

## KNOTTED TWINE

### **XII** **C**ABIN **F**EVER.

If you happen to be confined within a small sailing vessel and your propensities urge you about as though your pantaloons contained undiscoverable burrs or creepy crawly creatures, then, when the weather persists in waves of adversity, in a stormy wetness, and for long periods of time, it may be conjectured you are ready for the try-works.

A symptomatology: The ingestion of copious quantities of caffeinated elixirs; an intense and prolonged fidgetiness; a staring out-of-doors at the inclemency absorbing the gloom; the onset of extreme irritableness; an inability to concentrate; incipient claustrophobic alarm; extreme sensitivity to sound and the almost uncontrollable urge to stick pins into your companion(s).

Aye!, then, 'tis one's home upon the sea becomes a veritable try-pot. True enough it is, if your temperament is such ye canna calm your inner workings, or provide sufficient unto yourself some entertainments as to endure the waking hours in a most composed manner, being obliged to engage in these activities for a week or more at a time, 'tis probably something you ought begin to train for, that is, if ye should desire to make passage into the higher latitudes. If ye are so fond of the sea and imagine ye desire such wondrous adventures as your imaginings devise and should these encompass a lengthy 'spanse of time in a small vessel, and if a far greater impatience loom as expression of your character, perhaps an excursion in the Caribbean would exist as the wiser choice of places to sojourn in order to conduct some experiments with this dreamier stuff.

One might reflect upon the lot of incarcerated unfortunates 'doing time' pondering the condition of their sanity, and wonder at barred concrete cubicles as proper sustenance for the soul and as corrective device for the errant and ailing scoundrels amongst us. One might also consider that if he was to slay his companion in a fit of cabin fever, what would await him in the way of rebuke. The Ministers of Death claim Capital Punishment is not cruel and unusual.

One often hears tell of the indifferent persuasion of 'four walls' and how it is these are often 'climbed'. Ah Yes!, if one but had available to him such a cliff to traverse within the chambered nautilus that wears him upon the sea.

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Nay!, oddly enough, one finds his own self the sole companion in these affairs - should he be a conscionable mate. Now 'tis I invoke once again, as some intoning clapper hinged inside thy bony crypt: 'We demand eternity for a lifetime; when our mortal half-hours too often prove tedious'.

Truly, sometimes 'tis not Paradise welcomes us. 'Tis said the old and sickly, in contention with their infirmities, often cede the battle.

'Tis no longer the inclement weather, or the four walls, or the bit of a cabin aboard ship, but the persuasion of the life within this sack of flesh propped aright in some arrangement of bone and tendon; therein lie the nave of thy sailings hither and yon; therein ye elect to draw the very breath that sustains ye.

But, oh!, there are times when the very limbs ache for locomotion, their cells clamoring for the discharge of some involuntary command; perhaps 'tis then one ought suit up, brave the elements to pace the deck, however incommodious, beating upon his chest, wailing out the phlegm, demanding of the heavens just cause for this Sturm and Drang.

What one would give to hoe a field of potatoes? And what caged animal might not wish to do the same, or perhaps pull upon a plow until struck by a thunderbolt?

In actuality, there are milestones during the day; 'stations of the cross' as one might allude, as he observes some ritual approach to the unfolding hours. Surely we may labor in service to the alimentary canal; even the sage ensconced in his Ivory Tower cannot provide succor from goose quills, ink and parchment.

Prepare the table!!! Then 'tis, one may ply his sack of bones with enticements from the ship's stores giving employment to the ship's cook, and perhaps 'tis she or he may then provide a subtle admixture of patience to the brew. One might wish it so. In between the grosser repasts, nibblings might sate imaginary appetites while dissolving the hours. Then again one might nibble with his eyes some special volume he had reserved for occasions such as these. Often enough such a compromise is painless, and often enough this fever is only a manifestation of one's very own unfamiliarity with himself - a confrontation, as it were, with oneself.

Solitaire - blessed solitaire!

'Oh Gud!, are you that person I have betrayed so often, to whom I have promised feats of glory, whom I have postponed time and time again. 'Tis now you hunt me down, 'tis now when I am least able to pay, you choose to collect your debts'.

Perhaps 'tis then, from out the depths of these doleful moments, we become re-inspired; we envision making amends, reawaken and renew those stale promises; 'tis then we anticipate

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the glorious rewards - Ah Alas! "When I return I shall make thee into an epic - wait and see!"

The storm fades; the confining quarters loosen their grip; the eyes glaze; one projects a vision, a grand scheme upon the blurring outside world. One has finally triumphed; he has labored long; he has tapped his utter core; he has produced a masterpiece; he has evoked the WORD; he is lauded far and wide, the world over, with laurels heaped upon him; they have awarded him the Nobel Prize!

One begins to yawn (RCWD).