

**THE ROBB'S ISLAND
WRECK, AND
OTHER STORIES**

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The Robb's Island wreck, and other stories by Lynn R. Meekins

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LYNN R. MEEKINS

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AND OTHER STORIES

BY
LYNN R. MEEKINS



CHICAGO AND CAMBRIDGE
STONE AND KIMBALL
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THE ROBB'S ISLAND WRECK.

I.

THEY began by having great fun with the captain. Ten minutes before they arrived the captain came out and took his usual chair in the usual spot under the shadow of the station. He was not a handsome man. He was strong, rugged, picturesque, but not handsome. Six feet high and two hundred pounds in weight, he was an epic in hardened flesh and muscle. His face was as full of lines as an etched portrait. His general appearance offered a contrast to every rule of a fashion-plate, and he appeared like some big shaggy animal that was particularly lazy because it was especially strong.

On this occasion the captain's eyes were half-reefed, and they looked over an expanse of sand on which low houses were built, and saw the smoke of passing steamers that crept along the horizon. It was peaceful, but it was n't much of a view.

In fact Robb's Island was n't much of a place; simply a few hundred acres of sand in a wilderness of salt water. But it had its fascinations. For instance, in summer, people—some of them of such good family stock that they did n't have to talk about it—left their best clothes and formalities at home and went there. They lived in rough sheds, by courtesy collectively called a hotel, fished in the inlets, tumbled around in the surf, waded through the ever-shifting sand, and gathered flesh and tan and strength and freckles on the worst food that a summer resort could possibly offer. At first Robb's Island was deeply disappointing. You reached the place in a stuffy little boat, after a sail of ten miles from the mainland. The commonness and the glare of everything disgusted you. You firmly resolved to return the next morning. But the boat did n't go for two days, and there you were! In those two days you got into the surf, and pulled up more fish than you ever saw before, caught a shark or two, became the owner of a wonderful appetite, and when the boat was ready to start, you were on the other side of the island. In a week you were a confirmed victim to the repose of the place, and you remained a hopeless islander

until your conscience or your finances drove you across the ten miles of marsh and water to the world and its cares.

After the summer visitors went away in September, parties of men with canvas clothes and big guns arrived to kill ducks and geese; and when they departed, the island, with its hundred people, was left alone in the solitude of the waters. There was not much to do then, and the inhabitants did it. It was a dull life and a dull place. Everybody was well, and the only way to break the monotony was for the women folks to imagine a few complaints to fit the descriptions in the patent-medicine almanacs. A small community without sick people to gossip about is stupid, but the best that Robb's Island could do was to manufacture petty aches, and doctor them on home-made remedies. The idea of a resident physician was preposterous. He would n't make enough in a year to feed a cat on bread-crumbs and water, much less milk.

The most interesting place on the island was the life-saving station, — a fine house of two stories, with a broad gable roof, a flag-staff, a veranda, and a liberal decoration of red paint, whose contagion had spread over the neighborhood, and given the settlement