

OUT & IN & A & NOR' WESTER

By C. L. Olds, Marco, Fla.

This Story Received Honorable Mention in The Sun's Prize Story Contest.

It was springtime in Florida. Balmy days were followed by peaceful nights. Nowhere was there any chill; nowhere excessive heat. Mildness held gentle sway. The orange tree, fragrant with delicate bloom, invited sweet repose beneath its boughs of shimmering green, while the tender new leaves of the palm tree whispered in the soft breezes.

It was late afternoon on one of these delightful February days, when Frank Preston and Will Somers, who were staying at the cosy little hotel at Naples-on-the-Gulf, were out for a sail in a small sloop. They had met but a week before, but already had become fast friends.

It was their intention to sail down the Gulf coast a few miles, fish until sunset, and return in time for a late supper.

There was a light wind from the southeast, of which they expected to take advantage in returning. Now they were close-hauled on the starboard tack, running down the coast, Frank at the tiller, and Will sitting on the windward rail.

After an hour they anchored to fish. They became so much engrossed in fishing that they scarcely heeded the passing of the afternoon and the gradual dying out of the wind. Suddenly Frank said: "Why, the wind has died out altogether! And see those angry-looking clouds over there," pointing to the northwest.

Will was aroused in an instant, and, taking a hurried look at the limply hanging sails and the threatening clouds, quietly observed: "That means the scull oar. I don't quite like the look of those clouds. Why, where is that oar? I certainly put it here in the boat!" But no oar was there, nor anywhere aboard the boat.

Both understood at once what a serious loss this was, and as they looked at the rapidly approaching storm their faces grew grave.

Frank was the first to speak. "Well, what is to be done?"

"Nothing," said Will, "at present, except to wait quietly and hope that the wind will spring up light from the southwest or west before the storm breaks."

"But see how far we are from land. We must be drifting!"

"We may as well put out the anchor until we feel some wind," said Will.

This done, the boat at once headed to the northeast, showing that there was a strong offshore tide running.

The storm in the northwest, which at first appeared only as a narrow inky band, surmounted by a

grayish-looking bank of clouds, rapidly approached, the gray bank growing larger and grayer, rolling up ominously, as if pushed forward by the mighty power of the ink-black cloud below it.

Both stood grasping the gunwale, staring at this weird scene of cloud fury, now lighted up by the setting sun.

Presently Will turned to Frank: "There will be no wind before the storm breaks—at least none to do us any good. We must make everything as snug as possible; put a double reef in both mainsail and jib, and make them fast, and then play out all the cable we have. This boat has air-tight compartments and cannot sink, and we may be able to ride out the first fury of the storm. These nor'westers, I am told, often quiet down after half an hour's blow. If this should be the case, we may be able to make Marco harbor and spend the night at the hotel there."

They quickly made their preparations for the storm, and then stood fascinated by the terrifying spectacle.

The sky was now completely overcast, and the distant roaring of the wind was momentarily becoming more distinct.

"Here, Frank, put on these oilskins," said Will, who had been fumbling in the lockers. "We may as well keep as dry as we can. Hold on for your life now! She's here!"

And with a roar and a slap of rain the mighty black thing was upon them. In two minutes the sloop, which had been so idly swinging on the cable, was a thing of life. Like a living creature she reared and plunged, bounding forward and upward, and then jerking back on her cable with a force that bid fair to part it. But the manila was new and strong; no boat of the sloop's weight could break it. But would the anchor hold? This was the thought that came to Will as he bailed for dear life, clinging to a ring-bolt in the stern with one hand. "Would the anchor hold? And if it did would not some great wave sweep them from the boat?"

"Frank," he shouted, "we must cut her loose and run before it! Here, take the tiller! I'll set the jib and then cut her loose. Shove the tiller to starboard the moment I wave my hand."

With much caution and great difficulty he moved forward, each wave almost tearing him from the sloop's deck. He set the few square feet of jib. Then he slashed at the cable with his knife. Once he slashes, and an oncoming wave almost tears him from first gust the jib is torn to shreds, so they drive on under the bare pole, one moment upon the giddy sum-

mit of some great wave, the next in its cavernous black abyss.

Suddenly out of the blackness before them they hear the roar of the surf, and almost immediately are among the breakers. Up, up the boat is lifted upon the crest of a mountainous wave. Then down she crashes, and the tiller is torn from Will's grasp, the shock hurling him into the middle of the boat and half stunning him. When he regains the stern the tiller is gone, the rudder, too, he thinks. But now the water is calmer, and as the minutes pass grows calmer still. They seem to be carried swiftly by some unknown current, but the darkness keeps secret their whereabouts.

After drifting with the current for some time, the boat grated upon an oyster bar, and a moment later her bow touched the shore. Both boys jumped from the water-logged boat to the land, groped in the darkness for something to which they could tie the boat, and found a projecting mangrove root. After making the boat fast they crawled up the bank out of reach of the tide, and lay down exhausted to sleep.

his hold. Twice, three times, and with a snap the cable parts. He raises his hand. Over goes the tiller, and over goes the boat, listing and burying her bow in the water until it seems that she will disappear beneath the waves. But in a moment she rights, and though half-filled with water, is off before the wind like a racehorse. Will holds the tiller while Frank clears her of water. Thus relieved she fairly flies before the wind.

Soon they are able to make out the Marco beacon light, about two miles in shore, Will thinks. But he knows that it would be madness to attempt to enter the pass in such a gale. So they keep on dead before the wind. Cape Romano is only about ten or twelve miles below, and Will knows that if they can round the cape they will find smooth water beyond. But can they do it? It will be necessary to hoist the mainsail to round the cape. Will the boat bear another inch of canvas?

Soon they are abreast the cape, and during a momentary lull, Will gives her the peak of the mainsail. But she cannot stand it, and down it comes again. So on they drive, they know not whither, only that the wind is at their backs.

Time passes slowly as they crouch in the stern of the boat, drenched and chilled. After an hour the wind suddenly dies out, and then as suddenly bursts with redoubled fury out of the southwest. With the

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Enough Gold in Ocean to Gild Whole Earth

Written by Vere Carewe

LONDON, Feb. 11.—"There is enough gold in the oceans to gold-plate the entire surface of the earth, mountains, hills and dales," says Ramsay, the famous chemist, discoverer of helium and five other atmospheric elements. And Ramsay thinks of mining that amount of yellow metal without much delay—but not for the purpose of gilding streets and high roads, fields and forests, Chimbonazos and Mont Blancs. On the contrary, being a very practical man, he means above all to line his own pockets and those of his associates in the Ocean Gold Mining Trust, now forming in London.

On the face of it, the ocean gold mines is an elusive proposition, the metal being even less concentrated than helium is in the air, but Ramsay is full of hopes, and electricity is his ally, he says.

Your correspondent hears of a British wizard, a rival of our own Thomas A. Edison, who is constructing machinery, attachable to the bottoms and sides of steamships and other ocean going vessels. While the steamers, sailors and men of war for the government wants to have a hand in the game—trail along to their destination, the apparatus attracts the minute gold particles in the sea water traversed and works them up into solid nuggets by a newly invented electrolyte process.

The above sounds reassuring enough,

and Ramsay's promises durst not be brushed aside off hand, but one is forced to put a big interrogation mark behind the question: Will it work? In conversation with Mr. Beilby, just back from the South African gold fields, your correspondent learned what follows:

According to this unquestionable expert in the gold industry, the waters of the great Cyanid gold washeries in South Africa carry 100 per cent more gold than the ocean, yet up to now it has been impossible to extract the yellow metal running away. And that, despite the fact that the mine operators employed the very best talent to find ways and means to stop the waste.

The question: "How does the ocean come to be a gold mine?" answered itself. All the rivers empty into the ocean, and all the rivers extract considerable gold from their beds, sand, mud and mineral. While it does not pay to mine for gold in the rivers, except in a very few in Colorado, California, Oregon, the Klondike, the Ural District and in certain parts of Africa, the amounts carried being too infinitesimal on the average—the sum of floating gold, contributed to the oceans by a hundred thousand or more rivers in a million or more years, is staggering, indeed.

Concerning the probable amount your correspondent gathered the following interesting figures and calculations from official government statistics.

If all the oceans and great seas were pumped dry and the water stored upon the earth, a column of water 8,300 high would rise at our feet.

Now Ramsay has shown by analysis that each kilometer of ocean fluid (a kilometer is five-eighths of an English mile) contains gold to the amount of \$50,000,000.

Hence the amount of gold store above Central Park in the imaginary ocean water-column would be worth \$100,000,000 in American money.

"Very much in the air," says the patient reader, and adds: "How is the gold to be extracted?"

Leaving the question of electrical apparatus, lately announced by Ramsay, aside, the only practical one suggesting itself seems: Boiling, that is extracting the solid by evaporating the moisture. Here again we have government experiments to fall back upon.

Such a process would yield a solid mass weighing about one-thirtieth part of the water volume.

The entire solids of all the oceans distributed over the face of the earth, would cover the earth to a thickness of about 125 feet. The layman, not used to mathematics, can hardly conceive or imagine what that means, but the government expert assures us that it is equal in volume to the continents of Europe and North America posing above the level of the sea, the continents with

all they contain in the shape of mountains, forests, glaciers, etc.

Investigation of the solids of the ocean proves that the greater part consists of our ordinary cooking salt, namely 100 feet, the rest is chloride of potash and magnesium, kali, lime, gypsum, magnesia and gold.

The gold being the heaviest of the elements, lies at the bottom.

How much gold is there? Ramsay tells us, and is backed by other expert chemists, that each square kilometer of ocean water contains sixty tons of gold.

The amount then, lying at the bottom would be 30,000 pounds of gold, filling to the brink 750 liter measures. This would be enough, as before said, to gold-plate the entire surface of the earth about as heavily as the average silver goblet is plated, namely, one six thousandth part of a millimeter.

It doesn't seem necessary to believe all Dr. Ramsay says in connection with the scheme—certain it is that the gold he talks of is there in the quantities described. In that respect the ocean gold mine is far superior to the average rock-bound gold mine.

And another indisputable fact: The longer the mining is delayed, the better it will pay when finally undertaken, for the rivers continue their work of washing gold into the sea, and no mistake.