

JESTS AND GIBES BY GIDEON WURDZ



THE LONESOME LIFE.

By "ENGLISH JACK."

YOU'VE asked fer m' story, but I haint much on talk—
Livin' away from all sounds but th' tick o' th' clock
Or the 'casional fall of a stick or a stun
Or a rabbit or squirrel or deer on the run.

Wal, I've lived on Mount Willard more 'n thutty-two year;
I b'lieve I wuz fifty when I fust landed here,
Which, 'cordin to 'rithmetic, makes me jest eight-two,
But I don't hardly think thet I look it—d' you?

Yes, the most of 'em calls me English Jack, as you say,
And why? 'Cuz I sarved good Queen Vic in m' day;
For more'n thutty year I follered the sea—
As a Jack in the Navy I earned my "A. B."

Yes, I follered the sea fer some years, till one day
We wuz wrecked on an island in the Bay of Biscay;

The rest of the crew soon jined
Davy Jones,
But I wuz picked up with *some*
breath in m' bones

By a whaler thet happened along
frum th' west
And spied me a-waggin' m' cardigan vest
Fer a sign o' distress to try and
indooce
Some ship to deport me—a la Rob-
inson Cruse.

On thet onery island food wuz
powerful skurce—
It could easy been better but
couldn't been worse—
Fer bread we chawed berries, and
as fer our meat
We hed only snails, frogs and
lizards to eat.

Not one mother's son of us wuz
what you'd call stout
And there wa'n't nary one thet
wuz troubled with gout;
Fact, there wuz no one 'cept me
thet managed at all
To outlive his diet of critturs
thet crawl.

But the whaler thet saved me
from the starvation Fates
Only landed me penniless, here in
the States;
But I got a job helpin' 'em spike
down the rail
Thet follers the Crawford Notch
Indian trail.



When they'd finished their railroad I figgered I'd steer
Fer permanent moorin's in the mountains round here,
So I built this 'ere cabin—such as she are—
And I'll stick to the ship 'till I drift cross the Bar.

Lonesome, y' say? Wal, mebbe it is,
If you're lookin' fer neighbors who know all your "biz"
And borry yer tools and half of yer grub,
And then run ye down fer a "stingy old cub."

Yes, it's lonesome if a human female's what you need
To sew and wash clothes and heat up yer feed,
To fish in the brook and hoe in the patch
An' fill up yer pipe an' fetch ye a match.

But while it's some lonesome, I'm satisfied yet
Thet it's better'n a hair-pullin' set-to—you bet.
For Life, to my thinkin', is somewhat of a cross
When there's two candidates fer the office of Boss!