

1917 Centralian

## THE CENTRALIAN

### Prize Story.

#### An Ill-starred Voyage—A True Story.

WALTER C. REYNOLDS.

For many years Frederick E. Eaton lived a "life on the ocean wave." A short time was spent "before the mast" and for eleven years he served as an officer, rising to the rank of first mate.

One evening as he sat in his comfortable rocking chair before a cheery fire I said to him, "Grandfather, tell me a story of the sea—a really exciting and thrilling one." After a little pause he said, "Well, I don't know where to begin, I have had so many adventures. But perhaps you would like to hear about our experience with a leaky ship." "Yes, indeed, I would!" I replied eagerly. He arose and took from a drawer a large bundle of records and manuscripts, stained and yellow with age. After spreading them out before him, he began his story.

"In the fall of 1882 I found a berth on merchantman bound for Bristol, England. She was the L. D. V. Chipman—a splendid vessel, drafted and modeled by as good a shipbuilder as ever laid a keel.

"The day came when our cargo having been made secure, we were to take our departure for the English shores. As we began to haul in the anchor cable, an old sailor started up a lively song and the others joined in. We all worked with a vim as we sang:

"O what can the landsman know  
Of the life on the roaring main,  
When the stiff Nor'easters blow  
O'er miles of watery plain.  
For him is the blazing hearth,  
And his child upon his knee.  
But the sailor's home  
Is the ocean foam.  
And the salt and swell of the sea,  
Yo, ho! For the salt and swell of the sea."

It was one o'clock in the afternoon before we cast off our moorings and set sail. The wind was blowing quite strong from the southeast, and with every sail set and stretched to its utmost limits, we soon passed out of the magnificent harbor of New York and hove away from the rapidly receding shore. All was hurry and bustle on board as we transferred below or lashed securely on deck everything movable.

"The afternoon was favorable for sailing. Towards evening the wind began to freshen and to send the whitecaps flying above us, while our good ship plowed through the water like an animated being.

"By eight o'clock the wind had increased noticeably in velocity, and as threatening clouds appeared the sailors began telling their yarns, when one old 'tar,' with a

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droll countenance, spoke up: 'I have seen it just get up and blow on the ocean. Why, I was on board one ship when a gale of wind arose and it blew so hard that it

took four men to hold the captain's coat tail down, and it blew so long that it drove us into the Arctic Ocean, where we saw the Polar bears warming themselves by the Northern Lights.' With this I retired to my bunk, for I had had a very strenuous day. About midnight I was awakened very rudely from my deep slumbers by the hoarse cry: 'All hands on deck and take in sail.' To jump out into a blinding storm and tempest, to feel the rolling, pitching and surging of the ship as she struggled with the angry elements, to hear the rattling of the chain sheets as the top sails were clewed up—to hear all this, commingled with the loud commands of the officers, the shouts of the sailors, the shrieking of the wind and the fearful roar of the lashing waters, is enough to fill the stoutest heart with fear. But I sprang aloft to furl the tugging sails, the creaking, straining masts and rigging shook violently, which, added to the awful din and confusion, the blinding flashes of lightning, and the crashing peals of thunder, filled my young heart with indescribable awe and terror. Above it all the sharp, short commands of the captain could be distinctly heard: 'Take in the royals!' 'Clew up the top gallant sails!' 'Keep the ship before the wind, and clew up the courses!' 'Belay the top sails!' Following each of these a responsive 'Aye, aye, sir,' rang out of the darkness. As I crawled out on the yards to furl the wet sails, I was drenched through and through by the rain that came driving in torrents now. I would have been very happy indeed if I could have been my father's dog and crawled into the old woodshed that terrible night. But all things have an end.

"After a few hours the tempest passed over and the waves sank back to rest. The sun rose bright and clear the next morning and we shook out our top sails. As we gathered around the halyards an old sailor started a song and as he reached the chorus all joined in and pulled vigorously on the ropes as we sang:

Solo: 'O, the storm is passed and the skies are clear.'

Cho.: 'Blow, boys, blow a man down.'

Solo: 'We will spread our sails and be of good cheer.'

Cho.: 'Give me some time to blow a man down.'

"We sang this very lustily, as well as many more similar verses, for, sailor like, we had a song for every task and never failed to sing in the performance of our duties.

"Our sails were soon trimmed to the wind and we were once more speeding away for our destination. Good sailing weather continued in spite of the first night's forebodings of trouble. At length we reached Bristol, and, after unloading our cargo and taking on board some freight, we cast off our moorings for the return voyage, via Betts Cove, New Foundland.

"We had not gone far before we began to battle with rough weather. The cold, bleak winds blew right through our heavy clothing and chilled us to the marrow. Our light upper sails were all furled and the heavy spray beat on the ship as she plunged through the rough seas. Strong gales, high foaming waves, wintry-looking skies, and blinding sleet storms were encountered very frequently. After some little difficulty we dropped our anchor in the harbor of Betts Cove, where we took on board a heavy cargo of copper, and then gladly sailed away from those 'inhospitable shores.' But scarcely had the last gray cliff sunk beneath the horizon when cold, piercing winds

began to blow from the northeast; it soon increased to a heavy gale. With anxious fears we recognized that we were in the grip of one of those dreaded Nor'easters that prevail in those regions. The ship, with her weighty cargo, labored heavily and wallowed clumsily in the surging sea. About 8 o'clock in the evening it was discovered that she had sprung a leak and was filling rapidly. There was no sleep for anyone that night. All hands were on deck, reefing top sails and working the pumps for their lives. We were cheered by the fact that the water was not gaining on us, and we hoped that the storm would soon abate. Morning dawned with the wind increasing in violence and the ocean very boisterous. At 7 o'clock a monster sea boarded us amidship. Men grabbed the life rail and clung in desperation. I was hurled headlong toward the edge of the deck, but fortunately I lodged against a rail and was saved from a horrible doom. The sea passed over us and we were all safe, but consternation and fear gripped our hearts as we observed the havoc it had wrought. The shaft that carried the pumps was badly broken, and as quickly as possible we lashed it up, but at best it could be made to carry only one pump. We knew the consequences. The water would gain on us now and in a few hours we would find a grave in the briny deep. Strong hearts quailed and swarthy faces were blanched with fear. The captain came on deck and said, 'Men if we can keep the ship afloat for twenty-four hours, we can reach the harbor of St. John's.' The chances for doing this we knew were at fearful odds against us, but we answered, gloomily, 'We will do the best we can, Captain.' Men work when they work for their lives. All the long day we toiled frantically at the pump. The wind continued in its fierceness and huge seas broke over us from all directions. One at a time we would leave to eat a hard biscuit and then hurry back to the pump again. The water was gaining slowly but surely. Night settled with the raging storm. I thought of the little fireside at home and the loved ones I perhaps would never see again. I lived again the happy days spent with them and grew sick at heart as I thought of the future for them and for myself. That was a long, long night. The roaring of the sea, the shrieking of the wind through the rigging, the pitchy darkness, the laboring ship, surging on a high-crested wave, and then dropping down into the depths perhaps to be engulfed amid the black waters, made the bravest tremble and grow pale. 'Will she keep afloat? Can we hold out?' were the questions asked, only to be answered by the roaring of the storm.

"About 3 o'clock in the morning we sighted a light on one of the capes of St. John's harbor. It brought no joy to us, but filled us with dismay, for we were too far to the leeward to make the harbor. Straight toward the rocks the captain steered the ship. To remain outside was to perish and to dash upon these cruel rocks would surely mean ruin. But we had no alternative. On we drove to our seemingly inevitable doom. Only one forlorn hope remained and that was that we might be fortunate enough to find an opening into which to run the ship. As the morning began to dawn, the mists cleared away and we beheld a small island lying before us. Our wildest hopes were realized. Running the ship into the scant shelter that this afforded, we paid out our anchor and took to our boats.

"Another difficulty stared us in the face: it was very improbable that we could make a successful landing. Although the island offered some protection from the fierceness of the waves, yet there was a heavy swell that would make the landing extremely diffi-

cult. But Providence smiled on us once more and as it grew lighter we saw a little inlet into which we pulled our boats until they grounded on the shore.

"As I stepped out on the friendly earth, I breathed to heaven a prayer of thankfulness for our miraculous deliverance from those treacherous waves and those foaming billows. Our next concern was for our noble ship, which had so heroically battled with the raging elements. In vain we searched for her towering masts and wind-rent sails among those boiling waves, but not a trace of her could be seen. Her's was the fate that we had so narrowly escaped; her's the grave in the briny deep, but our's was a happier lot."

### A Kansan's Choice.

"Give me the land where the miles of wheat  
Ripple beneath the wind's light feet;  
Where the green armies of the corn  
Sway in the first sweet breath of morn;  
Give me the large and liberal land  
Of the open heart and the generous hand:  
Under the wide-spaced Kansas sky  
Let me live and let me die."

—H. H. KEMP.

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### FAREWELL

Farewell! Farewell! Thou friendly walls,  
The scenes of many happy days,  
Farewell thou wide and spacious halls!  
Farewell thou bright enchanted place.

The scenes we love, the faces dear,  
The merry din of voices gay,  
Farewell to all! We drop a tear,  
With heavy hearts our farewells say.

Farewell Central! We love thy name,  
We're loath to leave thy friendly walls,  
Thy proffered prize at last attained,  
We go to live where duty calls.

W. C. R.



"THOSE REYNOLDS TWINS."