

[Written for the Canadian Illustrated News.]

TALES OF THE LINKS OF LOVE.

BY ALEXANDER SOMERVILLE.

GOING TO AMERICA.

IN SIX CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER V.—Continued.

"What is all this?" Steelyard demands. "It is," cries Irk, "that report in the ship gives you the name of traitor to your companions. There is a plot to land us on a desert island to perish. Samson Steelyard, with Humphry Horn, and precious Bess o' the Barn, are to remain in the ship, reserved for better fortunes."

Abram Lud leaps on a trunk, and rising as nearly upright as the 'tween decks permits, his eyes glaring under the shaggy hair—head and hair of a lion, demands:

"Are you a traitor, Steelyard? I fear you be. I think you be."

"By what presumption do you put such question, Lud?"

"I put it because all through the ship the question is mooted. I ask it because when Royalfort is denounced you palliate his iniquity. When cursed by every honest working man as a feudal aristocrat you have called him a just and generous man. When abhorred as a murderer, you pretend to see in his social position an excuse for his hurling the infuriated yeomanry against us at Stone Grove. Confound his social position! Did we not go out, on march to London, to abolish his social position?"

"Abram Lud, listen: Something impends over us requiring other action than noisy re-creation."

"What is it?" cries Irk. "You seem to know. Out with it."

"I know nothing. Leastways nothing to be disclosed to you."

"Ah! He says, 'disclosed.' So he does know something. Who were you talking with just now on deck?"

"A sailor spoke to me, and I to him. What title have you to question whom I speak with?"

"Ask Abram Lud what title we have to question your secret interviews with pretended sailors."

"Lud, Irk! you drive me mad! What is all this? What pretended sailors?"

"Samson Steelyard," cries Lud, "you are a traitor. You were just now in a secret talk with Emery the London spy."

"Emery the spy! Impossible."

"Yes, the Government spy, Emery. He pretends to be a sailor; thinks he is not known. Irk knows him."

"But I don't know him; never saw him. What should a London spy be doing here? What is there to spy?"

"We are to be left to perish on a desert island," Irk rejoins. "You are not. Some more are not. I am. Lud is. Ized and Tabitha Bold are, and their babe. Tabitha might now be in possession of the St. Mary estate in Manchester but for the Royalfort kith and kin. Instead of permitting Ized and Tabitha Bold to get their rightful estates and establish the social community for good of all of us, Royalfort expects to feed us to wolves and bears. For what else did he send yeomanry on us at Stone Grove? For what else has he been so earnest in getting us out of the country?"

Irk pauses. A minute of silence, then Steelyard speaks:

"You have named no probable motive for such diabolical treachery. But at this instant something really peremptory demands investigation. If that man who spoke with me be whom you say, we are enveloped in mystery; perhaps peril. Our freedom, safety, lives, depend now on cautious, united action."

"The action," says Irk, "will indeed be cautious, with Lud and I, if Samson Steelyard be sharer in our counsels."

"Yet, we listen," Lud remarks. "In a general way, Steelyard, you have a clear head. Relate what the spy said. Suggest what we should do."

Steelyard peers around, to make sure no one hearkens. Then confides to Lud and Irk what the sailor said. He does not observe in the dim light that the mystery of the lost heir of Lillymere, being in some way connected with their possible misfortunes, gives one man a look of pallor. But presently Lud's loud laugh of derision rings in the ship, and does not sound as Samson would prefer to hear derision, or dissent in the present situation. "Now?" says he in conclusion; "what does all this mean? If that really be Emery the spy, what did he aim at by giving a pretended secret to me? Then hint that I might tell it to my wife, if I had one, or to somebody else's wife. So far it seems he would honestly give us warning not to show signs of alarm."

"The object of Emery," says Lud, "if that be Emery, and Irk says it is, can only be a

sequel to his proceedings in time of the first rising, when he got Simon Lud hung at York Castle, and at the Spa Fields rising in London. He insinuates sympathy of sentiment, leads to brink of the first fall, betrays and sacrifices such as were deceived by his duplicity."

"What object may he have here?"

"What object, Samson? This: Suppose government designs to destroy us, without the odium of trials and executions, which would have been a political danger, possibly brought on a revolution, they do it in this way. The Crown and Royalfort get credit and honour for leniency, for generosity, by seeming to send us to Canada to enjoy gifts of public lands. The gifts are a false pretence. We are to perish. Our destruction is to seem to the world as coming from ourselves. Their spy, in pretended secrecy, tells of danger, inciting to mutiny to give excuse for military gunshot execution. Emery is the agent to accomplish this. Do not you see it?"

"I see it," says Irk.

"Do not you see it, Samson?" Lud repeats.

"Merciful heavens! No, I do not see it. Cannot see it. Emery, if that really be Emery, may be equal to the iniquity. And, possibly, some form of the human being, if in Royalfort's position, might be fiend enough to devise a plot against formidable claimants to disputed estates in which he or connections prefer claims. But Ized and Tabitha Bold are not formidable, their title is remote. And Lord Royalfort is not a fiend. He could not devise their treacherous destruction, far less that of several hundred other persons, more than half of them women and children. And as for government planning such a clumsy atrocity, the bare thought of it is monstrous."

"Steelyard, it is monstrous," Lud retorts. "But you are to be excepted, and saved. That makes it not quite so monstrous to you."

"Impossible, Abram Lud! Government cannot shame itself before the world, and offend heaven by such a crime. It is not in human nature to design the wickedness, to say nothing of Statesmen devising the deception."

"The Statesmen are Tories."

"But Tories are gentlemen. Not always satisfactory to hand-loom weavers in their legislation, I admit, yet incapable of our wilful murder."

"Hold, Steelyard. What do you make of that insolent Kirby Rivers and his speech? For the present he and Verderer are, to us, the Government. Aren't they?"

Samson groans: "I know not what to make of that speech; do not indeed."

They are interrupted by the boatswain's call in the hatchway:

"No more talking down there. Let the quiet sleep. Lights out. Douse the glim."

Lights being out, and silence imposed, they defer conversation till morning.

Long before morning the ship seuds under reefed canvass in half a gale. She rises, descends, swings on crest of the billows. A gallant ship, the "Fingal" glides along before the wind, making rapid way to the west. On third day of the storm it freshens to a gale. Most of the weavers are helpless. But the ship seuds on. Tommy of Owdham has been able until now to climb the steps, hold on and stytle to the cook's galley, returning with at least some portion of his mess unspilt. This day he creeps on hands and knees, rolls down the hatchway—nothing saved. But the ship speeds on.

Bowton Trotter creeps, or staggers, or clings to things, and works himself along. In the steerage, on deck, in the cook's galley, now desolate—fires extinguished in the stoves, down the fore-castle to the sailors, aft at the cabin, he calls for a midwife. None respond. They say:

"It is only that Bowton Trotter raising lies and alarms that he himself may laugh—the fool."

Presently Humphry Horn creeps out, and up to deck, hair on end, calling for a midwife, or doctor, or anybody to help Bess.

The doctor comes from the cabin. Tabitha Bold comes also, a practical woman in emergencies, though just now, in face of the storm, she was soaring in poetry.

The captain comes. Other women rise to the great occasion. The doctor and boatswain enclose the berth of Humphry Horn by a screen of sail-cloth. The ship pitches, swings upon the billows, but faster and faster speeds on, and on, and on. And there, in the gale, a babe is born.

She is not eminently beautiful, this lass of Lancashire—Bess o' the Barn. Her place in life is to do, to suffer, to work and overcome. Yet she is of comely form, with footstep of a fawn, eyes of kindness, all truth. A young wife, a young mother, a loveable woman. In tumult of the elements, under roar of the tempest in the rigging, of the crash and the roar of ocean on the bulwarks of the ship, peril and pain are as nothing. All is joy, happiness, hope, at the voice, at the touch, at the breath, at the kiss of her babe—this first born son. They do not tell her, but it is very, very small. The Doctor says it is a fragile thing, to live in such a storm, and may cense to breathe any minute. So they go and find the reverend passenger in the cabin, the

military chaplain. The captain on one side, the boatswain on the other, conduct him along the slippery deck, and down the difficult hatchway ladder. By choice of the happy Humphry, the mother assenting, the child is named "Ocean." Already there is a dream, not all of the air, that in after years, the world is to know the fame of "Doctor Ocean Horn," the infant passenger just christened. The ship speeds on.

Westerly and westerly, to north for a time, and to south for a time, but westerly, westerly mostly, they at last skirt Anticosti in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Jack Holt at the hatchway "sings out"—bawls with hands at his mouth for a trumpet: "Blanketeers, ahoy! turn up, turn out! Ship at the desert island!"

Lud, who has by this time learned to know Holt when seen, and believes him to be no other than Emery, the London spy, rushes up the ladder and might have made the man's neck uncomfortable had he caught him. Other weavers at name of the "desert island" crouch in their berths. Steelyard is already on deck.

Up the St. Lawrence, the lordly river, the wide, the deep, impetuous tidal stream. Mr. Verderer assembles the people on deck. Congratulates them warmly. He has words of encouragement for each. And the Doctor inspects all the children, one by one strip of clothes to the waist, but seemingly discovers no marks on the skin. With microscopic lens, Jack Holt helping, he scans the little creatures closely behind the shoulders, for a birth mark in semblance of a naked sword. No such mark is found.

"My friends," continues Mr. Verderer on deck, after the doctor's inspection of children: "We are arrived at Quebec in safety from the Ocean. Now begins the journey inland, several hundred miles up the country. I am here to protect and direct. You get, for a family, two hundred acres of land, implements and seed, with provisions one year, if necessary for two years."

Cries Tommy of Owdham: "Is there owt of 'bacco with the provisions?"

"Yes, least I think so. If not I shall pay for the tobacco myself. Leave looms, headles, treadles, shuttles, wheels, reels, bobbins, and tambouring frames in store for the present. Comfortable quarters await you on shore. Wash, refresh, rest, pack away luggage not wanted in the woods; then, after two days the journey, by teams and battenax, is to begin."

No railway in that day, to whisk a thousand immigrants along at twenty or thirty miles an hour! There is now. And so, the Blanketeers go up to the wilderness.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LOST HEIR OF LILLYMERE—HE GOES TO AMERICA IN SEARCH OF HIMSELF.

London. Early May. Eleven a.m. A fair, English girl, seventeen or thereabout, who, in three days hence, will be presented at Court, passes on foot from St. James's Park by the Horse-Guards to Whitehall. Lightly she steps in her youth and beauty. At the crossing graceful feet pick clean spots daintily, avoiding the whirling traffic and mud of the freshly watered thoroughfare.

Another passenger picking clean spots is a clerk attached to the firm of Schooler & Schoeglers, Solicitors, Chancery Lane. A thought flutters the heart of this mild lad, tall of his age—eighteen—beardless—usually bashful—lower garments too short, for he is poor—hat excessively brushed for he has no other. A thought, sweet and insane, which, if shaped to words, might be read thus:

"I would I were the mud beneath her feet!" The same instant he blushes and is ashamed of himself.

An instant more the lady slips and might fall before the wheels of fast carriages but for the prompt hand of this young gentleman. He conducts her to the side-way. Then lifting his hat, bows, and walks onward to Westminster Hall.

Proceeds on his way, but hardly feels the feet beneath him. Thoughts are feet. The beautiful young creature, whose glove touched his hand, thanked him. Only in two simple, common-place words, but they were spoken with a smile, and so gentle, musical in tone as to be precious. So precious that already the insane boy decides to make treasure of the tone and smile, and plant them in his bosom, to keep a long, long while, to keep always, seeds of a secret joy, sonnet, or song.

"Who is she? Ah, me!" sighs the youth, "if I were not a mere clerk in a law office with a small salary, no beard, and only eighteen! Or even if eighteen with a fortune, I'd never lose sight of that lovely girl. Not till I learned her residence, name, friends. Not until I made her mine. Perhaps mine, only perhaps. She may be engaged, or she might despise me. Very likely she would despise me. Indeed I ought to be despised."

And the young lady, proceeding on her way, shapes the gentle phantoms of her heart thus:—

"That is one of my father's clerks, Mr. Tobias Oman—a handsome youth, with the head of Adonis, very clever, very good, pa says. Cruel misfortune that a boy so beautiful is whispered to be son of a man that was hanged, and now passing under an assumed

name. The real name, they say, is Simon Lud. Now he is Tobias Oman. Don't like that name more than Lud. Should hate to be called Oman. Wish he had a pretty name, and was a gentleman's son, with sisters for me to love."

Tobias Oman—the child Toby, whom we saw at Iridale sixteen years ago—Lost Heir of Lillymere, walks through Parliament Street to the committee-rooms of the House of Commons, with legal documents for counsel. Still he walks on air, with thoughts for feet:

"What miserable fate is mine,"—he is on earth in this sentence—"to have the evil reputation, privately circulated, of going by an assumed name to conceal that my father was a radical weaver who died on the scaffold. But I have got a start in life as articled clerk,"—he treads on air again—"and in the profession am bound to rise. Must, shall advance to barrister. On the steps of the Palace of Westminster I vow to do all that man may to enter the House of Commons as member ere many years pass. May become Attorney-General, after that Lord Chancellor. Why not? Some who reached that dignity were not higher in life at eighteen than I. Ah, no! none was son of a poor radical weaver who, displaced from work by compulsion of new inventions, was starving, headed a riot, and died on the scaffold."

Tobias is detained in the committee-rooms until five p.m., when announcement is made: "Mr. Speaker at prayers." The committees at once adjourn, members going to the House. With no papers to carry, as it happens to-day, this clerk of Schooler & Schoeglers, instead of returning to his desk, walks into St. James's Park, past Buckingham Palace, into Hyde Park, and along by the Serpentine lake. He ruminates in airy mazes:

"This is not the way to the Chancellor's wig and woolsock. This is not the way to the House of Commons. At the office in the Lane I should be now. Yet two Lord Chancellors made romantic marriages at Gretna Green, and afterwards rose by hard application from humility as lowly as mine. What constrains me to come alongside the equipages of fashion on the drive to-day? And to the Lady Mile Ride? Splendor of flashing chariots! Forms of fair equestriennes fitting among the old elm trees, so green and leafy! Who knows but I may yet become a great poet? Within my brain greatness is even now aspiring to its birth. Visions of beauty and of high hopes all around me. Oh, soul! burst into leaf and blossom and song! sing and attune the world to melody, love, and joy!"

"Beg pardon," says a handsomely attired man, addressing Tobias, "that lady just gone past with the groom following, saluted you. Who is she?"

"No lady saluted me, sir. Don't know any. Or if she did it was a mistake."

"Certainly she did. No mistake at all. You should have lifted that hat in return."

"That hat!" Tobias, knowing it is not glossy and fashionable, suffers a sensation as if the hat burned him. He could hate the man. And he could respect, esteem, love him as one of the best of mankind, for:

"What if it be true that a lady looked upon me? What if it were that lovely girl seen in the morning? What if it were the one fair creature of all the world?"

After silence of some minutes the other resumes:

"She returns. Shortens pace to a walk. Looking along the people on the foot-way for some one; for you most likely."

The lady approaches. Oh fluttering heart in bosom of Tobias, the bashful! It is! It is! Reining in the superb descendant of Godolphin the Barb, which proudly, poetically carries her, the vision advances to the railings. She speaks. It is the voice of low, soft music he heard in the morning:

"I was too much alarmed, Mr. Tobias, to thank you for saving me from a dangerous accident. My father, when he knows, will thank you better than I can. Good bye." And she rides away.

"What danger did you save her from?"

"Perhaps, sir, you will please mind your own business," says Tobias.

A constable passing, nods familiarly to the inquisitive man. Two inspectors of police mounted come along and they know him. Tobias, not choosing to be stared at, walks away, face homeward; but looking back sees the three following, with eyes directed upon him.

His thoughts: "Can it be this unfashionable, over-brushed hat that made the well-dressed man impatient? Or the pantaloons too short by an inch? Or the coarse high-lows? Can it be that one of them knows, and is telling the others, that I am son of Simon Lud? Is that a policeman in disguise? Is he telling of the young lady? He seems too refined in features to be so impertinent. Seems artist, or poet, or junior Lord of the Treasury. Too elegant for a police constable."

Tobias, you have not been long in London, else the gentleman's vocation and elegant person would be no mystery. This is Dublin of the plain clothes service, chief of the fashion department. He is likely to keep you under eye until informed who the young lady is, and what the occurrence she spoke of, which you