

A COLLISION IN THE PACIFIC

Smashing a Fishing Schooner in an Ocean Fog

By W. LACY AMY



TO the land-lubber, the man who prefers the all-train route west rather than risk the crossing of Lake Superior in greater comfort, the mere feeling of being on the ocean is sufficient to make him figure on the number of life preservers compared with the list of passengers and the possibilities of the distance from the mast head to keel being greater than the depth of the water. When you add to the miseries of the fearful one by placing him on the ocean in a dense fog, the shivers that run up and down his vertebrae as he hears boats all around him, are concealed only through the calmness of the older travellers.

When the *Princess Victoria* left Vancouver sharp at 10 p.m. on the night of Tuesday, September 30th, there were many on board taking their first trip on ocean waters. The night was dark but the Sound was as calm as a mill pond.

However, when the continuous whistling of the ship's whistle woke the passengers next morning at 6 o'clock the fearful ones hastily dressed and enjoyed for almost an hour the doubtful pleasure of hearing huge whistles blowing all around them without seeing one boat. Large boats passed within a few yards or cut across bow or stern, but apart from one or two shadowy outlines and the whistling there was nothing to show that the *Princess* was sailing through scores of boats, a collision with any one of which might bring disastrous results. Once or twice when the ship was set hard astern the closeness of a calamity did not tend to brighten things.

At 8 the *Princess* left the Seattle dock with the fog as dense as ever. For a few minutes the whistling was almost as fearsome, the short, sharp whistling of the big vessel at certain intervals conveying the idea of danger even to those who did not know the whistle signals.

For a time then, there was free sailing but full speed could never be risked. Then about 9.15 more whistles were heard, and for a few minutes there seemed to be a mix-up in signals. The *Princess* finally seemed to get free from the tangle and was settling down to half speed with a few whistles still sounding.

Many of the passengers were in the bow trying to pierce the fog, which allowed vision for about forty yards by this time.

Suddenly there seemed to step out of the fog into clear view ahead a fishing schooner almost in our path and approaching. The puff-puff of the gasoline engine showed its method of propulsion. On its deck the fishermen were clustered, looking helplessly at the *Princess*. From their course it seemed that they would strike us just on the starboard side of the bow. It was useless to attempt to turn the big C. P. R. steamer off. The engines were put hard astern but there did not seem to be the slightest diminution in the speed.

When just a few yards off, the skipper of the schooner seemed to lose his head and a turn of the rudder threw his boat with its bow directly in our path. The fishermen were too frightened to move and with a crash the *Princess* cut into the port side of the bow of their boat about twelve feet back and ripped its way more than half through. A sailor who had been standing right in the spot jumped behind the mast in the nick of time.

In a second or two the sailors were all action, and while the passengers on the *Princess* craned over the side, after the first crash was over, they came swarming up the anchor chains and their own rigging. In spite of all the excitement they pushed a twelve-year-old boy up first and followed along, the skipper standing on the cabin roof doing lively stunts in swearing.

Just when three or four of the men had got on board, a fat, greasy, trunky figure in undershirt and trousers clambered out of the hold and rushing at the rigging pushed the waiting group aside, grabbed a climbing sailor by the leg and hauling him down began to kick his way up, muttering to himself all the way. By his appearance he was easily spotted as the cook, and therefore a man of great authority but little seamanship.

The boat, which was now rapidly filling, was discovered to be the *Ida May* of Tacoma on her maiden trip and returning from the Hecate Strait fishing grounds with 30,000 pounds of halibut on board. It was a two-masted vessel of about 75 feet

length and carried a Norwegian crew of eighteen, Captain Hansen.

The captain came up last and reported to the captain of the *Princess*, who immediately took charge of affairs. After a few minutes one of the men was prevailed upon to go back on the *Ida May* with the second officer of the *Princess* to see if the boat could be held up. Ropes were passed under the bow and with ropes attached to the masts the unfortunate boat was held up.

All this time the cook had been ordering every sailor in turn to go down and save his clothes. When he saw one of the men back on the boat his shrill voice could be heard above every other noise calling for some bit of wearing apparel he had neglected to bring off with him.

The sailor on the *Ida May* reached down and seized a pair of pants. "An' get my hat," yelled the cook. The hat was thrown up. "An' my coat," and the coat was saved. "An' my shoes, there's two pairs." A big tan boot and a patent leather were tossed up. "An' my shirt," brought no response. "Damn you," yelled the cook, "get my other boots. I can't wear these two odd ones."

A big fellow slid down the ropes and recklessly went below saving sufficient clothing for most of the men to keep them warm. The gasoline engine had been churning away all the time, but was now turned off and the *Princess* headed for shore through the dense fog.

After a half hour's slow run, Norwegian Point was seen through the fog and a couple of small boats put off to see what was the matter. A ship's boat was lowered and an anchor carried ashore attached by a rope to the *Ida May*. The men clambered back on board and began to clean out the cabins into their small boats which they had launched.

A sailor reached down and pulled up a shaving-brush, and then a fine bevelled mirror in mahogany

frame with stand came up, with a laugh from all the *Princess*' passengers. Immediately it was shoved back and a hair brush was brought up slyly and slid under a coat.

The captain called the men back as the C. P. R. captain had promised to take them to Seattle.

The cook had been saving everything he could lay his hands on, and in his hunt had not noticed he was the last on board. With a frightened glance he saw himself alone, and with a shout rushed at the rigging. His load prevented his climbing and he frantically clawed away with one hand and jumped up and down on the deck. His captain called down to him to loose one of the big ropes holding the boat up, as after running on the bottom several times the *Princess* had succeeded in beaching the *Ida May*.

"No, I won't do that," yelled the cook. "Can't get up if I do."

However, after a few oaths from the skipper he went aft and commenced to work at the rope with one hand while the other was full of clothes and odds and ends. The crowd hugely enjoying his panicky and vain efforts shouted advice down to him.

After enduring it for a couple of minutes the cook's mutterings became louder and louder until at last without looking up he shouted, "What in hell you fellows laughing at?" which naturally drew a further laugh.

The Norwegian sailors talked English for the most part, but occasionally a bit of Norwegian would come in, followed immediately by a sentence in English.

The *Dode*, a passenger boat, happening to come up just then, the crew were put on it to return to Seattle.

A few minutes later the *Princess* pulled off, four hours late, and with full speed, which equals on the *Princess* about 24 miles an hour, made for Victoria.

The sequel of the accident was that the C. P. R. claimed salvage on the *Ida May* as her crew had deserted her and the *Princess* had taken charge.

THE FIRST AND LAST INTERVIEW WITH THOMAS GREENWAY

By A WELL-KNOWN JOURNALIST

THE last time I saw Thomas Greenway was in November, 1906, in the rotunda of the Royal Alexandra Hotel, Winnipeg. He moved about, looking at the pillars, the gorgeous ceiling; taking a glance at the elegant cafe; resuming his tour with bowed head and hands clasped behind his back.

Later in the day we sat down together. "Do you see all this?" he said, with a wave of his hand. By "this" he meant his elegant surroundings. "Well," he continued, "when I first came to Winnipeg such an hotel was not dreamed of. I came up from the American border, stayed here a few days and then set off to the south-west with an ox team. Up to a certain point I did not like the lay of the land, and had pretty nearly made up my mind to return to Winnipeg. But that night I was joined by another prospector who told me about the good land farther on. Next morning I hitched up the oxen and before night camped where Crystal City now is; and I've been there ever since."

I recalled his struggle with the C. P. R. in the early history of that road in the Province of Manitoba. "I was right," he said emphatically. "Time has shown it. This hotel is as much an outgrowth of the break-up of the monopolistic conditions incorporated in the original C. P. R. charter, as it is of the growth of the railway itself. It would be inconceivable were Manitoba shut off, in a railway sense, from the United States."

At that time Mr. Greenway foreshadowed his opposition to the legislation about to be introduced at Ottawa respecting odd-numbered sections; and the dropping of that part of the land bill showed how efficacious was his subsequent action.

Another topic upon which he dwelt was increased parliamentary representation at Ottawa for Western Canada. I have not a sufficient recollection of his figures and percentages to reproduce them now. Nor do I know that his advocacy was the reason why Saskatchewan and Alberta were given more membership in the Federal Parliament now about to be

summoned. I was chiefly interested at the change in Mr. Greenway's demeanour as he dilated upon the unjust handicap, as he termed it, imposed on "the West" under then present conditions. The spirit that broke the railway monopoly clause and abolished separate schools was shown in his face, his voice, his whole demeanour. He put forward his clenched fist and struck the table a sharp blow. "If I were as young as some of the Western representatives," said he, "I would not sit silent at Ottawa under such conditions. No, sir! But," he added, "I have been ill and I am too old for another big fight; and, besides, why should I care? Others have reaped where I have sown. The values of public service seem to have changed."

"Would you allow me to quote you to that effect?" I asked. "Not now," he rejoined; "not that I would have any hesitation in making such ideas generally known; but I would like the opportunity of making a more careful preparation before publicity would be given them."

It so happened that I never was able to meet Mr. Greenway again under circumstances which would permit fuller expression of his ideas, so briefly outlined at this interview.

The first occasion on which I met the late ex-Premier of Manitoba was at the Windsor Hotel, Montreal, previous to his defeat in 1898. He was in that city attending a Laurier banquet, at which he had spoken. Mr. George H. Ham undertook to pilot me to his room. We entered and found him sitting near the window, looking out on Dominion Square. He acknowledged my introduction with a grave cordiality, which, however, was not of a nature to set one quite at ease. But we got on well enough in the end, for Ham "broke the ice" in a manner peculiarly his own. Greenway's "top hat" lay on the bed, upon which my companion sat. He picked it up, put it on his head sideways, and asked in his own manner of inimitable whimsicality: "How do I look in a plug hat, Uncle Tom?"

And he looked so funny that we all roared.