

# ДЖЕК ЛОНДОН

THE CRUISE OF  
THE SNARK

Джек Лондон  
**The Cruise of the Snark**

*[http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio\\_book/?art=25292579](http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=25292579)*

*The Cruise of the Snark:*

# Содержание

CHAPTER I	4
CHAPTER II	18
CHAPTER III	37
CHAPTER IV	48
CHAPTER V	62
CHAPTER VI	72
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	76

# Jack London

## The Cruise of the Snark

### CHAPTER I

### FOREWORD

It began in the swimming pool at Glen Ellen. Between swims it was our wont to come out and lie in the sand and let our skins breathe the warm air and soak in the sunshine. Roscoe was a yachtsman. I had followed the sea a bit. It was inevitable that we should talk about boats. We talked about small boats, and the seaworthiness of small boats. We instanced Captain Slocum and his three years' voyage around the world in the *Spray*.

We asserted that we were not afraid to go around the world in a small boat, say forty feet long. We asserted furthermore that we would like to do it. We asserted finally that there was nothing in this world we'd like better than a chance to do it.

"Let us do it," we said.. in fun.

Then I asked Charmian privily if she'd really care to do it, and she said that it was too good to be true.

The next time we breathed our skins in the sand by the swimming pool I said to Roscoe, "Let us do it."

I was in earnest, and so was he, for he said:

“When shall we start?”

I had a house to build on the ranch, also an orchard, a vineyard, and several hedges to plant, and a number of other things to do. We thought we would start in four or five years. Then the lure of the adventure began to grip us. Why not start at once? We'd never be younger, any of us. Let the orchard, vineyard, and hedges be growing up while we were away. When we came back, they would be ready for us, and we could live in the barn while we built the house.

So the trip was decided upon, and the building of the *Snark* began. We named her the *Snark* because we could not think of any other name – this information is given for the benefit of those who otherwise might think there is something occult in the name.

Our friends cannot understand why we make this voyage. They shudder, and moan, and raise their hands. No amount of explanation can make them comprehend that we are moving along the line of least resistance; that it is easier for us to go down to the sea in a small ship than to remain on dry land, just as it is easier for them to remain on dry land than to go down to the sea in the small ship. This state of mind comes of an undue prominence of the ego. They cannot get away from themselves. They cannot come out of themselves long enough to see that their line of least resistance is not necessarily everybody else's line of least resistance. They make of their own bundle of desires, likes, and dislikes a yardstick wherewith to measure the desires, likes, and dislikes of all creatures. This is unfair. I tell them so. But

they cannot get away from their own miserable egos long enough to hear me. They think I am crazy. In return, I am sympathetic. It is a state of mind familiar to me. We are all prone to think there is something wrong with the mental processes of the man who disagrees with us.

The ultimate word is I LIKE. It lies beneath philosophy, and is twined about the heart of life. When philosophy has maundered ponderously for a month, telling the individual what he must do, the individual says, in an instant, "I LIKE," and does something else, and philosophy goes glimmering. It is I LIKE that makes the drunkard drink and the martyr wear a hair shirt; that makes one man a reveller and another man an anchorite; that makes one man pursue fame, another gold, another love, and another God. Philosophy is very often a man's way of explaining his own I LIKE.

But to return to the *Snark*, and why I, for one, want to journey in her around the world. The things I like constitute my set of values. The thing I like most of all is personal achievement – not achievement for the world's applause, but achievement for my own delight. It is the old "I did it! I did it! With my own hands I did it!" But personal achievement, with me, must be concrete. I'd rather win a water-fight in the swimming pool, or remain astride a horse that is trying to get out from under me, than write the great American novel. Each man to his liking. Some other fellow would prefer writing the great American novel to winning the water-fight or mastering the horse.

Possibly the proudest achievement of my life, my moment of highest living, occurred when I was seventeen. I was in a three-masted schooner off the coast of Japan. We were in a typhoon. All hands had been on deck most of the night. I was called from my bunk at seven in the morning to take the wheel. Not a stitch of canvas was set. We were running before it under bare poles, yet the schooner fairly tore along. The seas were all of an eighth of a mile apart, and the wind snatched the whitecaps from their summits, filling. The air so thick with driving spray that it was impossible to see more than two waves at a time. The schooner was almost unmanageable, rolling her rail under to starboard and to port, veering and yawing anywhere between south-east and south-west, and threatening, when the huge seas lifted under her quarter, to broach to. Had she broached to, she would ultimately have been reported lost with all hands and no tidings.

I took the wheel. The sailing-master watched me for a space. He was afraid of my youth, feared that I lacked the strength and the nerve. But when he saw me successfully wrestle the schooner through several bouts, he went below to breakfast. Fore and aft, all hands were below at breakfast. Had she broached to, not one of them would ever have reached the deck. For forty minutes I stood there alone at the wheel, in my grasp the wildly careering schooner and the lives of twenty-two men. Once we were pooped. I saw it coming, and, half-drowned, with tons of water crushing me, I checked the schooner's rush to broach to. At the end of the hour, sweating and played out, I was relieved.

But I had done it! With my own hands I had done my trick at the wheel and guided a hundred tons of wood and iron through a few million tons of wind and waves.

My delight was in that I had done it – not in the fact that twenty-two men knew I had done it. Within the year over half of them were dead and gone, yet my pride in the thing performed was not diminished by half. I am willing to confess, however, that I do like a small audience. But it must be a very small audience, composed of those who love me and whom I love. When I then accomplish personal achievement, I have a feeling that I am justifying their love for me. But this is quite apart from the delight of the achievement itself. This delight is peculiarly my own and does not depend upon witnesses. When I have done some such thing, I am exalted. I glow all over. I am aware of a pride in myself that is mine, and mine alone. It is organic. Every fibre of me is thrilling with it. It is very natural. It is a mere matter of satisfaction at adjustment to environment. It is success.

Life that lives is life successful, and success is the breath of its nostrils. The achievement of a difficult feat is successful adjustment to a sternly exacting environment. The more difficult the feat, the greater the satisfaction at its accomplishment. Thus it is with the man who leaps forward from the springboard, out over the swimming pool, and with a backward half-revolution of the body, enters the water head first. Once he leaves the springboard his environment becomes immediately savage, and savage the penalty it will exact should he fail and strike the water flat. Of



course, the man does not have to run the risk of the penalty. He could remain on the bank in a sweet and placid environment of summer air, sunshine, and stability. Only he is not made that way. In that swift mid-air moment he lives as he could never live on the bank.

As for myself, I'd rather be that man than the fellows who sit on the bank and watch him. That is why I am building the *Snark*. I am so made. I like, that is all. The trip around the world means big moments of living. Bear with me a moment and look at it. Here am I, a little animal called a man – a bit of vitalized matter, one hundred and sixty-five pounds of meat and blood, nerve, sinew, bones, and brain, – all of it soft and tender, susceptible to hurt, fallible, and frail. I strike a light back-handed blow on the nose of an obstreperous horse, and a bone in my hand is broken. I put my head under the water for five minutes, and I am drowned. I fall twenty feet through the air, and I am smashed. I am a creature of temperature. A few degrees one way, and my fingers and ears and toes blacken and drop off. A few degrees the other way, and my skin blisters and shrivels away from the raw, quivering flesh. A few additional degrees either way, and the life and the light in me go out. A drop of poison injected into my body from a snake, and I cease to move – for ever I cease to move. A splinter of lead from a rifle enters my head, and I am wrapped around in the eternal blackness.

Fallible and frail, a bit of pulsating, jelly-like life – it is all I am. About me are the great natural forces – colossal menaces,

Titans of destruction, unsentimental monsters that have less concern for me than I have for the grain of sand I crush under my foot. They have no concern at all for me. They do not know me. They are unconscious, unmerciful, and unmoral. They are the cyclones and tornadoes, lightning flashes and cloud-bursts, tide-rips and tidal waves, undertows and waterspouts, great whirls and sucks and eddies, earthquakes and volcanoes, surfs that thunder on rock-ribbed coasts and seas that leap aboard the largest crafts that float, crushing humans to pulp or licking them off into the sea and to death – and these insensate monsters do not know that tiny sensitive creature, all nerves and weaknesses, whom men call Jack London, and who himself thinks he is all right and quite a superior being.

In the maze and chaos of the conflict of these vast and draughty Titans, it is for me to thread my precarious way. The bit of life that is I will exult over them. The bit of life that is I, in so far as it succeeds in baffling them or in biting them to its service, will imagine that it is godlike. It is good to ride the tempest and feel godlike. I dare to assert that for a finite speck of pulsating jelly to feel godlike is a far more glorious feeling than for a god to feel godlike.

Here is the sea, the wind, and the wave. Here are the seas, the winds, and the waves of all the world. Here is ferocious environment. And here is difficult adjustment, the achievement of which is delight to the small quivering vanity that is I. I like. I am so made. It is my own particular form of vanity, that is all.

There is also another side to the voyage of the *Snark*. Being alive, I want to see, and all the world is a bigger thing to see than one small town or valley. We have done little outlining of the voyage. Only one thing is definite, and that is that our first port of call will be Honolulu. Beyond a few general ideas, we have no thought of our next port after Hawaii. We shall make up our minds as we get nearer, in a general way we know that we shall wander through the South Seas, take in Samoa, New Zealand, Tasmania, Australia, New Guinea, Borneo, and Sumatra, and go on up through the Philippines to Japan. Then will come Korea, China, India, the Red Sea, and the Mediterranean. After that the voyage becomes too vague to describe, though we know a number of things we shall surely do, and we expect to spend from one to several months in every country in Europe.

The *Snark* is to be sailed. There will be a gasolene engine on board, but it will be used only in case of emergency, such as in bad water among reefs and shoals, where a sudden calm in a swift current leaves a sailing-boat helpless. The rig of the *Snark* is to be what is called the "ketch." The ketch rig is a compromise between the yawl and the schooner. Of late years the yawl rig has proved the best for cruising. The ketch retains the cruising virtues of the yawl, and in addition manages to embrace a few of the sailing virtues of the schooner. The foregoing must be taken with a pinch of salt. It is all theory in my head. I've never sailed a ketch, nor even seen one. The theory commends itself to me. Wait till I get out on the ocean, then I'll be able to tell more about

the cruising and sailing qualities of the ketch.

As originally planned, the *Snark* was to be forty feet long on the water-line. But we discovered there was no space for a bath-room, and for that reason we have increased her length to forty-five feet. Her greatest beam is fifteen feet. She has no house and no hold. There is six feet of headroom, and the deck is unbroken save for two companionways and a hatch for'ard. The fact that there is no house to break the strength of the deck will make us feel safer in case great seas thunder their tons of water down on board. A large and roomy cockpit, sunk beneath the deck, with high rail and self-bailing, will make our rough-weather days and nights more comfortable.

There will be no crew. Or, rather, Charmian, Roscoe, and I are the crew. We are going to do the thing with our own hands. With our own hands we're going to circumnavigate the globe. Sail her or sink her, with our own hands we'll do it. Of course there will be a cook and a cabin-boy. Why should we stew over a stove, wash dishes, and set the table? We could stay on land if we wanted to do those things. Besides, we've got to stand watch and work the ship. And also, I've got to work at my trade of writing in order to feed us and to get new sails and tackle and keep the *Snark* in efficient working order. And then there's the ranch; I've got to keep the vineyard, orchard, and hedges growing.

When we increased the length of the *Snark* in order to get space for a bath-room, we found that all the space was not required by the bath-room. Because of this, we increased the size

of the engine. Seventy horse-power our engine is, and since we expect it to drive us along at a nine-knot clip, we do not know the name of a river with a current swift enough to defy us.

We expect to do a lot of inland work. The smallness of the *Snark* makes this possible. When we enter the land, out go the masts and on goes the engine. There are the canals of China, and the Yang-tse River. We shall spend months on them if we can get permission from the government. That will be the one obstacle to our inland voyaging – governmental permission. But if we can get that permission, there is scarcely a limit to the inland voyaging we can do.

When we come to the Nile, why we can go up the Nile. We can go up the Danube to Vienna, up the Thames to London, and we can go up the Seine to Paris and moor opposite the Latin Quarter with a bow-line out to Notre Dame and a stern-line fast to the Morgue. We can leave the Mediterranean and go up the Rhône to Lyons, there enter the Saône, cross from the Saône to the Maine through the Canal de Bourgogne, and from the Marne enter the Seine and go out the Seine at Havre. When we cross the Atlantic to the United States, we can go up the Hudson, pass through the Erie Canal, cross the Great Lakes, leave Lake Michigan at Chicago, gain the Mississippi by way of the Illinois River and the connecting canal, and go down the Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico. And then there are the great rivers of South America. We'll know something about geography when we get back to California.

People that build houses are often sore perplexed; but if they enjoy the strain of it, I'll advise them to build a boat like the *Snark*. Just consider, for a moment, the strain of detail. Take the engine. What is the best kind of engine – the two cycle? three cycle? four cycle? My lips are mutilated with all kinds of strange jargon, my mind is mutilated with still stranger ideas and is foot-sore and weary from travelling in new and rocky realms of thought. – Ignition methods; shall it be make-and-break or jump-spark? Shall dry cells or storage batteries be used? A storage battery commends itself, but it requires a dynamo. How powerful a dynamo? And when we have installed a dynamo and a storage battery, it is simply ridiculous not to light the boat with electricity. Then comes the discussion of how many lights and how many candle-power. It is a splendid idea. But electric lights will demand a more powerful storage battery, which, in turn, demands a more powerful dynamo.

And now that we've gone in for it, why not have a searchlight? It would be tremendously useful. But the searchlight needs so much electricity that when it runs it will put all the other lights out of commission. Again we travel the weary road in the quest after more power for storage battery and dynamo. And then, when it is finally solved, some one asks, "What if the engine breaks down?" And we collapse. There are the sidelights, the binnacle light, and the anchor light. Our very lives depend upon them. So we have to fit the boat throughout with oil lamps as well.

But we are not done with that engine yet. The engine is

powerful. We are two small men and a small woman. It will break our hearts and our backs to hoist anchor by hand. Let the engine do it. And then comes the problem of how to convey power for'ard from the engine to the winch. And by the time all this is settled, we redistribute the allotments of space to the engine-room, galley, bath-room, state-rooms, and cabin, and begin all over again. And when we have shifted the engine, I send off a telegram of gibberish to its makers at New York, something like this: *Toggle-joint abandoned change thrust-bearing accordingly distance from forward side of flywheel to face of stern post sixteen feet six inches.*

Just potter around in quest of the best steering gear, or try to decide whether you will set up your rigging with old-fashioned lanyards or with turnbuckles, if you want strain of detail. Shall the binnacle be located in front of the wheel in the centre of the beam, or shall it be located to one side in front of the wheel? – there's room right there for a library of sea-dog controversy. Then there's the problem of gasoline, fifteen hundred gallons of it – what are the safest ways to tank it and pipe it? and which is the best fire-extinguisher for a gasoline fire? Then there is the pretty problem of the life-boat and the stowage of the same. And when that is finished, come the cook and cabin-boy to confront one with nightmare possibilities. It is a small boat, and we'll be packed close together. The servant-girl problem of landsmen pales to insignificance. We did select one cabin-boy, and by that much were our troubles eased. And then the cabin-boy fell in

love and resigned.

And in the meanwhile how is a fellow to find time to study navigation – when he is divided between these problems and the earning of the money wherewith to settle the problems? Neither Roscoe nor I know anything about navigation, and the summer is gone, and we are about to start, and the problems are thicker than ever, and the treasury is stuffed with emptiness. Well, anyway, it takes years to learn seamanship, and both of us are seamen. If we don't find the time, we'll lay in the books and instruments and teach ourselves navigation on the ocean between San Francisco and Hawaii.

There is one unfortunate and perplexing phase of the voyage of the *Snark*. Roscoe, who is to be my co-navigator, is a follower of one, Cyrus R. Teed. Now Cyrus R. Teed has a different cosmology from the one generally accepted, and Roscoe shares his views. Wherefore Roscoe believes that the surface of the earth is concave and that we live on the inside of a hollow sphere. Thus, though we shall sail on the one boat, the *Snark*, Roscoe will journey around the world on the inside, while I shall journey around on the outside. But of this, more anon. We threaten to be of the one mind before the voyage is completed. I am confident that I shall convert him into making the journey on the outside, while he is equally confident that before we arrive back in San Francisco I shall be on the inside of the earth. How he is going to get me through the crust I don't know, but Roscoe is ay a masterful man.



P.S. – That engine! While we've got it, and the dynamo, and the storage battery, why not have an ice-machine? Ice in the tropics! It is more necessary than bread. Here goes for the ice-machine! Now I am plunged into chemistry, and my lips hurt, and my mind hurts, and how am I ever to find the time to study navigation?

## CHAPTER II

# THE INCONCEIVABLE AND MONSTROUS

“Spare no money,” I said to Roscoe. “Let everything on the *Snark* be of the best. And never mind decoration. Plain pine boards is good enough finishing for me. But put the money into the construction. Let the *Snark* be as staunch and strong as any boat afloat. Never mind what it costs to make her staunch and strong; you see that she is made staunch and strong, and I’ll go on writing and earning the money to pay for it.”

And I did.. as well as I could; for the *Snark* ate up money faster than I could earn it. In fact, every little while I had to borrow money with which to supplement my earnings. Now I borrowed one thousand dollars, now I borrowed two thousand dollars, and now I borrowed five thousand dollars. And all the time I went on working every day and sinking the earnings in the venture. I worked Sundays as well, and I took no holidays. But it was worth it. Every time I thought of the *Snark* I knew she was worth it.

For know, gentle reader, the staunchness of the *Snark*. She is forty-five feet long on the waterline. Her garboard strake is three inches thick; her planking two and one-half inches thick; her deck-planking two inches thick and in all her planking there are no butts. I know, for I ordered that planking especially from

Puget Sound. Then the *Snark* has four water-tight compartments, which is to say that her length is broken by three water-tight bulkheads. Thus, no matter how large a leak the *Snark* may spring, Only one compartment can fill with water. The other three compartments will keep her afloat, anyway, and, besides, will enable us to mend the leak. There is another virtue in these bulkheads. The last compartment of all, in the very stern, contains six tanks that carry over one thousand gallons of gasoline. Now gasoline is a very dangerous article to carry in bulk on a small craft far out on the wide ocean. But when the six tanks that do not leak are themselves contained in a compartment hermetically sealed off from the rest of the boat, the danger will be seen to be very small indeed.

The *Snark* is a sail-boat. She was built primarily to sail. But incidentally, as an auxiliary, a seventy-horse-power engine was installed. This is a good, strong engine. I ought to know. I paid for it to come out all the way from New York City. Then, on deck, above the engine, is a windlass. It is a magnificent affair. It weighs several hundred pounds and takes up no end of deck-room. You see, it is ridiculous to hoist up anchor by hand-power when there is a seventy-horse-power engine on board. So we installed the windlass, transmitting power to it from the engine by means of a gear and castings specially made in a San Francisco foundry.

The *Snark* was made for comfort, and no expense was spared in this regard. There is the bath-room, for instance, small and

compact, it is true, but containing all the conveniences of any bath-room upon land. The bath-room is a beautiful dream of schemes and devices, pumps, and levers, and sea-valves. Why, in the course of its building, I used to lie awake nights thinking about that bath-room. And next to the bath-room come the life-boat and the launch. They are carried on deck, and they take up what little space might have been left us for exercise. But then, they beat life insurance; and the prudent man, even if he has built as staunch and strong a craft as the *Snark*, will see to it that he has a good life-boat as well. And ours is a good one. It is a dandy. It was stipulated to cost one hundred and fifty dollars, and when I came to pay the bill, it turned out to be three hundred and ninety-five dollars. That shows how good a life-boat it is.

I could go on at great length relating the various virtues and excellences of the *Snark*, but I refrain. I have bragged enough as it is, and I have bragged to a purpose, as will be seen before my tale is ended. And please remember its title, "The Inconceivable and Monstrous." It was planned that the *Snark* should sail on October 1, 1906. That she did not so sail was inconceivable and monstrous. There was no valid reason for not sailing except that she was not ready to sail, and there was no conceivable reason why she was not ready. She was promised on November first, on November fifteenth, on December first; and yet she was never ready. On December first Charmian and I left the sweet, clean Sonoma country and came down to live in the stifling city – but not for long, oh, no, only for two weeks, for we would sail on

December fifteenth. And I guess we ought to know, for Roscoe said so, and it was on his advice that we came to the city to stay two weeks. Alas, the two weeks went by, four weeks went by, six weeks went by, eight weeks went by, and we were farther away from sailing than ever. Explain it? Who? – me? I can't. It is the one thing in all my life that I have backed down on. There is no explaining it; if there were, I'd do it. I, who am an artisan of speech, confess my inability to explain why the *Snark* was not ready. As I have said, and as I must repeat, it was inconceivable and monstrous.

The eight weeks became sixteen weeks, and then, one day, Roscoe cheered us up by saying: "If we don't sail before April first, you can use my head for a football."

Two weeks later he said, "I'm getting my head in training for that match."

"Never mind," Charmian and I said to each other; "think of the wonderful boat it is going to be when it is completed."

Whereat we would rehearse for our mutual encouragement the manifold virtues and excellences of the *Snark*. Also, I would borrow more money, and I would get down closer to my desk and write harder, and I refused heroically to take a Sunday off and go out into the hills with my friends. I was building a boat, and by the eternal it was going to be a boat, and a boat spelled out all in capitals – B – O – A – T; and no matter what it cost I didn't care. So long as it was a B O A T.

And, oh, there is one other excellence of the *Snark*, upon

which I must brag, namely, her bow. No sea could ever come over it. It laughs at the sea, that bow does; it challenges the sea; it snorts defiance at the sea. And withal it is a beautiful bow; the lines of it are dreamlike; I doubt if ever a boat was blessed with a more beautiful and at the same time a more capable bow. It was made to punch storms. To touch that bow is to rest one's hand on the cosmic nose of things. To look at it is to realize that expense cut no figure where it was concerned. And every time our sailing was delayed, or a new expense was tacked on, we thought of that wonderful bow and were content.

The *Snark* is a small boat. When I figured seven thousand dollars as her generous cost, I was both generous and correct. I have built barns and houses, and I know the peculiar trait such things have of running past their estimated cost. This knowledge was mine, was already mine, when I estimated the probable cost of the building of the *Snark* at seven thousand dollars. Well, she cost thirty thousand. Now don't ask me, please. It is the truth. I signed the cheques and I raised the money. Of course there is no explaining it, inconceivable and monstrous is what it is, as you will agree, I know, ere my tale is done.

Then there was the matter of delay. I dealt with forty-seven different kinds of union men and with one hundred and fifteen different firms. And not one union man and not one firm of all the union men and all the firms ever delivered anything at the time agreed upon, nor ever was on time for anything except pay-day and bill-collection. Men pledged me their immortal souls that

they would deliver a certain thing on a certain date; as a rule, after such pledging, they rarely exceeded being three months late in delivery. And so it went, and Charmian and I consoled each other by saying what a splendid boat the *Snark* was, so staunch and strong; also, we would get into the small boat and row around the *Snark*, and gloat over her unbelievably wonderful bow.

“Think,” I would say to Charmian, “of a gale off the China coast, and of the *Snark* hove to, that splendid bow of hers driving into the storm. Not a drop will come over that bow. She’ll be as dry as a feather, and we’ll be all below playing whist while the gale howls.”

And Charmian would press my hand enthusiastically and exclaim: “It’s worth every bit of it – the delay, and expense, and worry, and all the rest. Oh, what a truly wonderful boat!”

Whenever I looked at the bow of the *Snark* or thought of her water-tight compartments, I was encouraged. Nobody else, however, was encouraged. My friends began to make bets against the various sailing dates of the *Snark*. Mr. Wiget, who was left behind in charge of our Sonoma ranch was the first to cash his bet. He collected on New Year’s Day, 1907. After that the bets came fast and furious. My friends surrounded me like a gang of harpies, making bets against every sailing date I set. I was rash, and I was stubborn. I bet, and I bet, and I continued to bet; and I paid them all. Why, the women-kind of my friends grew so brave that those among them who never bet before began to bet with me. And I paid them, too.

“Never mind,” said Charmian to me; “just think of that bow and of being hove to on the China Seas.”

“You see,” I said to my friends, when I paid the latest bunch of wagers, “neither trouble nor cash is being spared in making the *Snark* the most seaworthy craft that ever sailed out through the Golden Gate – that is what causes all the delay.”

In the meantime editors and publishers with whom I had contracts pestered me with demands for explanations. But how could I explain to them, when I was unable to explain to myself, or when there was nobody, not even Roscoe, to explain to me? The newspapers began to laugh at me, and to publish rhymes anent the *Snark's* departure with refrains like, “Not yet, but soon.” And Charmian cheered me up by reminding me of the bow, and I went to a banker and borrowed five thousand more. There was one recompense for the delay, however. A friend of mine, who happens to be a critic, wrote a roast of me, of all I had done, and of all I ever was going to do; and he planned to have it published after I was out on the ocean. I was still on shore when it came out, and he has been busy explaining ever since.

And the time continued to go by. One thing was becoming apparent, namely, that it was impossible to finish the *Snark* in San Francisco. She had been so long in the building that she was beginning to break down and wear out. In fact, she had reached the stage where she was breaking down faster than she could be repaired. She had become a joke. Nobody took her seriously; least of all the men who worked on her. I said we would sail



just as she was and finish building her in Honolulu. Promptly she sprang a leak that had to be attended to before we could sail. I started her for the boat-ways. Before she got to them she was caught between two huge barges and received a vigorous crushing. We got her on the ways, and, part way along, the ways spread and dropped her through, stern-first, into the mud.

It was a pretty tangle, a job for wreckers, not boat-builders. There are two high tides every twenty-four hours, and at every high tide, night and day, for a week, there were two steam tugs pulling and hauling on the *Snark*. There she was, stuck, fallen between the ways and standing on her stern. Next, and while still in that predicament, we started to use the gears and castings made in the local foundry whereby power was conveyed from the engine to the windlass. It was the first time we ever tried to use that windlass. The castings had flaws; they shattered asunder, the gears ground together, and the windlass was out of commission. Following upon that, the seventy-horse-power engine went out of commission. This engine came from New York; so did its bed-plate; there was a flaw in the bed-plate; there were a lot of flaws in the bed-plate; and the seventy-horse-power engine broke away from its shattered foundations, reared up in the air, smashed all connections and fastenings, and fell over on its side. And the *Snark* continued to stick between the spread ways, and the two tugs continued to haul vainly upon her.

“Never mind,” said Charmian, “think of what a staunch, strong boat she is.”

“Yes,” said I, “and of that beautiful bow.”

So we took heart and went at it again. The ruined engine was lashed down on its rotten foundation; the smashed castings and cogs of the power transmission were taken down and stored away – all for the purpose of taking them to Honolulu where repairs and new castings could be made. Somewhere in the dim past the *Snark* had received on the outside one coat of white paint. The intention of the colour was still evident, however, when one got it in the right light. The *Snark* had never received any paint on the inside. On the contrary, she was coated inches thick with the grease and tobacco-juice of the multitudinous mechanics who had toiled upon her. Never mind, we said; the grease and filth could be planed off, and later, when we fetched Honolulu, the *Snark* could be painted at the same time as she was being rebuilt.

By main strength and sweat we dragged the *Snark* off from the wrecked ways and laid her alongside the Oakland City Wharf. The drays brought all the outfit from home, the books and blankets and personal luggage. Along with this, everything else came on board in a torrent of confusion – wood and coal, water and water-tanks, vegetables, provisions, oil, the life-boat and the launch, all our friends, all the friends of our friends and those who claimed to be their friends, to say nothing of some of the friends of the friends of the friends of our crew. Also there were reporters, and photographers, and strangers, and cranks, and finally, and over all, clouds of coal-dust from the wharf.

We were to sail Sunday at eleven, and Saturday afternoon had

arrived. The crowd on the wharf and the coal-dust were thicker than ever. In one pocket I carried a cheque-book, a fountain-pen, a dater, and a blotter; in another pocket I carried between one and two thousand dollars in paper money and gold. I was ready for the creditors, cash for the small ones and cheques for the large ones, and was waiting only for Roscoe to arrive with the balances of the accounts of the hundred and fifteen firms who had delayed me so many months. And then —

And then the inconceivable and monstrous happened once more. Before Roscoe could arrive there arrived another man. He was a United States marshal. He tacked a notice on the *Snark's* brave mast so that all on the wharf could read that the *Snark* had been libelled for debt. The marshal left a little old man in charge of the *Snark*, and himself went away. I had no longer any control of the *Snark*, nor of her wonderful bow. The little old man was now her lord and master, and I learned that I was paying him three dollars a day for being lord and master. Also, I learned the name of the man who had libelled the *Snark*. It was Sellers; the debt was two hundred and thirty-two dollars; and the deed was no more than was to be expected from the possessor of such a name. Sellers! Ye gods! Sellers!

But who under the sun was Sellers? I looked in my cheque-book and saw that two weeks before I had made him out a cheque for five hundred dollars. Other cheque-books showed me that during the many months of the building of the *Snark* I had paid him several thousand dollars. Then why in the name of common

decency hadn't he tried to collect his miserable little balance instead of libelling the *Snark*? I thrust my hands into my pockets, and in one pocket encountered the cheque-hook and the dater and the pen, and in the other pocket the gold money and the paper money. There was the wherewithal to settle his pitiful account a few score of times and over – why hadn't he given me a chance? There was no explanation; it was merely the inconceivable and monstrous.

To make the matter worse, the *Snark* had been libelled late Saturday afternoon; and though I sent lawyers and agents all over Oakland and San Francisco, neither United States judge, nor United States marshal, nor Mr. Sellers, nor Mr. Sellers' attorney, nor anybody could be found. They were all out of town for the weekend. And so the *Snark* did not sail Sunday morning at eleven. The little old man was still in charge, and he said no. And Charmian and I walked out on an opposite wharf and took consolation in the *Snark's* wonderful bow and thought of all the gales and typhoons it would proudly punch.

"A bourgeois trick," I said to Charmian, speaking of Mr. Sellers and his libel; "a petty trader's panic. But never mind; our troubles will cease when once we are away from this and out on the wide ocean."

And in the end we sailed away, on Tuesday morning, April 23, 1907. We started rather lame, I confess. We had to hoist anchor by hand, because the power transmission was a wreck. Also, what remained of our seventy-horse-power engine was lashed

down for ballast on the bottom of the *Snark*. But what of such things? They could be fixed in Honolulu, and in the meantime think of the magnificent rest of the boat! It is true, the engine in the launch wouldn't run, and the life-boat leaked like a sieve; but then they weren't the *Snark*; they were mere appurtenances. The things that counted were the water-tight bulkheads, the solid planking without butts, the bath-room devices – they were the *Snark*. And then there was, greatest of all, that noble, wind-punching bow.

We sailed out through the Golden Gate and set our course south toward that part of the Pacific where we could hope to pick up with the north-east trades. And right away things began to happen. I had calculated that youth was the stuff for a voyage like that of the *Snark*, and I had taken three youths – the engineer, the cook, and the cabin-boy. My calculation was only two-thirds off; I had forgotten to calculate on seasick youth, and I had two of them, the cook and the cabin boy. They immediately took to their bunks, and that was the end of their usefulness for a week to come. It will be understood, from the foregoing, that we did not have the hot meals we might have had, nor were things kept clean and orderly down below. But it did not matter very much anyway, for we quickly discovered that our box of oranges had at some time been frozen; that our box of apples was mushy and spoiling; that the crate of cabbages, spoiled before it was ever delivered to us, had to go overboard instantler; that kerosene had been spilled on the carrots, and that the turnips were woody and

the beets rotten, while the kindling was dead wood that wouldn't burn, and the coal, delivered in rotten potato-sacks, had spilled all over the deck and was washing through the scuppers.

But what did it matter? Such things were mere accessories. There was the boat – she was all right, wasn't she? I strolled along the deck and in one minute counted fourteen butts in the beautiful planking ordered specially from Puget Sound in order that there should be no butts in it. Also, that deck leaked, and it leaked badly. It drowned Roscoe out of his bunk and ruined the tools in the engine-room, to say nothing of the provisions it ruined in the galley. Also, the sides of the *Snark* leaked, and the bottom leaked, and we had to pump her every day to keep her afloat. The floor of the galley is a couple of feet above the inside bottom of the *Snark*; and yet I have stood on the floor of the galley, trying to snatch a cold bite, and been wet to the knees by the water churning around inside four hours after the last pumping.

Then those magnificent water-tight compartments that cost so much time and money – well, they weren't water-tight after all. The water moved free as the air from one compartment to another; furthermore, a strong smell of gasoline from the after compartment leads me to suspect that some one or more of the half-dozen tanks there stored have sprung a leak. The tanks leak, and they are not hermetically sealed in their compartment. Then there was the bath-room with its pumps and levers and sea-valves – it went out of commission inside the first twenty hours.

Powerful iron levers broke off short in one's hand when one tried to pump with them. The bath-room was the swiftest wreck of any portion of the *Snark*.

And the iron-work on the *Snark*, no matter what its source, proved to be mush. For instance, the bed-plate of the engine came from New York, and it was mush; so were the casting and gears for the windlass that came from San Francisco. And finally, there was the wrought iron used in the rigging, that carried away in all directions when the first strains were put upon it. Wrought iron, mind you, and it snapped like macaroni.

A gooseneck on the gaff of the mainsail broke short off. We replaced it with the gooseneck from the gaff of the storm trysail, and the second gooseneck broke short off inside fifteen minutes of use, and, mind you, it had been taken from the gaff of the storm trysail, upon which we would have depended in time of storm. At the present moment the *Snark* trails her mainsail like a broken wing, the gooseneck being replaced by a rough lashing. We'll see if we can get honest iron in Honolulu.

Man had betrayed us and sent us to sea in a sieve, but the Lord must have loved us, for we had calm weather in which to learn that we must pump every day in order to keep afloat, and that more trust could be placed in a wooden toothpick than in the most massive piece of iron to be found aboard. As the staunchness and the strength of the *Snark* went glimmering, Charmian and I pinned our faith more and more to the *Snark's* wonderful bow. There was nothing else left to pin to. It was all

inconceivable and monstrous, we knew, but that bow, at least, was rational. And then, one evening, we started to heave to.

How shall I describe it? First of all, for the benefit of the tyro, let me explain that heaving to is that sea manœuvre which, by means of short and balanced canvas, compels a vessel to ride bow-on to wind and sea. When the wind is too strong, or the sea is too high, a vessel of the size of the *Snark* can heave to with ease, whereupon there is no more work to do on deck. Nobody needs to steer. The lookout is superfluous. All hands can go below and sleep or play whist.

Well, it was blowing half of a small summer gale, when I told Roscoe we'd heave to. Night was coming on. I had been steering nearly all day, and all hands on deck (Roscoe and Bert and Charmian) were tired, while all hands below were seasick. It happened that we had already put two reefs in the big mainsail. The flying-jib and the jib were taken in, and a reef put in the fore-staysail. The mizzen was also taken in. About this time the flying jib-boom buried itself in a sea and broke short off. I started to put the wheel down in order to heave to. The *Snark* at the moment was rolling in the trough. She continued rolling in the trough. I put the spokes down harder and harder. She never budged from the trough. (The trough, gentle reader, is the most dangerous position all in which to lay a vessel.) I put the wheel hard down, and still the *Snark* rolled in the trough. Eight points was the nearest I could get her to the wind. I had Roscoe and Bert come in on the main-sheet. The *Snark* rolled on in the trough, now putting



her rail under on one side and now under on the other side.

Again the inconceivable and monstrous was showing its grizzly head. It was grotesque, impossible. I refused to believe it. Under double-reefed mainsail and single-reefed staysail the *Snark* refused to heave to. We flattened the mainsail down. It did not alter the *Snark's* course a tenth of a degree. We slacked the mainsail off with no more result. We set a storm trysail on the mizzen, and took in the mainsail. No change. The *Snark* roiled on in the trough. That beautiful bow of hers refused to come up and face the wind.

Next we took in the reefed staysail. Thus, the only bit of canvas left on her was the storm trysail on the mizzen. If anything would bring her bow up to the wind, that would. Maybe you won't believe me when I say it failed, but I do say it failed. And I say it failed because I saw it fail, and not because I believe it failed. I don't believe it did fail. It is unbelievable, and I am not telling you what I believe; I am telling you what I saw.

Now, gentle reader, what would you do if you were on a small boat, rolling in the trough of the sea, a trysail on that small boat's stern that was unable to swing the bow up into the wind? Get out the sea-anchor. It's just what we did. We had a patent one, made to order and warranted not to dive. Imagine a hoop of steel that serves to keep open the mouth of a large, conical, canvas bag, and you have a sea-anchor. Well, we made a line fast to the sea-anchor and to the bow of the *Snark*, and then dropped the sea-anchor overboard. It promptly dived. We had a tripping line on

it, so we tripped the sea-anchor and hauled it in. We attached a big timber as a float, and dropped the sea-anchor over again. This time it floated. The line to the bow grew taut. The trysail on the mizzen tended to swing the bow into the wind, but, in spite of this tendency, the *Snark* calmly took that sea-anchor in her teeth, and went on ahead, dragging it after her, still in the trough of the sea. And there you are. We even took in the trysail, hoisted the full mizzen in its place, and hauled the full mizzen down flat, and the *Snark* wallowed in the trough and dragged the sea-anchor behind her. Don't believe me. I don't believe it myself. I am merely telling you what I saw.

Now I leave it to you. Who ever heard of a sailing-boat that wouldn't heave to? – that wouldn't heave to with a sea-anchor to help it? Out of my brief experience with boats I know I never did. And I stood on deck and looked on the naked face of the inconceivable and monstrous – the *Snark* that wouldn't heave to. A stormy night with broken moonlight had come on. There was a splash of wet in the air, and up to windward there was a promise of rain-squalls; and then there was the trough of the sea, cold and cruel in the moonlight, in which the *Snark* complacently rolled. And then we took in the sea-anchor and the mizzen, hoisted the reefed staysail, ran the *Snark* off before it, and went below – not to the hot meal that should have awaited us, but to skate across the slush and slime on the cabin floor, where cook and cabin-boy lay like dead men in their bunks, and to lie down in our own bunks, with our clothes on ready for a call, and to listen to the

bilge-water spouting knee-high on the galley floor.

In the Bohemian Club of San Francisco there are some crack sailors. I know, because I heard them pass judgment on the *Snark* during the process of her building. They found only one vital thing the matter with her, and on this they were all agreed, namely, that she could not run. She was all right in every particular, they said, except that I'd never be able to run her before it in a stiff wind and sea. "Her lines," they explained enigmatically, "it is the fault of her lines. She simply cannot be made to run, that is all." Well, I wish I'd only had those crack sailors of the Bohemian Club on board the *Snark* the other night for them to see for themselves their one, vital, unanimous judgment absolutely reversed. Run? It is the one thing the *Snark* does to perfection. Run? She ran with a sea-anchor fast for'ard and a full mizzen flattened down aft. Run? At the present moment, as I write this, we are bowling along before it, at a six-knot clip, in the north-east trades. Quite a tidy bit of sea is running. There is nobody at the wheel, the wheel is not even lashed and is set over a half-spoke weather helm. To be precise, the wind is north-east; the *Snark's* mizzen is furled, her mainsail is over to starboard, her head-sheets are hauled flat: and the *Snark's* course is south-south-west. And yet there are men who have sailed the seas for forty years and who hold that no boat can run before it without being steered. They'll call me a liar when they read this; it's what they called Captain Slocum when he said the same of his *Spray*.

As regards the future of the *Snark* I'm all at sea. I don't know. If I had the money or the credit, I'd build another *Snark* that *would* heave to. But I am at the end of my resources. I've got to put up with the present *Snark* or quit – and I can't quit. So I guess I'll have to try to get along with heaving the *Snark* to stern first. I am waiting for the next gale to see how it will work. I think it can be done. It all depends on how her stern takes the seas. And who knows but that some wild morning on the China Sea, some gray-beard skipper will stare, rub his incredulous eyes and stare again, at the spectacle of a weird, small craft very much like the *Snark*, hove to stern-first and riding out the gale?

P.S. On my return to California after the voyage, I learned that the *Snark* was forty-three feet on the water-line instead of forty-five. This was due to the fact that the builder was not on speaking terms with the tape-line or two-foot rule.

## CHAPTER III

### ADVENTURE

No, adventure is not dead, and in spite of the steam engine and of Thomas Cook & Son. When the announcement of the contemplated voyage of the *Snark* was made, young men of “roving disposition” proved to be legion, and young women as well – to say nothing of the elderly men and women who volunteered for the voyage. Why, among my personal friends there were at least half a dozen who regretted their recent or imminent marriages; and there was one marriage I know of that almost failed to come off because of the *Snark*.

Every mail to me was burdened with the letters of applicants who were suffocating in the “man-stifled towns,” and it soon dawned upon me that a twentieth century Ulysses required a corps of stenographers to clear his correspondence before setting sail. No, adventure is certainly not dead – not while one receives letters that begin:

“There is no doubt that when you read this soul-plea from a female stranger in New York City,” etc.; and wherein one learns, a little farther on, that this female stranger weighs only ninety pounds, wants to be cabin-boy, and “yearns to see the countries of the world.”

The possession of a “passionate fondness for geography,” was

the way one applicant expressed the wander-lust that was in him; while another wrote, "I am cursed with an eternal yearning to be always on the move, consequently this letter to you." But best of all was the fellow who said he wanted to come because his feet itched.

There were a few who wrote anonymously, suggesting names of friends and giving said friends' qualifications; but to me there was a hint of something sinister in such proceedings, and I went no further in the matter.

With two or three exceptions, all the hundreds that volunteered for my crew were very much in earnest. Many of them sent their photographs. Ninety per cent. offered to work in any capacity, and ninety-nine per cent. offered to work without salary. "Contemplating your voyage on the *Snark*," said one, "and notwithstanding its attendant dangers, to accompany you (in any capacity whatever) would be the climax of my ambitions." Which reminds me of the young fellow who was "seventeen years old and ambitious," and who, at the end of his letter, earnestly requested "but please do not let this git into the papers or magazines." Quite different was the one who said, "I would be willing to work like hell and not demand pay." Almost all of them wanted me to telegraph, at their expense, my acceptance of their services; and quite a number offered to put up a bond to guarantee their appearance on sailing date.

Some were rather vague in their own minds concerning the work to be done on the *Snark*; as, for instance, the one who wrote:

“I am taking the liberty of writing you this note to find out if there would be any possibility of my going with you as one of the crew of your boat to make sketches and illustrations.” Several, unaware of the needful work on a small craft like the *Snark*, offered to serve, as one of them phrased it, “as assistant in filing materials collected for books and novels.” That’s what one gets for being prolific.

“Let me give my qualifications for the job,” wrote one. “I am an orphan living with my uncle, who is a hot revolutionary socialist and who says a man without the red blood of adventure is an animated dish-rag.” Said another: “I can swim some, though I don’t know any of the new strokes. But what is more important than strokes, the water is a friend of mine.” “If I was put alone in a sail-boat, I could get her anywhere I wanted to go,” was the qualification of a third – and a better qualification than the one that follows, “I have also watched the fish-boats unload.” But possibly the prize should go to this one, who very subtly conveys his deep knowledge of the world and life by saying: “My age, in years, is twenty-two.”

Then there were the simple straight-out, homely, and unadorned letters of young boys, lacking in the felicities of expression, it is true, but desiring greatly to make the voyage. These were the hardest of all to decline, and each time I declined one it seemed as if I had struck Youth a slap in the face. They were so earnest, these boys, they wanted so much to go. “I am sixteen but large for my age,” said one; and another, “Seventeen

but large and healthy.” “I am as strong at least as the average boy of my size,” said an evident weakling. “Not afraid of any kind of work,” was what many said, while one in particular, to lure me no doubt by inexpensiveness, wrote: “I can pay my way to the Pacific coast, so that part would probably be acceptable to you.” “Going around the world is *the one thing* I want to do,” said one, and it seemed to be the one thing that a few hundred wanted to do. “I have no one who cares whether I go or not,” was the pathetic note sounded by another. One had sent his photograph, and speaking of it, said, “I’m a homely-looking sort of a chap, but looks don’t always count.” And I am confident that the lad who wrote the following would have turned out all right: “My age is 19 years, but I am rather small and consequently won’t take up much room, but I’m tough as the devil.” And there was one thirteen-year-old applicant that Charmian and I fell in love with, and it nearly broke our hearts to refuse him.

But it must not be imagined that most of my volunteers were boys; on the contrary, boys constituted a very small proportion. There were men and women from every walk in life. Physicians, surgeons, and dentists offered in large numbers to come along, and, like all the professional men, offered to come without pay, to serve in any capacity, and to pay, even, for the privilege of so serving.

There was no end of composers and reporters who wanted to come, to say nothing of experienced valets, chefs, and stewards. Civil engineers were keen on the voyage; “lady” companions



galore cropped up for Charmian; while I was deluged with the applications of would-be private secretaries. Many high school and university students yearned for the voyage, and every trade in the working class developed a few applicants, the machinists, electricians, and engineers being especially strong on the trip. I was surprised at the number, who, in musty law offices, heard the call of adventure; and I was more than surprised by the number of elderly and retired sea captains who were still thralls to the sea. Several young fellows, with millions coming to them later on, were wild for the adventure, as were also several county superintendents of schools.

Fathers and sons wanted to come, and many men with their wives, to say nothing of the young woman stenographer who wrote: "Write immediately if you need me. I shall bring my typewriter on the first train." But the best of all is the following – observe the delicate way in which he worked in his wife: "I thought I would drop you a line of inquiry as to the possibility of making the trip with you, am 24 years of age, married and broke, and a trip of that kind would be just what we are looking for."

Come to think of it, for the average man it must be fairly difficult to write an honest letter of self-recommendation. One of my correspondents was so stumped that he began his letter with the words, "This is a hard task"; and, after vainly trying to describe his good points, he wound up with, "It is a hard job writing about one's self." Nevertheless, there was one who gave himself a most glowing and lengthy character, and in conclusion

stated that he had greatly enjoyed writing it.

“But suppose this: your cabin-boy could run your engine, could repair it when out of order. Suppose he could take his turn at the wheel, could do any carpenter or machinist work. Suppose he is strong, healthy, and willing to work. Would you not rather have him than a kid that gets seasick and can’t do anything but wash dishes?” It was letters of this sort that I hated to decline. The writer of it, self-taught in English, had been only two years in the United States, and, as he said, “I am not wishing to go with you to earn my living, but I wish to learn and see.” At the time of writing to me he was a designer for one of the big motor manufacturing companies; he had been to sea quite a bit, and had been used all his life to the handling of small boats.

“I have a good position, but it matters not so with me as I prefer travelling,” wrote another. “As to salary, look at me, and if I am worth a dollar or two, all right, and if I am not, nothing said. As to my honesty and character, I shall be pleased to show you my employers. Never drink, no tobacco, but to be honest, I myself, after a little more experience, want to do a little writing.”

“I can assure you that I am eminently respectable, but find other respectable people tiresome.” The man who wrote the foregoing certainly had me guessing, and I am still wondering whether or not he’d have found me tiresome, or what the deuce he did mean.

“I have seen better days than what I am passing through to-day,” wrote an old salt, “but I have seen them a great deal worse

also.”

But the willingness to sacrifice on the part of the man who wrote the following was so touching that I could not accept: “I have a father, a mother, brothers and sisters, dear friends and a lucrative position, and yet I will sacrifice all to become one of your crew.”

Another volunteer I could never have accepted was the finicky young fellow who, to show me how necessary it was that I should give him a chance, pointed out that “to go in the ordinary boat, be it schooner or steamer, would be impracticable, for I would have to mix among and live with the ordinary type of seamen, which as a rule is not a clean sort of life.”

Then there was the young fellow of twenty-six, who had “run through the gamut of human emotions,” and had “done everything from cooking to attending Stanford University,” and who, at the present writing, was “A vaquero on a fifty-five-thousand-acre range.” Quite in contrast was the modesty of the one who said, “I am not aware of possessing any particular qualities that would be likely to recommend me to your consideration. But should you be impressed, you might consider it worth a few minutes’ time to answer. Otherwise, there’s always work at the trade. Not expecting, but hoping, I remain, etc.”

But I have held my head in both my hands ever since, trying to figure out the intellectual kinship between myself and the one who wrote: “Long before I knew of you, I had mixed political economy and history and deducted therefrom many of your

conclusions in concrete.”

Here, in its way, is one of the best, as it is the briefest, that I received: “If any of the present company signed on for cruise happens to get cold feet and you need one more who understands boating, engines, etc., would like to hear from you, etc.” Here is another brief one: “Point blank, would like to have the job of cabin-boy on your trip around the world, or any other job on board. Am nineteen years old, weigh one hundred and forty pounds, and am an American.”

And here is a good one from a man a “little over five feet long”: “When I read about your manly plan of sailing around the world in a small boat with Mrs. London, I was so much rejoiced that I felt I was planning it myself, and I thought to write you about filling either position of cook or cabin-boy myself, but for some reason I did not do it, and I came to Denver from Oakland to join my friend’s business last month, but everything is worse and unfavourable. But fortunately you have postponed your departure on account of the great earthquake, so I finally decided to propose you to let me fill either of the positions. I am not very strong, being a man of a little over five feet long, although I am of sound health and capability.”

“I think I can add to your outfit an additional method of utilizing the power of the wind,” wrote a well-wisher, “which, while not interfering with ordinary sails in light breezes, will enable you to use the whole force of the wind in its mightiest blows, so that even when its force is so great that you may have

to take in every inch of canvas used in the ordinary way, you may carry the fullest spread with my method. With my attachment your craft could not be UPSET.”

The foregoing letter was written in San Francisco under the date of April 16, 1906. And two days later, on April 18, came the Great Earthquake. And that's why I've got it in for that earthquake, for it made a refugee out of the man who wrote the letter, and prevented us from ever getting together.

Many of my brother socialists objected to my making the cruise, of which the following is typical: “The Socialist Cause and the millions of oppressed victims of Capitalism has a right and claim upon your life and services. If, however, you persist, then, when you swallow the last mouthful of salt chuck you can hold before sinking, remember that we at least protested.”

One wanderer over the world who “could, if opportunity afforded, recount many unusual scenes and events,” spent several pages ardently trying to get to the point of his letter, and at last achieved the following: “Still I am neglecting the point I set out to write you about. So will say at once that it has been stated in print that you and one or two others are going to take a cruize around the world a little fifty- or sixty-foot boat. I therefore cannot get myself to think that a man of your attainments and experience would attempt such a proceeding, which is nothing less than courting death in that way. And even if you were to escape for some time, your whole Person, and those with you would be bruised from the ceaseless motion of a craft of the above size,

even if she were padded, a thing not usual at sea.” Thank you, kind friend, thank you for that qualification, “a thing not usual at sea.” Nor is this friend ignorant of the sea. As he says of himself, “I am not a land-lubber, and I have sailed every sea and ocean.” And he winds up his letter with: “Although not wishing to offend, it would be madness to take any woman outside the bay even, in such a craft.”

And yet, at the moment of writing this, Charmian is in her state-room at the typewriter, Martin is cooking dinner, Tochigi is setting the table, Roscoe and Bert are caulking the deck, and the *Snark* is steering herself some five knots an hour in a rattling good sea – and the *Snark* is not padded, either.

“Seeing a piece in the paper about your intended trip, would like to know if you would like a good crew, as there is six of us boys all good sailor men, with good discharges from the Navy and Merchant Service, all true Americans, all between the ages of 20 and 22, and at present are employed as riggers at the Union Iron Works, and would like very much to sail with you.” – It was letters like this that made me regret the boat was not larger.

And here writes the one woman in all the world – outside of Charmian – for the cruise: “If you have not succeeded in getting a cook I would like very much to take the trip in that capacity. I am a woman of fifty, healthy and capable, and can do the work for the small company that compose the crew of the *Snark*. I am a very good cook and a very good sailor and something of a traveller, and the length of the voyage, if of ten years’ duration,

would suit me better than one. References, etc.”

Some day, when I have made a lot of money, I'm going to build a big ship, with room in it for a thousand volunteers. They will have to do all the work of navigating that boat around the world, or they'll stay at home. I believe that they'll work the boat around the world, for I know that Adventure is not dead. I know Adventure is not dead because I have had a long and intimate correspondence with Adventure.

## CHAPTER IV

# FINDING ONE'S WAY ABOUT

“But,” our friends objected, “how dare you go to sea without a navigator on board? You’re not a navigator, are you?”

I had to confess that I was not a navigator, that I had never looked through a sextant in my life, and that I doubted if I could tell a sextant from a nautical almanac. And when they asked if Roscoe was a navigator, I shook my head. Roscoe resented this. He had glanced at the “Epitome,” bought for our voyage, knew how to use logarithm tables, had seen a sextant at some time, and, what of this and of his seafaring ancestry, he concluded that he did know navigation. But Roscoe was wrong, I still insist. When a young boy he came from Maine to California by way of the Isthmus of Panama, and that was the only time in his life that he was out of sight of land. He had never gone to a school of navigation, nor passed an examination in the same; nor had he sailed the deep sea and learned the art from some other navigator. He was a San Francisco Bay yachtsman, where land is always only several miles away and the art of navigation is never employed.

So the *Snark* started on her long voyage without a navigator. We beat through the Golden Gate on April 23, and headed for the Hawaiian Islands, twenty-one hundred sea-miles away as the



gull flies. And the outcome was our justification. We arrived. And we arrived, furthermore, without any trouble, as you shall see; that is, without any trouble to amount to anything. To begin with, Roscoe tackled the navigating. He had the theory all right, but it was the first time he had ever applied it, as was evidenced by the erratic behaviour of the *Snark*. Not but what the *Snark* was perfectly steady on the sea; the pranks she cut were on the chart. On a day with a light breeze she would make a jump on the chart that advertised "a wet sail and a flowing sheet," and on a day when she just raced over the ocean, she scarcely changed her position on the chart. Now when one's boat has logged six knots for twenty-four consecutive hours, it is incontestable that she has covered one hundred and forty-four miles of ocean. The ocean was all right, and so was the patent log; as for speed, one saw it with his own eyes. Therefore the thing that was not all right was the figuring that refused to boost the *Snark* along over the chart. Not that this happened every day, but that it did happen. And it was perfectly proper and no more than was to be expected from a first attempt at applying a theory.

The acquisition of the knowledge of navigation has a strange effect on the minds of men. The average navigator speaks of navigation with deep respect. To the layman navigation is a deed and awful mystery, which feeling has been generated in him by the deep and awful respect for navigation that the layman has seen displayed by navigators. I have known frank, ingenuous, and modest young men, open as the day, to learn navigation and

at once betray secretiveness, reserve, and self-importance as if they had achieved some tremendous intellectual attainment. The average navigator impresses the layman as a priest of some holy rite. With bated breath, the amateur yachtsman navigator invites one in to look at his chronometer. And so it was that our friends suffered such apprehension at our sailing without a navigator.

During the building of the *Snark*, Roscoe and I had an agreement, something like this: "I'll furnish the books and instruments," I said, "and do you study up navigation now. I'll be too busy to do any studying. Then, when we get to sea, you can teach me what you have learned." Roscoe was delighted. Furthermore, Roscoe was as frank and ingenuous and modest as the young men I have described. But when we got out to sea and he began to practise the holy rite, while I looked on admiringly, a change, subtle and distinctive, marked his bearing. When he shot the sun at noon, the glow of achievement wrapped him in lambent flame. When he went below, figured out his observation, and then returned on deck and announced our latitude and longitude, there was an authoritative ring in his voice that was new to all of us. But that was not the worst of it. He became filled with incommunicable information. And the more he discovered the reasons for the erratic jumps of the *Snark* over the chart, and the less the *Snark* jumped, the more incommunicable and holy and awful became his information. My mild suggestions that it was about time that I began to learn, met with no hearty response, with no offers on his part to help me. He displayed not the

slightest intention of living up to our agreement.

Now this was not Roscoe's fault; he could not help it. He had merely gone the way of all the men who learned navigation before him. By an understandable and forgivable confusion of values, plus a loss of orientation, he felt weighted by responsibility, and experienced the possession of power that was like unto that of a god. All his life Roscoe had lived on land, and therefore in sight of land. Being constantly in sight of land, with landmarks to guide him, he had managed, with occasional difficulties, to steer his body around and about the earth. Now he found himself on the sea, wide-stretching, bounded only by the eternal circle of the sky. This circle looked always the same. There were no landmarks. The sun rose to the east and set to the west and the stars wheeled through the night. But who may look at the sun or the stars and say, "My place on the face of the earth at the present moment is four and three-quarter miles to the west of Jones's Cash Store of Smithersville"? or "I know where I am now, for the Little Dipper informs me that Boston is three miles away on the second turning to the right"? And yet that was precisely what Roscoe did. That he was astounded by the achievement, is putting it mildly. He stood in reverential awe of himself; he had performed a miraculous feat. The act of finding himself on the face of the waters became a rite, and he felt himself a superior being to the rest of us who knew not this rite and were dependent on him for being shepherded across the heaving and limitless waste, the briny highroad that connects the continents

and whereon there are no mile-stones. So, with the sextant he made obeisance to the sun-god, he consulted ancient tomes and tables of magic characters, muttered prayers in a strange tongue that sounded like *Indexerrorparallaxrefraction*, made cabalistic signs on paper, added and carried one, and then, on a piece of holy script called the Grail – I mean the Chart – he placed his finger on a certain space conspicuous for its blankness and said, “Here we are.” When we looked at the blank space and asked, “And where is that?” he answered in the cipher-code of the higher priesthood, “31-15-47 north, 133-5-30 west.” And we said “Oh,” and felt mighty small.

So I aver, it was not Roscoe’s fault. He was like unto a god, and he carried us in the hollow of his hand across the blank spaces on the chart. I experienced a great respect for Roscoe; this respect grew so profound that had he commanded, “Kneel down and worship me,” I know that I should have flopped down on the deck and yammered. But, one day, there came a still small thought to me that said: “This is not a god; this is Roscoe, a mere man like myself. What he has done, I can do. Who taught him? Himself. Go you and do likewise – be your own teacher.” And right there Roscoe crashed, and he was high priest of the *Snark* no longer. I invaded the sanctuary and demanded the ancient tomes and magic tables, also the prayer-wheel – the sextant, I mean.

And now, in simple language. I shall describe how I taught myself navigation. One whole afternoon I sat in the cockpit, steering with one hand and studying logarithms with the other.

Two afternoons, two hours each, I studied the general theory of navigation and the particular process of taking a meridian altitude. Then I took the sextant, worked out the index error, and shot the sun. The figuring from the data of this observation was child's play. In the "Epitome" and the "Nautical Almanac" were scores of cunning tables, all worked out by mathematicians and astronomers. It was like using interest tables and lightning-calculator tables such as you all know. The mystery was mystery no longer. I put my finger on the chart and announced that that was where we were. I was right too, or at least I was as right as Roscoe, who selected a spot a quarter of a mile away from mine. Even he was willing to split the distance with me. I had exploded the mystery, and yet, such was the miracle of it, I was conscious of new power in me, and I felt the thrill and tickle of pride. And when Martin asked me, in the same humble and respectful way I had previously asked Roscoe, as to where we were, it was with exaltation and spiritual chest-throwing that I answered in the cipher-code of the higher priesthood and heard Martin's self-abasing and worshipful "Oh." As for Charmian, I felt that in a new way I had proved my right to her; and I was aware of another feeling, namely, that she was a most fortunate woman to have a man like me.

I couldn't help it. I tell it as a vindication of Roscoe and all the other navigators. The poison of power was working in me. I was not as other men – most other men; I knew what they did not know, – the mystery of the heavens, that pointed out

the way across the deep. And the taste of power I had received drove me on. I steered at the wheel long hours with one hand, and studied mystery with the other. By the end of the week, teaching myself, I was able to do divers things. For instance, I shot the North Star, at night, of course; got its altitude, corrected for index error, dip, etc., and found our latitude. And this latitude agreed with the latitude of the previous noon corrected by dead reckoning up to that moment. Proud? Well, I was even prouder with my next miracle. I was going to turn in at nine o'clock. I worked out the problem, self-instructed, and learned what star of the first magnitude would be passing the meridian around half-past eight. This star proved to be Alpha Crucis. I had never heard of the star before. I looked it up on the star map. It was one of the stars of the Southern Cross. What! thought I; have we been sailing with the Southern Cross in the sky of nights and never known it? Dolts that we are! Gudgeons and moles! I couldn't believe it. I went over the problem again, and verified it. Charmian had the wheel from eight till ten that evening. I told her to keep her eyes open and look due south for the Southern Cross. And when the stars came out, there shone the Southern Cross low on the horizon. Proud? No medicine man nor high priest was ever prouder. Furthermore, with the prayer-wheel I shot Alpha Crucis and from its altitude worked out our latitude. And still furthermore, I shot the North Star, too, and it agreed with what had been told me by the Southern Cross. Proud? Why, the language of the stars was mine, and I listened and heard them

telling me my way over the deep.

Proud? I was a worker of miracles. I forgot how easily I had taught myself from the printed page. I forgot that all the work (and a tremendous work, too) had been done by the masterminds before me, the astronomers and mathematicians, who had discovered and elaborated the whole science of navigation and made the tables in the “Epitome.” I remembered only the everlasting miracle of it – that I had listened to the voices of the stars and been told my place upon the highway of the sea. Charmian did not know, Martin did not know, Tochigi, the cabin-boy, did not know. But I told them. I was God’s messenger. I stood between them and infinity. I translated the high celestial speech into terms of their ordinary understanding. We were heaven-directed, and it was I who could read the sign-post of the sky! – I! I!

And now, in a cooler moment, I hasten to blab the whole simplicity of it, to blab on Roscoe and the other navigators and the rest of the priesthood, all for fear that I may become even as they, secretive, immodest, and inflated with self-esteem. And I want to say this now: any young fellow with ordinary gray matter, ordinary education, and with the slightest trace of the student-mind, can get the books, and charts, and instruments and teach himself navigation. Now I must not be misunderstood. Seamanship is an entirely different matter. It is not learned in a day, nor in many days; it requires years. Also, navigating by dead reckoning requires long study and practice. But navigating

by observations of the sun, moon, and stars, thanks to the astronomers and mathematicians, is child's play. Any average young fellow can teach himself in a week. And yet again I must not be misunderstood. I do not mean to say that at the end of a week a young fellow could take charge of a fifteen-thousand-ton steamer, driving twenty knots an hour through the brine, racing from land to land, fair weather and foul, clear sky or cloudy, steering by degrees on the compass card and making landfalls with most amazing precision. But what I do mean is just this: the average young fellow I have described can get into a staunch sail-boat and put out across the ocean, without knowing anything about navigation, and at the end of the week he will know enough to know where he is on the chart. He will be able to take a meridian observation with fair accuracy, and from that observation, with ten minutes of figuring, work out his latitude and longitude. And, carrying neither freight nor passengers, being under no press to reach his destination, he can jog comfortably along, and if at any time he doubts his own navigation and fears an imminent landfall, he can heave to all night and proceed in the morning.

Joshua Slocum sailed around the world a few years ago in a thirty-seven-foot boat all by himself. I shall never forget, in his narrative of the voyage, where he heartily indorsed the idea of young men, in similar small boats, making similar voyage. I promptly indorsed his idea, and so heartily that I took my wife along. While it certainly makes a Cook's tour look like



thirty cents, on top of that, amid on top of the fun and pleasure, it is a splendid education for a young man – oh, not a mere education in the things of the world outside, of lands, and peoples, and climates, but an education in the world inside, an education in one's self, a chance to learn one's own self, to get on speaking terms with one's soul. Then there is the training and the disciplining of it. First, naturally, the young fellow will learn his limitations; and next, inevitably, he will proceed to press back those limitations. And he cannot escape returning from such a voyage a bigger and better man. And as for sport, it is a king's sport, taking one's self around the world, doing it with one's own hands, depending on no one but one's self, and at the end, back at the starting-point, contemplating with inner vision the planet rushing through space, and saying, "I did it; with my own hands I did it. I went clear around that whirling sphere, and I can travel alone, without any nurse of a sea-captain to guide my steps across the seas. I may not fly to other stars, but of this star I myself am master."

As I write these lines I lift my eyes and look seaward. I am on the beach of Waikiki on the island of Oahu. Far, in the azure sky, the trade-wind clouds drift low over the blue-green turquoise of the deep sea. Nearer, the sea is emerald and light olive-green. Then comes the reef, where the water is all slaty purple flecked with red. Still nearer are brighter greens and tans, lying in alternate stripes and showing where sandbeds lie between the living coral banks. Through and over and out of these wonderful

colours tumbles and thunders a magnificent surf. As I say, I lift my eyes to all this, and through the white crest of a breaker suddenly appears a dark figure, erect, a man-fish or a sea-god, on the very forward face of the crest where the top falls over and down, driving in toward shore, buried to his loins in smoking spray, caught up by the sea and flung landward, bodily, a quarter of a mile. It is a Kanaka on a surf-board. And I know that when I have finished these lines I shall be out in that riot of colour and pounding surf, trying to bit those breakers even as he, and failing as he never failed, but living life as the best of us may live it. And the picture of that coloured sea and that flying sea-god Kanaka becomes another reason for the young man to go west, and farther west, beyond the Baths of Sunset, and still west till he arrives home again.

But to return. Please do not think that I already know it all. I know only the rudiments of navigation. There is a vast deal yet for me to learn. On the *Snark* there is a score of fascinating books on navigation waiting for me. There is the danger-angle of Lecky, there is the line of Sumner, which, when you know least of all where you are, shows most conclusively where you are, and where you are not. There are dozens and dozens of methods of finding one's location on the deep, and one can work years before he masters it all in all its fineness.

Even in the little we did learn there were slips that accounted for the apparently antic behaviour of the *Snark*. On Thursday, May 16, for instance, the trade wind failed us. During the twenty-

four hours that ended Friday at noon, by dead reckoning we had not sailed twenty miles. Yet here are our positions, at noon, for the two days, worked out from our observations:

Thursday	20°	57'	9"	N
	152°	40'	30"	W
Friday	21°	15'	33"	N
	154°	12'		

The difference between the two positions was something like eighty miles. Yet we knew we had not travelled twenty miles. Now our figuring was all right. We went over it several times. What was wrong was the observations we had taken. To take a correct observation requires practice and skill, and especially so on a small craft like the *Snark*. The violently moving boat and the closeness of the observer's eye to the surface of the water are to blame. A big wave that lifts up a mile off is liable to steal the horizon away.

But in our particular case there was another perturbing factor. The sun, in its annual march north through the heavens, was increasing its declination. On the 19th parallel of north latitude in the middle of May the sun is nearly overhead. The angle of arc was between eighty-eight and eighty-nine degrees. Had it been ninety degrees it would have been straight overhead. It was on another day that we learned a few things about taking the altitude of the almost perpendicular sun. Roscoe started in drawing the

sun down to the eastern horizon, and he stayed by that point of the compass despite the fact that the sun would pass the meridian to the south. I, on the other hand, started in to draw the sun down to south-east and strayed away to the south-west. You see, we were teaching ourselves. As a result, at twenty-five minutes past twelve by the ship's time, I called twelve o'clock by the sun. Now this signified that we had changed our location on the face of the world by twenty-five minutes, which was equal to something like six degrees of longitude, or three hundred and fifty miles. This showed the *Snark* had travelled fifteen knots per hour for twenty-four consecutive hours – and we had never noticed it! It was absurd and grotesque. But Roscoe, still looking east, averred that it was not yet twelve o'clock. He was bent on giving us a twenty-knot clip. Then we began to train our sextants rather wildly all around the horizon, and wherever we looked, there was the sun, puzzlingly close to the sky-line, sometimes above it and sometimes below it. In one direction the sun was proclaiming morning, in another direction it was proclaiming afternoon. The sun was all right – we knew that; therefore we were all wrong. And the rest of the afternoon we spent in the cockpit reading up the matter in the books and finding out what was wrong. We missed the observation that day, but we didn't the next. We had learned.

And we learned well, better than for a while we thought we had. At the beginning of the second dog-watch one evening, Charmian and I sat down on the fore-castle-head for a rubber

of cribbage. Chancing to glance ahead, I saw cloud-capped mountains rising from the sea. We were rejoiced at the sight of land, but I was in despair over our navigation. I thought we had learned something, yet our position at noon, plus what we had run since, did not put us within a hundred miles of land. But there was the land, fading away before our eyes in the fires of sunset. The land was all right. There was no disputing it. Therefore our navigation was all wrong. But it wasn't. That land we saw was the summit of Haleakala, the House of the Sun, the greatest extinct volcano in the world. It towered ten thousand feet above the sea, and it was all of a hundred miles away. We sailed all night at a seven-knot clip, and in the morning the House of the Sun was still before us, and it took a few more hours of sailing to bring it abreast of us. "That island is Maui," we said, verifying by the chart. "That next island sticking out is Molokai, where the lepers are. And the island next to that is Oahu. There is Makapuu Head now. We'll be in Honolulu to-morrow. Our navigation is all right."

# CHAPTER V

## THE FIRST LANDFALL

“It will not be so monotonous at sea,” I promised my fellow-voyagers on the *Snark*. “The sea is filled with life. It is so populous that every day something new is happening. Almost as soon as we pass through the Golden Gate and head south we’ll pick up with the flying fish. We’ll be having them fried for breakfast. We’ll be catching bonita and dolphin, and spearing porpoises from the bowsprit. And then there are the sharks – sharks without end.”

We passed through the Golden Gate and headed south. We dropped the mountains of California beneath the horizon, and daily the surf grew warmer. But there were no flying fish, no bonita and dolphin. The ocean was bereft of life. Never had I sailed on so forsaken a sea. Always, before, in the same latitudes, had I encountered flying fish.

“Never mind,” I said. “Wait till we get off the coast of Southern California. Then we’ll pick up the flying fish.”

We came abreast of Southern California, abreast of the Peninsula of Lower California, abreast of the coast of Mexico; and there were no flying fish. Nor was there anything else. No life moved. As the days went by the absence of life became almost uncanny.

“Never mind,” I said. “When we do pick up with the flying fish we’ll pick up with everything else. The flying fish is the staff of life for all the other breeds. Everything will come in a bunch when we find the flying fish.”

When I should have headed the *Snark* south-west for Hawaii, I still held her south. I was going to find those flying fish. Finally the time came when, if I wanted to go to Honolulu, I should have headed the *Snark* due west, instead of which I kept her south. Not until latitude 19° did we encounter the first flying fish. He was very much alone. I saw him. Five other pairs of eager eyes scanned the sea all day, but never saw another. So sparse were the flying fish that nearly a week more elapsed before the last one on board saw his first flying fish. As for the dolphin, bonita, porpoise, and all the other hordes of life – there weren’t any.

Not even a shark broke surface with his ominous dorsal fin. Bert took a dip daily under the bowsprit, hanging on to the stays and dragging his body through the water. And daily he canvassed the project of letting go and having a decent swim. I did my best to dissuade him. But with him I had lost all standing as an authority on sea life.

“If there are sharks,” he demanded, “why don’t they show up?”

I assured him that if he really did let go and have a swim the sharks would promptly appear. This was a bluff on my part. I didn’t believe it. It lasted as a deterrent for two days. The third day the wind fell calm, and it was pretty hot. The *Snark* was moving a knot an hour. Bert dropped down under the bowsprit

and let go. And now behold the perversity of things. We had sailed across two thousand miles and more of ocean and had met with no sharks. Within five minutes after Bert finished his swim, the fin of a shark was cutting the surface in circles around the *Snark*.

There was something wrong about that shark. It bothered me. It had no right to be there in that deserted ocean. The more I thought about it, the more incomprehensible it became. But two hours later we sighted land and the mystery was cleared up. He had come to us from the land, and not from the uninhabited deep. He had presaged the landfall. He was the messenger of the land.

Twenty-seven days out from San Francisco we arrived at the island of Oahu, Territory of Hawaii. In the early morning we drifted around Diamond Head into full view of Honolulu; and then the ocean burst suddenly into life. Flying fish cleaved the air in glittering squadrons. In five minutes we saw more of them than during the whole voyage. Other fish, large ones, of various sorts, leaped into the air. There was life everywhere, on sea and shore. We could see the masts and funnels of the shipping in the harbour, the hotels and bathers along the beach at Waikiki, the smoke rising from the dwelling-houses high up on the volcanic slopes of the Punch Bowl and Tantalus. The custom-house tug was racing toward us and a big school of porpoises got under our bow and began cutting the most ridiculous capers. The port doctor's launch came charging out at us, and a big sea turtle broke the surface with his back and took a look at us. Never was



there such a burgeoning of life. Strange faces were on our decks, strange voices were speaking, and copies of that very morning's newspaper, with cable reports from all the world, were thrust before our eyes. Incidentally, we read that the *Snark* and all hands had been lost at sea, and that she had been a very unseaworthy craft anyway. And while we read this information a wireless message was being received by the congressional party on the summit of Haleakala announcing the safe arrival of the *Snark*.

It was the *Snark's* first landfall – and such a landfall! For twenty-seven days we had been on the deserted deep, and it was pretty hard to realize that there was so much life in the world. We were made dizzy by it. We could not take it all in at once. We were like awakened Rip Van Winkles, and it seemed to us that we were dreaming. On one side the azure sea lapped across the horizon into the azure sky; on the other side the sea lifted itself into great breakers of emerald that fell in a snowy smother upon a white coral beach. Beyond the beach, green plantations of sugar-cane undulated gently upward to steeper slopes, which, in turn, became jagged volcanic crests, drenched with tropic showers and capped by stupendous masses of trade-wind clouds. At any rate, it was a most beautiful dream. The *Snark* turned and headed directly in toward the emerald surf, till it lifted and thundered on either hand; and on either hand, scarce a biscuit-toss away, the reef showed its long teeth, pale green and menacing.

Abruptly the land itself, in a riot of olive-greens of a thousand hues, reached out its arms and folded the *Snark* in. There was

no perilous passage through the reef, no emerald surf and azure sea – nothing but a warm soft land, a motionless lagoon, and tiny beaches on which swam dark-skinned tropic children. The sea had disappeared. The *Snark's* anchor rumbled the chain through the hawse-pipe, and we lay without movement on a “lineless, level floor.” It was all so beautiful and strange that we could not accept it as real. On the chart this place was called Pearl Harbour, but we called it Dream Harbour.

A launch came off to us; in it were members of the Hawaiian Yacht Club, come to greet us and make us welcome, with true Hawaiian hospitality, to all they had. They were ordinary men, flesh and blood and all the rest; but they did not tend to break our dreaming. Our last memories of men were of United States marshals and of panicky little merchants with rusty dollars for souls, who, in a reeking atmosphere of soot and coal-dust, laid grimy hands upon the *Snark* and held her back from her world adventure. But these men who came to meet us were clean men. A healthy tan was on their cheeks, and their eyes were not dazzled and bespectacled from gazing overmuch at glittering dollar-heaps. No, they merely verified the dream. They clinched it with their unsmirched souls.

So we went ashore with them across a level flashing sea to the wonderful green land. We landed on a tiny wharf, and the dream became more insistent; for know that for twenty-seven days we had been rocking across the ocean on the tiny *Snark*. Not once in all those twenty-seven days had we known a moment's rest,

a moment's cessation from movement. This ceaseless movement had become ingrained. Body and brain we had rocked and rolled so long that when we climbed out on the tiny wharf kept on rocking and rolling. This, naturally, we attributed to the wharf. It was projected psychology. I spraddled along the wharf and nearly fell into the water. I glanced at Charmian, and the way she walked made me sad. The wharf had all the seeming of a ship's deck. It lifted, tilted, heaved and sank; and since there were no handrails on it, it kept Charmian and me busy avoiding falling in. I never saw such a preposterous little wharf. Whenever I watched it closely, it refused to roll; but as soon as I took my attention off from it, away it went, just like the *Snark*. Once, I caught it in the act, just as it upended, and I looked down the length of it for two hundred feet, and for all the world it was like the deck of a ship ducking into a huge head-sea.

At last, however, supported by our hosts, we negotiated the wharf and gained the land. But the land was no better. The very first thing it did was to tilt up on one side, and far as the eye could see I watched it tilt, clear to its jagged, volcanic backbone, and I saw the clouds above tilt, too. This was no stable, firm-founded land, else it would not cut such capers. It was like all the rest of our landfall, unreal. It was a dream. At any moment, like shifting vapour, it might dissolve away. The thought entered my head that perhaps it was my fault, that my head was swimming or that something I had eaten had disagreed with me. But I glanced at Charmian and her sad walk, and even as I glanced I saw her

stagger and bump into the yachtsman by whose side she walked. I spoke to her, and she complained about the antic behaviour of the land.

We walked across a spacious, wonderful lawn and down an avenue of royal palms, and across more wonderful lawn in the gracious shade of stately trees. The air was filled with the songs of birds and was heavy with rich warm fragrances – wafture from great lilies, and blazing blossoms of hibiscus, and other strange gorgeous tropic flowers. The dream was becoming almost impossibly beautiful to us who for so long had seen naught but the restless, salty sea. Charmian reached out her hand and clung to me – for support against the ineffable beauty of it, thought I. But no. As I supported her I braced my legs, while the flowers and lawns reeled and swung around me. It was like an earthquake, only it quickly passed without doing any harm. It was fairly difficult to catch the land playing these tricks. As long as I kept my mind on it, nothing happened. But as soon as my attention was distracted, away it went, the whole panorama, swinging and heaving and tilting at all sorts of angles. Once, however, I turned my head suddenly and caught that stately line of royal palms swinging in a great arc across the sky. But it stopped, just as soon as I caught it, and became a placid dream again.

Next we came to a house of coolness, with great sweeping veranda, where lotus-eaters might dwell. Windows and doors were wide open to the breeze, and the songs and fragrances blew

lazily in and out. The walls were hung with tapa-cloths. Couches with grass-woven covers invited everywhere, and there was a grand piano, that played, I was sure, nothing more exciting than lullabies. Servants – Japanese maids in native costume – drifted around and about, noiselessly, like butterflies. Everything was preternaturally cool. Here was no blazing down of a tropic sun upon an unshrinking sea. It was too good to be true. But it was not real. It was a dream-dwelling. I knew, for I turned suddenly and caught the grand piano cavorting in a spacious corner of the room. I did not say anything, for just then we were being received by a gracious woman, a beautiful Madonna, clad in flowing white and shod with sandals, who greeted us as though she had known us always.

We sat at table on the lotus-eating veranda, served by the butterfly maids, and ate strange foods and partook of a nectar called poi. But the dream threatened to dissolve. It shimmered and trembled like an iridescent bubble about to break. I was just glancing out at the green grass and stately trees and blossoms of hibiscus, when suddenly I felt the table move. The table, and the Madonna across from me, and the veranda of the lotus-eaters, the scarlet hibiscus, the greensward and the trees – all lifted and tilted before my eyes, and heaved and sank down into the trough of a monstrous sea. I gripped my chair convulsively and held on. I had a feeling that I was holding on to the dream as well as the chair. I should not have been surprised had the sea rushed in and drowned all that fairyland and had I found myself at the wheel of

the *Snark* just looking up casually from the study of logarithms. But the dream persisted. I looked covertly at the Madonna and her husband. They evidenced no perturbation. The dishes had not moved upon the table. The hibiscus and trees and grass were still there. Nothing had changed. I partook of more nectar, and the dream was more real than ever.

“Will you have some iced tea?” asked the Madonna; and then her side of the table sank down gently and I said yes to her at an angle of forty-five degrees.

“Speaking of sharks,” said her husband, “up at Niihau there was a man – ” And at that moment the table lifted and heaved, and I gazed upward at him at an angle of forty-five degrees.

So the luncheon went on, and I was glad that I did not have to bear the affliction of watching Charmian walk. Suddenly, however, a mysterious word of fear broke from the lips of the lotus-eaters. “Ah, ah,” thought I, “now the dream goes glimmering.” I clutched the chair desperately, resolved to drag back to the reality of the *Snark* some tangible vestige of this lotus land. I felt the whole dream lurching and pulling to be gone. Just then the mysterious word of fear was repeated. It sounded like *Reporters*. I looked and saw three of them coming across the lawn. Oh, blessed reporters! Then the dream was indisputably real after all. I glanced out across the shining water and saw the *Snark* at anchor, and I remembered that I had sailed in her from San Francisco to Hawaii, and that this was Pearl Harbour, and that even then I was acknowledging introductions and saying, in

reply to the first question, “Yes, we had delightful weather all the way down.”

## CHAPTER VI

### A ROYAL SPORT

That is what it is, a royal sport for the natural kings of earth. The grass grows right down to the water at Waikiki Beach, and within fifty feet of the everlasting sea. The trees also grow down to the salty edge of things, and one sits in their shade and looks seaward at a majestic surf thundering in on the beach to one's very feet. Half a mile out, where is the reef, the white-headed combers thrust suddenly skyward out of the placid turquoise-blue and come rolling in to shore. One after another they come, a mile long, with smoking crests, the white battalions of the infinite army of the sea. And one sits and listens to the perpetual roar, and watches the unending procession, and feels tiny and fragile before this tremendous force expressing itself in fury and foam and sound. Indeed, one feels microscopically small, and the thought that one may wrestle with this sea raises in one's imagination a thrill of apprehension, almost of fear. Why, they are a mile long, these bull-mouthed monsters, and they weigh a thousand tons, and they charge in to shore faster than a man can run. What chance? No chance at all, is the verdict of the shrinking ego; and one sits, and looks, and listens, and thinks the grass and the shade are a pretty good place in which to be.

And suddenly, out there where a big smoker lifts skyward,



rising like a sea-god from out of the welter of spume and churning white, on the giddy, toppling, overhanging and downfalling, precarious crest appears the dark head of a man. Swiftly he rises through the rushing white. His black shoulders, his chest, his loins, his limbs – all is abruptly projected on one's vision. Where but the moment before was only the wide desolation and invincible roar, is now a man, erect, full-statured, not struggling frantically in that wild movement, not buried and crushed and buffeted by those mighty monsters, but standing above them all, calm and superb, poised on the giddy summit, his feet buried in the churning foam, the salt smoke rising to his knees, and all the rest of him in the free air and flashing sunlight, and he is flying through the air, flying forward, flying fast as the surge on which he stands. He is a Mercury – a brown Mercury. His heels are winged, and in them is the swiftness of the sea. In truth, from out of the sea he has leaped upon the back of the sea, and he is riding the sea that roars and bellows and cannot shake him from its back. But no frantic outreaching and balancing is his. He is impassive, motionless as a statue carved suddenly by some miracle out of the sea's depth from which he rose. And straight on toward shore he flies on his winged heels and the white crest of the breaker. There is a wild burst of foam, a long tumultuous rushing sound as the breaker falls futile and spent on the beach at your feet; and there, at your feet steps calmly ashore a Kanaka, burnt, golden and brown by the tropic sun. Several minutes ago he was a speck a quarter of a mile away. He has

“bitted the bull-mouthed breaker” and ridden it in, and the pride in the feat shows in the carriage of his magnificent body as he glances for a moment carelessly at you who sit in the shade of the shore. He is a Kanaka – and more, he is a man, a member of the kingly species that has mastered matter and the brutes and lorded it over creation.

And one sits and thinks of Tristram’s last wrestle with the sea on that fatal morning; and one thinks further, to the fact that that Kanaka has done what Tristram never did, and that he knows a joy of the sea that Tristram never knew. And still further one thinks. It is all very well, sitting here in cool shade of the beach, but you are a man, one of the kingly species, and what that Kanaka can do, you can do yourself. Go to. Strip off your clothes that are a nuisance in this mellow clime. Get in and wrestle with the sea; wing your heels with the skill and power that reside in you; bit the sea’s breakers, master them, and ride upon their backs as a king should.

And that is how it came about that I tackled surf-riding. And now that I have tackled it, more than ever do I hold it to be a royal sport. But first let me explain the physics of it. A wave is a communicated agitation. The water that composes the body of a wave does not move. If it did, when a stone is thrown into a pond and the ripples spread away in an ever widening circle, there would appear at the centre an ever increasing hole. No, the water that composes the body of a wave is stationary. Thus, you may watch a particular portion of the ocean’s surface and

you will see the sane water rise and fall a thousand times to the agitation communicated by a thousand successive waves. Now imagine this communicated agitation moving shoreward. As the bottom shoals, the lower portion of the wave strikes land first and is stopped. But water is fluid, and the upper portion has not struck anything, wherefore it keeps on communicating its agitation, keeps on going. And when the top of the wave keeps on going, while the bottom of it lags behind, something is bound to happen. The bottom of the wave drops out from under and the top of the wave falls over, forward, and down, curling and cresting and roaring as it does so. It is the bottom of a wave striking against the top of the land that is the cause of all surfs.

# Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.