A STORM AT SEA.

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THE writer of the following sketch, after many stirring adventures in Australia, had become a pearl-diver on the northwest coast. The season was nearing its close, and the pearl-fishermen were anxiously awaiting the arrival of the supply-ship, from Singapore, when the annual cyclones broke before their time, and wrecked the fleet almost to the last vessel.—EDITOR.

IT was the early part of November. The cyclone season was approaching, and every man in the fleet was looking forward to the two or three months' rest and recreation which lay before him; for in "willy-nilly time," as the natives call it, diving is suspended. A few of the divers had planned to run their boats far up the creeks during the stormy term, but the greater number were bound for Cossack and for a taste of civilization. We were all anchored a little to the southward of Cape Bossut, where a new patch had kept us busy for a fortnight, waiting for the Singapore steamer. Six weeks had elapsed since she had passed through the fleet on her way north, and we were short of provisions and overloaded with shell. A good ending to a good season had put the pearlers in excellent humor. All hands were like school-boys on the eve of breaking up for the holidays, and as soon as the overdue *Cockatoo* arrived, there promised to be fun.

Among my friends on the grounds was a Captain Blake, of the schooner *Dolphin*. He was the owner of a fleet of five luggers, a successful man, and, strange to say, a gentleman. Like most of the white men on the coast, Blake had a "past." That, however, did not concern me; he was a good fellow, a marvelous story-teller, and he kept a certain brand of Scotch whisky which I have not yet seen equaled. On the pearling-grounds any one of these things was enough to make a man popular. Blake was perhaps forty-five years old, tall, spare, and with iron-gray hair and mustache—a man who, in spite of his yellow, East Indian complexion and somewhat dissipated look, was still handsome.

While we were waiting for the *Cockatoo*, I spent most of my evenings aboard Blake's hospitable schooner. I usually sculled back to my own boat about ten o'clock, but one night I got caught. It came on to blow from the eastward. Unprotected as we were, a choppy sea rose at once, and, as the night was unusually dark, and my dinghy only a cockle-shell, I decided to remain aboard the *Dolphin* for the night. We sat up talking and smoking until late. Then Blake lent me a suit of his pajamas, and we turned in. James, Blake's mate, being in Lagrange Bay repairing one of the luggers, I took his bunk. There was nothing alarming about the situation, and I soon fell asleep.

Crack! Rattle! Bing!

The last sound rang and reverberated through the schooner's timbers like the stroke of a bell.

Awakened by these unusual sounds, the captain and I instantly sat bolt upright in our bunks. We looked at each other inquiringly, and listened. The sides of the vessel were hissing softly, and through the open companionway came the flutter of ill-stowed canvas and the hum of much wind. Yet the schooner was quiet—strangely so.

"Chain parted, eh, captain?" I said, leaping to the deck.

"Yes, curse it; that 's the third this season," he replied, following suit. "Here, you know your way about, boy. Run up and let go the heavy-weather anchor. It must be a pretty stiff squall."

As he spoke, a gust of cold, damp air descended the hatchway, and drove from the cabin its previous mugginess. The sound of hissing at the vessel's side changed to a series of little spats, and she began to roll.

"Broadside on," said the captain, as I jumped for the ladder.

Routing out the Malay crew, I cut the lashings of the great iron mud-hook, and fell to prying it from its chocks.

"Heave!" cried Orang, the Manila boatswain. "Heave and sink her! Heave!"

There was a splash, the rusty roar of eighteen fathoms of cable tearing through the hawse-pipe, then a lull. The heavy-weather anchor had found bottom.

Snubbed short, like a down-stream trout when fairly hooked, the schooner flung her stern round, and faced the eye of the wind with a new tune in her rigging. For she no longer went peaceably with her enemy, but stopped and defied him. She laid her nose down closer to the water, and all her ropes, from the double-bass forestay to the shrill-piping signal-halyards, joined in a song of insolence.

After I had paid out cable to the forty-fathom mark, and seen that everything was shipshape forward, I went aft again. On the top steps of the cabin I paused and scanned the horizon. It was a wicked-looking night. The sky was low, and like black wool. The sea, too, was black, all but the snarling crests of the waves; and they by contrast were a ghastly white. Up to windward the masts of the fleet were outlined against the lighter tone of the sand-hills, over which the wind came down in fast, fierce puffs. Two luggers, with a foot or two of sail showing, were trying to beat their way into the creek beyond the cape. It was a futile attempt, however, as they were being blown bodily to leeward. Among the crowd of boats ahead I tried in vain to distinguish the *Norma*. I felt it to be fortunate that she was anchored close inshore and was well supplied with chains and anchors.

Descending into the cabin, I found the captain standing on the settee, examining the barometer.

"Falling, Blake?" I inquired.

"Fast," he answered, with a grave face. "How does it look on deck?"

"Pretty bad," I admitted. "It 's more than a cockeyed bob,[1] I 'm afraid."

"Yes; by the look of things, we are in for an easterly blow, if not worse."

"Surely it could not be a cyclone at this time, could it?" I asked.

"According to general belief, it 's a month too early for a willy-nilly," said the captain; "but as that is based upon the statements of a lot of —— niggers, I don't know whether we can depend on it or not."

I wished then that I had remained aboard my own boat. Malays are poor heavy-weather sailors; and the *Norma*, moreover, was deeply laden. Though I knew that the chances of there being a great storm were in our favor, yet I was fearful for the *Norma's* safety.

[1] Westralian for squall.

Returning from a visit to the deck, the skipper said: "You 'd better turn in and get some sleep. As long as James is away, I 'll have to press you into service. I will take the first watch, and you can relieve me. Orang is standing by, forward."

Accustomed, by my sea-service, to obeying orders, I vaulted into my bunk, turned my face from the lamp, and went to sleep. I was too restless, however, to remain so long. Within an hour I was wide awake again. The captain, with an unlighted cigar between his teeth, was seated in full view of the barometer. Though his face was calm and his attitude easy, I could tell by his eyes that he was listening—that he was expecting something.

By this time the shrouds were pitching their song in a higher key, the waves had changed their snarl to a sullen roar, the schooner creaked and groaned, and her cable twanged like a harpstring.

Of a sudden, a strange rumbling noise vibrated through the vessel, and she trembled from stem to stern. It lasted for about three seconds, then stopped; then continued at short intervals. She was dragging her anchor.

The captain sprang up the companionway and hurried forward. I could hear his voice shouting orders to the crew, and later a prolonged rattle of cable. With ninety fathoms of chain out, the rumbling ceased. Blake came down the cabin steps, muttering. He lighted his cigar and returned to his chair to listen.

Louder and louder waxed the sounds of the approaching storm. The *Dolphin* leaped and dived and tugged at her chain, as a great fish might. She thrashed the sea with her stanch, bluff bow, till she rose in an acre of foam. Gust after gust in quick succession swept down upon her from the sand-hills, and she crouched before their fierce onslaught. The scroll-like waves were making deeper, darker hollows. She tried in vain to bound from one ridge to another. The captain began to pull on a suit of oilskins. Jamming his sou'wester on his head, he looked again at the barometer, and then turned toward my bunk.

"I 'm awake, Blake," I said. "Time to turn out?"

"Yes," he replied. "There 'll be work for us, unless I am mistaken. James's oilskins

and sea-boots are under the bunk. I 'm going on deck."

His tall form had hardly disappeared through the black square of the hatchway when, above the clamor of the elements, there rang out a deep-toned "Clang!" The cable had parted again.

As I tumbled out, I heard a rush of bare feet overhead, the rapid flinging down of coiled ropes upon the deck, and Blake bellowing like a bull. Without looking for more clothes, I scrambled up the ladder, to find the hands taking a double reef in the mainsail, preparatory to hoisting. The foretopmast staysail had already been set, and the schooner was scudding before the wind.

Feeling my way aft to the captain, I shouted: "What are you going to do—run?"

"Aye; there 's nothing for it but to run now," he answered. "You had better take the wheel. That shaking orang-utan there is giving her her eight points each way."

Going behind the Malay, I laid hold of the spokes, and soon had the yawing schooner steadied. Since she was merely running before the wind, without a set course, no compass was needed, and I steered by the "feel" of the wind at my back. No sooner was the mainsail on her than the *Dolphin* took wings anew, and flew over the seething seas as though she were alive to the impending danger. I thought of my little lugger and wondered how she fared. But my forebodings in regard to the *Norma* were only momentary.

The noise, the speed of the vessel, and the great amount of air, exhilarated me beyond measure. I was brimming over with strength, with laughter, with daring. Hatless, shoeless, and with my pajamas fast blowing to rags, I felt no discomfort, but only a sense of power and exultation. I talked to the vessel as I steered, praised her extravagantly when she slipped away from the fast-following waves, swore at her when she answered the helm slowly, and sang between times at the top of my voice. I was, indeed, intoxicated.

Dawn broke with a hurrying, tattered sky and a rising sea. The great breath which had so suddenly come upon the peaceful fleet now backed into the northeast, and momentarily grew in strength. Frequent rain-squalls, in narrow black lines, rose from the vague horizon, and, outstripping the upper clouds, flew swiftly across their ashen-hued faces, and deluged the racing schooner.

By this time the hatches were battened down with double tarpaulins, extra gaskets had been passed around the furled sails, the water-casks and other movables had been stowed below, and all preparations made for a gale.

About six o'clock I was relieved by Orang. All hands drank their coffee on deck, for the weather looked still more threatening. The closed arch of the heavens was becoming darker and darker. The gathering of dense cloud masses in the northeast was spreading fanwise across the sky, lowering the dome, and having the appearance of great black brush-marks upon a gray canvas. On they came, until all the sky was lined with straight, sooty smudges. Then they joined, and gradually formed a solid roof of darkness. It was an eclipse, depressing, ominous.

Suddenly, out of the sky immediately overhead, there came a blinding flash and a terrific thunderclap. A shock was felt by every soul aboard. The dog forward howled dismally, the Malays set up a wail to Allah, and the schooner's maintopmast fell in splinters about her deck.

Blake and I, who were standing together under the lee of the poop, looked at each other with blanched faces.

"That makes a man think there is a God," said the captain.

The tempest fell upon us then in all fury. There was a continuous crash of thunder, a ceaseless blaze of lightning; and the wind swept over the boiling sea with shrieks of blind destruction. At the first gust the few yards of canvas on the vessel left the bolt-ropes, and flapped away like birds to leeward. A heavy, slanting rain, which stung like whip-lashes, came with the new wind; and clouds of salt smoke, blown from the ruffled backs of the monster waves, befogged everything and drew the horizon close about us.

Faster and faster flew the *Dolphin* before the wrath of the storm. Her speed was slow, however, when compared with that of the clouds, the waves, or the wind. Unless one looked at her swirling wake, indeed, one might have thought her without headway, so easily did the waves overtake and pass her. At one moment she trembled in a dark valley before the onward rush of a white-streaked, slaty-hued mountain; at another she was riding buoyantly on its foaming crest; again, the mountain fell away, and she slid down into a valley.

And as the wildness of the gale increased, so did the tumult of it grow louder and louder. The rain and the salt spray hissed in unison; the wind whirred, whistled, howled,

and shrieked; the clouds opened their ports and cannonaded incessantly; and the ocean gave tongue in one long, magnificent roar. Added to these chief chords of the storm symphony were many minor strains—strange mutterings, and the voices of the sea. Wind, wave, and sky had combined their uproar, and the result was a deafening clamor. It was fearful; we looked at one another with eyes that asked, How will it all end?

The morning wore on. Still the storm grew more and more furious. To stand and watch the towering, angry ridges that ever rose astern; to see them come rushing after the little schooner, each one threatening to engulf her; to hear them roaring as they came; to feel the sting of their salt spray as they went boiling along the top-rail—these were things, indeed, to make the stoutest heart quake. Although we had set a storm-trysail, and the *Dolphin* ran before it like a frightened thing, we could no longer escape the sea. We had been expecting it for some time. It came at last. One frightful billow, higher, fiercer, hoarier than the others, reared itself above the stern. The schooner hung a moment in the shadowy abyss before it. Then she rose quickly toward the raging crest. But too late. It toppled with a crash over the heads of the men at the wheel, and swept her like an avalanche.

We were all carried forward with the rush of water. I found myself swimming abaft the forecastle-head. The deck was filled to the rails, and the vessel seemed to be sinking. She rose, however, gave a few quick rolls, like a big dog shaking himself, spilled the greater part of her weighty burden, and hurried on again.

Looking aft, I saw the wheel spinning madly. The steersman had been washed away. I yelled at one of the Malays to follow me, and clawed my way to the poop. When I reached it, the schooner was almost broadside on. Luckily the succeeding waves were not so large, or she must then and there have foundered.

The captain, pale and trembling, limped to my side a few minutes later. He had been hurt; his leg had been badly wrenched, blood was streaming from a gash in his temple, and he feared several of his ribs were broken.

As it was evidently unsafe to try to keep the *Dolphin* before it any longer, we decided, dangerous as it was in such a sea, to heave her to. The crew, in the meantime, had fled below, and it was only by force that the brave little Manila boatswain and I routed them on deck again. After we had hauled aft the sheet of the trysail, all hands were ordered into the main-rigging. Then, waiting for the right moment, I jammed the wheel over, shipped a becket over one of the spokes so as to hold it, and sprang aloft with the others.

It was a wind-blown, fearful little crowd that clung in the schooner's rigging that day waiting for her to come round. As I watched the *Dolphin's* nose swing, and saw the great gray combers lift high their foaming crests abeam, I appreciated for the first time in my life how risky a thing it was to heave to in a big sea. One, two, three of the mountains the *Dolphin* passed in safety; the fourth leaped her rail amidships and buried her. I heard the thundering of tons upon tons of green water falling on her decks; I felt her tremble and settle beneath us; I looked down upon a white waste of water, and I said in my heart, "She is gone!" But it was not so. She had only caught the thin top of the wave, after all, and though its weight and force had leveled the bulwarks to the deck on both sides, this very thing enabled her to rid herself quickly of water. A few moments more and she thrashed her spars to windward, screaming like a fiend. She had accomplished her task in safety.

Although the vessel now lay over until the water reached her hatch-coamings, and in spite of her frightful pitchings, lurchings, and the stinging, hail-like spray that flew continually over the weather bow, we all felt much relieved at the change; for under the new conditions she behaved beautifully, riding buoyantly over the ever-advancing ranges, and shipping few seas.

About noon the sky lightened, and the wind went down somewhat. We rejoiced in the hope that the gale had spent itself. Vain hopes; vain rejoicings; in less than half an hour the wind flew round suddenly to the northwest, and blew harder than ever. The storm-trysail disappeared at the first puff. Even under bare poles, however, the schooner careened at such an angle that we feared she would capsize. Four o'clock came, and still the gale grew and grew. The waves, their crests lashed into fury, rose higher yet; and the troughs between were valleys of terror.

The captain and I, meanwhile, had established ourselves abaft the high cabin skylight, where we were sheltered from the wind and yet could keep a lookout. Blake, poor fellow, was suffering so intensely from his side that he was obliged to lie down. I tried to induce him to go below, but he would not.

Seeing that he had made up his mind to remain on deck, I passed the bight of a rope under his arms, and nailed a piece of wood at his feet, so that he might not slip to leeward. From time to time I made a trip into the cabin to examine the barometer, which continued to fall. No one, fortunately, was needed at the wheel. As long as it was lashed hard down, the schooner steered herself. With the exception of morning coffee, we had eaten nothing all day. The excess of wind, moreover, and the constant strain we had been under for fourteen hours, were most exhausting. Our troubles, too, were increased by the discovery that the schooner had three feet of water in her hold. Although, owing to the unusual straining of the vessel, this was not altogether unexpected, the knowledge gave us some alarm, for the Malay crew had lost their courage and become ungovernable. Like a lot of frightened sheep, shivering and wild-looking, I found them huddled in the galley. Ketchong stood outside, under the lee of the same little structure, with an expression of disgust upon his broad yellow face. He showed his white teeth when I told him to get the men at the pumps. For a minute, perhaps, he stood at the galley door yelling. Then, no one coming forth, he drew his sheath-knife and dived into the dark interior. Fearing trouble, I laid hold of a belaying-pin, and waited.

A series of howls issued from the cook-house door; there were sounds of a fierce struggle going on inside; then, like sheep chased by a fierce collie, the crew pressed out on deck. Ketchong, grinning horribly and still prodding the laggards with his pointed blade, followed closely at their heels, and between us we drove them to the pumps. But we could not make them work satisfactorily. Not only was the slant of the schooner's deck against us, but fear seemed to have driven the men's strength away, and at every wave that broke over us they dropped the handle-bars and fled. We gave it up at last, and I went aft to the captain again.

Night was approaching, and the situation showed no signs of improvement. The seas broke over the little vessel more and more, and with every gust she heeled dangerously.

Blake looked up at me as I stood clinging to the skylight beside him. "How does it look now?" he asked.

"No better, I 'm afraid," I admitted. "We 've got to lighten her somehow."

He groaned. He knew what I meant, but the *Dolphin's* sticks were dear to him. He said, however, after a pause: "Well, go ahead, old man. Cut away if you must."

"It 's safest," I replied; and I started forward.

As I reached the weather rail of the poop, I ducked involuntarily. A high, dark wall of water was approaching, which I felt we could not escape. I had scarce time to call, "Hold on, Blake!" when it fell upon us with a dull crash. We were half drowned by the flood that rushed over us. I rose to my feet, gasping.

Sliding down to the skylight to assure myself that the captain was safe, I heard above the din a faint cry; and at the same instant I saw the galley, with half a dozen black heads about it, floating alongside. Under the weight of water, the wire lashing which had secured the galley to the deck had parted, and the whole house, occupants included, had slid down to the railless side, overboard. I rushed to the lee side, and threw several ropes toward them. But all fell short. Dazed, helpless, horrified, I stood and watched them drift away, beheld them writhing like a mass of black snakes amid the foam of the next wavetop, and saw the edge of the galley rise on the back of another. Then they vanished, swallowed up in the grayness of the evening and the smoke and smother of the storm.

The sea again broke heavily upon the *Dolphin's* deck. I realized that no time was to be lost; and, watching my opportunity, I made a dash forward. In the boatswain's locker, under the forecastle-head, I found the ax. It was not very sharp, and I wondered whether it would serve. Even at that moment, when the gale was screeching overhead, and death seemed so near, I was proud of my task. For years I had read and been told of blows in which it was necessary to cut away the masts; in my sea-training I had been instructed how it should be done, and, now that this thing had actually come into my experience, I felt rather vain, and said to myself that I must do it in a seamanlike manner.

Down in the lee scuppers, always up to my waist in water, and often overhead, I hacked away at the slack forerigging. It cut more easily than I had expected. Shrouds and backstays were soon flying to leeward. Next I "ringed" the foremast as high as I could reach, for I hoped to rig a jury-mast on the stump later. Then I tackled the weather rigging. The taut wire ropes parted like threads at the first blow. When only two of

the shrouds were left standing, there came a fierce squall upon us. Instantly the remaining splices drew, and the foremast, with a mighty crack and splintering, toppled overboard. When, in addition to this, the jib-boom went of its own accord, the schooner righted perceptibly.

With only her main lower mast standing, the *Dolphin* made comparatively fair weather of it, and for a time I was tempted to let her go as she was. The remembrance, however, that Blake and I were now alone, that the vessel had an unusual amount of water in her hold, and that the night was before us, decided me to continue my work. I therefore laid low the remaining mast.

After this my strength seemed to leave me. I trembled all over, and with difficulty dragged myself aft. Reaching Blake's side, I dropped on the wet deck beside him, and hooking my arm through the bight of his rope, slept the sleep of exhaustion. Once or twice I half awakened and edged closer to Blake for warmth, but I was not brought to full consciousness for six hours, when Blake's voice in my ear caused me to rouse with a start.

The gale was still howling furiously, a heavy rain was falling, and the night was intensely dark. Both the captain's teeth and mine were chattering, for it had grown very cold. Blake, who was faint from fasting, wanted me to go down into the cabin for a bottle of brandy, which, he told me, was stowed in one of the lockers. Now thoroughly awake, I discovered that I too was ravenously hungry, and gladly went below.

Feeling my way to the hatchway, I cautiously let myself down into the warm, stuffy atmosphere of the cabin. It was pitch-dark, and everything was awash. Chests, stools, clothes, bedding, crockery—all had been flung upon the deck, where they swished and smashed from side to side. The swinging lamp, and the telltale compass, which had hung above the table, were both broken; and the weather side of the skylight was stove in so that a cataract of water poured down at every sea. Only the barometer was intact, and that, I noted, by the light of a match, had ceased to fall. It was a good sign, and I yelled the news to Blake with a feeling of extravagant joy. In the darkness and the confusion into which the lockers had been thrown, I failed to find the brandy. I laid hold of some bottled ale, however, and two tins of sardines, and with these I ascended to the poop.

Lashed up to the windward, under the lee of the low rail, we sat and ate our midnight meal. We knocked off the necks of the bottles with a sheath-knife and opened the sardines with the same instrument. We used our fingers to eat with, and drank from the jagged edges of the bottles. The liquor was warm and bitter, but it made us feel more comfortable when it was down; and when we had finished we took a few more turns round our bodies with the ropes, and curling down together, fell asleep. We had reached that point where we really did not care what happened. We ached for a little warmth, a little comfort, a little rest.

The schooner, meanwhile, kept to the wind by the flying rags of the stowed sails, ascended the heights, slid down into the gullies, and rode on into the blackness of the awful night.

About four o'clock we were awake again. The barometer was rising, the sky was broken and lighter in patches, and the wind seemed to have abated somewhat. We shook hands, and laughed childishly over these signs of a dying storm. Ale and some half-soaked biscuits served for our breakfast, after which I bound Blake's side and legs with strips of blanket soaked in liniment. Though the unceasing motion of the vessel must have kept him in constant pain, the brave fellow never complained.

Seated close up under the weather bulwarks, with our backs against the stanchions, we waited hopefully for the coming day. It came, not suddenly, as it was wont to do in that tropical latitude, but with a slow changing of black to dark gray, and dark gray to a lead color. Sea, air, and sky were all the same dismal tone. We saw it reflected in our own pale faces. We saw it, too, in the appearance of the *Dolphin*. As human beings are said sometimes to do, she had turned gray in the night. Here the color transition stopped. It was daylight.

With the daylight, however, came the realization of our worst fears. Though the wind was dropping fast, the schooner no longer floated buoyantly as on the previous day, but moved in a tired, sluggish way. She wallowed in the dark troughs each time, and it seemed as though she could not climb the ridge that ever rose before her. The waves, finding her defenseless, broke with cruel force against her battered bow; they rolled across her railless deck unceasingly; they pounced upon her unawares, and buried her to the break of the poop. They did not race with ruffled backs and smoking crests before the gale now, but swept on in a de-

liberate, lumpish fashion, more than ever dangerous.

The *Dolphin* was sinking. Her hold was half full of water, and her deck almost on a level with the sea. Sooner or later—it might not be for half a day, or it might be within half an hour—she would go down.

Up to this time I had looked forward to the end with hopeful certainty. We should pull through it all right, I felt sure. Now I could see nothing ahead of us but death. No matter which way I turned, the grim specter rose before me, cruel and inevitable. I did not seem to care very much. It was not so hard to face death as I thought it would be. My principal feeling was one of rebellion. It was unjust that we should die then, just as the storm was over. It was not right to be treated so after all our efforts. Why had not she gone down in the night, when we were asleep, if she was going down? It was an infernal shame! In my heart of hearts I did not even then believe it.

It began to rain again—a heavy tropical downpour, though strangely cold. By comparison, the salt water that broke over us every few minutes was warm, and we wished that it would come oftener. From time to time I crept below and brought up more ale. It kept us from getting hungry, but otherwise had no effect. Returning from one of these trips, I found Blake in an attitude that he had doubtless learned at his mother's knee. His eyes were closed, the palms of his hands were placed together, and his lips were moving. He was praying. Not wishing to intrude upon him, I sat down on the top step of the companion, and waited. It was evident that the *Dolphin's* captain had given up all hope; yet, in the face of this grave acknowledgment (for so I took it), I could not forbear an inward smile. It was so funny to see Blake, of all men, praying. As I sat there, I fell to wondering whether it would be any good for me to pray. After due reflection I decided that it would not be any good. I argued that as I had not prayed for years, God would know that fear was my only reason for taking it up again, and would therefore take no notice of any supplications of mine. Thus I reasoned and thought in the hours which I felt were my last.

I took my place beside Blake again, and drearily watched the gray, foam-streaked surges that bore down upon us in such an endless regiment. How long should we have to wait before they swallowed us? I asked myself. I tried to imagine how it would all end, and I resolved that when it came I should not swim. Then my thoughts turned toward home. The picture of a dear old midland vicarage with climbing roses upon its walls, and an ancient cedar of Lebanon on its lawn, grew out of the gray, and in and about it moved the forms of those who were nearest to me. Yet, strange to say, I saw them only in one place. Thus my mother ever sat at a table pouring tea from an old silver tea-pot that I remembered from childhood. The ornament on top of the lid had been lost, and a huge black-velvet cozy with red embroidery stood close to the tea-pot stand. My father, with his coat-tails flying, appeared taking a short cut over the graves to the vestry door. The last bell had tolled, and the processional had begun. My sisters I also saw in some equally singular way. Aye, and there was a girl, too, a fair-haired, blue-eyed sweetheart of mine, who sat in the stern of a boat with a counterpane sail, and steered boldly into forbidden reaches of the river.

We grew unutterably weary as the day advanced. Weak, stupefied, aching in every muscle and shivering with cold, we sat waiting for the end. For my own part, nothing but pride kept me up. I would have given worlds to creep into one of the cabin berths and go to sleep. The schooner, meanwhile, sank lower and lower. It would not be long now. We imagined that the fear of death had left us, and we were calm.

In the midst of this somehow boastful acquiescence of ours, however, the *Dolphin*, now slow and lubberly in her movements, plunged headlong into the belly of a quivering green sea. Instantly our tranquillity forsook us, and we sprang to the highest point, —the main-boom,—blanched and trembling with fright. The wave closed over us with a seething sound, and, with the weight of molten lead, it flattened us upon the spar as though it would crush our lives out.

When it had passed, we saw that a yawning hole had opened up in the main-hatch. It could now be only a few minutes before she would fill and founder.

In a frenzy of self-preservation, we turned to the small dinghy that lay on the poop. The schooner's largest boat had been knocked to splinters long before, and but for the fact that the dinghy had been placed bottom up directly abaft the mainmast, and had been partly sheltered by the cabin skylight, it would also have been demolished. I do not think that either of us believed that such a cockle-shell would live in that sea. We took to her merely as a last resort—a staving

off of the termination. Hurriedly we cut the lashings, turned her upon her keel, and saw that she was firmly plugged. Oars we could not find, but we threw a bailer into her, and an old rope fender to act as a sea-anchor. Then we slid her down to the side, intending to launch her over the rail with our hands, for she was very light. All being in readiness, I turned to dive below for some food, and as I did so the *Dolphin* plunged again. I had scarce time to throw myself over the gunwale of the dinghy before it was afloat and whirling on the crest of the advancing wave. I expected that we should be swamped immediately, but as the wave passed without our shipping much water, I gained courage, and, making the fender fast to the end of the painter, threw it overboard. Looking round, I then saw that Blake lay at the bottom of the boat, behind me, face downward. Overcome by pain, my companion had fainted. I raised his head a little, and placed a stretcher under his forehead. More than this, however, I did not dare.

As the dinghy rose again, I looked anxiously on all sides for some signs of the *Dolphin*, but could not see her. The sea, gray, and streaked with wavering lines of foam, filled my vision. It was monstrous, awful, terrifying, and I dropped cowering at the bottom of the boat.

Beyond this point my memory fails me. I remember hazily starting up once or twice, and madly bailing. I recollect also looking up into a blue sky, and wondering if it were a dream. But, for the rest, I know nothing.

[THE writer and his companion, after being in the dinghy for eighteen hours, were picked up by the supply-ship *Cockatoo*.]

UNCLE ADAM.

BY M. E. M. DAVIS.

OLD plantation houses in the South are surrounded, as a rule, by detached buildings of different sizes and varying degrees of importance: the kitchen, the yawning fireplace of which establishes at meal-times lines of communication, composed of sundry shiny-faced piccaninnies, with the polished mahogany oval in the great-house; the smoke-house, with its brown-shelled hams, its dripping sides of bacon, and its pendent links of seasoned sausages; dairy, tool-house, pigeon-house, dog-kennel, and green-house. Somewhat apart, and in the midst of its own demesne, as it were, stands the "office." This one-storied lodge was formerly reserved for visiting bachelors. In the gay do-nothing days "before the war" dashing and debonair young gentlemen were wont to ride about from plantation to plantation, attended by their negro body-servants, hunting, dancing, and paying court at the "Cedars" or at "Rosemary," at "Madewood" or "Good Cheer"—wherever, in short, there was a pack of hounds, a fiddler, or a bevy of girls. They were hailed with delight when they came; their departure left an openly bewailed void. During their stay they were quartered in the office, where the master of the plantation generally had his baize-lined bookcases and his spindle-legged secretary. And it must be admitted that oftentimes, long after the great-house and the demure girls there were wrapped in slumber, the office, hazy with tobacco-smoke and redolent of mint-julep, resounded with boisterous laughter and bacchanalian song. Those days and nights and rollicking young idlers are passed away forever, and the old offices are put to other and doubtless better uses.

The office at Ridgeway Plantation was shaded on one side by low-branched magnolia and crape-myrtle trees; on the other side a sunny space was laid out in prim shelled walks. Here Major Adam Randolph paced of mornings with his hands behind his back, awaiting the call to breakfast from the great-house, while his "boy" Cato, a grizzled old negro who had followed his master to three wars, opened the windows of the office and set in order its old-fashioned furniture.

The spotted cheval-glass there had often reflected the slim and elegant figure of young Adam Randolph. Young Adam in those long-gone days owned his plantation, rode blooded horses, and followed, with a certain reserve, the reckless fashions of the time. In the servants' quarters at Ridgeway, traditions still lingered of the courtly grace and the prodi-