

THE MAIL

A PAPER FOR THE PEOPLE

LET HIM REST.

[The following exquisite lines were written by Hood Alston, who recently committed suicide by drowning in Bay St. Louis, Louisiana. They were penned a few days after the tragic death of an acquaintance, and serve as an appropriate epitaph for himself.]

When the hands are folded and the heart is still,
The last song sung and the last prayer said;

And the little that's left is laid under the hill,
A peaceful repose belongs to the dead.

For the sake of those who loved him best—
His deeds are done—let him rest, let him rest.

Let him rest in peace 'neath the sand and the sod;
Let him rest in peace by the beautiful bay;

All there was of him has gone to God,
The life that's left is only clay.

The breeze to day, blowing over the bay,
In soft melody seem to say:

For the sake of the few who knew him best,
His deeds are done—let him rest, let him rest.

How eloquent, oh, how wonderful sweet,
Is the quiet that comes to us all

When the grasses that used to grow under our feet
Grow above and spread out as a pall!

He is dead who in life was opposed and oppressed—
In the name of Christ, let him rest, let him rest.

Let him rest, let him rest, for the sake of those
Who knew him first and loved him best;

Let him rest, let him rest, in stately repose;

For the sake of peace, let him rest, let him rest.

Let the dead sleep in his calm repose;

Whatever goodness there be or 'till,
So let him alone; it is fittest and best

That at the dead should rest, that the dead should rest.

The Argonaut.
Jack Rede's Heart.

A SENTIMENTAL STORY OF THE SOUTH SEAS.

BY HERBERT C. DORR.

In a well lighted, plainly furnished room in the old Marine Hospital in San Francisco sat the resident physician at his writing desk, entering on his records the result of the examination of a man's heart who had died with that important organ in a remarkably diseased condition.

On a couch in the center of the room, and exposed to the full light lay the figure of a middle aged man. It was finely proportioned, though much emaciated, and the regular features and muscular development indicated he had possessed both beauty and strength in his youthful days. The pallid face, half concealed by a long beard, had upon it a stern expression of determination, which the firmly compressed lips still further increased. It would seem, indeed, this man must rather have died upon the field of battle than in peace upon his couch, if we were to judge from the expression of his features. His right arm stretched out from his side was tattooed in true sailor fashion with curious and mystic figures. Among these was one drawn and worked with remarkable skill and patience. It was the head and bust of a young girl, and so well was it executed we might suppose it was the actual likeness of some one he had desired to keep in close and constant remembrance.

The doctor's writing was finished, and he sat musing on the case he had been describing. "I do not know," said he, while telling the story; "I do not know that I ever saw a human heart so entirely diseased and completely worn out as that of Jack Rede. It scarcely seems possible a person could live at all with an organ in such condition. What could have caused such disorganization? What had been the life of the inanimate body that contained it?"

While engaged in such thoughts there came a tap on the door, and upon it being partly opened there was thrust in the weather beaten face of an old sailor, who slowly entered when he perceived the doctor was alone. A rough, rugged man, yet his face had a general good humored expression, which inclined one in his favor at once. He was short and stout in figure, slightly bow legged, and his rough hands knotted at the joints as some of the ropes may have been he had pulled upon in the long course of years. He was known in the hospital by the name of Tom Marlin, and was also known to have been for many years the intimate friend of Jack Rede.

Tom was a strange character, and although uneducated, his keen powers of observation and good memory had stored up a great amount of curious information. He had spent his life among men of many nations, and had acquired some habits and notions from all, which made him what might be termed a conglomerate character of many men's peculiarities. One of the most strongly marked characteristics of the old sailor was his superstition and tendency to always explain the mysterious events of life by supernatural agencies.

"Would your honor have time to spare me a few words about that unfortunate corpse as lies there?" said Tom, pointing at the same time to the body with the end of his finger, with a solemn expression on his face.

"Certainly, and more particularly as there was something peculiar about his disease—about his heart, I mean—and I would like to ask you of his past life."

"I know'd your honor would like to hear of it. Mayhap your honor would allow me a whiff of the pipe in the meanwhile? There's no unpleasantness from Jack, there, but, you see, the room seems close like, and a whiff of the pipe might be agreeable. And then again, if Jack's spirit is crusing this way, he'll like it to a certainty. He always did in life, and why shouldn't he now?" Saying which, Tom gravely lit his pipe and seated himself squarely down by the body, very much as if he were going to spin a yarn with it as he used to when in life.

"Jack Rede was an old shipmate of yours, Tom?"

"Well, he was, your honor. Many years we sailed together through stormy and calms, and many a jolly spree we had ashore; and then sometimes we used to cruise around the South Sea Islands, and settle down on some of 'em for a while, and sort of marry Injun fashion, and we'd stay there till it grow'd wearisome like, and then we'd sail our cables and put off, and take a 'voyage on the high seas. Jack, as he lies there," said Tom, giving a side look at the body, as though he thought he might be listening to all he said, "he could a kept better company than the likes of me, but he had no pride, and

always said my natural gifts was considerable, if they'd been schooled. Your honor, he was the smartest sailor I ever saw step a plank—knew a ship from truck to keelson—and had an uncommon heap of other learning. He had geography, astrology and navigation at his finger ends, knew the languages, and the fine arts, as music and botany, and could talk Latin like a jurist, and dance like a Frenchman, more's the pity he lies there a cold corpus now."

And Tom, wiping his eyes, sent forth a volume of smoke that covered him like a cloud. "But," continued he, "I know'd all along, and a year ago what he was coming to. What does your honor think he died of?" said he turning suddenly to me.

"Hypertrophy and ossification of the heart."

"Hard names them, but saving your honor's pardon," said Tom, "it was something else killed Jack, and he know'd it. I heard him say it over and over, he know'd he'd die of it."

"What of Tom?"

"The curse, your honor. He was cursed by a woman that he deserted and treated wrong, more than fifteen years ago. I was with him, and heard her, and there's her picture on his arm now, pointing to the dead man's arm."

"How was it, Tom?" said the doctor as he was filling his pipe again. "Tell me the story. I never heard of a man's dying of a woman's curse before."

"Howsoever that may be," said Tom, "it's true as holy writ, and if your honor could find a bit of spirit to wet my whistle, I'd ransack my ideas and give the true history of it."

Tom sipped his grog and smacked his lips with a gusto that none but an old suds could appreciate, and then suddenly he seemed to recollect something, and getting up, went and took a piece of cotton cloth dyed on a chair and very carefully draped it around the body, after putting the outstretched arm to its side, leaving the face alone exposed; then, taking his seat and lighting his pipe, he said with a satisfied air:

"Jack was an uncommon decent about his body, and I'm sartin if his spirit is around, he'll feel better to have it kived up than otherwise."

"How long had you known him, Tom?"

"Ever since he run away from school for a cabin boy," said he. "Jack Rede—which is his right name—was the son of an English person as lived in a country town, its name I can't overhail just now. You see they took a deal of care with his education, to make a person of him, too, but there wasn't a timber in him to build that kind of a craft, and he turned out otherwise. We all has our gifts, and every human has his weak point; Jack's weakness was in his morals, he hadn't enough for ballast to keep him on an even keel, and what he had was uncommon loose. He had a strong idea, too, he must do just what pleased him, and have everything he wanted—if he could get it—and he was always jolly and social when he had his own way and nobody went contrariwise; they did, then look out for squalls, for Jack was the devil all over. His religion was variable, and like weak ground tackle, as couldn't keep him off a lee shore. When Jack was a boy he went a 'voyage, and was wrecked on the coast of Africa, and was taken by the Arabys."

"Don't you mean Arabs?"

"It's all the same only spelled differ ent," said Tom, with a deprecatory look at my interruption. "He was taken by the Arabys, made a slave, and kept till he grew to be Moshmed and turned Turk. It was an awful set-back on his morals, to say nothing of religion, and he never got over it; for he always said it was as good a religion as any, and he believed it just as much. According to which, if it is true Jack may be flitting round in heaven with them. Hoorays the Turks believe in."

"Hoorays, Hoorays, Tom?"

"Sartin, sure," said Tom impatiently.

"Hoorays, the Mahomedans call 'em. Turkish she angels as wait and tend on Gork in heaven, and it's comfortable doctrine for them as likes women."

Jack could never be made to believe afterwards that women had any souls to speak of, unless they shared one with the man they was spliced to; and, your honor, the amount of wives that man had was terrible to think on. Once I remember, he was king of a tribe of cannibal niggers on the west coast of Africa; he was married to their queen."

"But Tom, how about Jack's heart and the curse—are you coming to it?"

"I'm overhauling it as quick as the course allows, your honor; and how can a man spin a true yarn, or build a ship, without laying the bottom timbers first. Ye see I must explainate Jack's ways before you can understand his doings afterwards. Wasn't he a rum 'un, your honor?"

"A bad one, I should say, Tom. A man of violent, unrestrained passions, who let them run riot to his own detriment. I think I begin to understand now what might easily have caused his disease of the heart."

"Avast! avast there! if you honor pleases," said Tom, with an air of impatience at my suppression.

"We ain't come to that yet, nor the curse as eat his heart up. I'm just bear ing up, beating to windward—as it might be—to reach that very pint, where Jack's heart was damaged, and we're close on it; let's weather that pint and I can bear away with a flowing sheet."

Ye see, Jack and I, about fifteen years ago, was down in Tahiti, and he says to me, "Tom, I'm tired of this crusing about, let us go somewhere and lay off in comfort awhile, where there's nothing to do, and plenty of grog, grub and gair, to make it sociable." Says I, "Whereaway will it be?" Then he overhauled his memory, and slapping his hand together, suddenly sang out, "Let us go to Old King Sinbad's island, where we went five years ago; we're big men, and even Sinbad himself is afraid of us."

He was taller than the women of the island, for they were rather short, but was perfect every way in her shape. Her color was something like we see inside those big sea shells, pinkish and white, and her features clear, cut and regular, with great brown eyes like some kind of peer-gazer. I think Jack called 'em; her hair was brown black, and thicker and finer than I ever saw on a woman afore, and she had it braided round her head like a turban, with a single white flower stuck in front. Her dress was made of some kind of white bark that was cut in fine threads and worked over till it was most as soft as silk. It was woven into a sort of long fringe, tied around her little waist with a narrow belt covered with small black and white shells, and it hung down below her knees; round her neck was another of the same kind of fringes that fell down over her bosom and shoulders. They fitted close to her, like feathers on a bird, wavy and smooth. Her arms were bare, with bracelets of black and white beads round each, and her little feet was part covered in sandals, wove out of bark. There she stood in all her natural beauty, and no folie de rois or gimp cracks round her to spite nature's crownin' glory, a perfect woman.

They told us that she was old Sinbad's daughter, and that her name was Looata. It might have been that she was the daughter of one of his wives, for one

their hand agin us, they would be killed out of hand and most likely cooked and eaten next day by the nobility, who had that special right exclusive. What ever left that island for is more'n I can tell, but sailors and some other folks never does know when they are well off. Well, your honor, we spent half out cash in Tahiti buying our outfit to go back there. As we wanted to please Old Sinbad and his royal family, we bought a small barrel of rum, plenty of tobacco, and a little ship bread, and some old tower muskets, besides a lot of nicknacks of all sorts, or we wanted to make good many presents to the islanders. They were amazing fond of music, and of almost anything to make pleasant sounds, and they had the habit of using a sort of flute they invented out of reeds, and when the young men are courting the girls, they go piping round the bushes like sick quails; cordingly I took a large lot of jews-harps for 'em, as being the least noisy.

After we was ready, by good luck, a whaler come in that was going to cruise in the seas where our island was, and the master agreed to take us as passengers to the Kingsmill group, but Jack never let out where he was really going, and there's her picture on his arm now, pointing to the dead man's arm.

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was 'most white; but she looked no more like the old pagan than I did, and I always opinionated there'd been furriers round that island afore we ever see it. Jack tried very hard to find some presents to take her fancy, but she received 'em proud and distant, like a queen, and handed 'em over to her waiting maid. Everybody seemed to love and obey her, and she seemed a different creature from the natives.

Time passed smooth and easy with Jack and me on the island, and well it might, for we had everything our own way, except with Jack, who somehow couldn't make much headway with Looata. She was always by his side, and if he attempted any fooling, as he might with the other girls, she pouted her lips, tapped her little foot on the ground, and, walking off, he would see no more of her that day. He didn't take it very easy, but swore to