Doubloons

By EDEN PHILLPOTTS and ARNOLD BENNETT.

CHAPTER XXVI.—(Continued.)

Sir Anthony had marked his prey, who turned into the square, was hidden for a moment behind a mass of flaming red and yellow crotons, dodged round some magnificent palms, and came to a momentary pause in the shadow of Nelson's green statue. The prey, while moving behaved as if he were being pursued. He only looked behind once. He seemed to possess a singular cleverness in avoiding contact with the shrill crowds that inhabited Broad street and the square, and he seemed also to be perfectly familiar with the complex geography of the island metropolis. At the statue it was that Tony nearly came up with him—nearly, but not quite. An orange colored tram labeled in large letters "Fontabelle," and tinkling with a hundred metallic tongues like a Russian sleigh, was just resuming its journey after a pause in the square, and he calmly stepped on to it, and was borne off, presumably to Fontabelle. Tony did not hesitate; he could not hesitate; there was one thing to do, and he did it. He ran after the tram and boarded it, full of an intention to drag the prey forcibly out of the vehicle, and submit him to the rigors of West Indian law. But events occurred differently; indeed, they bore no resemblance whatever to the mental picture of the immediate future formed by Tony as he hastened along Broad street. Owing to nervous excitement he did not get on to the jolting tram with remarkable neatness. In his hurried spring he crushed the conductor's toe, and the conductor, righteously angry, drew his attention to the fact that he had transgressed a by-law. The white ferocity of the conductor's teeth and the blackness of his grin each helped to induce in Tony a more thoughtful mood, a saner view of strategy and tactics. Having no adequate reply to the conductor, he sought the grateful shade of the interior of the tram. The prey had taken a seat in the left-hand corner near the door, and was rolling a cigarette. At the further end of the car was a full-blooded negro boy sucking a sugar cane, and midway were two sumptuously-dressed quadroon girls, apparently sisters moving in the most refined aristocratic circles, whose high-pitched chatter, whose colors and whose musk engaged the senses.

Tony sat down.

He suddenly perceived that he could not attack his prey in this public vehicle. Nor could he put him through a cross-examination. To address him thus: "You are Walter Pollexfen, a scoundrel and a murderer, and I have crossed the world to catch you. Tell me where Philip Masters is, and then come with me to the police station, or I'll break every bone in your body"—such an oration, though justice demanded it, was obviously impossible in the circumstances. The idea of addressing, in a tram car, a murderer to whom he had not been introduced was repugnant to Tony's instincts. He wanted to speak, but his tongue refused its office. He was, in a word, not equal to the situation. The languishing black eyes of the quadroons were upon him; the ophthalmic eyes of the cane sucking boy were also upon him; and he feared lest a scene might end in ridicule for himself. After all, he had not in his pocket a warrant for the arrest of Walter Pollexfen. And the prey had merely to suggest to the public that he, Tony, was a lunatic, in order to score at any rate a serious temporary advantage. Therefore Tony decided to wait until his prey should descend from the tram. And in the meanwhile he pulled his mustache nervously, and discovered that he was hotter than he had ever been in his life before, and that his breakfast was not digesting.

The prey, having rolled one cigarette, rolled another one, and smiled gravely at the floor.

Presently the tram was out of the town and running along a road fringed by great jungles of cane whose drooping polished stems reflected the light like metal. Clumps of bananas, with massive heads of fruit in all stages of perfection, diversified the undulating acres of cane, and here and there a handsome bread-fruit rose into the sky. Wind mills abounded, and sometimes the thud-thud of an agricultural steam-engine was heard. A hillock of ground now hid the capital and Tony began to wonder whither he was bound and what would be the end of the story. He had a notion that he was leaving civilization behind. He had read in a guide book that murderers in Barbadoes hide their victims in the tall cane, and that the first symptom of the crime is the gathering of vultures at a particular spot in the endless and pathless fields. The picture had no charm for him.

The boy, still meditatively sucking, got out; and then, opposite a gay little house bowered in brilliant flowers and foliage, the two quadroons also alighted, laughing and preening, and withdrew slowly and with backward glances into the domain. The prey descended instantly after them; and Tony followed the prey. The tram resumed its journey, and was soon out of sight round a curve.

Tony hesitated. The prey, gazing hard at the house into which the quadroons had retreated, drew forth a pocket-book and made notes. He then turned abruptly to Tony. They were alone on the hot, dazzling road.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said the prey, with a slow American accent, "can you oblige me with a match?" His tone was very persuasive, the quality of his voice beautiful, and his smile pleasant.

And as Tony gazed at the firm, keen, clean-shaven, middle-aged face, and at the strong limbs encased in modest, well-cut blue, he decided that he might as well oblige with a match; and he did so. He thought he could see a resemblance to Mrs. Upottery in those features, and then he thought he couldn't.

"Sultry, isn't it?" said the prey genially.

"Ye'es," Tony agreed, determined to commit himself as little as possible, and he added, suddenly resolved to make the leap: "I want to speak to you. I've come here to speak to you."

"What!" cried the prey. "Are you mixed up in the affair, too?"

"Mixed up in what affair?"

"I see you are," said the stranger. "I was told when I left headquarters at Kingston that I might meet a colleague from Scotland Yard. But I didn't know the Tiber was in yet."

Tony stared.

"What affair?" he repeated, astounded.

"Why! I guess there's only one. The Pollexfen affair, isn't?"

"What do you know about the Pollexfen case?" Tony stammered.

"Not as much as I want to," the other replied. "Come into the shade of these mahogany trees, will you? But I'm learning all the time, just all the time. You see they cabled us from London to headquarters in Jamaica that the alleged murderer had left London in a private yacht with a couple of thousand pounds and some papers, and as I'd had a pretty considerable experience in Denver and Chicago before I joined the Jamaica force, Trollope told me off to come here and meet the yacht."

"Indeed!" gasped Tony.

"Yes. That's the way of it."

"And has the yacht come?"

"I gues she's come. And he's somewhere on this blessed island. He may be over on the other side at the Crane hotel, for anything I know, but he's on the island. I'm not ready yet to make an arrest. Those two creatures that got out of the car a minute ago—they're in the game. Wouldn't think it, would you? But they are. I've had my eye on 'em for twenty-four hours. I saw 'em from the Ice House coming down Bridge street. That's why I left my cocktail in such a hurry. One has to hustle, eh? I guess you're the celebrated Varcoe."

Tony did not know what to say; but he shook his head.

"Come now," the other expostulated. "No need to treat me as if I was the elevator boy! I saw at once you'd got the Scotland Yard stamp on you."

"I—I took you for Walter Pollexfen," said Tony, trying to be severe.

"You—!"

The prey gave himself up to laughter, gradually but completely. He began with scarcely a sound, shutting his eyes and bending forward; then his mouth opened to a glorious and profound cachinnation.

"Well!" he managed to remark, later, "I award you the medal. Now come along with me, comrade"—he put his arm in Tony's arm. "Come along with me down to the police office—It isn't a mile—And I'll show you off to the boys. No escape. This will cost you cocktails round."

Reassured by the mention of the police office, Tony was inclined to think that either Coco had been entirely mistaken, or he had misunderstood Coco's indication of the man. In any case, he had no alternative but to return to the town. He found the prey an agreeable and intelligent companion. He accepted a cigarette from him, having left his cigarette case on the balcony of the Ice House. He hinted to the prey a little about the Wanderer and her voyage, and the finding of Varcoe, and other interesting things. But the prey, curbing his curiosity, intimated that he would prefer to postpone the full discussion of the Pollexfen affair until they were safe in the privacy of the Barbadoes detective department.

After five minutes they halted before a negro's mean dwelling, and the stranger bought a green cocoanut from the negro's wife, who with her two children and a lean cat, blinked and basked in the purple shadow of her doorway. A great, winged grasshopper leaped and flew a few paces ahead.

"As liquid refreshment," said the prey, paring away the top of the nut with his knife exactly as though he were sharpening a huge lead pencil, "there's nothing so suited to this hades of a climate as green cocoanut. See the pure milk there! Some people put ice in, but whisky is better."

He drew a flask from his pocket, and adulterated the milk's purity. When Tony had shared the drink, Tony's opinion of the stranger rose appreciably.

Further on, a liveller incident happened. At the vorner of a sugar cane field, where the great ragged canes bent over in a wild green and brown and yellow tangle, there stood a mango tree. The time for mangoes was not yet come, but a few, plump and nearly ripe, adorned the topmost branches of the tree, and some sentient being seemed to be up in the summit among them. Beneath the tree stood a big negro in a rage. A crowd of eight or nine other negroes were whispering and posturing at a safe distanse of a hundred yards.

"Hi! Uncle Tony!" came a voice from the tree top.

It was Horace's voice, and it signaled distress.

"Come down, you tief!" the big negro bawled; "no good stopping dar. Come down out ob dat. hab catched you at last. Come down, I say!"

"Uncle Tony!"

"Friend of yours?" the prey, questioned, and the two men hurried to the tree.

"Uncle Tony," sang the shrill voice of the boy, "I thought this was a wild tree, and I climbed up here, and—and—"

"My tree, and de young gem'man know he tief dem mangoes, and he lodge in gaol for it! Colored person somebody in 'Badoes."

"Shut your great mouth, you confounded che-che!" commanded the prey.

"No, sar."

The prey produced a revolver, and pointed it at the owner of the mango tree. There was a terrific sensation among the watching group of negroes. "And now follow me to the police office," the prey ordered the big negro. "You can come down, my little man," he called up the tree. "And bring a mango or two, if you like."

The outraged negro fell in with the suggestion of Bridgetown police office; but, strange to say, he showed no further anger, and followed the little procession which was soon formed.

"Mother's just in front," said Horace, eating his way bravely into a mango. He had consumed that morning nothing but flying fish, sweet potatoes, lamb, peas, oranges in their thin green skins, figs, bananas, plantains and sapodillas. His appetite was therefore excusable. He at once classed the stranger as a hero of really first-class quality. He gamboled round the stranger; he almost caressed the stranger; and ultimately he shyly asked permision to inspect the weapon that had so swiftly calmed his enemy.

They met Mrs. Appleby, who was becoming alarmed for her son. She had awakened from her nap, found to her surprise the restaurant empty, and had been compelled to discharge the bill. Her son she happily discovered playing in the square. He had soothed her and inveigled her into a stroll, and had exercised her till, refusing to be exercised further, she had left him in order to return to the town. She had almost no control over him. When he had recited to her the brilliant episode of the tree and the prey's share in it, the social success of the prey, although no formal introductions were made, was rounded off and perfected. Sir Anthony, his mind an arena of mutually-destructive theories, talked to his sister vaguely and even incoherently.

"I must just go down to the quay first," said the stranger when they arrived at the square again. "The Rhine sails at 1 o'clock, and I have to arrange some things. Come with me, will you? Suppose we all drive down together."

"That will be delightful," twittered Mrs. Appleby.

He hailed a rusty vehicle that was crawling by the sidewalk in precisely the Piccadilly manner.

The big negro, who had received a sovereign in secret from Mrs. Appleby, sagaciously sidled off with that noble coin.

CHAPTER XXVII.

The Silent Vessel.

Mary, having lost sight of both Sir Anthony and Coco, had followed the road down to the harbor. There, under the blazing sky, with the populous blue water at her feet, and the gleaming masses of white buildings around tempted to explain away Burabott's her, and in the distance sun-blanched beaches and the palms clustering on Pelican Island, she walked anxiously to and fro amid the yelling bustle of the thousand activities of the quay. What could she do but wait? She regretted that she had no longer her masculine disguise. So concealed, would she not have followed and outdistanced Sir Anthony—yes, and perhaps done more than he? She lacked confidence in Tony. He was a dear, good, vain fellow, but he inspired everything except trust in his ability to meet a crisis successfully. She could not conceive him as a match for Walter Pollexfen, and she was even troubled by vague fears for his personal safety. If only Oxwich had been at hand! At that very moment she caught sight of Oxwich, who, like herself, was perambulating uneasily to and fro near the Careenage. He saw her, too, and came hastening toward her. He was clearly perturbed.

"Excuse me, Miss Pollexfen," he said, raising his hat and stopping directly in front of her. "Do you know where Sir Anthony is?"

"I don't," she replied. She felt unable to explain to Oxwich that Tony was pursuing Walter Pollexfen through the mazes of the town. The idea seemed somehow ridiculous. "Do you want him particularly, Oxwich?"

"Well, miss," he said, gravely, "the White Rose has come in. That's all."

"The White Rose?" she breathed.

He nodded.

"Came in an hour ago or more, miss. We must have passed her during the night."

"Where is she?"

He pointed northwards into the distance of the bay.

"That gray thing," he said, "with one funnel and no masts. I just met that medical officer person, and he told me. Where shall I find Sir Anthony, miss?"

"Oxwich," she almost wept, "I don't know; but he can't be very far off." And she ended by relating to him what had happened at the Ice House.

Oxwich paused, reflectively.

"There's one thing to be said, miss," he observed at length. "If Mr. Walter Pollexfen is ashore, the White Rose can't be very dangerous, can she? How would you like me to go and have a look at her?"

"You mean at once?"

"I mean at once, miss. Supposing Mr. Masters to be aboard, miss, and Mr. Walter Pollexfen out of the way—you see, miss—"

"I must go with you, Oxwich."

"Certainly, miss."

Most men, she thought, would have tried to dissuade her from the enterprise, but Oxwich was not as other men. On the whole, she decided that she had not often met an individual so solidly based in human common-sense as Oxwich. And here, on the quay, he was less the valet than usual. Indeed, her heart counted him a fellow creature.

"The launch?"

"Yes, miss. It's down behind here." And he led the way.

The launch lay safe and secure where they had quitted it earlier in the morning. But it was deserted. A faint vapor rose from its narrow brass funnel, and a slight heat quivered over the machinery, but otherwise it was lifeless. In vain they gazed along the quay in search of one of the members of the Wanderer's crew, and then down into the interior of the launch as if by mere force of desire they could make it active and subservient to their needs. The launch without someone who understood its magic was futile, and though its entire desertion was doubtless contrary to Capt. Chetwode's orders, that desertion was none the less a fact. Oxwich accepted the situation at once.

"We must hire a boat, miss," he decided.

And he led the way to where a group of red-cushioned white boats, each presided over by a darkey sucking sugar cane, swayed gently, bumping in the shallow, diamond-pointed water.

A scarcely perceptible motion of Oxwich's fingers set the fleet in a roar.

"Star of Barbadoes you want, sar!"

"No, no. Massa want de Pearl."

"Go along wid de Pearl; gen'man calls for de Water Lily."

"You man dar, go 'way, go 'way. I say, massa signal me. Yes, sar; coming, sar; de Ocean Spray, sar."

"Call me, massa. I know you, massa. You often been in Flying Fish to-day. Quite a lady's boat, sar."

So the verbal strife continued, until Oxwich had actually set foot in the Flying Fish, and was giving a respectful hand to Mary to help her to embark. Then the turmoil expired as abruptly as it had risen, and the Flying Fish sped away under Oxwich's guidance.

Such was the burning glare that it was impossible to gaze open-eyed at either the water or the sky. But the nigger oarsman, in his ragged white, pulled a rapid, powerful stroke, and managed also to maintain a continuous whining monologue, an unceasing jet of information concerning the harbor, the uniqueness of the Flying Fish, the movement of liners and men-of-war, the rules for approaching the fever hospital on Pelican Island, and a thousand other matters.

Mary glanced feverishly ahead, not daring to raise her sun-veil, and resting her eyes from time to time on the dark red of the cushions of the boat. Oxwich was by her side in the roomy stern-sheets, but at a proper distance. Presently he took a pair of eye-glasses from his pocket, lit a match, and smoked them.

"Excuse me, miss," he said apologetically, assuming the pince-nez which had been his aid when, in less crowded hours, he studied the Encyclopaedia Britannica.

"Easy," he commanded the boatman.

They were within a couple of hundred yards of a small and rather unkempt vessel across whose stern could now be plainly deciphered the legend: "White Rose, London." She was swinging round to the flood-tide. Her gangway was down, the lowest step almost awash, and a dinghy bobbed on the waves near her forefoot, pulling at its painter like a young puppy. No other ships were in this quarter of the bay. A solitary figure hunc, apparently in a listless attitude, over the stern rail of the White Rose. Presently this figure could be discerned to raise a marine glass and examine the Flying Fish.

"Easy ahead," said Oxwich.

"Yes, sar, yes, sar," droned the oarsman. "You want me to hail dis ship, sar? Lady want me to hail dis ship?"

"No," said Oxwich, looking at Mary.

Mary's eyes were fixed on the White Rose's taffrail. And under the fire of those marine glasses which the figure held, she actually blushed.

"Oxwich," she said, "is that Mr. Masters?" Her voice shook.

"Yes, miss," said Oxwich succinctly.

"Thank heaven it is! A nice surprise we shall have for Sir Anthony. I think Mr. Masters has recognized us—you, I mean, miss." And then to the boatman: "Go ahead, boy!"

The figure on the deck of the yacht waved a hand in a gesture that seemed to resemble a gesture of adieu, and disappeared from view.

"He'll meet us on the gangway, miss," said Oxwich. "Pull with your left, boy, with your left—not your right."

But the gangway was slowly drawn up by hands invisible from the boat.

"What does that mean?" Mary asked nervously.

"We shall soon know, miss," was all Oxwich's reply.

The Flying Fish grazed the side of the yacht, which towered high above.

"Ship ahoy!" yelled the nigger in a cornet blast.

No answer.

"White Rose, ahoy!"

Again no answer. But near the boat, out of a vent in the battered flank of the steamer, water suddenly burst forth and poured in a regular stream as thick as a man's arm, splashing into the sea. The effect was uncanny.

"Mr. Masters!" cried Oxwich loudly, standing up.

No answer, nothing but the outpouring of waste water. The boat slowly made the circuit of the ship, passing by the empty dinghy, and round the taut anchor chain; and they discovered nothing. Repeated shouts availed naught. The steamer might have been uninhabited, abandoned, cursed. There was no means of boarding her; the gangway being horizontal, just out of reach.

"You are sure that was Mr. Masters?" Mary murmured, her throat dry.

"I am quite sure, miss."

"Then what are we to do?"

"We are to go back ashore, miss, and report, if that is agreeable to you," said Oxwich, with terrible solemnity.

When they arrived at the Careenage, they found a group consisting of Sir Anthony, Mrs. Appleby and Horace; and Horace was waving a handkerchief to the occupant of a boat that had just left the quay. Horace plunged into a recital of how the occupant of the boat had undoubtedly saved his life with a revolver. Tony, as he handed Mary out of the Flying Fish, asked anxiously where she had been.

"To the White Rose," she said.

Tony's face was a study, and a painful one. He had to describe his late doings as best he could. He finished by stating without conviction that the stranger whom Coco had mistaken for Walter Pollexfen was going over to the Rhine, and would return in twenty minutes, as the Rhine was about to sail.

"But the Rhine isn't about to sail, Sir Anthony," said Oxwich; "she's only just come in from St. Vincent. And what's more, he isn't heading for the Rhine. It seems to me he's heading for the White Rose." In Oxwich's tone disgust had triumphed over the valet in him.

The party on the Careenage had the pleasure of seeing the boat with its occupant merge into the distant mass of the White Rose, and then the White Rose weighed her anchor and leisurely departed from Carlisle Bay. Almost at the same moment Coco, breathless and disheveled, arrived. His activities had been as sterile as Sir Anthony's.

The last blow had yet to fall: it was discovered to be impossible to coal that day. The lighters were all engaged. But late in the evening a watcher on the deck of the Wanderer observed a moving train of phosphorus that gleaned and sparkled on the water like a host of marine fireflies. It had come slowly southwards from a point where lights indicated vessels at anchor, and it was approaching the Wanderer. It could only signify the passage of a boat. It drew nearer, and there was heard the sound of cautious oars, and then a voice. A boat touched the Wanderer's gangway.

"Who is it?" demanded the watcher fearfully. "Who is there?"

"It is I," rose the answer from the water—"Masters."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The Ambassador.

The white figure of Mary Pollexfen, with black velvet belt and black also at the wrists, stood leaning anxiously forward at the head of the gangway, one hand on the rail, the other at her heart. Below, in the deep shadow of the yacht's side, the swaying oval of a small boat was vaguely silhouetted against the sea's wavy phosphorescence. In the boat two forms could be discerned, and one of these uprose, detaching itself from the dinghy, and mounted cautiously the steps. Mary put out a hand in impulsive welcome, and caught the hand of Philip Masters. He reached the deck, and she still held his hand, and they peered silently into each other's faces at close quarters; the crescent moon was obscured, and some tracts of stars too, and the lanterns in the yacht's masts threw only a feeble gleam.

"Then you did not sail away in the White Rose?" she murmured at last.

"Yes," he whispered, "but she has put back."

"What for?" the girl inquired, in sudden fear

"Coal."

It seemed as if something compelled them to speak in an undertone. Their voices were tense, constrained. The yacht's deck stretched somber and deserted about them, the bridge dimly outlined over their heads. No one on board appeared to be awake save themselves, but a radiance from the skylight of the main saloon gave hint of life below. A little pause ensued. Mary could feel her heart beating violently, and she wondered what thoughts were passing through his brain as he fronted her in the midst of the vast, mysterious southern night.

"You have escaped!" she breathed at length. "I knew you would! Yet this morning—"

Perceiving that she had forgotten to loose his hand, she loosed it, as though it had been hot metal.

"I have not escaped," he muttered. "As for this morning—"

"Not escaped?"

"No. I—I'm a prisoner on parole. I did not expect to see you here to-night. I did not mean to see you. It was Tony that I wanted to—But I'm glad it was you who met me. Tremendously glad! I can't tell you how glad. I see now that I can talk to you better than to Tony. And yet a moment ago I fancied I should be ashamed to face you. As a matter of fact, I am. But I don't care, I don't care. It's so splendid to see you like this."

"Ashamed?" she queried. "Ashamed to meet me? What do you mean?"

"Listen."

And he related to her the interview on the Thames that had ended in the compact by which he had saved his life.

"So it was for money after all that my villainous uncle did it!" she said fiercely. "Ah! If—"

She broke off and remained silent.

"Well?" he pressed her. "It was a shameful compact I made? I ought to have taken the risks, ought I? I have often thought so since. I have connived at a crime! I'm what the lawyers call accessory after the fact!"

"You did right," she said slowly—"a thousand times right. If you had refused the offer you would only have increased our sorrow to no purpose. Some men would have sacrificed their lives; they would have been brave, but they would have been more foolish than brave. Whereas—"

"Whereas I was cowardly and senile," he put in.

She drew back with a proud gesture.

"Don't talk so," she protested. "Don't laugh at me—I can't bear it. If ever there was a brave man, you are one. Do you imagine that I can't appreciate all the moral courage it demanded on your part to do an unconventional thing? Do you imagine I don't understand that it needs less courage to do the correct stupid thing and die than to act wisely and live?"

"Thank you," he said. "You are kinder to me than I could have been to myself. Thank you."

"See!" she broke forth, "if you offer me thanks, I shall—I shall cry. It is I who have brought you into this trouble. What you have done you did out of sheer sympathy for me. And what can I give in return? It is I who should go down on my knees to you." She stopped, seeming to gasp, and resumed in another and quieter voice: "He confessed then?"

"Yes; he confessed. But he swore he didn't mean to murder."

"But Varcoe. Didn't he mean to murder Varcoe?"

"He argued that Varcoe's case was different."

"What do you think of him—my uncle?"

"He has a voice like yours," said Philip simply.

"Is that all?"

"It is enough."

"You haven't told me about this morning?" She gazed at him in tender reproach. "Could you not have thrown us a word—one word? You do not know what distress we have been suffering."

"A word would not have sufficed," said Philip. "In my case you could not have come on board. He had given orders. How could I have preached to you in your boat from where I was? No, I did the one thing that I could do. Besides, perhaps I was a little ashamed of my situation, ashamed of being alive under the circumstances. I have become nearly intimate with that murderer, you know. It sounds brutal, but I have. There was no alternative. Fourteen days on a yacht! And Pollexfen the master! What would you have? I'll be honest—there have been moments when I've almost forgotten that he was a criminal. The situation was extraordinary, very extraordinary."

"I can understand," she said softly. "And what is done is done!"

"If I hadn't become, as it were, intimate with him," Philip continued, "I very probably shouldn't be here now. He would never have let me come. And more tragedies might have happened. You know, I'm a very human person, and after all, I'm not sorry I'm alive. I want to be useful. That's why I've come—like this."

"But after your promise to him, how can you be useful to us?" she asked. "You say you gave your word to do nothing either directly or indirectly against him."

"Of course," he answered. "You may be sure that if he thought I should work against him, he wouldn't have allowed me to leave the yacht. Nor should I have asked permission."

"Then?"

"I don't quite know how to explain to you," he stammered.

"What?" she demanded. "Have I not proved to you that I am capable of understanding? Tell me at once why you are here, if it is not to help us." There was that in her voice which commanded.

"Your poor father is dead," Philip responded, speaking quietly and nervously. "Forgive me—but nothing can bring him to life. His money is gone, but you do not want his money. The past is the past. As you said just now, what is done, is done. Are you a believer in capital punishment? I am not. Are you ready to judge and be judged? I know I'm talking strangely, but my object is to suggest to you on board this yacht that you should abandon Mr. Walter Pollexfen to his own devices—that you don't trouble about him any more. There! Now you have it!"

He sighed heavily.

"With a man like Walter Pollexfen against you," Philip went on, "the risks you are running are tremendous. He'll stop at nothing. He's demonstrated that quite sufficiently already. Nearly anything might happen. It's equivalent to a war—Tony dogging him like this. He's afraid. He knows a lot, but he doesn't know all. He isn't sure if the police here haven't been cabled to from London. He got a pretty sort of a shock to-day when he found himself sitting beside you and Tony on the balcony of that restaurant—oh, he told me all about it—and so he's afraid. Hence he agreed to my suggestion that I should come over and urge you to go back to England and—and forget that he had arrived in the West Indies on a secret errand."

"Is it for our sakes or for his that you come, Mr. Ambassador?" said Mary coldly.

"Can you ask?" he returned, desolated. "I came solely because I wish to avoid the possibility of—of—I don't know what. Call it a few more murders if you like. And I would ask you to remember that no matter what occurs, I have given my word to Walter Pollexfen. I may have bought my life too expensively, in spite of what you say, but I have bought it, and with my word; the purchase is completed. And I can't ask Pollexfen to give me the price back again. He'd refuse."

"Perhaps," Mary said with an effort, "you had better talk to Sir Anthony. This is his yacht: I'm only a guest."

"But you came!" he exclaimed eagerly. "You came! You came to help to find me!"

"It was a suggestion of Mrs. Appleby's," she exclaimed in an even voice, and then more warmly: "Of course, I wanted to come very badly. But do go down and talk to Sir Anthony; he is alone in the drawing-room."

"I shall startle him."

"That will do him good. He is very depressed; he suspects that he has not covered himself with glory to-day." She smiled with a slightly satiric indulgence.

"You aren't coming down, too?"

"Presently," she said. "You men will talk better alone."

"Where is the drawing-room?"

She guided him to the companion-way, and he faded into the lower gloom. Then she crossed the deck slowly and leaned over the rail, and tears were in her eyes. But whether they were tears of joy or sorrow, of hope or despair, none could have told in that moment, not even she. She knew only that she was profoundly moved.

Behind her, a figure emerged stealthily from the shadow of the funnel. It was Coco, who had been appointed sole watchman for the earlier half of that night. Not another soul of the crew was astir. He glanced at Mary an instant, appeared to reflect, and then, with exaggerated precautions against noise, he descended after Philip.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Auchengray's Second Sight.

"Hullo, Tony!" said Philip, with an affection of imperturbable calm: he stood at the door of the drawing-room saloon, holding aside the green portiere with one hand. Sir Anthony was seated at the little Broadwood piano, absently engaged in the infantile game of pushing down the keys without making a sound. One of Mrs. Appleby's most emotional songs, "O Dry Those Tears" was open on the music stand. The baronet turned, saw Philip, grasped the fact that it really was Philip, and then vented his first explosion of surprise in a terrific oath, involving himself, and beginning with the first person singular of the present tense of an auxiliary verb. Nothing but that particular oath would have met the case.

He strode half-way across the floor, then stopped, and deliberately repeated the oath.

Whereupon they met and shook hands.

It is difficult for complex and self-observant souls to behave quite naturally under stress of such strange meetings, but Tony's soul was simple, and he behaved with perfect naturalness. His pleasure and satisfaction and curiosity expressed themselves freely and naively, and the greatest of these was perhaps his satisfaction. He forgot instantly the failure of the day and the list of his stupidities, and saw only that he had traversed half the world to find Philip, and had found him. His opinion of himself flew up like a flag, and he honestly though that Sir Anthony was one of the cleverest fellows on earth.

"Well, well, old chap!" he buzzed glowingly round Philip. "You see I got your famous salver all right, and came after you at once. And here we are! Well, well! Came straight to you. Scent breast high, upon my word. Now tell me how you got aboard. You gave me a rare start!"

"I want a drink," said Philip, dropping into a chair.

"Of course you do. Oxwich! I'll ring for Oxwich."

And he rang. The electric bell was out of order, but a sufficiently loud silver gong stood on a side-table with a lot of bottles and glasses.

The demeanor of Oxwich, who, entering with extreme quietude, saw Philip before Philip saw him, was a pleasing study in self-control. He had the heroism to display no symptom of even the mildest surprise until Philip spoke to him.

"Glad to see you again, Oxwich."

"Very kind of you, sir. I am more than glad to see you, sir." That was all. He rubbed his hands slowly.

"Whisky-and-soda, eh?" Tony questioned abruptly.

Philip nodded.

"Whisky-and-soda. Yes, sir," said Oxwich, going to the side-table. He turned his head, and inquired with steady features: "Stiff, Mr. Masters?"

"Stiff, Oxwich."

"Mine, too, Oxwich," said Sir Anthony.

"I may as well tell you at once," said Philip, taking the glass ceremoniously offered by Oxwich, "I can't stop here. I've got to go back. I'm only here on leave. I must get away again to the other yacht. Oxwich, will you refill my glass? Thanks."

He then succinctly gave the information which he had already imparted to Mary.

"Why man, you're mad!" Tony exclaimed.

"Am I?" said Philip. "And what would you do in my place? Break your word?"

"Another, sir?" Oxwich mildly asked.

"No, thanks."

"Do you hear this, Oxwich?" the baronet cried. "Mr. Masters intends to go back to that scoundrel, and, what's more, he wants us to give up the expedition." His accent on the word "expedition" narrowly escaped the sublime.

"Yes, sir, I hear," said Oxwich. "It's a pity, sir, a great pity!"

"But listen, Oxwich," Philip argued, addressing the man instead of the master. "You know enough of Pollexfen to know how dangerous the thing is. Sir Anthony has no idea what he is going in for."

"Might I ask, sir, what this Pollexfen is going in for?" Oxwich observed.

"Treasure," said Philip. "And he means to get it, and to get all of it."

"In the immediate district, sir?"

"At the Grand—No, I canont talk about that. I was forgetting my promise."

"Just so, sir. You stopped just in time, didn't you, sir?"

"And you must remember," said Philip, glancing at Tony, "that you've got ladies on board."

"Leave 'em ashore, here," Tony returned.

"If I may venture to say so, sir," Oxwich remarked, "I doubt whether the ladies would consent to be left. But on the other hand, I do not see the danger. Considering that the Wanderer is guaranteed to steam thirteen knots, and can really steam twelve, whereas it appears that the White Rose can only steam eight, I do not see the danger—at any rate, to those who remain on board the Wanderer. If I have read aright the lessons of the last naval manoeuvers, we should always be able to choose our distance."

"Yes, of course," said Sir Anthony; "that's exactly what I was thinking. Nothing can prevent us from keeping Pollexfen in sight, and we run no risk in doing so."

"That depends," said Philip.

"What does it depend on?"

"It depends on Pollexfen. I've not spent a fornight with him for nothing. Are the police on his track, too? Because I back him to be equal to outwitting both you and the police also."

Tony blushed at mention of the police. He had not quite forgotten his hoodwinking of the morn.

"The police have been informed," said he awkwardly, "but they would have nothing to do with my expedition. I expect they are still poking about London to find Pollexfen."

"Just like 'em," Philip observed. "Now, old chap, to business. You've decided you won't give up the job."

Sir Anthony glanced at Oxwich, at whom he always glanced when he wanted inspiration.

(To be continued.)

MOTHERS FEEL SAFE.

Mothers who have used Baby's Own Tablets for their little ones say they feel safe with the Tablets at hand, for they are of a never-failing cure for all the minor ills of babyhood and childhood. Mrs. Urias Cressman, New Hamburg, Ont., says: "I have used Baby's Own Tablets for stomach trouble and constipation with marked success. I always feel that my little one is safe when I have a box of Tablets in the house." Baby's Own Tablets are sold under the guarantee of a Government analyst to contain neither opiates nor other poisonous drugs. They always do good—they can't possibly do harm. For sale at druggists or by mail at 25 cents a box from The Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

For all disorders of stomach and liver, Bileans are a sound, safe and sure remedy. They strengthen the bodily functions in Nature's own way, being compounded from Nature's own herbal extracts. Women the world over find them a boon. Finest household remedy.

All druggists and stores, 50c. a box, or from Bilean Co., Toronto. 6 for $2.50.

BILEANS FOR BILIOUSNESS.