

CAPTAIN WESTWOOD'S WOOING

I.

"I thought I had told you to cease all correspondence with that man," said old Skipper Masterton to his daughter, as he threw down on the breakfast-table a letter the postman had just handed in.

"I cannot help Captain Westwood's writing to me," she replied. "I have kept my promise not to write to him without your consent, but I am sorry I ever gave it."

Marion Masterton put the letter in her pocket unread, for her father was in irritable mood, one, unfortunately for her, not unusual with him. She satisfied herself, however, as to the postmark, Montreal, the port for which the Tempest had sailed some weeks previously.

"He's at Montreal?" asked her father, inquiringly, although he knew well enough, as the arrival of the ship had long since been telegraphed to the firm of which he was managing director. This news he had been careful to keep to himself. His daughter's interest in the young commander of the Tempest did not please him.

"Why are you not reading your letter?" he asked.

"There will be plenty of time for that, since you won't allow me to answer it."

"And there will be plenty of time for him to write the next. It's the last time he takes the Tempest to America."

"The last time? Whatever do you mean, father?"

"Exactly what I say. I mean to get rid of him as soon as he has brought her back to Liverpool. If he will persist in writing to you, he will find himself without a ship."

The girl gazed at her father with wide-eyed astonishment, akin to consternation. She had hoped, and had waited, for his rancor to abate, but now it blazed forth fiercer than ever.

"I have sworn," he said, as he brought down his clenched fist on the table with a force that made the things standing on it leap and shake, "that my daughter shall not marry into John Westwood's family, and I shall keep my oath."

Argument or entreaty his daughter knew was useless, and she wisely refrained. Her father strode out, grim, angry, and relentless, and Marion was left alone to her thoughts and to the reading of the letter, the innocent cause of the outburst. Its contents were pleasing, as the mantling flush on her cheek evinced. The writer had apparently no premonition of the fate awaiting him at the end of the voyage. He anticipated the time when her father's purpose would change, and pictured a future of happiness for all concerned, with an increased measure for Marion and himself.

Meanwhile, Skipper Masterton had his own plans ready laid, and set out to put them into execution. He was only part-owner of the Tempest to the extent of half, or, in the language of the mercantile marine, thirty-two sixths. Skipper Westwood, his life-long friend until lately, and father of the young captain of the barque, held the other shares, with a corresponding interest in the management. It was to this fact that he owed his appointment to the command and to its retention after the friendship between the two older men had ceased.

Masterton's scheme was simply to buy the other's shares. In all likelihood Westwood would refuse to sell, knowing how much his son's position depended upon his own half-ownership. At one time most of the ships that hailed from the little port of St. Regulus, some eight or nine in all, had been owned in similar fashion. Provident old master-mariners had invested in this way the fruits of many years' thrift, and now Westwood was the last survivor. All the others had been bought out by Masterton, and at a figure which was far from recouping them. But they had to sell, or share with their co-owner in the payment of the heavy bills for repairs in foreign ports, which unaccountably figured largely during Masterton's joint management, and as unaccountably ceased when he became sole owner.

By such means he had become supreme in the little port. Opposition to him had been fraught with ruin to more than one, and his influence was now unquestioned. Only Westwood and his son refused to kneel under, and had the impudence to think of allying themselves with his family. Marion was a foolish girl to have anything to say to young Westwood, and all three would have to be taught submission.

II.

"Good morning, Captain Westwood," said Marion Masterton.

"Good morning, Captain Masterton," said young Westwood.

There was no inquiry concerning

each other's health. Matters had been getting strained lately, and all affection of the continuance of the old-time friendship had been gradually dropped. But coasting skippers, whether active or retired, are always "captain" to one another and to their female relatives.

"That's bad news from Montreal," said Masterton, at last. "Yes; more to pay for repairs than the whole freight for the double voyage. I wish you had seen me about it before sending the orders."

"Well, you weren't at home when I called, and I had to telegraph at once."

"I can't understand it at all. Your own ships are not so expensive, I reckon?"

"No; you see, since I've had them in hand they've always been well-found."

There was a sneer in this which the other was quick to note, with the implied innuendo.

"The Tempest ought to be well-found enough, considering what she's costing," he contented himself with saying.

"I've been giving things the most careful consideration," said Masterton, steadily regarding the opposite wall, out of the line of Westwood's glance, "and I've made up my mind to sell my share."

The other started, though he had been expecting such an announcement for some time. He himself had no chance of raising the money to purchase the offered share. It was hopeless, too, to look for a partner to take Masterton's place. That well-to-do owner would regard as his mortal enemy anyone who came between him and the success of his schemes, and no one in the neighborhood would risk such hostility, Westwood well knew. He also knew the process usual in such circumstances. It was not the first time that Masterton had become possessed of a whole ship by putting pressure upon a partner.

"I am afraid," he began to say, and then he checked himself. Why give himself away to Masterton? "Well, it's rather hurriedly this," he resumed, "but if you have made up your mind to sell I suppose it will be best for me to buy. What's the figure?"

The conversation was going exactly as the other had calculated. Westwood could not possibly buy, he knew. There was only one alternative—he would have to sell, and the determination of the price would lie with Masterton himself.

"I have been thinking the figure over," he replied, "and, as the barque is the worse of being built too long ago, and bills for repairs grow heavier every year, I will let you have her a good bargain—say, four thousand for my share."

"That's a very reasonable figure, indeed," said Westwood, in vain seeking to hide his real thoughts from his wily antagonist.

"Let me see. She cost thirteen thousand a few years ago. I'm making you, in fact, a present of a thousand at least, allowing for depreciation."

"More than that, Captain Masterton, more than that. I am sure it's very generous of you. I have always put my own share at six thousand myself."

"One likes to do an old friend a good turn. When will you have the money ready?"

It was this question that Westwood had been anticipating and planning to meet. His position was, as he well realized, absolutely hopeless. He would have to sell to his partner at a loss of two thousand at least. He had mortgaged his share for four thousand some years previously. The proposed transaction would swallow up all he was possessed of.

"I would like to consult with my son," he replied at length. It would at least stave off the evil day.

"Very well; say the end of next month. I'm anxious to be done with the barque, once for all. The last day of next month, then. She may be lost by then, and you would get the insurance," he said as he went out.

"You forget that my son commands her!" Masterton chuckled as he went home. "If she were lost, with young Westwood on board, it would be the best thing that could happen. It would bring Marion to her senses. She will have to be brought to them, whether or no," as the carrier said.

III.

The first thing that Skipper Westwood did when his partner had gone was to write to his son at Montreal, to apprise him of the impending stroke of fortune, or rather fate. He knew that it would be a heavy blow to the young man. The times were not propitious for the masters of sailing ships. The wind-jammers, as they are called, are a doomed race. Steam has ousted them from the regular and best-paying routes; and officers who lose their berths have to begin again, often at the lowest rung of the ladder, on board an ocean liner, if lucky—if unfortunate, on the board of a tramp steamer. The prospect would not commend itself to young Westwood, with his ambitions, and, above all, with his hopes of soon marrying Marion Masterton. That step would have to be postponed for many long years, and perhaps the engagement

would be finally broken off. All this passed through Westwood's mind when he had finished the letter and was left to the contemplation of a prospect dreary in the extreme. The ship, thanks to his son's energetic captaincy, had been paying well; now, with the change of owners, his son would be set adrift and his own income reduced to zero. And there seemed no way out of the difficulty.

Returning from posting the fatal letter—the harbinger of ruined hopes—he met Marion Masterton. He would have passed her unnoticed, so buried was he in his sorrowful anticipations.

"Are you getting so proud to recognize an old friend now?" she asked, playfully.

"I've just been sending bad news to Montreal," he said. "Bad for Harry and for us all—except perhaps, your father."

"There's nothing wrong with the Tempest?" she said, turning pale.

"I have just been writing to Harry. This is the letter."

"Has your father not told you anything about the barque lately?"

"He never has much to say to me about it now, but I have been guessing that something was going wrong."

"Well, you are bound to hear in a week or two from Harry, if your father does not tell you himself."

"Oh, Mr. Westwood, won't you tell me—and the very worst? I am strong and can bear it. Who knows but I may be able to help?"

It was not in any hope of this that Westwood told his story. He knew the girl's imagination would run riot in anticipation of evil, perhaps far in excess of the actual circumstances, and to spare her groundless pain he told her all he knew.

"I feared it was something worse," she said. "It was so good of you to tell me. I must put a postscript to Harry's letter—just a line to cheer him," she said, as she tore open the letter she was carrying. "I'll get pen and ink at the post-office."

And then she hurried away, with a cheery good-bye for the sad old man.

"Girls, the best of them, are quite helpless in business matters," he said to himself. "I am sure she hasn't the ghost of an idea how serious things are. A line to Harry won't stop the sale of the Tempest."

IV.

With her letter to her lover safely dispatched, Miss Masterton was now free to give anxious thought to the business considerations involved in the news she had just acquired from old Mr. Westwood.

"I must see Mr. Robertson at once," she said to herself. "I must have my lawyer's advice before I do anything in the matter."

Mr. Robertson was joint trustee, along with her father, of the modest fortune left her by her mother, who had died many years before. He was a "writer," as solicitors are termed in that part of the country, and was also manager or agent of the local branch of the National Bank of Scotland. It is not unusual for the functions of writer and agent to be combined in the person of one worthy individual. This fact was destined to prove useful in the sequel.

"I have called, Mr. Robertson," she said, without further preliminary, for they were old friends and he had known her all her life. "I have called to consult you."

As banker or as solicitor," he asked, with a twinkle, for gossip had been busy about matters concerning her father and the two Westwoods, as well as with her own immediate share.

"Well, about both?" she replied. "You are my trustee, are you not?"

"I have that honor, my dear young lady, along with your father."

"And can I get my money at any time I want it, and how much is it?"

"One question at a time, my dear. It was between six thousand and seven thousand pounds when your mother died, fifteen years ago, and has been in your father's hands since then, at good interest. I may add, and of course, on good trustee security. I am co-trustee, you know, and therefore responsible for the security's being good."

"And when is it payable to me? Can I draw upon it, say, in a month's time?"

"That depends upon your mother's will. I have it there in that tin box on which you see 'Mrs. Marion Masterton' in white letters."

Rising from his chair he had soon possessed himself of the will. He read it in a half-whisper to himself, while the girl strained her ears only to catch words here and there that were Greek to her.

"Well, Mr. Robertson?" she said at last, for he was sitting deep in thought.

"It's all right, my dear," he replied; "it's your very own money, of that there's no doubt. How much there is now I can't say until I look over the joint trustees' account. Quite ten thousand, I should say, at least."

Marion heaved a sigh of relief. It was a larger sum than her present purpose rendered necessary. "And when can I have it?"

"Immediately; that is to say, in a few days' time. We shall have to sell out the shares in which it is invested, but that won't take long."

"Then I may count upon getting it before the end of the month?"

"Certainly."

Marion rose to go, very happy in her mind.

"One moment," said the lawyer. "I've forgotten what your age is."

"Over twenty-one, I know."

"Then you know wrong. I'm not twenty yet—not for two months."

"Oh, dear, what a pity!"

"Pity to be under twenty? Wouldn't you like to be that yourself?"

"That's not the question, my dear young lady. This money is yours on the day you are twenty-one, and not before. Power of anticipation is debarred."

"Then it's too late. Whatever am I to do?"

The lawyer again glanced over the will. The girl's pleasure, so soon followed by the keenest disappointment, affected him deeply, hardened business man though he was.

He read aloud, "to be paid to her when she shall have attained the age of twenty-one years, if not previously married, in which case it shall be paid to her on her marriage-day."

"I am afraid there's no help for it," he said, kindly.

V.

It was the last day of the month, and the two partners in the ownership of the Tempest had met by arrangement in the chambers of Ferguson and Greig, the firm charged with most of Skipper Masterton's legal business. Skipper Westwood had taken with him Mr. Robertson, the solicitor, on that gentleman's own suggestion, as an old-time friend.

"There's nothing to discuss, gentlemen," said Masterton, who did not relish the presence of a solicitor for the other side. "Mr. Westwood has only to say if he will accept my offer to sell my half-share at four thousand pounds. If he does not wish to buy, I am ready to buy his share at the same price. Nothing could be fairer than that."

"I can't afford to buy, and I don't want to sell; but I suppose I must put up with it," urged Westwood.

"You can't retain a partner against his will," said Lawyer Ferguson. "Here are the papers for you to sign. I suppose you will pay off the mortgage now and be done with the business. Mr. Masterton, who holds the mortgage, will pay you the interest in lieu of notice, and that will just make everything square."

"Wait a minute," said Mr. Robertson. "I have something to say on this matter."

A clash of bells from a neighboring steeple drowned his voice.

"It's only a wedding," said Masterton; "let us get the business done with."

"I have instructions from a client," resumed Mr. Robertson, "to lend eight thousand pounds to Mr. Westwood, senior, or Mr. Westwood, junior, or Mr. Westwood, third."

Here a louder peal than usual burst upon their ears, but Masterton had already heard enough, and started to his feet.

"I have changed my mind," he shouted, as one who needs must. "Captain Westwood, old friend, we will just let things remain as they are. I like you as a partner too well."

"I am afraid it's too late," replied the lawyer, as soon as the bells had ceased. "I must carry out my client's instructions, and these are to lend the money to Mr. Westwood, and, on his refusal, to purchase outright. Here is a draft for four thousand pounds as from Mr. Westwood. He and I will settle matters between us afterwards. Mr. Masterton, I shall trouble you for your receipt, and for your signature to the papers."

"Who is your client?" asked Ferguson.

"We shall require the name for the necessary papers."

"Yes, yes, that's all right, of course. My client's name, I learn from the wedding-bells you have just heard, is Mrs. Marion Westwood, formerly Masterton."

"And me never to know anything about it!" stormed the old skipper, starting to his feet. "My own daughter!"

"It was your own doing. She got married so as to entitle her to her legacy and to save the Tempest for her husband. It's very fortunate for the young couple that the ship arrived in time. We shall have to hand over the trust-money, and the mortgage will be duly paid off."

Skipper Masterton glared angrily.

"Nay, nay, man," said the lawyer. "Don't take it so badly. You may have sold the ship cheap, but look at the fine son-in-law you've got. I deserve an extra fee for arranging about the marriage, and I am sure you will thank me some day. Come away, Mr. Westwood; I've to see the young couple off at the station for their honeymoon. You had better come with us, Mr. Masterton."—London Tit-Bits.

And somewhere they're sleeping under blankets.

A male gossip is nearly always looking for a job.

ABOUT THE HOUSE

THE SEWING ROOM.

Corset Cover Hint.—Make corset covers of your white shirt waists that are still good, but out of style. Cut out the neck, back and front and take out sleeves, making the arm holes larger. Finish around the neck and arm holes with ribbon, beading and lace.

Sewing Screen.—Make the framework of well seasoned wood, staining it any desired color. Cover the frame with flowered crumpe; put on without fullness. On the reverse side cover with cheesecloth, put on with a little fullness. Fasten both in place with gilt tacks. Extending across top and bottom of screen on the flowered side are pockets, made with fullness. These are each divided with stitches into compartments so the contents of the whole can be kept neatly divided. In them are mending supplies, odd bits of sewing and embroidery. Below the top casting is a spool rack, made of a strip of wood painted to match frame, and nails driven for spools to rest on.

Helpful Notes.—When making the plain circular or gore skirts finish the top of the skirt first, and put it on the band, then fold band, pin together and hang for at least a day before trimming and finishing bottom. The lancing stretches the seams and prevents the skirt from sagging after it is worn. When using cloth covered buttons on wash dresses do not sew them on as they do not iron well, but fasten on under side with a small safety pin, and when the dress is to be washed remove the buttons, string them on a thread, and after scrubbing and rinsing hang up to dry. If long tight sleeves are made of wash goods be sure to shrink the goods before sewing, or if that is not desirable allow an extra seam for shrinking, and then run the second seam in by hand to make the sleeves fit snug. Before washing remove this hand sewing and after sleeve is washed it will be just right. When braiding on delicate fabric have the stamping done on the under side, then trace it with a running stitch with fine thread, and follow this when applying the braid. This is a little more work, but prevents soil from the stamping chalk or fluid.

KITCHEN TIME SAVERS.

Pie Help.—To prevent the juice from running over when making berry pies, cut a three-inch square of plain writing paper and make into a cone. Just as you place pie in oven make a small cut in centre of upper crust and insert in this cut the small end of cone. The surplus juice will come up in the cone.

Three Things to Try.—Butter well the top of any kind of hot mush and set away to cool, especially for frying. It prevents a tough coating from forming. Keep bananas from turning dark in dessert or fruit salad by taking a fork and cutting crosswise. They are not so smooth as when cut with a knife, but will retain their natural color longer. When obliged to use hard water for dishes try adding a little sweet milk to the water and see how much easier to get a suds.

Bake Fish in Paper.—The following method does away with "fishy" dishes and disagreeable odors: Clean and wash the fish thoroughly, salt, pepper, and flour it inside and out sparingly; then roll in inside paper at least three times. Pinch the ends of the paper together, then fold back and pin, securely to prevent the escape of the juices. Bake in a moderate oven and allow fifteen minutes more than if baking uncovered. When ready to serve remove the paper, to which the skin will adhere, and place the delicious, juicy meat upon a platter. Garnish as desired.

SUMMER PESTS.

Death to Cockroaches.—A strong solution of common poke root mixed with dark molasses, equal parts, boiled to a syrup and spread on bread is sure death to cockroaches.

Cure for Ants.—A small quantity of tartar emetic, as much sugar, and cover with water. Put in a small dish or tin and set where the ants are found, and in a short time they will all be gone.

To Rid House of Flies.—To rid the house of flies, spray into the air oil of lavender diluted with hot water; this will cause the flies to leave and a delightful fragrance will be left. Screen all doors and windows. If not possible plant miniguettes in window and porch boxes. This will keep away both flies and mosquitoes. Do not leave any food lying around and do not eat food which has come in contact with flies. Spray garbage can tightly closed. Keep occasionally to prevent breeding. Pour kerosene in drains occasionally.

SHORTCAKES.

Sponge Cake for Shortcake.—One cupful of sugar, one cupful of flour,

four eggs, whites beaten to a froth, twelve teaspoonful of water, one teaspoonful of baking powder. Beat sugar and yolks of eggs, add the water, the flour, and baking powder, then the whites of eggs. Bake in jelly cake pans. Mash and sweeten two boxes of berries.

Orange and Banana Shortcake.—Separate two eggs, putting the yolks into a small bowl and the whites into a larger one. Into a cup put the grated rind of one orange and four tablespoonfuls of orange juice. Into another cup put the grated rind of one lemon and one tablespoonful of lemon juice. Have ready one cupful of powdered sugar. Beat the yolks of the eggs until they are like whipped cream, adding gradually one-half of the sugar. Then beat in carefully the rind and juice of the orange. Beat the whites until stiff, adding the remainder of the cupful of sugar, then the lemon rind and juice, beating thoroughly. Combine by pouring the orange mixture into the lemon, beat thoroughly while mixing. Drain the juice from the fruits and pour this orange cream sauce over the shortcake. Never put the fruit on the crust until ready to serve.

SUMMER SANDWICHES.

Meat and Pickle Sandwiches.—Chop the meat left over from a previous day, together with a sour pickle and spread on a lettuce leaf, put entire preparation between two thin slices of white bread.

Loaves for Sandwiches.—Half fill pound baking powder cans with bread dough and let rise until nearly level. Bake as any bread, and you have neat, round slices with no crust, suitable for lunch boxes, parties, or picnics.

HOME HINTS.

To prevent the smell of onions, which is so offensive on the breath, eat a sprig of parsley.

If a teaspoonful of vinegar is added to the water in which fish is to be washed, a most delicious flavor will be imparted to it.

Scrubbing brushes will last twice as long if they are put to dry with the bristles downwards. If turned the other way the water soaks into the wood and rots the bristles.

To Prevent Scorching Pastry.—If the heat of the oven is inclined to reach too high a temperature and scorch pastry or confectionery which is in the course of baking, a good plan is to place a tin or enameled saucer on the lowest shelf of the oven and fill it with water.

Sweet Cupboards.—If you are troubled with a damp-smelling cupboard or cellar, break up a lump of lime in a box and place inside, and all dampness and smell will quickly disappear. The lime should be then removed, as it left too long it causes dry rot in the woodwork.

Don't let your baby get into the bad habit of expecting to be rocked to sleep. When it is bedtime put him in his cradle, no matter whether awake or asleep, and leave him to himself. If this habit is formed from the first he will go off quite happily without any more attention.

To clean gold jewellery wash it in tepid water in soap lather to which a few drops of ammonia have been added. Rinse off with clean water, and, without wiping, put the article into a box of beechwood sawdust until dry, then brush off the sawdust with a very soft plate-brush.

To Preserve Carpets.—Carpets should be rubbed with a damp cloth rather than brushed, and if it is at all necessary that they must be brushed, this should be done by means of a covered carpet-sweeper with plenty of damp tea leaves. Of all ways of removing dirt from a carpet, the worst is by the use of the ordinary scrub brush, which involves the housemaid kneeling down in the dust.

A GRUESOME BEQUEST.

Extraordinary Legacy by the Father of Lord Audley.

Probably the most gruesome bequest ever made in a will was that made by Philip Thicknesse, a dissipated Englishman, who died in 1792. Some years before his death he had quarrelled bitterly with his son, Lord Audley, and to spite him had placed on the outside of the family mansion a board bearing this inscription in large black letters: "Boots and shoes mended, carpets beat, etc., etc., by P. Thicknesse, father of Lord Audley."

Finding he was about to die, he sent for his lawyer and drew up a will containing the following extraordinary clause: "I leave my right hand, to be cut off after my death, to my son, Lord Audley, who I desire it may be sent to him in hopes that such a sight may remind him of his duty to God after having so long abandoned the duty he owed to a father who once so affectionately loved him."

The dead man's wishes were scrupulously carried out, and his severed hand, enclosed in a hermetically sealed leaden casket, was forwarded to his son. There is no record as to how Lord Audley received his unwelcome legacy or how he disposed of it.