

# The Boston Sunday Globe

THE BOSTON SUNDAY GLOBE—FEBRUARY 29 1920—SEVENTY-SIX PAGES

## LONELY MONARCH OF DESERTED ISLE

Malden Boy Again Left Like a Modern Robinson Crusoe on Christmas Island, This Time With Only Two Natives for Company



JOSEPH ENGLISH AND ONE OF  
GIANT FISH CAUGHT IN LAGOON  
AT CHRISTMAS ISLAND



HOW THE SOUTH SEA ISLANDERS  
FELT ABOUT THE KAISER

**By JAMES H. POWERS**

In previous instalments the Globe has told how a Malden boy became manager and only white person on Christmas Island, out in the middle of the Pacific, how the cannibal workmen tried to kill him, how he escaped, and after waiting for a month for a second attack started out alone to hunt down the mutineers and overcame them by sheer audacity.

Then, with the ringleaders in irons, he put the now subdued mutineers to work; but they stopped all labor when their time was up and he had anxious weeks of waiting for the overdue supply ship.

At last he was aroused one night by the news that a strange white man was coming along the beach.

-----

### **THE STORY OF JOSEPH ENGLISH**

I leaped from my cot and started down the shore to meet the stranger, wondering what ship he was from, and with my whole being thrilled at the prospect of getting away from Christmas Island.

As I drew nearer I saw that he was exhausted and dripping wet from the sea, and I heard the words that he was crying at me:

"Where's English? I want Joe English," he shouted.

"I'm Joe English," said I. "What's the matter?"

"The schooner – " he gasped, "gone on the reef – lost!"

I turned and looked across to northward, toward the open ocean, and my joy and eagerness fell away from me as if I had been doused with ice water. For there, with her bows pointing up sharply into the stars and her stern already awash – there, on the outer reef beyond the anchorage, with the endless white breakers roaring past her side, lay the ship that I had waited for, prayed for and almost despaired of ever seeing – the Ysabel May.

The sailor had swam and waded ashore to bring me the news.

-----

### **Done for Till the Tide**

I left him and ran across the sands to the sea's edge, and plunged into the water. Partly swimming and partly wading, I made my way over the submerged coral and in a few minutes I climbed up the rope ladder thrown over the bows. The captain was there to meet me.

"I am Capt Jones," said he. "We're in a bad mess." And he began to tell me how he had fetched up on the reef, and that it was not on the chart. But I did not wait to hear his explanations. Looking aft I saw that the stern line was out.

"We've dropped the kedge anchor," explained Jones, following my gaze, "but it isn't much use. She is done for till the tide. Here's your instructions." I took the letter, paying but little attention to what I was doing, and thrust it into my pocket. "We'll have to throw the deckload of lumber overboard at

once," said I. "The tide is inshore and by morning it will wash the whole consignment up on the beach and my men will be able to salvage it."

"There's a chance that the morning tide will float her, just a chance," persisted Capt Jones.

"But why not throw the lumber over?" I demanded. "She will lighten then and if there is any chance it will help her."

"No, we will not throw a thing overboard yet," said Jones.

I looked at him and saw that he had become stubborn and it would be little use to argue with him. "I'll go and get my crowd of workmen and see if they can help with the kedge," said I. And so I did.

-----

### **Ordered Off by the Captain**

Three times more I asked that the deckload be jettisoned and every single time Capt Jones refused. When high water arrived, as I had foreseen, the Ysabel May did not move an inch.

It was close to 6 pm and, after a fruitless and hard day's labor, I asked again that the load be thrown off, and that the cargo in the forehold be taken out to lighten her.

"I am running this ship," retorted the captain savagely, and with that I turned and went ashore again. I determined to risk trouble once more and went aboard early in the evening.

"You will jettison the lumber at once," I said to Capt Jones.

"Not while I am captain of this ship," he replied.

"I am manager of this island and manager of this company and manager of this ship," Said I, losing my temper. "I will have this schooner saved if possible."

"You will get off this deck and be damned to you," roared Jones in a fury. The crew gathered, a mate and a nondescript group of Kanakas and Chinamen. I had to beat a retreat.

At 11:30 I called my workmen together on the shore near London House. "You will all go aboard the schooner with me and as soon as we arrive you will start throwing the lumber into the sea to landward," I commanded. And I told them that if they did not work fast, so that we could save the schooner before a storm should rise, we would never get off Christmas Island.

-----

### **At the Pistol's Point**

When we reached the "Ysabel May" the captain was asleep and there was no one to interfere with us, for the mate was drunk. We set to and worked all night and the next morning till well into the following afternoon, the captain failing to put in an appearance. The incoming tide, as I had figured, fetched nearly all of the lumber to the Point, and I had several hands there to salvage it.

**Then the captain came up in a white rage, but I had my pistol in my belt and there was nothing that he could do, for the lumber was gone.**

"I guess," said I, after looking over the "Ysabel May," and seeing that the weight of her burthen was still too much for her, "I guess that the cargo will have to be taken ashore too. I will start my men with the boats at once."

He walked over and stood on the hatchway and told me that if I put a finger on that hatch or the cargo I should take the consequences. "Then you can give me all of the cargo consigned to this island," said I. "I am not going to lose the supplies I have been waiting for a whole year almost."

To this he could not well protest, and so we carried our stores to London House, and tired and sick and weary, I sat down there and waited for a storm to kick up the sea and make an end to the schooner.

I tried to sleep. It was useless. I went back to the beach again and walked up and down, up and down.

While I walked I looked over at the "Ysabel May" and at once I perceived that there was something going on aboard her. I had not long to wait to discover what it was. In a few minutes boxes and bales and cases began to splash overboard. Capt Jones was throwing the cargo into the sea.

-----

### **Mate Fails to Beat Him Up**

That knocked me out entirely. I went into the house again, in the condition of a little child two years old, and I was afraid that I was going crazy.

Then, as a climax, came a note from Jones, saying that the ship was finished and that there was absolutely no chance left and he was coming ashore. I sent back word that I would take my men aboard and work all night and save what we could.

**Three days passed and the storm did not break, though on the second day there came a deluge of rain and wind that almost spelled destruction. The only result was to wedge the schooner higher up on the coral reef.**

We worked at the salvaging of the lose fixtures and the remainder of the cargo, as well as what might have drifted ashore. I became unable to eat or sleep with worry and the hard job.

Then on Aug. 1 the mate came into London House Station and created trouble. He was drunk. Some of the natives had got hold of liquor also.

I took my gun and stalked out into the middle of the gang. "The next man I see drunk on this island I will shoot dead," I said. And I sent word out to some of the crew, who were lingering on the ship, to the same effect.

At 11 o'clock that night, when I had dropped asleep in the dock house, for the first time in nearly a week, some of the natives came and woke me. The mate was ashore again, and he was looking for me. He was going to "beat me up." All of my boys were frightened, as he was a strongly built man with plenty of muscle.

The awakening exasperated me more than the fact of his drunkenness, and I jumped up and went outside in a savage temper, where I ran fair on the mate who had come questing me.

**“I am going to beat you to a jelly,” was his greeting in a thick voice. But when I got through with him he was quite tame and never again spoke a word about fighting me.**

-----

### **Forgotten Instructions**

The captain had now moved all his belongings from the “Ysabel May” in the belief that she was done for, and I resolved to try for help.

When I first suggested that I go to Fanning Island in the ship’s boat with three of the crew, and the sail from my black boat, he was quite willing that I should. But almost immediately he wanted to go himself.

I wrangled and talked with him, but finally decided that he was quite right. My place was there. So I gathered up stores for the cruise, which was close to 140 miles, and I packed the boat with enough water and provisions for a week.

Jones immediately refused to carry all the supplies. He was not going to need them, he said. The ship’s boat would ride too deeply. I remonstrated with him and pointed out that the trip might take him several days. A wind might blow him off course.

He declared that he knew better, and that it would take him but 30 hours at the worst. So I stopped arguing with him, for it was useless, and the thing was upon his own head, anyway. He set out.

During all this time I had forgotten the letter which I had been carrying around in my back trousers pocket. The rush and anxiety over the ship on the reef, the endless work, the desperate efforts to move her, the squabbles with the captain and the mate and the urgent necessity of hurry with our salvage before a storm should pound her to pieces, had driven clean from my mind the instructions.

Probably it was also due to the fact that instructions with a wrecked ship had little importance. Anyway, I rediscovered the letter on the very day that Jones and the ship’s boat started away on that ill-fated cruise.

-----

### **Father Rougier Arrives**

It was from Father Rougier, the owner of the island, and I sat reflecting bitterly on the irony of the situation. For there were directions instructing me to take passage on the “Ysabel May,” and to make a recruiting trip through the islands to south and westward, and secure 300 hands, and bring them back with me to Christmas Island for enlargement of the plantation operations.

**To get away from this place seemed at the moment to get into Heaven. I was to see real people again, white people, not the type of Jones and his mate or the Kanakas or any of the rest of that lazy collection of natives. And here the whole scheme was ruined.**

I fell to work, this time with all hands willing, and we filled in the interim until our help should arrive with making copra and clearing the groves.

Eight days later Capt Jones and his men were picked up by the steamer Saint Francoise, 17 miles off Fanning Island. Father Rougier was aboard the ship. The drifting boat had been sighted by a man at work on the hanger of the wireless at the masthead.

Capt Jones was the only man left in his right mind aboard that ship's goat, and his condition and that of the other men was such that the Saint Francoise had to turn back to Fanning Island and leave the four of them in a hospital for days. **They had been afloat four days and nights without a drop of water or food.**

All this I learned on the 23d of the month, when one of the men came running to me with a shout that the steamer had been raised. She came in and dropped anchor off the Northwest Beacon and "Santa Claus" Rougier came ashore to London House, with his two nieces, Bertha and Alice, and his ill-omened housekeeper, Mlle Pugeault, the first white women I had seen in a year.

-----

### **A Happy Interlude**

The mutineers were all of them fined and taken aboard the steamer in irons. Those next few days were among the happiest I spent on Christmas Island. For the steamer was put to work to help get the "Ysabel May" safe into deep water, under the direction of the steamer's captain. Meanwhile I took the girls over the island, showing them the plantations and explaining to them all about the nurseries and how they were cared for. Alice and her sister were intensely interested, though cocoanut growing was new to them.

They both planted cocoanuts in the sands near Paris House, and laughingly insisted that I look after their "plantation," when they should have gone, which I promised to do. Divers discovered that the schooner had sustained no real damage on the bottom, though she had sprung a leak badly; and at the end of the third day the "Ysabel May" was once more afloat on even keel, none the worse for her escapade save the loss of about a dozen feet of her false keel.

We began to load copra, and found that we had gathered 30 tons, which was to mean cargo. Rougier was distinctly pleased, and he declared that beginning with the next trip my salary was to go up. . . . The next trip . . . Little did I dream what was to happen before that next trip.

When the cargo was shipped and the Saint Francoise was ready to depart towing the "Ysabel May" to Fanning, Rougier called me into consultation.

**"I have changed my mind," he said.**

**I asked him what he meant.**

**"It is about your recruiting cruise," he replied. "Of course, there is no chance now to go in the 'Ysabel May.' I will have to make use of the steamer for the trip. I think it will be best that I make the trip myself and leave you here till I return."**

-----

### **Threatening to Strike**

"I will get through right now and here," I retorted, angered as I saw my chances of leaving the island again clouding.

"Don't be foolish, Joe," said "Santa Claus," stroking his beard with a calm smile. "I will go on the cruise and in less than 45 days I will be back with the 300 new hands. Of course the old gang cannot remain here after the mutiny."

I held out, I wanted to get away from the island. Finally the girls came in and when they heard that I was determined to quit they added their protest to that of the trader, and before the weight of this combined urging I said that I would remain there until the 45 days were up and the ship came back to get me.

The Frenchman said that he would leave two men with me for company. His selection left much to be desired, however, for he picked two of the laziest men ashore, Tiaran and Lucien. These two were to live with me and help me guard the property, and I saw little to be thankful for from the outset, though I paid them little heed at that moment, filled as I was with disappointment.

I returned to London House and there discovered that all of the stores had been removed by launch to the St Francoise, as well as all of the cargo of the "Ysabel May" which we had salvaged. There was not a thing left in the storehouse but a ton of rice.

Back I went to the steamer and to Rougier.

-----

### **Holding Out for Supplies**

"Look here. What are we going to eat, what are we going to live on till you come back? Everything has been removed!" I cried.

"You have your supplies, haven't you?" was his answer.

"We've been left a ton of rice and not a shred of meat, not a can of fish, not a sardine even or a pound of flour; I want food." I retorted.

"What," said Rougier, "they have left you a ton of rice? Hein. It is too much. What will three men do in 45 days with a ton of rice? We shall take half of it aboard at once." And he sent out for the captain to dispatch a boat.

At his calm indifference to me and the two men with me, I was amazed. "Then, Father Rougier," said I, "I am on this ship. I shall stay right on this ship till either you send the supplies I need or till you sail for Papeete. I am not going to starve to death for you or anyone else."

"But I do not wish you to starve to death. What a temper!" he replied. "What is it what you want?"

I told him that I wanted flour and meat and sugar and any other food there was aboard. We wrangled awhile, and finally, for the three of us, I wrung out of him 196 pounds of flour, three cases of roast beef, a case of cube sugar, three cases of condensed milk and three cases of sardines. And I took them ashore.

When I got back to London House this time the girls and the housekeeper had gone. They had crossed over to Paris House beyond the lagoon, the natives told me, taking some bundles with them, and were to get their belongings at Paris House, their stopping place, and go aboard the steamer that night. I did not see them again.

-----

### **Only Dreams for Comfort**

I felt very badly, for I had come to love Berthe as a sister. Her bright disposition, her laughter, her everlasting kindness and lively interest in a genuine feeling of affection on my part.

Pugeault, the housekeeper, I disliked. Before I had done with her I was to have more genuine cause for my dislike than mere personal distaste, too. The discovery of the sorry trick she had played on me, however, was reserved for another day, when it would be too late for me to remedy it.

That night, after the steamer and schooner had long since faded out of sight, I broke down completely, with homesickness and the loss of my good friends. Berthe kept coming into my mind. I thought I heard her voice, but it was only the wind in the palms overhead. I seemed to catch the infectious echo of her laughter, but I knew it was nothing. I was hearing memories.

**It was many a long day before I forgot them, in the life that now lay before me. Even when the necessity of finding something to do roused me in those ensuing days to action, she kept hovering in my mind, like a fortunate dream which I was unable to forget and which I prayed might linger.**

A great loneliness settled over me, which all my attempts to keep busy could not quite vanquish. And there was a strange, unreasonable premonition in my mind, a warning of danger, a feeling of impending trouble which I could not shake off at all.

-----

**Another instalment of this thrilling story of the South Seas will be published in the next Sunsay's Globe.**