam, as of heat lightning, would light up the darkness. Then could be heard the humming and "cheep, cheep" of ricocheting solid shot, followed by the bark of the gun. They were firing low.

The chase, commencing with the wind abeam, ended with the wind ahead; for the quarry, with large engine and small sail power, had edged around in a wide curve until the sails of the pursuer no longer drew. The cruisers of that time were at best but auxiliaries, unfitted to chase to windward, and had not this one, as though to voice her disgust to the night, discharged a broadside as she squared away, the fleeing steamer might have escaped.

It is this broadside, or, particularly, one round, nine-inch shot of it, that concerns us. The rest of them, with the screaming shells, flew wide or short. This shot, unaimed and unhelped of, struck a sea at a quarter of the distance, another three quarters, arose in the air, and crashed through the rudder and stern posts of the "Petrel", forward through the boiler, and then on through the length of the steamer, making holes for itself where necessary, from the last of which—in the port bow—it dropped into the sea. The "Petrel" was successfully raked and disabled.

When the shot had entered the stern, an iron belaying pin, jolted from its place in the taffrail by the impact, had spun high as the cross-trees. Before it came down, and coincident with the roar of escaping steam from the punctured boiler, the mate noted the damage done in his department, and, to apprise the captain on the bridge, roared out: "Rudder post—" But the descending belaying pin, striking him a glancing blow on the head, cut short the sentence, and he fell to the deck.

The escaping steam brought the cruiser back to the chase, and the "Petrel" was captured, towed to a Northern port, and condemned. Here John Dorsey, still unconscious, though breathing, was placed in the hospital of a military prison. In a week he opened his eyes and smiled—as a baby smiles. Then as a baby looks at his hands, he looked at his, and cooed softly. His skull had not, apparently, been injured, and the lump raised had disappeared; so he was told to get up and dress. He only smiled, and was then assisted.

It could hardly have been said that John Dorsey had recovered consciousness. While physically healthy, a negative, non-combative good-humor, indicated by his smile, was the only mental attribute apparent. He even seemed to lack some of the instincts of self-preservation which the human, in common with other animals, inherits from parents. Feeling hunger, he would not eat food placed before him until

A Tale Told BY a Mate and a Cook.

shown how; and then not with a knife and fork, or even by intelligent use of his fingers, but by lowering his head in the manner of brutes. Hustled aside by a harsh attendant, he felt pain, and cried out—with no articulation. But he felt no fear at the next meeting; he could not remember.

An inner sub-consciousness directed necessary physiological function, and he lived and gained flesh. But, though far below the level of brutes in intellect, he differed from them and idiots in his capacity for improvement. For he learned—to dress himself; to use a knife and fork; to make his bed, sweep, carry water, etc. The first sign of memory he displayed was in his avoidance of the nurse who habitually abused him. He learned the names of things one by one, and, in time, essayed to speak them. But only with the progress of a gurgling infant did he acquire a vocabulary sufficient for his wants; and this he used, not in the breezy, quarter-deck tone of John Dorsey, but in accents soft and low, as became the gentleness of his new nature. Not being a prisoner of war, he was discharged—cured; but being useful, and not a stickler for salary, was allowed to remain in the hospital until it was officially abolished, six months after the close of the war. Then he was turned adrift—a man in physique but a child in experience; for his life now dated from the awakening in the hospital, and what he knew he had learned since then. Not a glimmer or shadow of memory as to his past remained. It was as though the soul of John Dorsey had gone from him, and in its place had come another—but a limited, a weakling soul: one that could neither love, nor hate, nor fear, in a human sense.

Poorly equipped as he was, he naturally became a beggar, but would work when told to. He wandered, associating with tramps; and under the tutelage of tramps, his mind expanded, but only to the limit of his soul. Some things he could not understand. In a measure the embargo on his faculties impressed its stamp on his face; but the features of the intelligent John Dorsey did not at once yield to the new conditions, and while a fit candidate for an asylum, the strange mixture of expression, resembling careworn candor, saved him from commitment as weak-minded, though he was often sent to jail as a vagrant.

For thirty years he was a homeless wanderer on the face of the earth, at the end of which time he had learned much, considering his limitations. He could talk fairly well in the slang of the road, and in an evenly-modulated tone of voice which was somewhat plaintive. He could not read or write; but he could count, though telling the time by the clock marked the limits of his progress in practical mathematics. A time-table map, the chart of his wandering confederates, was an incomprehensible puzzle to him. He knew the use of money, and what his day's labor was worth, though his lack of skill at the simplest tasks prevented his holding a job; hence, his ever-reactionary tendency to beggary. But latterly he had worked in a hotel kitchen, and liking the shelter and warmth, cultivated the industry to the extent of becoming, in spite of himself, a fairly good third-rate cook.

At the hospital he had been number seven. Asked his name later, he had given this number, which his tramp companions corrupted to "Shiveh" and prefixed with "Jack"—their hall-mark of fellowship. His beard had grown, and with his hair, was of a soft shade of brown; with no vices to age him, and tormented by no speculations as to his origin or destiny—the impressions of a year back being forgotten unless renewed by friction—his face, though changed, was even more youthful than the sailor Dorsey's. In repose it was stupefied; but when he was pleased and smiled—with the infantile smile that marked the birth of his new existence—it lighted up with the ineffable glory of an angel's. It was the mute expression of an innocence of soul which approached the divine—beyond hu-

man understanding. And it won him universal good-will, though not always good treatment.

In the autumn of 1895 he was in New York, penniless; and overhearing from a group of South Street loungers that the "Avon," at Pier No. 9, wanted a cook hurried there and met her captain, stepping over the rail to find him. "I heard you had no cook," he began.

"You a cook?"
"I kin cook plain grub."
"Ever been to sea?"
"No."

"Where'er your clothes?"
The applicant looked down at himself.

"Tramp, aren't you?" said the captain, good-humoredly.
"Yes, kinder," he answered and smiled.

"Come aboard, I'm in a hurry. Thirty dollars a month. Say 'Sir' when you speak to me or the mate."

The "Avon" was a two-masted, schooner-rigged, five-hundred-ton, iron screw steamer, with an old-fashioned oscillating engine, which her old-fashioned engineer patted lovingly for the wonderful bursts of speed he could induce from it. Against his name on the Avon's articles, the new cook placed his mark for the highest rate of pay he had worked as Jack Shiven. He was seaisick the first day out, but recovered, and gave satisfaction. Quiet, good-humored, and obliging, he smiled on all hands and won hearts.

"He's a daft man, but a good 'un," said the engineer.

At Cedar Keys, Florida, the captain brought aboard, one evening, a tall, dark man, with whom he consulted locked in his cabin. As they parted at the rail, he said, in a low tone: "We're speedy enough to get away from any cutter on the coast, and I think, any cruiser the Spanish have over. This was a blockade dodger in war times, named 'Petrel'. Still, as I said, Doctor, I must consult my crew. It's risky work."

"Did you own the 'Avon' then, when she was the 'Petrel'?" asked the other, speaking with an accent that stamped him a foreigner.

"No," answered the captain; "I bought her years afterward. But," he added proudly, "I sailed in her 'fore the mast when she was captured. They jugged us for a while; then let us go. 'Twas curious about the mate, a fellow named Dorsey. Got a rap on the head somehow, and came to in the hospital, but lost his bearings—didn't know his name, and couldn't understand when told. They let him out 'fore they did us, and we lost all track of him. It's pitiful, the way his old mother sits up on the rocks over at Nassau and watches the channels. She expects her boy back; says she knows he'll come. I've got so I hate to bring the 'Avon' there; for every time I've done it, she's recognized the old 'Petrel' and waved her shawl from the rocks, and rushed aboard. And I've always had to give her the same old story: 'Haven't heard from him.' Its heart-breaking. But John Dorsey's dead, sure."

In a couple of days the "Avon" sailed, with the dark stranger below in the hold. Two hours later a revenue cutter, primed with information of a purposed breach of the neutrality laws, lifted her anchor and followed, a menacing speck on the horizon astern of the "Avon," and an irritation to the quickened nerves of her captain, as he viewed her through the glasses, and wondered, and guessed and swore. But next morning the horizon was clear, and the "Avon," having doubled the Florida reef in the night, was steaming up the east coast. The following midnight found her well up past Cape Canaveral, and here, after answering a rocket from the shore, she cautiously, and with much hearing of the lead, and speaking-tube calls to the engine-room, felt her way through a narrow inlet in the outlying reef or sand covered barrier, into the enclosed lagoon, where she lay, with steam up and without anchoring, while her crew brought off, with the three boats, numerous boxes, cases, and barrels, which they stowed carefully in the hold.

As the largest boat came out, the captain said to the tall stranger: "I'll not have that stuff aboard. We'll tow it astern. Its fine weather and smooth water. Here, you cook, Jack Shiven, watch this boat. Don't let it touch the side, or it'll blow your old head off. Keep it away with an oar." The boat was fastened to the stern by the painter, and the cook, who had

been awakened by the unusual proceedings, obeyed orders.

Then, leaving the dark man on the bridge to watch the horizon, and a negro fireman in the boiler-room to keep up steam, every other man in the crew from the captain to the mess-boy went ashore in the next boat, for the last and hardest lift of all. A large shell gun, too heavy for one boat, was to be carried off on a temporary deck covering two. At this work they were engaged when daylight broke; and with its coming appeared, outside the barrier and heading for the inlet, the revenue cutter that had followed them, with ports open, guns showing, and at her gaff-end a string of small flags which, in the silent Volapuk of the sea, said: "Get under way as fast as you can."

A signal-book and a good glass are needed, as a rule, to interpret this language. The captain and mate ashore had neither and those aboard were not tutored in their use; so the command was not answered. "The jig's up," said the captain. "Get this gun ashore again. We'll go aboard and answer or he may fire. They'll confiscate my boat, but I don't want her sunk."

But their hurry to unload the gun, resulted in the swamping of one boat and the staving of the other; so they were forced to remain—and hope.

"Run up a white flag," roared the captain; "then scull that boat ashore."

The cook heard, but could not understand. The man on the bridge understood, but could not obey—he could not find the flag locker. However, he impressed on the cook's mind the wisdom of getting the boat ashore. But Jack Shiven only smiled and shook his head. He could not scull a boat. Neither could the Cuban—for such he was—and the fireman conscientiously and emphatically refused to leave his work. He had shipped fireman, not sailor.

The boom of an unshot gun was heard from seaward—given as a hint, which, of course, was not taken. Then another report, louder, came from the cutter, and with it a shot, aimed to cross the stern of the "Avon." But years of service in the revenue marine had somewhat demoralized the old man-of-war's-man who had charge of the gun. He did not allow for the half-charge of powder, and the lateral deflection given the consequently ricocheting shot by choppy waves, running at angle with his aim. That shot, barely clearing the reef, made a curve, shorter with each blow of a glancing sea, bounded over the stern of the "Avon," and cut through the port main boom lift (a wire rope), which fell and struck the wondering, smiling cook on the head—a slight blow but enough. The shot buried itself in the sand on the beach, having undone the work of that other government shot fired thirty years before; it had wakened the sleeping soul of John Dorsey. He reeled, recovered, and in a cracked falsetto, cried out: "—carried away, sir," finishing the sentence begun in his youth and interrupted by the descending belaying-pin. Clapping his hand to his head, he looked around bewildered; then bounded forward to the bridge. The Cuban followed.

"Are you hurt?" asked the latter.

"Hurt? Who are you? Get off the bridge! Where's the captain? Who's got the wheel?" His voice was choked and guttural.

"The captain is on the shore with the crew. Do you not see them?"

Dorsey reached into the pilot house, and in the old familiar nook placed his hand on a pair of glasses, with which, after a suspicious inspection, he examined the group on the beach.

"None of our crowd," he muttered. Then he turned the glasses on the revenue vessel outside.

"Haven't they got enough men-of-war on the coast without trotting out their cutters?" he growled. "What's he say? 'M. L. H.'—get under way.' Say, you," he demanded of the Cuban, "what's happened? What time is it? When'd you join this boat?"

"On the day before yesterday, at Cedar Keys."

"You lie," snarled Dorsey. "We haven't been there in four months; but—" he felt his head again—"what's happened? Everything looks queer. Where's the ball on the pilot-house? Two minutes ago it was night time. What does this mean?"

Two minutes ago you were struck on the head, and have

acted strangely since," answered the Cuban, who thought the cook was crazed by the blow.

"Yes, I know something belted me; my head's pretty sore. But you weren't aboard, and I was up near Hatteras. Now we're down here in Gallino Bay, and it's daylight. I must ha' been knocked silly and stayed so. What day is it? Monday? Three days ago!" Dorsey's mind had solved the problem, though with no regard to the lapse of time. But his mind had not yet regained the command of Jack Shiven's body; his gestures were clumsy, and his eyes—wide open and alert—though not the eyes of Jack Shiven, were not the eyes of John Dorsey. His voice was a mixture of strange sounds, and he coughed continually.

"What ails my throat? And this!" he exclaimed; he had felt of his beard. "Say, Mister Man, am I dead or alive, or asleep, or crazy? Who am I?"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

GROWING MOVEMENT.

MEN ALL OVER THE COUNTRY ENLISTING TO AID CUBA.

The Enlisting of Men Causing Much Comment and Discussion Among State Department Officials in Washington—Compared by Some to the Coxy Movement.

While the members of the senate and house are endeavoring to kill off the Spaniards with resolutions and by wagging their jaws a movement that seems to be growing tremendously in the west is attracting more attention at the department of state than anything that is being said or done at the capitol.

"Oh, it will be nothing more than another Coxy affair, and will probably amount to less than that," said an official of the state department to me, and with that he was desirous to dismiss the whole subject.

The matter referred to especially was the report that Colonel John McAndrews, the middle of the road Populist candidate for attorney general of Colorado in the recent campaign, is raising an army that he will march to the coast, gathering recruits by the way, and will embark for Cuba to wrest the island from the Spaniards, despite the interference of the government and the statement of the officials of the Cuban junta that arms and ammunition and not men are wanted for the Cuban cause.

"But," said I, "suppose this movement really grows to formidable proportions, what are you going to do about it? The country feels intensely on this question, and no one can tell where a craze initiated in this way might end."

"It would be a problem in statecraft," was the response, "for which there is no precedent, and, to tell the truth, I don't see what this government could do about it. Such an army would be too great for arrest by the ordinary legal processes, and to call the regular military power into action would possibly excite antagonism which might have serious consequences. To tell the truth, we, as well as the war department, are watching, and have been for some time, these sporadic movements in various parts of the country to assemble a Cuban army and have been inclined to attach little importance to them until now. But the popular feeling is such that we would not be surprised if one of the most curious demonstrations the world has ever known should be made within a short time. There is an undercurrent that has not been estimated at its true value even by the press. While it savors of Coxyism, it has a much more substantial basis. One might liken it to the sort of enthusiasm which led Byron and other young men of the day to enlist in the cause of the Greeks. I hope it will be discussed in the press as little as possible, for such crazes grow upon notoriety."

"We are living in a time of strange psychological phenomena," said a member of congress to whom the above conversation was repeated, "and it really might be a healthy thing for the United States to become involved with some other country and so divert the minds of a certain class from brooding over things which they imagine are out of joint in our affairs."

One could give a mass of astonishing comment of this kind if it were worth the while.—Washington Cor. Pittsburgh Dispatch.

QUEER RECRUIT FOR CUBA.

Sargent's Two Kentucky Wives and His Loose Matrimonial Ties.

William Sargent, left his home in Lewis county, N. Y., the other day to join the revolutionists in Cuba. His wife kissed him an eternal farewell, as she never expects to see him again.

Sargent is a stalwart, 6 foot Kentuckian, who has had a remarkable matrimonial experience. Four years ago he wedded Miss Rosa Evans, one of the prettiest girls in Lewis county. She was the daughter of the Rev. William Evans. They had been married less than six months when Sargent went west in the interest of a capitalist. From the west came a report that Sargent had died in the Rocky mountains. After a decent interval the young widow married a prosperous business man of Cincinnati. After an absence of two years Sargent returned, procured a divorce and paid court to Miss Mary Evans, a younger sister of Rosa. Three months later they were married. It was not long, however, before Sargent disappeared from home, and a report came back that he had died in Cuba. His wife then married Charles Simpler of Lewis county. About six months later Sargent again turned up, but he did not surrender his

claims to Mary, and Mr. Simpler had to surrender her. In speaking of her peculiar husband, Mrs. Sargent said:

"If a Spaniard's bullet does not end his restless life, I think his strange experience in marrying the Evans girls will prevent him from returning to Lewis county."

A MONSTER WINE VAT.

Largest Tank In the World Being Set Up in San Francisco.

The largest oak wine vat in the world is being set up by the California Wine association at the Lachman cellar, on Brattan street, in San Francisco. The famous Heidelberg cask is a baby by the side of the newcomer. It has the proportions of a two story cottage, and on its bottom four quadrille sets could be danced with ease.

The Heidelberg wonder has a capacity of 50,000 gallons, while this San Francisco monster is to hold 80,000 gallons. The huge cask is oval shaped on the ground and measures 27½ by 30 feet in each direction, while the great sides rise to a height of 20 feet and are from 2½ to 3 inches in thickness. The wood used will weigh 20 tons, and the iron hoops would turn the scales at about six tons.

HE ATE AT HEADQUARTERS.

A Hungry Newspaper Reporter Who Invited Himself to Grant's Table.

After the officers at headquarters had obtained what sleep they could get, they arose about daylight, feeling that in all probability they would witness before night either a fight or a foot race—a fight if the armies encountered each other, a foot race to secure good positions if the armies remained apart.

General Meade had started south at dawn, moving along the Germanna road. General Grant intended to remain in his present camp till Burnside arrived, in order to give him some directions in person regarding his movements. The general sat down to the breakfast table after nearly all the staff officers had finished their morning meal. While he was slowly sipping his coffee a young newspaper reporter, whose appetite, combined with his spirit of enterprise, had gained a substantial victory over his modesty, slipped up to the table, took a seat at the farther end and remarked, "Well, I wouldn't mind taking a cup of something warm myself if there's no objection." Thereupon seizing a coffee-pot he poured out a full ration of that soothing army beverage, and, after helping himself to some of the other dishes, proceeded to eat breakfast with an appetite which had evidently been stimulated by long hours of fasting.

The general paid no more attention to this occurrence than he would have paid to the flight of a bird across his path. He scarcely looked at the intruder, did not utter a word at the time and made no mention of it afterward. It was a fair sample of the imperturbability of his nature as to trivial matters taking place about him—General Horatio Porter in Century.

OLNEY'S NEW TASK.

Foreign Nations Claim That Their Citizens Use American Privileges.

Secretary Olney is now engaged with another perplexing problem which relates to the treatment of naturalized Americans who have returned to the land of their birth and are suspected of not having the animus reverendi, which is the diplomatic phrase for an intention of returning to the United States. This has always been a very serious matter, particularly in Germany, Turkey and Russia and of late with Spain, in regard to her Cuban subjects.

The United States is one of the easiest countries on earth in which a foreigner may acquire citizenship, and a great many discontented persons come here from the monarchies of Europe simply for the purpose of taking out naturalization papers in order to claim the protection of our consuls abroad in case they get into trouble and to seek an asylum in this country if they are banished from their own. The Germans come in order to escape military service that is required of every citizen of that empire; the Russians, Poles, Hungarians, Turks, Syrians, Armenians and other subjects of Russia, Austria and Turkey have similar reasons, and it has been a common custom for Cubans to spend their summers in the United States and their winters at home until they have been able to take out papers.

Nearly all the persons engaged prominently in the Cuban revolution are citizens of the United States. Nearly all the citizens of the United States who have been arrested in Cuba for complicity in the revolution are naturalized citizens. Neither class has ever had any genuine residence in this country; and the most of them have never intended to return here unless they were compelled to do so to escape the penalty of their acts.—Chicago Record.

Kansas Will Talk Back.

This Jan. 29, the birthday of Kansas, will be made a state holiday. The people will meet, irrespective of party, and denounce the eastern capitalists who have maligning her good name because Populism won at the recent election. The appeal for meetings everywhere says: "Every yelping dog has had its bark at Kansas. Every cesspool of ignorance, squalor and iniquity in the east has gasped a curse at Kansas. Let us stand up for our state and rub out those hoary, wrinkled, hardened sinners."

Ireland's Potato Tercentenary.

The introduction of the potato into Ireland three centuries ago by Sir Walter Raleigh was celebrated by a conference and show in the Rotunda, Dublin, recently under the auspices of the Irish Gardeners' association. A larger and more meritorious collection of the different varieties of the succulent tuber, "Ireland's staple food," from almost every part of the kingdom was never before witnessed either in Dublin or out of it.—London Field.