

FEBRUARY 27, 1902

Story of James Stirling

the most disagreeable man so far. I hoped that we might have reached England first, but it was not the will of the Almighty. For God's sake find some corner for me where I may be isolated.

"But what is wrong with you?" I asked. There was no one near at the moment to listen to our words. "Look at me, doctor," he made reply. "What do I look like? Healthy and handsome eh?"

"You look ill, very ill," I replied. "But what do you fear?" He bent forward and whispered a word. I started and felt myself turning pale.

"No," I said, "impossible!" "Possible, very. In fact, certain. I was exposed to the infection just before leaving for England. A friend of mine died of it. He left the child to my care. The child was not infected then, and she is not infected now. Will someone else look after her?"

"Then she is not your child." "An expression of agony crossed his face. "I am taking her home to her mother," he said. "Once she is put into her mother's care my sorrows cease. I cannot tell you any more, doctor. No, she is not my child, but I love her as I love no other creature on earth. Let someone take care of her, and put me where I can be out of the way."

"Stay where you are for a moment or two," I answered. I rushed off to where Mrs. Harris, the stewardess, was waiting for me. "Do what you can for the child," I said. "I'll be back presently."

I saw the captain in his stateroom and told him briefly what had occurred. "What!" he cried. "A case of bubonic plague on board. Heavens!" "Whatever happens, Captain," I made answer, "we must keep panic at bay. There is that cabin in the stern of the lower deck which is unoccupied. Stateroom No. 4; it is quite out of the way. I'll have Stirling conveyed there."

"He had no right to come on board after subjecting himself to infection," said Captain Ross. "The whole thing is disgraceful—and the child—you say the child was subjected to the same infection."

"He says the child is safe." "Safe," said the captain; "he would say it to screen her. She must be closely watched, and if there is the slightest symptom of indisposition she must be quarantined at once."

"I will do all that is necessary," I answered. "I have promised the poor fellow to look after the child, and I must keep my word. After all, he is terribly to be pitied. From what I have seen of him he is not likely to live."

"Ugly brute," said Captain Ross. "He has put me into a fine mess. Well, do what you can, Grant. I can depend on your discretion."

Accordingly I had Stirling conveyed to an empty cabin on the lower deck. It was a large, roomy apartment, but seldom used on account of its bad position. Having seen to the sick man's comfort, I went back to the luxurious stateroom, where little missie quivered in royal fashion over the stewardess.

"Come, Miss Victoria," I heard Mrs. Harris say. "You must get up, it is very naughty for little ladies to lie in bed all day."

"Go 'way, natty thing," was little Vic's response. "You will get up for me, won't you?" I said, touching her on her shoulder. "Stirling would wish it."

The pretty blooming face was raised from the pillow; the bright eyes were fixed on mine. "Eic, go to Beauty-Deer. Take Vic to Beauty-Deer," and the mite stretched up her arms.

"Get up, then," I said, temporizing in quite a wicked fashion. "Let Mrs. Harris dress you at once; I can do nothing while you stay in bed."

At the thought of finding "Beauty-Deer," Victoria allowed herself to be put into her clothes. When she was fully dressed Mrs. Harris clasped her in a passion of motherly love to her breast.

"Take Vic to Beauty-Deer," said the child. Murmuring some inaudible reply, the stewardess took her into the dining-saloon, where the servants were enjoying their belated breakfast, but although the good woman coaxed and petted, little Victoria shut her lips tightly, and refused either to speak or to touch food.

At first this conduct on the part of the child was put down to a fit of baby sulks, but when it continued all through the day, and no one could induce the poor little mite to eat, or

to play, or to be happy, matters began to look serious. She was a very patient baby, and after the first trouble she ceased to cry. She crept back to the luxurious cabin, which she and Stirling had shared together, and, crouching on the floor, clasped her broken doll in her arms.

She sat there hour after hour, a most pathetic and hungry expression in her eyes. Meanwhile, the plague-stricken man grew worse. As the night approached, he began to get delirious. I resolved to sit up with him, and in company of a sailor who had already suffered from plague, and was supposed to be immune, kept watch during the long hours of darkness.

Seldom had I spent a more dreadful night. In his mad delirium the man was giving himself away, and his revelations of his past life were terrible. There were few deeds of lawlessness at which he had stopped. He had injured and oppressed most of those he had come in contact with, he had lost his money by gambling, and defrauded his friends. In especial, there was one man whom he hated; his bitter hatred of this man was apparent in his delirium and caused him sometimes to give vent to wild and terrible screams, and even shrieks. Beyond doubt there was a very black sin on his soul in connection with this man. As Stirling raved and struggled, and tossed himself about, I had to exercise all my force to keep him quiet. By the morning, however, the fell disease had to a great extent done its deadly work. The giant lay quiet as an infant, perspiration streaming off his face.

"He is quieter now, David," I said to the sailor. "I can leave him in your care for an hour or two. I will just go and have a disinfecting bath, and change my things—then I will come back and relieve you."

I rushed off to my cabin; the dawn was breaking. If all went well, we should arrive at Malta in twenty-four hours—we were now steaming across the Mediterranean, which was smooth as glass. I had just finished my toilet when there came a tap at my cabin door. I opened it, and Mrs. Harris stood without.

"If you please, sir," she said, "have you taken the child to Mr. Stirling?" "Heaven forbid," I answered. "I hear, sir, that the gentleman is very bad."

"But what about the child?" I queried. "Little miss is nowhere to be found doctor. I thought of course she had gone to the gentleman's cabin."

"She must not go near Stirling's cabin—do you hear, Mrs. Harris? You must keep the child in this part of the ship."

"Well, sir, I'll do my best—but I can't promise what may be impossible. The child is contrary and a bit sturned. Never a bite did she put inside her yesterday, and last night, sir, when I went into the stateroom to undress her, she was fast asleep on the floor, her cheeks all stained with tears, and that broken doll of hers—Sally, she calls it—clasped in her arms. I took the poor mite up just as she was, and popped her into her berth, and I hoped she would be safe till the morning. Well, she slept, and I went and had a bit of supper, and when I had seen to my ladies I thought I would go and sleep in the cabin with little missie."

"Quite right, Mrs. Harris," I answered. "I went to bed right enough, sir, and to sleep, and the last thing I saw was the glint of little missie's golden hair on her pillow, and I heard her breathing gentle as a lamb, but towards morning I awoke all of a sudden, and I looked across to missie's berth, and she was not there. I went and searched for her and called her name, and so did the sailors and the stewards, but none of them could find her, and none of them knew where she was. One said that maybe she had gone to find that harum-scarum man whom she is so taken up with, and I thought I would ask you sir."

"She is not there, and what is more, she must not go there," I answered. "Just speak to the purser, will you? He will give you orders to have every corner of the ship searched. Now I must go back to my patient."

I snatched some food, and went down stairs to the large cabin occupied by the plague-stricken man. The worst manifestations of this awful disease were now making themselves apparent. The deadly weakness continued, and got worse, and, strange to say, it had a sort of refining influence on the coarse face. The voice so rasping and loud was reduced to the merest whisper.

I gave a sigh of relief when I saw that little Victoria was not in the room. Motions to my sailor that he might leave me for the present, I sat down by the dying man.

"Come closer," I heard him whisper. "I have something to tell you." I bent towards him.

"How soon shall we reach Malta?" "By this time tomorrow," I answered. "Twenty-four hours," he muttered. "Shall I live till then, doctor?" "Hard to tell. I will do what I can for you, Stirling."

"Thanks. I should like to know that the child was safe in port, and delivered over to her mother. She was to meet us at Malta."

"Can you tell me anything about the little one, Stirling. You may live but you may not, you know—it is best to be prepared. At present I do not even know the child's name."

He smiled feebly. "A lady will meet you at Malta, and will come on board, and if—if I am not there give her the child. The lady will be the child's mother. The little one's name is Angelo, Victoria Angelo."

"And what am I to say when I give the child to Mrs. Angelo?" "Say that Stirling brought her across, and that he has atoned."

"I don't understand."

"Nor will she—but that does not matter. She need never know. Angelo is dead, and she gets the child. Look at me, doctor. You do not know the wicked sort of person you have on board. I killed Angelo."

"What!" I cried. "Yes, practically I did. I did it on purpose. I hated him; he and I were partners in the same business, up country, about two hundred miles beyond Bombay. The plague came, and I brought some infected sheets from a man who died of it, and put them on Angelo's bed. He took it and died. I killed him. I did every bad thing I could to that man, defrauded him, stole his property. The reckoning day was near, and I had to get him out of the way. It was either he or I to go under, and I had the choice, and I chose him. He is dead, and I was taking the little one back to her mother. Now, I will tell you something strange. You see a devil before you, a devil—neither more nor less, but that mite fell in love with me—would not be happy with anybody else—liked to stroke this awful face of mine, liked to get into my arms, liked to kiss me; well, she bowled me over, doctor. I can't tell you how or why. I can bear a good bit, but just the love of that little innocent was the last straw too much. The mother had gone to England a year ago, broken down by the climate, but Angelo would not part with the child. That child could bowl any man in all the world over. Well, my punishment and my redemption, too, were to bring her home and put her into her mother's arms. But it is not to be. I hoped that I might have reached Malta before the disease broke out, for I guessed, of course, that I was infected. I am dying now and I'll never see that little angel again. I atone for everything when I die without seeing her. Oh, God, to a man like me, could any punishment be more? She is the one bit of humanity that ever touched me."

His voice trailed away to the faintest whisper. I gave him a stimulant, and after a little he said: "Do you ask if I repent—no, not a bit of it."

I sat with Stirling for hours. By and by I went back to my cabin. Mrs. Harris met me with her face quite white, and tears in her eyes. "We cannot find her anywhere, doctor. Do you think the poor little dear could have slipped overboard?" "Oh, no, Mrs. Harris, she must be on the ship."

"Well, sir, every sailor on board is searching high and low; we are all taking part."

The panic about little Victoria the saloon passengers were in a state spread rapidly, and by lunch time of excitement. They knew that Stirling was ill, although the real nature of his illness was carefully kept from them. One lady came to the captain with tears in her eyes. "My little Doris is Victoria's age. If the poor baby could be found she might come to my cabin to play with Doris."

But Vic's chosen playmates were of a different sort, a broken-down and battered doll, and a broken-down and battered man, black as pitch, except for that little streak of gold which his love for her caused to shine through his nature. Towards evening we entered some of the cross-currents of the coast of Malta. The wind rose and the Arethusa was tossed on the waves. In Stirling's cabin the motion was felt a good deal. The dying man was now in a state of stupor, and could scarcely be roused to take nourishment. I arranged once again to spend the night with him. By six o'clock in the morning we should reach Malta. Could he possibly live so long? Night settled down over the big liner and Stirling breathed heavily. About an hour after midnight he

dropped into a still deeper slumber. His breathing became fainter and once I bent towards him wondering if the last moment had come. As I did so he started up, fresh strength animated his frame, he opened his eyes and looked around him—then he uttered a laugh. "It is time for the pussy-call," he said. "How queer that I should have forgotten—Little Victoria will wonder; well, never mind, Victoria, better late than never."

He half raised himself on his pillow and forming his lips into an "O," he began to make the queer purring sound of a large cat. This curious noise had not continued more than half a minute before there came a rustling from under the berth, and the next instant, to my horror, a little white face and a dirty white frock appeared in view, and the baby girl, clasping a broken doll in her arms, looked straight into the ghastly face of Stirling.

"I see come, Beauty-Deer," said little Victoria. "Pussy's come; take I in your arms, Beauty-Deer, 'cause I see so tired."

Before I could prevent him the man leapt forward, snatched at the baby, got her into his arms and pressed her to his heart.

"Stay close to Beauty-Deer, little Vic," he said. "Send Beauty-Deer to sleep."

"Hush, hush, Beauty-Deer. Go sound asleep," said little Victoria. "But with that last embrace, and those last words, Stirling's spirit departed. It was with some difficulty I could take the child from his arms."

Wonderful to relate the poor baby never took the plague. We reached Malta the next morning. Owing to quarantine laws, no one could come on board, and Victoria's mother could only be seen on the neighboring quay.

But all it good time the little girl, well and hearty, was pressed in the loving arms of Mrs. Angelo. When this took place the child looked very

solemnly at her mother. "Beauty-Deer asleep. Don't talk too loud, mummy. Don't wake Beauty-Deer."—By Mrs. L. T. Meade.

**A Long Man-hunt.** San Francisco, Feb. 14.—The Chronicle says that Sheriff George A. Storrs of Provo, Utah, has been in this city for several days in search of a man whom he has been pursuing for over five years, a man charged with four murders and numberless lesser crimes, punishment for which he has thus far succeeded in escaping. The object of this interesting man hunt is one George H. Wright. Of the many crimes charged to George H. Wright, alias James G. Weeks, alias C. T. Case, alias Stevens, ens, the most serious is the murder of three young men, Albert Ernstrom, Alfred Nielson and Andrew Johnson, near Pelican Point, on Utah Lake, on February 16, 1895. For this crime H. F. Hayes, stepfather of Ernstrom, was indicted on December 4, 1895, tried and on April 14 following, found guilty and sentenced to be hanged. Hayes secured a commutation of pardon and, on a showing that he was innocent, was finally pardoned. Since then the officers have been hunting for Wright, who is accused of the crime.

A sweet little maid of four years in Harlem was distressed the other evening because her father did not come home to dinner on time. Her grown-up sister said to her: "Papa is naughty, and when he comes we won't give him any tea." When he did come the sister sent the teapot out to the kitchen for fresh tea. The baby looked on with a troubled face, and stole softly to her own room. Shortly she returned, with something squeezed up in her tiny fist. Going up to her sister she whispered: "Annie, I'll give you all my pennies if you'll give papa his tea." And opening her hand she displayed all her carefully hoarded Christmas pennies.—New York Times.

WINTER TIME TABLE—STAGE LINE. THE ORR & TUKY CO., Ltd. Going into effect Nov. 11, 1901—Week Days Only. FOR GOLD RUN AND CARIBOU via Carmack and Lorne. 9 a. m. FOR GRAND FORKS. 9 a. m. 1 p. m. and 5 p. m. FOR BELLEVILLE LOWER DOMINION via Hunkle Creek. 9:30 a. m. FOR QUARTZ, MONTANA AND EUREKA, CREEKS—9 a. m. every other day, Sun days included. Sunday Service—Leave Dawson and Grand Forks at 9 a. m. and 3 p. m. ALL STAGES LEAVE OFFICE N. C. CO. BUILDING. PHONE 6. Watches set by departure and arrival of our stages.

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Approval or disapproval... nter Gets in... Daily Nugget... Feb. 26—Gordon... appointed Chief Justice... Court of British Columbia... game at Bonanza... Operatic Society... will be held in... A full attendance... COMPANY... BUILDING, King Street... RIUM... NEE... URES... CONFUSION... ANS & EDGERTON... Successors to Pacific Steam Whaling Co. book's Inlet... HOMER... SAN FRANCISCO... ship Co. mers... "Dirigo"... Western Alaska... Yukon Railway... Seattle, Wash... your ticket should... the Burlington... SEATTLE, WA... Long Distance... Telephone Syn.