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No. 1

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Cover illustration for “The Beast Plants”  
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**The May Issue Will Be On Sale April 10**



# The Devil

# of the Western Sea

By PHILIP M. FISHER

"Stop both engines. Away the boarding party!" the captain shouted

Time rolled back four centuries before the startled eyes of the Destroyer Shoshone's crew. Were they trapped forever in the past, or had they sailed into an eerie time-mirage from which they could escape?

## FOREWORD

**E**VENTS of the past sometimes have in them things strangely prophetic of the present.

Some one will probably say to that

statement: "Oh, yes. Ben Franklin, with his kite string, brought electricity from the clouds to his finger tips—and now we have the radio. What of that?"

But I do not mean the statement to be construed that way. Were I to re-word the

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thought, then, I might better say and perhaps more clearly, that there are certain strange occurrences of the years gone by that may be linked with, and are peculiarly explainable by, certain perhaps unusual events of today.

Please do not take that last as a gratuitous insult. The blame of it lies with me. I simply desire to be clear; to be very clear, indeed, for I wish all to understand with the same clarity that I understand myself, so that you, too, may come to agree with me in my conclusion.

There have been strange incidents in the past. There are strange events of today. It is my belief, sincere and frank, that between certain of those of the past and these of the present there lies a definite and explainable relationship.

There is in the archives of *La Academia de Historia* in Madrid, a manuscript, penned in a monkish hand upon parchment brittle and yellowing with age, that tells of one event of the past. It is one of many written by the professional historian, Francisco Verdugo de Coloma, and bears the quaintly characterized date of: *12 de Abril del año 1564*. It is entitled: *Otra Occurencia Misteriosa de los Mares Occidentales*. And that it cites a case in point, the case in point, is my frank and whole-souled belief.

The following excerpt, a rather crude translation I fear, contains the very pertinent *résumé* that I would bring to your attention. Read it if you will, and carry its simple story with you as you continue on. And pardon if I persist and repeat. I want you to understand, and, when you finish, agree.

. . . . And thus, gray and forbidding, it rushed upon them. A monster of the deep, high-headed and huge, lean-bodied, and in length even as the greatest ship of the fleet; and as it approached in the dying sun, taking on by its awful witchcraft something of the appearance of a diabolic serpent ship—glowing, fiery eyes from head to tail, spouting black smoke as it roared down upon His Majesty's vessels,

and snorting and bellowing as with rage at this invasion of its hunting grounds.

In pious supplication they fell upon their knees and begged forgiveness of Beloved Mary and of God and the Son of God, and the priests gave to all the final sacraments, then made exhortation that this hellish demon be conquered by the guns. Thus the fleet belched forth all its artillery, and the priests on bow and poop displayed the crucifix, and pronounced the curse of God.

At this the monster swerved somewhat from its onward rush so as to point its great head upon the middle of the fleet. The horrid panting of its breath came clearly across the waters, and a raucous, intermittent note as of sobbing reached their ears. Whereupon the priests exhorted with redoubled effort, and held the crucifix on high, and the cannon roared again.

At this the fiery eyes of the devil tight closed, and it emitted a scream as of the fear of God. Yet it rushed on and on, cleaving the sea and piling wave upon wave—then passed through our fleet, disturbing the equilibrium of the galleons with the lashings of its tail so that the priest Francisco de Casceres fell into the sea bearing his crucifix with him, and then he disappeared from sight.

At this all men fell upon their knees and besought mercy, thinking they were assuredly lost. And as by fear of the Power of Powers the monster bellowed again, and disappeared in the falling night. And all prayed in thanksgiving.

One hour later came another visitation.

A great white eye appeared, and swept the seas as in searching. It fell upon one galleon, and fixed upon it, growing ever greater and more blinding in the intensity of its devilish glare. Again the guns of the fleet belched forth, and this time the monster eye dimmed.

Shortly, mid awful fires, the Cristobal was seen to tear asunder, and a terrific bellowing roar shook the fleet. The eye peered forth again upon where the Cristobal had been, then dimmed once more. Again the same volcanic roar that shook

the sea, and the *Maria Nuestra* blew asunder, and disappeared. And then another ship, and another, and still others, until eleven of His Majesty's galleons were gone beneath the sea.

In the darkness it seemed that the power of God were as naught before this thing of Satan, and the one galleon afloat, that of the vice-admiral of the fleet, and bearing the choicest treasure from Darien, silenced its guns and fled, hoping that God in His mercy would save them.

But the burning eye sought this last out, and with a great snorting and puffing the monster suddenly appeared and cried out in the voice of man speaking in a bastard Spanish tongue, saying that it was a friend. Whereupon all men fell upon their knees—the devil of the sea, in the clothing of a serpent-ship, ranged alongside, closed in with the galleon, and in a moment more the decks were alive with strangely clad, man-like demons to the number of two hundred. And all crossed themselves, believing that their day had come. But with the deceiving smiles of Satan these man-like spirits of evil made friendly approaches; and undaunted by the courageous priest, proceeded as by preconceived command to different parts of the ship.

Some, much begilded upon the arms, sought out the vice-admiral. Others brought up the treasure. Others still released the English pirate prisoners, and spirited them with the treasure onto the monster itself. Others attached iron ropes to the bow of the galleon and thence to the tail of the loudly breathing demon, whose stench had all but overcome the crew.

And shortly all the man-like things save sixteen returned to the monster, which, with much blowing and stench of smoke, proceeded on again, with His Majesty's ship helpless in tow.

Thus, for the space of twelve hours, when land appeared ahead, and buildings ashore which our officers declared to be of the New World city of Darien in the Panama, which they had left two days before.

Whereupon the sixteen man-like demons bade the anchor be dropped, and our vice-

admiral, helpless under the spell they had cast upon him, complied. The great monster gave a screeching roar, and halted too, close aboard.

Thus for perhaps five minutes, when of a sudden the creature dissolved from sight. And the sixteen man-like demons on board the galleon vanished before the very eyes of our men.

Five men were seen struggling in the waters in the very space where the demon had last lain—but our own vessel heeded them not, believing it but another trick of evil. In haste the anchor was gotten up, and the galleon, favored by winds and the grace of God, made away with all sail. Truly the seas of *Las Indias Occidentales* are in the power of Satan, and it behooves His Majesty well that great fleets be sent with soldiery and priests to rid the water and the land of his evil—

Enough of the manuscript, with its story of the long past year, 1564. Two other paragraphs of it I have reserved to the end. They are more fitting in conclusion than as preface to the rather extraordinary event of the present day that follows.

## CHAPTER I

### SILENCE

THE door of the flagship's radio shack opened softly, and the squadron commander himself stepped in.

At the men's startled looks and movement as to arise, he shook his head and put his finger to his lips. His eyes went swiftly about the little room, then he bent quickly and pulled out a bucket, which he inverted, and sat upon. For a moment he pressed his temples, rubbing them gently as though some slight pain beat in them, or as a man might to soothe a growing perplexity. Then he drew from the pocket of his white coat a radio blank, white, with red lettering, and pored over, and over again, the three short lines in black typing that constituted the message sent up to him the night before. His eyes flashed

once to the clock on the port bulkhead over the phones. And his lips moved slowly for the first time.

"Three—o'clock!"

The words were barely audible, yet the startled glances of the two operators betrayed their alertness, and that they had heard—and understood.

In the silence the squadron commander watched the radio officer as he tuned and retuned, as the key punctuated the hot hiss of the sparkling apparatus.

Suddenly the officer reached and pulled the switch that broke the sending contacts. Then he jerked off the head gear with a grunted oath.

"Not a damn thing, Biggins!"

The first class radio electrician leaped from his seat on the desk by the phones. "Sir?"

"Either I'm crazy, Biggins, or their radio is on the bum, or they've gone to the bottom of the sea with all hands. Take the watch—you know the stuff better than I do. Keep tryin', every second on the jump. You know what the matter is now, and we've got to get something or the old man'll go crazy with all—"

Something in Biggins' eyes made him swing about. At sight of the squadron commander he stopped short, his eyes wide open, his jaw dropped.

"Captain, I—"

The squadron commander raised his hand with a smile, nodding toward the set. "Nothing, Gordon?"

Lieutenant Gordon shook his head.

"Not a single word, captain. Not a single word. I don't understand it. They were in first rate condition when they went out. The experiments went O. K. And that message came through—that—"

"I know," said the captain, "Tuned to perfection. Quite ready to try it out."

There was a short silence, broken only by the hiss of the spark as Biggins sent out the call.

The squadron commander cleared his throat. "You are quite sure this set is in working order?"

Lieutenant Gordon nodded emphatically.

"Absolutely, sir. I tested that out this morning at eleven. Had 'em semaphore to the Apache to open up, and we exchanged spark and phone for ten minutes. We're all right, captain, I know that. It's this other—thing. This—"

"The Apache's pretty close. How about your distance?"

The squadron commander shook his head in perplexity.

"Got Guantanamo with the spark at eleven-thirty, captain. I know we're all right, sir," insisted the lieutenant.

"Better let one of the other ships try to reach them."

"I did, sir." Gordon threw out his hands. "Between twelve noon and two o'clock, I had four of 'em open up in half-hour watches. They couldn't get a thing, sir. And since then I've been at the set myself. And still nothing doing. It's three fifteen now."

"They were due at eight o'clock this morning," the captain mused aloud. His eyes flashed to the clock. "And now—three sixteen. Seven hours since they should have dropped anchor. And nothing but silence since nine o'clock last night."

Slowly his black eyes met Gordon's. "Their position when they sent this message would put them not a hundred and sixty miles due east, at the most. One hundred and sixty miles—at fifteen knots—ten hours. They should have anchored before eight this morning."

**G**ORDON stared at him in sympathy. The thing had been done by department order. It was not the squad. com.'s fault in any possible way. But, still, he had the responsibility.

"That—that message—" Gordon nodded to the radio blank—"it says that the experiment was successful, doesn't it, sir?"

The captain nodded heavily.

Gordon went on: "The Cheyenne and the Hopi got in at two. Nothing from them, sir? They found nothing?"

"Nothing, Gordon."

The radio officer swung about to Biggins, who was now listening, his head cocked to

one side, one hand upon the wave dial, in the other a pencil ready at the pad.

"Anything doing, Biggins?"

The first class lifted one ear receiver.

"What's that, sir?"

"Do you get anything?"

"Not a thing, sir. It's just kind of—silent, sir."

## CHAPTER II

### RADIO

WHEN Professor Antonio Callieri first brought his discovery to the Navy Department he was listened to with patient interest. But when he was finally ushered to the door his heart was heavy within him. He had failed utterly.

He knew what wide sweeping effect upon all radio communication his discovery would have. He knew of the inestimable value it would be to any single world power into whose hands its secret would fall. And to America, the America that had done so much for world peace, he had dearly wished that secret to come. He swore within himself that he would yet persist. He would try again. And to that end he must get some one trusted by the United States Navy to help him.

Professor Callieri finally found his man. And through the medium of this man's understanding and his high influence, the navy came into control of the secret of what has come to be known as the Callieri Cool Wave.

Of the secret itself we have but little to say here, save for the fact that through it the strange relationship between events of the past and certain ones of the present have come, in my mind, at least, to be as clear as day.

Suffice it to say, then, that through the sifting of the ordinary electric wave through a peculiar, tube-like device, it was made possible to send through the ether a new type of wave impulse which could not be picked up by any other apparatus than one embodying with it the Callieri Detector. That should be sufficient—by its

medium—the intricate processes of coding and decoding messages in time of war might be entirely obviated. Messages could be transmitted in the ordinary manner, alien ears could not even detect their presence in the atmosphere, and alien minds would be none the wiser.

A destroyer was fitted with a sending and a receiving set. Another destroyer simply had the detector.

The place chosen for the experimental work was the Caribbean side of the Isthmus of Panama, and the work was to go on in a natural way, so that no outsider might suspect. The destroyer Shoshone, in whose radio shack had been connected the complete apparatus, was simply to proceed to sea for a couple of days' engine trial; the destroyer Osage, with the Callieri Detector only, would remain at anchor off Colon. The Shoshone would send, the Osage receive. If at any time during the trials it was deemed necessary to communicate from the Osage side, it were but by the simple cutting of an electrical contact that the ordinary radio would be put into play.

As suggested, it was done.

At eight on the morning of March 6, the Shoshone put to sea, fully equipped. The day was peaceful, weather no warmer than as ordinarily in the tropics, sea placid and gleaming like cut sheet lead under the slanting rays of the early sun. The meteorological observatory for the canal prophesied calm conditions, with no appreciable change in temperature. It seemed a splendid day for the experiment.

Everything turned out as Professor Callieri had declared it would. The Shoshone sent continuously, alternating between the usual radio wave and the new type. The Osage received all the messages sent. The Apache, lying at anchor within three hundred yards of the Osage, received only the messages coming by the ordinary medium. Between were blanks. No sound. Nothing to work on. Nothing to tune in. Simply blanks of utter radio silence. But the Osage caught all, and with the Callieri Detector filled in the blanks.

It was an unqualified success.

At eight o'clock that evening the Shoshone sent in her position report to the squadron commander. And at nine she radioed that she would be with him at eight o'clock the next morning.

From that point on it were best that an eyewitness take up the narrative.

Lieutenant Graham Hardwick, Medical Corps, U. S. Navy, attached to the Shoshone as division doctor, told me the tale in the first case, and was kind enough to repeat it, in my presence, so that a yeoman stenographer might take it down verbatim. With some slight editing, his story of the rather extraordinary occurrences following the last message sent in to the squadron commander follows. Recall again the account of Francisco Verdugo de Coloma, penned in the year 1564, as you read on. The relationship, to me, is overwhelming. Follow on, and see if you, too, will not believe.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE TERROR SUN

THE experiment had been a success.

I, myself, was the first to have the pleasure of grasping Professor Callieri by the hand in congratulation, and I thrilled to find him trembling with emotion. He was so happy. His work had been well received, his trial fully approved. And the country of his adoption was the richer and more powerful through his brain and through his effort. The tears almost welled into my eyes as I noted that his own lashes were blinking wet with them. The day augured to be a great one in our naval history.

At nine o'clock that evening all the data had been tabulated, all the signatures down.

At once the commanding officer radioed to the squadron commander that the Shoshone would arrive in Colon at about eight the next morning, and standard speed was run up on the engine room telegraphs. We turned our bows almost due west, and

were shortly making our fifteen knots. The sea was smooth, the evening clear, though without moon, the temperature the customary tropical eighty-one. The day itself had been ideal for the work carried on—with no atmospheric eccentricities to interfere.

It was at this time that the professor requested permission to go to the radio shack for the purpose of trying an experiment that he intimated had been long in his mind, but that he had never attempted because of lack of such powerful equipment as a destroyer carried.

I know now something of the work he intended to do, and though I am no radio expert I can say at least that it entailed the conjoining of his own cool wave with that of the ordinary apparatus in such a manner that all other ordinary radio waves in the ether might be neutralized. The benefit of such a condition is easily seen. We could send our own secret messages in time of war or peace, then absolutely blank off the atmosphere to the passage of any alien work.

But the main point I desire to make is that this neutralization was to be effected by a combination of the ordinary wave impulse with the Callieri Cool Wave. The *combination*, you understand. It had never been tried on a large scale—it was a virgin experiment.

So the professor was given a free hand, and went below. It was past nine o'clock.

I remained on the bridge enjoying a cigar with the officer of the deck, and chatting over a coming boar hunt we were to have south of the canal during the coming weekend. We had been talking for perhaps ten minutes in the darkness of the bridge, with the black satin of the Caribbean spreading out ahead and about the ship, and the diamond stars projecting just above our heads as though ready for any plucking hand, when suddenly we found ourselves half blinded by a dazzling light in the west.

That sounds rather trite, perhaps. Blinded by a dazzling light in the west. But I assure you that it was not a trite thing

to us—coming out of the deepening shadows of the night.

The sea suddenly sprang from the deepest black to the shimmering blue of day, and the long lance-like reflections from that light were momentarily torture to our eyes. The fo'c'sle of the ship leaped into life, and I could see the men asleep on their cool mats about the number one four-inch, one or two raised on their elbows staring, as was I.

I gasped. I felt that I had fallen asleep, and was in the midst of a strange dream. Half stupefied, I turned to the men about me.

And then I felt a spasmodic clutch at my right arm. The suddenness of it made me jump.

It was Ronleigh, who had the deck, and staring out as though mad with wonder, and with terror, too. It was not a dream—it was true; unbelievable, but true.

That dazzling light was the sun, the *sun*—and yet that same sun had set three hours before!

"God!" The word came from Lieutenant Ronleigh's lips. It was not an oath. It was more a prayer.

"Doc!" he suddenly shouted in my ear. "Tell me I'm awake! Tell me I'm sane. Tell me I am alive. The sun. The *sun*. Daylight! And not three hours ago—it *set*—a minute ago—a minute back it was—night! Doc!"

I could not answer. The ship was ahum with new life. Cries from fore and aft. Running of feet. The captain appeared, his face drawn and white, and a look of wonder in his eyes that I never wish to see again. Wonder in which was mingled a peculiar light of almost mystic awe, of fear.

Came a rush of feet, and more cries of astonishment. The bridge was crowded with our officers and those who had come aboard for the purpose of witnessing Calieri's experimenting.

For perhaps five minutes no man uttered a word.

And during those five minutes the sun slowly sank toward the western horizon,

sank again toward its resting place beyond the seas. At six five it had slid once from sight, and night had closed in with its tropic alacrity, the day was done. And here—here at nine fifteen of the same night, three hours after it had let darkness have full sway, the sun was once more sinking toward its western harborage. An hour more, and it would set again.

*Again!*

Unbelievable! And yet—there it was. And one hundred and twenty sane men standing in wonder and in fear. I felt that if the deck were to open up beneath my feet and precipitate me suddenly to life in the center of the earth my wonder could not be greater. The sun—out of the darkness of the night—breaking out of the black western sky—come again to bring the day. Dropping now—setting for a *second* time!

Unbelievable. Yet, there it was!

**W**ITH a sudden oath the captain leaped for the annunciators, and jerked the signal to stop. There came no answering swing of the indicators. He turned savagely on the port lookout.

"Get down there and get those men on the job! Call for the engineer officer. On the jump!"

The lad stared the captain full in the face, his jaw unhinged, his pale blue eyes wide open in a sightless stare. Then, without a sound, he collapsed on the deck.

I jumped to his side.

"Fainted, captain," I said quickly in answer to the latter's dumbstruck look of wonder. "One of you help me into the emergency cabin with him. Get water—I'll bring him 'round."

At that moment the engineer appeared, coatless, disheveled, black, swiped with grease. Some one else had collected the wit to call.

"You wanted me, captain?"

Captain Williams turned upon him with that dazed look still in his eyes. The lad with me suddenly groaned, and raised his head.

"What is the matter with — with —



things?" he demanded, groping vaguely with an outstretched hand.

The captain knelt by his side, disregarding Lieutenant Porter, who was mopping the sweat from his forehead with a bit of oily waste.

"It's all right, lad," the captain said. "Here, you!" He turned to the other lookout. "Help this lad below."

The officer of the deck, suddenly alive, cried over the port sill to the men crowded on the fo'c's'le.

"Tell the bosun's mate of the watch to hustle up another lookout!"

The captain turned to the engineer.

I expected a tirade. But his voice came softly.

"Porter," he said, "what's the matter in the engine room?"

The lieutenant rubbed his hands with his bit of waste.

"Sir, the men—they saw—they heard that it—was—was shining again, and that crazy engineman yelled that it was the day of resurrection and jumped for the deck. I just came from below, sir." His wavering glance fixed upon the engine room telegraph dial. "Your signal's answered, captain. The engines are stopped."

The captain's eyes followed the engineer's. He nodded without a word. Then he stepped slowly over to the telegraphs, paused behind the stand as though in uncertainty—and it was the first time I had ever seen Commander Williams act thus—then slowly put the arrow at standard speed again.

"Ronleigh!"

"Sir?" returned the officer of the deck, alert now.

"Call down to the engine room to prepare for full speed on the two boilers lit off!"

"Aye, aye, sir!"

The captain turned to me.

"Medico, what in the name of Heaven does this mean?"

He waved to the sinking sun.

I shook my head. His eyes dropped. Then he gave a short cough, and shrugged his shoulders.

"Ronleigh!"

The officer of the deck clamped the voice tube cap down.

"Get back on your course. We'll open her up wide when they're ready below."

"Aye, aye, sir."

The captain turned to us again. "Where's Callieri?" he demanded.

"In the radio shack—when we—left it, captain."

"He's a man of science. Ask him what this means."

**T**HE assistant squadron radio officer was back in ten seconds, whiter of face than before, consternation in his eyes.

"The professor is dead, sir," he gasped. "Dead!"

The man nodded, rubbing his hands and twisting them, his eyes peering over the captain's shoulder at the dying sun.

"Lying across the radio desk, captain. I thought he had just fainted, like—like the lad they took below—but I think he's dead, sir."

"Doctor—"

But I was already halfway down the ladder.

I stooped over the professor who had worked the wonder in radio that we had seen that day—the day before—the second day—I found myself in doubt. The body of Antonio Callieri was sprawled over the desk-like shelf before the instrument board, one hand on the key, the other evidently fallen from one of the tuning dials just above. The shack was deserted but for his quiet form.

I touched him. His body was tense and hard to my hand. The thought flashed to me: *rigor mortis* could not set in so soon. I seized Callieri's pulse, and breathed a sigh of relief.

The inventor was not dead. But something—perhaps he had unwittingly made contact with a bare wire and the shock—or the experiment he wanted to try. I could not tell. I saw no connection then between his own accident and the extraordinary return of day.

I laid him down on one of the radio

operator's bunks, and applied restorative. To my infinite relief his eyes opened, and a breath of a sigh escaped his lips.

I confess that my gladness was so much that I might again go topside and see that miraculous second setting of the sun as it was that the man was alive. Five minutes I stayed, with my hospital apprentice under instruction as to the professor's care.

Then came a sudden hubbub on deck. A loud outcry. Then another. A chorus of them.

I suddenly felt the ship leap throbbingly beneath me, tremulous as with a newly invigorated life.

I bent over Professor Callieri and asked him how he felt.

"Bettair, bettair, doctor. I—I but wondair what ees t'ees light—eet ees anothair day, no? I haf been vairee eel?"

I saw at once that I had better not inform him just yet of the unheard of situation outside.

"It's all right, professor," I whispered. "Just take it easy for half an hour or so, and we'll have you on your feet."

Again came a cry from topside. And a chorused shout.

Then the ship heeled. She was swinging off to one side! Where? Why? The captain had just said that we would go on.

Came a rush of feet, and the sudden clang of an iron hatch cover.

A long scream of the siren.

I rushed from the radio shack, and scrambled to the bridge.

The dying sun was about me. The sun—that unbelievable sun—was turning golden as it neared its journey's end.

Every man on the bridge was staring out to port, and I noted that the ship's head was swinging in that direction.

I seized somebody's arm. "Quick! Shall I get the professor up? Are we in danger?"

He raised his arm and pointed.

"There! Look! Of all the wonders of heaven, what will happen next? Look there!"

I looked in the direction he indicated, and stiffened once more in rigid astonishment and awe—and with somewhat of

fear, too, for who could dream of what terrible thing would yet come?

## CHAPTER IV

### THE CRASH OF GUNS

NOT a mile away was a fleet of ships. But such ships!

Twelve of them I counted, twelve ships in a fleet. Men of war? Surely not—not men of war. Men of war in this day do not carry sail. And yet—merchantmen? Merchantmen do not go to sea in peace times in groups of twelve.

I stepped beside the captain, using my doctor's privilege.

"Captain," I began. "What—"

He turned his blank eyes upon me, and shrugged his shoulders.

"We're going to find out," he said grimly.

I stared.

High pooped, deep bellied, tall bowed—twelve ships. Four masted—two towering from the waist; two tiny ones—at stem and stern. From the former, great, ballooned sail; from the latter, smaller spreads of rounded canvas. And all—all reflecting crimson gold in the flame of the second sinking of the sun.

Where had I seen such ships before? Where in my life—*Such* ships!

We were approaching fast, the Shoshone pulsing to her engine's turn. I glanced at the engine room annunciators. Full speed! I reflected. Two boilers. That would mean nearly thirty knots! Automobile speed.

The vessels grew larger. We could see details.

Banners whipping. Colors. Crimsons. Golds.

Guns—peering from battlemented ports. Guns that gleamed golden in the sun. Brass cannon—or bronze.

Figures. Movement about the decks. Men!

The Shoshone heeled again. We were almost upon them, not five hundred yards away, running on a parallel course.

The captain gave a great oath. "By heaven, what flag is that they fly?"

I stared at the banners of the nearest ship. Those colors! Crimson and gold.

As I opened my mouth, came a gasping cry at my side.

"Galleons!"

It was Professor Callieri, rigid, one arm outstretched stiffly.

We rushed down their flank. Every eye was upon the strange vessels.

I stared at the captain. His knuckles shown white on the port sill. The word had broken from him as though forced by some other power than his own will. He was staring out upon the extraordinary apparition as though transfixed with wonder. His face twitched.

Suddenly he whipped about to us. "Gentlemen!" he cried. "Galleons—a fleet of old Spain! Four hundred years ago! Understand? And that sun—that sun—setting for us a second time!"

A thought seized me to which I found I could not give word. What—he could not mean that!

But it must be true. We all saw it. I was not mad. We were not all of us mad.

Movements on the decks of the nearest ship.

A flash. A loud *boom!*

The captain gave a shout.

"By heaven, they're firing on us!" To the officer of the deck: "Ronleigh, Ronleigh, sound general quarters. Get up the gunnery officer. Wheelsman, there! Hard right!"

The raucous, intermittent honking of the general alarm beat through the ship. The gun crews leaped for their guns. Came another clanging of hatch covers. The ammunition parties were at their posts. The gunnery officer appeared at the captain's elbow.

"You want me, captain?"

"How are your torpedoes?" came the quick, incisive demand.

"None with warheads on, sir. But—"

"Get your entire torpedo force on the job. Warheads on. Quick work now, Cowl- ing! Tubes O. K.?"

"Yes, captain."

"Very well."

He turned to the executive officer, who was standing with one hand on a rung of the ladder leading to the fire control station just above.

"Fire control O. K.?"

"O. K., sir."

"Test out all circuits, and let me know when ready."

"Aye, aye, sir. We'll be ready to fire in two minutes, sir."

The captain nodded. "On the job! Action!"

THE captain was himself again.

It was his way. Stories had run much in the wardroom ever since I had been attached to the Shoshone. The captain had ever been this way. In athletics at the Academy—nervous, even frightened, before the crack of the pistol. Then the coolest of the team, the cleanest fighter, the cleverest player, the gamest sportsman of the lot.

In wartime, the same. Nervous in convoy. Yet, when enemy craft were sighted—his destroyer had been the only one in the fleet to gain three gold stars. And now—no longer pale, no longer did his face twitch, no longer did he draw the deep inhalations that a tremulous body found vitally necessary. Cool, alert, concise. To use his own words—on the job.

Another series of flashes from the nearest galleon.

*Boom!*

More fountainlike splashes at our stern. The captain chuckled.

"They can't gage our speed, poor devils. Lucky." He grinned at our open-eyed faces. "Even those shots would pierce our thin skin." He snapped at the wheelsman, "Head straight through them. Fifteen left. A touch more. There—there—s-t-e-a-d-y—right on. Mr. Ronleigh, keep her so. Pass the fifth ship in line just astern." He chuckled. "Give 'em a thrill. Don't want to use our fire unless I have to. Ready, though."

He was utterly transformed.

How did he do it? I myself was still too overcome by the utter mystery of the situation really to come to normal perception of things about me. That first sunset—gleaming gold. Then three hours of clear-cut, moonless night. Then, as by a flash of lightning, a second day within the night. The sun, the same sun, riding low in the western heavens, going a second time to rest. A new day, a different day. And then this.

Had we actually been by some miraculous agency shunted four hundred years back into the past? Impossible! Such things were written about by highly strung imaginations. The imaginations for the greater part of temperamental individuals who had dedicated themselves to the study of social science, and in that study dreamed long and oft of Utopias, past, present and future, that would best suit their own peculiar idiosyncrasies. But as for really going back—impossible.

And yet here was our ship, a modern steel destroyer capable of express train speed and volcanic destruction, headed straight between two towering galleons of Old Spain in a day that should really be night! What did that mean?

*Boom!*

Again the flashing and the bellow of guns.

Again the high-fountained sea in our spreading wake. Ha! Speed. How could they, with those lumbering barges they called ships, judge our thirty knots and train their guns to hit? And yet, at that, I thanked the captain's judgment when he headed straight for the fleet, exposing naught but a knifelike bow to their fire.

We were almost upon the galleon fifth in line now. And on its towering poop, as high as our destroyer's bridge, climbed a man. He stood erect by the gilded and carven rail. Black-gowned, and shaven-headed—not a hundred feet away as we rushed by—he raised aloft a crucifix, shining gold in the setting sun. We passed with an echoing roar. The giant waves of our wake reached the galleon. She felt the sudden impulse and rolled. With a cry

which we heard even above the droning roar of our engine room blowers, the priest fell into the sea, his symbol flashing on high, last to disappear beneath the heaving water.

Some fool at this moment pulled the siren cord, and with the wail of a devil the steam screamed forth. We could make out that men fell upon their knees on the Spaniard, while another priest in black robes rushed to the bulwarks and held aloft another thing that gleamed golden in the sun. The courage of faith!

Then: *Boom! Boom!*

Came a crash over head, then the creaking squeal of tortured timber, and in another moment the foremast raised havoc with the number three gun on the midships deck house.

"Wow!" the captain cried, his face lighting up. "This is good!"

I stared at him, and Professor Callieri, seeming well over whatever had rendered him unconscious in the radio shack when first the night had become day, gripped him by the sleeve.

"*Dios!* Thee radio eet ees gone! *Capitàn*, do you not fight, sair? American do not run, sair!"

The captain looked down upon the little naturalized American.

"We have three guns left as a port broadside," he said with a smile. "They have twenty in each. At close range they could send us to the bottom inside of two minutes. At long range—" he shrugged his shoulders, "but we won't do that. Those poor devils—not a chance, not a chance. We'll go back, and try to make a truce—"

He broke off suddenly, his eyes to the westward. I followed his glance. All of us did, I think. The sun's rim was just touching the horizon. The ship rushed on; the galleon fleet, still flashing fire, fell back. A moment more and darkness fell as in sudden eclipse.

A gunner's mate stepped beside the captain, and saluted.

"Mr. Cowling reports six torpedoes ready in their tubes for action, sir."

The captain started with a slight grunt. "Humph! Good work. Report when all are ready. May not use 'em now, but tell Mr. Cowling to have 'em ready."

"Aye, aye, sir." The lad saluted and leaped away.

THE captain turned to me.

"That sun—another day—another age—I can't go back and destroy those ships. I can't. Not the game. Not sport."

Callieri broke in again.

"But, *capitàn*, they did shoot at you, sair. They haf break thees radio. They—"

"I know, I know, professor. But they're men from a different age. They don't know what or who we are. They don't know our power. Probably take us for some kind of a devil. Undoubtedly. Smoke, and all that. Too much advantage. And—" He looked about him with a peculiar light in his eyes which shone even in the darkness that now enveloped the bridge. "Who can tell? This came on us in a flash. Who can tell but that in another flash we'll be—back? And we can't destroy fellows like that. We don't belong. They are in the past—we—by accident— No. No. I'll go back shortly and we'll try to make a truce and find out. It's interesting, astonishingly interesting. But as to their destruction—no, no."

Callieri's face tightened.

"But, *capitàn*, they haf broke thee mast down by t'eir shot. They haf thus stop radio from all work, sair. Ees t'at not enough for make war upon t'em, sair? They shoot upon thee flag of my adopted countrie, sair. They—"

The captain stopped him with an upraised hand.

"Professor, think a minute. Did they ever see that flag before? Remember, they're of the past. How, I don't know. But they're more mystified than we. We know what *we* are. We know what *they* are. They only know their own present, and we are of their future. A devil. A monster of the unknown seas. Remember those stories even the men with Columbus brought back? Monsters. They'll go home

and tell 'em hair-raising tales of the sea monsters belching fire and smoke and rushing down upon them with the speed of wind, raising the sea in tidal waves with the tremendous whipping of their tails. You see, professor?"

Slowly the little Italian nodded. Yet I do not doubt that it was for the love of his adopted land, the country to which he had given his great radio secret, the life of his life, that he pleaded for vengeance upon the guns that had fired upon us. But the captain's point of view was right. We had to play the game. We were supermen. We were gods. We could forgive, we could be merciful—for we understood the condition, though the cause was yet enwrapped in mystery.

Callieri's hand shot out. "I would shake your hand, *capitàn*," he said gravely.

And the captain as gravely took it in his own. "We will play the game," he repeated, quietly.

At that moment one of the crew stepped before me.

"Doctor! On the galley deck house, sir. Mr. Rowland! He was in the crow's nest for spotting if we fired. He's pretty badly—"

"*What!*" The captain turned upon the lad fiercely.

"Yes, sir. That's his G.Q. station, captain—in the crow's nest—for'ard spotter. And when the mast was shot down he—"

"Is he badly—"

"We just found him, sir, forgot all about him being there, heard him groan."

The old man swung upon me. "Doctor, get Rowland out of that. Get him out. By Heaven!" He turned to the galleon fleet just discernible in the gloom astern of us.

"By Heaven! Young Rowland! If they—Wheelsman! Hard left! On the jump." He leaped from under the bridge overhead, and called up to the executive officer who had the fire control. "Get ready there!"

"Ready now, sir!"

Captain Williams' face was grim as I hurried away. Young Rowland with whom he played chess every evening after dinner, hurt. I well understood the old man's love

for the lad. And when the foremast fell, young Rowland—medical officer though I be, I found myself shudder at the thought. Rowland, the life of the ship!

And the captain determined now to fight. Changed his mind. A clean sport—but young Rowland. Fight. Fight now. Revenge upon these fools of a bygone age. Revenge. A lesson.

I rushed to the youngster's side, and found that I had to cling hard to the rail of the ladder communicating with the gun deck of the galley deck house, for the Shoshone was heeled twenty degrees with the rudder hard aport. The captain was going back. No truce now. Fight. Fight. One against twelve. And fight.

Odds? Glorious!

## CHAPTER V

### DESTRUCTION

**T**HE ship steadied as I reached Rowland. I knew that we then must be heading straight back for the galleon fleet. With my heart pounding with excitement, I leaned into the rushing wind and gazed ahead, trying to penetrate the darkness. The Spaniards were almost invisible in the sudden fall of night.

As I bent over my young friend a sputtering crackle reached my ears even over the roaring of the fire room blowers. Then came a glow of white light, and from forward shot out the long white finger of the searchlight, keenly penetrating the gloom before us in search of the craft that had lain the ship's favorite low.

No bones broken. A bruise, welling purple in the aura of radiance sent back by the intense light from the bridge overhead, showed on Rowland's left temple. With what little skill I possessed I determined to my own satisfaction that though the lad's skull might be fractured, it was not damaged to such an extent that the dear life within would find exit.

I breathed a sigh of relief. And yet the thing was dangerous enough. On the destroyer, if bad came to worse, there were

no conveniences for proper surgery. We must wait until we reached port in the morning—then the naval hospital on the beach, and proper care and treatment. Silence, above all things. And absolute motionlessness. If only the old man would et these ghost galleons go and head straight back for—a terrifying thought struck me.

*Go back?*

Where?

Go back—to what place? We were not in the present. We were in the past. How, Heaven alone held that mystery. But four hundred years must lie between us and going back. But one thing to do—

*Boom!*

The man beneath my hand groaned, and I with him.

Shooting. Then I started. The ship had not trembled with that "*Boom!*" We had not fired. It was the fire of that ancient—

We hurried Rowland below to his stateroom and made him as comfortable as our small conveniences would permit. There was little I could do save bandage his head, and give him something that would keep him restful until we reached port.

Reached—I shook my head again, and gave utterance to a fervent oath. Would we ever reach the port we knew—Colon? And if we did reach the place where we had known Colon to be, would Colon yet be there? Four hundred years, and years are not miles. Time does not speed up.

Time, the mysterious, the unchangeable, the relentless, the absolute. Beginning—a brain stunning infinity of eons in the past. Continuing—a soul scourging infinity of infinities into the future. Coming from—going to—God alone knew; and I, in the then shriveled state of my own mind and soul, began to doubt that there was a God.

Time—time was the god. Time willed, and it was by Time's will that we, on a modern destroyer of the finest type, were even now speeding to give battle to a fleet of ships that had passed into oblivion four hundred years ere our own ship slid from the ways into the sea.

*Boom!*

Rowland had fallen under the power of

the opiate, and I left him in charge of his Filipino boy and stumbled down the passageway into the wardroom—ghostly blue now, with the battle lamps close to the deck. I shuddered. Ghostly. Galleons. And the sun breaking out of the black night.

Even as I stepped upon the deck and turned for the ladder leading up to the bridge, the Shoshone heeled again. I dashed up. We were swinging to the right again, and a great galleon, crimson sailed, stood out like a bloody spectre in the piercing column of blinding white from the forward searchlight. Came a series of flashes from the galleon's bellied sides; deep-throated concussions; the awkward whish of their slow arching projectiles as they flew overhead.

The galleon was almost on our beam when the captain, who had been standing by one of the devices near the flag rail peering out to port, suddenly bent his head to the voice tube.

"Let go!"

Came a slight jerk under foot, followed by a gentle cough.

A curious trembling shook me as I peered out upon that ill-fated warrior of old Spain; a mingling of hope and horror. Then the thought of young Rowland suffering down below stiffened me.

Not five hundred yards were we when abeam of the crimson-sailed apparition of the past. And perhaps a minute passed from the time the shock of discharge came to us through the slender frame of the Shoshone.

Then the strange picture on the screen of the searchlight, suddenly fell in upon itself. The great masts tottered, the decks upheaved, shattered fragments flew up to greet the drooping canvas. A great muffled roar—shivering deck—silence. And when the searchlight flashed out again, where the galleon had been—naught but the heaving sea.

"Next!"

The captain's order. Cool. Inexorable.

The white finger of the searchlight slid back and forth, dallying now and again as the electricians in charge thought they

had located another of the doomed fleet, sweeping the sea in great horizon-parallel-ing paths. Then steadied. Shifted a bit to the right.

And another picture stood forth in the glare.

The rudder was put to right fifteen. Shortly afterward, back amidships; and we swept on broadside to the second galleon of the fleet. The roaring flashes of the ancient guns broke forth again, and the captain cursed.

"If they hit! If they hit! By Heaven, gentlemen— Hello, Hello, doctor! How's the boy?"

Even as he peered through the directing telescope, one hand reached out and clutched at my sleeve.

"As well as can be expected, captain. Of course there is danger of a fracture of the skull. He's quiet down below, sir."

**A** GAIN the old man swore a terrible oath.

"For that—it's for that I'm doing this. Hellish. Not sport. But they brought it upon themselves. We would have been friends. Investigation. For history. Photographs. Wonderful. But—Rowland—Rowland."

He suddenly leaned to the voice tube again.

"Let go!"

Another jerk underfoot, another muffled cough.

And in a minute more came a second detonation. The crimson sails of the second galleon folded in upon her like a shroud, and as though a giant hand had plucked her by the keel she went beneath the sea.

"Next!"

The captain's implacable word came clear and vengeful again.

Horrible! I thought to protest. This kind of warfare was not honorable. Murder. And yet they had fired upon us first. They had all but killed one of our company. They were firing even now, aiming, I suppose, for the source of the gleaming column of light. But, poor devils, little did they know what they were up against.



"When the priest had given the final sacraments, he made exhortation that this demon be conquered by our guns. . . ."

Probably, as the old man had said, they thought us evil demons of the sea. That searchlight—I wondered what they thought of that. A giant, peering eye. The eye of a monster that was fed by the flames of its own vitals. The flame of hell itself. Awful—to them! Terrifying! Soul-searing! Worse than death. The eyes of a more horrible Satan than dwelt in the pit. And the brave priests, seeking to hold us back. Pitiful.

And yet—Rowland!

Awful. And if for some reason we could not—did not get back, back to our own times, our own century, then our very lives were dependent upon our making ourselves masters of the sea. Take what we could, make land somewhere—anywhere—while the fuel oil held out, and live as the people of that day lived.

As they lived?

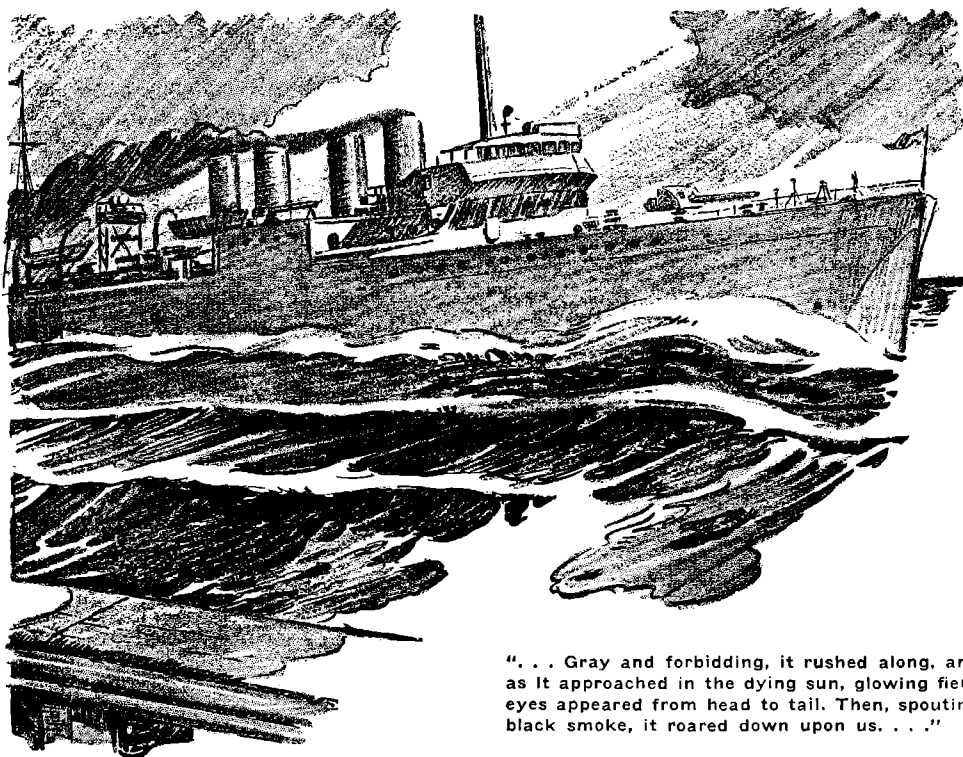
Would we not be supermen even for the sixteenth century? But—what happened to supermen? Wizardry. The stake. Unless they fell in with the priestcraft—wizardry. Inquisition. The fiery stake.

Or—perhaps the ally of kings. Who could tell? Torture, or preeminence. Who could tell?

Three more galleons found their last harborage on the bottom of the Caribbean, in rapid succession. Then came a miss.

The captain swore again. Quickly calmed. "Six torpedoes left. And seven ships."





“. . . Gray and forbidding, it rushed along, and as it approached in the dying sun, glowing fiery eyes appeared from head to tail. Then, spouting black smoke, it roared down upon us. . . .”

The officer of the deck spoke up. “Shall I go about, sir?”

“No, Ronleigh.” The skipper gave a short, dry cough. “If the Lord has seen fit to save that ship, we won’t interfere. There are still six of them ahead.”

A hail from fire control.

“Picked up another, captain.” The exec’s voice came pleadingly. “Can’t I try my four-inch out, captain?”

“No, no.” He turned to the wheelsman: “Make the same approach.”

“Aye, aye, sir.”

“Manson!”

The chief quartermaster jumped before the captain.

“Take the wheel. Come about.”

The old man stepped back from under the overhead of the bridge.

“Fire control.”

The executive officer’s round face showed over the rail above. “Sir?”

“Get that searchlight on the ship we missed. No. 3 four-inch still out of commission?”

“Both telescopes smashed, and the sight bar bent, sir. Can use the port battery best. Three guns there, captain.” The exec’s voice was hoarsely plaintive. “You goin’ to get that last ship?”

The captain shook his head.

“It depends,” he replied enigmatically. “Port side, eh? Get it ready.”

The exec’s voice still held the same note. “Been ready for two hours, captain.”

The captain’s face softened with a flickering smile as he noted the protest in his mate’s tones. And I could sense the exec’s disappointment that only torpedoes had come into the game so far.

“On the job!” cried the old man. “Cut down all crews to the limit, and prepare a boarding party.”

“A *boarding party!* Aye, aye, sir!” Lieutenant Wilson’s voice trembled with eagerness.

**WE** COULD hear his snapped orders to the man at the voice tubes leading to the guns. Then the repeats at the tubes

themselves. A man was sent down to the gunnery officer. Sounds of cheering. A clanking of the steel door of the rifle locker on deck. I saw three men sitting a Lewis gun on its mount between the bridge and the galley deck-house, ready to sweep the decks of a closing ship.

Boarding party!

No wonder the old man had called the chief quartermaster to the wheel. Always did when a ticklish landing was to be made. Had him there when we came through the canal the last time. Three weeks—or was it four hundred years yet to come? By Heaven, the mystery of it. Four hundred years! How? Why?

A hail came from overhead.

"Right on, sir. Shall we fire when we get the range, captain?"

The exec was itching to use his guns. His voice again betrayed him.

The captain shook his head.

"Break out the after-searchlight. Steady both on. Let go a half dozen illumination shells. Give 'em a real scare. If they don't fire, Mr. Wilson, stand by to board."

"Aye, aye, sir."

The sharp crack of the stubby anti-aircraft just forward of the bridge rang out. Shortly came a dull report from the distance, and a dazzling white glow filled the sky just above the last galleon.

*Boom!*

The ancient guns replied.

"Good range with the A A!" cried the captain. "Keep it up. I don't want to send this one to the bottom of the sea. Scare 'em, put the fear of hell into 'em. It's what I want and they need, if they only knew it. We'll get 'em that way. That's the dope. That's the dope! Keep it up. Now both searchlights out. On again. Out again. That's it. Blink our eyes, hang 'em. Blinkin' the sea devil's eyes. The hair's pricklin' on 'em now. More star shells. Light from heaven fallin' on them. Light from heaven.

"Why in the name of decency didn't I think of that in the first place? Keep it up. Good. Good. Stopped firing—they've quit it. All up with 'em now. Devil of the sea's got 'em, and heaven's with the devil

for once. Ha! Avaunt! Avaunt! Won't do any good. Heaven and the devil of the sea—by Heaven, if young Rowland goes under he's been avenged. Hard right, there, chief! Ease her—ease her. Steady. Good. Hold her so."

The captain leaped to the engine room telegraphs, and brought the engines to one-third. The roar of the forced draft blowers sank to a sullen drone. Silence.

"Searchlights on, fore and aft!"

The galleon, not three ship lengths on the port bow, stood out in the ensuing glare.

"Ronleigh!"

"Sir?"

"Take the annunciators."

The officer of the deck, alert, his head cocked toward the old man, seized the levers of the telegraphs.

"Wilson!"

The round face appeared over the rail again.

"Secure fire control temporarily. Come down. Ready boarding party. Ten degrees left, chief."

The captain was leaning over the port wing of the bridge staring over at the galleon. Members of her crew could be seen upon their knees. The sound of a solemn chant drifted to us. Once a long, high-pitched scream, that most terrifying sound, the scream of a man when in the torment of a paralyzing fear. A black figure arose on the galleon's high poop, in his outstretched hand a glowing crucifix. His deep-throated voice boomed across to us. He made the sign of the cross.

Some one muttered on our own bridge, and repeated the sign.

The captain tore out his handkerchief and waved it at the priest. The latter shifted slightly beside the carven rail, and raised his symbol on high.

"Megaphone!"

The captain snatched it from my hand.

"*Amigo!*" he cried as he held it to his lips. Then in his academy Spanish, a sentence or two.

An amazed look came into the priest's face. Slowly his arm descended.

The chanting arose closer in the great deep-bellied ship.

Again the old man cried that he would be their friend. Then: "Stop both engines!"

Ronleigh, at the telegraphs, arched his levers, and brought both at "Stop." The engine's throb ceased. The blowers died away. We slid upon the galleon in silence.

"*Amigo!*" the captain cried again.

A man in resplendent trappings sprang beside the priest. The captain waved his handkerchief again. The Spaniard raised his arms, the palms of his hands toward us. The captain nodded and waved a hand, palm out.

Then swung to the chief at the wheel. "Twenty-five left!"

Then to Ronleigh: "Back full, both!"

The slim Shoshone shuddered throughout her entire length. The churning of the great wheels as they beat with the power of thirty thousand horses to bring the destroyer to a dead stop echoed from the galleon's bulging flanks. The old man's seamanship had ever been of the best. Our nose was against the galleon's side, our stern swung in as the propellers flung the sea against the hard left rudder.

"Stop both. Away the boarding party!" the captain shouted.

And in a moment more, armed to the teeth, our men were scrambling up the great vessel's rounded sides.

## CHAPTER VI

### TREASURE

I'LL admit I was not far behind the executive when he finally leaped, panting and with his automatic ready in hand, upon the decks of that ancient ship.

And the first man to confront us was the priest again.

"*Amigo! Amigo!*" I cried.

The man stared. Then his glance swept about the decks. They were bare—not a man in sight. The crew had evidently fled in terror.

Our own men scattered, in accordance with the prearranged design.

I approached the priest, my automatic dangling from my left hand, my right extended in what I meant to be friendly greeting. He made again the sign of the cross, and muttered some words which I thought to be Latin. Following him, and though not of the Catholic faith myself, I, too, made the sign. The man stared dumbly. I repeated it, and recalling a Spanish exclamation I had often heard in Colon, cried:

"*Salvame Dios!*" And I half knelt before him as I uttered the words.

With a sudden cry the priest stepped to me. I seized his hand and wrung it heartily. Poor fellow—the fear that shone in his eyes in the wide-focused glare of the two searchlights that was upon us! Crossing myself once more, I cried again the same words:

"*Salvame Dios—God save me!*"

"*Dondes es el capitán?*"

Startled, I swung about.

It was our own skipper.

The priest nodded toward the poop.

"*Gracias,*" thanked the captain softly, and bowed. "Come with me, Medico."

I obeyed with alacrity. This was something to see. A Spanish galleon of the sixteenth century—ancient, and yet—of the day in which we now lived—seemed to live—four hundred years. I shook my head. We were here, that was all I could think. On a full-equipped Spanish galleon, on the Caribbean Sea, one hundred and sixty miles from the Isthmus of Panama—from the canal. From the canal? This—we *must* be in the sixteenth century! And the canal—four centuries before it was even dreamed. Good heavens! Would we get back? Would some similar cataclysmic convulsion of the god Time send us back to our own day as it had precipitated us into this?

The priest led the way.

Beneath the poop we followed him.

And I snatched down the hand of a gorgeously clad officer who was in the act of blowing out his brains.

"No, no. *Amigos!*" I pointed to the captain and myself. "*Amigos.*"

The curious fashioned pistol dropped to the floor. The proud Castillian features of the officer clouded with grief. He fell upon a bench by the brocaded table and buried his face in his arms. In pity for him I touched his shoulder. He jerked up, his face aflame.

"*Amigo*," I repeated, indicating the captain. "*Es mi capitàn. Amigo. Friend.*"

The man stood erect and bowed his head.

The old man started a flood of his Spanish. Another silken officer entered the cabin. Three more. They stared at us with wide eyes, listening to the captain's attempts to make them understand, and glancing at each other as in utter mystification.

Then suddenly the priest spoke. Those priests! They had the courage in those days.

The captain motioned him to go slower.

Then answered.

The priest nodded quickly, his alert black eyes snapping.

The captain turned to me, wrinkling his brows.

"They want to know what we did to the other ships. They could see the flash in the darkness, he says, and the collapse of each galleon under the play of our searchlight, and thought that the glaring beam did the thing. What in the devil will I tell 'em? Got to make it as easy as we can, for the priest says they're bent on suicide—could never return to Spain in such disgrace. What'll I say, Medico?"

"Why, tell 'em the truth, captain. That we're men from the future, come back to give them a glimpse of what is to be, and—"

"Good, good!"

And turning to the Spaniards he broke into his modern version of their language again. I watched their faces in the strong light that entered through the great window-like ports facing our own ship. The sorrow gradually fell away, the deep lines of disgrace smoothed from their foreheads. Took their place a look of bewilderment, of mystification again. They glanced at each other as though they could not believe their ears, and I could not in my heart

blame them. Then the priest interrupted with one soft question. The old man thought a moment, then turned to me once more.

The one whom you prevented from blowing out his brains is the vice admiral of this fleet. The others are the ship's officers, and one or two of his staff. They are all firm in that they cannot return to Spain. And they ask if we will take them with us."

That was a poser.

Take them with us!

Into the future? That was their only escape.

Or—a new idea came. This was some time in the sixteenth century. Now—to make sure. A good chance.

"Ask them what year this really is, captain."

The answer came quickly.

"Fifteen hundred and sixty-four. Holy Moses! And we're in it!" The captain's own face showed plainly his wonder, set at last.

He seized the arm of the priest.

"*Es verdad? The truth? Verdad?*"

The black-robed man stared. One of the officers went to a sort of cupboard built against the bulkhead and fetched back a crudely bound book that would have given ecstasy to a collector of our own day. He opened this before the priest, and spoke a sentence or two. Rapidly the priest slipped over the pages, and held out the thing to us.

The captain took it from his hand.

"The ship's log," he exclaimed. "By Jove!"

The priest pointed with a lean white finger.

And in Arabic numerals I read the date of the last entry:

3 de anero de 1564.

**T**HE captain's eye met mine. In silence he returned the book with a nod, then quite suddenly sat him down on the bench.

The priest stepped quickly beside him, dropping a hand upon his shoulder. And

the captain, with all of us looking on in astonishment, reached up and seized it in his own.

Voices from outside.

The exec entered, glancing at us strangely. I indicated the man whom first I had seen.

"The vice admiral," I said.

Wilson looked at me, startled, then bowed gravely. Suddenly I must have recollected that a vice admiral is a great naval officer in any age, stiffened erect, and saluted. The Spaniard's face tightened. Then the vice admiral returned the bow.

"Captain," I went on, breaking the awkward silence that followed, "bad as it seems, we really are bumped back into 1564. In that case something will probably knock us back into our own time again. These fellows say they can't go home, and want us to take them somewhere. Why not put a line on 'em, and get 'em back to Colon? Think what it would mean for our own year, and for the historians, to have them—"

The executive officer broke in:

"Wait a minute, doc! Captain, I came to tell you that there are English prisoners on board this ship."

"What?"

Wilson nodded.

"Yes, sir. Our men found 'em rotting in chains down in a black hole in the fore part of the galleon. English."

The old man's eyes snapped dangerously. I wondered if at that time, too, he did not think of young Rowland.

"English, by Heaven!" He paused a moment. "Taking 'em back for a little inquisition, eh?" His fist came down on the table with a crash. "That settles it! We did right. Get a tow line out and we'll take the outfit back to the canal. Detail a party of fifteen men and one officer to take charge here. We'll take the Englishmen aboard the Shoshone. That settles it. Anything else?"

For Lieutenant Wilson made no move to depart.

"The professor came aboard snoopin' around, captain. He's right outside, wants

to speak to you, but I stopped him, not knowing what was going on in here."

"Send him in."

The exec left to carry out the captain's orders, and Callieri appeared. He showed no trace of his recent indisposition, and his eyes sparkled with a new excitement.

He bowed to all in the room, and his glance lingered upon the silken draperies of the room, and the rich furnishings of plate and tapestry.

Then he slipped to the captain's side.

"We are worth a meillion dollars, every mans, *capitan*," he whispered softly, looking up into Commander Williams's eyes with a crafty wink. "I haf talk Spanish to one of t'ee sailors of t'ees sheep, an' eet ees *wan* sheep t'at carry mos' treasure!"

Treasure!

The captain's eyes met mine again.

Then glancing down at the professor he slowly shook his head and smiled.

"We are taking this ship back to Colon, Professor Callieri. The authorities shall decide about that treasure. And in my opinion the English prisoners aboard here are most entitled to what there may be. The stuff was mighty likely taken from them in the first place."

We waved the little man aside, and swung back to the Spaniards, exploding into violent speech.

Shortly the priest replied. Then all bowed, and we left.

A detail of five men was sent to the cabin to guard the officers and prevent any possibility of the thing we feared most—suicide.

The crew of the galleon had all been brought topside and lined up in the waist, disarmed and disconsolate and most pathetic in their abject fear. Devils to them we must have been. The chief bosun's mate was in charge of them, and he had sent over to the Shoshone for a Spanish dictionary, and with the help of the yeoman was rapidly turning its pages in search of illuminating words that would give him something to say. It is strange how even in the most grave circumstances a thing will strike a man as humorous.

The chief was so solemn in his efforts to bring about an understanding. His brow was wrinkled in perplexity. His great hand almost hid the stubby pencil with which he was attempting a full sentence on the envelope on the dictionary's page, and his eye rolled so comically as he read his effort to the assembled sailors. Meaningless to them, of course—but he could not quite understand their dumb stare when he had finished.

He broke into the most atrocious denunciation of a type of misbegotten cave-men who could not even understand their own language. He raved—in glorious, futuristic English. The Spaniards crossed themselves, and one fell upon the deck and groveled.

While I, in hysterical reaction I suppose, found myself behind the great mainmast, undoubtedly purple, and cackling in a high-pitched soprano that I could not control.

Then I heard an exclamation in peculiar English, followed by a short chuckle, a weary attempt at laughter that somehow thrilled me. Turning, I beheld five tattered and unshaven individuals sitting weakly against the port bulwarks.

The English prisoners we had miraculously delivered from the torture and death that had surely been their doom!

Sobering instantly, I stepped over to them and held out my hand.

"I am glad we came in time," I said.

The tallest of them, a man who must have been of extraordinary physical powers before the emaciation of his imprisonment had withered his body, seized my hand and shook it English fashion.

"God or fiend," he cried huskily, "to you are we grateful!"

"We are neither gods nor fiends," I returned. "We are even as you—men. And why we are here, or how, is as much mystery to us as our presence here must be to you."

**H**IS keen eyes watched me as I spoke. Slowly he shook his head.

"It is in the hands of God, fair sir, as

are all things. I for one cannot believe that you come emissary of the evil one. But—" His eyes roved over to the brightly lit destroyer. "But, in God's name, whence do you come?"

I swept my hand toward the Shoshone. "From the future—" I began.

But his hand seized mine convulsively again.

"But you speak my own tongue, albeit somewhat strangely. You are English!"

Shaking my head gravely I told him that we were not of his land, but of a people related in blood and tongue, now dwelling in a great country to the north.

"And in a great war of our times," I went on, "my own land and that which is yours grown older, yet even more powerful, were allied in the cause of democracy."

His eyes widened.

"Democracy? 'Tis a strange word, and savoreth to my mind of certain ungodly politics of the ancient Greek. Has Greece, then, returned to her old prominence in this growing world, and again attempting to elevate the peasantry to a position they cannot hold?"

I shook my head.

"The ancient Greece is long gone," I answered. "And yet the modern Greece fought with us. Our cause was not that of a single nation, my friend. We fought for the liberty and happiness of all mankind."

His eyes flashed to his fellows. Then returning, searched my face.

"Truly is the world upside down, fair deliverer. *We* fought for the queen."

There was haughtiness in his tone and words.

"In our day," I smiled, "the people are king."

His brows wrinkled in perplexity. He drew himself up with an arrogance that touched my sense of humor again, and opened his mouth as though in scorn. Then came the sputtering roar of an escape valve from the Shoshone, and to his eyes shot utter mystification once more. Slowly his glance roved over the destroyer, then quite suddenly fixed upon the bosun's mate, who was still attempting, dictionary

in hand, to illuminate the minds of the Spanish crew as our glaring searchlights brought their bodies into the light of day.

"'Tis black magic, and I understand not. The future you say you come from, and yet you know not how you came, or why. You say that you are of a new land and kin to my own, and yet that the people are king. And in fighting for the people, who are king, you say that you fight for this dream of ancient Greece, this insidious outrage they called democracy. Against whom, then, if not against another king—who could not well be if what you say be sooth—did you take arms?"

I could think of no other answer to his question than one which I felt he would best understand.

"We fought, England and we, against the Powers of Darkness."

He fell back a step.

"Truly, then, you are in league with God."

I nodded and told the truth.

"We know more of God than did your day. And understand more His powers, using them in that greater knowledge."

A gasp from all five. I wondered if I had uttered blasphemy. The man before me, who seemed to be of higher rank than his comrades, stared in silence for a moment. Then stepped closer to me.

"Art thou priest, then? And all with you?"

"I am a doctor," I replied.

He fell back again, as though my touch might contaminate.

"A chirurgon! Nay, jest not. No doctor has knowledge of God. Yet that fellow there"—he indicated the bosun's mate—"he readeth from a book. He, then, is a priest."

I explained as best I could that all men of our day could read, and that all men, though not priests, had come to a greater and more intimate comprehension of the powers of God. But I could not make him understand, and shortly, when Lieutenant Wilson called me aft, I bowed and left them in their bewilderment.

The captain, it seemed, was in a deuced hurry to get away. He had decided, the exec informed me, not only to take the English on board the destroyer, but also the treasure the galleon carried. And this latter, our men, with the aid of some Spanish who had found themselves able to move, were bringing up from below and storing in the forward magazine of the Shoshone. One small chest had been opened on deck, and about it were gathered the gunnery officer, the engineer, and a number of the men.

It was full to the brim with virgin gold. Cowling was on his knees before it, running his hands through the coarse grains of the stuff as a man might in sifting wheat. I myself—I could not resist—had scooped up a handful of the heavy stuff, roughly calculating its value. The one chest alone would have made a third of our crew happily independent. How it glistened when the beams of the searchlight lingered upon it as the crowd about shifted and bent! The little professor was right: we could well be worth a "meellion each mans!"

"**H**OW many chests are there?"  
"In all there are fourteen like this," breathed Cowling with a sigh. "And a round dozen filled with bars of silver."

Millions! Millions!

And ours, every bar of silver, every grain of gold.

In sudden thought I called to the tall Englishman:

"Where did this gold come from? From what land?"

He drew himself up.

"These cursed Spaniards may lie, but I do not. The Spaniards took the gold from us."

"From you!—The captain had probably been right in his conjecture. "Then—but from what land did *it* originally come?"

"That I do not know in sooth," haughtily. "We stoop not to take it from the soil ourselves. We gained possession of the gold—from others."

I jumped. He had taken it from the

Spanish in the first case! I stared at him in amazement, all the stories of my boyhood coming in a rush.

"*You are a pirate?*"

His eyes flashed. "I seized it for my queen."

Ha! Buccaneersing for deft-conscienced Elizabeth. Little difference, thought I, though I kept the notion to myself.

It took well over half an hour to store the stuff in the magazine. And by that time the towlines had been lead out and all was ready for our return—if indeed we could return.

The English demurred somewhat at going aboard the fire devil that our destroyer must have seemed, but were prevailed upon to accept our hospitality by the captain, who told them that he would explain the modern mysteries of the Shoshone to them, and also that they were to have their share of the gold. Quickly, at that last, did they appear to forget that they had taken it for their queen.

And somewhat after midnight we cast off the mooring lines, and started at dead slow until the towline began to take up a strain. Then we came to standard speed of ten knots.

We figured that when we had sent that last message to the squadron commander, our distance from Colon was approximately one hundred and sixty miles. Following the Spaniard fleet might have added twenty more. Hence, we should make port by three in the afternoon, instead of the anticipated eight in the morning.

Three in the afternoon, I had better say, by our own clocks. If—and Heaven forbid that such a thing should come to pass—if we continued to remain in the year of 1564, with the three-hour difference in time of sunset, then we would reach Colon by high noon.

And reaching Colon—I confess I have dreamed of leaving the sea were fortune ever to come my way—the treasure stored below would in some part surely come to us. Then—gold, and silver, and a little home in a nook in the hills back of the bay at home. Life again with my wife.

And the youngster, cutting his teeth the last time I had seen him a year and a half ago.

The romance of it! Building a home with pirate gold. Chests of it! Gold. Silver! Even now, on our own ship, pirate treasure. Ours!

## CHAPTER VII

### BLACK MAGIC

WHEN day came at last, young Rowland was out of danger.

And the captain was happy. Yet underneath his outward show of gayety was something else. This I could not entirely understand. But as we gathered at the table for breakfast, with our English guests, I thought I discovered the trouble.

He was grieving over the sinking of eleven galleons. Grieving that his own sorrow and rage at the hurt the Spaniards did Rowland had so taken him by force. Grieving, and yet—wondering, too.

I confess that I also had wondered much as I tried to sleep during the dark hours after we got under way. I could yet see the great galleon in the glare of the after searchlight's relentless eye and at the end of our steel wire tow. I could not understand how the thing had come to pass. I could hardly believe as I lay in my bunk that conditions were actually as they were. Time and time again I arose, and, donning a bathrobe, climbed up on deck and looked astern of us for the concrete proof. Each time I felt my heart beat hard again. The galleon was there, still there—it was not a dream. We men of the "present" were thrust back into the past.

It was true. It was awful to contemplate, hard to accept—but it was true. The deck force was repairing our foremast—shot down. And there rode the last of the twelve galleons in the fleet we had sent to the bottom of the sea.

The treasure was in our hold!

The English prisoners were eating breakfast with me now!

And Colon—Colon was ahead of us now.



A few hours more, four hours more when the sun reached its height—when the sun reached its height?

Hold on. I gripped myself. That would mean that we were still under the influence of the thing, that had sent us into the past. That would mean that if we came to land at all, Colon—as we knew it—would not be there—non-existent! Then what we do? What *could* we do? How long would this condition last?

Were we forever to remain in the past? Were we from now on to take up life from the year 1564 and go on, living a strange and perhaps horribly uncertain life in the day of our ancestors—centuries before our own grandfathers were born on earth? What—my heart beat unsteadily as I watched the Englishman awkwardly attempt manipulation of their forks.

Forks! We lived in a time when a fork was not invented. A little thing, a fork. And yet—idiocy! I gripped myself again.

And Colon—the canal—not yet a thing of life!

I showed the Englishmen over the ship in the broad light of day. And truly I think they believed themselves bewitched. The glances they continually cast back upon the galleon following in our wake! The fearful manner in which they touched each new miracle—the simplest contrivances on deck!

At breakfast—the forks. Their childish surprise when we gave them coffee.

“Coffee!”

One of them exclaimed aloud; he had tasted the stuff in the land of the infidel Turk.

The glances they cast at each other! These demons of the future, these devils of the unknown seas—ate food and drank—coffee!

How they exclaimed even to see us light a cigarette. Then the pleasure that overcame their consternation when we prevailed upon them each to try one. More. And more!

On deck. The torpedo tubes—we had to show them prints of the torpedos themselves. How they shuddered in horror, and yet aroused to enthusiasm when we told them of their destructive power, and related how we had sunk eleven of the galleons with one torpedo each. Oh, yes, they had heard and felt the muffled detonations in their black hole below. How they shuddered again when we related how their ship had been saved by accident.

“The will of the good God!” they exclaimed.

I bowed my head. Perhaps it was. I wondered if it were by the will of God that we had been thus cast back into the past. I wondered. The great god—*Time*.

The engines—afraid to touch them. Carefully we explained. Showed them a coffeepot in the wardroom pantry. Let them see the lifting of the cover as the water boiled—Watt-like. They shook their heads—they could not understand.

Electric lights. How they marveled!

And leaped back at a slight shock we

were able to give them, by the touch of a cigar lighter the black gang had rigged in the engine room. Magic! Black magic!

Like children. Then again like the men they must have been when they trod their own decks.

Officers all, and titled. I tried to explain to them our own system of examination for commission in our own navy. What? We were of the commons? Of the mass? Peasantry?

Unbelievable!

Yet, and I do not think it was entirely fancy on my part, I swear I detected a certain condescension toward us, despite their obvious awe, from then on. Poor devils!

The little suns? What were they? In the night they had made the galleon stand out as at noon of a brilliant day.

We showed them the searchlights; they fell back before the sputtering hiss as our electrician sent the current through the carbons. Little suns! Black magic!

I shuddered—that second setting of the sun, only the night before. It already seemed a month, an age. Four hundred years—four centuries back. Would the next setting of the sun find us still in mystery? Or—

And Colon. An hour more now, and we were due to raise land in the east. What would these sixteenth century Englishmen say of our canal? Or—would the canal be there? That was not yet even a dream. That was of the future. So were we. But somehow, in some way, good or evil—in our own past! With the blood, Heaven knows, of some of these very Englishmen in our own veins!

The compass! Yes, they knew what a compass did. But such a compass!

**N**OON came, and still they marveled. Still the condescension. And yet, also, still the awe, the reverence, the bewilderment.

Pathetic, tragic, comical—terrible. For them. And for us.

A bell rang on the bridge.

They stared in dumb astonishment as

the officer of the deck sprang to the voice tube from the crow's nest.

"Land, ho!"

"Where away?"

"Dead ahead, sir."

The executive, in his capacity of navigator, nodded to the captain. I fancied he breathed a sigh of relief. I know that I did. At least, the land was where it ought to be. And sighted when expected. Land!

By the sun—high noon.

But by our ship's clocks—unchanged to suit the new condition of the great white orb overhead—three o'clock in the afternoon.

Gradually the land rose to the east. Familiar, yet strange.

Binoculars, a long glass. Colon was not within our view. The executive took bearings upon prominent landmarks that showed above the monotony of the green- ing coastline.

Turned an amazed face to the captain.

"This mountain, and that, correspond with our charts, captain. Between them ought to be Colon. It isn't there."

We stared at the land.

We turned and saw the great galleon at the end of our steel wire.

We were within a mile of the beach.

A signal fluttered to our foreyard. A man appeared in the towering bows of the galleon. Semaphore messages whipped back and forth. The man disappeared.

"Stop both!" the captain snapped.

The roar of the blowers diminished to a low drone. The English stared. Mystery again.

The fo'c'sle gang were ready forward. The bosun's mate had the anchor bar under the fluke. The captain watched the galleon as it drifted on. A splash under her bows.

"They've cast the towline adrift, captain!" cried the officer of the deck.

"On the job," returned the old man laconically.

A greater splash.

"Galleon's anchored, sir," came the report.

"Very well."

The skipper leaned over the rail in the port wing of the bridge. The Englishmen stared with him. The way of the Shoshone was almost stopped. The after-gang were bending a heavy Manila mooring line to the eye in the steel hawser, preparatory to taking it to the anchor engine to haul in.

"Dead in the water, sir!" cried the leadsman from below.

The captain waved his hands to the fo'c'sle. "Let's go!"

The bosun's mate gave a great heave on the anchor bar, and with a rattling roar that set the ship a-shivering the chain leaped and jerked from below.

No word was spoken for some moments.

The officer of the deck made his noon reports, doubtfully.

"Twelve o'clock, sir—by the sun. Chronometers wound."

"Very well."

Nothing else.

We all stood and stared.

The general appearance of the land was the same as we had seen it when we left Colon two days before. The low, palm-fringed, white beach. The rising hills to right and left. The same indentations in the coast line. The same. There could be no doubt of that. And yet—not the same.

Time!

Four centuries were yet to pass before we might recognize all, and feel certain of ourselves again. Some one suggested that we leave the galleon and coast up and down the shore a bit. No answer was vouchsafed him. We knew where we were—geographically. We knew where we were—chronologically. But somehow we were in between. And the great god Time had played us a horrible trick.

One of the Englishmen suddenly pointed. "Darien! The Spaniard stronghold of these seas. Darien!"

We had known that. But the words did not arouse any enthusiasm. Darien—and four centuries later, Colon. Outcasts from our own land, our own civilization, our own time. God!

Came a sudden heart-jerking and nerve-rending crash from below.

*The next second the sun blazed in our faces, mid-low in the western sky! A loud cry came from the fo'c'sle.*

"Colon!"

We stared aghast. It was the change.

The land before us—Colon! We were back. By what marvelous accident, we did not know. But the sun had been jerked from directly above our heads to mid-afternoon, and the green land had given way to the white city, lying low before us.

Another exclamation. "Great Heavens! The galleon—"

I swung about, still stunned. The Spanish galleon had disappeared. A man called down in a high-pitched voice from the fire control platform.

"There are men struggling in the water where the galleon lay, sir!"

A sudden light came into the captain's eyes.

"Great God! It must be—must be *our own men*. On the jump, there! Save those men!"

THE motor sailer was hanging ready from the davits, a foot from the water, the smoke of its engine drifting up to the deck. Men tumbled into it. The boat shoved off.

In sudden recollection I dashed around the bridge.

Then to the captain: "Captain! The Englishmen—"

He nodded, looking me straight in the eye.

"Gone! Probably struggling in these very waters, four centuries ago, as our men are out there now where the galleon was anchored."

I stared at him.

A swift boat was running toward us from the beach.

Professor Callieri stumbled breathlessly up the ladder.

"It works! It works! I deescover what the trouble ees, an' thee radio ees now in condeetion. Eet ees what I t'ink make us go back to year fifteen-sixty-four. Las' night I t'ink try my cool wave once more, an' I make circuit t'ees time in wrong man-

nair. Then shock—Like t'at—*shock!* Doctor, he fin' me, shock. Las' night, he fin' me like t'at. Jus' now I go down again, because mast is raise again, an' radio wire O. K. Once more I try. Bang! Whish! Thee sun fall, thee galleon deesappear, thee Englishmans—"The little professor threw up his hands expressively—"an' we haf come back to our own time, wit' thee United States of America to use thee Callieri Cool Wave for efer and for efer now. *Dios*, what a frightfulness t'at was!"

At last I had awakened.

The radio! I had not thought of that. The radio—and Callieri's request last night to go below and attempt something in the way of a combination of his cool wave and the ordinary waves. That was what did it!

Electric waves in the ether. The theory of vibration. Something had gone wrong, as the professor said. Some peculiar vibration had suddenly seized upon the ship, and we had been sent in the flash of an instant and with the speed of light, into the past. Radio—the fourth dimension—the theory of vibration.

I shuddered. Suppose we had not gotten *back*.

I looked about me. All seemed a dream. Yet above our heads was the patched foremast. And here, the men who had been on the galleon.

"We anchored, sir, according to signal. It was noon; the sun at meridian. The next thing we knew, we were struggling in the water, the galleon vanished from about us, the sun hanging at mid-afternoon. That is all I can say, captain. We were on the Spanish ship, then it was gone and we were in the water." The man wiped beads from his forehead that were not salt water of the sea. "Whew! It's all I want of that!"

We quite agreed. And we wondered what the thoughts of the five Englishmen had been, going through the same experience almost four hundred years ago. Magic! Black magic!

Callieri suddenly gripped my arm, with a cry of delight.

"Thee treasure—thee *treasure*. Eet mus'

have fallen like thee Englishmans. An' eef it deed so fall, t'en—"

"By Heaven!" cried the skipper. "Then it's still on the bottom of the seas beneath our very decks!"

But the search for that is another story. We were thankful enough just then that we had returned.

## CHAPTER VIII\*

### THE GREAT GOD TIME

**T**HAT was the story that Lieutenant Graham Hardwick, Medical Corps, United States Navy, told me. Brief enough it was, but the doctor was still laboring under the awe of the thing, and there were many details undoubtedly omitted that would have made interesting reading. But I dared not question the lieutenant too deeply. Indeed, he and every other man of the Shoshone were ill with what seemed a peculiar nervous condition somewhat similar to shell-shock for a space of three weeks after their miraculous appearance lying at anchor in the harbor of Colon.

I leave to your imagination the astonishment on board the flagship, when a man came rushing into the radio shack where the squadron commander and the radio officer were awaiting some word of the lost Shoshone.

"Captain! Captain! She's *back!*"

How the squadron commander and others there had jumped outside, and beheld the Shoshone lying peacefully at anchor. Lying there at anchor, when no man could be found who had seen the ship come up over the horizon, although a hundred were on watch! Lying there at anchor, although no man in the crowded harbor had seen the ship come in!

The mate of a banana boat, with his eyes starting from their sockets, came rowing madly over to the flag.

"I was looking at the very spot! The very spot, captain. Clear as day, with the sun shinin' bright. Lookin' right at the spot—and nothin' was there. Not a thing. Nothin'! I was lookin' right there, sir,

kinda at nothin', jest a dreamin' an' a gazin'. The next thing I knowed, why there was the Shoshone, anchored!"

I swear I would not anticipate such an experience with any great degree of joy. And yet I would that I had been on the Shoshone when she made that short day's cruise into the past. Few men have done that and fetched back the proof. What a memory to have! What tales to tell! What a glorious thing to have lived in a day four centuries back. I envy every man of them. And yet if the opportunity should come my way I would think twice before I seized it!

#### AFTER WORD

WITH a purpose in mind I withheld part of the ancient pen-written manuscript of Francisco Vedugo de Coloma, and bearing a date just three months and nine days from that we saw in the galleon's log—the date the doctor had seen.

Just a sentence or two it is, but pertinent. A point of view it gives—the idea the writer held regarding the story of the returned galleon's crew.

. . . But (de Coloma goes on) we have heard much of sea demons and fire breathing monsters of the Western Seas. And it is in our secret mind that such tales often are the outgrowth of a fear-inflamed imagination, or given in excuse for a disaster that, coming through poor seamanship, destroyed many of His Majesty's galleons.

Too many such tales are brought back, and always, it seems, when galleons have been lost. Now, were some fleet of His Majesty's to sail for *Las Indias Occidentales*, remain there for a length of time, then return intact bringing such a tale, we might have cause to believe, the story not being fired through fear of consequences. But this continual notice given to fiery monsters becomes wearisome.

We would that some of these returned mariners, in accounting for their troubles might bring back some new and unheard account, and not forever and ever lay the blame upon the Devil of the Western Seas.

May I, in concluding, repeat one small thought I put down in the beginning.

There have been strange incidents in the past. There have been strange events of today. It is my belief, sincere and frank, that between certain of those of the past and these of the present, there lies a definite and explainable relationship.

That is the point I hoped to drive home. And the story brought to de Coloma of old Spain by the crew of a lone surviving galleon, with that of Dr. Hardwick of the modern destroyer, so fit together in every detail that I have come to believe. And frankly, I hope that you see the things as clearly as do I. We know but little of the marvels of this world of ours. The past is behind us, the present is here, and the future ahead.

Who knows when the great god Time will relent, and let us tread all three?