

## The Tale of the Nigger Barber

SOME years ago, I spent the winter cruising about the coast of Florida. Being very fond of the water, and being in pleasant company, it is needless to say that I had a good time. However, when we were anchored off Lemon City one day, I announced my intention of getting shore leave, and purchasing a shave. The captain looked at me and laughed. "Don't," he said, "I did—once." I scented a story, so said, "Go on."

"Well," said he, "we blew in here one day from a two weeks' cruise, and my chin whiskers were numerous, and of a fine healthy growth. I rolled ashore, and discovered two barber shops on the one street of the town. One didn't look any better than the other, and I therefor entered the first



one I came to. The barber was the blackest nigger I ever saw in my life, and I began to have qualms, and when he began to lather me with laundry soap, I knew that I had begun to climb the wrong tree. I let him go on, however, and he stropped his razor on the upper of a shoe. He took one swipe at my face, and got all of the whiskers, and most of the skin. 'Good Lord!' I yelled, 'why don't you hone that razor?'

" 'Well, yo' see boss' says the nigger, 'dat nig-gah barbah 'cross the street, him and me ust to be in partnership, an' we done broke up, an' when we was dissolutionized, I took the bresh and razah, an' he done took de glass an' whetrock, so's I can't sharpen mah razah no moh.'

"I let him wipe the soap off my face and left. I found out afterward," went on the captain with a twinkle in his eye, "that the old nigger was quite a character in the town. You know that most of the southern gentlemen are rather sallow, and their faces are rather hard to shave. They used to go to this nigger. He would put his thumb in their cheek, and hold it out while he shaved it with his other hand. It was all right until a new man came to town one day. Now this man was afflicted with a very thin skin. In due time he called at the nigger's to get shaved. The barber put his thumb into the man's cheek in the usual manner, but the man's skin was so thin that he cut the end of his thumb off, and he has not shaved any one that way since."