

Adrift!

A young Englishman discovers there is no free ride

- Frank Bruce, a 26 year old Englishman, has been working in Canada. But times are hard and the jobs poor. So Frank decides to return home to England.
- He signs on to a cattle ship in Montreal bound for Liverpool. It's January, 1926. The ship is beset by a fierce winter storm and loses her rudder. For weeks, the ship drifts in the North Atlantic. Food runs short and cattle must be thrown overboard.
- Finally a salvage tug secures a line and tows her to the Azores.

SALVAGE!

By S. FRANK BRUCE.

I STADIED myself against the edge of the iron bunk while the ship rolled heavily to port; as she regained the vertical, I left the fore-castle and stepped on deck into the cold wind. Inside, my fellow cattlemen slept uneasily in their clothes, breathing stertorously a close, damp atmosphere loaded with the mingled smells of cow, unwashed clothing, stale tobacco and the apples we had borrowed from the cargo below.

The night sky was brilliantly starred; the January wind still blew strong and steady over the Atlantic from the northwest. The ship, her rudder-quadrant broken, lay as she had drifted for three weeks now, helplessly rolling broadside to the heavy swell. Each tremendous wave, rushing at the ship as she listed under the pressure of the wind, dealt her a smashing blow, and passed beneath us. Down the wind-fretted back of the wave she slid, trembling, into the trough; listed again and waited for the buffet from the next onrushing wall of water.

NOW OR NEVER!

Pulling up the collar of my old army greatcoat I hung over the lee rail to watch the dim white crests of the waves leave the ship's rail, and with a hiss and a heave, leap away into the darkness.

I was pretty sure it was a hail that had brought me on deck; but we were in mid-Atlantic, where hails are few. Sure enough, lights were dancing to leeward. Stately, swaying, they rode for a moment on the wind, then plunged with a sidewise swing, and the next moment were again flung skyward. I dived back into the fore-castle and punched a shapeless mass of blankets, clothes and sack on an upper bunk.

"Hey, Bill! Golden you; wake up. Here's the tug."
Groaning protest, Bill rolled out, yawned himself into cap and sweater. We went outside together. The watch was already on deck. The tug had come a thousand miles

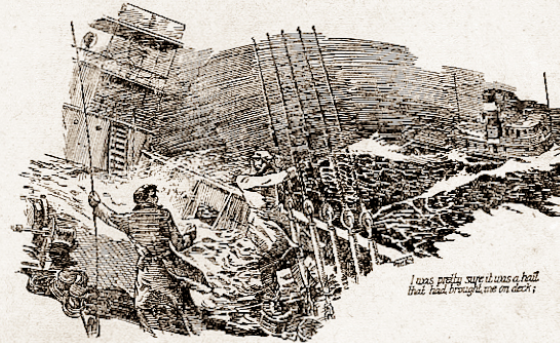
and more to fetch us, had found us at night in mid-ocean. She was ready now to hook on to us in a sea that we had already seen, during the previous two weeks, break like twine the three-inch steel hawsers passed to us by other ships, salvage bent.

The tug came in close, hailed us again, and told us to stand by to receive a line. Her searchlight showed our Old Man on the bridge, megaphone in hand. He yelled in a hoarse but surprisingly loud voice, that it couldn't be done—better wait till daylight. The answer, blurred by the wind, came booming back: "You take my line now or I'll leave you."

The Old Man's "O.K." was the last word of this laconic argument.

A MIGHTY FLAIL.

Up forward, the crew were already busy with the anchor winch. Spare hawsers were already coiled on the foredeck. Two days before, as another ship was attempting to tow us, the heavy hawser had parted. The end of the steel hawser, converted instantly into a mighty flail, whipped around the bollard and disappeared overside, leaving the car-



I was pretty sure it was a hail that had brought me on deck!

pen's mate in a huddle on the deck, with one leg nearly severed at the ankle.

"I'LL CUT YOUR THROAT!"

I felt in an inside pocket for cigarettes. Bill and I leaned against the rail next the cowshed and watched the crew lugging cables forward along the heaving steel deck. From the afterdeck, littered with smashed cowshed and a tangle of wire ropes, with the dead steers still wedged between the winches and the hatch, they dragged the heavy rope. Past the galley door where we were wont to wait for the inevitable stew and the tea with coffee grounds; past the engine-room door, whence the negro stoker had flown past me for his razor the night before; while the second engineer dived into his cabin for a gun, appealing to me over his shoulder as a witness:

"You heard that black devil say he'd cut my throat, didn't ye, hey?"
Past the fiddley they lugged the heavy cable; the fiddley where in bad weather we let go our hold on the life lines rigged along the deck, and dived for the warmth of the stokehold; only to be soaked again as we descended by flying masts of being from windward, which

plunged through the great dripping steel ladders to the deck of the dim stokehold. Past the steward's pan-

SS. Salvage King of the Pacific, like its sister ships of the Atlantic, savior of hundreds of boats in trouble.

Adrift!

1931

VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA.

D

The Tug Fought Through a Thousand Miles of Ocean Gales to Succor the Crippled Tramp— And We Sipped Hot Tea While the Cook Slept

aggod the cable forward, where we could go to draw rations and where a floor was still wet with the water that had flooded down from the smashed chart-room through the sacred saloon.

Bill and I smoked and gladly stiched the crew working. The wind pressed coldly upon us, it not with the solid, irresistible force it had shown during the worst of the weather. It had blown then iraculously from a clear steel-blue sky upon a grey and raging sea. It had blown with incredible intensity and steadiness; now flattening the sea with its weight, now whipping it flying spume up over the windward taffrail, heaved high as the ship listed, whipping it horizontally across the deck.

Bill and I finished our smokes.

ISHING FOR THE LINE.

Very soon the tug would send a line aboard. She would do it by the simple process of slinging overboard a windward a lifebuoy with the line attached. The ships would drift faster than the buoy and we could fish for it with lines weighted with iron shovels or bars as soon as they had drifted down upon it.

We began to get cold; our interest

in the proceedings waned with every chilling moment.

APPLE PIE.

"Tea, Bill," I said, and we moved off in the direction of the galley.

Making tea had to be done at some time between midnight and three in the morning, when the fat, vituperative, whisky-ridden cook was snoring in his bunk. Ham, our tame cattle-man-actor, had even baked an apple pie at these unearthly hours. To be sure, the apples were stolen from the cargo and cooked without sugar; and the crust made from the cook's flour, without fat, but in the circumstances it was a culinary triumph. Ham himself had brought me a piece and awakened me to eat it. After the first enthusiastic bite, one ate the rest out of love for Ham and respect for his remarkable achievement.

While Bill stoked up the big iron range, with its railed top, I took a small saucepan, slid forward again to within earshot of where the mate was still grunting orders, and slipped below. I moved quickly aft along the rows of cattle between decks, assailed by the cloying smell

of the animals, and of wet hay, and from the already rotting apples in the hold.

Near the end of the long line of weary, weeping animals stood the little black Angus cow that had presented us with a shiny black calf a week before. With this single gesture, she had attained a unique popularity with the entire ship's company, who while glad of the calf as a pet, were still more pleased at the prospect of having fresh milk in their tea. Competition for the milk waxed fierce between the saloon, the sailors and the cattlemen. Fortunately for the calf, it was a point of honor among the warring foster brothers to see that the calf was fed first. After that, it was anybody's milk. Hence, it was as necessary to do our milking while the crew worked and the steward slept, as it was to wait until the fat and unpleasant cook was safe in the arms of Morpheus before making tea.

THE CALF WAS FED.

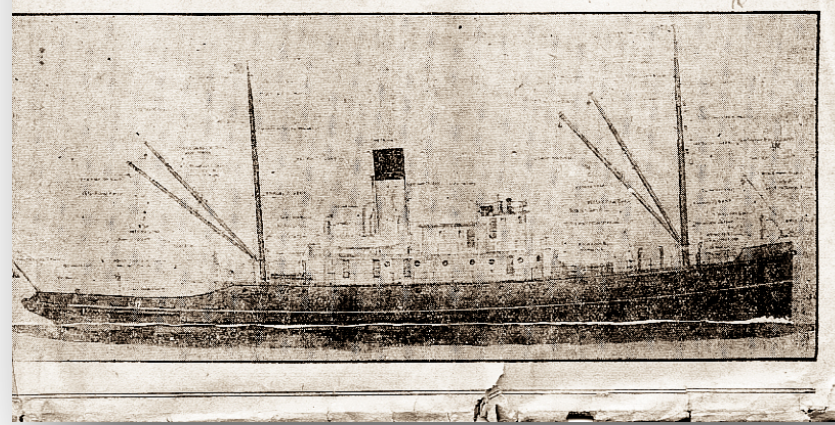
It should be explained that tea as Ham made it, or as we made it, and as the cook made it for Ham and us, were not recognizable as the same beverage.

The calf was fed. I took a cupful of milk in the saucepan, tied up

the calf to its stanchion, fed the little black cow crushed apples in a pail, and hied me with my booty to the galley.

HOT, GOOD TEA.

The tea was strong and fragrant. We sipped gratefully; warming our backs at the stove, which had been generously stoked by the big-hearted Bill. My hands at the cup smelled of the apples and the cow. Over the cups we regarded each other with pleased and perfect understanding. Tomorrow, we thought, after three weeks adrift, we shall be limping south to the Azores. Moving slowly we shall be, it is true; moving at hardly a man's walking pace behind the tug from Queens-town that found ships in mid-ocean and made their skippers hook on at night. The sea would go down. Every day it would get warmer. Perhaps we could even lie on the hatch in the sun and watch the sailors chipping paint. Meanwhile the drunken cook was asleep and we had hot tea with no stale coffee grounds in it and made, too, with fresh milk.



Adrift!



Adrift!



Adrift!



Adrift!



Adrift!



Adrift!



Adrift!



Adrift!



Adrift!

Leave Lisbon 8.45 a.m.

Arrive Pamplona 12.10 --

Change.

Leave Pamplona 12.40 --

Arr. Lerida d'Onza 5.49 p.m.

Change.

Leave .. 6.20 --

Arrive Medina 0.34 midnight

Change.

Leave .. 2.25 a.m.

Arr. Arunday 11.30 a.m.

Change.

Leave .. 12.57 p.m.

Arr. Paris (Orsay) ~~7~~ 6 a.m.

Leave Paris (Nord) 8.35 --

Arr. London (Victoria) 3.30 p.m.

Adrift!

CATTLE AT SEA

Need for Provision of Humane Killers

TO THE EDITOR OF THE MORNING POST

SIR,—Circumstances rendered the case of the *Manchester Producer* a particularly terrible one, but the cattle suffer more or less on every voyage. Some years ago motives of economy led me to cross the Atlantic as a cattleman instead of as a passenger. The month was August, and we had little rough weather; yet, even so, we "lost" three head of cattle between Montreal and Deptford, and cases of minor injury, broken horns and the like, were numerous.—Yours, &c.,

C. J. HOGARTH.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE MORNING POST

SIR,—Your article in to-day's issue, headed "Cattle Boat's Ordeal," shows the sufferings that are endured by these poor creatures in transit. Our Society, with others, and greatly aided by articles and letters in the *Morning Post*, tried to prevent the lifting of the cattle embargo, unfortunately in vain.

The writer says there were no implements on board to enable them to kill the cattle. We have written to Shipping Companies offering to provide humane killers for those carrying cattle and horses, but have been told that the Government regulations compelled them to be carried in case of accidents. If this statement is not correct, we shall be happy to supply them, but if it be correct why were the instruments not there?—Yours, &c.,

VIOLET WOOD, Secretary, Council
of Justice to Animals.

March 19.

Adrift!

MANCHESTER PRODUCER

Horta . Fayal

Date *28 Feb 1926.*

Please pass bearer with *one trunk*
two suit cases & bag.

Personal Effects

H.R. Barlow

3rd Officer.

in charge

Adrift!

SUFFERINGS OF CATTLE AT SEA

TO THE EDITOR OF THE MORNING POST

SIR,—No one could read the heartrending accounts of the sufferings of these poor animals on the *Manchester Producer* without intense anguish. Surely on the Atlantic, above all oceans, animals should not be shipped and put on upper decks where they cannot be either fed or properly attended to if a storm comes. One can only hope such a strong public feeling will now be aroused that existing conditions will be abolished once for all. Men can look after themselves, but helpless animals can do nothing. It is inhuman that they should be shipped in such a way that during rough seas they cannot be fed or protected.—Yours, &c.,

F. A. SUTTABY.

The Malt House, Frensham, Surrey,
March 22.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE MORNING POST

SIR,—The Hon. Stephen Coleridge, in his letter on the *Manchester Producer* cattle affair, was, I am sure, but giving expression to the feelings of thousands of your readers. The terrible narratives published in Friday's and Saturday's issues of the *Morning Post* should be sufficient to arouse the indignation of the country. Why should animals be exposed to the possibility of such tortures?

Britishers have a reputation among other nations for their kindness to animals. Could we not justify that reputation still further by taking up this question in Parliament?—Yours, &c.,

EDITH K. STEER.

Godstone, March, 20.

[Many letters similar in terms to the foregoing have been received.—Ed. M.P.]

Adrift!

CATTLE SHIP INQUIRY

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT)

MANCHESTER, Monday.

It is understood that following the disclosures in the *Morning Post* of the voyage of the cattle-laden steamer the *Manchester Producer*, an inquiry was conducted in private to-day by the owners of the vessel, Manchester Liners, Limited. Among those who attended was Captain Mitchell, master of the ship.

During the day the Managing Director informed me that there was no communication to make. He added: "If the company decide to make any statement we will let the *Morning Post* know."

[Letters expressing the views of correspondents are printed on p. 11.]

"VICTIMS OF A STRIKE"

Mr. Havelock Wilson, the secretary of the National Sailors' and Firemen's Union, has received a cheque for £1,250 from the shipowners on the National Maritime Board as a first contribution to the fund for the alleviation of distress among the families of seamen caused by the recent strike of sailors in Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa.

This is in response to an appeal made by Mr. Wilson to the Board on the 18th inst., as reported in the *Morning Post*.

Adrift!

country is purchased abroad, the decrease in the sale of manufactures is reflected in the high cost of imported foodstuffs, and also in the permanent existence of a mass of unemployed persons, who are supported out of the earnings of the rest of the community. As matters stand, even the persons employed draw largely from the State—that is, from other classes of the community—for the money to defray the cost of education, sickness, and pensions. Pursued to its logical conclusion, the class-war ends in national bankruptcy; and during its course towards its appointed end, it inflicts incalculable hardship and misery. In whatever the defects of the modern industrial system may consist, they can only be remedied by the common agreement of masters and men to make the utmost out of the industry from which both parties alike draw their livelihood. If industry is to exist at all, it must be created by Capital and Labour. If it is to prosper, Capital and Labour must combine together in the enterprise. There is no other way.

A TALE OF THE SEA

We are able to-day to amplify the vivid narrative which we published yesterday of the terrible ordeal through which the cattle-boat *Manchester Producer* passed on her recent voyage across the Atlantic. It is certain that no one of imagination and compassion can read that narrative unmoved. The sufferings of the crew and cattlemen on board that partially disabled vessel through days of a raging storm were severe enough; but even worse were those of the poor beasts cooped and tethered on the upper decks, exposed to the weather, flung about with the tossings of the ship, often maimed by their buffetings, and necessarily deprived of food and water. Few of them reached port; and those that were thrown overboard found a merciful release from their sufferings. There is no suggestion that all the rules applicable to cattle-boats were not duly observed, or that the cattlemen did not do their utmost to fulfil their duty. The point is that on a disabled vessel in such a storm it was impossible to avoid subjecting a cargo of living cattle to sufferings which the humane mind shrinks from contemplating. The question that suggests itself is, not whether the regulations, as they exist,

tion as soon as the machines were started, and the binding was an operation equally simple. There is not a printing house in the country which could not be put to the utmost demand within a few days; there is not a publisher who is not confidently expecting to be supplied; and would not have been able to supply it. Station

Adrift!

beasts cooped and tethered on the upper decks, exposed to the weather, flung about with the tossings of the ship, often maimed by their buffetings, and necessarily deprived of food and water. Few of them reached port; and those that were thrown overboard found a merciful release from their sufferings. There is no suggestion that all the rules applicable to cattle-boats were not duly observed, or that the cattlemen did not do their utmost to fulfil their duty. The point is that on a disabled vessel in such a storm it was impossible to avoid subjecting a cargo of living cattle to sufferings which the humane mind shrinks from contemplating. The question that suggests itself is, not whether the regulations, as they exist, were observed, but whether those regulations are sufficient for the circumstances.

The North Atlantic is not a placid ocean. Storms of great severity are not at all uncommon there. They must be reckoned with and provided for; and the experience of the *Manchester Producer* suggests very plainly that bad passages are not sufficiently reckoned with or provided for, as far as the live-cattle trade is concerned. No doubt this was an exceptional experience; but one that is by no means so unlikely to recur as to place it beyond the range of practical calculation. No human skill and management can provide entirely against all the risks of ocean-voyaging; but it is surely right to inquire whether more cannot be done to protect from such a terrible fate the helpless beasts that are shipped in the course of trade from America to England. Humanity is shocked by such a disclosure, and those who are engaged in a legitimate and necessary trade should be the first to court inquiry and to invite measures for the amelioration of present conditions. In the old days, when Army horses were shipped abroad, the things they suffered were very terrible. But those were days of small ships at the mercy of the wind. The modern cargo vessel is both more commodious and more manageable. Yet even of the grim stories that have come down of the old Peninsular troopers there is none that provokes a shudder more than the tale of the *Manchester Producer*.

Adrift!

SHIPMENT OF CATTLE

The "Morning Post" Disclosures

ENFORCEMENT OF REGULATIONS

Sir Arthur Boscawen's Suggestions

The *Morning Post* disclosures of the treatment of cattle during their shipment across the Atlantic in the *Manchester Producer* have shocked public opinion in England. Further corroborative evidence has been given to the *Morning Post* of the truth of the allegations made by Mr. Berry, and substantiated by Mr. Bruce.

Another member of the crew of the *Manchester Producer*, who sailed in the vessel during her last voyage, verified these statements. He went on to make the following criticisms:

"The business of shipping cattle on the upper decks of cattle boats in mid-winter is absolutely inhuman. I understand that the master of a vessel has the privilege of refusing to do this if he cares to exercise his right; and he sometimes does so. If he is not strong on this point, however, he is often overruled. On this unhappy voyage the cattle suffered the greatest misery, both through the storm and because there were no effective appliances on board for the immediate destruction of those cattle which were maimed or had to be disposed of.

"I am not going to condemn entirely," he continued, "the practice of taking on board inexperienced men to look after the cattle, provided that there is an experienced foreman there to supervise. After all, it does not call for very much skill to lay a bale of hay before an animal or to give him a drink of water.

"There is no doubt, however, that it would be much better if men were appointed as cattlemen, at a definite wage, instead of this casual practice of shipping men indiscriminately, and allowing them to pay for their passage. They should also have a fuller knowledge of what their duties on board should be."

SIR A. BOSCAWEN'S VIEWS

"Judging from this account, the regulations cannot have been carried out."

Adrift!

SIR A. BOSCAWEN'S VIEWS

"Judging from this account, the regulations cannot have been carried out."

Sir Arthur Boscawen, the former Minister of Agriculture, made this comment to a *Morning Post* representative yesterday after studying the articles which described on Friday and Saturday the sufferings of the cattle on board the *Manchester Producer*.

In the fierce controversy as to whether Canadian store cattle should be admitted to this country, Sir Arthur Boscawen was a central figure, and he abandoned politics shortly after Parliament's decision that the embargo should be lifted. Before leaving the Ministry Sir Arthur framed regulations to protect Canadian cattle from hardship on their Atlantic voyages.

By comparing the detailed accounts given in the *Morning Post* of conditions on the *Manchester Producer* with the Importation of Canadian Cattle Order, 1923, and the Canadian Regulations on the Shipping of Live Stock, he was able to indicate many rules in the carriage of these animals which appear to have been disregarded.

"QUALIFIED" MEN

"To begin with," Sir Arthur said, "both the English and the Canadian Orders insist that the attendants on board shall be 'qualified' and of 'experience and ability.' Mr. Berry, who has given you the facts, had never handled cattle before, and the mechanics, business men, and the actor he mentions could scarcely be counted qualified. Further, the 1923 Order states that adequate light for the proper tending of the animals must be ensured at all times. Even if the electric light, with which cattle ships have to be installed, failed in the storm, there should have been hurricane lamps available. The clause declaring that 'animals shall be protected against injury or unnecessary suffering from undue exposure to the weather' seems to have been very loosely interpreted.

"An Atlantic crossing like this, packed with misery for man and beast, suggests one or two new regulations. Vessels should in future be obliged to carry humane killers, and the proviso that store animals shall not, except in certain circumstances, be carried on the forward well-deck between the months of October and March might be strengthened to forbid any pens for any cattle being placed on the spar deck during the winter period of gales and heavy seas."

The R.S.P.C.A. has informed the *Morning Post* that steps have been taken to urge an inquiry into the matter.

NO HUMANE KILLER

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT)

MONTREAL, March 21.

The present regulations governing shipments of cattle to Liverpool contain no provision for a humane killer as a necessary equipment. Shippers here, discussing the experience of the *Manchester Producer*, agree that a humane killer is desirable, but point out that the necessity to use it on a large number of cattle rarely arises. There appears to be no general rule which allows the carrying of cattle on the upper decks in winter, though certain ships have temporary upper deck accommodation, which can be used under a permit from the Government. Lower deck accommodation is generally used on all cattle lines. The regulations prescribe hay and chopped roots as food which all ships carrying

Adrift!

to this country, Sir Arthur Boscawen was a central figure, and he abandoned politics shortly after Parliament's decision that the embargo should be lifted. Before leaving the Ministry Sir Arthur framed regulations to protect Canadian cattle from hardship on their Atlantic voyages.

By comparing the detailed accounts given in the *Morning Post* of conditions on the *Manchester Producer* with the Importation of Canadian Cattle Order, 1923, and the Canadian Regulations on the Shipping of Live Stock, he was able to indicate many rules in the carriage of these animals which appear to have been disregarded.

"QUALIFIED" MEN

"To begin with," Sir Arthur said, "both the English and the Canadian Orders insist that the attendants on board shall be 'qualified' and of 'experience and ability.' Mr. Berry, who has given you the facts, had never handled cattle before, and the mechanics, business men, and the actor he mentions could scarcely be counted qualified. Further, the 1923 Order states that adequate light for the proper tending of the animals must be ensured at all times. Even if the electric light, with which cattle ships have to be installed, failed in the storm, there should have been hurricane lamps available. The clause declaring that 'animals shall be protected against injury or unnecessary suffering from undue exposure to the weather' seems to have been very loosely interpreted.

"An Atlantic crossing like this, packed with misery for man and beast, suggests one or two new regulations. Vessels should in future be obliged to carry humane killers, and the proviso that store animals shall not, except in certain circumstances, be carried on the forward well-deck between the months of October and March might be strengthened to forbid any pens for any cattle being placed on the spar deck during the winter period of gales and heavy seas."

The R.S.P.C.A. has informed the *Morning Post* that steps have been taken to urge an inquiry into the matter.

NO HUMANE KILLER

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT)

MONTREAL, March 21.

The present regulations governing shipments of cattle to Liverpool contain no provision for a humane killer as a necessary equipment. Shippers here, discussing the experience of the *Manchester Producer*, agree that a humane killer is desirable, but point out that the necessity to use it on a large number of cattle rarely arises. There appears to be no general rule which allows the carrying of cattle on the upper decks in winter, though certain ships have temporary upper deck accommodation, which can be used under a permit from the Government. Lower deck accommodation is generally used on all cattle lines. The regulations prescribe hay and chopped oats as food which all ships carrying Canadian cattle must provide, and shippers here believe that the requirement is generally observed.

The News Service of THE MORNING POST is copyright in U.S.A. by the New York Herald Tribune, in South America by the United Press Association, and in Australia and New Zealand by the Australian Press Association.

Adrift!

"Manchester Producer"

Sun. March 2nd.

Dear Friend;

You will no doubt have all ^{your} heart & soul interested in this wonderful ship so I will try and outline the rest of the voyage to you.

It is just a week ago since you two fellows left us, & we have had some fun since then. No doubt you heard of the battle of Horta which occurred last Sun. p.m. when Paddy struck the apprentice boy & fought the 2nd mate, while Capt. & 1st mate were ashore. After tea the police were notified & called to his arrest but never showed up till Mon. 2. a.m. An old fellow came in armed like a warrior with a long fancy sword & two other big fellows. Paddy was paraded into the saloon before the Capt. & 2nd mate & these officials. He had tears in his eyes & shook like a leaf. He sure put in a terrible night of misery, after the deed. Mate had stitches in his eye lid but is better now. Well Paddy handed me his

Adrift!

A New Earth Media Production

peter@newearthvillage.com

Copyright: Peter Bruce 2013