

UNCLAIMED LETTERS, REMAINING IN G. P. to Jan. 18th, 1912.

Table listing unclaimed letters with columns for recipient names and addresses. Includes names like Abbott, Miss Olive; Baird, Samuel; Braddie, John; etc.

A MYSTERIOUS QUEST.

CHAPTER XXX.

A GREAT HEIRRESS.

When the signorina finally summoned courage sufficiently to open the door and pass in, she was startled to observe three gentlemen present, and was greatly confused, notwithstanding the warning she had received, when she perceived that one of them was the artist. Surely this was not the interview she had expected when Mr. Degraw, of Cleveland, had set the hour for saving something to her of special importance!

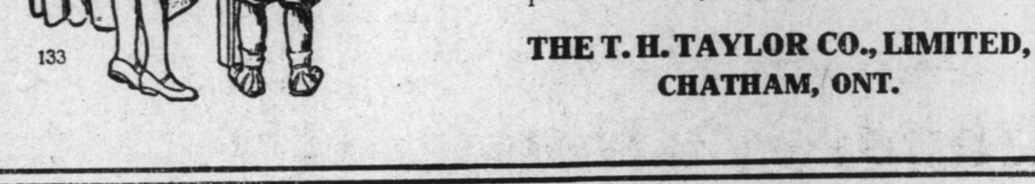
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SEAMEN'S LIST.

Table listing seamen with columns for names, ship names, and agents. Includes names like Rose, Frank; Warren, Augustine; Grandy, Capt. George; etc.

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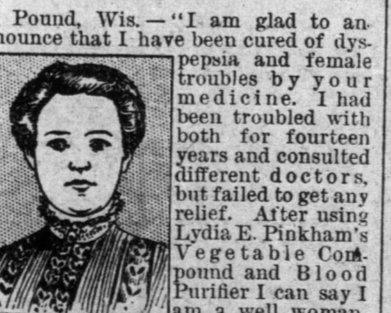
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happen to me before; and this is pleasant, isn't it?"

Her child-like look, her utter amazement and winning helplessness told upon two hearts there with almost equal power; but the artist sat silent, though he could not forbear letting his heart speak through his eyes. The other spoke, but his tone was studiously friendly rather than lover-like.

"Yes," he replied, "it is pleasant, because, though I have the honor to hand you the deed, by means of which, the moment it is signed, you will be made the owner of three million dollars worth of property, there is nothing in this bequest, nor in your acceptance of it, which should cause a blush to rise to your cheek or to mine. It is simply a gift made by a childless man to the woman who bears the name and characteristics of the being he most loved."

"Oh," she cried, with a flushing cheek, "will not some one call Hilary? I do not know how to bear such good fortune alone. Three millions! Why, it is incredible! I almost refuse to believe it."

"Perhaps this gentleman will help you to do so," he smiled, indicating the stranger who had accompanied him. "This is Mr. Walden, Miss Rogers. He is a lawyer, and will explain to you the technicalities of this matter."

She bowed abstractedly. She was looking at the deed which had been handed to her, and scarcely seemed to hear this introduction. "But this immense gift is made out in your name," she declared. "How is that? You are not the donor of this vast amount of money."

He smiled reassuringly, but to his rival's watchful eyes there was sadness in his smile, as there were evidences of growing discouragement in his whole manner.

"No," he assured her, "I am not the donor; the gift is made through me, but not by me. Let me tell you my story before we go any further, Miss Aspinwall can hear it later; you alone are concerned in it now." And drawing her to a seat, he took his place by her side and began his relation, in language similar to that which he had employed in making his disclosures to the detective the night before. She listened with wide-open eyes, that ever and anon filled with tears, of which she seemed unconscious; and when he had finished, her head sank in thoughtful reverie on her breast and remained in this position so long

that Mr. Degraw made a gesture to the lawyer, which caused him to quietly leave the room. As soon as the door was closed upon him, the former ventured to take her hand and say, with visible emotion:

"I sought you out in the first place, Miss Rogers, solely for the purpose what is revealed by this story I have just related. But in studying your character, I have learned to love you, and only refrain from making you the proposals which lie near to my heart, from an instinct of honor which forbids me to share the fortune which was intrusted to me to place where my judgment directed."

Startled and touched in her deepest sensibilities, she cast one wild look behind her. Yes, the artist had not left with the lawyer; he was standing where she had last seen him, in the deep recess of the window.

"Oh!" she remonstrated, "we are not alone."

But this Mr. Degraw knew as well as she did.

"I know it," he calmly rejoined. "I urged Mr. Degraw to accompany me, because I wished him to be a witness to your decision. My devotion and this money cannot go together, Miss Rogers; but if you tell me to tear up this deed—" His voice sank, his large and strong frame trembled.

"No," was the kindly rejoinder. "A word from me will summon back Mr. Walden. I expected to have to utter it. I only wish to be perfectly frank with you, and to make one attempt to gain the happiness which it is every man's right to enjoy. I have not benefited by the effort, but I hope I have not lost you esteem."

"Oh, no," she cried, breaking down, "if I only felt—as—as—" "I understand," he assured her. "Do not distress yourself. See! I have summoned the lawyer; he is coming back."

And almost before her tears were dry or her trembling ceased, Mr. Walden was in the room, and the papers were duly signed and the Signorina Valdi, who a moment before had owned nothing save what was contained in her small trunk, stood up before these three men, the undisputed possessor of millions.

Then, indeed, a marked change passed over her. From impressing the beholder with her delicacy, she seemed suddenly to have acquired breadth and height. Even her beauty took on dignity, and her step character. She was not less admirable thus, but she lost some of the touching grace which had won her the love of these two strong hearts. The artist, who was watching her with bated breath, now came forward with his congratulations. She received him with a smile that seemed to tell her heart's story; but the next moment a certain air of coquettish independence took the place of her first eager delight, and she made him withdraw again and take his stand by Mr. Degraw.

"Hilary! Why will you tell Hilary?" the signorina now cried. "A sight of her dear face might persuade me that this is not a dream."

To be continued.

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