

A SEA CHANCE.

By MORGAN ROBERTSON.

"I believe you are the cook of this boat, in a sad condition of mind," said the Cuban dryly, more interested now in the approaching cutter. "Cook! I'm mate, if I'm anything," spluttered Dorsey, the sailor in him aroused by the affront. Yet the terror in his eyes might have indicated his doubt that he was anything.

The vessel outside had stopped her engines at the mouth of the inlet, and now sent another and better aimed shot across the "Avon's" stern. It aroused Dorsey to fury.

"That's your game is it?" he growled, hoarsely. "All right. Get under way," you say." He sprang to the deck, saw that the anchors were on the rail; then, to satisfy misgivings thirty years old, ran aft and looked over the stern at the rudder. It was there, intact, and he hurried to the engine-room hatch.

"Down there, Chief?" he called. "Who's below?"

There was no answer. He reached the fire-room at a bound, and met, emerging, the woolly head of the fireman, who had heard the gun and wanted to know.

"What steam have you got?" demanded Dorsey, who recognized his craft, though not knowing him.

"Wha' dat yo' business, Jack Shiven? Yo' g' back t' yo' pots an' pans, an' doan yo' cum foolin' 'bout dis yere fire-hole. Dis fire too hot f' yo'. Yo' git bawnd, stand! Yah yah, yah-yah. Who fire dat cannon, cookie?"

"What steam you got?"—the words seemed to explode from the throat—"answer me, you black imp, or I'll jam you into that furnace. How many pounds?"

"Wha' dat?"

The fireman got no farther. Dorsey's fingers gripped his throat, and in a second he was sprawled backward over the hatch combing. Squeezing hard for a moment, the infuriated questioner again demanded: "What steam you got?"

"Fifty pounds, Jack," gurgled the negro; "le, go; wha' yo' want?"

"Get down there! Bring it up to sixty and keep it so. I'm going to start the engine. Down with you, quick! Don't you leave that fire hold till I tell you."

The frightened fireman descended, and Dorsey examined the engine.

"Same scrap-heap," he muttered. "Hasn't changed like me and the boat, and the heavens and earth." He ran forward again. In the after end of the pilot house he found a chest, which he kicked open, scattering the contents—signal flags—on the floor. He picked out three, and called the Cuban.

"Who are you, anyhow?" he asked. "Can you run the engine?"

"No."

"Can you steer?"

"I cannot."

"Then I must do both. Run these three flags up to the truck in the order I name them—K, G, P. Understand? K on top. They're marked. Quick, now."

"Why," demanded the other, "what do these flags say?"

"They say our engine's broken down, if you must know," yelled Dorsey. "I want to stop his fire, and draw him into the inlet; then dash by him. It's our only chance. Do you want to end your days in a Yankee prison? Bear a hand, or you will—that is, unless you want to swim."

The Cuban glanced at three dorsal fins alongside towards which Dorsey pointed, and took the flags. He had watched the friction at the hatch with as much amusement as would mingle with his apprehension of arrest. But this masterful, methodical figure who had given such forceful instruction to the fireman, and who now seemed to have the International Signal Code in his head, was the same smiling imbecile who could not scull a boat. Suspicions of Spanish espionage disturbed him.

Yet the other's action might indicate a desire to escape; and so, reasoning that whatever the flags might say, his position would be made no worse, he hoisted them, while Dorsey, after giving a tentative turn or two to the engine, watched the effect on the cutter.

A Tale Told By a Mate and a Cook.

The ruse succeeded. The mendacious message, read aboard the government craft, caused her to reserve her fire and enter the inlet. Then Dorsey threw the throttle wide open, and with a gassing disjuration to the victim in the fire-room ran to the wheel.

"Come up here and give me a hand," he called; but the Cuban did not answer. He had just seen a dark figure emerge from the fire-hold, take a hurried look around, and speed to the stern, where the boat, nearly on end now as the steamer gathered way, was fastened by its painter. Acting on a sudden resolution, he followed, choosing to join the party ashore with the aid of the fireman—who could scull—rather than remain with a man who, if not a maniac, was a most aggressive and unpleasant companion—possibly a Spanish spy. He slipped down the rope after the negro, and cut the boat clear.

Dorsey saw them, shook his fist, and steered for the inlet.

The wind had drifted the "Avon" close to the opening; so now, with the other vessel just entering, they were not a quarter of a mile apart, and a minute later were within hailing distance.

"Where are you going?" bawled a brass buttoned officer from the cutter's bridge. "Stop your engine or I'll sink you!"

Dorsey stretched his head and half of his body through the pilot-house window, and shouted in reply: "Our engine's running away with us—lever's broken. We'll pull our fires outside."

The officer doubted, but hesitated, and the "Avon" shot by at a fifteen-knot rate. Dorsey edged up into the cutter's wake, and by keeping her masts in line, avoided, for awhile, her fire; for she was a revenue cutter, built to pursue, not to flee; hence none of her guns could be trained over the stern. Was ever dignified government craft caught in a more undignified position? She could not safely back out of the inlet, and by the time she had steamed in, turned around, and started seaward, the "Avon" was a mile and a half away, with an increased blackness to her line of belching smoke which indicated anything but an intention to "pull fires."

Dorsey, lashing the wheel, had gone and added fuel, tried the water and talked (after the fashion of the engine-room) to the oscillating cylinder, wagging away like the stump-tail of an over-pleased dog. He now returned to the wheel.

Shot after shot from the cutter's long-range guns hummed around the "Avon" but none of them struck. Though her armament was comparatively modern, her engine was old—older than the "Avon's," and inferior by two knot's speed per hour.

Dorsey steered due east, made periodical trips to the boat's vitals, and in three hours whooped in triumph as he saw the pursuer head slowly around and start back. An hour later he drew his fires, stopped the engine, and cooked his breakfast, hardly yet recovered from his excitement sufficiently to realize to the full his isolation—not of space, but of time. He was still of the past; just escaped from peril a generation gone.

He finished his meal and wanted a smoke. Going to his old room, he found strange clothing, strange alterations of the fittings, but no pipe. "Queer!" he muttered. "Got some one in my place, I suppose." His tone was aggrieved. "Might ha' waited more'n three days. Wonder how long, though, I've been silly. Not long—my head's sore yet. Yet I've grown a beard. Wonder what hit me. I'll get a pipe down forward."

In the fore-cabin he found one and a strange brand of tobacco, which he confiscated. Returning to the deck he smoked and reflected. But in a minute he put the pipe down nauseated. Jack Shiven had not been a smoker.

"What'll I do?" he mused. "Go back to the coast and pick up the crew—that wasn't the crew! The boat's changed hands. Has she been seized? Maybe; and I was too dead to move. What ails the boat? She looks as though she'd been through seven hells. He went to the rail. Old paint! old woodwork! old boat! Where's she been to? Wire-rigged, too!

I'll see the articles. I'll see if I belong here."

The captain's room was locked. In no condition of mind to care for nautical etiquette, he raised his foot, burst in the door and entered. A large mirror on the bulk head reflected his image, and he stood transfixed by the strange, staring, bearded face—which was not his own. He raised his hand; the image did the same. He inclined his head to the right and the left, and was accompanied.

"It's me," "and it isn't me!" Approaching the glass, he examined closely the spectre confronting him. There was not a trace of resemblance between the old and the new John Dorsey, unless it was the color of the eyes. Hair, features, even the shape of the nose and thickness of the lips, were changed. The shoulders, too, were more sloping, as though dragged down by weights. John Dorsey had pulled ropes, downward; Jack Shiven had wheeled barrows.

He sank down on a chest in helpless fright, while perspiration oozed from his forehead. A discolored newspaper lay folded in the berth, which he seized and examined. It was dated January 1, 1895. He threw it down. "Can't be," he said, with a doubtful, though pitious, half smile. "Seventy-five, eighty-five, ninety-five—thirty years. Nonsense. Where's the log-book?"

He found it in the mate's room; its last departure dated October 3, 1895. With brain on fire, he returned to the captain's room, and attacked the boat's library, tearing books from their places, examining the publishers' imprints, and throwing them down. They bore dates ranging through the years following the war. He burst the captain's desk apart, and rummaged for the articles. His name was not there. The last entered was "Jack Shiven, cook," and the articles also were dated thirty years into the future. He crept on deck. He wanted air.

Not a breath of air ruffled the glassy smoothness of the ground swell which, sent by some distant gale, had thrown the "Avon" into its trough and was rolling her gently as she drifted north with the Gulf Stream. The sun was shining from a cloud-flecked sky, and in the air were all the mild warmth and softness of the Florida winter. But to this human soul, torn from its past, plunged alone and unguided far into the unknown, there was something unreal and unearthly in the aspect of the sea and sky. There was insufferable heat and dryness to the air he breathed, and a new, metallic ring to the tinkling swash of the water as the boat rolled; and this sound, with the hissing of steam from the boiler, instead of relieving, seemed but to accentuate the intense silence of the ocean—which bore him down and crushed him.

"Who am I?" he thought, rather than uttered. "I'm not John Dorsey. I'm some one else. Who?"

He backed up against the side of the forward house. Off to the westward was a speck—the revenue cutter. It was a tangible reality, and his dazed faculties seized it. He traced back, painfully, the events of the morning. "She chased me out here," he whispered. "Who was that Dago? He knew me. Who was the nigger, and the crowd on the beach? They were not the crew—I'm not the mate." He walked aft. "Here I stood this morning—last night—when I was struck; and then—all at once—it was daylight, and I was here." He moved a few steps. "And nothing is the same." He noticed the broken wire-rope on the deck. "What parted the lift? It seems—yes—it must be—that is what hit me. I remember now; I saw it move on deck. It must have knocked me senseless, and meanwhile the boat has had trouble. But they haven't mended the lift, and it was a hemp lift, too—and I'm still in her—no, I'm not—I'm not John Dorsey, I'm somebody else. Who am I? I can't make it out. Who am I?" He clung to the rail and screamed loudly and hoarsely, in an agony of terror. Then he ran forward, then aft, and forward again. He burst into the captain's room, examined again the face in the glass—which he loathed—and fled from it.

On the pilot-house was the boat's name, which he had not noticed in the articles. He saw it now for the first time. He sprang to the bow, and looked over. There, in block copper letters, where once had been the word "Petrel," he saw the boat's later name. Aft on the stern he

read it again—"Avon, of New York." He seated himself on a hatch, steadier in mind now for the removal of the "Petrel" from the problem. As he sat there he noticed an anchor worked in indelible ink on the back of his hand—the soft, white hand of Jack Shiven, the cook. He looked at it in amazement; then pulled up his right sleeve. There, close to his elbow was a wreath, and within it the initials "J.D." He tore open his shirt, and on his breast found a mole. He sprang to his feet, raised his clenched fist, brought it down, and said, calmly and decisively: "I am John Dorsey. And this boat—" he scanned the fabric from trucks to curving deck with the eye of a sailor who loves his craft,—has once been the "Petrel."

As the noon hour approached he thought of an observation. "I know the latitude," he mused. "I can subtract that from the zenith distance and get the declination, and that will give me the month and day in the almanac. But what's the use? I'll know tomorrow, when I see the owners. The sun's well south of the line; it's the fall of the year. It was last January when my light went out."

He threw on coal, started the engine, and shaped a course for the providence channel. All that day and the following night he gravitated from the wheel to the boiler and engine, and next morning, as the languid islanders were waking to their indolent existence, he steered into the west entrance of Nassau harbor. On the highest point of the low shore was a figure that waved to him something red. He did not see it. Inside the harbor, he stooped the engine, while he puzzled over the mechanism of a patent windlass, which was new to him. Mastering this, he went on at half speed. The figure had left the rocks, and still waving the red cloth, was hastening toward the landing. Close as he dared go, he again shut off steam, pried the small anchor off the rail, dropped it, and after paying out a few fathoms, backed the fires, and hailed a shore boat. As he landed, an old woman in a red shawl was waiting. She flung herself upon him with a glad cry, and after a moment he knew her for his mother. But his greeting was rather a cold one, for by his chronology it was only a week since he kissed her good-by. Later, when questioned, he said: "I didn't know mother, at first; she had grown so old." She, on her part declared with streaming eyes: "I recognized Johnny the minute I saw him. And I always knew he'd come back in the old 'Petrel.'"

Dorsey did not go to seek the owners of the "Petrel." Men who professed to be friends of his, but who looked curiously old and weatherbeaten, talked to him in such a way that everything grew more uncertain than ever. Then, one day, as he climbed over the "Avon's" rail, a man emerged from the cabin, and with a stern countenance, though with a secret twinkle in the eye, advanced and colored him. "So-so, my man," said he; "never been to sea, hey? Yet you can navigate. Can't scull a boat ashore, but can run an engine, and steal a big steamer?"

He gave Dorsey a gentle shake. The next moment he was seated on the deck a dozen feet away, rubbing a smarting spot on his chest about as large as Dorsey's fist—which fist, as unused to such collisions as Dorsey was to being shaken, was also being rubbed. In his incomplete correspondence with his environment, he was still the mate of the "Petrel," dealing with an insolent member of the crew; for time had touched lightly the captain of the "Avon," and Dorsey recognized him as his old shipmate.

"The nigger was right when he muttered the captain, as he arose; 'mad as an Irish duke on a tater-hill.' He started for the rail and had nearly scrambled over when Dorsey seized, dragged him in board, and seated him, not too gently, on a hatch.

"Now then you sit there and answer a few questions," said Dorsey with his hand on the captain's collar. "They tell me it's a long time since you and I were together. What do you know? What became of me after that shot from the Yankee?"

"Why, I don't really know, Jack," said the captain, resolved to humor his captor, whose maniacal strength prevented an escape; but his neck was nearly dislocated by the sudden shake he received as Dorsey thundered: "Don't call me Jack! Answer me!"

"I don't know; I s'pose you came here. You ran off with my boat; but that's all right; good thing you did; don't choke me, don't!"

Dorsey had shifted his fingers. "No nonsense. Where'd I go after we were taken?"

"We weren't taken. Don't you remember? You started the machine, and fooled the cutter, and got away. I s'pose you kept right on and brought up here."

Dorsey released him. "But that was in this boat. Do you belong in her?"

"I'm her captain and owner; and it seems I'm getting queer treatment from my cook. You've looted my cabin." The captain grew easier. There was no gleam of insanity in the earnest eyes that were fixed upon him. "Was I the cook? What was my name? Waere'd I come from?" asked Dorsey eagerly. "You shipped in New York as Jack Shiven; that's all I know. You're not a bewildering success as a cook, but I'll admit you were a well behaved man until lately. The fireman swears you're crazy." The grinning captain said nothing of his own doubts on this point.

"Jack Shiven," repeated Dorsey; "yes, that's what he called me. But, Captain, I meant the 'Petrel'—when she was taken—it was last week to me—but they tell me it was thirty years back—when you were fore the mast, and I was mate; what happened? Where'd I go?"

"Wha'at?" exclaimed the captain, springing up; "you Mr. Dorsey? Not much! I'd know him with wings on."

"I tell you I am," said Dorsey vehemently. "My mother knows me."

"She does? Then I'll take it on faith. But," he seized Dorsey's hand, and began to shake it vigorously. "Mr. Dorsey, I might ha' known it—I might ha' known it, if I'd thought. No man on earth but John Dorsey would have got by that cutter. Why, it was a miracle, that's what it was. Takes blockading to develop a man. I s'pose old times brought you round. Yes, don't you know? You was turned and couldn't remember. And you've seen your mother. I'd give this boat to have been at that meeting. Thirty long years, winter and summer, she's sat on those rocks waiting for you Mr. Dorsey and now you've come! The captain was winking hard. "Come below, Mr. Dorsey. There's only one thing that fits this occasion. If you'd smashed more furniture, you'd ha' found it. It was bottled the year you went under."

THE END.

SHORTHAND IN THE SENATE.

Mr. Mason of Illinois the Latest Potbock Expert to Be Elected.

The election of Billy Mason will add another competent shorthand reporter to the membership of the United States senate. Several years ago he was considered one of the best in the country. Judge Withrow of the Rock Island railroad used to say that a first class stenographer was spoiled when Mason went into politics.

It is not generally known that Senator Chandler of New Hampshire is also a proficient stenographer, like Representative Hitt of Illinois. Both of them have been professionals, and both still use the shorthand system in making notes during debates, committee meetings, etc. Although he has not had active practice for 25 or 30 years Mr. Chandler is able to make and transcribe his notes as rapidly as when he was a young man in daily practice as reporter for the supreme court of New Hampshire.

One day in a committee meeting of senators there was a lively dispute between Mr. Chandler and a Democratic colleague. As it grew heated Mr. Chandler, who is always an exasperating antagonist in a controversy, accused his opponent of contradicting himself, which the latter stoutly denied.

"I will tell you exactly what you said," retorted Mr. Chandler. "I thought you were speaking recklessly and would disavow it sooner or later, so I took your words down in shorthand."

Then he began to read from a page covered with potbocks, and the other members of the committee testified to the accuracy of his report.

Several years ago in New Hampshire an important legal case arose which rested upon the accuracy of the translation of the notes of the shorthand reporter who had been employed by an attorney in the case, and Senator Chandler was called upon as an expert. A great deal depended upon whether a certain sign in the notes should be translated "at" or "of." Mr. Chandler took an envelope out of his pocket and on the back of it made two marks with a lead pencil.

"Now," he said to the attorney, "if you can tell me which of those characters was used in the copy I will tell you without looking at it which word it was intended for. The characters used for 'at' and 'of' are generally similar, but any stenographer can distinguish them at a glance."—Chicago Record.

PLACES IN NEW YORK.

A MONSTER BUILDING THAT IS A TOWN IN ITSELF.

The Diversified Industries That Are Sheltered by Its Roof—A Great Safe Deposit Vault and Its Impregnable Defenses—A Woman's Interesting Story.

Mrs. Schuyler Van Rensselaer contributes to the February Century a paper on "Places in New York," in the course of which she says: If you enter one of the largest office buildings and go up and down and around in it, you will see that it is not a mere edifice, but almost a town in itself. It nearly covers the space of an entire city block. Thirty-two elevators serve the persons and the wants of its denizens and their visitors, and they carry some 40,000 passengers each day. The great business concern which owns it fills a whole floor, with halls as big as churches and regiments of clerks. On the other floors live many another big company and many an individual doing a big business. If this sort of that, and their number will not amaze you as much as the luxury with which prosaic tasks of money-making now surround themselves. I wonder sometimes what my grandfather would have thought of it. No one in New York did business in a bigger way than he, sending his famous clipper ships to encircle the world and traffic in a score of ports. Yet, when my father began to "clerk" for him, the first of his duties was to sand his office floor, and I can remember how small and plain was this office even at a much later day, with the bowsprits of vessels almost poking themselves in at the windows as they lay along the border of South street.

The people who dwell in the typical office building of today walk about on polished marble floors; the government has given them a postoffice just for themselves; a big library and a restaurant exclusively serve the lawyers among them; another restaurant generously serves whomsoever may wish to eat; there are rows of shops in the huge, barrel-vaulted main hall; there are barbers' rooms and bootjacks' rooms, and so forth and so on. You can almost believe that a man might live in this building, going forth only to sleep, and be supplied with pretty much everything he needs, except the domestic affections, a church and a theater. It seems rather surprising indeed that a missionary chapel has not been started in one of its corners, a roof garden for daytime performances up on the hilltop called its roof. But up on this roof you may find the bureau which breeds our weather for us, and down in its underground stories, in the very entrails of earth, you may confidently leave it your wealth to guard.

Truly the steel clad burrows of a great safe deposit company look capacious enough to contain all the wealth of New York, and whether your share of it be large or small your needs can be exactly met. You may hire a safe so little that a diamond necklace would almost fill it or so big that it is a good sized room, and its rent means the income of a good sized fortune—\$7,000 or so per annum. Narrow lanes after lanes are walled by tiers of these safes, as streets are walled by house fronts; there is a second story below the first, and there are other places where other things than gold and silver, precious papers and jewels may be stored. There are rooms full of trunks, and I remember a big one with the sweat of steam glistening on its walls and ceilings, which was filled full and heaped and piled with raw silk, costly and also perishable, needing to be kept perpetually moist lest it lose its pliability.

When in this treasure house of uncountable riches we see marble floors which can be lifted by levers so that they lie against the bases of doors impregnable without them and vents which can throw curtains of scalding steam down upon the head of any one who may try to tamper with them, it seems as though the days of oriental magicians had returned, with conspicuous modern improvements. Of course there are rows and rows of little cabinets, where Croesus may handle his wealth very privately, and fine large waiting rooms, too, all shut in by gates and bars and passwords. "The ladies' waiting room is a great convenience," said the gray coated guardian one day. "When gentlemen bring their wives down town and have business to do elsewhere, it's a nice place to leave them in." So it is, but if it is much used for this purpose I hope that its niceness, not its terrific security, determines the fact.

Admiral Dot Has a Son.

A son and heir has been born to Admiral Dot, the famous dwarf. When weighed on the scales, the youngster turned out at exactly seven pounds and is what might be called an average weight. He is perfectly formed and although both his parents are midgets may be a man of ordinary height. Both mother and son are doing well. This is the second addition to the admiral's family, his first born being a bright little girl, Hazel, who is in her fourth year.

No Pay For Football Injuries.

The jury in the Costello-Winston case returned a verdict for the defendant. The action was brought by M. Costello of Duluth against P. B. Winston, the Minneapolis capitalist, to recover \$50,000 damages. In a high school football game at Duluth Mr. Costello's son was thrown out of a flying wedge and permanently crippled. He contended that Mr. Winston's son threw him out. The defense did not attempt to show the rough character of the game.

The Drama In Arcostook.

Some of our young people, who desire to do some hugging and kissing, are talking of organizing a dramatic club. —Arcostook Leader.