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CHAPTER XXXIII.
"They'll get him, eh, Gilsby? He can't escape, can he?"
Mr. Gilsby smiled assuringly.
"Oh, no; certainly not. Quite impossible! You may make your mind easy on that point, Mr. Mershon. They'll bring him back in a few days."

Mershon drew a breath of satisfaction, and hurried out of court. Mr. Boskett glanced after him, and bled his eyebrows questioningly. Mr. Gilsby smiled.
"Both fond of this Miss Deane," he said, answering the unspoken question. "You'll bitterly disappoint my client if you fail to get a conviction, Mr. Boskett. But that's a certainty, I suppose?"

Mr. Boskett only smiled in reply.
The "Pevensey Castle" went on her way. There were a number of passengers, and the usual amusements and entertainments were arranged and successfully carried out; and there was a good deal of laughter and merry-making on board the big ship.

But Gaunt took no part in the quizzing, the concerts, or the dances. He craved for solitude, and he avoided his fellow-passengers and spent most of his time in solitary pacing of the least frequented part of the deck, or shut up in his cabin.

It seemed to him as if his heart would never cease to ache with the longing for the girl-love whom he had so nearly wronged, and whom he should never see again.
Declina was always before him, always in his thoughts; and as he imagined—and he could so easily picture her—her sorrow and horror at his conduct, he felt almost too wretched to live.

And yet he had not sinned wilfully. He had gone to Scotland to avoid her; he had been on his way to Africa to put a still greater distance between them, when Fate had led her to his rooms.

There was only one other passenger who took no part in the pastimes of the vessel; this was Mr. Jackson.

He, like Gaunt, spent his time pacing the deck, but in another part than that which Gaunt so restlessly trod. But, when down below, Mr. Jackson did not confine himself to his cabin, though he spent some time there. He was very often in the smoking-saloon, or in the purser's canteen; and there was always a glass of champagne or brandy and soda before him. He drank a great deal; but he was never intoxicated; indeed, his liquor seemed to take little or no effect upon him.

For some days he avoided his fellow-passengers, only speaking when

he was obliged, and then only in monosyllables. People on board a ship are always curious about their fellow-voyagers, and there was a general idea that Mr. Jackson had lost all his money in Africa; but this idea was dropped when Mr. Jackson one evening joined the inevitable card-party and took a hand at poker. He played every night; and he did not seem to care how high the stakes were. Nor did he seem to care very much whether he won or lost.

It can not be said that he added much to the geniality of the party, for he rarely spoke, and never laughed or even smiled. The other players regarded him rather curiously, and with a certain amount of doubt; for there was something peculiar and uncanny about his manner and appearance. His face was so unnaturally pale, his eyes so unpleasantly red and bloodshot, and he had a singular trick of looking up suddenly, in the midst of the game, with a vacant stare as if he were seeing something or hearing something that was not perceptible to the others; and one or twice he had laid down his cards and risen from his chair, as if he had forgotten that the game was in progress.

"Our friend, Mr. Jackson, has got something on his mind," remarked one of the players one evening, after Jackson had left the saloon.
He had walked out with a perfectly unmoved countenance, as impassive as a stone mask, though he had won a considerable sum.

"It's a drink, I think," said another.
"He drinks like a fish. Why how many glasses do you think he's put down while he's been sitting here?"

"And the extraordinary thing is, that it never seems to have any effect upon him," remarked a third. "Why, most of us would have been under the table if we had drunk half that young fellow has mopped up. You meet some queer characters on board a ship, don't you?"

Now and again Gaunt met or came across Mr. Jackson, and Jackson would always eye him sideways and give him a nod, which Gaunt returned in an absent-minded way. One evening Gaunt was pacing up and down on his favorite part of the deck, thinking, of course, of Declina, when he saw Jackson coming toward him. The moon was shining brightly, and Gaunt could see the young fellow's face quite plainly. It was working spasmodically, the lips were moving as if he were talking to himself, and his hands were clenched at his side. Gaunt stopped half mechanically in the shadow of a deck-house, absently watching the man.

Jackson brought up his walk within a few yards of Gaunt, and, leaning over the vessel's side, started out to sea with bloodshot eyes. Suddenly he put one foot on the gunwale, then drew up the other, and stood in imminent danger of falling over.

It looked to Gaunt as if the man were meditating suicide, and Gaunt sprang forward, seized him by the arm, and dragged him down to the deck.

"What are you doing?" he asked, sternly.
Mr. Jackson eyed him vacantly for a moment, then he said, without a smile:

"I wanted to see if I could stand there without falling over."
"Rather a dangerous experiment, wasn't it?" said Gaunt.

Jackson looked up at him with a kind of sullen defiance.
"Anyhow, it's no business of yours!" he said.

Gaunt smiled grimly.
"I suppose not," he said. "But I am not sure. If I had allowed you to fall over, you would in all probability have been drowned and I should have been accessory to your suicide; I

might have been charged with your murder."

At the word "murder," Mr. Jackson started and shuddered, and looked at Gaunt with a half-suspicious, half-gangly stare.

"What do you mean by that?" he said.

"Exactly what I say," said Gaunt. He saw that the young fellow had been drinking, and a kind of pity stole into Gaunt's breast; his own sorrow made him very tender toward the weakness and folly of his fellow-men. "Better go down to your cabin," he said; "and don't drink any more to-night."

"I'm not drunk," said Jackson, sullenly.
"No; but you've had enough," said Gaunt.

There was a touch of sympathy in his tone which appeared to affect the young fellow.

"I'm devilish wretched!" he said.
"My dear fellow," remarked Gaunt, "if all the men who were 'devilish wretched' flung themselves into the sea, how many passengers do you think would remain on board the 'Pevensey Castle'?"
Jackson looked at him curiously. "You don't look particularly cheerful," he said.

Gaunt froze instantly.

"Better go down to your cabin," he said. "I will see you down."

"Oh, it's all right," said Jackson, with a distortion of the lips which might pass for a smile. "I sha'n't try the experiment again."
"Don't," said Gaunt, quietly. "Nothing in this world is so bad that it might not be worse."

"That's a lie!" remarked Jackson, laconically.

Gaunt made no response, but accompanied the young fellow as far as the saloon stairs, and waited until he had entered his cabin.

The next morning Mr. Jackson passed him on deck with a casual kind of nod; but after Gaunt had passed, Jackson looked after him with a curious expression on his face.
There were half a dozen children on board, and though Gaunt had avoided his fellow-passengers, some of these children had, not so much attracted his attention, but forced themselves upon it; for there was something about Gaunt which exerted a magnetic influence upon animals and children. Declina felt it that first day on meeting him at the Zoo.

One little girl—a pale-faced little thing, whose mother was taking her to Africa in the hope of snatching her from the demon Consumption—had, on several occasions, contrived to attract Gaunt's attention, and once or twice Gaunt had stopped in his pacing and spoken to her; and the child had looked so pleased that he had got into the habit of pausing beside her deck-chair and talking to her about the ship's log, the absence of any toys on board, and her own complicated ailments. He would draw the shawl across her chest, or carry her and her chair bodily into the sun and out of the wind. He rarely spoke to the mother, who was rather afraid of the grim-looking gentleman; but Maude did not share her mother's fear and shyness, but talked to Gaunt with the frankness of childish innocence.

(to be continued.)

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