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Weird Tales

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WEIRD TALES ISSUED 1st OF EACH MONTH

The Black Gang

By EDGAR DANIEL KRAMER

Squarehead and scowling hunky,
 Polacker, limey, wop,
 Deep in the tramper's belly,
 Making the gages hop,
 Shut from the salt spray's stinging,
 Hid from the sun and stars,
 Swaying and fiercely cursing,
 Working the rakes and bars,
 Feeding the furnace fires,
 Deaf to the shovels' clang,
 Keeping the pistons pounding,
 While the hot fire-doors bang,
 Sweating and black with coal dust,
 Burned to a sizzling brown,
 Dreaming of wild hell-raising,
 When they were loose in town.

Yankee and cock-eyed lascar,
 Heiny and Frog and Chink,
 Down in the tramper's stokehold,
 Smelling the bilge's stink,
 Hid from the gray gull's screaming,
 Shut from the wind-swept skies,
 Keeping the red flames roaring,
 Blinking their sweat-filled eyes,
 Slaves to the throbbing engines,
 Stripped to their blistered hides,
 Struggling for breath and footing,
 Flouting the rolling tides,
 Splashed with the steam's white gasping,
 Devils and gods and men,
 Dreaming of wild hell-raising,
 When they reach port again.