

The Burning of the Clipper Ship *Hornet*

From the Weekly Union

By Mark Twain

Honolulu, June 25, 1866.

In the postscript to a letter which I wrote two or three days ago and sent by the ship *Live Yankee*, I gave you the substance of a letter received here from Hilo by Walker, Allen & Co., informing them that a boat containing fifteen men, in a helpless and starving condition, had drifted ashore at Laupahoehoe, Island of Hawaii, and that they had belonged to the clipper ship *Hornet*, Mitchell master, and had been afloat on the ocean since the burning of that vessel, about one hundred miles north of the equator, on the 3d of May—forty-three days.

The third mate and ten of the seamen have arrived here and are now in the hospital. Captain Mitchell, one seaman named Antonio Passene, and two passengers (Samuel and Henry Ferguson, of New York City, young gentlemen aged respectively eighteen and twenty-eight) are still at Hilo, but are expected here within the week.

In the captain's modest epitome of this terrible romance, which you have probably published, you detect the fine old hero through it. It reads like Grant.

I have talked with the seamen and with John S. Thomas, third mate, but their accounts are so nearly alike in all substantial points that I will merely give the officer's statement and weave into it such matters as the men mentioned in the way of incidents, experiences, emotions, etc. Thomas is a very intelligent and a very cool and self-possessed young man and seems to have kept a pretty accurate log of his remarkable voyage in his head. He told his story, of three hours' length, in a plain, straight-forward way, and with no attempt at display and no straining after effect. Wherever any incident may be noted in this paper where any individual has betrayed any emotion, or enthusiasm, or has departed from strict, stoical self-possession, or had a solitary thought that was not an utterly unpoetical and essentially practical one, remember that Thomas, the third mate, was not that person. He has been eleven days on shore, and already looks sufficiently sound and healthy to pass almost anywhere without being taken for an invalid. He has the marks of a hard experience about him, though, when one looks closely. He is very much sunburned and weather-beaten, and looks thirty-two years old. He is only twenty-four, however, and has been a sailor fifteen years. He was born in Richmond, Maine, and still considers that place his home. The following is the substance of what Thomas said:

The *Hornet* left New York on the 15th of January last, unusually well manned, fitted, and provisioned—as fast and as handsome a clipper ship as ever sailed out of that port. She had a general cargo—a little of everything: a large quantity of kerosene oil in barrels; several hundred cases of candles; also four hundred tons Pacific Railroad iron, and three engines. The third mate thinks they were dock engines, and one of the seamen thought they were locomotives. Had no gales and no bad weather; nothing but fine sailing weather, and she went along steadily and well—fast, very fast, in fact. Had uncommonly good weather off Cape Horn; he had been around that Cape seven times—each way—and had never seen such fine weather there before. On the 12th of April, in latitude, say, 35° S. and longitude 95° W., signaled a Prussian bark; she set Prussian ensign, and the *Hornet* responded with her name, expressed by means of Merritt's system of signals. She was sailing west—probably bound for Australia. This was the last vessel

ever seen by the *Hornet's* people until they floated ashore in Hawaii in the longboat—a space of sixty-four days.

At seven o'clock on the morning of the 3d of May, the chief mate and two men started down into the hold to draw some "bright varnish" from a cask. The captain told him to bring the cask on deck—that it was dangerous to have it where it was, in the hold. The mate, instead of obeying the order, proceeded to draw a canful of the varnish first. He had an open light in his hand, and the liquid took fire; the can was dropped, the officer in his consternation neglected to close the bung, and in a few seconds the fiery torrent had run in every direction, under bales of rope, cases of candles, barrels of kerosene, and all sorts of freight, and tongues of flame were shooting upward through every aperture and crevice toward the deck.

The ship was moving along under easy sail, the watch on duty were idling here and there in such shade as they could find, and the listlessness and repose of morning in the tropics was upon the vessel and her belongings. But as six bells chimed, the cry of "Fire!" rang through the ship and woke every man to life and action. And following the fearful warning, and almost as fleetly, came the fire itself. It sprang through hatchways, seized upon chairs, table, cordage, anything, everything—and almost before the bewildered men could realize what the trouble was and what was to be done the cabin was a hell of angry flames. The mainmast was on fire—its rigging was burned asunder! One man said all this had happened within eighteen or twenty minutes after the first alarm—two others say in ten minutes. All say that one hour after the alarm, the main and mizzenmasts were burned in two and fell overboard.

Captain Mitchell ordered the three boats to be launched instantly, which was done—and so hurriedly that the long-boat (the one he left the vessel in himself) had a hole as large as a man's head stove in her bottom. A blanket was stuffed into the opening and fastened to its place. Not a single thing was saved, except such food and other articles as lay about the cabin and could be quickly seized and thrown on deck. Thomas was sent into the longboat to receive its proportion of these things, and, being barefooted at the time, and bareheaded, and having no clothing on save an undershirt and pantaloons, of course he never got a chance afterward to add to his dress. He lost everything he had, including his logbook, which he had faithfully kept from the first. Forty minutes after the fire alarm the provisions and passengers were on board the three boats, and they rowed away from the ship—and to some distance, too, for the heat was very great. Twenty minutes afterward the two masts I have mentioned, with their rigging and their broad sheets of canvas wreathed in flames, crashed into the sea.

All night long the thirty-one unfortunates sat in their frail boats and watched the gallant ship burn; and felt as men feel when they see a tried friend perishing and are powerless to help him. The sea was illuminated for miles around, and the clouds above were tinged with a ruddy hue; the faces of the men glowed in the strong light as they shaded their eyes with their hands and peered out anxiously upon the wild picture, and the gunwales of the boats and the idle oars shone like polished gold.

At five o'clock on the morning after the disaster, in latitude 2° 20' N., longitude 112° 8' W., the ship went down, and the crew of the *Hornet* were alone on the great deep, or, as one of the seamen expressed it, "We felt as if somebody or something had gone away—as if we hadn't any home any more."

Captain Mitchell divided his boat's crew into two watches and gave the third mate charge of one and took the other himself. He had saved a studding sail from the ship, and out of this the men fashioned a rude sail with their knives; they hoisted it, and taking the first and second

mates' boats in tow, they bore away upon the ship's course (northwest) and kept in the track of vessels bound to or from San Francisco, in the hope of being picked up.

I have said that in the few minutes' time allowed him, Captain Mitchell was only able to seize upon the few articles of food and other necessaries that happened to lie about the cabin. Here is the list: Four hams; seven pieces of salt pork (each piece weighed about four pounds); one box of raisins; one hundred pounds of bread (about one barrel); twelve two-pound cans of oysters, clams, and assorted meats; six buckets of raw potatoes (which rotted so fast they got but little benefit from them); a keg with four pounds of butter in it; twelve gallons of water in a forty-gallon tierce or scuttle butt; four one-gallon demijohns full of water; three bottles of brandy, the property of passengers; some pipes, matches, and a hundred pounds of tobacco; they had no medicines. That was all these poor fellows had to live on for forty-three days—the whole thirty-one of them!

Each boat had a compass, a quadrant, a copy of Bow-ditch's *Navigator*, and a nautical almanac, and the captain's and chief mate's boats had chronometers.

Of course, all hands were put on short allowance at once. The day they set sail from the ship each man was allowed a small morsel of salt pork—or a little piece of potato, if he preferred it—and half a sea biscuit three times a day. To understand how very light this ration of bread was, it is only necessary to know that it takes seven of these sea biscuits to weigh a pound. The first two days they only allowed one gill of water a day to each man; but for nearly a fortnight after that the weather was lowering and stormy, and frequent rain squalls occurred. The rain was caught in canvas, and whenever there was a shower the forty-gallon cask and every other vessel that would hold water was filled—even all the boots that were watertight were pressed into this service, except such as the matches and tobacco were deposited in to keep dry. So for fourteen days. There were luxurious occasions when there was plenty of water to drink. But after that how they suffered the agonies of thirst for four long weeks!

For seven days the boats sailed on, and the starving men ate their fragment of biscuit and their morsel of raw pork in the morning, and hungrily counted the tedious hours until noon and night should bring their repetitions of it. And in the long intervals they looked mutely into each other's faces, or turned their wistful eyes across the wild sea in search of the succoring sail that was never to come.

"Didn't you talk?" I asked one of the men.

"No; we were too downhearted—that is, the first week or more. We didn't talk—we only looked at each other and over the ocean."

And thought, I suppose, thought of home—of shelter from storms—of food, and drink, and rest.

The hope of being picked up hung to them constantly—was ever present to them, and in their thoughts, like hunger. And in the captain's mind was the hope of making the Clarion Islands, and he clung to it many a day.

The nights were very dark. They had no lantern and could not see the compass, and there were no stars to steer by. Thomas said, of the boat, "She handled easy, and we steered by the feel of the wind in our faces and the heave of the sea." Dark, and dismal, and lonesome work was that! Sometimes they got a glimpse of the sailor's friend, the north star, and then they lighted a match and hastened anxiously to see if their compass was faithful to them—for it had to be placed close to an iron ringbolt in the stern, and they were afraid, during those first nights, that this might cause it to vary. It proved true to them, however.

On the fifth day a notable incident occurred. They caught a dolphin! and while their enthusiasm was still at its highest over this stroke of good fortune, they captured another. They made a trifling fire in a tin plate and warmed the prizes—to cook them was not possible—and divided them equitably among all hands and ate them.

On the sixth day two more dolphins were caught.

Two more were caught on the seventh day, and also a small bonita, and they began to believe they were always going to live in this extravagant way; but it was not to be; these were their last dolphins, and they never could get another bonita, though they saw them and longed for them often afterward.

On the eighth day the rations were reduced about one half. Thus: breakfast, one fourth of a biscuit, an ounce of ham, and a gill of water to each man; dinner, same quantity of bread and water, and four oysters or clams; supper, water and bread the same, and twelve large raisins or fourteen small ones, to a man. Also, during the first twelve or fifteen days, each man had one spoonful of brandy a day; then it gave out.

This day, as one of the men was gazing across the dull waste of waters as usual, he saw a small, dark object rising and falling upon the waves. He called attention to it, and in a moment every eye was bent upon it in intensest interest. When the boat had approached a little nearer, it was discovered that it was a small green turtle, fast asleep. Every noise was hushed as they crept upon the unconscious slumberer. Directions were given and hopes and fears expressed in guarded whispers. At the fateful moment—a moment of tremendous consequence to these famishing men—the expert selected for the high and responsible office stretched forth his hand, while his excited comrades bated their breath and trembled for the success of the enterprise, and seized the turtle by the hind leg and handed him aboard! His delicate flesh was carefully divided among the party and eagerly devoured—after being “warmed” like the dolphins which went before him.

After the eighth day I have ten days unaccounted for—no notes of them save that the men say they had their two or three ounces of food and their gill of water three times a day—and then the same weary watching for a saving sail by day and by night, and the same sad “hope deferred that maketh the heart sick;” was their monotonous experience. They talked more, however, and the captain labored without ceasing to keep them cheerful. (They have always a word of praise for the “old man.”)

The eighteenth day was a memorable one to the wanderers on the lonely sea. On that day the boats parted company. The captain said that separate from each other there were three chances for the saving of some of the party where there could be but one chance if they kept together.

The magnanimity and utter unselfishness of Captain Mitchell (and through his example, the same conduct in his men) throughout this distressing voyage are among its most amazing features. No disposition was ever shown by the strong to impose upon the weak, and no greediness, no desire on the part of any to get more than his just share of food, was ever evinced. On the contrary, they were thoughtful of each other and always ready to care for and assist each other to the utmost of their ability. When the time came to part company, Captain Mitchell and his crew, although theirs was much the more numerous party (fifteen men to nine and seven respectively in the other boats), took only one-third of the meager amount of provisions still left, and passed over the other two-thirds to be divided up between the other crews; these men could starve, if need be, but they seem not to have known how to be mean.

After the division the Captain had left for his boat's share two-thirds of the ham, one-fourth of a box of raisins, half a bucket of biscuit crumbs, fourteen gallons of water, three cans of soup-

and-bully. [That last expression of the third mate's occurred frequently during his narrative, and bothered me so painfully with its mysterious incomprehensibility that at length I begged him to explain to me what this dark and dreadful "soup-and-bully" might be. With the consul's assistance he finally made me understand the French dish known as soup bouillon is put up in cans like preserved meats, and the American sailor is under the impression that its name is a sort of general title which describes any description of edible whatever which is hermetically sealed in a tin vessel, and with that high contempt for trifling conventionalities which distinguishes his class, he has seen fit to modify the pronunciation into soup-and-bully.—Mark.]

The captain told the mates he was still going to try to make the Clarion Isles, and that they could imitate his example if they thought best, but he wished them to freely follow the dictates of their own judgment in the matter. At eleven o'clock in the forenoon the boats were all cast loose from each other, and then, as friends part from friends whom they expect to meet no more in life, all hands hailed with a fervent "God bless you, boys; good-by!" And the two cherished sails drifted away and disappeared from the longing gaze that followed them so sorrowfully.

On the afternoon of this eventful eighteenth day two boobies were caught—a bird about as large as a duck, but all bone and feathers—not as much meat as there is on a pigeon—not nearly so much, the men say. They ate them raw—bones, entrails and everything—no single morsel was wasted; they were carefully apportioned among the fifteen men. No fire could be built for cooking purposes—the wind was so strong and the sea ran so high that it was all a man could do to light his pipe.

At eventide the wanderers missed a cheerful spirit—a plucky, strong-hearted fellow, who never drooped his head or lost his grip—a staunch and true good friend, who was always at his post in storm or calm, in rain or shine—who scorned to say die, and yet was never afraid to die—a little trim and taut old rooster, he was, who starved with the rest, but came on watch in the stern sheets promptly every day at four in the morning and six in the evening for eighteen days and crowed like a maniac! Right well they named him Richard of the Lion Heart! One of the men said with honest feeling: "As true as I'm a man, Mr. Mark Twain, if that rooster was here today and any man dared to abuse the bird, I'd break his neck!" Richard was esteemed by all, and by all his rights were respected. He received his little ration of bread crumbs every time the men were fed, and, like them, he bore up bravely and never grumbled and never gave way to despair. As long as he was strong enough, he stood in the stern sheets or mounted the gunwale as regularly as his watch came round, and crowed his two-hour talk, and when at last he grew feeble in the legs and had to stay be-low, his heart was still stout and he slapped about in the water on the bottom of the boat and crowed as bravely as ever! He felt that under circumstances like these America expects every rooster to do his duty, and he did it. But is it not to the high honor of that boat's crew of starving men that, tortured day and night by the pangs of hunger as they were, they refused to appease them with the blood of their humble comrade? Richard was transferred to the chief mate's boat and sailed away on the eighteenth day.

The third mate does not remember distinctly, but thinks morning and evening prayers were begun on the nineteenth day. They were conducted by one of the young Fergusons, because the captain could not read the prayer book without his spectacles, and they had been burned with the ship. And ever after this date, at the rising and the setting of the sun, the storm-tossed mariners reverently bowed their heads while prayers went up for "they that are helpless and far at sea."

On the morning of the twenty-first day, while some of the crew were dozing on the thwarts and others were buried in reflection, one of the men suddenly sprang to his feet and cried, "A sail! a sail!" Of course, sluggish blood bounded-then and eager eyes were turned to seek the welcome

vision. But disappointment was their portion, as usual. It was only the chief mate's boat drifting across their path after three days' absence. In a short time the two parties were abreast each other and in hailing distance. They talked twenty minutes; the mate reported "All well" and then sailed away, and they never saw him afterward.

On the twenty-fourth day Captain Mitchell took an observation and found that he was in latitude 16° N. and longitude 117° W.—about 1,000 miles from where his vessel was burned. The hope he had cherished so long that he would be able to make the Clarion Isles deserted him at last; he could only go before the wind, and he was now obliged to attempt the best thing the southeast trades could do for him—blow him to the "American group" or to the Sandwich Islands—and therefore he reluctantly and with many misgivings turned his prow toward those distant archipelagoes. Not many mouthfuls of food were left, and these must be economized. The third mate said that under this new program of proceedings "we could see that we were living too high; we had got to let up on them raisins, or the soup-and-bullies, one, because it stood to reason that we warn't going to make land soon, and so they wouldn't last." It was a matter which had few humorous features about it to them, and yet a smile is almost pardonable to this idea, so gravely expressed, of "living high" on fourteen raisins at a meal.

The rations remained the same as fixed on the eighth day, except that only two meals a day were allowed, and occasionally the raisins and oysters were left out.

What these men suffered during the next three weeks no mortal man may hope to describe. Their stomachs and intestines felt to the grasp like a couple of small tough balls, and the gnawing hunger pains and the dreadful thirst that was consuming them in those burning latitudes became almost insupportable. And yet, as the men say, the captain said funny things and talked cheerful talk until he got them to conversing freely, and then they used to spend hours together describing delicious dinners they had eaten at home, and earnestly planning interminable and preposterous bills of fare for dinners they were going to eat on shore, if they ever lived through their troubles to do it, poor fellows. The captain said plain bread and butter would be good enough for him all the days of his life, if he could only get it.

But the saddest things were the dreams they had. An unusually intelligent young sailor named Cox said: "In those long days and nights we dreamed all the time—not that we ever slept, I don't mean—no, we only sort of dozed—three-fourths of the faculties awake and the other fourth benumbed into a counterfeit of a slumber; oh, no—some of us never slept for twenty-three days, and no man ever saw the captain asleep for upward of thirty minutes. But we barely dozed that way and dreamed—and always of such feasts! Bread, and fowls, and meat—everything a man could think of, piled upon long tables, and smoking hot! And we sat down and seized upon the first dish in our reach, like ravenous wolves, and carried it to our lips, and—and then we woke up and found the same starving comrades about us, and the vacant sky and the desolate sea!"

These things are terrible even to think of.

Rations Still Further Reduced. It even startles me to come across that significant heading so often in my notebook, notwithstanding I have grown so familiar with its sound by talking so much with these unfortunate men.

On the twenty-eighth day the rations were: one teaspoonful of bread crumbs and about an ounce of ham for the morning meal; a spoonful of bread crumbs alone for the evening meal, and one gill of water three times a day! A kitten would perish eventually under such sustenance.

At this point the third mate's mind reverted painfully to an incident of the early stages of their sufferings. He said there were two between decks, on board the *Hornet*, who had been lying there sick and helpless for he didn't know how long; but when the ship took fire they turned out

as lively as anyone under the spur of the excitement. One was a "Portyghee," he said, and always of a hungry disposition; when all the provisions that could be got had been brought aft and deposited near the wheel to be lowered into the boats, "that sick Portyghee watched his chance, and when nobody was looking he harnessed the provisions and ate up nearly a quarter of a bar'l of bread before the old man caught him, and he had more than two notions to put his light out." The third mate dwelt upon this circumstance as upon a wrong he could not fully forgive, and intimated that the Portyghee stole bread enough, if economized in twenty-eighth-day rations, to have run the longboat party three months.

Four little flying fish, the size of the sardines of these latter days, flew into the boat on the night of the twenty-eighth day. They were divided among all hands and devoured raw. On the twenty-ninth day they caught another, and divided it into fifteen pieces, less than a spoonful apiece.

On the thirtieth day they caught a third flying fish and gave it to the revered old captain—a fish of the same poor little proportions as the others—four inches long—a present a king might be proud of under such circumstances—a present whose value, in the eyes of the men who offered it, was not to be found in the Bank of England—yea, whose vaults were not able to contain it! The old captain refused to take it; the men insisted; the captain said no—he would take his fifteenth—they must take the remainder. They said in substance, though not in words, that they would see him in Jericho first! So the captain had to eat the fish.

I believe I have done the third mate some little wrong in the beginning of this letter. I have said he was as self-possessed as a statue—that he never betrayed emotion or enthusiasm. He never did except when he spoke of "the old man." I always thawed through his ice then. The men were the same way; the captain is their hero—their true and faithful friend, whom they delight to honor. I said to one of these infatuated skeletons, "But you wouldn't go quite so far as to die for him?" A snap of the finger—"As quick as that!—I wouldn't be alive now if it hadn't been for him." We pursued the subject no further.

Rations Still Further Reduced. I still claim the public's indulgence and belief. At least Thomas and his men do through me.' About the thirty-second day the bread gave entirely out. There was nothing left, now, but mere odds and ends of their stock of provisions. Five days afterward, on the thirty-seventh day—latitude 16° 30' N., and longitude 170° W.—kept off for the "American group"—"which don't exist and never will, I suppose," said the third mate. Ran directly over the ground said to be occupied by these islands—that is, between latitude 16° and 17° N., and longitude 133° to 136° W. Ran over the imaginary islands and got into 136° W, and then the captain made a dash for Hawaii, resolving that he would go till he fetched land, or at any rate as long as he and his men survived.

On Monday, the thirty-eighth day after the disaster, "we had nothing left," said the third mate, "but a pound and a half of ham—the bone was a good deal the heaviest part of it—and one soup-and-bully tin.' These things were divided among the fifteen men, and they ate it all—two ounces of food to each man. I do not count the ham bone, as that was saved for next day. For some time, now, the poor wretches had been cutting their old boots into small pieces and eating them. They would also pound wet rags to a sort of pulp and eat them.

On the thirty-ninth day the ham bone was divided up into rations, and scraped with knives and eaten. I said: "You say the two sick men remained sick all through, and after awhile two or three had to be relieved from standing watch; how did you get along without medicines!"

The reply was: "Oh, we couldn't have kept them if we'd had them; if we'd had boxes of pills, or anything like that, we'd have eaten them. It was just as well—we couldn't have kept them,

and we couldn't have given them to the sick men alone—we'd have shared them around all alike, I guess." It was said rather in jest, but it was a pretty true jest, no doubt.

After apportioning the ham bone, the captain cut the canvas cover that had been around the ham into fifteen equal pieces, and each man took his portion. This was the last division of food the captain made. The men broke up the small oaken butter tub and divided the staves among themselves, and gnawed them up. The shell of the little green turtle, heretofore mentioned, was scraped with knives and eaten to the last shaving. The third mate chewed pieces of boots and spit them out, but ate nothing except the soft straps of two pairs of boots—ate three on the thirtieth day and saved one for the fortieth.

The men seem to have thought in their own minds of the shipwrecked mariner's last dreadful resort—cannibalism; but they do not appear to have conversed about it. They only thought of the casting lots and killing one of their number as a possibility; but even when they were eating rags, and bones, and boots, and shell, and hard oak wood, they seem to have still had a notion that it was remote. They felt that someone of the company must die soon—which one they well knew; and during the last three or four days of their terrible voyage they were patiently but hungrily waiting for him. I wonder if the subject of these anticipations knew what they were thinking of? He must have known it—he must have felt it. They had even calculated how long he would last; they said to themselves, but not to each other, I think they said, "He will die Saturday—and then!"

There was one exception to the spirit of delicacy I have mentioned—a Frenchman, who kept an eye of strong personal interest upon the sinking man and noted his failing strength with untiring care and some degree of cheerfulness. He frequently said to Thomas: "I think he will go off pretty soon, now, sir. And then we'll eat him!" This is very sad.

Thomas and also several of the men state that the sick Portygree, during the five days that they were entirely out of provisions, actually ate two silk handkerchiefs and a couple of cotton shirts, besides his share of the boots, and bones, and lumber.

Captain Mitchell was fifty-six years old on the 12th of June—the fortieth day after the burning of the ship and the third day before the boat's crew reached land. He said it looked somewhat as if it might be the last one he was going to enjoy. He had no birthday feast except some bits of ham canvas—no luxury but this, and no substantials save the leather and oaken bucket staves.

Speaking of the leather diet, one of the men told me he was obliged to eat a pair of boots which were so old and rotten that they were full of holes; and then he smiled gently and said he didn't know, though, but what the holes tasted about as good as the balance of the boot. This man was still very feeble, and after saying this he went to bed.

At eleven o'clock on the 15th of June, after suffering all that men may suffer and live for forty-three days, in an open boat, on a scorching tropical sea, one of the men feebly shouted the glad tidings, "Land ho!" The "watch below" were lying in the bottom of the boat. What do you suppose they did? They said they had been cruelly disappointed over and over again, and they dreaded to risk another experience of the kind—they could not bear it—they lay still where they were. They said they would not trust to an appearance that might not be land after all. They would wait.

Shortly it was proved beyond question that they were almost to land. Then there was joy in the party. One man is said to have swooned away. Another said the sight of the green hills was better to him than a day's rations, a strange figure for a man to use who had been fasting for forty days and forty nights.

The land was the island of Hawaii, and they were off Laupahoehoe and could see nothing inshore but breakers. I was there a week or two ago, and it is a very dangerous place. When they got pretty close to shore they saw cabins, but no human beings. They thought they would lower the sail and try to work in with the oars. They cut the ropes and the sail came down, and then they found they were not strong enough to ship the oars. They drifted helplessly toward the breakers, but looked listlessly on and cared not a straw for the violent death which seemed about to overtake them after all their manful struggles, their privations, and their terrible sufferings. They said, "It was good to see the green fields again." It was all they cared for. The "green fields" were a haven of rest for the weary wayfarers; it was sufficient; they were satisfied; it was nothing to them that Death stood in their pathway; they had long been familiar to him; he had no terrors for them.

Two of Captain Spencer's natives saw the boat, knew by the appearance of things that it was in trouble, and dashed through the surf and swam out to it. When they climbed aboard there were only five yards of space between the poor sufferers and a sudden and violent death. Fifteen minutes afterward the boat was beached upon the shore and a crowd of natives (who are the very incarnation of generosity, unselfishness, and hospitality) were around the strangers, dumping bananas, melons, taro, poi—anything and everything they could scrape together that could be eaten—on the ground by the cartload; and if Mr. Jones, of the station, had not hurried down with his steward, they would soon have killed the starving men with kindness. As it was, the sick Portygeeh really ate six bananas before Jones could get hold of him and stop him. This is a fact. And so are the stories of his previous exploits. Jones and the kanaka girls and men took the mariners in their arms like so many children and carried them up to the house, where they received kind and judicious attention until Sunday evening, when two whaleboats came from Hilo, Jones furnished a third, and they were taken in these to the town just named, arriving there at two o'clock Monday morning.

Each of the young Fergusons kept a journal from the day the ship sailed from New York until they got on land once more at Hawaii. The captain also kept a log every day he was adrift. These logs, by the captain's direction, were to be kept up faithfully as long as any of the crew were alive, and the last survivor was to put them in a bottle, when he succumbed, and lash the bottle to the inside of the boat. The captain gave a bottle to each officer of the other boats, with orders to follow his example. The old gentleman was always thoughtful.

The hardest berth in that boat, I think, must have been that of provision keeper. This office was performed by the captain and the third mate; of course they were always hungry. They always had access to the food, and yet must not gratify their craving appetites.

The young Fergusons are very highly spoken of by all the boat's crew, as patient, enduring, manly and kindhearted gentlemen. The captain gave them a watch to themselves—it was the duty of each to bail the water out of the boat three hours a day. Their home is in Stamford, Connecticut, but their father's place of business is New York.

In the chief mate's boat was a passenger—a gentlemanly young fellow of twenty years named William Lang, son of a stockbroker in New York.

The chief mate, Samuel Hardy, lived at Chatham, Massachusetts; second mate belonged in Shields, England; the cook, George Washington (Negro), was in the chief mate's boat, and also the steward (Negro); the carpenter was in the second mate's boat.

Captain Mitchell. To this man's good sense, cool judgment, perfect discipline, close attention to the smallest particulars which could conduce to the welfare of his crew or render their ultimate rescue more probable, that boat's crew owe their lives. He has shown brain and ability that make

him worthy to command the finest frigate in the United States, and a genuine unassuming heroism that entitles him to a Congressional medal. I suppose some of the citizens of San Francisco who know how to appreciate this kind of a man will not let him go on hungry forever after he gets there. In the above remarks I am only echoing the expressed opinions of numbers of persons here who have never seen Captain Mitchell, but who judge him by his works—among others the Hon. Anson Burlingame and our Minister to Japan, both of whom have called at the hospital several times and held long conversations with the men. Burlingame speaks in terms of the most unqualified praise of Captain Mitchell's high and distinguished abilities as evinced at every point throughout his wonderful voyage.

Captain Mitchell, one sailor, and the two Fergusons are still at Hilo. The two first mentioned are pretty feeble, from what I can learn. The captain's sense of responsibility kept him strong and awake all through the voyage; but as soon as he landed and that fearful strain upon his faculties was removed, he was prostrated—became the feeblest of the boat's company.

The seamen here are doing remarkably well, considering all things. They already walk about the hospital a little, and very stiff-legged, because of the long inaction their muscles have experienced.

When they came ashore at Hawaii, no man in the party had had any movement of his bowels for eighteen days, several not for twenty-five or thirty, one not for thirty-seven, and one not for forty-four days. As soon as any of these men can travel, they will be sent to San Francisco.

I have written this lengthy letter in a great hurry in order to get it off by the bark *Milton Badger*, if the thing be possible, and I may have made a good many mistakes, but I hardly think so. All the statistical information in it comes from Thomas, and he may have made mistakes, because he tells his story entirely from memory, and although he has naturally a most excellent one, it might well be pardoned for inaccuracies concerning events which transpired during a series of weeks that never saw his mind strongly fixed upon any thought save the weary longing for food and water. But the logbooks of the captain and the two passengers will tell the terrible romance from the first day to the last in faithful detail, and these I shall forward by the next mail if I am permitted to copy them.