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MIRAMICHI ADVANCE

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J. D. B. F. MACKENZIE.
Chatham, N. B., Sept. 24, 1895.

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E. A. STRANG

STORIES OF THE SEA

By EDWARD JENKINS, M.P.

Author of "Little Hodge," "Lord Bantam," "Ginx's Baby," &c.

CHAPTER I.
THE DINNER BELL.

Ding-dong, ding-dong, ding-dong, ding-dong, ding-dong, ding-a-dong! The great ship Kamschatkan, 3,500 tons, Captain Windlass, R.N.R., commanding, had cleared the Mersey, and was running up the channel for the west of the Isle of Man, the breeze being light at N. E., and her speed twelve knots. But for the thud and vibration of her screw twirling on the great shaft in mighty revolutions to the splendid play of a pair of Penn's marvellous engines, whose enormous cylinders oscillated to and fro with an ease and quietness that was almost appalling to a spectator; and but for the evidence of their eyes, as the green-set river banks, with their charming panorama of wood and field and mansion, with here and there the spires or towers of hamlet churches, and all the other sweet features of English scenery, had swiftly passed from view, the passengers would scarcely have believed themselves to be driving through the water nearly at the speed of a racehorse—six hundred of them, with bag and baggage, and some thousands of tons of merchandise into the bargain.

Less than three hours before, the majestic vessel displayed from the pier, to the eager eyes of the last batch of first-class passengers, who were with much ado embarking on the tender, her long and graceful hulk floating out in the middle of the noble river, the Union Jack at the stern, the pennon of the steamship company at the fore peak, her masts and spars sharply relieved against a black cloud, while the sun from its westering path picked out with a golden burnish the complicated tracery of tackle and stay, of rigging, rope and spar.

The funnel vomited smoke, which the lazy breeze bore aft in a broad black ribbon, and across the river could be heard the bellowing of the great steam pipe, as the engineer, watching his guages, curbed the impatience of the hissing boilers. The tiny tender, rolling in the slight swell of the river, came bowling alongside with her deck crowded. From amidships to the bow of the giant vessel steerage emigrants pressed to the starboard bulwarks, to watch the embarkation of the few scores of "felloe" passengers who were to occupy the luxurious cabins, and enjoy if they were able the rich fare, of the saloon deck. The canny Scotch and Canadian passengers, who had gone aboard by an earlier tender, and had seen and "nobbled" their stewards and stewardesses, and settled down comfortably in their cabins, and secured the best seats at the table, now peered curiously over at the later arrivals, with whom they were to eat and drink and talk and quarrel and vomit in friendly community for the next ten or twelve days. These astute persons had already studied the list of passengers which lay before the purser in the saloon, and had to some extent drawn therefrom their own conclusions as to the chances of a pleasant company for the voyage.

Meanwhile, amidst much uproar, immense confusion, wholesale giving and disregarding of commands, murderous heaving about and pitching down of luggage, screams, oaths, angry words, laughter, shouts of captain, mates, stewards, and seamen, and no little chaffing from the leviathan to the cockboat and back again, suddenly a bell clangs, "All ashore!" The captain roars from the bridge to the tender, "Cast off there!" The steam rushes out with a deafening clangour that drowns "good-byes." The tender, darting off amid a cloud of waving handkerchiefs, and a feeble cheer, takes away and leaves behind a few aching hearts and crying eyes; and then suddenly a little bell rings from the bridge. A man below lays his hand on a steel rod; it moves slowly. It moves! There is a second's pause, a rushing, mighty sound through the bowels of the great ship, a quiver; and the screw, at the bidding of that slight command, twirls its tons of iron fluke through resisting tons of water, just like a child's toy-windmill in a breeze. Anon, with a shudder that thrills every heart on board, from the experienced captain to the new cabin-boy — from Sir Benjamin Peakman, K.C.M.G., the swell of the cabin, down to John and Betsy Smith, children of John and Betsy Smith from Dorsetshire, steerage passengers, who are leaving starvation at home to risk it abroad—the leviathan majestically moves forward.

"We are off!" says Sir Benjamin, with a slight trace of excitement in his tone, addressing his daughter, a young lady of eighteen, fresh from a crack school near Windsor, where she has been trying to learn amongst relatives of royalty, the accomplishments of an aristocrat.

"We're off!" says Mr. Sandy McGowkie, of the firm of McGowkie and Middlemass, who keep a "store" at Toronto, where everything a man or woman can wear or use or waste in the way of "dry goods" is sold, to yield the thrifty Scots a handsome twenty thousand dollars a year clear profit. He speaks to a neat-looking little Scotchwoman, with a blooming face — just now a trifle pale — and bright eyes, and a fine row of pearly teeth, which she displays to perfection as between a sob, thrown after the tender, and a smile, meant for McGowkie, who, however, does not see it, she faintly echoes, "We're off!" Honest McGowkie has just brought this little woman from Aberdeen, his native city, where she has figured for a few short years back as pretty Miss Auldjo, daughter of the Reverend Andrew Auldjo, the well-known U. P. minister. That worthy—having come off with them in the earliest tender, and given them many a word of sober warning and good counsel, along with his parting blessing, emphasised by a brief exercise of prayer in their little cabin—can still be discerned on the paddle-box of the tender, conspicuous by his great height, waving up and down a tear-damped pocket-handkerchief with the ungainly regularity of a semaphore, or a flag signal. For the staunch old man is going back to a widower's home, and to his Lord's work, with a shawdowed albeit a steadfast heart.

"We're off!" cries poor little Miss Beckwith, a young lady somewhat short of forty summers, in a dingy grey travelling dress and coarse straw hat with a blue veil of mine-penny net, which she drops over her pale face and moist eyes, as she takes from her bosom a well-worn locket, containing the photograph of a man—a man not handsome, and made even ghastly by the ill-used sun, which often so effectively resents the work of the so-called "artists" who endeavour to adapt him to their vile purposes. But she kisses the glass that protects the picture, and her poor little heart, which has throbbed to many a sorrow, pulsates rudely against the whalebone fencing of her stays—her oldest and staunchest friend in the world. She is departing—the steamship company having agreed to carry her first-class at half price, for I can vouch that steamship companies have both consciences and hearts—to try her luck as a governess in Canada. That photograph is one of her brother, a hopeless "ne'er-do-weel," whom she has practically been keeping for years out of her small earnings; from whom she is indeed now trying to escape; who only last night, in the poor inn they stayed at in Liverpool, got drunk, and struck her, for not leaving him the few shillings she had kept over to give her a week or two's chance of life in America; a brute whom she left snoring this very day in a drunken slumber, and all unconscious of her sorrowful parting kisses. Great Heaven! what bloodless and bleeding hearts get linked together in this mad world of ours!

"We're off!" says a seedy-looking man, with a sharp, cold, Jewish face, who has restlessly moved to and fro among the crowding steerage people, averting his features whenever they were glanced at, however casually and drawing low over his forehead a great dirty-brown felt wideawake that looks fit to serve the gloomy turn of a famous night-prowling poet. Sharply has this man, and with increasing restlessness, been watching the arrival of the tender; quickly has his eye run over its company and taken a measure of every man and woman on board; anxiously he sees the steamer at length depart with its lightened load; eagerly he watches the captain, leaning on the rail of the bridge before he gives the critical command; and deep and grateful is the sigh he heaves as he sees the skipper's hand rise and gently touch the button which sends the order for the mighty machine below to begin its labors. And now, drawing a deep breath, he smiles sardonically on the people around him, and cries aloud, "We're off!" "Thank God!" he adds to himself, with a quaint and profane stroke of piety. It is the gratitude of a heart evil and full of evil apprehensions.

"We're off!" says a man to himself in the captain's cabin, feeling the first thrill of motion, as he lies on the velvet sofa, and glances round the darkened chamber, where his valet has piled up, in extreme confusion, bags, valises, rugs, sticks, and boxes—but, dressing, despatch, or otherwise—enough for a batch of officials on a Queen's Commission. "Ha! we're off," he says sighing, "I wish I were ashore again. I declare I do." And he turns his face to the cushion and lies there motionless, but occasionally grumbling to himself.

This man had the best cabin in the ship, on the upper deck, starboard side, at the stern end of the row of deckhouses, which embraced, as is usual in these big vessels, the cabins of captain, purser, doctor, the ladies upper saloon, and the smoking-room, besides enclosing the "companion" leading down to the spar-deck and its port and starboard line of cabins. The captain, for a consideration, had agreed to give up this luxurious place for the voyage, and be satisfied with his great chart-room amidships, under the bridge, where there was every convenience for sleeping, and where he was within hail of everybody. Only the day before the vessel sailed had an agent arranged with the owners that his client should occupy the favored room astern.

But we shall have gone over the whole vessel before we return to our sheep, so we come back to the huge dinner bell, which the youngest and most energetic steward—like the king of the "ghouls" in the tower in Poe's celebrated jingle is wringing with all the zest and ferocity of a madman. Horrible, jovial bell! To-day every one may call it, with Byron—

That tocsin of the soul, the dinner bell!

but to-morrow afternoon, driving up beyond the north coast of Ireland in the teeth of a nor'-wester, when that madcap villain stands there, and for five full minutes bangs and jangles that brazen bowl about with a brutal jollity, and over the creak of stay and warping plank, and the shivering thud of the waves on the dead-lights and on the thin iron skin of the ship, the wild and wanton brawl of that metallic voice will sound like the crack of doom—it will thrill to many ears as if it were the demoniac howling of a spirit of the storm, or like the hideous cachinnation of some diabolical cynic sitting at the foot of the companion, and laughing over the sorrows of the wretches who, huddled and cowering and squirming in their narrow berths, have that horrible sensation of going up to heaven and going down into the deep, so well described by a psalmist, and have become for the nonce utterly indifferent where it might all end, if the infernal torture could only be straightway and for ever terminated. —But here, again, we must pull up our too active Pegasus. To begin, we were too retrospective; now we are proposing too far. For the moment, at least, when this hideous jangle, inadequately reported in our first sentence, startles the ship, the sea is smooth and the air is appetizing, and from nearly every cabin, with few exceptions, ladies and gentlemen and cads and counter-jumpers are streaming into the great saloon.

In the broad, long, low room, with its row of round-eyed lights, its polish-gilded cornices, and flashing mirrors, two tables are laid out on either side. That to the right, entering on the port side, is the captain's table, at the top whereof sit those whom he selects for the honor to the number of twelve, friends of himself or the owners, and distinguished passengers. On the left is the purser's table, frequented mostly by bachelors, old and young, and by leary commercials, who are married when at home, but are traveling for the voyage en garcon—a most lively table, where the purser genially encourages a vast consumption of strong sherry and stronger whiskies, where rough joke and broad story are never wanting; and where, however dark or unweatherly the day, the men come up to the call of the imp with the bell, the strong stomachs of these practised voyagers ever standing out manfully against the perturbing efforts of storm and wave.

Soup is on the table. Many of the guests are seated. Stewards are standing at intervals of every ten persons on either side of the long tables curiously examining their squads of victims, and forming estimates of the probable amount of the gratuities when the voyage is over. A bell tinkles, the covers of the soup tureens come off with a flourish, their steaming contents are ladied out, and clattering spoons and smacking lips give testimony rather to the appetite than to the good-breeding of the general company. The benches are pretty well filled. There are eighty-seven cabin passengers on board. Here and there in the long ranks a hiatus is visible, the empty chair of some invalid, or weak-stomached man or woman, or of some one whose sorrow at parting is keener than appetite. There is also at first a considerable blank at the head of the captain's table. He of course is absent. So long as his ship is in the channel he will not leave the deck. But to the right and left of his seat several places are vacant. The cards of the persons to whom they have been assigned lie on the table-cloth.

"Where are the swells?" said a coarse-looking middle-aged man, with cheeks that looked as if it was no unusual thing for them to weather an Atlantic storm, and who sat at the foot of the captain's table. He addressed a young gentleman opposite to him, tall, with dark hair and eyes, well-cut features, and a reserved and haughty bearing.

The young man lazily lifted his eyes towards the speaker, and inquired rather with them than by his tone of voice—which was fashionably drawling and monotonous—"I beg pardon. What do you mean?"

"Why, don't you see," replied the other, not minding his fellow-traveller's manner, "there ain't any one at the head of the table, where the swells sit?"

"Oh!" returned the young man, quietly applying himself again to his soup. The red-faced man plied his spoon vigorously and audibly. When he had done, he renewed the attack.

"You know, I s'pose, that only the captain's friends and the 'aristocracy' are allowed to sit in the twelve first places?"

To Be Continued.

IRREGULAR BY SYSTEM.

The Ameer of Afghanistan Is Not a Believer in Punctuality.

Civilization, at least as we understand it, makes much of economy—a saving of money, effort and time. Moreover it teaches us that one of the most efficient helps to economy of any sort is regularity. Nevertheless the civilization of Afghanistan teaches the lesson otherwise.

Miss Lillian Hamilton, M.D., who occupied the important position of lady physician to the ameer tells some of her amusing experiences—among others of the lack of regularity in the ameer's household, and the reason therefor. She found that work begins in the morning when he is ready, when he is tired, work ceases. When he wishes to eat, dinner is served, and when he feels inclined to sleep the court is closed. He seldom rises before noon, though he may be astir early.

The difficulty is that as soon as he is astir every one is expected to be in attendance. The most important officials keep a servant waiting at the court door, to leap on his horse, and warn his master the moment the ameer wakes.

Being so unused to punctuality himself, the ameer cannot understand it in others. Miss Hamilton says, that one day when she had been sitting with him, she noticed that it was about her lunch time. Accordingly she excused herself, explaining where she was going.

"Are you hungry?" asked the ameer.

"No, I cannot say I am."

"Then why are you going to eat?" he persisted. "What a strange idea." Again she explained that it was her lunch time.

"Lunch-time?" he said. "Who made it your lunch-time? And what has that to do with it? I should have thought appetite was what had to be consulted, not time."

The treatment of servants was another subject on which the stranger found her ideas had to be remodelled. She quickly dropped into the habit of being as free and easy with them as was the custom.

"Indeed," she says, "I should have gained nothing if I had tried to keep them in what we should call 'their places.' They would not have understood it, because they were not accustomed to it. Moreover you could never be quite sure what their places were, they changed about so. I shall never forget my surprise when I met the ameer's old doorkeeper riding some distance outside Cabul, surrounded by quite a retinue of servants. He was on his way to Kandahar, of which city he had just been made governor.

"Several of the ameer's own relations are table servants. This is, indeed, rather a coveted post, as it often means advancement. But when they have laid the cloth—on the floor, of course—and placed the dishes on it, they sit down and partake of the repast with the rest of the courtiers."

POSTOFFICE AUTO-CARS.

Experiments Made in England and How They Worked.

A novel feature of the yearly report of the British Postmaster-General, which has just been issued, consists in the account of experiments made with motor vans driven by oil, steam and electricity. An oil motor car, the property of the British Motor Syndicate, was engaged for two separate weeks, in the first instance conveying letter mails between the General Post-office, and the South-western district office, and on the second occasion between the latter office and Kingston-on-Thames.

For the first week there was a nominal charge of 26s., said to be the out-of-pocket expenses of the syndicate, whereas for the service which the motor car displaced in the week, about £6 would have been paid under the contracts, and for the service to Kingston rather more than £5.

The work of the motor car was performed satisfactorily, but the experiment was not pursued, as the syndicate were desirous of constructing a more suitable car. For the next experiment a steam motor car was engaged, the property of a private firm, and the vehicle was employed for six weeks conveying parcels between London and Redhill, The price charged was £7 a week, compared with an amount ranging from £11 to £14, the estimated cost of a pair-horse van of like capacity. As a rule, the journey was performed in from ten to twenty minutes less time than that allowed for a horsed conveyance.

An electric motor car, belonging to the Electrical Vehicle Syndicate, was employed on town work for four weeks. One or two accidents of a minor character occurred, giving rise to delays, but in other respects the work was satisfactorily performed.

Arrangements have since been made for extended trials, and it is confidently hoped that the results will show that motors can be permanently used with advantage to the mail service.

WEST INDIAN HURRICANE

SCENES AND INCIDENTS OF THE TERRIBLE STORM.

A Woman's Account of the Desolation Wrought in the Island of St. Vincent.

This account of the recent hurricane in the West Indies forms part of a letter written by a woman at Kingston St. Vincent, to a friend in this country:

"The hurricane of Sunday, Sept. 11, was one of the most terrible that this little island of St. Vincent or any other of the West Indian islands have ever witnessed. It only swept over Barbadoes and St. Vincent, passing the other islands by. The morning was dark, cloudy and gusty, but not enough so to alarm any one until about 8.30 a. m., when from our window we could see the schooner Ocean King and the sloop Sylvia dragging their anchors and going out to sea, one with a few men on board, the other with no one. The sloop Water Witch soon followed and the captain and crew were all drowned. Then the wind rose terribly. We could see huge trees breaking in pieces, houses going down like packs of cards, branches, slates and beams from falling houses flying about like leaves.

"The house shook and trembled as though there were an earthquake, and the noise of the wind was so terrible that you would see a house fall next door to you, and yet would not hear a sound when it fell. You would see huge trees uprooted as though they were weeds. Our house was strong, and stood it, but almost every small house was blown down.

IT WAS TERRIBLE.

to see the poor people from the different villages flock into town for shelter. All the churches except the Presbyterian are damaged badly, but the people had to go into them for refuge. The hospital had the roof of the middle wing blown down, endangering the lives of several people in that ward, who, through the bravery of our dispenser and an assistant, were all rescued.

"There were two distinct blows, as they are called here, the first form 9 a.m. to 12, and the second from 12.15 p.m., to about 3. Directly the first lull came, my father, who is in charge, of the hospital, left us to go there, and we did not think he could have arrived before the second came on. He sheltered himself in a stone bath on his way. The streets were so dangerous with so many things flying about, that many were wounded in them, but the greater damage was done by the houses falling on the inmates. Over 240 wounded were attended to in the hospital, my father being the only doctor there, though several people assisted him, among them two medical students.

"The two doctors had to go to the out district, where the number of people with wounds and broken limbs is very great. Some of the accidents are frightful. One little boy now in the hospital was almost cut in two. Some had both legs broken and half of the face cut open. One lady was killed by a piece of galvanized iron which severed the head from the body at one blow.

"It is calculated that the Government will have to feed over 20,000 people. All the crops are gone. All the mills and boiling houses, etc., for sugar making are flat. Every bread-tree the mainstay and principal food of the people, is rooted up or else so shaken at the roots that it is dying. How they will all live

GOD ONLY KNOWS;

and the little children—oh, it is so sad to see them, poor little ones, crying for more food, and there is no more to give them than just their daily portion. I myself helped to feed those who were to get out-door relief. We fed 238 apart from those at the church, grammar school, kirk and Court House; it is so sad to hear the poor people at the kirk (it is right opposite to us) singing hymns in the early dawn and at night.

"The hurricane itself was the most terrifying thing I had ever gone through. We all stayed in a strong little room downstairs, but every minute I would run upstairs to the windows though that was most dangerous. At times the rain seemed to come in a circle, from all four quarters at once, so that you could see nothing. Then it would fall straight for a minute, and you would catch, a dark, gloomy glimpse of flying beams and falling houses, half-naked people and uprooted trees. Then suddenly a sort of wave of light would come, like the glare from a fire, and you would move from the window, as though it could about scorch you, it was so vivid. Then the dull, dark look, would settle down again. The sea, too, was mountains high. Two big ships are high and dry on the beach in Kingston and two big American vessels bringing flour to Barbadoes are ashore at Georgetown.

"But the experience of those whose homes were ruined, and who were glad to crawl through the ruins into a cellar to save their lives, was terrible indeed. One girl I know saw a wall fall on her mother so that only her head was uncovered, and in spite of all the efforts to move the things she could do nothing but let her mother die before her eyes. Another, a man, heard his wife's screams under the ruins, but could not get at her until the next day, when she was quite dead. Many of the colored people have gone mad from the fright of it. The country is ruined hopelessly, and how we are all to be kept from starvation, black and white alike, Heaven only knows."

TIPS FOR MANUFACTURERS.

A correspondent, in discussing the keen competition and prospects of the wool trade, says that the manufacturer who wishes to stay in the race in these times must equip his mill with the best machinery that money can buy, and the best overseers and help he can hire. If he should try to compete in the markets while using old worn-out machinery and inferior help his time in the woolen business will be short unless he is possessed of great wealth, and wishes to manufacture for pleasure only. This is simply a confirmation of the experience of mill owners in other branches of trade. Everything else being equal, it is the mill or factory with the most modern machinery that pays the best.

AN OBJECTION.

Do you read Shakspeare? asked the old-fashioned citizen.

Well, answered Mr. Meekton, we have an expurgated edition that Henrietta brought home last Christmas.

There are some passages in the great poet's work not exactly suited to the young.

Oh, it wasn't the young she worried about. But she insisted on having the set rebound so as to leave out The Taming of the Shrew.

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