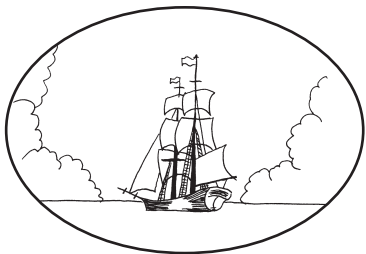


"The Bosun, whose horrid whip was raised high against him..."



Just then I heard the sting of a lash, and I turned to see a crewman, the same sort of lad as was I, crouching at the Bosun, whose horrid whip was raised high against him. It occurred to me that the Captain must have liked me especially, such that he would have lessons that brute was doling out. I resolved then and there, as I began swabbing furiously, to please the Captain and to rise amongst his ranks, until I stood on equal footing with him - a Captain of my own Vessel!

This number contains part two of "Captain Dick's Pirate Story," a serial tale of Spirited Adventure on the High Seas for All to Enjoy.



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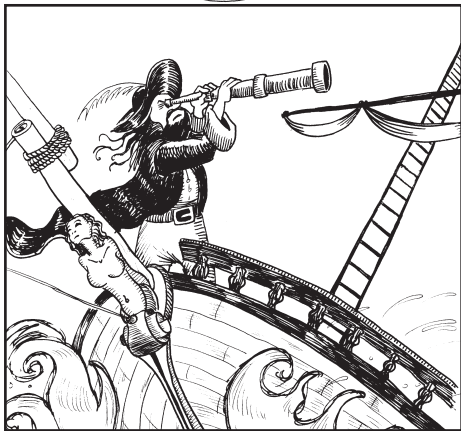


"Then tell me, kind sir, how it is you came to pay the Innkeeper last night for your meal and drink? How it was that you paid for a bed to sleep in? I do not believe I heard your pockets jingling as you came through the tavern door. No, tis the Queen herself who paid your debt last night, me boy, and as she has done I nodded, lower lip protruding, hurt and confused.

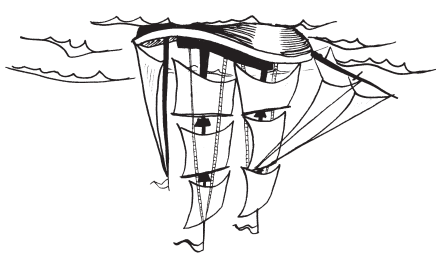
"I believe I just saw your mouth form the word 'kidnaped,' did I not?" Confused, I cried hot tears - ah, me youth, that I could act such a fool and still evoke the slightest pity! My talents were wasted on the Captain. I resolved then and there, as I began swabbing furiously, to please the Captain and to rise amongst his ranks, until I stood on equal footing with him - a Captain of my own Vessel!

Impressed! Impressed into service!

"CAPTAIN DICK'S PIRATE STORY" IN THIS NUMBER



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Day broke, and I found myself already aboard the jolly ship "Madelaine," but all was not what it would seem. As the harsh morning rays struck my red jellies, a swab was thrust in my hand - by the Marquis, no less!

And yes, there was a map, and no, he did not show it to us just yet. There was still time for that later. And what did old Dick do then? Eh? Well he thought he'd get him some o' that treasure, he did, and become the next King Richard, the world, with a weary crown on his head and ladies in waiting! Dancing visions of the world's riches were coursing through young Dick's head! The more the Marquis talked, the more sense he made. It wasn't long before every man jack of us had decided to come along. Down we drained the last dregs, and by the time the house-mother came to throw our wobbly bones into the street I'd had food enough and drink aplenty, now to care where I'd wake up next morn. Borne by the arms of my jolly companions, it grew dark for me, and I ceased to wonder.

Chapter Four: The Matter at Hand

Chapter Three: A Fine Start

A young lad, the wide, open world, the call of adventure... yes, you might think back on your own life and summon up this golden time. You may have a dim recall of such a day when the world was at your feet and each new experience seemed to sound a Great Celestial Horn in your honor. But that was not the way it happened to Young Dick.

The call of adventure is fine when you are in good health, spirits, and have pocketsful of money. But your dear narrator found himself thrown from the family hearth into a vast expanse he knew nothing more about than he did his jersey and trousers. There wasn't an extra farthing to be had, no jangle of coins to reassure me or guarantee a good meal and rest for the next day's vacation. The day I left our village I did not know when next I would eat!

Nor did I know much about where I was going.

As my life had been spent on the coastline, fishing, so I assumed I would simply make my way up that coastline to the next town. As long as there was coast, there should be fish, and I was eager to try and make my own way through this tangle we call life. As night fell, it found me wandering into the tiny port of Bournemouth. Now, for a bumpkin such as I were, this was a great city, such as I had never seen before. The size! The grandeur! I was taken with it all. And, as it were early evening, I walked the streets, checking all the houses by the ever-dimming twilight before I crept to a barn or field such as I might sleep in that night.

Perhaps it was just to torture myself, but I stopped at every public-house on the row, edging toward the window where I could see people inside, laughing, drinking, eating - and so great was my desire to join them, but without money of any kind, what was I to do? My stomach growled, but I walked on.

It was at such a public-house that, whilst I gaped and stared at those inside, I suddenly found myself at the center of a rather angry disagreement.

And it was a tale of treasure, my friends, oh yes, of gold and jewels such as man had never known. The Marquis knew where to get it, and he needed lads such as there were to crew his ship, the fair tawler "Madelaine," to divers islands where we could find the great reward.

Ah! Such grand companions! Though the least man among them, and hardly a man at that, I was bursting with pride to sit at a table with such nobles! Never had eye seen such finery! Never had ears heard so soft and genteel a tone as that of the Marquis as he held court at that table!

I had never laid eyes on such a marvellous person.... He led me in to the public-house, where the smells of food and the warmth of the fire threatened to overwhelm me. Soon I would be unconscious like the sailor outside, drowned in a sea of happy sighs and smiles. With Fortune at last on my side, I was able to keep my wits and follow the Marquis to his table. Mead! Drink! And fine companions! Ah! Such luck befell on Cappy Dick at that moment!



A crack as loud as thunder preceded the ejection of a sailor from the house with such force and so little warning that I, unfortunate occupant of the space before the door, became an unhappy obstacle in the path of the man, now sailing through air and not the sea, catching me in my midsection and ensuring we both became a tangle of limbs in the middle of the street. The man's assailant was at the door, calling out, "Such perfidy! Villain! Don't let him get away!"

Dazed, I was, but as it seemed this command was meant for me, and as I was, in those days, generally amiable to requests, I made move to contain the sailor, whose pugnacious countenance and evil-smelling breath had not endeared me to him. The fall had taken much of the fight out of this brute, and it was easy to keep him at bay.

Then I got a look at the man who was in such disagreement with my flying companion. I had never laid eyes on such a marvellous person. Dressed in rich robes, bedecked with the finery of the day, the Marquis was so elegant, so impressive, that I almost dropped the arms of the man I was restraining. The Marquis smoothed his sharp little moustaches and approached my captive

He snorted, and lifted the chin of the groggy man so that he could look in his eyes. With the other hand he reached for the man's purse and snapped the cord free. He considered the heft of it, and shook it to hear the coins jingle. I became aware that my sailor was, in fact, already unconscious, either from drink or abuse, and that I was holding him up the entire time.

Pleased with the contents of the purse, the Marquis let a gentle smile overtake him, and he motioned for me to let the body fall into the gutter. Then he clapped his hand to my shoulders. "Good lad!" he crowed. "How happy that you have allowed me to collect my debt from this unruly blackguard! And so shall you be rewarded! Come and join me at my table!"