

# SEVEN DAYS IN OPEN BOAT IS ADVENTURE UP-TO-DATE

Thrilling Tale of Nine Men Afloat on Atlantic With Food and Water Gone  
A CONRAD TALE

A romance of the sea rich with the salty tang of a fore-castle yarn by Joseph Conrad or Clark Russell was brought to light on October 30, when the Volendam, of the Holland-America Line, carrying a number of bankers on a holiday jaunt, picked up in the dangerous waters off Bermuda an open boat containing eight white men and a Jamaica negro. These men, shipwrecked seven days before, were almost spent with battling against wind and wave, and, to make matters worse, their provisions and water had come to an end. Their tale as they told it, when warmed and fed aboard the hospitable liner, was as old as the race of men "that go down to the sea in ships," as timeless as the gray waters that had tossed their cockle-shell of a boat to and fro so many weary hours. In essence it has been told a thousand times in song and story, but the thrill of it is still "as new as the new-cut tooth." There is something about the sea and man's eternal struggle to tame its tremendous forces to his will that has the power to stir us all to the very depths, a call of the primitive that finds an answer in every heart. Here is the tale of these nine men and their boat as recorded for us in the columns of the New York World:

"It wasn't no picnic," said Chief Mate Gene Brown. "Next time I'll take more fruit and less beef," said William D. Potter, the thirty-year-old captain of the foundered schooner, with a tired grin. "Fadder God done it," said the big Jamaica negro, who was cook. Joseph Notice is his name, but everybody on the lost schooner called him "Bill." Why they didn't know, they just called him Bill, and so Bill he was. "When Bill shipped on," said the young captain, his face cut deep with lines of weariness, "the first thing he asked for was a bottle of rum and a Bible." It happened that they didn't have a Bible on the Horatio Foss, the old tub of a four-masted schooner, which now lies somewhere in a thousand fathoms of Atlantic. They had a prayer-book. Yesterday "Bill" still had that prayer-book, and he had probably thumbed it more during those seven days in the open boat, between spells of balling and pulling at an oar, than most prayer-books ever are thumbed in their whole existence.

Bill had almost prayed the other eight men in that twenty-two-foot open boat into craziness. Captain Potter wouldn't talk much about that. "I like Bill," he said. Nevertheless, the story had gone about on board the Volendam of how, just insane from the rest of the crew had wanted to throw him overboard, and how Potter prevailed against this to the bitter end.

Capt. Jacobus de Konin of the Volendam was almost as noncommittal as the nine men from the sea. "I haufed to and made a lee just off the reef at Bermuda," he said, "and then we let down a ladder over the stern to them. The last man up pulled the plug and sank their boat."

A red flare flaring up over the darkening waters had been sighted, so we are told, from the bridge of the Volendam as she headed away from Bermuda for New York. That flare was the last desperate effort of the exhausted men in their drifting boat to get once more in touch with the life that was so rapidly leaving them. Says the World story:

Potter and Bill and his crew had pulled and sailed into a gale 400 miles just up to the gate of Bermuda. Then slowly the wind pushed them back. Their blankets and sheets, rigged up on oars and a harpoon haft for sails, whipped futilely in the gale. They slipped back. They had been within a mile of the reef, not more than eleven or twelve miles from Bermuda. Then, driven back away from life just as it seemed to be in their bleeding hands, they saw the Volendam putting out of Bermuda in the twilight. They watched her come toward them, then sheer off to the right. They groaned. Peter succeeded in lighting a wet match. The red flare sputtered in the fading light full of purple dimness. And all at once the Volendam sheered out of her course, stopped and then backed into the gale, gathering speed.

And a little later, in the darkening light, the excited bankers leaned down over the high rail and watched the small boat slide and reel into the slick which the liner made with her hull broadside to the wind. They saw the cramped men, more dead than alive, creep up the rope ladder slowly and drop on the deck exhausted, their bodies covered with boils from the slatting of the salt water for seven days. For that instant the comfortable passengers glimpsed the sea.

"We left Philadelphia October 10," said Potter, his face still drawn from the strain. "We were for Martinique with a cargo of coal for Guadaloupe. We had 1,100 tons under our hatches. Everything seemed fine when we stood out of the Delaware River, and two days later we were in the Gulf stream with wind picking up." The Horatio Foss, nearly twenty years old, had four stubby masts, rigging and all, along the 132 feet

of her length. She was registered out of Boston at 546 tons.

We now have a glimpse of Captain Potter, safe and sound in his cabin on the Volendam, reading from the log of the Foss, carefully preserved by him through all these perilous days, the story of the heavy gales that at last forced him to leave his sinking vessel. He then takes up his tale once more by word of mouth. The day before abandoning ship Potter, who believed in being beforehand, had looked the situation over and decided the ship's launch hardly would take his whole crew with the weight of the gasoline engine in it. So he had ordered the engine shipped. Now, when the time came to get away he was in fair shape. Bill came sweating from the galley with a case of beef, a case of tomatoes, some old cans of salmon, and a few biscuits.

A water beaker holding about twenty gallons was stowed aboard. Another five-gallon tin of water was added. Then the boat was slung from the davits. The falls were useless. So the boat was slung from a rough tackle and two blows from an axe dropped it flat into the running sea.

Dawn was just breaking, the wind was screaming, the Foss was sinking low into the water, her bows half under, and the nine men were 400 miles north of Bermuda.

"I thought I'd counted noses," said Potter. "But after we were away, I found we'd only eight altogether. Then I looked back and saw Olsen hanging onto the painter. We got him in. We didn't dare get too close to the ship for fear of getting a stove boat. When we'd got a safe distance away, I remembered then that we had no compass. I knew we had to get the ship's compass somehow—a ten-inch compass it was.

"We pulled back the boat until we got about twenty feet off. I'd stripped off my clothes. Then I jumped in and swam to the ship." The captain broke the compass out of the foundering schooner's binacle. Then he grabbed a handline and threw one end to the boat and made the other fast to the compass. And while his crew dragged the instrument through the heaving dark water, Potter swam back and was pulled in over the gun.

"We rigged a sea anchor and lay to all day there," he said. "At five a.m., an hour after abandoning my ship, went down. She sank by the head. We rowed over to the spot, but all that floated up was a life-preserver. Well, we rigged up three sails. We had two sheets, a blanket and a small piece of canvas. For spars we used two oars and a harpoon haft. Besides this we kept pulling on the oars. "Two men had to be balling all the time. The boat had so knocked against the ship some, and she was leaking pretty bad. But we found she rode very well if we kept her headed right. We headed for Bermuda by the compass."

That was the beginning of the long week, the longest week those nine men ever will live. Two hands had to be balling with biscuit tins all the while. Others were at the oars. Potter sat up in front and managed things. For seven days he never lay down to sleep. In the first place, there wasn't room to lie down. In the second place he didn't dare.

"All you could do was catnap now and then when you had the chance," he said wearily. "Once I curled up on top the biscuit tin, but couldn't sleep." Always when the two balling men were spelled by their comrades they dropt over against a thwart and went to sleep. They dared to sleep, and had to, in order to have strength for more balling in the next watch. And Bill the cook prayed. If Bill had been devout before, he was plous now. He prayed, he doxologized, he halleluiahed. The salt water came slatting over in sheets every time the launch smacked down into a wave, but Bill kept his prayer-book dry. When the gale slackened away a bit and things faired up, Bill would shout: "See what Fadder sent us!"

When things got worse again and the wind howled hungrily all around them, Bill would shout still louder: "Fadder ain't ready for us yet!" The days that followed were lived through somehow by the forlorn little party. Most of them had not the faith of the negro to uphold them, and it was hard to fight off despair. The picture drawn for us of their unhappy state is a poignantly moving one:

The nine men talked little. They measured out the food and drink. There wasn't a drop of rum in the boat; hadn't been any on the schooner. They measured out the beef and tomatoes and water, and watched their store shrink. They saw nothing but the gale and the ocean. The sea was as big as the sky, and the sky as big as the sea. Everything was gray and immense and destructive. Potter watched his compass and tried to get every bit of forward motion he could out of the contrary wind. Though they were nine, the ocean became lonelier and lonelier. Now and then a sea bird came overhead in the wet murk with a haunting cry. The only other life they saw was a dolphin. For three days the dolphin played alongside and around

## The Most Thrilling Race of All



A striking snapshot of men and horses poised in midair during the running of the Staines' Handicap at Hawthorn Hill, England.

## Scientists Use Radio to Check Drift of Continents and Isles

Astronomers Take Observations on Stars Passing Meridian, Then Compare Local Time With Radio Signals From World's Master Clocks

Are the continents and islands drifting? Are we afloat in 140,000,000 square miles of water, since the earth's land surface is only 57,000,000 square miles? These and other vital questions were discussed at the third general congress of the Geodetic and Geophysical Union recently held at Prague, Czechoslovakia.

The United States Coast and Geodetic Survey would answer these questions in the negative, basing its assumptions on results of the world-wide radio longitude campaign conducted in October and November, 1928, by thirty countries. These were approximately thirty-five astronomical stations where observations were made each clear night on the stars as they passed the meridian. These observations enabled the observers to determine their local time. The clocks at the various stations were compared by means of radio signals sent by one of a dozen of the most powerful radio stations of the world.

Major William A. Bowie, who represented the United States at the Prague meeting, expressed the following views: "The campaign was a great success in every way. We now know, or soon shall know, after computations of all have been made, the exact longitude of each station taking part in the campaign. These stations will now be bases for astronomical work, charts, maps or surveys of various countries and groups of islands. "While longitude had been determined at many points on the earth's surface, they were less exact than the radio longitude campaign. The comparison of the clocks at two widely separated points was made by signals sent over land wires or submarine cables, and there were many relays in the land wires which interfered with the telegraph signals. In the radio longitude survey the time of transmission did vary from night to night, dependent upon the adjustment of relays with the radio signal. Very little apparatus, however, was used, and the transmission time through the atmosphere is that of the velocity of light, 186,246 miles per second.

"The accuracy of radio longitude as determined last year is indicated by the closure of a circuit involving observations made at Greenwich, England; Shanghai, China; San Diego, Cal., and Washington, D.C. The 360 degrees around the earth was measured by this longitude work, and the closing error of the circuit is only twelve-hundredths of a second of arc, or, in the latitude of New York, about ten feet. As we measure this closing error in time, it was only eight-thousandths of a second. "In this longitude work the best instruments and most skilled observers were employed by the United States. The Naval Observatory operated stations in Washington and San Diego, while the Coast and Geodetic Survey had stations at Honolulu and Manila. Many of the private observatories of the country took advantage of the opportunity to locate their places in longitude while the campaign was being made.

"All of the computations have not been deduced by the large net, but it is hoped in the near future to be able to furnish the exact longitude of every station involved in the campaign. It will be possible, when these results are available, to compare the longitude determined by radio signals with the longitudes of the same points determined by signals sent over wires and cables. If the differences are very great it will be an indication that there has been a shifting of the continents and islands of the earth's surface.

"One of the principal objects of conducting the longitude campaign was to begin a world-wide study of the hypothesis that North and South America are drifting away from Europe and Africa and the other land masses, like Australia, and wandering on the earth's surface. This hypothesis does not appeal to officials of the Coast and Geodetic Survey as being possible, but scientific workers must have open minds and test any hypothesis that is seriously adhered to by other scientific workers.

"Professor Alfred Wegener of Austria formulated a hypothesis which has appealed to many earth students, especially biologists, who are confronted with problems of accounting for the distribution of animals over the earth's surface. The same species of animal are present on all the continents, and the question has been asked for generations. How could they move from one coast to another through oceans? Some investigators say the bottoms of the oceans were dry and furnished 'land bridges' from one to another. Wegener's hypothesis would obviate the necessity for land bridges, since, according to him, all continental areas were once a single land mass.

"There is a slight land force acting on continental masses due to the earth's rotation, which is believed to make continents drift toward the equator. This drifting would be modified by the earth's rotation, with the resultant direction being westward. The officials of the Coast and Geodetic Survey and many other students of the earth believe this force totally inadequate to break continents away from their setting in the earth's crust and move them about like chips on a mill pond. "It may take us years to find out whether Wegener is right or wrong, but the test will come when the very accurate longitude determinations of 1928 are reproduced in the future. If, for instance, the new value of the distance of Washington and Greenwich, say, ten or twenty years from now, is 100 feet, we shall be justified in claiming that North America has changed its relation to Europe. If the distance is only five or ten feet, we would consider it was due to un-

available small errors present in all physical measures. "It is rather interesting to note that scientific workers have adopted the radio in their research operations so soon after the radio time signals were broadcast. As a matter of fact, students of the earth have chosen to follow very closely the application of scientific discoveries by the physicist and the engineer. The study of the earth going on to-day is due to modern methods attributable to the results of the work of physicists."

## A Timely Topic

PUTTING ASIDE SOIL FOR HOT-BEDS

When spring approaches thought is turned toward the hot-bed for starting vegetables and flowering plants, but it very often happens that soil for the hot-bed has not been set aside and is not available, and as a result nothing is done. It is wise, therefore, to prepare for the spring now, and to make up a cone-shaped pile of suitable soil in a convenient place, so that it will be reasonably dry and ready for spring work. Or it may be put under cover in an outbuilding in barrels. Any good friable loam is suitable for starting plants in. It is wise to use a soil that does not bake, or one containing considerable sand and decayed vegetable matter or humus. The surface soil from a garden that has previously been well manured serves the purpose admirably. Or if the soil is poor, well rotted manure should be added and mixed well with the soil, using about fifteen to twenty per cent of manure. Sods gathered during the summer and piled alternately with manure will, when cut down and well worked together, make the best hot-bed soil. If flats or shallow boxes to grow the plants in are available it is not necessary to put aside much soil, and usually two barrels will suffice to meet the requirements for an ordinary garden. If on the other hand the soil is to be put into the hot-bed direct, twice as much will be necessary.

Plants may also be started early in a cold-frame. The frame is set in place now and six inches of good, rich, friable soil is placed in it. Over this leaves, straw, straw manure, or litter not containing weed seeds is put to keep out the frost. In the early spring this litter is removed and the sashes put on, and it will be found that in a short time the ground will nicely warm up, so that seeds of the hardier vegetables and flowers may be planted.—W. S. Blair, Superintendent, Experimental Station, Kentville, N.S.



"The first wave disturbs the calm."

## Insults to Religion

The Indian Legislature is considering a bill for penalizing insults to religion. The proposed addition to the Indian penal code reads as follows: "Whoever, by words, either spoken or written, or by signs or by visible representations, or otherwise, intentionally insults or attempts to insult the religion, or intentionally outrages or attempts to outrage the religious feelings of any class of his Majesty's subjects, shall be punished with imprisonment... for a term which may extend to two years or with a fine or with both."

## Turkey Has 481,137 Excess of Women, Due to Many Wars

Constantinople.—Further data from the first Turkish census, taken last month, reveals an excess of 481,137 women. Turkey's incessant warfare in the Balkans and the great war made heavy inroads on the male population. The abolition of polygamy and the freedom of women is leading to extensive changes in labor. Women are now employed in nearly all forms of industrial and commercial activity. Angora, attracting Government officials, is the only city with an excess of males.

The ukulele is now an accepted musical instrument, and specifications for an approved standard pattern have been adopted by an organization of manufacturers of musical instruments. It is just as well that such an organization did not exist in the days of Amati, Stradivarius, and Guarnerius in Cremona.

## Adding "Atmosphere" to Canberra



ST. ANDREW'S CATHEDRAL (Anglican) At Sidney, Australia, which it is proposed to take down and re-erect at Canberra, Australia's new federal capital, this fine (and for Australia) old Cathedral.

all living... LEX... THE... RK MODELS... discover... seriously with the... have announced... to develop a least... have been pig... may be gre... by the pe... modern woman... old-fashioned... or cut of oper... Anything... fat ruin... when the red... a lardaceous... meat book and... with a snappy... is gone for... marketman may... the, but the... her... like the l... and... 1927 run like... a breakfast... of pork chops... in the last... largely old... had one too far... the hog raisers... is to breed a... I have snapper... like a pig means... has got to look... farmers actually... or market... witness the pack... as an obesity... ay blaze on the... TIC BACON... OU THAT... LOOK... SUPERFLU... ARMOUR'S... DRKERS... AND KEEP... R. FIGURE... ATED HOGS... ing? The next... the potato with... like it more like... chocolateclair... eral appearance... NO MORE... are the studies... hood?... rithmatic and... d Winners... of the Nobel... funds now... 0,000 crowne, or... Beginning in... mounting to a... in thirteen and... have been... 23 prizes went... are awarded in... 25 in l... promotion of... of prizes in... Frenchmen; 20... 3 Americans, 8... and Danes, 6... egians, Italians... Spaniards, 3... 3 Russians, 2... galese, 1 each... went to France... 4 to America... Neurwig...