

Strange STORIES

VOL. II, NO. 2 **CONTENTS** OCTOBER, 1939

DEATH IS FORBIDDEN	Don Alviso	
<i>Did this Man-Muddle, Created by the Scalpel of a Wizard Surgeon, Have a Soul? [An Eerie Complete Novelet]</i>		
		16
THE CULT OF THE DEAD	Gabriel Wilson	
<i>Dark and Terrible are the Mysteries of Black Haiti!</i>		
		33
KAAPI	Marian Stearns Curry	
<i>A Jungle Spell is Cast when a Dark-haired Maiden Dies</i>		
		41
LET ME OUT!	Maria Moravsky	
<i>An Imprisoned Mind Struggles Grimly for Release</i>		
		51
THE MASTER	Shelton Goodall	
<i>There is a Terrible, Uncanny Secret About Malvolio, the Animal Hypnotist, a Secret That Makes Men's Blood Go Cold! [A Complete Novelet] . . .</i>		
		54
HE WAITS BENEATH THE SEA	Tarleton Fiske	
<i>David Ames Fights a Menace that Would Rule the World</i>		
		65
A MESSAGE FOR HIS MAJESTY	August W. Derleth	
<i>A Mysterious Visitant Opens the Dread Door of the Unknown</i>		
		75
HALF BULL	Manly Wade Wellman	
<i>Still Today the Redman Flings a Stone Upon the Indian Cairn!</i>		
		79
THE GHOSTLY VENGEANCE	A. Hyatt Verrill	
<i>A Sea Wraith Seeks to Even Scores with Life!</i>		
		88
THE GEIST OF THE JUNGLE	R. R. Winterbotham	
<i>An Amateur Archeologist Makes a Startling Discovery in Yucatan</i>		
		96
THE LIGHT MUST BURN	Capt. George J. Rawlins	
<i>Eerie Drama is Enacted within the Devil's Reef Lighthouse</i>		
		104
HOUSE OF THE GRIFFIN	Will Garth	
<i>Forces of Terror Strike from the Void</i>		
		109
SPAWN OF BLACKNESS	Carl Jacobi	
<i>An Evil God Shuns the Light and Seeks Victims in Darkness</i>		
		112
THE BLACK ARTS (A Department)	Lucifer	8

STRANGE STORIES, published bi-monthly by Better Publications, Inc., 22 West 48th Street, New York, N. Y. N. L. Pines, President. Entered as second class matter November 3rd, 1938, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3rd, 1879. Copyright, 1939, by Better Publications, Inc. Yearly, \$3.00; single copies, \$1.15; foreign and Canadian postage extra. Manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by self-addressed, stamped envelopes, and are submitted at the author's risk. Names of all characters used in stories and semi-fiction articles are fictitious. If the name of any living person or existing institution is used, it is a coincidence.

Read our companion magazines: Thrilling Detective, Thrilling Adventures, Thrilling Ranch Stories, Thrilling Wonder Stories, West, Thrilling Mystery, Thrilling Sports, Thrilling Western, Thrilling Love, Sky Fighters, The Lone Eagle, Everyday Astrology, G-Men, Popular Sports Magazine, Popular Detective, Popular Love, Popular Western, Masked Rider Western Magazine, Startling Stories, Texas Rangers, Range Rider, Detective Novels Magazine, and Black Book Detective Magazine.

The GHOSTLY

By
A. HYATT VERRILL

Author of "Monsters of the Ray,"
"The Death Drum," etc.

DO I believe in ghosts? Listen, Mister, seeing's believing, isn't it. I've seen ghosts, leastwise, I've seen one—and, by Judas, I'm not hankering to see another.

No, I wasn't "seeing things," and I'm no drinking man and never was. And what's more every man aboard the ship saw the same, not once but maybe a dozen times.

Of course, such things can't happen these days, what with Seamen's Unions, wireless and radio, and all the rest. Why, Lord love you, a skipper ain't master of his own ship these days, with shore law aboard ship. But in the days when I went to sea a master was master, and the only law out of soundings was what the Old Man said. You don't see why law and unions and radio should keep ghosts from boarding ships, you say? Well, maybe they don't; there may be haunted ships sailing the seas nowadays for all I know. But when I say such things can't happen these days, I mean the things that were the reason for the ghost being aboard the *Enterprise*.

I was second mate on the *Enterprise* at the time, a full-rigged ship that was a sweet sight for a sailor-man's eyes, what with her clipper bow and pole bowsprit and topmasts and flying kites carrying royals and sky-sails. Reminded me of some women, she did—pretty as a picture but with the devil in her heart. For all her sweet looks the *Enterprise* was a hell ship once she dropped a topline and yards were braced and she was on her course.

No, it wasn't the ship herself, as fine a hooker as ever I signed articles

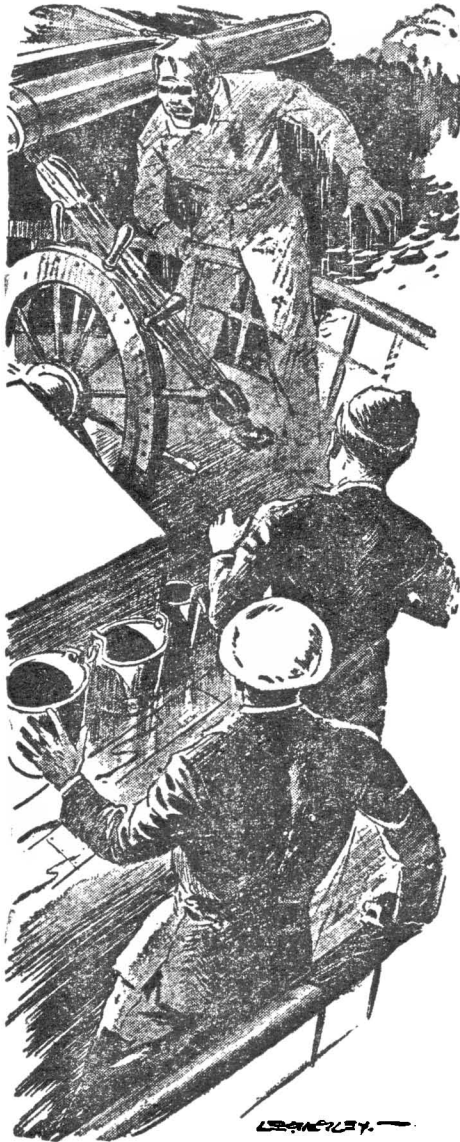


Next second the captain whipped

on, but the Old Man. If ever the devil paced a quarter-deck he was Cap'n Prout. Part owner he was and a good navigator, but surly as a bull whale with an iron in his side and with eyes as cold and cruel as the eyes of a tiger shark.

A Downeaster, he was forever mak-

VENGEANCE



out his pistol and fired at the ghost

ing out to be a religious, God-fearing Christian. And along with all that, he was the most superstitious man I've ever come across.

Eastwood, the mate, was a real bucko and tougher than the Old Man himself. I never laid claims to being soft myself, but, by glory, it turned

*Captain Prout Sails with Doom
when a Wraith of the Sea
Seeks to Even Scores with Life!*

my stomach the way that bucko mate and the old sea-louse of a skipper treated the men aboard the *Enterprise*. I recollect one day when we were a week or so out, one of the boys was ordered aloft to clear a block that was jammed on the main royal hal-yards. He was just a kid and green—never been to sea before, and he couldn't make it above the lower top-sail yard. All the cussing of the mate didn't move him, and grabbing a be-laying pin, Mr. Mate jumped for the ratlines.

"Don't trouble to go aloft, Mr. Eastwood," said the Old Man. "As long as he don't wish to go up I'll bring him down."

THEN he out with the pistol he always carried and fired away at the boy. At the second shot the lad gave an awful yell and came tumbling down. Lucky for him he landed in the mainsail that had been clewed up or he'd have been smashed flat when he hit the deck. He wasn't hurt very bad, just his arm broke where the bullet hit, but no fault of the canting old murderer aft that he wasn't killed.

It wasn't a happy ship, and worst of all, we were bound for Valparaiso which meant we'd be two or maybe three months at sea with no chance of the men jumping ship and getting clear of the floating hell she was. It was a wonder they didn't mutiny afore we crossed the Line, but they were a decent crew—mostly Yanks, with a sprinkling of Blue Noses, and the bos'n who was a Portugee from Fayal. A steady, hard-working sailor man he was, for all his yellow skin and the creepy yarns of ghosts and witches and Lord knows what he was forever spinning.

I had to berth aft and eat at the cabin table with the Old Man and Eastwood, but I left the dirty work to them, and the men all knew that I hated the pair as much as did any of the fo'c'sle hands. Once or twice the Old Man and me had words over it, but he knew he couldn't scare me and couldn't do without me, either, so he decided to let me be.

We had a pretty fair run till we were off the Amazon. Then it fell flat calm and we drifted with the current for three mortal weeks. And hot! Like an oven it was, decks so blazing hot even the men couldn't go bare-footed, and the pumps going half the time to slosh the decks and topsides to stop the seams from opening up. That greasy, flat calm made the skipper uglier than ever. It was downright ghastly, and we'd all of us gone stark, staring mad if a light wind hadn't come up and we got under way at last.

It was a day or two after we was again on our course that the mate ordered the bo'sun aft to do some little job on the cabin skylight.

The Old Man was below, reading his Bible, while Manuel was working. I didn't see just how it happened, but somehow or other the bo'sun dropped his hammer through the open skylight and it landed alongside the cap'n down below.

The next second the Old Man was roaring and cussing up the companionway.

"Damn you, you lousy black Portugee!" he yelled, as he saw Manuel bending over the skylight looking down for his hammer. "You tried to murder me, damn you. Take that, you blankety-blank son of Satan!"

As he spoke he yanked out his pistol and before the bo'sun could turn about, the Old Man fired point-blank.

MANUEL gave a blood-curdling yell, clapped one hand to his side and staggered for'ard. Before he got to the break of the poop the damned old pirate fired again, and the bo'sun jerked and fell face down onto the deck just abaft the mizzenmast.

The Old Man stuck his pistol back

under his coat and turned to where I was standing too cussed mad and shocked to move.

"Mr. Barton," he said in a nasty tone and grinning like a shark. "Have that carrion tossed overside and have the men swab up that mess on the deck. Any man who dares attempt violence on this ship will meet the same end."

It was cold-blooded murder, and I could see the crew for'ard drawing together and looking ugly. They had seen Manuel killed. I expected they'd start a mutiny any minute. And, by glory, if they had, I wouldn't have lifted a finger or said a word to stop them. Still, I was an officer and I managed to keep a civil tongue though it pretty near choked me.

"Do you mean, sir," I said, "that the bo'sun is not to be given Christian burial?"

"Burial?" he roared, his eyes blazing. "Christian burial for a murderous mutineer! Obey my orders, Mr. Barton, or you'll go next."

"You can murder the hands," I told him, "and get by with it—maybe. But you can't shoot your officers, and you know it, you brute. If you won't give Manuel proper burial you'll be damned sorry for this before the voyage is over. You can heave the bo'sun's body over the rail, but that won't be the end of him."

I thought sure he'd shoot me, he was so furious. He half-drew his pistol, his lips snarled back over his big teeth and his eyes blazing. But just then the first came up.

"No good starting a row 'twixt officers," said he. "Leastwise, not over a dead Portugee swab. Maybe," turning to me, "if you're so damned particular about holding obsequies over him, Mister, you can play sky pilot yourself. That is, if Captain Prout has no objections."

"By Judas, I will," I told him.

If looks could kill I'd have been as dead as the bo'sun from the look the Old Man give me. He was that mad he couldn't speak. But Eastwood said something to him in a low voice, began arguing with him, and I went for'ard.

I ordered a couple of hands aft to

pick up Manuel's body, told the sail-maker to sew him up in an old stay-sail, and hunted about to find something to put at the bo'sun's feet to carry him down to Davy Jones. All I could find were some links of old anchor chain.

I reckon the crew had seen and heard all that had gone on 'twixt me and the skipper aft, but I just told them the Old Man wouldn't read the service, so I'd attend to it myself.

It was about six bells in the forenoon by the time the body was sewed up and ready. The men lifted the corpse onto a hatch cover. Pulling off their caps, they carried it to the starboard rail where I read the service.

Then the hatch cover was tipped, and poor Manuel slid off and splashed into the sea. The links of chain were pretty light to sink him, what with the air inside the canvas covering, and he went down kind of slowly. The ship being under weigh, he went slipping aft, sinking all the time, and in the clear water we could see him as a sort of pale green shadow, getting smaller and smaller, with bubbles of air coming up like those from a diver's helmet.

WE WERE just barely making steerage way and by eight bells the breeze failed, and it came flat calm with a fog making. Not a thick, greasy pea-soup fog like we have on the Banks or in the Channel, but a thin wispy fog that drifted across the water like smoke. Uneven it was, too. One minute we could see for a couple of miles across the ocean though everything was hid higher than the lower topsail yards. Next minute it would be clear to starboard and thick to port or 'tother way about, or maybe clear for'ard and thick astern or vice-versa.

Tricky weather for navigating, but down there with practically the whole South Atlantic to ourselves there wasn't much chance of running afoul another ship, especially as we weren't making headway enough to keep the logline taut. The sun went down in a bank of murky gray, and when the moon came out, the sea had a sort of ghostly look; black as Jonah's pocket

when fog hid the moon, and light as day the next minute with the wisps of fog looking like drifting snow.

I was standing at the port rail close to the mizzen rigging, the mate being below, and the cap'n was pacing the quarter-deck to starboard, when I heard him give a strange choking cry. I swung about and there he stood staring astern with his head stuck out and his eyes ready to pop out of their sockets. The next minute he started running aft drawing his pistol as he went.

Wondering what in thunderation he'd seen, I ran aft on the port side. But he beat me to the taffrail where he stood shouting a string of the worst cuss words I ever heard. Then he up with his pistol, began shooting.

"Damn your soul!" he yelled between shots. "Go back to hell where you belong! Take that, you—"

Then, by glory, I saw what he was firing at. There, surrounded by an unholy greenish light of phosphorescence bobbing up and down in our wake, twisting and turning in the eddies, was a long, shapeless sort of thing that was somehow sort of human-looking at that. The minute I saw it I knew what it was.

It was Manuel!

His body, sewed in canvas, had come back from Davy Jones. Either the chain links had busted through the rotten old sailcloth and let the corpse bob up, or else there hadn't been enough weight to keep it down when it got into a current or maybe sucked into our wake. Whatever the reason, there was the body bobbing along astern just as if Manuel was being towed along by the *Enterprise*.

The first shot from the Old Man's pistol splashed the water close alongside the body, but the second bullet hit it square. It may have been my imagination, but it seemed to me there was a queer sound, something like a groan, came from the corpse when the shot struck it.

At the first report, the man at the wheel turned and looked astern. The next second he let out a fearful yell and releasing the wheel, ran forward as if the devil was at his heels. I jumped for the wheel that was spin-

ning and 'twixt catching the spokes and shouting for the superstitious idiot to come back, I had enough to attend to without watching the bos'n's body, though I heard the cap'n blazing away at it until he emptied his pistol.

Pretty soon the helmsman came crawling back, whiter than a new top-sail, and without looking astern took over the wheel. By then there wasn't a sign of the corpse, but the Old Man was still standing at the taffrail, holding his empty gun and looking dazed, his face the color of putty.

AT SOUND of the shooting, Eastwood had come rushing up the companionway, expecting to find a mutiny had broken out, for he had his pistol in his hand. When he saw nothing, he asked the cap'n what he'd been shooting at. The Old Man began to swear frightfully.

"That blankety-blank bo'sun!" he shouted. "Following after us and trying to board us. But by the eternal I settled him. Filled his rotten carcass full of lead, damn his soul!"

Eastwood gave a hard sort of laugh. He wasn't superstitious like the skipper.

"Better come below, sir, and have a shot of rum," he said. "A bit uncanny to see such a sight, but I've seen more than one dead body do the same thing. Nothing supernatural to worry over, Cap'n."

The Old Man was shaking all over and his mouth, usually so hard and cruel, was loose and dribbling as he went below with the mate. He was scared, that was plain, being so superstitious.

Soon as the pair had gone below, two of the men came aft and wanted to know what the shooting was. When I told them they looked mighty uneasy and glanced about into the shadows and stood staring first to port and then to starboard as if expecting to see their dead shipmate appear at any minute. The sailmaker, a wizened old fellow, spoke first.

"It's bad business, sir," he said as solemn as an owl. "Manny's uneasy, and you can lay to that, Mr. Barton. He'll be hangin' about and bringin'

bad luck to the ship, sir. But praise God, Mr. Barton, 'tis none of us nor you, sir, what he's after."

"Shut up and go forward," I ordered him. "You're talking like an ass. There's nothing strange about a dead body floating when there isn't enough weight to sink it. We haven't made ten knots since we dropped Manuel over the rail and the current's running faster than we sailed. Anyhow, he's gone for good now. The cap'n's bullets let the air out of the canvas and he'll go to the bottom. You'll never see him again."

Without a word they went forward, but I knew I hadn't changed their opinions any. Sailormen are a superstitious lot, forever looking for omens and most of them in those days believed in spirits and ghosts and apparitions.

At four bells the Old Man came on deck looking about as usual, and I ducked below to get some tobacco. Just as I started back there was a fearsome screech from the deck.

"Mutiny!" I said to myself, and grabbing up my pistol, I went up the companionway in two jumps.

Before I reached the deck I could hear the Old Man's voice and it sounded as if he was being strangled.

"Do—do you see him?" he choked.

Then I heard the helmsman answering. "No, sir, I don't see nothin'."

So the cap'n thought he still saw Manuel's body, while the man at the wheel didn't see. But soon as I reached the deck I saw. And, by Judas, I'm telling you, Mister. I felt like a bucket of cold water had been dumped down my back. I could feel the hair rising on my head.

There, by the main rigging, one leg already over the rail was Manuel coming aboard the ship!

I saw him just as plain as I see you now. His clothes were dripping water, there was a big red splotch on the front of his shirt, and his face was a sickly green-white like the belly of a shark.

I'm not a scary man, and up to that minute I'd never believed in ghosts. But when with my own two eyes I saw Manuel's ghost dragging itself over the ship's rail, coming aboard

from out the sea, I felt as if I was being strangled.

THE cap'n was holding fast to the mizzen backstay with one hand and pointing at the ghost with the other. He was groaning as if in mortal pain and his face was the color of mildewed canvas.

The man at the wheel was seeing the ghost, too. Letting go the spokes, he went to his knees, crossing himself and shaking so his teeth chattered. The next second the cap'n let go the backstay, whipped out his pistol, fired at the ghost and fell flat on the deck. I jumped to him, thinking he'd had a stroke, and I pretty near had one myself when I saw the ghost simply fade away like a wisp of fog. The next minute it was gone, and Eastwood came along.

"Look after the cap'n," I yelled at him and ran forward, taking mighty good care to go to starboard and not to port where I'd seen Manuel's spirit a minute before. I was mortally scared, but I'd got my senses back.

"Where the blazes did he go?" I shouted to a bunch of the men.

The sailmaker shook his head and glanced about nervously. "We don't know, sir, but he'll never rest easy till he even scores with the Old Man. Didn't I say he'd bring bad luck to the ship?"

"I don't believe in ghosts," I declared, "but I saw what the cap'n fired at was straddling the port rail by the main rigging."

One of the men laughed, a sort of dry cackling laugh. "What you and the Old Man saw was Manny's ghost, and you can lay to that Mr. Barton, sir."

"Follow me," I ordered grimly, leading the way to the spot where I had seen whatever it was coming in over the port rail.

I jumped back as if I'd seen a coiled cobra there. Plain on the deck planking was a big splotch of blood and a trail of blood and water led to it from the rail!

At sight of this the men turned and ran for the fo'c'sle hatch and fairly tumbled down it, banging the cover shut after them. I headed in the other

direction, and never stopped till I was on the quarter-deck. Not a soul was in sight. The helmsman had vanished, gone forward I supposed. Eastwood had managed to get the Old Man below and to his berth where he was clean off his head, babbling and shouting about ghosts and dead men while the mate was telling him he'd had a hallucination or something.

"Mr. Barton, call two men and search the ship," Eastwood shouted up to me. "Go through her from decks to bilges and from stem to stern and find the damned sailor who's been playing ghost."

I knew it wouldn't be any use, for by now I was positive it was no mortal I'd seen. But I managed to rout out some of the men and, lashing the wheel, for not one would come aft, I ordered two of them to search the ship with me. Not one would budge from the forward deck. Though they hadn't seen the ghost, they were so scared they'd have let themselves be shot down rather than move twenty feet aft.

"Don't surprise me that Manny came aboard," declared one man when at last I gave up. "He was murdered and can't rest easy. But he hasn't anything against us so didn't show himself for'ard. Most likely wants a word with the Old Man."

BY the time I went aft the skipper had gone to sleep, and I guess Eastwood had followed his own advice to the Old Man and taken more than a "tot" of rum, for he was snoring like a grampus on the cabin settee, although 'twas time for his watch on deck. I knew I couldn't sleep if I did turn in, so I stood out his watch on top of my own, pacing up and down the deck.

Long about three bells the skipper came on deck. It was pretty light by then, and he looked liked he'd risen from a sick bed, being pale and pasty and having black rings under his eyes and his lips sort of quivering. For a time he stood staring astern as if half-expecting to see the bo'sun's body still bobbing along in our wake. Then he gave a sort of sigh of relief and swept the horizon, after

which he stepped forward to the break of the poop.

The next second he let out a God-awful yell and stood staring, pop-eyed and shaking, at the deck below. I jumped forward expecting to see Manuel's ghost. It wasn't there but there was something just as uncanny. There, plain on the planking was a big splotch of blood. I couldn't breathe for a second, I was that flabbergasted. I'd seen that splotch of blood mopped up and the deck swabbed as clean as the rest of the deck, yet there it was back again and as fresh and red as if it hadn't been there more than five minutes.

Well, when the men forward saw me and the cap'n staring speechless they came aft to find out what we saw. When they did see it they turned and ran as if the ghost was chasing them.

The Old Man went clean off his head. He whipped out his pistol and began shooting at that blood stain. And every time a bullet hit the deck that damnable red splotch got bigger and bigger before my eyes. By the time the last shot was fired, it covered a spot bigger than the head of a harness cask.

I know, because there wasn't a man aboard who'd go near it, and to cover it up, I had to roll a cask onto it. That didn't hide the whole of it, so I nailed a patch of old canvas over it.

When the skipper had emptied his gun he gave a fearful screech and heaved the pistol over the rail into the sea, fell on his knees and begun babbling prayers. The shooting aroused Eastwood from his sleep, and he came alongside us, kind of wobbly and with bleary eyes. But he was a lot more wobbly when he saw the bloodstained deck, and his eyes fairly bulged. Then he let out a string of cuss words and began damning the Old Man something awful. I don't expect the cap'n even heard him, for he kept right on praying and babbling until suddenly he dropped to the deck, kicking and writhing as if he had a fit.

"Here, help me get the Old Man below," I yelled at the mate.

For a second Eastwood looked

dazed, staring at the skipper like he'd never seen him before. Then he quit swearing and helped me lift the Old Man. Together we carried him below. I couldn't wait to see if the skipper came out of his fit, for the ship was yawing and I could hear the sails thrashing and yards buckling in the breeze that was coming up with the sun.

Lucky it was that the wind wasn't strong, or we'd have been in a holy mess aloft. As it was we were aback, and the ship was roiling awful. Sailormen may be scary, but they're never too afraid to man braces or jump to lifts and sheets when there's need of it to save a ship. They worked lively enough when I shouted orders to them.

WE GOT sails trimmed and the *Enterprise* back on her course, and I managed to get two men to the wheel, one not daring to come aft alone. Then I hid the red stain on deck like I've said and, being dog-tired, I stretched out on the bench alongside the skylight. I dared not go below and turn in for fear some other damned thing would go wrong.

The fog lifted with the sun, and when I woke up it was clear weather, the sun shining bright with a ten-knot breeze filling the sails and a crinkly blue sea with little white caps flashing in the sunlight. For a minute I thought I'd been dreaming about the ghost of Manuel—until my eyes fell on that square of canvas I'd nailed to the deck, and I remembered what was under it. I was hungry enough to eat the chafing gear off the main rigging, and after taking a squint aloft and seeing everything was ship-shape, I ducked below to get a cup of coffee and a snack of breakfast.

Eastwood was already at the table, but he wasn't eating anything, just gulping down hot black coffee. He neither looked up nor spoke when I came in. When I asked him how the skipper was, he just jerked his head toward the cap'n's cabin without answering.

"You'd better go on deck soon as you've finished," I said to him. "I'm

about all in, standing watch the whole blessed night long."

"Mind your own damned business," he snarled. But he went up just the same.

When I'd eaten, I took a look into the cap'n's cabin. The Old Man was lying in his berth, his eyes shut, moaning in his sleep.

I turned in and slept like a log till near eight bells when I went on deck to shoot the sun. Everything was shipshape, the mate pacing back and forth and the men at the wheel seeming easy enough. When Eastwood saw me with my sextant, he ducked below and came up with his, and we took sights as usual. But he didn't say a damned word except to holler "eight bells" when the sun crossed the meridian.

The breeze held well until after sundown when it got fitful and puffy, but it was a bright moonlight night, clear as a bell with the sea like a sheet of silver. About two bells, Eastwood came across to where I was standing and spoke to me for the first time since breakfast.

"What's your opinion of all this monkey business, Mr. Barton?" he asked. "I don't know," I told him. "What do you think of it?"

He looked about as if expecting to see Manuel's ghost sneaking up on us. Then, speaking in low tones:

"'Twixt you and me I think the bo'sun has come back to haunt the Old Man," he said. "I've been a damned tough man, but I never killed a man in cold blood the way he killed Manuel."

I had never liked Eastwood, and I remembered the way he'd man-handled the men, and I thought I'd take a good dig at him now.

"Maybe you didn't have a hand in killing Manuel," I said, "but you stood by the Old Man when it came to giving him Christian burial. Maybe Manuel has it in for you on that account."

The mate's face went white as chalk in the moonlight.

"My God, I hadn't thought of that!" he gasped. "Do you think—"

An awful scream from the cabin cut him short. I jumped for the com-

panionway and went down without touching the steps. The door to the skipper's cabin was open, and I dashed for it not knowing what to expect to find. And then as I reached the doorway I run plumb into something I couldn't see. It was soft and squashy and cold—deadly cold—and wet. Yet there wasn't a blessed thing there 'twixt me and the cabin where a night light was still burning inside.

THEN I felt like my legs had given way under me, for the thing I'd struck slid past me and I heard a voice. "'Scuse me, Meester Barton," was whispered in my ear.

It was Manny's voice, and I reeled back against the door casing weak as a frayed yarn, knowing I'd bumped into the bo'sun's ghost. I don't know how long I stood there trying to catch my breath and stop shaking like a to'gallant sail in a squall. A yell from on deck brought me to my senses. Forgetting all about the Old Man, I made for the deck, scared stiff that I'd bump into the ghost again.

The two men at the wheel were chattering like monkeys and the mate was hanging onto a backstay looking like a corpse. But I scarcely noticed him, for hovering just above the port rail, like a cloud of steam, was the ghost. I could see the main shrouds and backstays right through it. It didn't have legs as far as I could see, but the body and head! An awful sight indeed for mortal eyes to see. It was Manuel's form, but somehow terrible.

Then I heard the Old Man's voice, moaning and babbling, just behind me. The next second he passed within three feet of where Eastwood and I stood, but he never so much as turned his head towards us. He was like a man walking in his sleep, his eyes fixed straight ahead. Then before I knew what he was about he was climbing over the poop rail.

For a second he stood there staring at the awful thing that seemed to be floating away from the ship. The next second the Old Man gave a blood curdling scream and jumped overboard. He struck the water right

(Concluded on page 122)

THE GHOSTLY VENGEANCE

(Concluded from page 95)

alongside the ghost and the specter vanished like a snuffed-out candle flame.

I found my voice then. "Man overboard!" I yelled.

That brought the mate to his senses. He grabbed a life-ring and heaved it. Scared as the men were, they jumped to braces and sheets and backed the yards. But all we saw was the life-ring bobbing on the waves. There was never a sign of the skipper. Eastwood drew a long deep breath like a man coming up for air after almost drowning.

"I reckon he paid his debt," he said

in a half-whisper. "Maybe now he's gone the ghost won't trouble us more."

It didn't. We never saw it again. From that time on the old *Enterprise* was a happy ship. Eastwood was a changed man. He was as easy-going a master as ever I sailed with. A mighty strange thing happened, Mister, when we were rounding the Horn. The piece of canvas I'd nailed over the bloodstain got loose and the wind tore it clear away. And where it had been the deck was as clean and white as ever, and that, Mister, is the gospel truth.