

Choice Literature.

AN UNSUNG HERO.

A PHYSICIAN'S STORY.

ADAPTED FROM THE GERMAN.

The fair, false waves shone on in dazzling calm, the ship rocked gently, making no perceptible headway. The sultriness was becoming unendurable. A strange languor and depression pervaded the air. Suddenly the silence was broken by the sound of excited voices, which I recognized as those of the Captain and Dr. Claas. The old lady pricked up her ears.

"If I mistake not," said she, "they are quarrelling over your *protege*, the interesting sailor. Go and see. As for me, I have enough of this. I go below."

To my intense relief the venerable gossip prepared to depart, and rising, I began walking the deck, going a little nearer the excited speakers.

"For the last time, sir," the Captain was saying in angry tones, "I repeat, that such conduct is entirely unbecoming, and against my wishes. Yesterday you lead one of my men on to an act of romantic foolhardiness, and to day, without consulting me, you send him below to his hammock to recover from the consequences of this eccentric and absurd experiment. Why, sir, you are exceeding your authority. You are encouraging insubordination. Once more, sir, it cannot be allowed!"

"Allow me to say, Captain," said Dr. Claas, with great self-control, "that there was no leading on in the matter, whatever. As I call this gentleman to witness (turning towards me), the man having overheard us as we discussed the subject on the deck, not dreaming that he would hear, or at least comprehend, what we were saying, came forward and offered himself for the experiment—an act which no one man in a hundred would be capable of, sir. Yes, sir; came of his own free will, and submitted to a painful and even dangerous operation to save a human life in no way connected with his own. And I say it is due to him that he should be protected from the consequences almost sure to ensue from any unusual strain upon his strength. To send him aloft to repair a broken yard under a sky like this, after such a loss of blood, would be simply brutal, sir."

The doctor's earnest speech had its effect upon the testy but kind-hearted officer, and after some further efforts on our united parts, the captain returned to the quarter-deck in a somewhat mollified mood.

At the suggestion of Dr. Claas I went below to look after Tom. The brave fellow lay stretched in his hammock in the close, small cabin, in a troubled sleep. The open collar of his blouse exposed to view a throat and chest of statuesque proportions; his curling brown hair was matted over his forehead; his face, haggard, beneath its deep bronze hue, wore a look of gentleness and suffering.

The interest I had felt from the start in this fine specimen of Nature's noblemen had mounted to enthusiasm, and I was impatient to know more of the man and of his relations with the woman, seemingly so far removed from his own sphere in life, upon whom his appearance had produced so startling an effect. But as I stood looking down upon him, noting his irregular respiration, and the contractions that from time to time passed over his features, I realized that even of a physique like Tom's too much might be demanded. The enervating climate, and, as I had every reason to suspect, some strong mental excitement, had diminished the man's power of endurance, and it was certain that Dr. Claas' solicitude was only too well-founded.

Not to disturb the sleeper I would have withdrawn noiselessly, but at the moment Tom stirred, and opening his eyes gazed at me with a bewildered stare. His glance was uncertain, his lips trembled, as with fever.

"What time is it?" he asked, feebly. "Have I slept long?"

"It is twelve," I answered. "You have slept two hours, and can lie and rest as long as you feel like it. It is the captain's order. How are you feeling?" I added, seating myself on the blue-painted chest that doubtless contained the sailor's worldly possessions.

"Better, now," answered Tom; "but a while ago my legs would scarcely bear me, and my head whirled round like a rusty capstan. It is powerful kind o' you, sir, to come an' ask after me. An' how is the little chap gettin' on?" he added, his voice softening suddenly.

"Very well indeed, Tom. I have just been with Dr. Claas to see him, and unless we are much mistaken, the tide has turned and the boy will recover. And if he does, Tom, it is to you he owes his life."

Words cannot picture the look that transfigured the sailor's sun-bronzed countenance—a look of deep and perfect content. He kept his eyes on the ceiling over his head for some time, his lips smiling like a child's.

"Good!" I heard him whisper. "That does me good to hear. The boy will live, an' she will be happy. Good!"

But after a while he turned to me again.

"Mebbe," he began, doubtfully—"mebbe you mought a-guessed from what you saw, that the little chap's mother an' me wasn't no strangers, sir; and if ye don't mind lis'enin' I'd like to tell you how things is, an' was, sir, for I wouldn't have ye go to think harm of her, not knowin'."

I assured Tom that I was only too glad to listen to his story if it would not fatigue him too much in the telling.

"No, sir," he said; "it'll be a powerful relief to get it off my mind, along of her that mought be misjudged, if ye didn't know the true facts. No, sir; Nell—that's her—Nell an' me is no strangers. We was born an' brought up in a little village ye likely never heard of, away down on the coast o' Maine. Ay, different as things is now, our folks was neighbours, and Nell and me was playmates an' friends as long ago as I can remember, tho' her folks was better off than mine, an' Nell had a better chance at books an' the like. So when I grew up an' began to foller the sea, like my father an' gran'father aforeme, it come about quite natural that I should begin to look on Nell as my sweetheart, an' she on me. Every time I got home from a voyage I found her prettier an' sweeter, an' fonder of me; leastways I thought so then. She was a beauty in them days, sir, as ye can judge for yourself now, tho' she's changed powerful, poor girl! But in them times she led the fleet, sir. The city folks that come down to the coast

o' summers took a deal o' notice of Nell—she was that proud an' sperrited, an' could hold her own with the best, her father bein' a retired cap'n and had made his pile, but wasn't in no way stuck up an' favoured me, poor sailor tho' I was. Well, sir, there come a time when I was started off on a three years' cruise. It was pretty tough, that was, but we was to be married when it was over, an' with that look ahead, sir, bein' young, an' ambitious, the time passed pretty quick. It's a rough life, a sailor's, as every man knows, an' I'm free to own as I've been a bit wild in my time, sir, but as I'm a livin' man to-day, I was true to Nell all through that three years' cruise. Whenever we made port instead o' foolin' away my money with the rest, I was hangin' round shops at bazars, a-pickin' up pretty things for Nell—silk handkerchers, an' carved boxes an' fans, an' all kinds o' furrin' notions that women love. Nell never got to see 'em, sir; they're stowed away in that there blue chest as you're a-settin' on this minute, for, as mebbe you've guessed by this time, when we made port I found Nell married an' gone—ay, sir, married to a fine gentleman from the city, an' gone to live amongst his kind of folks. Ay," he added, with a husky laugh, "if I'd got home a month sooner, I mought a-danced at her wedding!"

"They are all alike, Tom," I said, as he paused, my cynicisms reviving; "unworthy of a true man's love and trust."

Tom turned his clear blue eyes upon me wonderingly.

"Lord bless ye, sir," he said warmly, "ye ain't to lay no blame on her! It's me as was a fool, for thinkin' myself good enough for a girl like Nell, that had been brought up so different, an' could hold her own with the best on 'em, along of her father bein' a retired captain. An' I forgot to mention that the old man was dead, or mebbe it moughtn't a-happened; tho' I do know as it would have made any odds. No, sir, I never laid no blame on to her, tho' I own as it hit me hard an' sent me a-careerin' over the world like a ship that's lost rudder an' compass. It's goin' on seven year, since it happened, sir, an' I'd begun to git in a way used to it tho' it sorter took me afresh when the ship was homeward bound an' I remembered as no one was a-waitin' and a-watchin' for me, my folks bein' dead an' gone long ago—when there was she a-comin' on board this here ship, sir, a lone woman at her age—she's only twenty-six, sir, an' lookin' so peaked, an' a holdin' on for dear life to that there little youngster as a stout breeze might blow away! An' now you know how it is, sir; an' why I was willin' to do what I done: not for a strange woman (though I ain't sure as I wouldn't a-done the same), but for the little woman that was to a-been my wife; the little woman I ain't never forgot, an' never shall forget, tho' she never can be aught to a rough sailor like me."

"But she asked for you, Tom, this morning. She wishes to see you," I said.

Tom laid his bandaged arm across his face, but his deepening colour did not escape me, and I saw how the burly frame was shaken with sudden emotion.

"No, sir," he said huskily, after some moments. "No, sir, it's better not. Tell her I say it's better not. Tell her she's free and welcome to all I done, an' if 'twas to do over again she'd be free an' welcome to the last drop o' my heart's blood, so be the little chap was flourishin', an' she was happy. An' tell her," he continued softly, "if so be as she should say anything to you, about what's past an' gone, that I ain't never harboured nothin' agin her, first or last, an' wishes her well an' happy wherever she may be."

There was silence in the little cabin—a silence like that of a church. My confidence in human worth was strengthened. This unlettered sailor was a man before whom Diogenes might well have extinguished his lantern, as I did mine. I was compelled to believe again in human love—a love so perfect that it becomes a religion. I pressed the sailor's horny palm in silent acknowledgment.

But what was this?

In my interest in Tom's narration I had not observed the gradual darkening of the cabin; but now all motion seemed suddenly and strangely suspended. The ship shuddered through all her timbers, as though held in the grasp of a Titanic hand that was about to crush her to powder; then a hollow, thunderous sound made itself heard; black masses of water foamed at the port-holes, and the vessel was whirled to and fro and about, as in a whirlpool.

It needed not Tom's sudden excited cry to tell me the meaning of this. I knew intuitively that we were at the mercy of a hurricane.

At the first sound Tom had leaped from his hammock, and flung open the door. Above the roar of the elements could be heard a confusion of voices, a hurried rush of feet, then clear and distinct came the captain's voice shouting through his trumpet.

"All hands on deck!"

Instantly Tom sprang towards the stairs, turning only to say as I would have followed him:

"No passengers allowed on deck! Take care of yourself and keep cool, sir! The 'Sea-Gull' has out-riden many a storm. Ay, ay, sir!" he shouted back, as the trumpet-call sounded again.

I tried to detain him, to speak some words of caution and protest. My voice was drowned by the storm, and Tom shook off my hand with a laugh. With one spring he mounted the stairs and lifted the hatchway. The storm dashed against his brave, smiling face; he shook the spray from his hair, waved his hand to me and vanished, letting the hatchway fall behind him. In vain I endeavoured to raise it; in vain I beat upon it, and called Tom's name. My feeble efforts amounted to nothing, and in deep anxiety and dread I turned away.

Stumbling and pitching along the narrow, dark gang-way I managed to reach the passenger saloon. There panic reigned.

Women and children with faces convulsed with terror, lay stretched upon the floor, clutching frantically at the thick carpet, or at any object within their grasp. Men staggered about aimlessly, crying, cursing or praying, in a frenzy of fear. Having first made my way to the state-room of our little patient, and with the aid of cushions and pillows made the position of mother and child as secure as possible, I turned my attention to the women and children in the saloon. There was very little that could be done, for every attempt at speech was drowned in the awful tumult, and exhaustion soon put an end to my efforts, and stretched me helpless in their midst.

The hours went by on leaden feet. The "Sea-Gull" wrestled bravely with her mighty enemy at times sinking upon her side until the topmast kissed the crest of the engulfing waves, then like the bird whose name she bore, mounting and hovering on their summit, only to plunge again into

the yawning abyss of waters. Of what was passing outside and above us we knew nothing, being in darkness, except as the ship rose for an instant, vouchsafing brief glimpses of the furious sea, and hearing only the tumult of the elements, with now and then a rush of feet, or the faint trumpet-call of the captain.

But I did not forget Tom. With a shudder I recalled that open vein so insecurely protected for such an emergency; with a thrill of sincere admiration I remembered his look of eager daring as he sprang into the storm to meet his duty, and it might be, his death.

Toward sunset the hurricane seemed to have expended its power, and though the ship continued to pitch frightfully, the passengers dragged themselves to their respective state-rooms, myself among the rest; and against my own will, for I meant to seize the first possibility of reaching the deck, I sank from sheer exhaustion into a sleep which lasted until day-break. As soon as I was conscious I left my room and hastened on deck. The sea was still heavy, but of the fearful hurricane there remained only a fine stiff breeze that drove the ship bravely on toward her goal.

Almost the first person I saw was Dr. Claas, who was coming in search of me.

"At sight of his face a sharp pang went through me. 'We are safe, yes,' he said, seizing my hand; 'but the storm had its victim.'"

"Tom!" I barely whispered.

"Yes, Tom!"

It seemed that at the very height of the storm, one of the sails became loose from its fastenings, and sweeping the deck caused the ship to careen dangerously to leeward. The captain called for volunteers to climb the topmast and cut away the sail. It was a perilous undertaking in such a wind. Of all the crew only one man came forward. It was Tom. Firm and sure he made the ascent, and cut away the ropes; the sail flew swiftly off over the frothing sea, and the ship righted herself at once.

Hand over hand, swinging himself gallantly from yard to yard, the brave fellow descended; but when half way down he was seen to miss his grasp, to clutch at the ropes, to fall heavily to the deck.

In his violent efforts the bandage had been torn from his wrist, and Tom had fainted from loss of blood. It being impossible to open the hatchways in such a sea, some attempt at a bandage was made, and the insensible sailor placed in as secure a position as it was possible. But it was hours before Dr. Claas could reach him, and then only to find himself too late.

The sun was setting when, wrapped in the ship's flag, a tribute rendered to his heroic worth and splendid seamanship, the dead sailor was consigned to his unmarked grave.

No dead monarch, lying in kingly state, ever called forth deeper or sincerer reverence and regret than showed itself in the faces of those who stood with uncovered heads about the still form that had held so gallant and true a spirit.

In low tones the captain read the burial service; for a moment each head was bent in silent prayer; then, at a signal, there was a swift gliding of ropes, a splash, and the laughing waves closed above all that was mortal of the humble hero of this simple tale.

MANNERS IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

We are hearing a good deal just now of the need of other kinds of training than mere literary training in the schools. There is a loud demand, not only for manual, but for moral and religious training—something very hard to get in a satisfactory shape, because its efficiency must largely depend on the character of the teacher. It is not every teacher who can make himself or herself a moral or religious influence, or even furnish a proper vehicle for moral or religious instruction. But there is a branch of ethics which might be taught in every school, and which ought to be taught in every school, but is grossly neglected to the great national detriment—we mean what is called manners or "minor morals." In this field it is safe to say our common schools do nothing, or next to nothing, and there is none within their reach in which they might do so much.

We are not now talking of the kind of demeanour in ordinary intercourse known as "politeness," though this is terribly deficient in nearly all our boys and girls. Little or nothing is done in the schools to combat the mischievous delusion that suavity of manner is a confession of social or other inferiority, and that in order to preserve his self-respect and maintain his republican equality, an American has to be surly or indifferent, after the manner of hotel clerks or expressmen, and too often salesmen and "sales-ladies" in stores. The result is, that we have probably the worst-mannered children in the civilized world. And the result of this neglect of the schools is to give a great many young people a dull, unready air—that is, they avoid quick responsiveness, lest it should seem like servile eagerness to please, and the habit of dilatory answering ends in giving an appearance of dulness and stupidity. One of the great uses of schools is to fortify the children of the State against whatever is evil and deteriorating in the political or economical condition of their lives. One of the great uses of American schools should be to fortify American boys and girls against the bad influence, either in mind or manners, of the passion for equality pushed to extremes, and the still more corrupting passion for notoriety fostered by the newspapers.

One of the defects in our civilization to which attention is now being called by the preparation for the Exposition is the filthy and squalid condition of our streets and by-ways and the surroundings of our houses. Every one who has seen a foreign capital anticipates with more or less shame the arrival in New York of people who are accustomed to the comfort and cleanliness of London or Paris or Vienna. No doubt much of this filth and squalor is due to defective municipal administration. But, unfortunately, it is not New York alone which suffers from it. Similar nuisances are to be encountered in every town and