

To begin with, you must understand that a cable-ship is not like other ships, <sup>which</sup> whose chief concern is to stay as far away from the bottom as possible. The cable-ship's sole concern is the bottom, where the slender man-made rope of copper wire and copper tape, and gutta percha insulation, and jute cushion, and galvanised iron wire armour, lies in the dark ooze connecting continent with continent. You might think it would lie there forever undisturbed; but, ~~no~~, there are teredo worms and other borers which thrive on gutta percha and manage to find their way through the smallest gap in the armour to indulge their taste; and there are ship's anchors, and the dragging gear of steam trawlers, and on the Newfoundland end there are icebergs grounding in the spring and crushing the shore-ends to death; and far out in the deeps, where one supposes no marine life, no anchors, trawl-gear or icebergs, the cable develops mysterious faults of itself, and goes sick, and has to be pulled up and operated upon. For this reason, ~~\$\$\$\$\$~~ companies like the Canada/Imperial Undersea Cable maintain ships like the Triton.

The Triton is gone from the sea now, a hulk used for cable storage in a roadstead somewhere, but I still think of her with affection, and when I think of her I think naturally of Captain Tewkes, and the struggle with Main Four that drove him mad. I was a wireless operator then, and very young -- it was just after the First German War -- and the Triton was old and worn, and really on her way to the discard. Within six months I left her she was condemned, and the sea -- and the sea-bottom -- knew her no more. But she was still a rather trim thing, even then, sitting rather low on the water, with a single grey funnel behind a high glassed-in bridge. She had a clipper bow, with a big cable sheave where you might have expected a figure-head, and there was another sheave for paying out, astern. On the forward deck, in the big well between the bridge deck and the forecastle, stood the picking-up machine, a mighty winch for lowering ~~and \$\$\$~~ the grapnel and its many fathoms of stout rope, and hauling it in again when the cable had been hooked. And aft, in the smaller well between the bridge deck and poop, stood the paying-out machine. Her decks were of oak, kept holystoned like those of a man-o'-war, and all her brasswork shone. You would never have thought, to look at her, that she was built away back in the 1880's somewhere, and that the war had tried her beyond the endurance required by Lloyds'. There had been a gun, I remember, an ancient 4.7 purchased from the Japanese navy's surplus stock. It stood on the gleaming white poop, with its long barrel over the paying-out sheave, and the queer laundry-marks of the Japanese still painted on it. We had a crew of Crystal-Palace gunners, the sort who were then manning guns on ships of the merchant marine everywhere, and ~~once they had fired the thing, that was just outside Halifax Harbour, somewhere; the old gun nearly tore itself out of the poop. The concussion broke every dish in the saloon below, where the officers were gathered about the long mahogany table for lunch, and sent a cascade of flower-pots out of the skylight -- an enormous thing, the captain's pride -- upon their astonished heads. Old Captain Smith forbade the gun to be fired after that, submarines or no submarines, and after the war it was taken away, without regrets. Captain Smith went soon after, but with many regrets. He was fine old man, an Englishman right out of the time of Drake and Raleigh, an alert, humourous, cautious old pirate with an Oxford accent and a torpedo beard. He had been on that ship forty 35 years, beginning as third officer, and when he left, it came to everybody as a shock that the ship could be so old. He and she had had a hard life together, all over the Atlantic, in all seasons, in every sort of weather; and they had done some jobs of ~~\$\$\$~~ laying and ~~\$\$\$~~ repairing that were famous in cable circles. And now they were parted at last, and ~~\$\$\$~~ the chief officer, Tewkes, became Captain Tewkes, and moved his clothes and pictures from the stuffy cabin that opened off the saloon ~~\$\$\$~~ under the poop, and on the water line, where the porthole had to be closed as soon as the ship left her wharf -- moved to the spacious quarters on the starboard side of the poop, the big day cabin, with its desk and easy chairs, the smaller night cabin, where there was ~~\$\$\$~~ a built-in bed instead of a bunk. He inherited also the captain's steward, a thin-faced, rheumy old man named Jimmie, who had worshipped the deck~~



*Captain's later bond slave*

under Captain Smith's <sup>sure to</sup> number nine half-wellingtons. Everybody wondered how Jimmie would adjust himself to a new master; for Jimmie was a rude old man, immensely conscious of his position as acolyte to the ship's ~~chief~~ <sup>chief</sup> god, and in his time he had offended the sensibilities of ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> chief officer Tewkes on more than one occasion. But they got along very well, ~~apparently~~. Jimmie seemed to transfer his worship to Captain Tewkes in its entirety; and Captain Tewkes was not one to hold a grudge.

He had waited a long time for this berth. ~~\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$~~ The best part of his life, in fact. Captain Tewkes was an Englishman ~~of~~ <sup>of</sup> the tall, blond, hook-nosed, sweeping-moustached type, beloved of cartoonists. <sup>beloved cartoonists</sup> Everybody on board the ~~Triton~~ <sup>Triton</sup> said Tewkes could make a lot more money ~~playing~~ <sup>playing</sup> retired-English-colonel parts in Hollywood if the movie industry had only known about him.

The officers and crew of the Triton originally were mainly English, for they had brought the ship out new from a Clyde-side yard to take her place on the North Atlantic cable grounds. Her base was a Nova Scotia seaport, and there the officers and some of the crew brought wives and families. In the course of time most of the original ~~crew~~ <sup>crew</sup> had drifted back home, their places taken by <sup>hard-bitten fishermen</sup> seamen of the Grand Bank fleet, the coasters, ~~\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$~~ <sup>came</sup> scollier men from the Sydney-St. Lawrence trade, and the like. The officers were all ~~men~~ <sup>men</sup> of good ~~\$\$\$\$\$\$~~ <sup>\$\$\$\$\$\$</sup> but impoverished English families, who had put their sons through second-rate schools and training ships, and exerted influence in the right quarters to get them posts in the ~~cables~~ <sup>service</sup>, where of course the pay was very much better than the merchant service or the navy. They were good men, and as good men do, they ~~\$\$\$~~ <sup>drifted</sup> drifted home, to retire on pension somewhere in the English countryside, and put their sons through second-rate schools and exerted influences in their turn. So it came that in my time, the Triton's big forcastle was full of Canadians; and of those who sat about the long table in the saloon aft, only Captain Tewkes, ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> the purser, and the first and second electricians were English-- and the last three were men in the twenties and thirties, of ~~\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$~~ <sup>\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$</sup> what one might call the second generation. They sat in a little group at the head of the table, with the Canadian chief engineer at the captain's right hand. At the foot of the table sat the chief officer, a Bluenose named Murchie, with a hand some square red face and curly pepper-and-salt hair, and ~~with~~ <sup>with</sup> ~~\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$~~ <sup>\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$</sup> the second and third officers at his right and left. They talked shop a good deal, and the ways of ships and men and ports they had known. But at the captain's end of the table the conversation ranged over such things as books, plays, the latest thing said in parliament, and the cricket scores as received by wireless. ~~\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$~~ <sup>\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$</sup> I think Captain Tewkes would rather have talked ships; but the ~~chief~~ <sup>chief</sup> electrician was ~~one~~ <sup>one</sup> of those slim, pale men, with neatly brushed blond hair and white even teeth, who are turned out of ~~\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$~~ <sup>\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$</sup> the minor English public schools like boards from a sawmill; ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> he kept the conversation on a public school plane. Over that group at the table's head hung what might be called, in fact, the atmosphere of the old school tie. (A) As wireless operator, the lowest form of marine life, I occupied a seat between these groups, and so could listen to ~~\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$~~ <sup>\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$</sup> each. I was young then, ~~as~~ <sup>as</sup> I have said, and the contrast between the ~~two~~ <sup>two</sup> schools amused me very much. I don not suppose you could find a ~~situation~~ <sup>situation</sup> like that anywhere on earth today. On so small a ship, I mean. We were surrounded by mahogany panels and doors, where cabins opened off the saloon. And overhead the sunlight poured through the long poop skylight, through the massed flower-pots of the late captain's fancy, ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> Jimmie's special care. Jimmie stood behind Captain Tewkes, anticipating his every want. The rest of us had to be content with ~~two~~ <sup>two</sup> stewards, one to the each side of the table. The ship rolled, and the knives and forks and plates slid against the fiddles ~~\$\$\$\$\$\$~~ <sup>\$\$\$\$\$\$</sup>, and the flower-pots clicked gently in the racks overhead, the stewards moved to and fro, silent on the thick saloon carpet, and now from the after end of the table came a snatch of a fishing voyage to Labrador, and now from the captain's end came the ~~lively~~ <sup>lively</sup> voice of the chief electrician, talking about Lord's, or the last act of Chu-Chin-Chow.



lovely ~~light~~

(A) There was something ghostly about their conversation, as if it were faint echoes from the time when the ship was young, and the whole ~~of~~ table surrounded by ~~the~~ <sup>shined</sup> marble faces and polished accents speaking reverently of "home." <sup>where the ship was based</sup>

That was a long time ago. Home for Captain Leuker was a house in the Nova Scotia seaport, a wooden house with stunted brown shingles and a bit of lawn at the side and back. His wife was English, <sup>the first</sup> a child had come to them ~~in their middle age~~ and the boy was now ten; Mrs Leuker had long since ceased to talk of "home"; the sun rose and set, not on the British Empire, but on young Geoffrey.



We had been kept busy in West Indian waters all that winter, when weather made repairs in the North Atlantic uncertain and expensive-- on loan to another cable firm. There was some grumbling on board. Christmas in Bermuda was ~~all~~ very fine, but when a man has a family in Halifax, and there's the long summer season ahead, with its incessant calls out into the North Atlantic for weeks on end. In the old days, when the cables were ~~newly laid~~ newly laid, there was little to do except a few shore-end jobs in the summer months. Those were the halcyon days of the cables. But the teredo had followed the cables ~~out of warm waters and acclimated himself~~ out of warm waters and acclimated himself to the northern seas, and of course the war with its incessant depth-charging had played havoc with the bottom, and now that the cables were old and rotten there was a constant round of repairs to be made. When we came north to refit for the summer's work the married men were happy for a time, and one night, by special permission of Captain Tewkes, the crew and their girls and their families held a dance in the big cable-shed at the head of the wharf. It was a gala affair, with Chinese lanterns lighting the gloom of the concrete walls, and the crew's own orchestra playing for the dancing. There was a big crowd, seventy men, with their families or their girls. Captain Tewkes ~~came down to the docks in mid-evening, in mufti, and made a little speech from the orchestra platform.~~ came down to the docks in mid-evening, in mufti, and made a little speech from the orchestra platform. He was glad to see them enjoying themselves, he said. Now that he had taken command he hoped that he would always have their friendly cooperation in the work of the ship. Frankly, he declared, he was counting on the crew to back him up in every way during the coming summer's work. The West Indian job had been a series of small repairs, in shallow water mostly, and of course the whole job was merely a loan business -- it was not "our company". "Our company" would judge his fitness to command the Triton by the way this summer's work was done. Captain Smith had been a great cable-man (cheers) and it would be hard to fill his shoes (a silence) but captains come and captains go, and ~~the work must go on forever.~~ the work must go on forever. ("Hear! Hear!") There was a little patter of polite applause when he stepped down, and the Triton's bosun, ~~an~~ Newfoundland-Irish giant named Hearn, called fiercely for cheers, which were given obediently. The fiddles struck up then for a square dance, and to carry the thing through properly, Captain Tewkes should have asked the bosun's wife at that point for a dance -- as ~~the~~ Captain Smith would have done. But he was no dancing man; he was a stiff man, physically and mentally. for anything like that. He put on his hat and went home; and when he came down to the ship in the morning he ~~learned~~ learned that a child of one of the seamen had fallen into a cable tank at the end of the shed shortly after he left. The big concret tank was empty, and the child died in the night. It was a gloomy ship that morning, I remember.

But there was work to be done. The Triton went into dry dock for some attention to her twin screws, and then there were miles of grapnel rope to taken aboard, and the big mark buoys, the cable tanks, fore and aft, to be filled, and stores and bunkers for a month at sea. At the close of these feverish activities came the word we had been waiting for. It happened nearly every spring. An iceberg, drifting down the Newfoundland coast, had worked into the cove where Main Four landed and nipped off the heavy shore-end like string. We disconnected the shore telephone -- to the pursers relief, for the thing rang incessantly outside his cabin whenever we were in the home port -- and cast off the lines. It was the last of April, a warm spring day in Nova Scotia, but as we cleared the harbour and swung north-east there was a rising sea in the bright sunshine, and a cold wind blowing down from Labrador that chilled the deck crew to the bones. On the second day out the wind came ahead, and the sea with it; the old ship laboured heavily into it. Four days out we passed through a flock of heavy bergs, spray-whipped in the high seas. There was a heavy ice movement that year. Boudreau, the navigating officer, brought in his noon position, and I called Cape Race and the American ice-patrol cutter, giving the details to add to their long lists of ice warnings, and presently heard the high singing spark of Cape Race and the shrill quanned-gap whistle of the cutter screaming these new dangers to ships at sea.



We found <sup>out ice</sup> the berg squatting like a big marquee in a cove amongst the black Newfoundland cliffs, aground in fifty fathoms. It was an old battle-ground for the Triton. Some freak of the coastal current carried bergs in there every spring, and old Captain Slater had engaged in some famous tussles with them. He had tried towing them, and dynamiting them -- useless, of course -- and once a small berg had upset with a working party on it, including Slater himself, and they had got \$\$\$ away in the boat by a miracle. Captain Tewkes steamed up ~~very close~~ <sup>close</sup> to the thing. It was thrilling to be so close to a berg, for I remembered the Titanic, and I was young and full of illusions. But after careful inspection it was decided ~~that nothing could be done except to~~ ~~restore the usefulness of Main Four temporarily~~ ~~with a piece of cable laid around the berg.~~ We put into St. John's to await developments. The berg was bound to shift, for it was melting, even in that cold stream along the coast, and a good off-shore wind would take it out of the bay. Probably it would tear up our temporary by-pass in the going, and possibly some <sup>rack</sup> of the other mains. We waited. St. John's was cold and dull, and overhung with the ~~essence~~ <sup>essence</sup> of the sealing fleet; but the Newfoundland girls were rosy-cheeked and kind, and the crew enjoyed ~~the~~ <sup>themselves</sup> ~~them~~. These simple pleasures were not possible to the officers, these decorous men, mostly of middle age, with families. They stayed on board, sipping whiskey at certain times of the day, beginning when the sun was over the yardarm and ending with a night-cap before bed, in a scheduled as old as the ship. Liquors were carried in the Triton's slop-chest for ~~the benefit of the officers,~~ who signed little wine-cards and had the total deducted from their pay at the end of each cruise. In this way they drank a good deal, but there was never any drunkenness, except at Christmas and New Year, and of course a binge whenever somebody left the ship for another post. The drinking was done in company, in the purser's cabin, the chief electrician's, or the chief steward's, and for the night-cap everybody gathered about the saloon table, with the air blue with tobacco, and the gramophone playing -- sea permitting -- and ~~the~~ rats poking their sleek snouts out of the grillwork that ventilated the cabins; to listen to the music, I suppose.

Captain Tewkes had been part of these gatherings ~~when~~ <sup>when</sup> he was chief officer; but now <sup>that</sup> the essential loneliness of the captain's position had descended upon him; he drank ~~alone~~, in his cabin over the saloon. He had absorbed a bottle of whiskey a day for years, and it never had any effect on him that could be noticed. We lay in St. John's a week. Every afternoon Captain Tewkes, dressed in tweeds, and swinging a stout silver-knobbed stick, went ashore with his red setter Mick, striding about the rugged slopes of Signal Hill; and in the evening <sup>in his cabin</sup> old Jimmie brought forth his bottle and glass and shuffled off, leaving Captain Tewkes to his whiskey and his thoughts. The strains of our music, and the clink of our glasses must have penetrated up to him, I think, but he never came down. On the seventh evening came word that the berg had capsized and drifted off, and in the morning we left to make a permanent job of Main Four. Shore-end cable is three inches or so in diameter, heavily armoured, and weighs something like thirty tons to the mile; but there was nothing unusual about the job, after all. We fished up the broken ends, spliced on a new section, and let the matter drop. It had been a simple shore-end affair, after all. ~~Then~~ ~~we~~ ~~were~~ ~~not~~ ~~yet~~ ~~finished~~ with Main Four.

The Cape Race sang in my ear, ~~ch~~ ~~an~~ ~~ting~~ ~~the~~ ~~Triton's~~ ~~call~~ ~~letters~~, in the crisp dots-and-dashes that distinguished Cape Race operators amongst all others on the coast. It was a long message. For some time there had a slight fault in Main Four, far out in the sea; not much, a slight leak in the insulation that made the tape signals blurred but readable. The fault had become steadily worse. Now it was a clear break. An absurd coincidence; as if our struggles at the shore-end had in some way jerked the long line apart, a thousand miles away. I took the thing to Captain Tewkes. He was at his cabin table, writing, at ease, with his uniform jacket unbuttoned, a glass at his elbow, and a fountain pen clutched in his <sup>big</sup> fair-haired hand. He was one of those big blond men who never sunburn but whose faces are always red, winter and sun. The red scalp gleamed through the thin wisps of his hair. He stared at the message a long time, and



said " Ah ! " in a grim way. Then he ~~\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$~~ frowned up at me over his big hooked nose and pulled at his big yellow moustaches in a fierce way, as if, having brought the bad news, I <sup>must be</sup> was the author of it.

" I was afraid of this, " he said at last. " That <sup>Four</sup> Main is old -- as old as the ship, by Jove ! It won't stand much pulling about. We shall have trouble getting it to the top. Um ! Well, they've got a clear break, anyway -- good tests both ways -- an accurate position. ~~That's~~ <sup>That's</sup> something to be thankful for. Latitude fifty-~~\$\$\$\$~~twenty, longitude thirty-forty. D'you know where that is, Sparks ? It's mid-ocean, just about ~~\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$~~ We won't get much good working weather out there."

" No, sir, " I said, as if I knew ~~how~~ <sup>well</sup> all about such things. " Is there any reply, sir ? " I pushed the blue pad at him, with a pencil, and he wrote an acknowledgement, printing each word ~~\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$~~ in the allotted ruling with great care. As I stepped out of the poop doorway on to the well deck, he came out behind me and blew his whistle for a quartermaster. I heard boots running along the flying gangway from the bridge, and later the chief officer hurried past. \$

We sailed for Sydney to replenish our bunkers and stores, and on May 25th we dropped a mark buoy over the break -- out there in mid-Atlantic, over that deep submarine ridge that runs down from Cape Farewell through the Azores to Africa -- and lowered our grapnel. There is no mystery about picking up a cable. ~~\$\$\$\$~~ You lower a hook and drag it back and forth over the <sup>bottom</sup> ground, as you might fish for a dropped necklace through a cellar grating. We were all afternoon paying out the grapnel rope in that immense depth, and at 4 P.M. the ship commenced slowly cruising back and forth across the cable ground, feeling blindly for ~~\$\$\$~~ Main Four. Four miles from the buoy the dynamometer on the ~~\$\$\$\$~~ picking-up machine forward registered a <sup>leap</sup> jump to ten tons. <sup>Big</sup> Hearn jumped away from it, roaring up to the bridge, " Hooked, sir ! Hooked ! " The ship stopped in a jangle of engine room bells. The picking-up machine revolved ponderously until midnight, when a shout rang from the fo'c'sle head, " Cable at bow, sir ! " I heard the rush of feet as Hearn's gang hurried to <sup>get</sup> a chain stopper on it and <sup>set</sup> work the end aboard. Then, in a few minutes, just as I was putting down my 'phones for the night, with the sheets of ~~\$\$\$\$~~ press news copied from Arlington and Poldhu before me, the door opened, and I heard over my shoulder the voice of Rhodes, the chief electrician. " Go to bed, Sparks. It's a dead end. ~~We've~~ <sup>cut</sup> in somewhere ~~\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$~~ Rotten stuff." As I turned in I could hear the ~~\$\$\$~~ big forward machine monotonously paying out the grapnel rope again.

~~That~~ It was a bad omen, <sup>held</sup> but the weather was fine. Boudreau, and Victor, the chief officer, and Updike, the lean sallow second, and Cammock, the ~~\$\$\$\$~~ dark savage <sup>CANADIAN</sup> from Greenock who was third, <sup>all</sup> checked and re-checked their sights. Boudreau was a <sup>fine</sup> navigator, a tall fleshy man from Isle Madame, with a chuckling Avadian accent. He lived ~~under~~ <sup>under</sup> the sun, but <sup>under</sup> the stars, which most <sup>sea folk</sup> merchant marine officers never trouble their heads about. Under his keen eye and careful figuring the Triton always knew where she was in the immensity of waters. All the next day the Triton steamed back and forth across the grounds without success, without a flicker on the forward dynamometer except when the grapnel, deep down, a mile, two miles -- I forget now -- struck some obstacle in the ooze and eternal dark. But the <sup>next</sup> day -- the 27th of May -- we hooked the Irish end in the morning, hauled it up carefully, and had it stoppered at the bows by mid-afternoon. Cargill, the jointer, connected leads to the free end there, led them to the testing room amidships, and Rhodes and Jessup poured on them, connected them to their instruments, and talked to Ireland. I watched them, admiring. They were good men. I never had any head for the ~~\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$~~ higher mathematics which they used in the course of their ~~\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$~~ business, and their work was always marvellous. The English schools <sup>teach</sup> good things to go with the accent and the tie. The sea was getting up fast, and Captain Tewkes hung over them anxiously as they worked their little double key, and the white spot of their mirror galvanometer flickered back and forth across the screen. At 6 P.M., just as ~~the~~ old Jimmie was ringing the brass hand-bell for dinner aft, and a train of white-jacketed men poured in two streams from the galley with steaming dishes of food, the cable parted. It was too rotten to stand the heave of the ship.

Scot

✓ We dropped a mark buoy at the new break, moved to the bottom, you understand, in less than three hours.



The weather grew steadily worse, developed into a strong gale out of the east; and when that gale went down the long swell remained, pitching the slim Triton like a cork. Her heavy deck machinery ~~and~~ gave her the roll that was famous amongst the sailors in the dives along the Halifax waterfront; ~~the~~ the swell was ~~just~~ just right for it. <sup>There was a</sup> And then the wind sprang up and blew from the west. For eight days on end the tall masts of the ~~the~~ Triton described an uncomfortable arc under a low scudding ceiling of grey cloud that came ~~first~~ first from the east, then the west; and the long seas rolled with the winds, clashing in a lumpy confusion on the change. Triton was built before Marconi dreamed his dreams, and the wireless cabin had been stuck on the starboard side of the after well deck, an afterthought, ~~in the shape of~~ an iron box, with a high weather-board and a stout oak door. The ship was always trimmed by the stern, and in bad weather the after well was continuously awash. I sat at my instruments in that little iron island, like a rat under a box, and at meal times ~~dashed~~ ~~to~~ ~~the~~ ~~companion~~ ~~door~~ watched my chance to dash for the companion door. Each day, monotonously, Tewkes wirelessly "our company", given the noon position -- always the same, for our mark buoys were lit at night by an electric device of Rhodes' invention, and the ship ~~beat~~ <sup>beat</sup> ceaselessly up and down ~~between~~ <sup>between</sup> them, like a policeman on a beat. <sup>and adding "Heavy weather. No cable work".</sup>

On June 5th, in heavy rain, and despite a strong swell, we dropped our grapnel once more, and at four o'clock in the afternoon hooked the elusive Main Four. A big Cunarder passed us, I remember, with the passengers all lining the rails to watch our ~~own~~ activities. In the ~~the~~ night, with the wet oilskins of the deck gang shining under ~~the~~ the electric clusters ~~over~~ <sup>on</sup> the forward deck, the cable came to the bow. It was a short end again, the piece between our cut of ~~the~~ May 27th and the original break. There was nothing for it ~~but~~ but to pick up slowly to the break, to get the stuff out of the way, stowing it in the fore tank. That night and another day we patrolled in the heavy seas from buoy to buoy. Then the weather improved, and the sea went down. We hooked the cable again -- a cable, at any rate -- and got it to the top. Another short end, a bit of <sup>an</sup> stray cable this time, dumped by some slovenly cableship skipper in ~~some~~ <sup>a</sup> past repair job. Again two days went by in heavy seas, though the sky was bright, and the nights warm and full of stars. After each meal, morning, afternoon, and evening, Captain Tewkes strode on his long legs up and down the weather side of the poop, with Mike trotting at his side. He was always bareheaded, with his hands in his trouser pockets, and always deep in thought; ~~but~~ but now and again he would throw up his head and sniff the wind fiercely, as if he suspected something malignant behind it. The poop was the only possible place for exercise, thirty ~~or~~ <sup>or</sup> forty feet of bone-white oak deck, sparkling with salt, from the bolt-holes of the old gun platform to the rail forward, and divided into two walks by the long saloon skylight. I was up there, walking the lee side one afternoon when the captain came up. I was a shabby object. The annual dress allowance covered one uniform a year, and my jacket was faded and worn, on the lean end of the year, with the ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> twining gold braids on my sleeves worn down to the yellow cord from chafing on the wireless room table. I turned to go, and he said abruptly, "Don't go. Walk here if you like." He looked worn and worried. Then a smile parted the grim long red face. "This isn't the Royal Navy, you know." It was the first thing he had said to me, except for ship's business, since ~~he~~ <sup>he</sup> became ~~my~~ <sup>my</sup> I boarded the ship. I sat too far from his orbit at table, and in any case I never knew what horse was favoured to win the Derby, or the best fly for trout in the waters of Devon. I was absurdly pleased. ~~But~~ <sup>But</sup> I was young then. And I walked the poop -- on the lee side.