

Lobster-Creels

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ILLUSTRATIONS (FRONTISPIECE) BY GORDON STEVENSON



I was not by accident that Captain Jacobs invited Danny McCann to join him at O'Callahan's. It was the last crafty move of desperation. He was richly rewarded.

By the fourth drink he had it all. The reason why the *Morning Star* had been mysteriously, day by day, sinking deeper into the water. Lobster-creels! Puget Sound lobster-creels to fill an immediate and pressing want of the fishermen down South, whose expected consignments had been delayed when lobsters were earlier than usual, and thick as hops. Quick money and lots of it. Kitty's idea, imparted to Danny, her husband, under seal of the deadliest secrecy!

The *Morning Star* was about loaded, and everything held for a fair and uneventful trip south from Seattle. Captain Jacob's ship, the *Whang*, was also ready to sail the same voyage, and showed unmistakable intentions of getting away first. This was much to the disgust of Captain Dan McCann, who, after his confidence in Jacobs, was unable to find out what cargo was aboard, or why he should have spent both night and day in loading and unloading. As he boarded the *Morning Star* Captain McCann questioned the mate on these matters, but Mr. McHenry, being newly shipped, had no information to give him.

About noon Captain Jacobs came aboard and inquired for Captain McCann.

"He is in the cabin," said the mate; "playing with the canary-bird. Won't you step down and find him?"

"Oh, no, indeed," and there was a sort of quivering burliness about Captain Jacobs at the very thought, "Mrs. McCann might happen along. She is a

screech-owl. She is a man-tamer, I can tell you."

At this moment Captain Dan stuck his head out of the companionway.

"When do you sail, Jacobs?" he said, nodding.

"This evening, if all goes well. And when do you expect to get away?"

"If all goes well," snivelled Captain Dan, "to-morrow noon."

The two captains whispered something to each other which was not audible to the mate's all-too-ready ear. Then, descending the gangway, they shaped a course for the nearest saloon.

About two hours later the echoes were startled by a loud and masculine voice from the wharf: "Ahoy, the *Morning Star*!"

The size of the voice was no indication of the size of its container, for it proceeded from a small and inconspicuous woman neatly shawled and bonneted. But, as she approached, and the sunlight pierced the bonnet's gloom, a face was revealed whose gray eye brooked no contradiction, whose mouth was one accustomed to command. The right arm holding the ruffled skirt was sheer muscle, and the footwork as she bounded to the deck proclaimed that she could take a fall out of any man not specially trained to withstand her.

She was none other than Kitty McCann, master mariner in her own right, half-owner and sole boss of the coastwise schooner *Morning Star*.

"Where is McCann?" she asked, casting as she did so a gimlet gaze over deck, crew, and rigging.

"Gone," the mate answered, briefly.

There was a moment's silence. Then, "Gone wid that divil Jacobs, I suppose. Whin did they go?"

"About noon, arm in arm."

"That settles it. It'll be no less than

thirty days for me poor Danny." "What did the auld clodhopper have to say, now?" she asked presently, after running her eye absent-mindedly over the paint-work, and commenting vividly on its condition.

"He had enough to say."

"Out wid it. I can shtand dinamite now. Was it me good name he'd be afther slurrin'?"

Now the mate was young, and no better than mates usually are. Not that he meant to make mischief. He remembered Captain Jacobs' expression as well.

"He said that neither you nor your husband were even capable of running a fishing-boat. That as for being seamen——"

She was pawing the deck like a horse in a shallow stream.

"No more," she cried, then to herself in an almost affectionate tone:

"I'll not kill him, I'll *murdher* him!"

There was a commotion forward. McHenry looked up, and saw that Kitty's gaze was riveted on a small tug that was bearing down upon them. Behind her lurched the schooner *Whang*, outward bound. Captain Jacobs, holding aloft and waving a large lobster-creel, shouted as he passed in a voice that could be heard as far as sound could travel:

"Starboard your helm and keep away from McCann's paper-box. McCann is in jail, where he belongs. We'll see who'll take his rotten old hooker out of Puget Sound. We'll see . . . get first . . . at the lobsters!"

Kitty was too far gone for speech. The mate walked forward, and stood with his back turned, pitying her helplessness. It was pity wasted.

"Tell the crew," she began; "no, tell thim nothing. We'll sail to-morrow before noon. I'll be aven wit that hide-bound bum yet."

Then and there McHenry resolved to take a chance on Davy Jones's locker if he must, in command of a woman, but to stick by the ship, if only to see what became of her.

At about eleven the next day an express-wagon drew up at the gangway of the *Morning Star*. There, seated alongside the driver, was Kitty McCann.

"Ahoy, the *Morning Star*!" she shouted.

"Aye, aye, sir," the mate answered, unconsciously.

"Bring your min here to carry me things on board, and hurry, we have no time to lose."

The crew rallied around the expressman silently, all but one man with a crooked leg, who ejaculated: "Good gracious, is *she* going with us? Well, we can expect bad weather, and lots of trouble!"

Another sailor, who stuttered, remarked: "It l-l-looks as if we hh-h-had b-bbeen s-sh-sh-shanghaied!"

Fortunately this escaped Kitty's lightning hearing. She was snowed under with rubber-boots, oilskins, boxes, and very masculine-looking luggage; but, as they gradually dug her out, it became clear that she purposed taking command dressed in a red flannel skirt of furious hue, offset above by a pea-green tam-o'-shanter with a long woollen tassel, and below by stockings of the same vernal color, ending in square-toed carpet slippers.

While she was in the cabin arranging her belongings a tugboat came alongside and demanded a head-line. This caused the crooked-legged sailor to say earnestly as he gazed ashore:

"In the name of Heaven, where is the captain?"

Sharp and clear from the stern of the *Morning Star* rang the command:

"Cast off your lines forward, and a couple of youse come aft and haul in the stern-lines, and some one shtand by with a cork-fender."

The crooked-legged sailor uttered his final protest:

"I have sailed around the world. I have been north to seventy-seven; I have been south to sixty-four. But, Lord, not with a woman captain, not with a woman."

About four bells the next day, in the middle watch, the northwest wind which had driven her along at seven knots for twenty-four hours died away, leaving the sails flapping in the bolt-ropes. Away to the southward and eastward clouds were making with a light scud overhead. One hour later a fresh breeze arose from the southeast. By four o'clock the breeze continued to freshen, and the choppy sea made the *Morning Star* dip and dive, squeak and groan.

At ten o'clock, with the wind still fresh, and the sea quite lumpy, she was making dirty weather of it. Astern, and out of the horizon, a topsail schooner was fast gaining upon her. Kitty was particularly interested in watching her out of a pair of binoculars, impatiently switching her green tassel out of the way of her vision, the while the red petticoat made a grand showing streaming in the wind.

"I can't make out," she said, as she laid the glasses by, "whether she has two topmasts or three."

"Well," answered McHenry, "we shan't have long to wait, at the rate she is gaining on us."

There was a new expression on Kitty's face. The eye no longer had even a trace of kindness, but was become cruel and daring. As the stranger came ploughing along close hauled and on the port tack, still gaining, and crowding a little to windward, Kitty snatched up the glasses and looked through them long and earnestly. Then she handed them to the mate, saying:

"What is she?"

"She is a two-topmast schooner," said he, momentarily.

"Can you see her name?" she barked back.

"I can make out the first letter."

"In the name of Hivin, what is it?"

"W——," but as he continued to look at and spell the letters in the name of the fast-approaching schooner, Kitty in her excitement pulled the glasses away from him, and picking up the tail of her skirt wiped the lenses long and carefully, then focussed them to her glittering eye, and threw them full on the suspicious name astern the *Morning Star*.

While Kitty gazed as if life and death depended on the name of the schooner, the canary-bird sang, and the man at the wheel cleared his throat. Finally she set down the glasses with a bang.

"The dirty auld shnake."

"Can you make out her name, Mrs. McCann?" the mate asked, tactlessly.

She turned on him like a she-bear.

"Niver mind what her name is. How much of the cindreboard is down?"

"It is all down."

"Pick half of it up, and get the stay-sail and flying-jib on." Then quietly to

herself: "It is the howly Saint Anthony himself that guided him into this course, and becalmed him to meet up wid us. Be no other chanst could I have beat him down. It may be doubtful now that I can do it, but it'll be the last vyage of Katherine Viola McCann if I do not."

Kitty's superior knowledge of handling the schooner seemed to have an immediate effect on the crew. They were aware of the rivalry with the *Whang*, and when she passed close to windward, close enough for them to distinguish Jacob's derisive pose on the poop-deck, they one and all became interested in the race to San Pedro, which was on in earnest now.

McHenry, too, felt the new interest, but with it a shade of anxiety, for with the glasses he could not but notice that Captain Jacobs's face, for all its coarseness, was the face of a veteran of the sea, and that to judge by his behavior and grave expression, he saw danger for both ships, and that not so far ahead.

The schooner was making heavy weather as she dipped her jibboom under the water, bringing tons of the emerald green over the forecandle and down to the main deck, where it raced away to the lee scuppers and to freedom. Cracking, groaning, buckling, and pitching the salt foam from stem to stern, it was only with the greatest difficulty that one could stand upon her bronco decks.

"I am afraid," said McHenry, looking aloft, "that the *Morning Star* has too much spread of canvas for this wind and sea."

Kitty braced her foot against the mooring-bitt. The green tam-o'-shanter blew away unheeded, its tassel streaming to the last. The wind that knows no virtue had respect neither for her hair nor her red flannel petticoat. She looked savagely ahead at the *Whang*.

"No, me bye, if the *Morning Star* can't carry her topsails atop av the wather, be me sowl she'll have to carry thim under the wather."

The crooked-legged sailor came hurrying aft.

"Mrs. McCann," he said, nervously, "she has sprung a seam on the weather-bow, and the water is running into the forecandle."

"Is it up to the bunks yet?"

"Well, no, but the Lord save us if it ever do get that high. I am afraid, Mrs. McCann, that you are crowding the little vessel too much. She can't stand it, ma'am, she can't."

He got no further. Kitty flew at him like a bantam rooster.

"It's a purty-looking sailor ye are. Go forward wit you, gowan now, before I lose me timper and tell you what I think of youse. Bail it out or drown, you lazy hound, and as far as the *Morning Star* is concerned, I'll sail her under, I'll make firewood of her, before I'll take in a yard of canvas! Now go forward and tell that to your fair-weather shipmates."

McHenry ran to the cabin for his oilskins, then forward to the fore-castle to find out how the leak was. Old shoes, tin plates, and odds and ends of a sailor's belongings were awash on the narrow floor.

"Where is the leak?" he cried.

"Leak be damned," shouted a short sailor, delivering himself with one foot propped up on the bunk, the other resting on a floating bench; "the bottom has dropped out of her, that's what."

"Get your buckets, men, and bail it out."

"Well," said crooked-leg (who, by the way, claimed that he had once fallen from the mast in a fit), "not that I want to interfere with any plans for the safety of the *Morning Star*, but with all respect for Mrs. McCann, she might as well ask us to bail out the ocean." He was clearing his throat to enlarge upon his subject when a sudden corkscrew pitch threw them all into the rising water on the fore-castle floor.

"What did I tell ye?" shouted the irrepressible one, as he washed around. "What about me dream now? The dream you laughed at?"

The mate scrambled for the stairs and went aft to report to Kitty. The petticoat of no surrender was inconspicuous now. It had given way to a long black oilskin coat. The carpet-slippers had been replaced by hip-boots, and the tam-o'-shanter by an equally distinctive old rubber hat, with a decided list to port.

As McHenry approached he said: "Mrs. McCann, I did not know you."

"Ah, shure an' I feel more comfortable now that I have me corsets off."

"There is two feet of water in the fore-castle," he said, pathetically.

"Is the water gaining on thim?" as she took a bearing on the schooner ahead.

"Yes, very fast," he said.

"Well, have thim move aft to the lazaret. Shure an' it's dry enough there for anny wan. You had better sound her and see if there is air dhrop of wather in the hold."

While he was in the lazaret getting the sounding-rod the mate could hear Kitty screaming her orders. He knew that at any moment something might be carried away, and thinking that this had happened, stuck his head out of the lazaret hatch. He saw Kitty towering over three sailors from the fore-castle. She seemed to grow as she grew angrier.

"We can't bail it out," said one, as he dodged a sheet of spray; "it's coming too fast."

"I can see daylight through her every time she rolls to leeward," interrupted the stout sailor.

"Move your dunnage aft here to the lazaret," said Kitty angrily; "it's afraid of a little water you are. Shure, and I believe it's flying-fish sailors you would be."

"Take the topsails off her," ventured crooked-leg, "before she goes to pieces."

"The divil a stitch will come off her as long as there is a plank left in her." Kitty was working up a dramatic scene for the benefit of those soaking sailors. She stepped to the weather rail and pointed ahead.

"Do you see that blackguard ahead? Well, it's me intintions to beat him to San Pedro if I have to drown ivery wan av yez. Wit the help av God," crossing herself, "and me faith in the *Morning Star*, I'll do it or drown wit yez."

The schooner was diving into the lumpy sea, throwing white combers from her arrow bow, forty or fifty feet to windward. When she rolled to leeward one would think that the drift-bolts were slowly receding from their fastenings. The groanings and squeakings were intensified as she rolled to windward. As she rose to the sea, showing her forefoot, the stern would go down into the trough. Down till the sea was even with the davits.

The crew, getting no satisfaction from

the master, slunk forward obedient to Kitty's commands.

There were twenty inches of water in the schooner's hold. The situation was serious. With the constant driving against the wind and sea, there was danger that the frail vessel would open up and spill her crew into the water.

McHenry reported this to Kitty. Peering out from the rim of her storm hat with daring eyes, she answered him quite calmly.

"Oh, well, that little dhrop won't disturb us much."

"Mrs. McCann, do you realize that she may open up at any minute, and we'll all be drowned like rats in a trap? I don't trust even the knee-bolts, and if they spring the hold will be the box, and the deck the lid, and it'll be up to you what we ride on."

"I don't give a divil damn if the bottom dhrops out of her. I have sworn to me Maker to win this race, and I have yet to go back on Him!"

Stuttering John at the wheel began to look and act as if he were about to be overcome by a fit. His arms were flying over his head, he was kicking at the wheel-box. His mouth was open, his ears flung back like a braying ass, but not a sound could he utter.

"Speak, man, speak," shouted Kitty; "is it dying you are?"

He pointed astern, and with great difficulty sputtered: "Th-th-th—" Then he tried another tack with no better success. "C-c-c-c—"

"Out wit it," cried Kitty, "if it chokes you!"

"C-c-centreboard gone!"

"Ah, and don't let that bother you, me good man," patting him on the hand; "shure, we'll niver miss it. There's plenty of her left yit. You kape your eyes on the *Whang* ahead, and nose to windward of him all you can." She turned to the mate, not at all daunted by increasing misfortune.

"Put the crew to work and pump her out."

The *Whang*, about four cable-lengths ahead, was still holding on to her topsails, although she was making as dirty weather of it as was the *Morning Star*. Her hull was a mass of white foam, and at times all

that was visible of her was her raking spars. Jacobs was as daring as Kitty was about carrying sail, a fact that spoke for the importance of the race to him, also.

Six o'clock and supper. The wind was increasing. After pumping four hours the water had gained four inches in the hold, making two feet.

Kitty seemed in suspense at leaving the deck. The strain of the race was beginning to tell upon her. The cook, waiting his chance for an even keel, served bean soup.

"Mrs. McCann," began the mate hesitatingly, "the water is gaining on us in the hold, and I am afraid that by morning we shall be water-logged and helpless, unless the *Whang* comes to our rescue."

The spoon dropped from Kitty's hand, spilling the soup over the dirty tablecloth. The pointed and freckled nose drooped, the cheeks were no longer flushed with the adventurous spirit of youth, and the fighting and flashing eyes faded into dreamless space. Kitty's hope was gone.

Tears streamed down her cheeks. Her trembling hand tried to push back her spray-soaked hair. The silence was miserable.

Heedless of the scene in the cabin, the *Morning Star* drove on. But the reverberations from the pump told that the crew were fighting for their lives. The sympathetic cook was snuffling in the pantry. Even McHenry, hardened as he was, hated the words he had been forced to speak.

Kitty rose slowly, steadying herself against the table.

"Take the topsails and flying-jib off her."

She started to go into her room, then, turning around suddenly she cried out: "It's the dishgrace of it, it's the dishgrace of it, dragging me good name and character through the streets. I could choke him, the dirty hound! Ah, he must be happy now, whin he sees me take in sail, and the *Morning Star* opening up, with me husband in jail, and me cintreboard gone!"

She jumped in front of him, furiously.

"If I could pass him once, I would die happy. Yis, if I could just pass him, even if I niver set foot upon the land again, I



Drawn by Gordon Stevenson.

"I have niver kissed ary man outside of Danny McCann, . . . but, right or wrong, I am going to kiss you."—Page 314.

would forgive me inimies, and close me eyes in peace at the bottom of the sea!"

Then tears of emotion and sorrow took possession of her again, and rubbing her tear-stained face pathetically she murmured:

"I am only a woman, after all."

Kitty's last words fastened onto McHenry like a vise. She was only a woman after all. She had no one to encourage her in the race against Jacobs. She knew that she was alone in the fight. It was not for her own life that she was willing to sacrifice her one cherished dream. It was not for the ship. It was for the sake of the crew. In the final word she was the real Master Mariner.

"Mrs. McCann," said the mate, touching her on the arm, "don't cry. Brace up. By jingo, we will beat the *Whang*, or sink the *Morning Star*."

Kitty ceased sobbing. The glow that lighted her face made her seem almost pretty. She threw her arms around his shoulders.

"God bliss ye," she said; "I have niver kissed ary man outside of Danny McCann, and of late years very little at that, but, right or wrong, I am going to kiss you."

Death held no terrors for McHenry now. He went to the companionway.

"Tell the men to lay aft here," he called to a sailor. "Splice the main brace!" It is the call to lay aft for grog. When the sailor hears this heavenly murmur, the misery of years fades from his hardened face.

They crowded around the companionway, and Kitty spoke with tears in her voice and on her cheeks.

"Men, do you see that schooner ahead of you?"

"We do, Mrs. McCann."

"Well, if she beats us to San Pedro I am a ruined and disgraced woman. Are you willing to take the risk of your lives to get ahead of her?"

"We are," they shouted, and Stuttering John gave emphasis with head and hands.

"Here, give thim a ball, and the man at the wheel, too, God bliss thim, shure they are deservin' of it. I niver mind a drink to a sailor, or a sowl that is passing away."

"And," she continued, turning to McHenry, "ye may have seen a fisherman's staysail in the lazareet. Well, I'm thinkin' we'll be takin' the chanst of stringin' it up. Be the grace av God we be gainin' on Jacobs now, and be the strenth av the staysail we should pass him althegither if we hold up."

Every man in the crew knew the risk they were taking now. The staysail had the same drawing-power as both topsails, and was as large. The added strain on the ship would be proportionate to the enormous increase in speed. But the main brace was spliced. What was a leaky schooner now, or a misplaced sea?

The muddled strains of a sailor's chan-tey floated aft from 'midships.

"Then heave ho, away Rio,
Fare you well, my pretty young girls,
We are bound for Rio Grande."

The groaning, even the death-struggles, of the *Morning Star*, would rhyme now to some old familiar melody. "Let her blow, let her roll, shipmates, this is the life!"

Getting up the sail, carrying it forward, and bending it took about five minutes. But to hoist it up, and get it on was a problem that required tact, skill, and strength. There was no time to lose, for the setting sun was making another day in the antipodes.

Regardless of the schooner's misery Kitty was at the wheel, relieving the helmsman to help the others. She was blazing with excitement.

"I could steer her through hell without a pilot," she said aloud, "just to have the pleasure of passing that auld divil himself." Then, "Are you ready, me byes?"

"All ready to hoist away, Mrs. McCann."

Down went the wheel, and up came the brave little vessel, heedless of the strain upon her emaciated hull, daring the wind and the whitecap combers, ever obedient to the whims of man, answering her master, and bowing before the elements that know no law. The whistling of the wind and the groaning of the schooner were lost in the noise of flapping sails.

"Hand over hand, men, lively, lively, up with it, belay, aft to the sheet, another pull—make fast!" roared the mate.

"All fast, sir."

The mate signalled to Kitty that the sail was set. She answered by putting her wheel up, and filling away on the shuddering canvas. As the schooner listed over to the force of the wind and sea, her voice could be heard above the tumult.

"Ivery man for himself, and God be wit yez!"

The crew ran to the weather-main-rigging, and McHenry aft to the wheel and Kitty. He got to the break of the poop, unable to go farther. The *Morning Star* was trembling over fathomless depths. The weather side, from the beam aft, pitched high out of water, assuming a horizontal position.

The fore and main booms were trailing in the sea, the hempen lanyards that supported the windward shrouds groaned and stretched in the deadeyes. The masts buckled, the sea-washed hull warped and twisted like a dying eel. No, she could not survive.

She had lost her headway when she came up in the wind, and was now being crushed by wind and sea and sail, unable to regain the momentum which was her only alternative to a watery grave.

The cinnabar sky to the westward was fading into the blue—to the eastward the faint and murky rays of a new September moon hung over the horizon, mocking those men in their despair. Alas, the work of an eccentric woman!

Suddenly a voice rang out loud and clear. Kitty's voice.

"Now, now, for me revinge!"

McHenry struggled to his hands and knees, and crept aft. The *Morning Star* was under way, no longer in a death-vice. The last rays of a dying day shone upon her, as she split the sea like a dolphin leaping toward the vessel ahead.

Kitty had kicked herself clear of her hip boots, and in so doing had parted the fastening which supported the pea-green stockings. In her acrobatic manœuvrings with the wheel they were forced from their mooring, and lay in emerald folds about her feet.

She stood perched to windward of the wheel, a heelhold around the corner of the wheel-box. Her left knee was braced against the spindles, and her nimble hands commanded the spokes. She looked like

a windtorn half-uprooted cedar on a hillside against the rising moon.

"Unconquering, but unconquered, still!"

She was talking to the *Morning Star* as a mother would talk to her child.

"Take it aisy, me girl, take it aisy. Shure, I niver doubted you for a second. It's not shtrangling you I am, it's giving you your head. Now show that baste on the *Whang* your purty, fair stern."

The *Morning Star*, defiant as her master, refused to acknowledge the autocratic sea. She dove through it like a silver salmon on his way to softer ripples and shallower waters.

The crew in the rigging were twisted around the swifters and the ratlines, high above the surging foam that enveloped the hull and deck. They were fast gaining on the *Whang*, which was about two hundred yards ahead, and a little to windward.

"I pass to leeward," shouted Kitty, waving off the mate's offer to take the wheel. "I'll take no chances with the crooked auld divil by passing on the weather side."

The *Whang* was three ship's lengths ahead.

"Look at him, the haythen, look at him, he is trying to cross me bows!"

The *Morning Star* was abaft the beam of the *Whang*, and a cat-jump to leeward of her. The unexpected would have to happen if collision were to be avoided. The men still clung in the rigging, motionless, in the face of this new danger.

"Keep her off," they cried to Kitty; "you're running into him, you'll drown us all!" For it is one thing to die because you have to, and quite another to perish through mistake.

Kitty puckered her mouth, and the wind seemed to make a gap for her voice, so loud it sounded.

"Haul in the mainsail!" she roared.

The crew slid down from the rigging, and ran for the sheet, with the strength that comes only in danger. They pulled till their eyes stuck out and their muscles stretched in pain. They flattened the mainsail in about ten feet. That was enough for Kitty.

"Belay," she shouted, "and look out for yourselves."

She put the wheel down, and the *Morning Star* nosed her head less than half a point to windward of the *Whang*.

Barely missing the weather quarter she was abreast of her now and less than twenty feet away. Slowly she took the wind out of the sails of the *Whang*, which dropped astern, and Captain Jacobs's language, fit to melt pig-iron, could be plainly heard.

Kitty took her eyes off the *Morning Star* just for a moment.

"Ha, ha! you auld blackguard who call yourself a sailor——"

She did not finish, for her voice broke into hysterical laughter that chimed the notes of conquest of the sea.

The crew, sure now of their captain and defiant through and through, clutched with one hand the briny shrouds, and with the other pulled off their caps and waved them high, cheering and cheering again.

When the force of the wind caught the loose, floppy sails of the *Whang*, a deafening and tearing roar spread out, and drowned laughter and cheers alike. Jacobs's sails were blown to ribbons.

The Great Bear was slowly circling the Polar Star, a horn of crescent moon was perpendicular to the horizon, as the *Morning Star*, dressed for comfort, sped on to harbor lights.

For five dismal days and nights the pumps sang their funeral dirge, but the *Morning Star* didn't carry her name for nothing, and safely she crept into port.

Kitty lost no time in disposing of her cargo. She unloaded her wares on the wharf, and sent an urgent call to the fishermen. They came in droves, and outbid each other for the lobster-creels.

"Now, min," she would say, as she held

up a creel, "what's the use to go to Alaska wit the gold plentiful at your door? Here you are, me byes, take thim away as long as they last. Shure an' I'm giving thim away at two dollars for the large ones and a dollar fifty cints for the shmall ones."

On the morning of the fourth day after, the *Whang* loafed into port and berthed just ahead of the *Morning Star*. Kitty saw Jacobs taking the hatches off his cargo, getting ready to unload. She still had some creels left, but not enough to fill the demand. How should she spoil his market?

"Come on, me hearties," she shouted; "come on, me fine-looking buckoes, you can have what is left for a dollar for the big ones and fifty cints for the small ones."

In vain Jacobs bid for custom. Kitty had the crowd. The market was swamped at last. "Come on and buy," she called hoarsely, "all you have to do is to put in a morsel of dog-salmon, thin drop it into twinty-foive feet of wather, and you have as foine a bit of lobster as iver you sunk your teeth into."

As she sold the last of her cargo she noticed a man running toward her. Before she had time to pocket her sale he stood breathless before her. He spoke as if his very life depended upon her answer.

"Kitty, for the love of hivin, give me tin dollars."

"And phwat would you be wantin' wit tin dollars, ye auld jailbird?" she asked with no more show of emotion than if she had seen Danny McCann at this very spot yesterday.

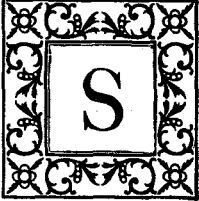
"It will cost me that for me fine to bate up Jacobs," he answered, simply.



Strange Memories

BY EDGAR JAMES SWIFT

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MR WILLIAM HAMILTON once said, speaking of Grotius and Pascal: "They forgot nothing that they had ever read." Of course this was an exaggeration. These

men had read and forgotten much that was not revealed in their vast learning. An efficient memory does not retain everything. It is selective.

Forgetting is as important as remembering, but we must forget the right things—that is, the facts which are useless for our purposes. That which impressed Hamilton in Grotius and Pascal was their marvellous erudition within the circle in which they were working and writing. And this circle seemed distressingly large even to so scholarly a man as Hamilton. But this only shows that these men were doing an immense business in ideas. When one is immersed in work in which one is profoundly interested one has little difficulty in remembering the facts related to one's problems. Such a person remembers them because he uses them. This, then, is the secret of an efficient memory.

Whenever a man has a remarkable memory in any line there is a reason for it. And this reason is personal inclination or force of circumstances which has made him practise the sort of memory in which later he is found to excel. Facts for which we have no use are forgotten. Personal motives, of course, play the leading part in promoting a good memory. An excellent illustration is mentioned by Frank Harris in his "Contemporary Portraits." He is quoting Upton Sinclair, who was speaking of his own memory and the change that occurred when writing gave him a compelling motive for remembering.

"I studied Latin five years and Greek three," Mr. Sinclair said. And "I looked

up some words in the dictionary ten thousand times and forgot them ten thousand times." But in writing, he continues a little later in Mr. Harris' sketch, "I developed a really extraordinary memory for words; I never put pen to paper till I had whole pages off by heart in my mind. I would walk up and down thinking it over and over, and it would stay in my mind—whole scenes.

"In the stock-yards I came on a wedding and sat and watched it all the afternoon and evening, and the whole opening scene of 'The Jungle' took shape in my memory. I never jotted down a note, nor a word, but two months later, when I settled at home to write, I wrote out that scene, and I doubt if three sentences varied. I can still do that."

It would be well, perhaps, before going farther, to make one point clear. There is no such thing as memory. Instead of this there are memories. Some excel in remembering faces, while others recall names or dates with ease. Doubtless this is due, in part, to heredity, but in large measure, it is the result of practice. Native ability of a particular sort, however, probably explains some of the memory feats which seem to us almost miraculous.

Selection is always operative in work that demands a high degree of specialized memory. The checkless checkers of hats in large hotels are illustrations. Doubtless many young men were employed and discharged before one was found who could learn to take three hundred hats from men entering the dining-room and distribute them as the diners left, without checks and without an error. In a city luncheon club with nearly four hundred members, for example, the usual method of paging a man who is wanted has been changed to asking the colored man in the hat-room whether this man has arrived. And a glance over the hats gives accurate information.