

## AN OCEAN MYSTERY

A Young Girl Suddenly Disappears From a Ship

By WILLARD BLAKEMAN

On one of my voyages across the Atlantic I became quite chummy with one of the officers, who told me the following incident that had happened at sea under his observation:

"One sailing day I was leaning over the rail on the upper deck watching some baggage being lifted aboard when a carriage drove up and two ladies got out and came up the gangway. They were evidently mother and daughter, the younger being about twenty years of age. There was nothing especially noticeable about them except that the young lady struck me as being very beautiful. I mean that there was something winning in her appearance.

"During the trip from New York to Liverpool I never saw the young lady on deck except with her mother. The old lady got quite thick with one of



TALKING WITH A WOMAN ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE CANVAS.

the other lady passengers and told her that she was taking her daughter abroad to break up a love affair between her and a young man at home. The confident told some one else, and it finally got around to me.

"It didn't appear that the girl was much pained at the separation from her lover. At any rate, she didn't look so. But seemed very well satisfied with the attentions she made on the voyage. They played sunbath and the other deck games together and before we were half across had got very chummy. I confess, notwithstanding the girl had left a lover behind, she would make a match or at least start one during the trip. I've seen so many matches made on the ocean that when I see a man and a woman fitting together on a ship, no matter what their antecedents, I expect a love affair.

"Well, as I was saying, these two were together all the way over most of the time, the girls' mother sitting on deck where she could easily keep them in sight. One day she left them alone together there. I was on the bridge and saw her go down the companionway. Some ten minutes later I saw her daughter put with the young man who was attentive to her and go below also.

"That was the last seen of the girl on that ship.

"A bird flying from the top of the mast could not more completely vanish than the girl I am telling you about.

"Half an hour later the mother came up and looked about for her chick. She went from stern to stern on the upper deck, then down to the next one. Later I saw her talking excitedly to the man the girl had been with, and he seemed as excited as she. She called up to me and asked me if I had seen anything of the young lady, to which I replied that I had seen her leave the young man and go below. The fellow seemed relieved at my statement, telling me that the young lady could not be found and it was feared something might have happened to her. He was glad that I had seen the parting between them and could bear witness to the fact. The mother left him and hurried below.

"When I came out to watch I found the ship in a state of excitement. Every one had a theory as to what had become of the girl. The sea was rough, and the prevailing opinion was that during a lurch she had been thrown overboard. Every part of the ship was searched. What I mean by that is that all the staterooms were looked into. There was no need to do that, for they were all occupied, and no one in them could have any motive for concealing the girl. To satisfy the mother, the captain took her all over the ship, permitting her to look wherever she pleased.

"If it hadn't been for my testimony that I had seen her part with the young man she was with when her mother left her, she would have been held to be turned over to the authorities on land. He not only proved the parting

ue, but that when the girl left him he had gone to the smoking room and was talking with a man there for some time. Then he went down into the saloon for luncheon, where he was served by the waiter who usually attended him. Indeed he was able to prove that he had not been in the girls' company after I had seen her leave him.

"Within twenty-four hours after her disappearance every one aboard except her mother had arrived at the opinion that she had fallen overboard. Whether it was because a mother is more hopeful than others concerning her offspring, the lady did not share in this theory. True, she was very much worried, but either she could not or would not believe that her daughter had been lost. But when asked for another explanation of the vanishment she could give none.

"There was no end of persons who had heard splashes. A number remembered a wave of unusual dimension striking the ship about the time the girl went below. Several persons claimed to have heard shrieks, and one woman's porthole was disturbed for a fraction of a second, as though a body was falling before it. So far as I was concerned, I placed no faith in any of these bits of testimony. The girl had simply made one of those mysterious disappearances that when they occur on the land concentrate the attention of the community in which they occur and are seldom explained unless the body of the missing person is found. When such cases occur at sea they are attributed either to the person falling overboard, walking overboard while asleep or suicide by drowning, the matter occurring when no one is near to see. The most reasonable supposition in the case in question was that the young lady had been pitched over the rail during a lurch of the ship.

"When we reached Liverpool we were detained by a fog in the river Mersey between 4 o'clock in the afternoon and 10 o'clock at night, during which time we had no communication with the shore. Then the fog lifted, but no passengers went ashore till morning, when a tender came for them. At the request of the mother of the missing girl every person on board the ship as he or she passed over the gangplank was scrutinized.

"And here a singular thing developed. The number of passengers going ashore was counted and differed not by one passenger, but two. The other missing person was finally traced to a woman who had taken passage in the steamer under the name of Mary Monahan. Few of her fellow passengers remembered much about her. Indeed, as every one was going ashore, there was no opportunity to learn who or what she was. The want of tally added to the mystery, but since the passengers were now intent on other matters the affair did not excite any attention among them. As for the officers and crew, we could talk all we liked among ourselves, but as employees of the company we were not expected to add anything to mysterious disappearances that occurred on any of its ships. Indeed, the only thing I ever learned about this mystery was seeing an item in a newspaper consisting of about twenty lines and headed 'A Case of Suicide.'

The narrator paused while he hesitated a clear I gave him and then continued:

"And now I'm going to give you a clue to the mystery that I thought nothing of at the time, but which loomed up as important afterward. The after lower deck, first class, was separated from the steerage by canvas only. Passengers would walk aft and occasionally peep between two screens at their junction at the steerage passengers. One morning I had seen the girl who disappeared talking with a woman on the other side of the canvas. Seeing me, she shut the canvas. I put this down to her being turned away. I put this down to her not liking to be seen talking to a steerage passenger and thought no more about it.

"Before we sailed on the return trip one of the room stewardesses showed signs of having got a windfall. One of the deck hands in the steerage went ashore got drunk and spent a hundred dollars before coming aboard again. It struck me that there had been bribery and corruption on the way out, and in thinking the matter over, I remembered having seen the young lady who disappeared talking with the steerage passenger. This suggested a connection with the money spent by the deck hand. I reported to the captain that I suspected some underhand business had taken place in the matter of the mystery. He then called for the stewardess and questioned her.

"It didn't require much time to bring the matter out. She confessed that she had been well paid to secure for the young lady the dress of a steerage passenger, had taken her to a vacant stateroom aft, where she had put it on and slipped through the canvas screens into the steerage. This she knew about her. The captain then called for the deck hand who said that he had received \$100 to secure a boat and row two women steerage passengers ashore when we lay fog bound in the Mersey. He suspected one of these persons to be a man.

"The rest was plain enough. The girl's lover had taken passage in the steerage dressed as a woman, and the lovers had outwitted the mother, who had taken her aboard to get her away from him. The daughter's flirtation with the young man she met on the voyage was a blind for the old lady.

"Months after the episode the witness woman and her husband sailed with us from Liverpool to New York. She told me all about her escapade, ending it with, 'When you caught me talking through the canvas screens I thought our plan would be discovered.'

## No Trespassing

His Welcome Home After Landing in the Trap.

By ISOLA FORRESTER.

Sue Varian pulled up the bay mare short in the middle of the road and stared at the objects in the shade of the maples. There were two—that is, two as main points of interest. One was a large red automobile. The other was a young man lying comfortably on the front seat of the red automobile, fast asleep. Incidentally, even to the lay eye of experience, there was unmistakably something the matter with the red automobile. It was top-sliced, and the front part—Sue didn't know the technical term—but the main front part appeared to be dislocated. It looked like a boy tin auto that had been stepped on.

But there was nothing the matter with the young man. He was sleeping peacefully, calmly, his knees elevated tentatively, his arms folded like a slumbering brave in effigy on his breast, and Sue laughed softly to herself and looked up and down the road.

It was deserted. Between 6 and 7 hardly any one ever passed along the shore road. It was the dinner hour up at the inn. And people who knew what they were about never took the shore road, anyway, not with red automobiles. It was a short cut, of course, to the inn, but primarily—and legally—it was a private road leading to the Varian estate, and to Harley Varian's mind the only blot on the fair face of nature in the summer time were summer boarders and red automobiles.

Suddenly the young man moved restlessly. Mosquitoes were plentiful in the shade of the maples. He sighed, opened his eyes, caught sight of the bay mare and neat black road cart and sat up.

"Has he got back?"

The question was one of dazed concern. "You returned his stare with grave interest.

"I don't know what you mean. You have had some accident?"

"Some accident?" The young man became troubled and explosive. "We came mighty near killing ourselves, and smashing the machine to splinters over that—that rope. Didn't you see the rope?"

"A rope?" Miss Varian's tone was mild and sympathetic.

"Stretched across the road on purpose, and we rode bang into it. Willson, that's the chauffeur, has gone somewhere to get help. We missed the road a few miles back."

"Where you hurt?"

"Just a little jolted. I presume the owner of the rope hoped for funerals."

"There was a funeral here a few days ago," interposed Miss Varian gently. "That is why the rope was put up. I believe, to turn back any stray autos and prevent any more funerals. A red one ran over a calf."

"It was a pet calf," resumed Miss Varian firmly, "and it was with its mother. It had a perfect right to ramble along this road, and automobiles haven't. It's a private road. Didn't you read the sign on the stone gateposts as you came in?"

"The sign said simply: 'No Trespassing. Traps and Dogs Keep Out.' I'm neither a tramp nor a dog, so I came in."

"Well, the rope wasn't stretched for a tramp or a dog."

The trespasser was silent for the first time. Climbing out of his machine, he strode over to the cart and looked up at the girl in it. She was roding about seventeen, he thought.

Her waist was a white linen boyish affair that a very young person might be expected to wear, with plain tulle down collar and short sleeves. The white linen skirt was short, too—ankle length. He could see the low back, and his eyes followed her as she walked. And her hair was light and wavy and round around her head like a misplaced aureole that had slipped down. Worse than all, she was laughing at him. He knew it when he saw her eyes.

When he spoke again it was with a less obvious reference to his own wrongs.

"Can you tell me where I am?"

"Seven and a half miles from Glenmore. You missed the main road about two miles back. This leads to the Varian house."

"But that's where I want to go!" exclaimed the young man. "I thought Willson was making for the inn. I am bound for Varian's place."

"Then why did you come in an automobile? Don't you know Mr. Varian personally?"

"Haven't seen him for years. He must be a jolly old beggar to judge from the rope—real sweet, neighborly disposition, hasn't he?"

"I think he was perfectly right and justified," said Miss Varian, with sudden haughty defiance. "It was the dearest little calf, and it belonged to me."

The young man began to smile, smile in a gradual dominance of the situation. It was a smile to resent, because it showed premeditated triumph and foreknowledge. But it improved him. "If I bet forty-seven dollars and two cents that you're Sue?" he said happily.

Miss Varian tucked in her side looks deftly, loftily. They were daring side looks, curly, tantalizing wisps of loose sunshine that knew their business and

escaped from the side comb whenever there was a propitious moment.

"My first name is Suzanne," she said. "No, sir, it isn't; it's Sue, and your hair used to be red. Remember the day you climbed our wall and tried to get up in the big apple tree after a blackbird's nest I told you was there? And your foot caught, and you tumbled down, and I had to climb up and take your shoe off before you could get your foot out of the cleft in the trunk. Do you remember, Miss Sue? Freshie!"

He was laughing now, laughing wickedly, joyously. Miss Varian blushed, hesitated, caught the merry gaze of the brown eyes of the trespasser and laughed too.

"I remember. You did use to call me that, didn't you?"

"And it fits you yet," he retorted calmly. "Any one who'd sit and gloat over a poor stranded, wrecked devil for the sake of an idiotic calf is nothing but a fresh kid. I'm going to ride home with you, Sue. Sit over on the other side and give me those reins."

"I shall drive," began Sue resolutely, but the reins were taken from her. Down the road a figure was coming, and they waited. It was Willson, the chauffeur.

"It's all right, Bob," he called. "I saw the old man and fixed it up with him. He says to come on up to the house, and he'll phone to Glenmore for some one to fix the machine."

"Well, you'd better stay and watch it until you hear from Glenmore. Willson," said Bob Morrison kindly, "hurry ahead with Miss Varian."

Willson climbed wearily into the automobile and watched the road cart out of sight. Miss Varian was silent. It was eight years since Bob Morrison had left Glenmore school, just eight years since his mother had died and the great old house up on the bluff had been closed up. She had missed her neighbors. So had her father, Greg Varian, and the Maples were the last of the old estates along the shore to hold out against the encroachment of summer hotels. She stole a side glance at the figure beside her, knowing how warm his welcome would be at the house in spite of the red automobile.

"Caught you peeping," laughed Bob, looking down at her and swinging the bay mare easily around the last curve. "Why don't you say you're glad I'm home?"

"We heard you were going to Europe after you left college," she said.

"Well, I'm not," he retorted deliberately. "Dad's had about enough of this white, and I'm going to take this place and settle down here at Gregrocks—that is, if my neighbors treat me right."

"The rope wasn't for neighbors," said Sue slowly, "just for trespassers. And anyway a neighbor would know the way, past the big apple tree. That's the way neighbors pass from Gregrocks to the Maples."

"We'll tear down the wall and travel across lots every day, won't we, Suzanne Sue?"

He was laughing, but there was an undercurrent of serious intent that brought the quick warm color to Sue's face. She wondered if he was thinking of the last time they had traveled across lots, the day he had left for school, and at the old stone wall he had kissed her goodby and slipped on a lock of her hair with his pocket-knife.

Bob shifted the reins to his left hand and reached for his inside pocket. From a small Russia leather bill book he took a bit of curly red hair with a piece of black thread, boy fashion.

"It was red, those days," he said thoughtfully, and Sue said never a word.

"I hope there isn't any trespassing sign on the apple tree," he told the bay mare's ears.

"Neighbors aren't trespassers," said Sue softly, and he slipped the red curl lock in the bill book as they drew up before the Maples. It was his welcome home.

**A Spelling Lesson.**

Miss Thompson, whose form nature has endowed with all too ample curves, was giving her little nephew a lesson in spelling the other day. He had spelt b-e, he, and a-s, he, and now she was trying to get him to tell her what me spelt.

"Listen, Bobby," she said earnestly. Then closing her lips she pronounced the sound of a long m, and opening them she said the sound of a long e. "What does that spell?"

Bobby looked at her and shook his head. Again she tried, and this time, while pronouncing the sounds, she vigorously tapped her own round chest with her plump forefinger.

"Mmm, ee. What letters am I saying and what do they spell?" she asked, still vigorously tapping her chest.

"I don't know what the letters are," replied Bobby, watching the plump forefinger, "but I guess they spell fat."

—New York Press.

**A Legend of the Seven Stars.**

To the naked eye six of the Pleiades, or "Seven Stars," seem to be of about the same magnitude, while the seventh is very dim. The dim star, the legend says, is Merope, one of the seven daughters of Atlas and Pelione, and her paleness is a punishment visited upon her for having married a mortal. The other sisters all married gods. Alcyone and Celaeno married Neptune. Electra, Maia and Targeta were wedded to Jupiter and Sterope to Mars. Poor Merope united herself to Sisyphus, a common mortal, and was doomed to eternal dimness for her rash act. Besides this, her husband must throughout all eternity roll a huge stone up a hill. As soon as it gets to the summit it rolls back, and his never ending task is again resumed.

## VACANCIES AT WEST POINT. A PLEA FOR BIG FAMILIES.

There Are Not Enough Cadets at the Military Academy.

The difficulty in filling vacancies in the corps of cadets in the Military Academy continues, despite every effort made by the war department to maintain a complete complement. There are more than fifty unfilled positions in the corps, and, while this proportion of vacancies is less than for many years, it is realized by the military authorities that provision should be made at once to keep the places filled for the best and most economical interests of the service.

A measure to that end was considered and favorably reported by the senate committee on military affairs at the last session of congress and was incorporated in the Military Academy bill, but was lost in the closing days of the session.

This bill provided that whenever all vacancies at the Military Academy shall not have been filled as the result of the regular entrance examinations, not to exceed thirty of the remaining unfilled vacancies shall be filled from the whole list of alternates selected in the order of merit, establishing at such entrance examinations, preferably from the same state in which the vacancies occurred; these appointments to be credited to the United States at large and to be without prejudice to any other appointment authorized by law.

The secretary of war again strongly urged that this legislation be enacted during the present session of congress. Every year there are hundreds of applications made to the war department by ambitious young men, qualified physically, morally and mentally for entrance to West Point, who would be more than glad to avail themselves of the opportunity to win the honor and advantages of an appointment, but who must be denied because there is no vacancy in the particular congressional district where the applicant happens to reside, while many vacancies exist in other districts not available to them.—Army and Navy Register.

## MISS KITTS HAS A RECORD.

She is Only Twelve, but Has Traveled More Than 46,000 Miles.

The United States army can now probably claim the world's juvenile traveling record by virtue of the globe trotting of Miss Julia D. Kitts, daughter of Lieutenant William P. Kitts, Twenty-first United States Infantry.

Incidentally, her record sheds a strong light upon the mutations of the army officer and the frequent recurrence of "moving day," says the Army and Navy Journal.

The child was born at Fort Lincoln, N. D., April 22, 1901, and was the first baby born at that post. Within three weeks she had traveled 42 miles; within two months 1,250 miles; within six months 3,750 miles; and within one year, 13,500 miles. In this short time the baby had traveled from North Dakota to Minnesota, to the Atlantic coast, to San Francisco, and thence across the Pacific to the Philippines.

It took her only two years more to add 17,000 miles to her record, making the total distance covered in three years 32,500 miles, or an average of more than 10,000 miles a year. She has kept on going, and at present has more than 43,000 miles to her credit. This youthful tourist, who could put to shame Plutarch, Jules Verne's traveling hero, has nearly completed her second tour of foreign service with the regiment.

**Testing Potatoes.**

Dr. Pierre Berthaut of Paris has discovered that a surprising variation exists in the cellular density of potatoes. Microscopic examination shows that edible varieties have small and numerous cells, while industrial varieties possess larger and coarser cells. Dr. Berthaut says that potatoes of the finest flavor have the smallest cells. Those that have the largest cells should be used only in such industries as the manufacture of starch. If the structure is a sure indicator of the quality of the potato, as the French investigator declares, a choice of the best varieties for planting should depend largely upon simple microscopic tests.

**His Impression.**

Judge Ben B. Lindsey, defending woman's suffrage, said of an opponent: "He objects because he misunderstands. His description of woman's stands. His description of woman's suffrage is about as wise and accurate as the little boy's description of the circus elephant."

"This little boy, seeing an elephant for the first time on Easter Monday, shouted:

"Oh, pop, look at the big cow with her horns in her mouth eating hay with her tail!"—Washington Star.

**Want to Open Shakespeare's Grave.**

An Englishman makes the suggestion that the Bacon-Shakespeare controversy may be settled by the opening of Shakespeare's grave. In order to escape the consequences of the Bard's curse, "Cursed be he that moves my bones," etc., the Englishman proposes to have the grave opened by women. It seems to us that this would be about as far as people could go in their efforts to take advantage of a technicality.—Chicago Record-Herald.

**Bullets in Battle.**

Instanting the fact that in the Boer war "it took 5,000 shots to hit a man," the celebrated rifle shot, Omundson says, "In spite of improvements in the modern weapons, the percentage of hits was immeasurably greater a hundred years ago than it is today."

## First Two Children Not So Able as Those That Come Later.

The first two children in a family in a majority of cases are not as able mentally and as strong physically as those that come later. This is an astonishing, authenticated fact just demonstrated in London in a great laboratory which has been examining and tabulating thousands and thousands of cases.

It is clear that this discovery is of enormous significance to the people of the United States, where economic pressure has been reducing the size of families. Translated into plain language it means for the United States that unless the cost of living decreases and families begin to increase in size we shall have a weaker race, both mentally and physically, for this new statistical science puts before us the effect of a strange natural law of primogeniture. It shows that the physical and mental condition of early members of the family—first-born and second-born—is sharply differentiated from that of later members. Where, for example, tuberculosis, insanity, criminality and albinism are found in a family they are found in predominate (tremendously in the first and second-born.

In England the size of families has decreased. The cause was the passage of stringent child labor laws a generation ago. These laws made it impossible for children to work in the factories. This at once resulted in a decreased birth rate, inasmuch as working people could not afford to have children unless the children could work and become an economic asset. This decrease in the size of families was followed by an increase in tuberculosis, crime, insanity and albinism. The Galton laboratory took hold of the matter and has produced in documentary form the results briefly summarized here.

## BRIDGE WHIST.

Has It Supplanted Poker as the Great American Game?

Gamblers say bridge whist has supplanted draw poker, stud poker, faro bank, roulette and the races as the great national game of chance, and it is predicted that eventually there will be a crusade against this form of gambling one from his money just as it has been done against other forms of gambling. It is not an uncommon thing for the regulars to lose \$100 in a night's sitting at the bridge whist table where the stakes are 3 cents a point, says the Chicago News. Many of the clubs at present play stakes as high as 5 cents and 10 cents a point, and the losses at this higher price can easily be imagined.

"When I used to be a regular customer of the poker rooms where the limit was \$3 I never met as much in an all night play as I have at bridge whist," said one of the local regulars who makes his living, or tries to, at the game. "One night of bad luck at bridge with a no trumper doubled a couple of times will relieve one of more money than a beaten ace full at poker. Bridge is a fast game and far more scientific than any of the other games of chance I can think of."

**Bluejackets Will Boast Matrimony.**

Some of the bluejackets in the navy are credited with a scheme to make the matrimonial pathway easy for themselves and others aboard United States warships. The plan is for the enlisted men to form into a large matrimonial organization and all agree to pay \$1 toward the wedding present for any fellow member who takes a bride. Counting on a basis of 9,000 members, each sailor would receive \$6,000 to start housekeeping. Of course, if 5,000 members decided to marry, the one remaining bachelor would feel the burden of supplying so many dollar wedding presents, but this, it is argued, would prompt him to get in ahead of the others.

## Ravages of Cancer.

"Cancer has at last, by a steady and uniform increase year after year, reached a mortality of 8,000," a recent bulletin of the New York state department of health reports. "Cancer as a disease has increased more rapidly than tuberculosis. The comparison with tuberculosis shows that in the preceding twenty years there have been 270,000 deaths from that cause and 100,000 from cancer." The bulletin adds:

"Comparing cancer with the almost stationary mortality of consumption, it would appear that within another twenty years there will be more deaths from cancer than from consumption."

## The Stars in the Flag.

An official order for changing the stars of the national ensign and the union jack in use by the navy to show the addition of two new states to the Union has been issued by the navy department. The change, which takes effect on July 4, provides for forty-eight stars to be arranged in six rows of eight each, with the corresponding stars of each row in a vertical line. This arrangement is the one recommended by the joint board of the army and navy and approved by President Taft.

## To Make Venusius Work.

Artificial warming of the world is one of the greatest of modern problems, and yet the earth is itself a vast furnace, whose flames are sometimes aggressively active and destructive. Italians are planning to use some of this heat. A boiler is to be installed at some point where the internal fires of Venusius are accessible, and hot water is to be piped to the neighboring towns.