

have proven a decided success. The salvation of cotton-belt country life is in the making of such estates as this. The old order must go to decay in time through the wearing out of the soil. But when others

have caught the spirit of Mr. Waring and applied to Southern farming the principles which make modern agriculture remunerative, we may look for a new country life in the Old South.



"The old slave quarters still stand, a little row of one-story cabins, each with its chimney of sticks."

A GALE OFF CAPE HORN

By CHARLES G. DAVIS

ONE windy, cloudy Sunday in October, 1892, the little Boston bark *James A. Wright*, with yards chocked in, was doing some famous traveling off the Patagonian coast. Days of idle rolling about with creaking gear and groaning hull were now being compensated for as the *Wright*, with everything to her royals set, piled the white water high above her hawsepipes. A hard, cold, westerly wind had been piping a merry tune all day, and running parallel with the shore the bark was in smooth water and logging all of nine knots. That night the weather changed, and gave us a foretaste of what was in store for us off the "Horn."

The first thing I heard next morning was, "Ho, sleepers! Seven bells; turn out and get your breakfast!" How I had learned to dread that call! But when the voice added, "There's land in sight!" that altered matters considerably. Two months

before, the Highlands of the Navesink had been left astern, and not a sight of land had we had since. At that hour it was hardly to be recognized as land, but when the sun dispelled the mists, the brown, rugged shore of Patagonia was in plain view, and in the background high, snow-capped mountains. All day long these mountains were in sight, and that night the bark approached the narrow strip of water called the Straits of Le Maire, which divides Staten Land from the mainland of Patagonia.

When the gray morning dawned again, we could see land on both sides of us, and all hands were called to make sail. Every stitch of canvas the bark carried was shaken out and hoisted. The captain himself came on deck, as this was a difficult passage for a sailing craft, owing to the strong winds and treacherous currents. With royals set, the *Wright* made good

headway through the smooth water. I could hear the spasmodic whir of the taffrail log behind me, for it was my trick at the wheel, and knew by the spin of the suds past the counter she was reeling off six or seven knots.

As eight bells, eight o'clock, struck, the captain sung out for the mate to hold on with the watch for a moment, and the officers looked over toward Patagonia through their glasses. At the wheel I had also seen trouble in store for us. All along under the land the water was black with a squall of wind, preceded by a wicked-looking line of white foam. In a moment everything was in an uproar. "Let go your royal and top-gallant halliards!" "Stand by your clewlines!" "Haul down your outer jibs!" "Let go the staysail halliards!" The captain and both mates were giving orders and letting go halliards and sheets, while all hands, cook and cabin boy, were clewling up sail after sail. But the squall hit us before the sail was half off her, and the old man came running aft to watch the compass and see she held her course, for we had a lee shore under us.

It was an old whistler when it struck us, and for a few moments I could hear nothing but the screech of the wind and seething of the foam that struck the weather side of the bark, and hove her over until her lee rail was under water. Fred, one of the other watch, was up furling the main top-gallant sail when it struck, and the whole topsail on the mast proved too great a strain for it. There was a report as if a gun had been fired on board, and a tremor ran through the bark. From my place at the wheel, I couldn't tell what had parted, but knew some stay had gone, for the whole towering height of the mainmast jumped and buckled. All hands stopped work for a second, expecting to see the mast go over the side. It was the main topmast stay that had parted, one of the main supports to the mainmast, a double-wire stay as large as a man's wrist.

Up where Fred was, the mast was whipping at every jump enough to throw him off the yard. It was a job fit for three men the way the sail was bellying out, but he stowed it and came down, never knowing till then the danger he had been in.

Picked men in the meantime had taken aloft the end of a heavy mooring hawser,

which was passed around the topmast and then set up to the fore bits with the fish tackle and another heavy one. Sail also had been shortened, so nothing remained on the bark but reefed topsails, storm spanker and lower staysails.

It blew hard all day, but in the dog watches reefs were shaken out as it had moderated. But when we turned out at midnight, there was another decided change in the weather, and the first order we heard as we stepped out on deck was, "Lay aft and reef the main topsail!" One sail after another was clewled up and furled, until there only remained set the main lower topsail, the storm spanker and the fore staysail.

The bark lay in this condition when daylight broke, hove to, with her head pointing south by east. When daylight revealed to us the height of the seas that were running I was amazed. I thought I had seen some pretty big seas up north, but with a Cape Horn so'wester blowing I saw such seas as I hope never to see again. And every one seemed to grow larger and larger, for the gale had only just begun, and the wind blew with such force it seemed to slide the bark bodily to leeward. How she ever rose to surmount some of those walls of solid green water was a mystery to me. The one square sail that was set heaved her over on her beam ends until her lee rail was clear under water. Braces and all the running gear blew out in semi-circles and had to be continually hauled taut.

Every evening for the three days and nights the bark lay hove to; at the change of watches, the mate took us from one end of the bark to the other and made us put a watch tackle on all the braces and sheets and haul them taut as fiddle strings. Once, when we were "sweating up" the lee fore brace, the whole crew came near being washed overboard. We were bending our backs on the brace when the bark went over on her beam ends and a solid green sea broke aboard over the lee rail. It took every one of us clean off our feet, and those near the rail with only a little slack on the brace were held down so the sea broke fully two feet over their heads. By watching our chance we hauled the brace tight, and were heartily glad when we heard the last order, "Belay!" It was getting so furious that it was dangerous

to go on the lee side at all, for the wind hove the bark over every time she rose to the summit of a sea, and filled her decks with water, flush to the rails. Then, when she toppled over the crest, with a heavy roll to windward it went washing back and forth, threatening to tear the bulwarks away, and I believe would have done so had the mates not taken axes and knocked out the ports to relieve the pressure. It was the sight of a lifetime to see the water spout up in the air as it hit the rail, a huge column of white, and blow off to leeward over the sea. Water, in spray form, was flying in every direction. Every scupper was running a stream, but instead of going down, the eddies of the gale of wind would carry it up in a cloud of rain until level with the weather rail, then spray it off to leeward like snow. Every way we turned we were blinded by flying spray, and although our oilskins were lashed with rope yarns to our boots and wrists and buckled about our waist with our belts, the water found its way inside somehow and kept us chilled to the bone. To make matters worse, the galley was washed out and our last comfort, the pot of hot tea or coffee, was cut off.

That night, when it came our watch on deck, Bill and I went aft to relieve the wheel. It took two men to hold it and keep the helm from wrecking itself. There was no steering to be done. The bark wasn't going ahead a foot; she was sliding off to leeward with every sea. The two we found at the wheel had a heavy life line stretched from rail to rail in front of them. It was black as a tar-barrel except only for the bright ray of light the compass lamp threw in the binnacle box. Bill took the wheel to windward as it was his trick, and I held it to leeward. When the bark went over a sea and settled her stern it was all the two of us could do to hold the wheel. We got along all right for about an hour, and then, just as I knew by the way the bark lifted an extra heavy sea was coming, Bill let go the wheel and hung on to the life line.

What happened to me and the wheel I did not, for a moment, know. I felt a sharp pain in my left elbow, and the next thing I knew my head came into violent contact with the deck, and my feet were up in the air on the wheel box and the wheel going round like a buzz saw. Over

it went one way, then back again the other, so fast it looked like a pin wheel. Then, just as it was about to spin back again, Bill grabbed it and I scrambled around to leeward and took hold again. But my left arm was powerless, and I realized I had been thrown over the wheel.

Things were certainly in a wild state when we went below at midnight, and we had to watch our chance when the water in the waist of the bark was still and then jump in knee-deep or more and flounder forward to the fo'castle door.

It was a sorry looking sight that met our eyes next morning. Harder than ever blew the wind, and the seas came rolling along in long, sloping hills as high as our topsail yards. During the morning we were sent up to put extra gaskets around the main upper topsail and then we felt a sample of the wind's force. It was all I could do as I climbed up the main rigging to hold myself away from the shrouds so as to have room to lift my knees. The wind, like a giant hand, seemed to be pressing on my back, flattening me against the rigging.

But that was not the worst of it. It would get under the back of my so'wester and lift it off my head, nearly strangling me with the string buttoned under my chin. One minute the shrouds would be up and down, and the next, as the bark rolled over, they would be like a ladder laid horizontally. It was, nevertheless, a grand sight to look from the height of the yard we were on and see the wild play of those Cape Horn seas around us.

About noon time things got so bad the captain ordered all hands to stay aft where the decks were higher, and when our watch was up we went down into the sacred precincts of the cabin, and slept in our oilskins on the polished hardwood floor. The mate that morning put three oil bags over the weather side, one at each rigging, but it was hard to see what effect they had on the water.

Every watch we had a spell at the pumps. It was so difficult to get a true sounding of the well that the mate kept us pumping to make sure the water should not gain. This was dangerous enough in the day time, while the mate kept watch on the poop and gave us warning when a "grayhead" was about to break on board, so we could jump and get into the mass of rigging

around the main bits; but at night it was particularly dangerous. Many a time we would be heaving the heavy flywheels around, that worked the pumps, with the water swashing back and forth knee-deep, when, without a second's warning, there would be a flash of white and a sea would break on deck that sent every mother's son of us washing into the lee scuppers, soaked to the skin and choked with the salt water. We had finally to lash ourselves to the pumps.

About two o'clock in the afternoon of the second day, the fore staysail blew out of the bolt ropes, and left nothing but a few flapping ribbons, which soon followed the rest of the sail. There was nothing we could do when it was not our trick at the wheel but wait, so I squatted in the lee of the wheel box and noticed as I looked astern that the gulls, the strongest birds that fly, were unable to make headway to windward, but kept close down to the water in the lee of the swells, while in the lee of the bark's hull, floating on the water, were a great number of them resting, and glad enough, no doubt, for the protection it afforded them. From them my gaze went forward to the bows of the bark, and I watched her sluggish rise, followed by a drunken, drowning kind of a lurch that made me think she must have water in her. The more I looked the firmer I became convinced she was slowly settling. She seemed to lack the buoyancy she formerly had, and an unconquerable dread crept over me. I tried to shake off the feeling and rally, but three days and nights of sleeplessness, worry, and hard work had dragged my spirits pretty low. I never remember feeling as blue as I did then, seated on deck with my legs stretched out and no heart to move myself.

And so another (a third) black night was passed, with the sea hissing over the bark in showers that looked like snow squalls, and all hands hung on, with their teeth chattering, half frozen in the cold night wind.

The gale was at its height that night. There was only one spot on the ship's decks where it was safe for a man to hang on, and that was clear aft by the wheel. All

the forward part was sometimes under water, and every movable object had been smashed to kindling wood and gone over the side. All the ladders, water casks, and a good part of the bulwarks were gone, and one sea broke over the top of the forward house and smashed in the long-boat stowed there, smashed in the galley and carpenter shop, and as it came aft broke in the cabin doors and skylight. Then it was that the life line came in handy, and saved us from going over the bark's stern into the sea. For all that great tidal wave, as it rolled aft over the deck, struck us square in the chest and poured off over the stern.

At daybreak, things looked a little brighter overhead. The captain said the barometer was rising, and his face looked much more hopeful. For about an hour it blew with apparently more violence than at any previous time; it was a wild, furious outfly that tested things aboard the bark to their utmost, but it did not last long, and then there came a temporary lull.

We wore ship that afternoon, and started back for Staten Land. The bark had been blown just two hundred miles to the eastward during the four days she lay hove to. As we neared the Horn again, ships and barks were heaving in sight on all sides. One outward bounder cape along with both his top-gallant masts snapped off at the caps, another minus his jibboom, and a large bark with his mizzen carried away. Then the sight of a homeward bounder sent a pang of regret to our hearts, to see him under a press of sail making a fair wind of a breeze that had kept us practically hove to, rolling rails under, with deck and scuppers running with water. I was astride the fore upper topsail yard at the time making up gaskets. It had been snowing and hailing so hard I had to turn my back to it as I worked, and the hail rattled like pebbles against my stiff and frozen oilers. When the final squall blew over, I heard the mate below me on the fo'castle head sing out, "What's that on the weather bow, Davis?" I looked, and there was the same rugged, snow-topped peaks of Patagonia we had left a week before.

"Land!" I shouted back.