

Back in 1902, the writer was a deckboy on the steamer Pomona, on the Eureka run. The boatswain was a red haired and bearded Swede, named RED Carson. This man's temper was something to remember and to avoid, as I learned on his firsttrip on the ship.

We had arrived in San Francisco one early morning and after discharging our passengers and cargo, the barge Comanche came alongside and started to coal our ship, dumping the coal into the forehatch. Some coalchunks and much dust landed on the teakwood deck and I was told, in no uncertain words to sweep the stuff away. I did this unpleasant work and finally I noticed that the barge had stopped swinging the buckets aboard our ship. I immediately swept the deck and then, as quieting time arrived, I washed up, donned my shore clothes and was about to leave for my home when "Red" Carson caught me by the arm and with the most impolite language, told me to get up on deck and clean things up. I found that the barge had again brought a final big bucket up from the barge and had spilled the coal accidentally, on our deck. "Red" Carson told me to stay and clean the mess up and then he left to go to his home.

I was quite upset about having to stay and with a "Oh Gosh" I disgustedly picked up a lump of coal and threw it at a floating bottle which was very near the ship. At that instant "Red" Carson stepped from the side port of the deck below and walked down the loading plank. My lump of coal hit him in the right ear and blood spurted down the side of his store clothes. He looked up and aase the scared deckboy, mouth wide open and fear in his eyes.

With a curse, "Red" Carson started up the scuttle, yelling that he would kill that boy. I started on the run heading aft until I came to the door leading into the fiddley, that space which is directly over the firerooms. Into this room I dashed, hoping to go thru the door on the other side, slam it shup and get away before "Red" Carson could catch me. That door was locked from the other side and I was almost caught but a large ventilator was in that room, going to the hurrican deck above. I threw myself up across the iron bars and crawled up and out of the top. Then, spying the canvas covered life boat on the port side of the deck, I lifted the canvas and crawled in, pulling the canvas safely into place.

"Red" Carson had seen my disappearing feet and ran to the ladder, leading up to the bridge, ran up to find me. He did not think, in his anger, to look into the life boats and soon, I spied him, going down to the deck below and walking off the ship, his big red bandana being held over his right ear.

I immediately knew that I would not be safe on this vessel and I decided to leave at once. The steamer Queen was on the opposite side of Pier 9 and as I walked away from the Pomona I met Johnny Johnson, leaving the Queen. He stopped me and asked if I knew where he could get a job as a deckboy, for he had had quite an argument with Tom Thornton, the boatswain and it would be best if he could leave that vessel. Ofcourse I told him that I would trade ships and the first mate agreed to the deal.

On the following morning, I was just about to board the Queen when I discovered "Red" Carson aboard that vessel and I saw that he and Tom Thornton had traded jobs. I knew that if I went to the Queen I would again be with "RED" Carson and Johnny and I decided on the Pomona with Tom Thornton. I quickly saw Johnny and decided to see the First Mates and have our old jobs restored to us.

