

Clouds of Even.

From the heights... Above me, far above, across the silent sea. Those fleets of beauty fast do move before the wintry wind they flee...

—ALPHA.

THE MASTER OF THE CHRYSOLITE.

Captain Anderson stood alone in the world. But he was one who could stand alone, for his will was strong and his affections were weak. Those who thought they knew him best said he was hard, his heart a stone...

So as the mate's back was turned, John Anderson took a revolver from a locker and charged it; then, ascending the companion ladder, he walked to the break of the poop, with his hands buried in the pockets of a pea jacket.

"All hands 'bout ship!" cried the master. The wounded boatswain, raising himself for a moment on one hand, piped faintly and fell back unconscious.

Such incidents as these gave John Anderson an unenviable reputation among sailors. It was seldom that some error served him twice. Two times under him were more than enough to be stood, and from his subordinates, therefore, he gained nothing but hatred and fear.

"Well, now I think of it again, I believe my brother did say she was devilish old—a strange coincidence. Still, she was a fine model of a boat. What'd ye think yourself?"

"The very remark I made myself only yesterday. Yes, we agreed she was a pretty boat; and I admit, from sheer sentiment, I cannot bear to think of her being chopped up for firewood. So inharmonious, don't you think?"

"My brother told me he should not mind seeing her end her days as a picturesque wreck, but to sell her for matchwood was barbarous. I was really of the same opinion. And—couldn't it be managed for her, Captain Anderson?"

"Now before your judge, hear me captain, I feel sure you could find the man if you chose. See, the 'Chrysolite' is insured in the Jupiter Insurance Company for £9,000. Here is the policy. And the man that carries her from the axle, and makes a picturesque wreck of her will care the gratitude of Messrs. Ruin and Ruin, and £9,000 besides."

But the world was wrong. The Captain himself was sometimes given to metaphysical speculation, and even he was puzzled to know if his heart had a whit more feeling than any other pumping engine. Women he looked upon as frivolities of vanity to which he could not reconcile his stern nature; and men he regarded as instruments to be rigorously disciplined, not falling at the same time to discipline himself. His heart was of no use to him except to circulate his blood. In default, therefore, of loving anything, he fell naturally to pursuing a difficult task—the piling up of a mountain of gold. This was congenial solely because it was difficult, and difficulties overcome were his only sources of satisfaction.

Now it happened that a new firm trading to the East, in competition with Messrs Ruin & Ruin, had made advances to Captain Anderson with a view to engaging him in their service; and as they offered liberal terms, including a handsome percentage, it was not long before the old seaman was won over. Here is a chance, thought he, of heaping up my mountain so much the more quickly, and I am determined that my actions shall not be hampered by sentiment. Notwithstanding this last thought, he found it a very unpleasant thing to break with his old employers, one of whose ships he had commanded for a score of years. But he would get scott free of them before he finally concluded negotiations with the new people. And so it came to pass that one morning he walked along Billiter street with his twenty-year-old commission in his pocket.

It is curious how fond real old salts are of dress when ashore. Here was John Anderson in a top hat and kid gloves, looking anything but at home in them. The glossy hat was mockery to his bald, sea-worn face, and his big knuckles were almost bursting through the soft kid with indignation at the affront put upon them.

He resolved the chambers in which the firm of Messrs Ruin & Ruin was established, ascended the staircase—for the office was on the second floor. The senior partner was within, and the captain was admitted into his room without delay. "Glad to see you, Captain Anderson," said Mr. Ruin in an unusually cordial tone, at the same time shaking hands. "You've made a capital passage, and freighted the 'Chrysolite' well."

"My dear captain, we could not hear of it! We're too old friends to part like that!"

"I can't accept it, Mr. Anderson; I can't indeed," replied the owner, picking up the parchment, and "And I'll tell you why. My brother and I have been thinking matters over and we've really been obliged to confess, for conscientious sake, that the 'Chrysolite' is getting old."

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Anderson only took up his hat and walked slowly out of the room. He had not descended many steps, when he turned back and re-ascended the door.

"No, sir," he said, "it can't be done. I must think it over, and—no—it can't be done." With that he went his way, miserable.

The same night he received a letter by post. It contained his old commission, reinstating him in the command of the 'Chrysolite'.

Four months later the 'Chrysolite' was unloading a general cargo in Mauritius Harbour. Captain Anderson had thought it over.

The quay was quickly covered with Manchester bales and Birmingham cases, and it was not long before the tackle at the main yard arm was set a creaking as the baskets and sand-ballast were hoisted up to be poured into the empty hold. No such luxuries were there as steam winches; not any of those modern appliances for light labour.

Anderson put the glass into his pocket. He was sullen and determined. He stood motionless for full half an hour, trying to repress the workings of an aroused conscience, but his thoughts would not let him alone.

Some of the hands had grumbled at not having more liberty to go ashore. In an excess of passion Anderson made answer: "To your kennels, you dogs! I'll put you ashore soon enough, and I'll warrant you'll stay there longer than you care for."

It was indiscreet language, and the men puzzled over it. They concluded that the skipper meant to obtain their imprisonment at the next British port they should touch, for mutinous conduct, and knowing he was a man of a word they assumed their best behaviour.

Captain Anderson had not changed for the better. Hitherto he had maintained a firmness of discipline bordering upon severity, and he certainly had never relaxed from that attitude. Now he had become an incomprehensible mixture of indulgence and cruelty. The two elements were incompatible, and the more intelligent of his officers were not long in perceiving that there was a vicious and variable wind in their superior's moral atmosphere, under which his canvas strained or flapped unaccountably.

They imagined, to pursue their own figure, that his hand did not grasp the reason tiller with its customary grip, and that his barque was left more or less to the conflicting guidance of other influences. Many a time since his departure from England had the old sailor been stung with remorse at the unwritten tenor of his present commission. He would frequently try to look the whole thing in the face, would endeavor to account for the acceptance of an office against which his whole self revolted. He would recite the interview in the Billiter street chambers with his employer, passing over the preliminary parts until he came to the reward. Not he was not false enough or egotistical enough to call it a reward; he would regard it as a bribe. But he could never get further he always grounded on his reef of gold, and no tide of indignation or regret, no generous current of honor, had power to sweep him off again into the saving waters. Here the fierce rays of desire shot down upon the resplendent heap,

whose reflected glory filled the whole vision of the water with its lustre.

Anderson followed his mental inquiries to a conclusion, had he demonstrated to himself the depth of moral degradation into which he must be plunged, his pride would never have allowed him to do anything but redeem his uttered word.

As an illustration of the captain's lately acquired habit of indulgence, the most remarkable was his treatment of the watch on deck during the night. The man on the lookout, for instance, was in the habit of going to sleep if the weather made it at all practicable. The rest of the watch, some fifteen or twenty hands, followed suit, or even stalked back to the fore-castle, there to strolled themselves out on their chests and smoked. These things the captain connived at, and the men were only too glad of the relief to enquire too curiously into his reasons. The main object of a sailing ship's crew is to gain as much sleep as he can by whatever means, in pursuit of this end he will evade even those duties which are most essential to the safety of the ship.

One night during the middle watch the captain came on deck, and took to walking up and down with the second mate. The night was clear though dark. The "Chrysolite" was close-hauled on the starboard tack, and was making good headway under a clinking breeze. She was an old-fashioned, frigate-built, full rigged ship, such as one seldom happens on now, her quarter galleries, chain plates, top gallant bulwarks and single topgallant yards being all out of date among the ship-builders of today. It has been said that she had "rare lines," and the remark was just. A more imposing pile of timber was possibly never floated. She had plenty of beam to cope with the South Atlantic wave giants, and not too much sheer. Her fiddle stem was gracefully cut, and harmonized to perfection with the slight rake aft of her lofty masts. Her spars, also, were finely proportioned to the breadth of her hull. So that, with her canvas spread in an unwavering breeze, the Chrysolite was a stately creature and "a thing of beauty."

"Mr. Grant," said the captain, addressing his subordinate officer, "be good enough to take a star and work out the ship's position."

The second mate quickly brought his sextant, and took the altitude of a star convenient for his purpose. He then went below to the cabin to perform his calculations. The look out man, a ready sleeper, was in a heavy slumber, upon which the stiffening breeze made no effect, the rest of the watch had disappeared in the customary fashion. Captain Anderson was practically alone on deck.

He walked forward, leant over the weather rail, and directed his glass. He saw just exactly what he expected to see. There right ahead in the distance, the binoculars showed a long, thin streak of sparkling silver, appearing like a lightning flash held fast between the darkness and the deep sea. It was phosphorescent water playing on a sand bank.

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Ticklish Things. Coughs are ticklish things. Nowhere does the extravagant saying: "I was tickled to death," come nearer being true, than in the case of a severe cough. Do you know the feeling? The tickle in the throat, that you writhle under and fight against, until at last you break out in a profuse sweat of shame? Why not cure the cough and enjoy unbroken rest? You can do so by using Ayer's Cherry Pectoral.

Anderson cannot understand it, old sailor as he is, puts the helm down once more: once more she misses.

"Soon every stitch of canvas on the mainmast is swung about to face the breeze, while that on the foremast is hauled in. Although she be going at eight knots, that should check her."

"About this time Messrs Ruin & Ruin were more than usually interested in the shipping news, and one morning they saw under the heading of 'Wrecks and Casualties,' thus: 'MINICOY (MALDIVES ISLANDS)—The ship 'Chrysolite,' of London, went ashore yesterday night on the southern reef, and is now a total wreck. All hands saved except John Anderson master, who was killed by a falling spar.'

The result of the whole business had far exceeded the owners' expectation. It had been so neatly done, and the greatest comfort of all was that no one was now left who could tell tales. They did not exactly thank God it was many words for the death of their faithful servant. That was very sad, as of course it should be. But they thanked Him in all humility for a certain sum of £9000 which would have gone elsewhere but for—If he, Anderson, had had a wife or children, Messrs Ruin and Ruin felt almost certain they would have made provision for them. But they thanked God again that he had never married. All that was necessary to be done now was to send in a claim for the insurance money, and, if well advised, retire into private life.

Messrs Ruin & Ruin talked the matter over between them, congratulated themselves upon their prosperity, made no end of choice little plans for the future, and finally decided to forsake the commercial profession. And, indeed, they would have done so, but that the evening papers contained an item of intelligence, which, though less expected, and therefore more startling, contained just as lively an interest for them as the report of the wreck. It ran thus: 'It is currently reported that the Jupiter Insurance Company has failed heavily, and is only able to meet its liabilities with a composition of sixpence on the £.'

Messrs Ruin & Ruin still carry on business near Billiter Street, but their offices are now on the top floor in a very back alley.

It Gives all Sides. At all times Public Opinion has successfully maintained its reputation for fairness. Every shade of thought upon all topics is ever re-echoed in its American Affairs department; not one man's opinion but the opinion of every man who is at all representative. Public Opinion (published at New York) is the one journal that enables its readers to keep posted upon the happenings in every field of human activity. Four local paper furnishes information as to purely local affairs, and Public Opinion furnishes a view of national affairs. To go outside these two papers, except for purposes of special investigation, is unnecessary. For \$2.50 you can be thoroughly posted up for one year, \$1.25 for 6 months, 65c. for 3 months.

The good which eight or ten can no longer apprehend is yet as real an existence as when we could both see and feel it; nothing good can be ultimately lost; memory may still preserve it, and love carry us to it at last.

Anderson himself holds the wheel. He has put the helm up, and soon the great ship with swelling sails breaks out of the current. He feels the change in an instant; the hands know it too. But the danger is not past. Leaving the wheel to another, he runs quickly forward to lean over the weather rail. As he passes through the crowd of the fore-castle, the poor fellows cheer him rapturously. The fine old seaman doffs his cap and makes them a grand, manly bow.

He glances at the reef and then mutters quietly to himself, "She will never clear it, and God forgive me!" Then, wheeling around, he gives a command. "Let go both anchors! It is our only chance!"

Many hearts sink at the order, but in as few moments as possible, the cables are smoking through the hawse pipes. The anchors touch bottom, and hold. All hands clutch the stanchions or shrouds in anticipation of the shock. It comes. The ship, racing on, is brought up with a round turn of such sudden force as to shake every nail in her timbers. Aloft there is crash upon crash, and the lighter spars come showering on to the deck, bringing along with them ragged remnants of canvas. One man is struck down. The hawsers hum with strenuous vibration. The timbers at the bluff of the low crack almost vertically, until the ship's nose is well nigh torn out. The sensation is too great and the port cable snaps. The starboard one is tougher. But were it ever so tough it would not save the ship, for its anchor is dragging. Back she eags, gathered into her doom by the whitecap waters; until

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scrofula Any doctor will tell you that Professor Hare, of Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia, is one of the highest authorities in the world on the action of drugs. In his last work, speaking of the treatment of scrofula, he says: 'It is hardly necessary to state that the best oil should be given in emulsion, so prepared as to be palatable.' He also says that the hypophosphites should be combined with the oil. Scott's Emulsion of cod-liver oil, with hypophosphites, is precisely such a preparation.