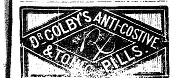
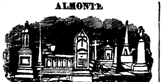
The Almonte Gazette.

VOL. X., NO. 50 ALMONTE, ONT., FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 1877. $1 PER YEAR





AN OLD UMBRELLA.

An old umbrella in the hall,
Battered and baggy, quaint and queer—
By all the rains of many a year
Bent, stained and faded—that is all.

Warped, broken, twisted by the blast
Of twenty winters, till at last
Like some poor close-reefed schooner cast,
All water-logged, with half a mast,
Upon the rocks, it finds a nook
Of shelter on an entry hook:
Old battered craft, how came you here?

Ah, could it speak, 'twould tell of one—
Old Simon Dowles, who now is gone—
Gone where the weary are at rest—
Of one who locked within his breast
His private sorrows o'er his lot,
And in his humble work forgot
That he was but a toiling bark
Upon the billows in the dark,
While the brave newer ships swept by,
Sailing beneath a prosperous sky,
And winged with opportunities
Fate had denied to hands like his.

A plain, old-fashioned wight was he
As these sport-loving days could see.
He in his youth had loved and lost
His loyal true-love. Ever since
His lonely life was flecked and crossed
By sorrow's nameless shadow-tints;
Yet never a murmur from his lips
Told of his darkened soul's eclipse.
I often think I still can hear
His voice so blithe, his tones of cheer,
As, dropping in to say "good-day,"
He gossiped in his old man's way,
And yet we laughed when he had gone.
We youngsters couldn't understand—
No matter if it rained or shone,
He held the umbrella in his hand.
Or, if he set it in the hall,
Where other shedders of the rain
Stood dripping up against the wall,
His was too shabby and too plain
To tempt exchange: all passed it by,
Though showers of rain were pouring down,
And all the gutters of the town
Were torrents in the darkening sky.

He never left it once behind,
Save the last time he crossed our door.
Oblivious shadows o'er his mind
Presaged his failing strength. Before
The morning he had passed away
In peaceful sleep from night to day.
And here the old brown umbrella still
In its old corner stays to fill
The place, as best it may, of him
Who, on this wild and wintry night,
Is surely with the saints of light;
For whom my eyes grow moist and dim
While I this simple rhyme indite.

"SHIP AHOY."

A Yarn in Thirty-six Cable Lengths.

FIRST CABLE LENGTH.

HOW THE "MERRY MAY" CAME IN.

'Now, my sons, all together!'
'Yo-ho!—hoy-y!'
'Now, another!'
'Yo-ho!—a-hoy-y!'
'Now altogether, my lads!'
'Ahoy!—hoy! hoy!—yerhup!'
'Now a good one!'
'Yo-hoy!—yer hup!—hoop!!'
'Another pull, my sons!'
'Hoy!—yoho!—yo-ho!—hup!'
'Well pulled. Now your song.'

"Ho! hauly yo! hoy-y!
Cheerly, men, ho!—yo-hoy! y;"

Pull, stamp, and haul together, and the good ship the Merry May, working into dock, with her foretopmast gone at the cross trees, her maintop gallant nearly sprung, a splice in her spanker boom, and her sides battered and denuded of paint. Two boats swept away, and a big piece of her bulwarks patched up in a sorry fashion after that great wave pooped her, and cut its way out of the port side as though the bulwarks had been made of bandbox. Worse than all, too, there is about as strange a make shift of a rudder as was ever seen; for, after a fair voyage from Colombo, in rounding the Cape the sea rose, and the wind blew what old Basalt called 'a snorer,' and he swore a dozen times—pooh! a thousand times in oaths, but a dozen times in his assertion—that the May would go to the bottom.

But she did not; for Captain John Anderson knew his duty as well as any sailor in the merchant service, and fought the storm like a good man and true—beat it like a Briton, when a score of other men would have given up, and gone down on their knees in despair, and prayed to God to save them.

'Like a set of lubbers!' said old Basalt, when telling the story at the 'Jolly Sailors' afterward, over a glass of Mrs. Gurnett's best rum and water.

'But there, Lord bless you! I taught the boy to make his first knot—I made a sailor of him; and a sailor he is, every inch, God bless him!'

Here old Jeremiah Basalt wiped either a tear or a drop of rum and water out of his eye.

'Sink? Not she. We was knocking about for a fortnight, and he never once left the deck. Sails was blown outer the bolt ropes, bulwarks swept away, boats went, and the fellows was ready to give up; but d'ye think he would? Not he. Why, bless yer, he's that much of a true Briton that if Davy Jones hisself was to come and say to him, 'You're dead now, as a copper fastener,' he wouldn't believe him! Not he. He says to me, just about the worst of it, when it was blowing the greatest guns as ever did blow, 'Jerry,' he says, 'I undertook to sail this here ship for Mr. Halley,' he says; 'and she's got a cargo in her of tea and silks as is worth a hundred thousand pound,' he says; 'and I mean to run her safe into London Dock afore I've done.'

'He roared them there words—a bit shorter, you know—into my ear as we was holding on to the spokes of the wheel, just in the worry worst on it, for, bless you, he wouldn't trust no one else then. Drenched we was to the skin, and puffing to get a breath now and then—with the wind shrieking in your ears, and the sea spitting in your face, and cutting your very eyes out. 'No, Jerry,' he says, while I've breath in my body,' he says, 'I'll never give up.' And then—bang!'

'What?' said Mrs. Gurnett, breathlessly, as, in his excitement, old Basalt swept his half drunk glass of grog on to the floor.

'What? Why—bang!' cried old Basalt, again bringing his fist down upon the table with a blow that made every glass in the snug bar parlor ring again. 'Bang! Mrs. Gurnett, bang! The wheel spun round, and sent the capen to leeward and me to windward, half stunned, under the bulwarks; and when we come to again, we found the rudder swep' away, and the poor old ship wallering in the trough o' the sea, like a blown porpus in a tideway.

'Ship seas? Ah, we did ship seas; and any body else 'ud a gone quietly to the bottom 'cep' John Anderson my Jo; and if he didn't rig up a rudder out of a beam, and work it with ropes and blocks, and get her afore the wind again, why I ain't here without a drop o rum and water to wet my throat, dry with all this talking.'

But to go back to the dock. There was the good ship Merry May in sore plight as to her outward appearance; but tight, and free from water. Her whole cargo was safe, and in port; her captain proud, and talking to his owner, as the men, under old Basalt's orders, cheered, and hauled, and helped the dock men till the vessel was through the great flood gates, and being warped in among the tier of shipping in the inner basin.

An hour after the riggers were on board, and up aloft, unbending sails; while John Anderson was shaking hands with Mr. Halley, a florid old gentleman, at the gangway.

'At one o'clock, then, to-morrow, Anderson, at Canonbury. Lunch and a glass of wine. And God bless you, my boy, and thank you!'

'Don't say any more, sir pray.'

'But I must say more, Anderson,' said the owner. 'I don't believe there's another captain who would have brought her into port; and no insurance would have ever recompensed me for her loss. Good-bye—God bless you!'

'And you too, sir. Good-bye.'

'At one to-morrow,' from the wharf.

'At one to-morrow, sir,' from the gangway.

Mr. Halley passed out of the dock gates, and took a cab to his office in Shipping Street; and Captain John Anderson, aged twenty nine, fair, sunburned, gray eyed, and frankly handsome, went home like a good son, as she said he was, to think of some one else, and to kiss his mother.

SECOND CABLE LENGTH.

HOW MRS. ANDERSON TALKED TO HER SON.

If you can imagine Mary Queen of Scots, at the age of seventy-two, and wearing a black silk dress, you have before you Mrs. Anderson, standing with her cross handled stick in one hand, while with the other she caresses the crisp, brown, Saxon curls of her son's hair. Her fair old face stands out from her stiffly starched ruff like collar and crimped cap. Her grey hair is suitably arranged over her temples, and every feature seems to speak and say—'This is my son!'

It is a quaint old room where they are; well furnished, but there is a nautical smack about it. You can even smell the sea—the odor being furnished by some bunches of bladder wrack hanging from the nail that supports the painting of 'The Flying Betsy bark passing the Nab Light'—a finely executed work of art, wherein you have every sail set, a series of dots along the deck to represent captain and crew, and the foaming billows raising foam capped with a regularity that suggests their all having been formed in the same mould. Over the chimney piece hangs the portrait of the late Captain Anderson pere, who appears to have run a good deal to fat. Beneath it is suspended his spy glass, bearing upon its long tube the flags of all nations. There are cabinets of walnut, too, with curiosities from all parts. A chest from China, a screen form Japan, some New Zealand waddies, and bird skins and feathers from the Cape—collections commenced by the father and continued by the son.

'So you're going up to Mr. Halley's, John, are you?'

'Yes; to lunch, mother.'

'I don't think you ought to go, John—the first day you're at home with your poor old mother.'

'But it's business, dear—I could not refuse,' said Anderson, gently, as he passed his arm round the slight old figure and kissed the handsome old face.

'May be,' said the old lady, enjoying the embrace, but evidently only half satisfied.

'I'll soon be back to you,' said the son, smiling; 'they won't want me there long.'

'I don't know, John, I don't know. I should not so much mind you going but Mr. Halley has a daughter.'

'Yes, of course he has,' said John Anderson, starting, and the blood mounting to his forehead.

'And I do not want her to be laying traps for my boy.'

'Why, you dear old goose,' cried John, laughing outright; 'what a fine fellow this son of yours is, isn't he?'

The old lady bridled up, and knitted her brows.

'Do you think it would be safe for either of the Queen's unmarried daughters to see me?' laughed John. 'They might have marriageable ideas.'

'They might do worse, John,' said the old lady, stiffly, but stroking his hair the while.

'Why, my dear old darling,' said John, huskily, as he drew her down upon his sturdy knee, and laid his forehead against her shoulder, 'do you for a moment think it possible that a rich ship owner's daughter could ever lower herself to look with eyes of favor upon a poor ignorant merchant sailor, who has only one idea in his head, and that is the working of a ship?'

'If you don't wish to break your poor old mother's heart, John, say no more,' said the old lady, sobbing angrily. 'As if there was a nobler, a finer, a handsomer, a cleverer man anywhere in the world than—'

'Phew—w—w—w!' whistled Captain Anderson, softly, as he drew the frail old figure closer to him, and kissed the wrinkled forehead reverently, saying to himself,

'Thank God for making mothers!' And then aloud, 'There, there, dear, when I am about to sail a fresh ship and want a character, I'll send the owners to you.'

'Such nonsense, John! As if it were ever likely you would want a better ship than the Merry May.'

'Well spoke, Mrs. Anderson—well spoke,' said Jeremiah Basalt, entering the room with two sways and a lurch; 'as if it was likely the captain would ever want to sail any other ship. No, indeed. By the mark seven, as we say, Master Halley knows good biscuit when he sees it, and it'll be a long time afore he parts company with our cap'.'

'Mr. Basalt, will you take a glass of strong waters?' said Mrs. Anderson, primly, but all the same looking graciously at the rough old salt.

'Thanky, Mrs. Anderson, I will,' said Basalt. 'Allus water when you has a chance, and then your casks won't run dry.'

The old lady trudged softly across the room to a corner cupboard; then after searching among the folds of her stiff silk dress, she found a pocket hole, into which she plunged her arm almost to the elbow, and brought out a great pincushion, then a housewife, next a bodkin case, a piece of orris root, a pen knife, and lastly, though not by any means the bottom of her cargo, a shining bunch of keys—one and all rubbed bright and worn with many years friction. Selecting one key, she opened the quaint cupboard, and lifted out a curious old leather covered case, which her son hastened to take from her hands and place upon the table, while she smiled her thanks, and then brought out two old fashioned glasses, in the stems of which were quaint opal lined spirals.

Then another key had to be brought into requisition to open the case, from which three square bottles were drawn.

'Your poor father's own case, John,' said the old lady, as she took out a stopper and filled one of the glasses for old Basalt. 'Hollands, Mr. Basalt, that he brought himself from Flushing, twenty years ago.'

'Is it really?' said the old mate, holding up the greeny fluid to the light, and squinting through the glass before smelling it. 'Took a good fire to 'still it, anyhow. Why, you can sniff the smoke now.'

'Taste it, Mr. Basalt—taste it, and drink my John's health.'

'God bless him! that I will,' cried the old fellow, rising glass in one hand to slap his other into his captain's open palm, and shake it heartily. 'John Anderson, God bless you!'

The grasp was as heartily returned; and then, shutting one eye, Jeremiah Basalt poured the glass of Hollands down his throat; and grog hardened even as he was, gave a slight gasp as he put down the glass, and, turning to Mrs. Anderson, said, solemnly,

'Lor! I wish I'd been a Dutchman.'

Mrs. Anderson smiled graciously, and held out her hand to take the emptied glass and refill it, a movement half resented in a sham bashful manner by the old man, who pretended to draw back, the glass; but all the same drew it softly to him as soon as it was refilled, to take a sniff at its contents, and then exhale a long breath, after the fashion of a connoisseur learned in the bouquet of wines.

John Anderson drained his glass, filled for him by the old lady, who even then could not resist the temptation to have another stroke at her son's hair. The next minute he rose, saying,

'I am going up to Mr. Halley's now, Basalt, and will come down to the docks afterward.'

'Not much good your coming there,' grumbled the old man. 'The ship's mucked up with lubbers, and will be till we get her loaded again; and the sooner the better, say I. Mrs. Anderson, my service to you, I drink your very good health this time.'

And he poured the second glass of Hollands down his throat, such is the force of education, without so much as a wink.

The next minute he and his captain were standing side by side in the street.

'No news about the ship, I suppose?' said Anderson, more for the sake of conversation than any thing else.

'No,' said the mate, 'only, as I said, she's full of lubbers—lubbers up aloft, lubbers down below, lubbers hanging over her sides, and lubbers on the wharf taking her cargo.'

'Wait a bit—wait a bit,' said Anderson, smiling, 'and we'll be off again to sea.'

'Sooner the better,' said Basalt, 'for, if I stay ashore long, I shall never get away at all. I shall be married and done for, as sure as a gun.'

'Stuff!' said Anderson, laughing, and holding out his hand to shake the mate's and part.

'Stop a bit,' said Basalt; 'there's news of one of Rutherby's ships.'

'Good?'

'Damn bad!'

'Not lost?'

'Gone to the bottom of the sea—'the sea, the sea, and she's gone to the bottom of the sea,' as the old song says.'

'Bad job that, Basalt.'

'Not it,' growled the old fellow. 'Heav'ly insured—rotten old hulk—sent out a purpose. Half the men drowned, and the owner turns his eyes up like a gull in thunder, wipes the corners, and then rubs his hands and goes to church. There's lots o' them games carried on, and owners make fortunes out of it. They say Rutherby's does, Langford & Co.'s does, and some more of 'em.'

'Basalt,' said Anderson, flushing up, and speaking hotly, 'you're a prejudiced old humbug. Do you mean to say that in your heart you believe a ship owner would be such a cold blooded, hellish scoundrel as to send a crew to sea in a vessel that he knew to be unsafe, and that he had heavily insured?'

'Yes, I do—swear to it!' said the old fellow stoutly.

'It's all confounded rubbish!' was the reply. 'Why, a demon would think twice before he did such a thing. Why, it's rank murder!'

'To be sure it is,' said the old fellow. 'Why, I've known it done over and over again. I could show you the men who have done it, and made money by it. I don't say as their crews were always drowned; but they were sometimes. As to demons, and them sort of chaps, I never know'd one as was in the shipping trade, and don't know whether they make good shippers; but I'll tell you this, and swear to it too, my lad, I've known shippers, and have sailed for 'em, as would have made out an' out good demons. So put that in your next quid, my boy.'

Here the old fellow went growling off, and Captain Anderson made his way to the corner by the bank, to get a Cannonbury 'bus, muttering to himself as he went.

'As good an old fellow as ever stepped, but as prejudiced and obstinate as a wooden mule.'

THIRD CABLE LENGTH.

HOW JOHN ANDERSON MADE LOVE.

Canonbury is not fashionable, but it is comfortable. The old red brick houses look snug and prosperous. There is an air of wealth about the district, and old-fashioned ease. The red walls indicate warmth; and once beyond them and their coating of ivy and overshadowing trees, you expect to find solid furniture, good plate, and fine linen.

You are quite right in your expectations—they are all there; and as to veneering, it is not known in the older parts. There are cellars to the houses in Canonbury; none of your West End cellars, under the pavement, with an iron disk in the centre for the admission of coals, but rare old cellars of a hundred years and more, with fine fungous growths among the brickwork, and a glorious smell of damp sawdust. *That!* you know in a moment that there are bins there with rare, dry, natural sherry that has been lying for years, and rich, tawny old port next door, whose beeswing breeds glorious fancies in the mind of him who sips it over the dark, glossy mahogany of its owner. And that is not all, for here and there, too, in Canonbury are bins of that rare, priceless old wine, of glistening topaz hue, rich Maderia, treasured up as a store that can never be replenished.

Your citizens have long favored Canonbury as a convenient abode; and those who have never cared to migrate westward cling to the old place still, to look down with solid respectability upon the new, semi-detached villa people, who have hemmed them in on every side, but have left Canonbury *in statu quo*.

It was at a quarter to one that Captain John Anderson, with his cheek flushed and heart palpitating, pulled at the bell by the old iron gate-way of Brunswick House—that great, red brick, ivy-covered mansion that faces you as you go down from Upper street towards the Tower.

He had meant to ring gently; but the bell sent forth a clamorous peal which brought a formal-looking footman in drab to the door, where he stood for a moment, and then condescended to come down to the iron gate.

'Why didn't you come in—the gate was open?' said the footman, looking his visitor over superciliously; for Samuel had a most profound contempt for Shipping street, and the bluff, handsome captain savored to him of the shop.

But Captain Anderson was distrait; and merely saying, 'Tell your master I'm here,' passed on into the hall, from whence he was shown into the drawing room, where, as the door closed behind him, he stood with palpitating heart, trembling and nerveless, and with a stifling sensation at his throat in the presence of his fate.

You don't believe it, perhaps, you! May be you are not strong, and big, and sturdy, and desperately in love with a sweet-faced, loveable girl, in the first flush of her beauty. You do not believe, perhaps, in a huge Hercules becoming slave to a beautiful Omphale? I am sorry for you; I do; and, what is more, I have history on my side, with hundreds of cases where the strong are really the weak. It is a pity, but all the same it is so; and the bigger, and stronger, and more muscular you are, the greater shall be your thraldom when you are led captive by some such a fair maiden as was May Halley.

Shall I try to paint her? I will, though I have but white paper and black ink. No; upon second thoughts, I will not, lest I fail; and therefore let me say that, without the aid of classic features, she was all that could be desired in a sweet English maiden, whose eyes were gray, cheeks peachy, forhead white, and who upon occasion could flash up into a very Juno.

As Captain Anderson was announced, he became aware of the fact that a tall, fair young man was in the act of bidding a lady good-bye, and bending with great *empressment* over her hand. Then it seemed that the door was closed, and that the room was all clouds; and he, John Anderson, below them on earth, and May Halley above them in heaven.

Then she spoke—words simple and commonplace, but sufficient to thrill him through and through.

'I am glad to see you safely back, Captain Anderson. Take a seat. Papa will be disengaged very soon.'

John Anderson did not make any response, but stood, hat in hand, gazing at the fair girl before him till she flushed scarlet, and half turned away with resentment in her bright eyes.

He could not have spoken then to have saved his life, for a great struggle was going on within him. For a few moments the room seemed to spin round, and he saw May Halley through a fiery mist; then two red anger spots began to burn on his cheeks; a dull, dead, aching sense of pain fell upon his heart; and he stood with his hands clenching till the great veins stood out, swollen and knotted, while the dew stood upon his forehead in big drops.

For John Anderson had awakened to the fact that the idol he had worshipped now for years, without ever thinking of speaking of his love, was also the idol of another. He had seen that tall, fair young man—smooth gentlemanly, with the world's polish, fashionable exterior—bending over May's hand, and saying words that must have been of a complimentary nature; for she had smiled pleasantly as she bade him adieu.

Yes, and he had taken that hand in his—his, such a soft, white, well-cared for hand; while the hand of John Anderson clenched, till the nails pressed savagely into his flesh, was brown, hardened and rugged with toil. There was a great tar mark, too, that had refused to be washed off; and as for a moment the young man's eyes fell, it was to see that black stain there.

That black mark! It was a brand of his toil spent life; and he shivered as he thought of the house of cards he had been rearing—dreaming, as he had been, of May in the long watches of many a night in the far-off seas, when he had leaned over the bulwarks thinking of home, and the fair girl he had seen at each return, growing more and more into a beautiful woman.

Yes, he knew it all now; that he had been dreaming; that he was but a rough, coarse sailor, fit only to battle with the sea; while this fair pearl was to be worn upon the heart of a polished gallant, and—

John Anderson started, for May Halley was standing before him with outstretched hand.

'I am very glad to see you back,' she said. In a moment John Anderson had the soft little hand between both his, and in another he would have raised it to his lips, but the thought of what he had witnessed came at that instant like a chill; and, dropping her hand, he half staggered back, and sank into a chair.

'Captain Anderson! is anything the matter? Are you unwell? Shall I ring for a glass of wine?' exclaimed May, in tones full of concern, every word thrilling the strong man's heart, and making every fibre vibrate.

'Yes—yes!' he exclaimed, half beside self, as he caught her hand in his, 'there is much the matter. I—I—there—I must speak—I am half mad, May—darling, I know I am but a rough sailor—but—since a child—loved you— Oh! for God's sake, don't turn away from me! Tell me—tell me that I am not right—that you do not love that—that man I saw here! I—'

He stopped, for May stood before him with reddened cheek and flashing eye. He heard but three words, but they burned into his brain as she turned away—

'How dare you!'

The next moment she was sobbing in her father's arms, for Mr. Halley had entered unperceived with the visitor of a short time before.

'What does all this mean?'

'Oh, papa,' sobbed the girl, 'Captain Anderson has insulted me.'

'A confounded cad!' exclaimed the young man, facing Anderson, and laying his hand upon his collar as if to turn him out of the room; but the next instant—it was like a flash more than anything else—he was lying on the carpet, having crushed in his fall a frail, spider-legged table, and carried with him a vase of flowers, which pleasantly ornamented his white visage as he lay.

The next minute John Anderson was hurrying down the street on his way back to town, seeing nothing; hearing nothing, only feeling that he was mad—that he had acted like a madman—that he had, in one wild moment, demolished the idol that had been his sole thought for years, and that now life was one great burden, and the sooner he was away again at sea the better.

'At sea!'

He said those two words aloud, and stopped short so suddenly that he was rudely jostled by a passer-by.

At sea! Why, after what had passed this morning, he would lose the command of the Merry May. Mr. Halley would never allow the presumptuous man who had insulted his daughter with his impertinent pretensions to sail his ship; and he would be without a command!

It was horrible to think of; but the thought would come, and John Anderson gave a groan as he called himself a maniac, and staggered along, feeling that he had lost love, his ship, self-esteem, and the confidence of his employer. And all for what?

All for love; the love of as sweet a woman as ever was made to give happiness to sinful, erring man.

'Yes,' said John Anderson, 'I have lost all. And all for what? All for love! What shall I do now?'

He stood again for a moment or two, thinking; and then, with a half-mocking, half-tearful smile, he said, simply,

'I'll go home.'

FOURTH CABLE LENGTH.

HOW JEREMIAH BASALT WENT TO SEE THE WIDOW.

'I never drinks but one glass of grog a day at sea,' said old Basalt; 'never but one, Mrs. Gurnett. For why? 'Cause there's dooty to be done, and maybe a watch to keep; and if your sooperior officers takes more than is good for them, what is to be expected of your men? But now I'm ashore, with nothing to do but amuse myself, I don't care If I do take another.'

'And it's welcome you are here to as many as you like, and when you like, Mr. Basalt,' said Mrs. Gurnett, rising with alacrity from her side of the fire in her snug bar to mix a fresh glass of steaming compound for her visitor, who took it with a grunt of satisfaction, and silently drank the donor's health before setting the glass down, smoking slowly and thoughtfully at his pipe as he stared at the glowing fire and the bright black bars.

A quarter of an hour passed, during which Mrs. Gurnett, who was pleasant and comely in spite of her fifty years, knitted away at a pair of thick gray worsted stockings; and then Jeremiah Basalt spoke, saying, in a surly voice,

'I know I am!'

Mrs. Gurnett, landlady of the comfortable old hostelry known as 'The Jolly Sailors,' gave a start.

'Know you are what, Mr. Basalt?'

'Know as I'm welcome, and have been this ten year, or else I shouldn't come.'

Mrs. Gurnett sighed, drew at the gray worsted ball far down in her pocket, changed one of her knitting pins, and began a fresh row.

'Who's them for?' said Basalt, pointing at the stockings with the stem of his pipe.

'I was thinking of asking you to accept them before you go on your next voyage, Mr. Basalt—that is if you are going to sea again.'

There was another pause, of quite ten minutes' duration, before Basalt again spoke.

'What should I do ashore?'

'I don't know, I'm sure,' said Mrs. Gurnett; 'only it seems to me very dangerous going to sea, and you are not so young as you used to be, Mr. Basalt. We none of us are.'

'Pooh!' said Basalt. 'Fifty-seven—bob. but a boy yet. And as to danger, why, it's a deal safer at sea than it is here, I do know that. Why, if I was to give up the sea, what'ud become of me? I should always be hanging about here, and then you'd get tired of me.'

Mrs. Gurnett sighed, and continued her knitting.

'You're a good soul, though, and I like you, Mrs. Gurnett, better than any other woman I ever see in my life; and, if I was a marrying man, instead of a chock of old salt-junk, soaked and hardened, and good for nowt but to knock about aboard ship, I'm blessed if I don't think I should say to you some fine day, 'Mrs. Gurnett, will you have me?''

Mrs. Gurnett sighed again, and looked more attentively at her knitting, while Basalt smoked himself into the centre of a cloud.

'I think I'd make 'em a little more slack in the leg this time,' he said at last. 'Them others was so tight that they opened in the back seams, and you can't werry well calk when you're out at sea.'

'You have very fine legs, Mr. Basalt,' remarked Mrs. Gurnett, glancing at her visitor's lower extremities approvingly, as she gave another tug at her worsted.

'They do right enough,' said the old fellow disparagingly; 'and as long as they keep me going I'm satisfied. But what do you think of our cap's choice—speaking as a woman, now?'

'I did not know that he had made a choice,' said Mrs. Gurnett, indifferently; for the conversation was taking a turn in which she felt no interest.

'He has, though,' said Basalt; 'and as nice a little craft as a man would wish to own—clean run, pretty counter, all taut alow and aloft, and I should say as good a lass as the ship we sail in, and as bears her name.'

Mrs. Gurnett dropped her knitting, and gazed in her visitor's face.

'Don't I? but I just do; and what is there surprising in that? Here's Cap. John Anderson, as smart a sailor and as handsome a young fellow as ever stepped, and here's Miss May Halley, as pretty a gal; and if they wouldn't make a nice pair to consort together, and sail these here stormy seas o' life in company, why tell me.'

Here old Basalt took a hasty sip of his grog, and stooped to pick up the knitting, which had glided to the floor, as Mrs. Gurnet sat dreamily smoothing one of her pleasant old cheeks with her knitting needle.

'That's dropping stitches wholesale and for export,' said Basalt, with a grim smile, as he laid the work upon it's owner's lap; but the remark drew forth no response, only Mrs. Gurnett said, in a low, sad tone,

'Dear—dear—dear—dear—dear!'

'What dear, dear?' said Basalt, gruffly.

'Oh, Mr. Basalt, I'm very, very, very sorry to hear all this.'

'What, about the cap?'

'Yes, very grieved indeed.'

'Gammon!' said the old sailor. 'Why he loves the very ground she walks on; thinks about her all day and all night too. Many's the time he's walked the deck with me in a dark watch and talked about that gal—when she was a gal, you know, of ten and twelve and fourteen; but since she's been growed a woman, 'No,' says he to hisself—I know just as plain as if he'd told me—'she's too good and beautiful to be talked about to a rough old sailor.' For true love's a thing to be kep' snug in the locker of yer heart like a precious jewel. Look here, Betsy—'

Mrs. Gurnett started; for Jeremiah Basalt, in all the years she had known him, had never before addressed her by her Christian name.

'Look here, Betsy,' he said, drawing his chair closer, so that he could lay one great horny paw upon the hostess' plump white hand.

'Don't, Mr. Basalt,' she said, with a sob, 'the customer's might see you.'

'Blame the customers!' said Basalt, sturdily; 'what is it to them if I like to speak my mind like a man? Look here, my lass, I'm rough, but I'm ready; and I an't known you fifteen years come this Christmas without knowing as I'd got a heart in my buzzum. 'That's a good woman, Jerry,' I've said to myself hundreds o' times, 'and if ever you marries, marry she, if she'll have you.' 'I will,' I says; 'I'll ask her some day.' But I an't going to be such a brute to a woman as to ask her to have me, and then keep going away to sea.' There, swab up these tears, my lass,' he continued, for the great drops were chasing one another down Mrs. Gurnett's cheeks.

'No,' I says, 'I an't agoing to be such a brute to a woman as I love, as to be always a-leaving her; and I an't going to be such a brute to myself—as is a man for whom I has a great respect—as to have to be leaving her. No. My 'pinion is that when you tie yourself tight to a woman, you oughtn't to be parting the strands. 'No,' I says, ''tain't time yet, but there's the port you hope to reach, Jerry;' and to reach that port I've got eight 'undred and twenty-seven pun' sixteen and sixpence saved up, and it's all safe in a pair o' them stockings as you knitted for me, my lass, one put inside the other so as to be strong.

'And I says to myself, I says, 'There, Jerry Basalt, there's your cap'n as loves true, and there's you as loves true; and he asks she to have she, and she marries he, why you shall go and empty that there pair o' stockings in Betsy Gurnett's lap, and says you to her, says you, My lass, you says, I bring this here, not as you cares a ball o' spun yarn about money, but just so as no spiteful 'longshore-going warmint should say as Jerry Basalt wanted to marry you for the sake of the snug business and the few pounds as your master—God rest him!—left you when he give in the number of his mess; and then you says, says you—''

'Oh, Basalt, Mr. Basalt!' cried the hostess, clapping her apron to her eyes, and sobbing loudly, as she rocked herself to and fro.

'Stow that!' cried the old fellow excitedly, as he started from his chair, and then stood looking down at the weeping woman. 'Don't come no woman's games with a poor fellow as is as innocent as a baby of all 'longshore things, and has spoke out his mind free and handsome.'

'Oh, Mr. Basalt, I wouldn't deceive you for the world,' said Mrs. Gurnett, turning up her wet eyes to look full in his.

'That you wouldn't,' he cried, taking her hand in both his, and waving it up and down. 'You're deep water right away, and there an't a rock or shoal in you from top to bottom, I'll swear; but I'm took aback, my lass, as much for John Anderson's sake as I am for my own. Avast there a minute, and let me give a look out ahead.'

He walked to the red-curtained window, and stood looking out for a few moments, as if into the stormy night; but really into the dark, empty parlor of 'The Jolly Sailors.' Then he came back to speak seriously, as he stood with one hand resting on the table.

'It looks squally,' he said—'very squally, my lass. 'And,' he continued, giving a tug at his collar, 'it seems to me whether as may be the wrecking of a fine handsome teak-built ship, A 1 at Lloyd's, and called the John Anderson my Jo; and likewise of a weather-beaten old craft that meant to come well into port, and her name—his name I mean,' he added, correcting himself—'his name I won't say nothing about. But, anyhow, you know the bearings of the coast better than I do, so heave ahead. I'll have another glass the whiles, for I'm for all the world as if I'd shipped a heavy sea.'

'I've known Miss May from a baby, and nursed her when I was in Mr. Halley's service,' said Mrs. Gurnett. 'It was from the old house in Canonbury there that James Gurnett married me—being coachman, and having saved a little money.'

'I think I remember,' said Basalt, huskily.

'And it's bene going on now some time,' continued Mrs. Gurnett. 'There's a gentleman there constant now, and he wants Miss May, and they tell me at the house that she has him there to see her; and they do say that he has some hold on poor old master, which I won't believe, for he's too rich and too high spirited to be trampled on by anyone. Anyhow, he's in the shipping trade, and partner in a big house; and I do think that they are to be married soon.'

Jeremiah Basalt filled his pipe slowly, evidently thinking hard the while; then, although there were splints in the holder upon the chimney-piece, he stooped down, picked a glowing cinder from between the bottom bars with his case-hardened finger and thumb, and laid it upon the pipe bowl, and then sat sucking at it for a few minutes before he spoke—Mrs. Gurnett now sitting drying her eyes and smoothing her hair.

'It'll about break that poor chap's 'art,' said Basalt, at last.

Mrs. Gurnett sighed, and then there was another pause. Then Basalt said,

'What's the gent's name?'

'Merritt—Mr. Philip Merritt.'

'Never heard it afore,' said Basalt, gruffly; 'and I wish as I hadn't heard it now. And he's got a Co., I s'pose—all shippers has—Merritt & Co., I s'pose—blame 'em!'

'No,' said Mrs. Gurnett, 'he belongs to a big house, and his name don't appear. I think he's a Co. himself, instead of having one; for the name up is Rutherby & Co.'

'The devil!'

Jeremiah Basalt let fall the glass he was about to raise to his lips, and it was smashed to atoms upon the white hearthstone. Then he started to his feet, for the outer door opened quickly, and a well-known voice said at the bar,

'Is Mr. Basalt here?'

(To be Continued.)

First Things.

The first almanac was printed by George Von Purbach, in 1460.

The first copper cent was coined in New The first watch was made at Nuremburg, in 1477.

Omnibusses were introduced in New York in 1830.

The first college in the United States was founded in 1866.

The first compass was used in France in 1150, though the Chinese are said to have employed the loadstone earlier.

The first chimneys were introduced into Rome from Padua in 1368.

The first newspaper advertisement appeared in 1652.

The first air pump was made in 1650.

The first algebra originated with Diophantus, in either the fourth or sixth century.

The first baloon ascent was made in 1783.

The first national bank in the United States was incorporated by Congress, Dec. 31, 1781.

The first attempt to manufacture pins in this country was made soon after the war of 1812.

Anæsthesia was first discovered in 1844.

The first steel pen was made in 1830.

The first machine for carding, roving and spinning cotton, made in the United States, was manufactured in 1786.

Organs are said to have been first introduced into churches by Pope Vitalianus, about A.D. 1670.

Envelopes were first used in 1839.

The first complete sewing machine was patented by Elias Howe, jr., in 1846.

Ships were first "copper-bottomed" in 1873.

The first printing press in the United States was introduced in 1869.

Coaches were first used in England in 1569.

The first horse railroad was built in 1826-7.

The first daily newspaper appeared in 1702. The first newspaper in the United States was published in Boston, September, 26, 1690. The first religious newspaper, the Boston *Record*, was established in 1815.

Kerosene was first used for lighting purposes in 1826.

The first Union flag was unfurled on the first of January, 1776, over the camp at Cambridge. It had thirteen stripes of white and red, and retained the English cross in one corner.

The first steam engine on the continent was brought from England in 1753.

The first saw-maker's anvil was brought to America in 1819.

The first temperance society in the United States was organized in Saratoga county, N.Y., in March, 1808.

Glass was early discovered. Glass beads were found on mummies over 3,000 years old.

Glass windows were first introduced into England in the eighth century.

Gas was first used as an illuminating agent in 1702. Its first use in New York was in 1827.

The first glass factory in the United States of which we have definite knowledge was built in 1780.

Gold was first discovered in California in 1848.

The first use of a locomotive in the United States was in 1829.

The first society for the exclusive purpose of circulating the bible, was organized in 1805, under the name of "British and Foreign Bible Society."

The entire Hebrew bible was printed in 1488.

The first telegraph instrument was successfully operated by S. F. B. Morse, the inventor, in 1835, though its utility was not demonstrated to the world until 1844.

The quartz lead on the Rosseau is now yielding gold at the rate of fifteen dollars per ton.