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The Wings of the Morning

BY LOUIS TRACY.

Acting under his advice, the bodies of the dead were thrown into the lagoon, the wounded were collected in the hut to be attended to by the ship's surgeon, and the prisoners were paraded in front of Mir Jan, who identified every man, and found, by counting heads, that none was missing.

Robert did not forget to write out a formal notice and fasten it to the rock. This proceeding further mystified the officers of the Orient, who had gradually formed a connected idea of the great fight made by the shipwrecked party, when he thought of the manner in which Iris would picture the scene. As it was, he had the first inning, and he did not fail to use the opportunity. In the few terse words which the militant Briton best understands, he described the girl's fortitude, her unflagging cheerfulness, her uncomplaining readiness to do and dare.

Little was said by his auditors, save to interpolate an occasional question as to why such and such a thing was necessary, or how some particular drawback had been surmounted.

Standing near the well, it was not unjustly necessary to move to explain to them the chief features of the island, and point out the measures he had adopted.

When he ended, the first lieutenant, who commanded the boats sent in pursuit of the flying Dyaks—the Orient sank both sampans as soon as they were launched—summed up the general verdict.

"You do not need our admiration, Capt. Anstruther. Each man of us envies you from the bottom of his soul."

"I do, I know—from the very bilge," exclaimed a stout midshipman, one of those who had seen Iris.

Robert waited until the laugh had died away.

"There is an error about my rank," he said. "I did once hold a commission in the Indian army, but I was court-martialed and cashiered in Hong Kong six months ago. I was unjustly convicted on a grave charge, and I hope some day to clear myself. Meanwhile I am a mere civilian. It was only Miss Deane's generous sympathy which led her to mention my former rank, Mr. Playdon."

Had another of the Orient's twelve-pounder shells suddenly burst in the midst of the group of officers, it would have created less dismay than this unexpected avowal. Court-martialed! Cashiered! None but a service man can grasp the awful significance of those words to the commissioned ranks of the army and navy.

Anstruther well knew what he was doing. Somehow, he found nothing hard in the performance of these penances now. Of course, the ugly truth must be revealed the moment Lord Ventnor heard his name. It was not fair to the good fellows crowding around him, and offering every attention that the frank hospitality of the British sailor could suggest, to permit him to adopt the tone of friendly equality which rigid discipline, if nothing else, would not allow them to maintain.

The first lieutenant, by reason of his rank, was compelled to say something.

"That is a devilish bad job, Mr. Anstruther," he blurted out.

"Well, you know, I had to tell you," he smiled unaffectedly at the wondering circle. He, too, was an officer, and appreciated their sentiment. They were utterly sorry for him, a man so brave and modest, such a splendid type of the soldier and gentleman, yet, by their common law, an outcast. Nor could they wholly understand his demeanor. There was a noble dignity in his candor, a conscious innocence that disdained to shield itself under a partial truth. He spoke, not as a wrongdoer, but as one who addresses those who have been and will be once more his peers.

The first lieutenant again phrased the thoughts of his junior.

"I, and every other man in the ship, cannot help but sympathize with you. But whatever may be your record—if you were an escaped convict—Mr. Anstruther—no one could withhold from you the praise deserved for your magnificent stand against overwhelming odds. Our duty is plain. We will bring you to Singapore, where the others will no doubt wish to go immediately. I will tell the captain what you have been good enough to acquaint us with. Meanwhile we will give you every assistance and—attention in our power."

A murmur of approbation ran through the little circle. Robert's face paled somewhat. What first-rate chaps they were to be sure!

"I can only thank you," he said unsteadily. "Your kindness is more trying than adversity."

A rustle of silk, the intrusion into the intent knot of men of a young lady in a Paris gown, a Paris hat, carrying a Trouville parasol, and most exquisitely gloved and booted, made everyone gasp.

"Oh, Robert, dear, how could you? I actually didn't know you!"

Thus Iris, bewitchingly attired, and gazing now with provoking admiration at Robert, who certainly offered as great a contrast to his former state as did the girl herself. He returned her look with interest.

"Would any man believe," laughed he, "that clothes would do so much for a woman?"

"What a left-handed compliment! But, come, dearest, Capt. Fitzroy and I."

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Lord Ventnor have come ashore with father and me. They want us to show them everything. You will excuse him, won't you?" she added, with a seraphic smile to the others.

They walked off together.

"Jimmy!" gasped the fat midshipman to a lanky youth. "She's got on your toes."

Meaning that Iris had ransacked the Orient's theatrical wardrobe, and pounced on the swell outfit of the principal female impersonator in the ship's company.

Lieut. Playdon bit the chin strap of his pith helmet, for the landing party wore the regulation uniform for service ashore in the tropics. He muttered to his chief:

"Darn! If I've got the hang of this business yet."

"Neither have I. Anstruther looks a decent sort of fellow and the girl is a stunner. Yet, I've known, Playdon, right through the cruise I've understood that she was the fiancée of that cad, Ventnor."

"Anstruther appears to have arranged matters differently. Fonder what he will say, but I don't think he owns up about the court-martial."

"Give it up, which is more than the girl will do, or I'm much mistaken. Funny thing, you know, but I've a sort of hazy recollection of Ventnor's name being mixed up with that of a colonel's wife at Hong Kong. Fancy Ventnor was in it, too, as a witness. Stand by, and we'll see something before we unload at Singapore."

CHAPTER XVI.

Lord Ventnor was no fool. While Iris was transforming herself from a semi-savage condition into a semi-blond of an ultra chic Parisienne, the Orient's dramatic companion went in for strong stage effects in feminine attire—Sir Arthur Deane told the early something of the state of affairs on the island.

His lordship—a handsome, saturnine man, coolly insolent, polite, and plentifully endowed with the judgmental derring that is the necessary equipment of a social libertine—counselled patience, toleration, even silent recognition of Anstruther's undoubted claims for services rendered.

"She is an enthusiastic, high-spirited girl," he urged upon his surprised hearer, who expected a very different expression of opinion. "This fellow Anstruther is a plausible sort of rascal, a good man in a tight place, too—just the sort of fire-eating blackguard who would fill the heroic bill where a fight is concerned. Damn him, he licked me twice."

Further amazement for the shipowner.

"Yes, it's quite true. I interfered with his little games, and he gave me the usual reward of the devil's apothecary. I led Iris alone. At present she is strung up to an intense pitch of gratitude, having barely escaped a terrible fate. Let her come back to the normal. Anstruther's shady reputation must gradually leak out. The will disgust her. In a week she will appeal to you to buy him off. He is hard up—cut off by his people and that sort of thing. There you probably have the measure of his scheming. He knows quite well he can never marry your daughter. It is all a matter of price."

Sir Arthur willingly allowed himself to be persuaded. At the back of his head there was an uneasy consciousness that it was not "all a matter of price." If it were he would never trust a man's face again. But Ventnor's well-balanced arguments swayed him. The course indicated was the only decent one. It was humanly impossible for a man to chide his daughter and flout her rescuer within an hour of finding them.

Lord Ventnor played his cards with a deeper design. He bowed to the inevitable. Iris said she loved his rival. Very well. To attempt to dissuade her was to throw her more closely into that rival's arms. The right course was to appear resigned, saddened, compelled against his will to reveal the distressing truth. Fittingly, he could on Anstruther's quick temper as an active agent. Such a man would be the first to rebel against such an assumption of pitying tolerance. He would bring bitter charges of conspiracy, of unbelievable complicity to secure his ruin. All this must recall on his own head when the facts were laid bare. Not even the hero of the island could prevail against the terrible indictment of the court-martial. Finally, at Singapore, three days distant, Col. Costobell and his wife were staying. Lord Ventnor, alone of those on board, knew this. Indeed, he accompanied Sir Arthur Deane largely in order to break up a somewhat ying-ying arrangement. He smiled complacently as he thought of the effect on Iris of Mrs. Costobell's indignant remonstrances when the baronet asked that injured lady to tell the girl all that had happened at Hong Kong.

In a word, Lord Ventnor was most profoundly annoyed, and he cursed Anstruther from the depths of his heart. But he could see a way out. The more desperate the emergency the more manly the display of finesse. Above all, he must avoid an immediate rupture.

He came ashore with Iris and her father; the captain of the Orient also joined the party. The three men watched Robert and the girl walking towards them from the group of officers.

"Anstruther is a smart-looking fellow," commented Capt. Fitzroy. "Who is he?"

Truth to tell, the gallant commander of the Orient was secretly amazed by the metamorphosis effected in Robert's appearance. Since he scrutinized him through his glasses, Iris, too, unaccustomed to the constraint of high-heeled shoes, clung to the non-descript arm in a manner that shook the sailor's faith in Lord Ventnor's pretensions as her favored suitor.

Poor Sir Arthur said not a word, but his lordship was quite at ease.

"From his name, and from what Deane tells me, I believe he is an ex-officer of the Indian army."

"Ah. He has left the service?"

"Yes. I met him last in Hong Kong."

(To Be Continued.)

TRAVELERS' GUIDE

GRAND TRUNK RAILWAY.

SARNIA TUNNEL TO SUSPENSION BRIDGE AND TORONTO.

Arrive from the east—*3:50 a.m., *10:56 a.m., *11:12 a.m., *11:23 a.m., *6:30 p.m., *8:00 p.m., 10 p.m.

Arrive from the west—*12:09 a.m., *3:55 a.m., *11:28 a.m., 1:10 p.m., *4:10 p.m., 6:25 p.m.

Depart for the east—*12:14 a.m., *3:40 a.m., 7:30 a.m., 9 a.m., *11:38 a.m., 2:05 p.m., *4:25 p.m., *6:53 p.m. (Eastern Flyer).

The trains leaving at 7:30 a.m. and 2:05 p.m. stop at all stations.

Depart for the west—*4:00 a.m., 7:40 a.m., *11:18 a.m., *11:33 a.m., 1:40 p.m., *7:30 p.m., and the 1:49 p.m. trains stop at all stations.

LONDON AND WINDSOR.

Arrive—10:00 a.m., *4 p.m., *6:50 p.m. (Eastern Flyer), 11 p.m.

Depart—6:35 a.m., *11:27 a.m., 2:20 p.m., *8:10 p.m. (International Limited).

STRATFORD BRANCH.

Arrive—*3:25 a.m., 11:15 a.m., 1:35 p.m., 6:45 p.m., 11:25 p.m.

Depart—10:10 a.m., 10:20 a.m., 2:45 p.m., 4:55 p.m.

LONDON, HURON AND BRUCE.

Arrive—10:10 a.m., 6:10 p.m.

Depart—10:10 a.m., 4:50 p.m.

Trains marked * run daily.

Those not so marked run daily except Sunday.

MICHIGAN CENTRAL RAILWAY.

Arrive—6:55 a.m., 11:10 a.m., 5:10 p.m., 9:50 p.m.

Depart—7:15 a.m., 2:20 p.m., 5:35 p.m., *10:25 p.m.

*Runs through to Waterford.

ARRIVE—10:52 p.m. From the west—*4:30 a.m., *8:20 a.m., *5:20 p.m.

Depart—For the east—*4:40 a.m., *8:28 a.m., *6:28 p.m. For the west—*11:28 a.m., *8:10 p.m., *11:00 p.m.

Trains marked * run daily.

Those not so marked run daily except Sunday. *From Chatham only.

**Runs only to Chatham.

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LEYLAND LINE.

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Tunisian sails Oct. 2 Oct. 30

Victorian sails Oct. 8 Nov. 5

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Heperian sails Sept. 26 Oct. 24

Ionian sails Oct. 3 Oct. 31

Gramplan sails Oct. 10 Nov. 7

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Sicilian sails Oct. 10 Nov. 19

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