

Ralph Delahaye
Paine

Four Bells

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THE VOICE OF THE SPANISH MAIN

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A GREAT GALLEON

THE ANGER OF COLONEL FAJARDO

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A TRANQUIL HAVEN

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Four Bells

A Tale of the Caribbean

THE VOICE OF THE SPANISH MAIN

The romance of the sea! Damned rubbish, he called it. The trade of seafaring was one way to earn a living. This was about all you could say for it. He had been lured into the merchant service as the aftermath of an enlistment in the Naval Reserve for the duration of the war. There was a great hurrah, as you will recall, over the mighty fleet of new cargo ships which were to restore the Stars and Stripes to blue water—Columbia's return to the ocean, and all that—a splendid revival of the days of Yankee ships and sailors of long ago—a career for ambitious, adventurous American youth.

This was true enough until the bubble broke. The painful malady of deflation suddenly afflicted the world's commerce. Much of Columbia's mighty fleet rusted at its moorings. Ambitious American youth walked the streets in quest of jobs afloat or relinquished the sea to the Briton and the Scandinavian. It could not be said that the nation was deeply stirred by this calamity. In a manner of speaking, it had long since turned its back to the coast and could not be persuaded to face about.

This Richard Cary was one of the young men who had not been cast high and dry by the ebb tide of maritime affairs. No auspicious slant of fortune favored him. He earned what came to him in the way of employment and promotion. All he knew was the hard schooling of North Atlantic voyages in bull-nosed brutes of war-built freighters that would neither steam nor steer.

During the period of booming prosperity, the supply of competent officers fell far short of the demand. Any ancient mariner with a master's license and fairly sound legs could get a ship. Foreign skippers were given "red ink tickets" and shoved aboard big American steamers.

The iron discipline and austere traditions of the sea were jeered at by motley crews, alien and native-born, who had easier work and better treatment than sailors had ever known. Mutiny ceased to be sensational. Noisy Slavs preached Bolshevism in the forecabin. Every dirty loafer had a grievance. Ships limped into port with drunken stokers who refused to ply shovel and slice-bar unless they happened to feel like it. Wise gentlemen ashore diagnosed it as the poison of social unrest.

Amid these turbulent conditions, such an officer as Richard Cary was worth his weight in gold. For one thing, the Navy had hammered into his soul certain ideas which he declined to regard as obsolete. These pertained to order, fidelity, and obedience as essential to the conduct of a ship. He was a young man untroubled by complex emotions. Life consisted in doing the day's work well, and the Lord help the subordinate who held opinions to the contrary.

It was a doctrine which had vouchsafed its own rewards. At twenty-five years of age he was chief officer of a ten-thousand-ton steamer of the Shipping Board fleet. There was something more to this rapid advancement than the old-fashioned virtues referred to. A natural aptitude for the sea was a large factor. Linked with this was a strong serenity of temper that few besetments could ruffle. Chief Officer Richard Cary moved on his appointed way with a certain ponderous momentum of mind and body.

He was sprung from that undiluted pioneer stock which is still to be found in the rural New England that is remote from the wash of later

immigration. It was the English strain, fair-haired and blue of eye, that throws back to the Saxon blood. There had been men of rare height and bulk among his ancestors. This was his goodly inheritance, that his head should brush the ceiling beams of his cabin on shipboard and his shoulders fill the width of the doorway. Mutinous or sulky sailors ceased to bluster about their rights when this imperturbable young man laid hands on them. This was not often necessary. What he called moral suasion was enough to quell a very pretty riot. He had this uncommon gift of leadership, of mastering men and circumstances, when he was compelled to display it.

There was lacking, however, the driving power of ambition, the keen-edged ardor that cuts its way through obstacles to reach a destined goal. This large placidity of outlook betokened a dormant imagination, a sort of spiritual inertia. There was no riddle of existence, so far as he was concerned. The romance and mystery of the sea? Silly yarns written by lubbers for landsmen to read! They ought to jam across the Western Ocean in the dead of winter with a doddering old fool of a skipper on the bridge and a crew of rotten scoundrels who deserved to be hung.

While enthusiastic crusaders were proclaiming the glorious resurgence of the American merchant marine, surplus tonnage began to pile up in every port. Richard Cary's huge scow of a freighter could find no cargo and was condemned to idleness with a melancholy squadron of her sister craft. The chief officer decided to look around a bit before seeking another berth. One or two offers came from shipping men who knew him by reputation. Already he stood out from the crowd. Waterfront gossip had passed along various tales of the reign of law and order upon the decks which big Dick Cary trod. He was no cursing, bullying bucko mate, mind you. Six and a half feet of soothing influence is a fairer phrase.

Home he went to the New Hampshire farm for a respite from the hard toil of the sea. In February it was, and the bleak hills wore their deep blankets of snow. His younger brother drove him in a pung to the white house snuggled close to the ground which had sheltered six generations of Carys. It made his back ache merely to look at the miles of stone wall which, as a clumsy young giant, he had helped to keep in repair.

“I guess going to sea is easier than this,” said brother Bill. “You seem to have done mighty well for yourself, I’ll tell the world. Any chance for me?”

“Not a chance,” replied the deep, leisurely accents of brother Dick. “Seafaring is all shot to pieces. You stand by your mother and look after the farm till you are ready to go to the agricultural college. I’ll pay for it.”

“Plenty of excitin’ stories to tell us, I s’pose. Your picture was in the papers, Dick, after your ship came into New York with four men in irons. It said you subdued ’em. What with, I want to know.”

“I read poetry to ’em, Bill, and distributed bouquets of cut flowers. They seemed grateful. So mother is as spry as ever and working her head off because she likes it.”

“Yep, she sure does make me snap out, Dick. And I bet she takes no back talk from you.”

“I’m scared already,” grinned the herculean mariner. “Watch her start a rough house if I track in any snow.”

He strode up the path to the granite doorstep and whisked up the wiry little woman who wore a best black gown and a white apron. Into the house he carried this trifling burden and set her down in a rush-bottomed chair by the fireplace.

“Bless me, Richard,” she cried, “that’s a trick you learned from your father that’s dead and gone! I used to tell him it was dreadful undignified. Of course he didn’t have your heft, but there was no ruggeder man in the village. Do you realize it’s been a whole year since you came home last?”

“Couldn’t break away, mother. A mate has to drive like a nigger when a ship is in port. Has Bill been taking good care of you? Any complaints and I’ll wallop the kid.”

“William is a quick and willing boy,” was the maternal verdict—“not so easy and good-natured as you—more inclined to be fretty when things go wrong.”

“You always called me lazy,” laughed the elder son, “and a nuisance under foot.”

“I dunno as I was far wrong, Richard,” was the severe rejoinder, “but we all have our failings. You have been a generous boy to your widowed mother. My land, you must have sent me ’most all your pay. I’ve been as careful as I could with it, and the account in the savings bank makes me feel real rich. Of course it belongs to you.”

“Forget it,” Richard growled amiably, waving a careless hand of imposing dimensions. “I’ll eat you out of house and home in the next fortnight. What about a whole pie right now?”

“Too much pie is bad for you between meals,” she firmly announced. “I’ll go cut you a reasonable piece. And don’t you let me hear you make a fuss about it.”

“Not me,” he sighed. “I know better.”

Contentedly he submitted to this fond tyranny. After all, home was the only place where folks cared whether a man lived or died. He was in every respect so unlike this high-strung, unflagging wisp of a mother of his that the contrast amused him. She was a Chichester and ran true to type. Most of the women wore themselves out in middle age. Her energy burned like a flame. Idleness was a sin.

In her turn she was perplexed by this strapping son of hers. He was rated as a highly successful young man, and yet, in her opinion, he lacked both zeal and industry—cardinal tenets of her New England creed. Sprawled upon the cushioned settle, he would drowsily stare at the fire for hours on end. He read very little and was not a loquacious person. An excellent listener, however, his mother's eager chatter about little things broke against his massive composure like ripples upon a rock.

Now and then, in oddly silent moments, she studied him intently. Rugged, like his father, but there resemblance strangely halted. Matthew Cary's frame had been gaunt, his features harsh and shrewd with the enduring imprint of the Puritan tradition. Richard, the son, might have belonged to another race of men. The fair skin, the ruddy cheek roughened by strong winds and salt spray, the hair like minted gold, were unfamiliar among the recent generations of Carys and Chichesters.

Handsome as a picture and as big as all outdoors, reflected the canny mother with a thrill of pride, but she actually felt like boxing his ears to wake him up. There was no soft streak in him, no weak fiber. This much she knew. His record at sea confirmed it. To call him hulking was absurd. There was courage in the level, tranquil gaze, and resolution was conveyed by the firm lips that smiled so readily.

"What in the world do you think about when you sit there like a bump on a log?" impatiently exclaimed the mother. "Is it a girl? William has suffered

from those moon-struck spells now and then, but at his age it's no more serious than chicken-pox."

"There's never been a girl that I thought of very long," dutifully answered Richard, his pipe between his teeth. "I'm not so anxious to meet the right one. Going to sea is poor stuff for a married man. They mean well enough, but I have seen too many lonely skippers and mates raising hell ashore."

"Don't you swear in this house, Richard. And I advise you to beware of low company. Sailors who have been properly brought up are true to their sweethearts and wives, like all decent folks."

"Yes'm," murmured her worldly young giant. "If Bill ground the axe, as I told him to, I guess I'll go and cut two or three cords of that pine growth. I need to limber up."

"Then please stop at the gate and get the mail, Richard. It must be in the box by this time. And don't you let that axe slip and cut your foot. I know you're a wonderful chopper, just like your father, but I always fret—"

"Aye, mother. You never saw a man so careful of his own skin. At sea, now, I run no risks at all."

"Richard, you are joking. Please don't cross the pond. The ice is melted thin and rotten with this February thaw. You might fall in and catch your death o' cold."

Chief Officer Cary, veteran of the North Atlantic trade, promised to avoid getting wet in the pond. Axe on his shoulder, he passed through the lane to the highway. In the box nailed to a gatepost he found a letter from a seafaring friend in New York. It appeared to interest him. After a hasty glance, he read it with more care. What it said was this:

My dear Dick:

I don't know what your plans are. If you have a job already cinched you are a lucky stiff. You can't throw a brick in this port without hitting an idle shipmaster. So far I haven't been chucked on the beach. The port captain of the Union Fruit Company is an old friend of mine. I told him about you yesterday. He needs a second officer in a passenger boat, the *Tarragona*, on the run to Kingston, Cartagena, and so on. Fine people to work for. None better. You may turn up your nose at the notion of going second mate, but they can't keep a good man down. The *Tarragona* sails next Wednesday. Wire me if you care to run down and size it up. Better come early and avoid the rush. The Spanish Main ahoy!

Faithfully yours

L. J. P.

Richard Cary let the axe rest against the gate while he pondered in his deliberate fashion. At first it had annoyed him to think of stepping down a peg. He had been looking forward to command in two or three years more. But times were hard and the tenure of employment in cargo steamers uncertain. He might be shifting about, from one company to another, and if freight rates dropped much lower he would be likely to join the luckless mob of stranded officers.

There was a prospect of advancement in the Union Fruit Company's service. A second mate's pay would meet his modest needs, with a surplus to send home. An easier life, decent men to handle, a smart, efficient ship

—these were arguments not to be tossed aside. So much for the practical aspect of it. This was overshadowed, however, by the desire to make the southern run. It was more like an urgent impulse. Until now, voyaging in the tropic zones had never appealed to him. He had a Western Ocean sailor's pride in fighting bitter gales and pounding seas.

Rather puzzled by his quick surrender to this summons, he turned back to the house and forgot to pick up the axe. He walked briskly, chin up, a man astir and efficient. Queer how a few lines of that letter had thrilled his matter-of-fact mind! He liked the sound of Cartagena and the Spanish Main. Where the devil was Cartagena? He knew there was a port of that name on the coast of Spain. This other one was somewhere in the Caribbean, down Colombia way, as he vaguely recalled.

Into the kitchen swung Richard Cary and demanded to know where the atlas was kept. His mother wiped the flour from her hands and exclaimed:

"First time I ever saw you in a hurry about anything except your meals. What under the sun ails you?"

"Outward bound—the night train for New York. I want to find out where I go from there." His mellow voice rang through the low-studded rooms. His mother was dismayed. The sea had called her towering son and he was a different being. Almost timidly she said:

"But you expected to make a longer visit, Richard. Why, you aren't really rested up. You sat around here—"

"And enjoyed every minute of it," he broke in, with a boyish laugh. "Now I'm going south in a banana boat, where the flying fishes play. Do I have to pull this house down to break out the atlas?"

“Mercy sakes, no! It’s under the Bible on the parlor table where it has set for years. There’s yellow fever and snakes down there, and how are you off for summer underwear?”

With his chin in his hand he pored over the map of the Caribbean and the sailing tracks across that storied sea. Jamaica and the Isthmus of Panama! Thence his finger moved along the coast to Cartagena and Santa Marta and La Guayra. His kindled fancy played around the words. They were like haunting melody. It was an emotion curiously novel. To find anything like it, he had to hark back to the fairy tales of childhood.

The feeling passed. His mother’s anxious accents recalled him to himself.

“But is it necessary, Richard, for you to rush off and take a second officer’s position? Why don’t you wait for something better? It’s not a mite like you to fly off at a tangent like this. Common sense was always your strongest point.”

“This is just the berth I want, I tell you,” said he. “It sounds new and interesting. Now if you will help me get my dunnage together—clean clothes and so on—where’s Bill?”

“Gone to the village on an errand, Richard,” was the meek answer. “He will be back in plenty of time to drive you to the train. Well, I’ve seen you wake up for once. Is this the way you boss men around on a ship?”

“For Heaven’s sake, I didn’t mean to sound rough, mother dear. I can move lively when something has to be done. And I don’t want to lose the chance of sailing in this *Tarragona*.”

The details of departure arranged, he resumed his wonted humor, care-free and easy. His mother wept a little when the sound of sleigh-bells

heralded the approach of William in the pung. There had been other partings like this, however, and she briskly waved a handkerchief from a window as he rode away. She still had her qualms about those outlandish ports, but he had solemnly sworn to shake the scorpions out of his shoes before putting them on, and this gave her some small comfort.

Young William fired a volley of questions on the road to the station, but his big brother had little to say. The spell of the Caribbean had faded. It was merely another job in a different ship. This lazy reticence irritated William who burst out:

“Sometimes you act as if you were dead from the neck up, Dick. You go to sleep in your tracks like a regular dumb-bell. Where’s your pep and punch if you’re such a blamed good officer? I’m entitled to talk plain, seeing as it’s all in the family. Don’t you ever get mad?”

“Quite peevish at times, Bill. There was a cabin steward last voyage who brought me cold water to shave with, two days running. I hated to do it, but I had to beat him to death with a hairbrush and throw his body overboard. He left a wife and seven children in Sweden and begged piteously for his life. Discipline, Bill! You have simply got to enforce it.”

William snorted with disgust. He was off this big lump of a brother, he said to himself, who treated him like a silly kid. The train was late, and while they waited at the station a stray dog wandered along the platform. It was no vagrant cur, but a handsome collie which had somehow lost its master and was earnestly trying to find him. The plight was enough to inspire sympathy in the heart of any man that loved a good dog.

“Take him home and keep him until you can ’phone around and stick up a notice in the post-office, Bill,” said Richard Cary.

Before William could catch the collie, the express train came thundering down. One of the loungers on the platform emitted a loud guffaw and tossed a bit of stick between the rails of the track. The collie rushed to retrieve it. Richard Cary cursed the man and yelled at the dog which bravely snatched the stick and fled to safety, escaping destruction by no more than the length of its plumed tail. It stood quivering in every nerve, nuzzling Richard's hand.

"Put my bags aboard, Bill," said the mariner. "I have a little business to attend to. It will take only a minute."

William concluded to hover within sight and sound. His brother's face was white as he moved closer to the man who had attempted to slay a dog in wanton sport. The offender was heavily built, with a truculent air, a stranger to the village. His coarse visage reflected alarm, but before he could fight or retreat his right arm was caught and twisted back in a grip that made him scream with pain.

A bone snapped. It would be some time before he could throw sticks with that right arm. Beside himself with rage and anguish, he bellowed foul abuse.

"Shut your dirty mouth," commanded Richard Cary. "You are getting off easy."

The tortured blackguard was given time to utter one more obscene insult. An open palm smote his face. It was a buffet so tremendous that the victim was fairly lifted from his feet. He pitched into the snow at the edge of the platform and lay huddled without motion.

"Good God-amighty, Dick, you busted that guy's neck," gasped William as he tugged at his brother's sleeve. "And all you did was slap him. If you want

to hop this train, you'd better hustle."

"Broke his neck? No such luck," growled Richard. "If he wants to see me again, tell him to wait till I come back. All right, Bill. Let's go."

He stooped to pat the head of the affectionate collie and ran to swing on board of the moving train. William had a farewell glimpse of his face at the window. Again it was ruddy and good-humored. The smile was a little wistful, almost like that of a boy leaving home for the first time. The younger brother stood staring after the train. His thoughts were confused. Presently he said to himself:

"Looks to me like there is a good deal for us to learn about Dick. You don't catch *me* sassin' him again. I certainly did run an awful risk when I called him a dumb-bell. Come on, pup. He told me to lug you home and I feel darn particular about obeyin' orders."

THE SEA DOGS OF DEVON

The *Tarragona*, of the Union Fruit Company's fleet, was steaming to the southward, away from harsh winds and ice-fettered harbors. It was sheer magic, this sea change that brought the sweet airs of the tropics to caress the white ship when she was no more than three days out from Sandy Hook. Passengers whose only business was to seek amusement loafed on the immaculate decks or besought the nimble bartender to mix one more round of planter's punches. The three-mile limit was another discomfort which had been left far astern.

To the second officer, Richard Cary, it was like a yachting cruise. He was adjusting himself to this unfamiliar kind of sailing. In a uniform of snowy duck he stood his watches on the bridge or occupied himself with the tasks of keeping the ship as smart and clean as eternal vigilance could make her. It resembled dining in a gayly crowded hotel to take his seat at one of the small tables in the saloon and listen, with an ingenuous interest, to the chatter of these voyagers who had embarked for an idle holiday on the blue Caribbean. Among them were girls, adept at flirtation and not at all coy, who regarded this big, fair-haired second officer with glances frankly admiring. He was by all odds the most intriguing young man aboard the *Tarragona*.

His lazy indifference was provoking. When asked a question on deck he replied with a boyish smile and a courteous word or two, but could not be persuaded to linger. In his own opinion he was not hired to entertain the passengers. Leave that nonsense to the skipper. He had all the time in the world and seemed to enjoy making a favorite of himself.

Captain Jordan Sterry was a man past fifty years old, but reluctant to admit it. A competent seaman of long service in the company's employ, he had a sociable disposition and could tell a good story. Sturdy and erect, his grayish hair and mustache close-cropped, he looked the part of the veteran shipmaster. He had one weakness, not unknown among men of his years. He preferred the society of women very much younger than himself. This expressed itself in a manner gallantly attentive to the bored young person who could find nobody else on board to play with, or to the audacious flapper who liked them well seasoned by experience and felt immensely flattered at attracting the notice of the spruce master of the *Tarragona*.

His attitude was nicely paternal. He deluded himself into believing that onlookers accepted it as such. In this respect Captain Jordan Sterry was not unique.

Richard Cary had an observant eye and a sense of humor. When he appeared sluggish, it was merely the sensible avoidance of waste motion of mind and body. He read the philandering skipper through and through and felt a healthy contempt for the soft streak in him, harmless enough, perhaps, but proof that there is no fool like an old fool. The man had been young once. Presumably he had had his fling. Why try to clutch at something that was gone, that had vanished as utterly as the froth of a wave? It was more than absurd. To Richard Cary, secure in the splendid twenties, unable to imagine himself as ever growing old, the skipper's rebellion against the inevitable was almost grotesque.

Professionally no flaws could be found in Captain Sterry's conduct. He ruled his ship with a firm hand, dealt justly with his officers, and was quick to note inefficiency. In all ways the *Tarragona* was a crack ship. It was to Richard Cary's credit that the captain already approved of him. In fact, he was as cordial as the difference in rank permitted.

The chief officer was a sun-dried, silent down-easter who had found it slow climbing the ladder of promotion. He was always hoping for a command, yet somehow missing it. Dependable, incredibly industrious, he lacked the spark of initiative, the essential quality of leadership. Disappointment had soured him. He nursed his grievances and wished he were fitted for a decent job ashore.

After trying in vain to break through his crust, Richard Cary sought companionship elsewhere. He found it in the chief engineer, an extraordinary Englishman named McClement whose cabin was filled with books: history, philosophy, poetry; fiction translated from the French and Russian. There he sat and read by the hour, shirt stripped off, electric fan purring, a cold bottle of beer at his elbow. Half a dozen assistant engineers stood their watches down where the oil burners roared in the furnaces and the huge piston rods whirled the gleaming crank shafts. If anything went wrong, the chief engineer appeared swiftly, clad in disreputable overalls, and his speech was rugged Anglo-Saxon, of a quality requiring expurgation.

Now and then he strolled on deck of an evening, a lean, abstracted figure in spotless white clothes, hands clasped behind him, eyeing the capers of frivolous humankind with a certain cynical tolerance. They were as God had made them, but it was a bungled job. He ate most of his meals in his room, a book propped behind the tray. In this manner he evaded the affliction of mingling with tired business men and vivacious ladies eager to visit the engine room.

Richard Cary drifted into this McClement's quarters by invitation, found a chair strong enough to hold him, and filled a blackened pipe from a jar on the desk. As usual he had not a great deal to say, but was amiability itself. He was content to sit and smoke and speak when spoken to. This pleased

his host who read aloud choice bits of things and made pungent comments. The visitor borrowed a book and came again. They got on famously together because in temperament they were so curiously unlike.

On a clear day the ship sighted the lofty mountain range of Jamaica and steered to make her landfall for the harbor of Kingston. She drew near to the coast in the late afternoon. The breeze brought the heavy scents of the tropical verdure, of lush mountain vales, and the wet jungle. Richard Cary was on watch. Instead of standing at the bridge railing, with his calm and solid composure, he walked to and fro in a mood oddly restless. Intently he stared at the lofty slopes all clothed in living green, the tiny waterfalls bedecking them like flashes of silver lace.

He snuffed the air, so very different from the sea winds. The tropic island of Jamaica was strange to him, and yet it seemed vaguely, elusively familiar, as though he had beheld it while asleep and dreaming. The chief officer relieved him, but he lingered on the boat deck to see the black pilot come aboard from a dugout canoe. The steamer forged ahead again and passed into the harbor. The mountains loomed beyond the huddled roofs of Kingston. On the starboard side was a low, sandy point upon which were the trim, red-tiled bungalows of the quarantine station. The *Tarragona* paused again, to wait for the British health officer.

McClement, the chief engineer, climbed to the boat deck and said, as he joined Richard Cary:

“Port Royal yonder! No more than a sandbank now. The old town was sunk by an earthquake long ago. If you poke about in a small boat, they say you can see the stone walls of the houses down under the clear water. It was a famous resort of pirates and such gentry in the roaring days of the Spanish Main. Rum and loot, women and sin! All that made life worth living.”

“Port Royal?” exclaimed Cary. “I’m sure I have heard something about Port Royal. All gone, eh, Mac? Scuppered for their crimes. Served ’em right. A bad lot.”

“Very rotten, Dick, but they had certain virtues which the modern buccaneers of industry lack. We have two or three of these aboard. They never risked their skins to bag *their* plunder.”

Second Officer Cary muttered something and walked to the edge of the deck to peer down into the bright green water as if expecting to see the flickering phantoms of the wild sea rovers of the lost Port Royal. His blue eyes were bright with an ardent interest. McClement remarked, with a quizzical grin:

“I haven’t seen you really awake before now. What touched you off? Pirate yarns you read when you were a kid?”

“Perhaps so, Mac. I had this feeling once before. It was when I got word from a pal in New York, telling me about this job, that it was on the run to Cartagena. What is Cartagena like?”

“Wait and see it, my boy. Cartagena is a vision of vanished adventures, a gorgeous old Spanish treasure town preserved, by a sort of miracle, through three hundred years. Romance, color, tradition? It makes the days of the tall galleons and the bold sea dogs live again.”

“Tell me more about it,” demanded Richard Cary. His voice rolled out in a deep and masterful note.

“Come down to my room after the ship docks and I’ll give you some books to read, Kingsley’s ‘Westward Ho,’ Hakluyt’s ‘Voyages,’ and Captain Burney’s ‘History of the Buccaneers of America.’”

Some small sound in the engine-room far below them diverted McClement's attention. His perception of such things was uncannily acute. He vanished instantly down the nearest stairway. Richard Cary also found work to do. This broke the spell of his day-dreaming. It did not recur to him during the *Tarragona's* brief stay at Kingston. In the evening he was on duty at the cargo hatches while the passengers swarmed ashore to find entertainment at the excessively modern and luxurious hotel.

He had leisure to saunter a little way from the wharf, but felt no desire to explore Kingston. It was quite common-place, the streets noisy with electric cars and automobiles, the brick and wooden buildings as cheap and unlovely as those of any American town. Several charming young passengers failed to persuade him to join a party at the hotel where an orchestra was jazzing it, and he also declined, with due caution, the hospitality of thirsty voyagers who were making a night of it.

Returning to the ship, he went to his room at midnight and picked up the chief engineer's books instead of turning in. Presently he found himself fascinated. For the sake of comfort he shifted into pajamas and lay stretched in the bunk. The ship's bell tolled one half-hour after another and he was still reading. These printed pages were a key that unlocked the gates of enchantment. Now and then he lost himself in absorbed reverie.

These chronicles of hazards and escapes and hard fighting in the waters that washed the Spanish Main had been derived from documents, from the robust memoirs of men whose bones had crumbled in a century now dim and dead. The rich ports whose walls they had stormed with a bravado that defied all odds were no more than fragments of ruined masonry submerged in the jungle growth, Nombre de Dios, Porto Bello, and old Panama, names that still reëcho like the brazen blare of trumpets.

All gone save Cartagena, reflected Richard Cary. Cartagena still basking by the sea to recall that day when Francis Drake and his Devon lads had stormed it with the naked sword.

At length this brawny second mate of the *Tarragona* laid the books aside. Dawn was brightening the windows of his room. He thrust his bare feet into straw slippers and went on deck to loaf in the fresh morning air. His head was buzzing. He felt fatigued, although as a mariner he was hardened to wakeful nights.

In fancy he had been sailing, fighting, and carousing with those ferocious freebooters of the Caribbean. They seemed as real to him as the plodding, slow-spoken farmers of the New Hampshire soil on which he had been raised. Those clumsy, high-pooped ships with the bellying sails and gaudy pennants were as clearly etched in his mind as the stone walls, the square white houses, and the dark woodlands of his native countryside.

Confound the chief engineer's books, he said to himself. They had turned his brain all topsy-turvy.

These impressions slowly faded until the *Tarragona* had sailed from Kingston and was steaming across that wide waste of sea that rolls between Jamaica and the Spanish Main. Strong winds were almost always blowing there, whistling through a ship's stays, whipping the blue surface into foaming surges, with clear skies and hot sunshine. The *Tarragona* reeled to the swing of these restless seas, and the spray pelted her decks in sparkling showers. The passengers disliked it. Some of them uttered low moans and retired to their rooms. There were vacant chairs in the dining-saloon, regrets at having left the dry land of home, no matter how dry it was.

Richard Cary enjoyed it. He was amazed that he had ever regarded going to sea as drudgery. This part of the voyage appealed to him with a peculiar zest. For the first time he loved the ocean. This boisterous wind that blew beneath a hard bright sky, a cool tang to it that tempered the tropic heat—he drew it deep into his lungs, standing with arms folded across his mighty chest.

The astute chief engineer found something to interest him in the behavior of his herculean young shipmate. They were walking the deck together when McClement said, with his dry chuckle:

“Until we sighted Jamaica, Dick, you were majestic and quiet, like the everlasting hills. I welcomed you as a benign influence in a world of guff and jazz and nervous twitters. Now you fairly talk my head off. It doesn’t bore me, mind you, but I find myself perplexed to account for this flow of language. Were you bottled up all those years, and has the cork just blown out?”

“Something like that, Mac,” rather sheepishly admitted Richard Cary. “I can’t seem to help talking to you about the Spanish Main and the hard-boiled lads that put it on the map. You know all that stuff by heart, and I fairly eat it up.”

“Aye, Dick, you lick your chops over it. You have read every bally book I could dig up. It is like a craving for strong drink.”

Cary did not appear to be listening. The wind was blowing against his cheek. The deck was unsteady beneath his feet. Against the ship’s side the crested waves crashed and broke.

“Can’t you see them, Mac?” was his resonant exclamation. “Lubberly little vessels, as round as an apple, leaking like baskets, rotten with fever—

wallowing off to leeward when the wind drew ahead? It was this same wind that blew them across this stretch of sea to the Isthmus of Darien and Cartagena, that made it possible for them to fetch the mainland. They had it on the beam, there and back. It served the Spanish galleons as well as the Englishmen that hunted them. Why, Mac, old man, the *feel* of this wind, now don't laugh at me, is enough to tell me more stories than I found in all your musty old books."

The chief engineer halted in his tracks. With a keener scrutiny than usual he studied the candid, engaging features of Richard Cary, the fearless vision, the resolute chin, the ruddy color, and the thatch of yellow hair. Cary was conscious of this deliberate appraisal. He flushed under it. McClement took another turn along the deck before halting to ask a question:

"Do you resemble the rest of the family, Dick?"

"Absolutely not. My dad used to say I was a throwback, and a long throw at that."

"Precisely. That is what I am driving at. New England rural stock, you told me. English on both sides, I presume. Where did your forbears come from?"

"Devonshire, all of them," answered Cary. "My mother's folks came over from Plymouth a couple of hundred years ago and settled near where they live now. My father's ancestors came later, just before the Revolution. They hailed from a little village near Bideford, so I used to hear him say."

"From Devon?" exclaimed McClement, who did not appear greatly surprised. "The Carys of Devon! And your mother was—"

“A Chichester,” said Richard.

“Carys and Chichesters, of course, Dick. And you are the living image of Amyas Leigh in ‘Westward Ho’! He must have been about your build and bulk. The kind of lad they bred in Devon when the world was young!”

“Carys and Chichesters sailed with Drake and Hawkins,” broke in Richard, “in these same seas, and they fought the Spanish Armada along with Walter Raleigh and Martin Frobisher. I found the names in one of your books.”

“Aye, they did all of that and more too,” agreed the chief engineer. “I am too hard-headed to take stock in any fantastic theory of buried memories and such tosh as that. I’ll have to admit, though, that you are a bit startling, Dick. It’s out of the question, of course, that certain impressions and associations could have been handed down through your race, to come to life in you.”

Inherited memories of the Spanish Main? Such a notion had not occurred to Richard Cary. Fantastic enough, but his quickened imagination laid hold of it.

“There must have been a Cary in one of the expeditions against Cartagena, don’t you think, Mac?”

“My word, yes. You can bet your last dollar on that. Those stout Devon lads were all over the shop, wherever there was a chance to singe the beard of the king of Spain.”

“Then wouldn’t that account for the queer feeling that I have been in these waters before? Why, the idea of sailing for Cartagena made me tingle right down to my heels when I first heard of it.”

“Here, you can’t coax me into discussing anything like that, you fine big brute,” protested McClement. “It won’t do at all. Do you think you are a blooming reincarnation? Better come to my room and have a drink and forget it.”

“Then how do you explain it?” was the stubborn question. “On the level, I am getting worried about myself.”

“No occasion for it, Dick. You are a coincidence, in a way, and a vastly interesting one. What ails you, however, is the spirit of romance and adventure. You didn’t know you had it in you. Youth often finds it in a first voyage to the tropics. I was that way myself. And the Spanish Main has a beguiling magic of its own. Most of these wild tales were fresh to you. Unconsciously you identified yourself with them because you knew you were bred from that same strain of Elizabethan seamen.”

“Have it your own way,” rather sulkily agreed Richard Cary, “but there is more to this than you can figure out, as wise as you are.”

McClement had implanted a suggestion which oddly lingered in Cary’s thoughts and colored them with strange conjectures. Who or what was the real Richard Cary? The brawny rover of Devon who had dived with the devil and the deep sea, or the prosaic son of New Hampshire farming folk who had viewed seafaring as a means of earning his bread?

“Two Richard Carys,” reflected this second officer of the *Tarragona*. “All my life I may have been a mixture of both and didn’t know it. When I got sore at something and cleared for action, like wading into that bunch of fo’castle outlaws on the last Western Ocean voyage, I must have been the big Dick Cary of Devon that found his fun in walloping the Spaniards.”

His meditations trailed off into nebulous realms, into a haze of conjectures and dreams and anticipations. Instead of taking each day as it came, he found himself looking forward to something. It seemed to be beckoning him. Somewhere in these romantic seas, adventure awaited him. The chief engineer read aloud a poem that matched this new mood. Richard Cary listened with a smile on his face.

“Could man be drunk forever
With liquor, love or fights,
Lief should I rouse at morning
And lief lie down of nights.

“But men at whiles are sober
And think by fits and starts,
And if they think, they fasten
Their hands upon their hearts.”

A GREAT GALLEON

Señorita Teresa Fernandez was the stewardess of the *Tarragona*. A dark, handsome young woman, she wore a cap and uniform of white, severely plain, that were singularly becoming. They also conveyed the impression that she had no time for sentiment or frivolity. She talked easily, with a flash of white teeth, a sparkling eye, and graceful gestures. The ladies were apt to confide their affairs to her when she carried the breakfast trays to their rooms.

In return she told them various things about herself. She had been left motherless when a child. Her father, a South American merchant who had traveled much and visited many countries of Europe, had taken her with him and she had learned to know the sea and to speak French and Italian and English. He had died after very sad business troubles and there had been no relatives to look after her except an uncle, a very eccentric and disagreeable old gentleman to get along with.

She had preferred making her own way in the world to seeking shelter under her uncle's roof. She was very young for a stewardess? Yes, but her father had been a friend of certain officials of the Fruit Company, and she had been given a trial. It was enough for her to say that she had been kept in the service. For one whose family was very old and dignified, with an honored name, it was unusual, in a way; but what would you? If Teresa Fernandez was not ashamed to be earning an honest living, why pay attention to what others might say?

When off duty she liked to sit in a wicker chair near the saloon staircase of the *Tarragona*. It was a cool, breezy place. She was close enough to the electric bells to respond to any summons. It was convenient for chatting with her friends as they passed, the second steward, the wireless operators, the purser, or the doctor. They agreed that Señorita Fernandez was a good scout.

Now and then Richard Cary had stopped for a bit of gossip. He liked this cheerful, good-looking young stewardess who always had a smile for him and a gay word of greeting. She offered to darn his socks and overhaul his shirts for missing buttons, and refused payment for it. This was out of the ordinary. She was a thrifty soul who overlooked no opportunities to add to her income.

From his seat in the dining-saloon, Cary often caught her looking at him when she was resting in the wicker chair near the landing. And when their eyes met, the tint in the olive cheek of Teresa Fernandez was likely to deepen. It was to be surmised that she was a woman of feelings as well as a very competent stewardess.

During the run from Jamaica to the Spanish Main, Dick Cary paused oftener and stayed longer beside the wicker chair. He had lost that air of serene indifference to the feminine equation. This Teresa Fernandez strongly attracted him. She knew ships and the sea and the ports of many climes. She made conversation delightfully easy.

One evening he found her standing on the lower deck, in a corner sheltered from the wind. A scarf of Spanish lace was thrown over her ebon, lustrous hair. She was alluring, exotic, a woman in another role than that of the efficient, industrious stewardess of the *Tarragona*.