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The Titanic

By BRAND WHITLOCK

AND THIS," the dark Ironic Spirit mocked
As it beheld the proud new lofty ship
Upon its westering way across the sea,
"This is thy latest, greatest miracle,
The triumph of thy science, art and all
That skill thou'st learnt since forth the Norsemen fared
Across these waters in their cockle shells,
In dodging back and forth 'twixt storm and sea,
Until at last, in this thy master work,
Thou'dst go in safety and in pride, and boast
Meanwhile of thine unparalleled achievement,
Thy victory o'er my wanton will and whim!
Ho, Little Man, behold! I'd not waste e'en
A tempest on thy paragon, but thus,
Upon its first glad, confident adventure,
With but a cast-off fragment of my store
Of power—thus to the bottom of the seas
For evermore, with this thy latest marvel
And with thee! Ho! Ho!"

The awful laugh
Rang through the dreadful reaches of the Void.
But lo! The calm and all-sufficient answer
Of our intrepid Northern race! With lips
Drawn tight, they look with clear, dry eyes on doom,
And so confront the end, there in the night
That was to have for them no pitying dawn.
(Their kind alone of all intelligence
Feels pity.)

"The women and the children first.
We stay."

No cry, no whimpering; and there,
Up there, upon the dark, mysterious bridge,
The grizzled captain, chief of all those victims
Of Its sublime, stupendous, bitter joke,
But the exemplar of that race which knows
How to aspire, achieve, and dare Its wrath,
And in the hour of failure, how to die.

