VOL. 12. NO. 5.

THE

# Overland Monthly

DEVOTED TO

*THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRY.*

MAY, 1874.

SAN FRANCISCO:
JOHN H. CARMANY & CO., PUBLISHERS,
No. 409 WASHINGTON STREET.

THE AMERICAN NEWS COMPANY,
117, 119, and 121 Nassau Street, New York.

*And all News Dealers in the United States, are Agents.*

John H. Carmany & Co., Printers, San Francisco.

# THE PHILADELPHIA MONTHLY'S

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A PRIZE stamp in EVERY Packet, worth from 5 to 50 cts.

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the chaparral, and hidden himself and his little sister therein so completely that they would not have been discovered, if their dog had not followed and revealed their hiding-place. By some good fortune they were not separated, but were carried, first, in a pair of huge saddlebags, made for the purpose, one suspended on each side of the horse, with their heads just peeping out; and afterward in a wagon, with a number of others, all snugly packed on the floor, and covered with deer-skins, bear-skins, and other peltries. In passing through a town, the wagon attracted suspicion, and was halted and slightly searched by the officers of the law, but nothing was discovered contraband. With the strange instinct of their race, the young captives did not cry out, or whimper, or move a muscle, but laid as still as young quails lie in the chaparral when the hawk is hovering overhead. The wagon was suffered to proceed, but in another town it was halted and searched again, more thoroughly, and the young Indians brought to light. For the vindication of the excellent majesty of American law, it was necessary that there should be a prosecution of the kidnapper, and he was gently mulcted in the sum of $100, and the good citizens of the place took away his captives from him, and they became "apprenticed" unto them! It chanced that our little hero and heroine thus passed into the possession of a great philanthropist of those regions, whose voice had often been mightily lifted up in denunciation of the infamies of this "Indian slave-trade." He kept them some time, and finally transferred them to a Negro barber in exchange for a stove, did this philanthropist! The barber did not keep them long, but sold them for twenty-five dollars apiece, the usual price of an Indian boy in those times. Thus they passed from one to another, until seven or eight years had elapsed, and they were grown nearly to maturity; but they still remained unseparated.

At the end of this period they regained their liberty, and at once they set out together to return to their native valley. It was many days' journey for them, for they traveled afoot, but at last they arrived in sight of the village wherein they were born. By some means the news of their escape and return had preceded them, and the parents now learned for the first time that their long-lost children were still alive.

The wanderers now approach the village. They enter, and are guided by friends to the paternal wigwam, for there are many changes since they saw the village last. Ascending the earthen dome, they go down the well-worn ladder in the centre, and seat themselves without a word. The father and mother give one hasty glance at them, but no more, and not a word is uttered. What the exceeding great joy of their hearts is, heaven and themselves alone know; but from all the spectator can read in their stern, passionless faces, he would not know that they had ever borne any children, or mourned them for years with that great and unforgetting sorrow that savages sometimes know. An hour passes away, and still not a word is spoken, not even a single glance of recognition exchanged. The returned captives sit in motionless silence, while the father and mother move about the lodge on their various duties. An hour and a half is gone. The parents turn now and then a sudden and stolen look upon their waiting children. Two hours or more elapse. The glances become more frequent and bolder. It is now perhaps three hours since the captives entered, and yet not a whisper. But at last all the fullness of time of savage custom and savage etiquette is rounded and complete. The waiting hearts of the aged father and mother are full to bursting. Their eyes are filled with tears.

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They turn and call their children by name, they rush to them, they fall upon their necks, and together they mingle their tears, their strange outcries of joy, and their sobs.

To the reader this may seem extravagant and impossible, but, with the exception of minor particulars, it is a true story, illustrating a social custom of this most singular race. In receiving a guest the Concows frequently wait more than three hours before they address him. The substance of the above story was narrated to me by an American, who was an eye-witness of the captives' return.

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## CAPE HORN POST-OFFICE.

WE were grouped around upon the forecastle, preparing to take things cosily. Eight bells had struck, our watch was over, there was no especial work to be done, and it seemed that at last we should be able to smoke our pipes in contentment. Suddenly, however, from the quarter-deck came the order to heave-to. We started up, and, as we took our stations, gazed inquiringly at each other. To our minds it was the place of all others where we should not tarry. At open sea, indeed, it might be safely done; but here, with the land lying low and dangerous only two miles away, it seemed a greater risk than any present emergency would warrant. The air was warm and balmy, for it was the commencement of the Antarctic summer; but the wind was light and baffling, the sails at times scarcely drawing, at other moments idly flapping against the masts, and, with our best exertions, we could get out of the brig not more than three or four knots. Beneath the surface of the water, so smooth and glassy, were unknown currents that might drift us into destruction at any hour, and far off in the south was a long low bank of dark clouds that might stand for sudden squalls or for three days' gale, but, at the least, portended rough weather. Therefore, it was not without apprehension that we gazed askant into each other's faces, wondering whether the captain had gone suddenly mad, or, on the contrary, might be up to some trick of seamanship beyond the best of us.

"Cape Horn Post-office, I reckon," growled forth Bill Gallard, as he wound the line around the belaying-pin, jerking his head toward the shore. "Has been and married a young wife, has the old man, and, as is natural, I suppose, he wants to send her a billy-doo."

"To be sure—in course," chimed in the others, seeming satisfied with the explanation. As for myself, I was at first a little puzzled about the matter; but in a moment I recollected having once been told of the chained cask upon the Patagonian coast, in which outward-bound vessels could deposit their letters. There was, of course, a very great chance that the letters would never reach their destination; but it was still a possibility that homeward-bound vessels, running near the coast, might visit the cask and carry away the precious contents, thus at times enabling anxious wives and mothers to hear news in advance of the more regular yet more distant mails from China and the Sandwich Islands. To vessels from California or the South American ports, this extemporized post-office was of little value; but for whalers, with no especial ports marked out for them at which to stop, it often proved of very timely service.

"See here," said the second mate, approaching me as soon as all things were made fast, and the old brig was lying with her main-topsail flat to the mast, riding easily on the long swell, "get into the starboard quarter-boat, and be ready to go ashore. And you, Bill Askins, go with him."

Bill Askins was the oldest man on the vessel, and bent and wrinkled as it would seem only a long course of life before the mast can make a man. He was a silent sort of fellow, seldom breaking out into the least appearance of sociability, and caring little for enjoyment of any kind, excepting his drink. This was his failing, and several times already he had been brought up with a rope's-end for drunkenness. Apart from that, he was a first-class seaman, never shirking duty. So that it was with surprise I saw him turn away, as though he had not heard the order.

"Do you mind, Bill Askins?" said the second mate, eyeing him sharply, and with no good-will. For the two were not exactly friends, and moreover the second mate was a rigid disciplinarian, and would not have stood much hesitation from even his twin-brother. "Do you mind, there?"

"Seeing that my hand is sore for pulling a boat, Mr. Skippy, couldn't some one else go in my place——?"

Upon that, without waiting to hear the end, Mr. Skippy jumped thrice straight up and down the deck, and opened upon Bill Askins incontinently, consigning him to the lowest possible regions of woe; sending thither, also, to keep him company, his father and his mother, his brothers and his sisters, and, incidentally, all the rest of his relations, with a running commentary of uncomplimentary suggestions about the origin, habits, general career, and expectations of each; and all because Bill Askins had hinted that some other person who had not a sore hand might prove a good substitute for him at the oar. There was nothing further to be said, consequently; and Bill, with his usual furtive, hang-dog expression, and, as it seemed to me, a glance of apprehension toward the shore, repaired with me aft, and took his place in the quarter-boat.

Here the captain — or, as we called him, the "old man" — handed me some letters for the post, and bade us be speedy, as the vessel could not wait long. He was not an old man, by the way, being scarcely thirty-five, and good-looking enough to have a handsome wife at home, anxious to hear from him at every opportunity. His own correspondence was doubtless the real reason for delaying the vessel, though with his letter were those of three cabin passengers for the Sandwich Islands, and hence he could easily make of a desire to accommodate them a pretense for serving himself. Taking these letters, I dropped into the boat, and in a moment more we were lowered and on our way to the shore.

It was not an easy matter. Tranquil as seemed the sea, there was a long rolling swell which greatly embarrassed our efforts, while, at first, we failed to pull in proper unison. But after awhile, by my watching Bill's stroke, we did better; and as the afternoon was warm for that latitude, and the situation a novel one, I soon got into the spirit of it, though regretting my interrupted smoke on the forecastle. It was a queer thing, indeed, this slipping over the glassy rollers toward an unknown and rock-bound coast, the cape pigeons circling round our heads with piping screams of dismay at the intrusion, and here and there a great white albatross asleep with his head under his wing, so close that we could almost have touched him with the outstretched oars.

Gradually we left the brig farther behind, and soon the rugged shore loomed up close before us. A flattened coast, running back in an irregular series of

undulations, covered at that time of year with long tough moss, and an occasional scraggy bush—not green, but yet, at the distance and in contrast with the far-off background of peaked mountains with their perpetual coating of glittering ice and snow, giving the scene a semblance of freshness. In front the shoreline sloped almost to the level of the water, but the outline was notched and irregular, and bordered with a setting of black, outlying rocks, so that even the smooth sea was there broken into foam and swept alternately in and out with the noise of great guns.

All the while Bill Askins had been rowing with head bent down, morbid and unsocial, but muttering to himself in a half-crazy way detached and fragmentary sentences, the purport of which I could not gather. Now, as we approached the shore, he turned his face to mark our bearings, and scanned the situation with a sort of dazed, half-frightened expression. A stranger would have said that he had been drinking too much; and, for the moment, I was inclined to the same opinion. But, after all, there was something different in this from the look of a drunken man; and I saw that in reality he had never been more sober in all his life, and that his manner was rather owing to some disturbing mental influence.

"Starboard, Jerry!" he said, as he threw back his glance again. "There is a little cove around yonder bend, into which the boat will just fit."

"Then you have been here before, Bill?" I asked.

"Did I say so?" he retorted. "May not a man guess that there is a landing-place not far off, without having been there himself? Well, yes, Jerry," he added, after a moment, during which the momentary heat with which he had spoken seemed to die away, or rather to become stifled by some strong inner effort, "I was here, indeed, many a year ago. For where will not an old sailor, at some time or other, turn up in thirty years? Well, well—a little to the starboard—and so here we are!"

Turning the projecting point, the small cove opened upon us—just about large enough, as Bill had suggested, for our boat to fit closely in. Resting for a moment, we caught the next swell, and so, with one powerful sweep, rowed in safely, jumped out, and hauled the boat up in security from tide or roller.

Before us, in plain sight, was the post-office. An old spar had been set up between two bowlders, and from it hung, by a stout chain, the little cask. It was canvas-bound and well pitched upon the outside, and at the top was a circle of sheet-iron, fitting close and working on a stout leather hinge. The whole hung low enough to escape, in some measure, the tempest's blasts, yet sufficiently raised to avoid impediment from the winter's snow. Whoever had first placed the apparatus in position had arranged all things with a kindly forethought; for, though the cask had hung there for so many years that the traditions of the oldest seamen went not to the contrary, and the chain was already half rusted away, the whole was still firm, and would probably do good service for another generation. That is, if any service continued to be made of it at all. At present it seemed falling into disuse, for there were no letters in it. Possibly its lack of service at that moment was a mere accident. It is certain that we, at least, broke the spell; and, as I dropped the package of letters inside, and saw them lie white and glistening at the bottom, I wondered whether they would ever reach their destination, and if so, whether it might not be only after years; and how that they would then be dark and discolored, and many of the persons for whom they were destined be dead and gone. In fact, I thought over all those commonplaces that so naturally

would arise upon such an occasion. Looking at the many chances against any real benefit coming from this, was it the proper thing for the captain to run the risk of——

"See here! are you never coming?" broke in Bill Askins. "It's roughening up already, and if we do not hurry we'll hardly get back at all."

I left the post and ran back to the boat. Bill still stood there, having never made more than the first step on shore, or turned his eyes away from the distant vessel. In silence we pushed the boat off and prepared to tumble in; but before we could do so, it was lifted upon a heavier roller than usual and hurled back, throwing us both sprawling upon the shore. Raising ourselves, we gazed around, taking more minute notice of the scene. In every direction the swell was increasing, and the smooth surface of the rollers broken into little caps. Even as we gazed, the waves increased in size and irregularity, and the whole scene became a seething, boiling mass. The sky, which had been so clear except for the distant line of cloud, was now almost completely overspread, the cloud having worked up with startling rapidity—not creeping up slowly, as a storm will gather in more temperate climates, but rushing forward, wildly and impetuously, with jagged, rifted edges, momentarily changing their figure, as though broken squadrons of cavalry were plunging across the sky. It was no settled storm, in fact, but a sudden squall, which might last an hour, and, on the other hand, might lead to prolonged gales. It had seemed to come in an instant, without preparation, as though it were a train of mischief kindled by the sudden dropping of a spark. At one moment we saw the gentle rolling and unbroken sea, and the pure, clear sky; at the next, only the wild frolic of waves and the fierce scud of angry vapor.

We gazed half petrified into each other's faces. The situation was not a pleasant one. The sun was already behind the distant snow-tipped mountains, and the darkness had commenced to fall. With that troubled surface upon the sea, we could not hope to ride it in safety were we now to launch the boat again. The frail shell would not have lived two minutes outside the point of shelter. And even had we hope of navigating it securely, whither now could we go? For, looking across the gathering gloom, we saw that foresail and jib had been set, and that the little brig was standing out from the land, with intent to creep away from the dangerous coast as speedily as possible. We remained on shore deserted.

"They will run in again to-morrow, will they not, Bill?" I said, in a vain attempt to re-assure myself. My face certainly expressed affright. I could feel it imprinted in every feature, and my heart seemed to stand still. As for Bill, there was now less of apprehension than of stolid fortitude in his expression. He seemed rather like one who, having had forebodings of some approaching fate, now knew that it was close at hand, to be met as an inevitable thing, not to be avoided. This was the face of one who had nerved himself with desperation for a hopeless contest.

"If it were not for me, Jerry, it might be they would come back and you would be safe," he said, at last. "But being with me, you see, why, of course, you too must suffer. It was meant from the first, I suppose. From the very time of it, I have never been on any ship that was likely to touch here, and I thought that I never should. For thirty years I have been to England and to the Mediterranean, but never to the Cape. But this time, even in New York, I felt the power behind driving me on, and I could not help it. Then I thought that perhaps we might go outside the

islands, and so avoid it. And when I saw the same old shore again, just as on that morning, and heard the order to heave-to, I knew as well as if I had been told that it had all been brought about for me. And, of course, I ought to be the one to suffer. But as for you, Jerry, whatever had you done?"

"And what is all that you are talking about, Bill Askins?" I exclaimed; "and what does it all amount to?"

"Nothing—nothing, Jerry. It is all a dream. Old sea-dogs will talk, you know. Come, let us make ourselves comfortable, since we must remain here all night, at the least."

There was no especial present danger, indeed. As yet, the nights were not so cold that we could suffer, and fuel was plenty. There were a few old broken drift-logs scattered along the shore, and the long gray moss was dry and inflammable. Soon we had a bright fire, serving not only for warmth but cheering the gloom a little, and also indicating our safety to our friends upon the vessel, if not by that time too far off. Then, dragging the boat still farther out, we turned it over and propped up one gunwale so that we could lie with our heads beneath the shelter, fully protected from the wind. The real misery of our situation laid in our apprehension about the future. We were utterly provisionless; and, supposing that the bad weather were to culminate in a prolonged gale which would keep our vessel away, not many days would elapse before we would starve to death. Even could the brig return before the week was out, the captain might refuse to do so, taking the chances that we might have been already rescued by some other vessel, or would have wandered inland, or, in fact, that something might have happened to render a divergence from his course unnecessary. Ship captains not uncommonly thus satisfy their consciences in favor of continuing their course, when it is only the matter of a life or two.

As for Askins, he seemed to have already made up his mind that there was no rescue for us, and his face still wore its expression of hopeless stolidity and of nerving himself for an unavoidable fate. Propped against the rounding sides of the boat, he sat for awhile gazing silently before him. Then turning, he drew a bottle from his pocket.

"We have this, though," he said, with the satisfaction of one who has prudently made good provision for the future. "Come, we will enjoy ourselves while this lasts, at least."

Where he had procured the liquor I did not ask. It was remarkable, indeed, that he could always succeed in smuggling it on board where others failed. However this might be, I felt that it was not a bad thing at present to have that bottle of brandy; and at the first sip it seemed as though the liquor not only warmed my body but also inspired me with new courage. My only fear was that Askins might yield too completely to the temptation, thus incapacitating himself from the operations necessary for our relief. And this seemed about to happen; for, after allowing me a sip or two, he held the bottle firmly, as though jealous of further partnership in it, and took draught after draught. His eye began to glow, his whole manner became reckless, and he soon had evidently reached the stage of his drunkenness which always preceded stupid imbecility. I expected that this would follow; but all at once he seemed to fall into troubled reflection, during which the bottle slipped from his hand, and, to my relief, emptied itself upon the sand. Then suddenly he seized me by the arm and put his face close to mine. Somehow his excitement was now greater than usual, letting me feel his keen old eyes blazing into mine like a half-suppressed fire. The brandy, the wild-

ness of the scene, and his own manner for the moment appeared to foster delirium in myself, and the air seemed filled with shadowy forms. These disappeared almost as quickly as they had gathered, leaving only one figure — clothed in a sailor's dress, and standing against the post that supported the little cask. The other figures had been acknowledged deceptions, but this appeared so real that I turned to point it out to Askins. At this, the figure seemed to shake its head, and almost immediately faded away into thin air as the others had done. Then my hand, which had been partially raised, fell, and the vertigo, if such it was, passed off, and I recovered myself, finding Askins still clutching at my arm.

"It was thirty years ago," he commenced. "See here, Jerry! there was a minister once who told me that when one has a secret in his mind it were better to have it out. Is it so?"

"That depends upon what the secret is," I answered. "If it were a crime——"

"Crime or no crime, what matters it?" was the somewhat angry retort. "And since we are never going to get away from here, why should I not out with it all, before we starve to death?"

"But, Bill," I urged, "don't tell me anything you would afterward wish you had rather not. We may get off, after all."

"Not we, Jerry. Do you suppose the old man will come back after two poor forecastle hands — one a boy, at that — when he can ship as many as he pleases at the first port? Not he. But he will leave us here to eat our own fingers off, while he goes on with his good wind. So here's for the story. I suppose it may ease me at the end to have told it."

Forced into quiescent assent, I listened, while he, with his grasp still upon my arm and his eye blazing into mine, went on:

"Thirty years ago, Jerry, I was not the battered old hulk I am now. I was a slim young fellow, good to look at, they said, and meant to be captain of a liner some day; and might have been, I suppose, only that the drink got the control over me, and it came from the one thing that blasted all my —— Well, but that, too, will come in course.

"And naturally, I fell in love, and I believed that little Mary Warren thought well of me, too. But I was mistaken, it seemed. I had a shipmate, and she favored him. And what could I do when I found it out? There was only one thing, of course. I gave it up and tried to swallow down my feelings, and we went off to sea together — did Hoskins and I — and I shook hands with her, and she said she would always be my friend; and I saw her say good-by to him with her arm about his neck, and so we sailed for the South Seas.

"If there is a God who rules the world, Jerry, there is also a devil who has considerable to say in it. For if not, how did it happen that on the same voyage Hoskins and myself were sent ashore to this point with letters, just as you and I have been? And when I saw him go to the cask yonder with his clean, white letter in his hand, and I nothing to send to anybody — why, then the temptation all at once came over me. I stole up behind with a stick of timber, just like those with which we have made the fire, and ——"

"Bill Askins, don't tell me another word!" I here cried out, just beginning to get at the gist of the story; and, horror-stricken, I tore myself away, and escaped three or four yards off. "You have told me more than enough already. As sure as you live, you will feel sorry, when we get away, that you have gone even so far."

"Easy, easy, Jerry," he whimpered out in a half-maudlin tone. "And why shouldn't I go on? But you have guess-

ed the rest, haven't you? And after all, if you let me go on, you would see that it didn't do me any good. For when I got home, and told little Mary Warren the story I had made up about his having fallen from the rocks and been swept away, though she believed it all, yet somehow she would have nothing more to do with me than before, so that——"

"Not another word! Not another word!" I screamed out again, holding myself ready against an attack; for I did not know how soon his mood might change, and I felt that it would be for his interest now to destroy me, also, and again bury in oblivion the story which a moment of weakness or repentance had exhibited. His mood did indeed change even at that moment, but not as yet enough to lead him to attack me.

"Why should I not go on?" he repeated, with a defiant air. "And who are you that tells an old hand like myself we shall ever get away from here? Don't I know that it is starvation for us now, and that the brig will never come back again for us? And I tell you, Jerry, that if she does ever come back, it will be as bad for you, for I will twist your neck myself rather than have you get away with that story. I have come out with it all; but do you think I was fool enough to tell it to anyone who could ever live to bring it up against me?"

Again I thought he must be coming after me, so defiant was his manner; but it appeared that in his assurance of our speedy destruction, by abandonment, he deemed it useless to accelerate my fate. For his outstretched arms fell, and looking at the ground he began kicking the empty bottle to and fro again in a desultory, purposeless manner; and so, his fierce mood passing off, he sat down against the upturned boat, and so seemed gradually to fall asleep.

Maintaining my own guard, I stood for a long time with my eyes fixed upon him. Then, as I heard his deep breathing, and knew that at last he was asleep —since if he were counterfeiting slumber, he could not have put on those sudden starts and meaningless ejaculations which accompany uneasy rest—I suffered my vigilance to relax. Not sufficiently, however, to admit of approaching him. For the whole world, it seemed, I could not have come near the shelter of the boat and laid down beside him. But I threw myself down where I then stood, and pulling up the long moss, made a rough pillow for myself; and so, still resolving to watch my companion, soon fell into a doze.

When I awoke, it was three or four o'clock in the morning. Full of the one subject, my waking thoughts endured no gradual transition from the confusion of slumber. At once I felt full perception of my situation, and glanced toward Askins. He was yet asleep, rolled over upon his back, and muttering disjointed fragments of meaningless ejaculation in the pauses of his deep, heavy breathing. So far, all was well. Then, looking about me, I saw with delight that what had threatened to ripen into a lasting tempest, had passed off in a simple squall. Already the wind was down and the sea had subsided into its old unruffled, gentle swell. The sky was clear of clouds, and right before me, bright and lustrous, gleamed the Southern Cross, seeming to look down protectingly. Then came, at the east, the light of the rising moon; and as it rose out of the water, I saw our vessel clearly defined against the bright surface—again within a few miles of the land, and still slowly standing in. This cheering vision lasted only for a moment. In a few seconds, indeed, the moon had so far risen that the vessel was no longer in its line and visible to me; but those few seconds had been enough. During their passage, I had recognized the battered old hulk beyond any doubt—even the queer clumsy set of the fore-yard—and

saw that the mainsail was set and drawing. There could be little doubt of our speedy relief.

At any other time I would have awakened my companion to share my hopeful assurances. Now, however, my sole thought was to keep him asleep until our rescue might be accomplished. Even on board again, I knew that I should not be entirely safe. I must even there be watchful against crafty surprises, which, causing my sudden disappearance, might be attributed to accident—the missing of a foot-rope, or the like. But there was now the present prospect of succor, and I could scarcely be too careful not to awaken him who lay so few feet from me. Therefore I remained quiet and almost breathless, awaiting the coming of day, and gazing alternately upon the Southern Cross, now paling under the light of the moon, and the smouldering fire near my feet. Gazing intently at the latter, there was a moment when I thought I saw a single figure standing at one side in meditative posture—apparently the same figure in sailor's dress which I had previously seen beside the post. Again I rubbed my eyes—not believing in the reality of the apparition, but attributing it, as before, to my unwonted nervousness. Hardly for an instant did I connect it with the story that Askins had told me, or, if so, in some confused manner that made no real impression of the supernatural upon me. Rather did I look upon it as an evidence of again approaching dream-land, and more than ever I determined to arouse myself from that danger. But as before, my tired nature gained control over me; and while I imagined that I was keeping myself awake, my senses again slipped away from me, and I slept.

When for the second time I awoke, the full dawn of day had commenced. The Southern Cross had entirely faded away, and the moon was high in the heavens—not now radiant and golden-hued, but with diminished orb and lack-lustre lifelessness. The sky was cloudless, and the distant snow-peaks were tinged with sunlight; the brig was not in sight. There was a thin fog upon the water, not rising high, but still deep enough to shut out the vessel, however near she might be. But I heard not far off the gentle, well-turned stroke of oars, and my heart bounded, for I knew that our friends were coming with the other quarter-boat in search of us.

I gazed around at Askins, and saw that he also was awake. He was sitting up, with his head resting upon one hand, and an air of troubled thought upon his face. Evidently, he had not yet caught that regular beat of approaching oars, and I devoutly prayed that he might not. But he heard me stirring, and raised his head and gazed searchingly into my face.

"I was drunk last night, was I not, Jerry?"

"Rather, Bill," I answered.

"And did I talk any nonsense, Jerry?"

"You did not talk at all, Bill. You slept like a top all night."

Still the puzzled look of inquiry, like one who has indistinct recollections of mischief, and is not half satisfied at what is being told him. Then for the first time that beat of oars struck his ears, and with it the muffled sound of outer conversation. He quickened his attention, and his power of apprehension seemed to be revived. One look at myself, in whose watchful and scared face he seemed to read everything—one gleam of revivified recollection—and then he arose and staggered toward me. Not with a quick spring to take me unaware, but rather with the deliberate pace of one who prepares a sacrifice. I knew at once by his steadfast expression what was in his mind—and he read as surely my comprehension of the situation and my instinct of defense. There

was, therefore, nothing to be said by either of us. In mute determination, he approached and I awaited him. Then coming near, for the first time he made his spring upon me, feeling for his knife. I gave one loud cry for succor; and with that, borne down beneath his weight, we rolled over and over in a deathly grip.

Round and round in that life and death grapple. I was the younger and more active; but on the other hand my opponent was tough as a bull—indurated for conflict by a thousand hardships. In less time than I now take to tell it, he had my arms pinioned to my side. I felt his knee upon my breast—I knew that he was once more searching for his knife. I almost gave up all hope, with his fierce glare and heavy breathing within a few inches of my face—then, suddenly, I saw a third person standing a few paces off.

One of our own crew, was my first impression; but when the form turned its head, I beheld one who was not of our vessel. A strange face—youthful, well-featured, though sad in expression, and not yet hardened by toil or vicious indulgence. There was a bloody bruise upon the side of the head; but all else, in person and costume, was unusually neat and proper. At once I felt it borne in upon me that this was the face of no living man, and I connected it with the fleeting shades that had already twice appeared to me. Those were seemingly evanescent and impalpable, to be sure, while this one came with all the reality of life; yet I knew that it was the same. And then it approached, not with mortal step, but with a vague motion that can scarcely be described. At first, it stood at the side of the letter-post; and at that moment my opponent had his fingers around the handle of his knife. Before the knife was half-drawn, however, the ghostly appearance stood behind him, having not so much approached by regular gradation, as having merely disappeared at the one place, and re-appeared at the other. Then it seemed to lay its hand lightly upon Askin's shoulder. In the man's fierce assault upon me, it was hardly to be supposed that the clinch of strong men behind could prevail upon him to relinquish his grasp; but now, at the very light touch of this spectral shade behind him, he turned and sprung to his feet in a paroxysm of terror and dismay.

It was all over in a minute, but it left upon my brain a picture that I can never forget. In the centre, the ghostly shade with the bloody wound upon the side of the head—not revengeful in face, but rather sombre and sad—slowly gliding along by some unexplainable motion as it faced the murderer. He, with unutterable terror imprinted upon his face, slowly retiring before the pursuer, one hand over his eyes as though he would shut out the dreadful visitant, the other arm thrown wildly into the air—so ever receding until the limit of the little rocky peninsula was reached, and then unresistingly falling headlong into the swift current below. At the other side, our men clambering ashore from the quarter-boat, with loud and boisterous greeting. Then I fell back, and for the time knew nothing more, until awakening, I found myself lying on the moss, with three or four of the men grouped about me, and at a little distance the second mate, jumping up and down on the bare rock as he had jumped upon the brig's deck, and swearing in a blue streak against everything—at the wind and the tide, at the sky and the sea, at the men and the boat, and more particularly at the unlucky chance that had robbed him of a first-class hand.

"And all because he couldn't keep the bottle away from him!" stormed the second mate, interlarding his speech with a copious vocabulary of oaths. "In course he would some day get the hor-

rors and kill himself, or some one else; but why couldn't he have waited until he got into port again? And he might better have killed you outright," continued the second mate, glaring at me, "and so saved himself alive, than to have given it up at the wrong time, and walked overboard himself!"

"And did—did any of you see anything else?" I said, accepting for the truth what after all was the only rational explanation of the scene that the crew would admit. "Another person—tall—with blood on the side of his head, and——"

"Why, Jerry," put in Bill Gallard, helping me upon my feet, "what is the matter with you? You haven't been taking too many nips out of the bottle yourself, have you?"

With that the conversation ceased. The men set to work launching our boat again, and I stood by to recover my as yet disordered faculties. Was it all true? Was any of it true? Was it not all a delusion of the senses? There were the men, but Bill Askins was not among them. There was Bill's knife, however, lying at my feet, just where he had dropped it. There was the empty bottle on the ground, and there was the post with the iron-rusted cask, dolefully creaking in the freshening breeze. To make assurance more sure, I staggered to the post and lifted up the sheet-iron cover of the cask. There lay the snow-white letters of the captain and passengers just as I had deposited them the evening before; but directly on top of them lay another letter—black, mildewed, and leather-stained; yet not so discolored that I could not read the address, "Mary Warren."

I did not touch it. I should not have dared, if I had wanted to; and I softly re-closed the cask, and stole away to the boat. Nor did I ever learn the fate of that mysterious letter. Was it merely a ghostly epistle, like its writer, only visible to my eyes, and after a moment fading away forever? Or was it a real letter, detained in the spirit world for thirty years, and then brought back to earthly reality? If the latter, did it lie there for years until the storms of the Horn had destroyed it—or did it really reach its destination after a while? And did it there find awaiting it, some lonely old maid, still full of concealed sentiment for the writer—or some happy wife with plenteous children and household cares, and not a memory left for the long-dead lover—or perchance only the white tomb of a broken-hearted girl, upon which cold stone could be laid those blackened lines? I do not know. At that time, it was in my mind some day to search it out. But a long whaling-cruise made me forgetful of many things; and when I again reached home, though I recollected the name, "Mary Warren," I could no longer recall the little village where the letter credited her with having lived.

# RESCUING A CENTRAL AMERICAN PRESIDENT.

THE particular revolution I refer to happened several years ago, and very probably had no special points of difference from those that have occurred since, or those that had preceded it. Its principal feature, in my recollection of it, is that, in a small way, I "had a hand" in it—like Æneas, in his narrative, "*pars fui*." But on second thought, I believe I do my revolution injustice, and that after all it was one of more than usual magnitude, and not perhaps to be thrown into the well-filled ranks of ordinary revolutions. I am certain that it was dignified by the name of "a war" at the time; and that officers of high-sounding titles and much gilt decoration figured in the "battles" of it. But the Spanish American is fond of the pomp and circumstance of war, if not of the hardships and danger of actual service, and can hardly be blamed for an unwillingness to sacrifice entirely the one for the other.

It was in 1864 that an American man-of-war steamed into the port of La Union, San Salvador, and was ominously greeted by a shot from the fort, which glanced over the water unpleasantly near its stern. The streets of the little town were found lined with soldiers; many houses were deserted, many shops closed, business generally suspended; in short, it was clearly a time of war or revolution. The story, or rather the outlines of it, were soon told, and it proved to be somewhat as follows: The President of the little republic, General Banios, who it was maintained had done more for the advancement and improvement of San Salvador than any of his predecessors, who had built roads, established order, and encouraged immigration, had in some way become obnoxious to the sovereign people, and had moreover incurred the hostility of his neighbors, Honduras and Guatemala, and as a consequence had incurred the inevitable fate of deposition. His successor, President Dueñez, had already been proclaimed, and was fairly seated in the presidential chair. The ex-President's followers had been reduced by certain summary processes to a mere handful, and one would naturally suppose that this revolution having accomplished its object, public order would be restored until the next one should come in due course of time. It was, therefore, a matter of some surprise that the military establishment was still so strictly maintained.

The commanding officer of the district was General Gonzalez, an officer whose external decorations in gold lace were of the most ornamental description, and, from what we learned, in the inverse ratio to his service in the field, at least in this particular revolution. He had been, we were informed, an officer under General Banios, and in that capacity had led his army against the enemy; but at the first encounter had become theirs without exchanging a shot, transferring himself and his command, *en masse*, to the hostile forces. Appointed by his new superiors to the command of the principal town of the sea-coast, and the only probable loop-hole of escape for the now deserted and powerless chief, he naturally became the most determined of his enemies, and especially directed his energies against any attempt at flight. Every avenue to the suburbs was most carefully guarded to prevent Banios from reaching and hiding himself in the town.

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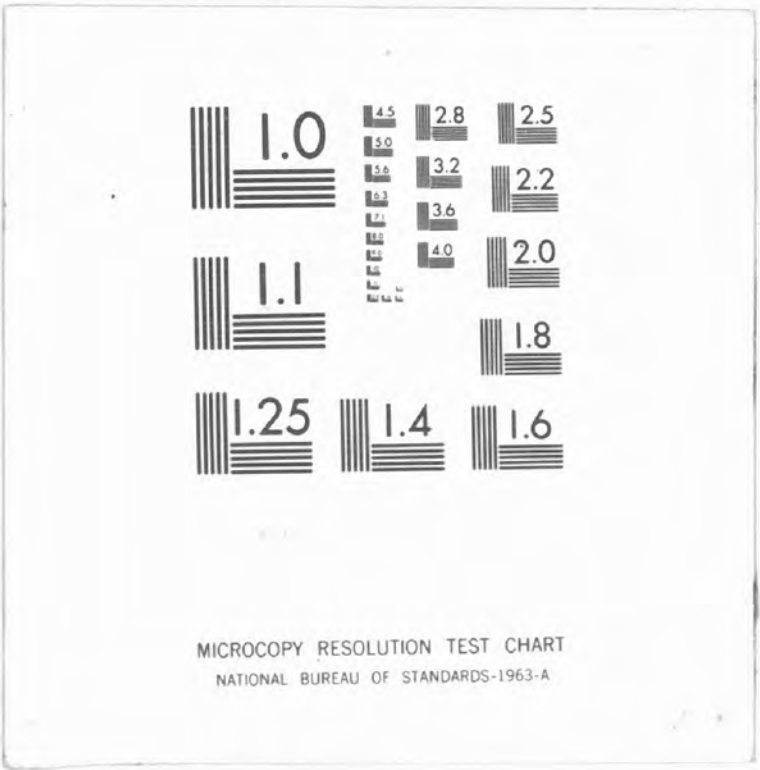
PHILATELIC SECTION.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