

## NIGHT AND MORNING DREAMS.

I wake from dreams of the night,  
And the stars aloft are coldly gleaming,  
My dream is dark and strange with woe;  
Oh foolish heart! dost thou not know  
The dreams that are dreamed 'neath the stars'  
pale light  
Are nought but idle dreaming!

I wake from dreams of the morn,  
And the sun on high is shining fairly,  
The lark in the blue is singing far,  
Seeking in vain for the midnight star,  
And buds of the roses newly born  
Blush through their dew-drops pearly.

My dream bath fled from the light,  
But my heart is warm where its face was shin-  
ing;

Oh happy heart! thou knowest well  
What the morning dream doth sure foretell,  
Thine onward path will be glad and bright,  
Arise! and forswear repining!

## THE YACHT "BANSHEE."

BY PERCY FITZGERALD.

## I.

## HOW I CAME TO BUY THE "BANSHEE."

At one time of my life I was in very low spirits at the loss of a near and dear relation; and this feeling soon deepened into a sort of depression, which it was impossible to shake off. Though I was what is called "a writing man," and working morning, noon, and night, with an enthusiasm that made other occupations an enjoyment, still, the accustomed duties had now become as odious as the thirty lines of Virgil the schoolboy must get by heart before being allowed out to fly his kite. A friendly physician—Sir Duncan Dennison, who had studied thoroughly all the mental ills that the brains of studious men are not merely heirs to, but actually enjoy in strict settlement, such as "breaking down," "breaking up," or, what is more fatal still, "overdoing it,"—said, in his blunt way, that there were but two alternatives—going abroad, or going to Colony Hatch. "Clear your head of Isabella and Lord Robert, forswear pothooks and hangers for three months at least, or,"—he added mysteriously—"you may be found one morning using a pothook or hanger in a way very alarming to your friends. Let's see. Go to Homburg, Baden, Switzerland."

"Been there," I said, "for a dozen years in succession."

"Well, do you like the sea?"

"I used to, when I was a boy. Once on a time I used to row."

"The very thing. Get a yacht! Go away—get into storms—run into danger: be well browned and scorched. You will come back quite boisterous. The very thing!"

It was the very thing. I would get a yacht, and revive my old taste, which had been lying dormant for some twenty years, like my skill at marbles or hand-ball, which I am convinced a day or two's practice would restore. I was delighted at the idea; a faint enthusiasm was kindling within me. The recollections of breezy days; the boat lying down until the rail was under water; the peculiar gurgle or rushing sound of the waves; the independence;—all these things began to come back on me. There might still be a zest found in life, independent of the pothooks and hangers.

The first object was to secure a boat, and to this end I waited on various agents. The first, the Grand Yachting Company, professed to have five hundred twenty-ton cutters, three hundred thirty-ton, two hundred forty-ton, and one hundred schooners of every class and tonnage. I felt certain that I must suit myself at an establishment doing such vast business, and enjoying the confidence of such a varied scale of yachting interests; and that it must be difficult indeed if I could not provide myself in such a fleet. I was asked for a precise statement of my wants; and, to my surprise, found that there were, at most, but three or four vessels that were at all likely to answer to these requirements. I tried other establishments, and found that where the prices suited the boat did not, and that where the boat suited the price did not. All agreed that to get what would exactly "suit me" was a question of time; all agreed that in a month or so whole fleets would be coming in to be laid up, and that then would be my opportunity. Yachts, I have since discovered, are very like horses—hard to sell, and yet, strange to say, harder to buy. All the agents brightened and became enthusiastic when a delay was mentioned, and almost scoffed at the notion of the proper craft not being forthcoming.

One morning—it was at the end of September—I received a letter with a black-edged envelope. It ran—

"SIR,—I understand you want a yacht.  
"I have got one to sell.  
"She is a new boat, cost a deal of money, is fitted handsomely, and will take you anywhere.  
"A low price is asked,  
"If you come down to Southampton, any day you choose to appoint, I shall show her to you.

"I wish to part with her at once. She is fitted out, having just returned from a voyage.

"Her name, the 'Banshee.'

"I remain,  
"Yours sincerely,  
"STEPHEN BLACKWOOD."

I felt that this was a proper business-like man to deal with. There was nothing about him corresponding to the three hundred ton, &c., though there was a bluntness in his style that was almost surly. I started the very next day, and found him at the hotel whence his letter was dated.

He was a tall, black-haired, barrister-faced man, very hard in the features; one who, with suitable clothes and due amount of scrubbiness, would have had the true money-lending air. He was too genteel, however, for that, and was dressed in the best style. There was not the least nautical flavor about him, which was odd. A tall, Italian-looking woman was sitting with him, whose full, dark eyes expanded as they rested on me.

"Mrs. Blackwood," he said, as she rose to leave the room. "Now to business. What do you think of the boat? Does she suit you?"

"I have not seen her."  
"Not seen her?" Then we are only wasting time talking. Suppose you go and see her, and return here? She lies in the outer dock; not ten minutes' walk from this place."

There was something in this style I did not quite relish; but, as it was to be a matter of business, I did not mind. I went straight to the docks, and saw the "Banshee" lying out in the middle of the basin. There was an indescribable, solemn look about her—a solitary air, as she lay there, which struck me at the very first glance. Her hull was dark, and seemed to rest on the water in a dull, brooding fashion.

"Coffin-built, summut like," said a voice beside me; "but the best work is in her. No money was spared on her. Like to go aboard, sir?"

We went on board. The praise given was not too much. She was a beautifully-finished boat; her decks as smooth as a ball-room floor; brass-work, skylights, "sticks," spars, running-rigging, standing ditto—everything perfect, and everything handsome.

I went below. At the foot of the stair, to the right and left, were the saloon and ladies' cabin. The former seemed to me singularly gloomy, and somewhat like a dark study in an old house; but this, I found, was the effect of the sombre wood of which the fittings were made, and which I took to be ebony. This effect was the more curious, as the ladies' cabin was bright with the gayest chintz and pretty hangings, and the light shaded off by pink-lined muslin. The whole, indeed, was exactly the thing for me, save in one respect—the price. Such a craft could not be had under some six or seven hundred pounds, which was much beyond what I could compass.

I returned.

"Well, you have seen the 'Banshee,'" he said. "Do you like her?—and will you take her?"

"I like her, certainly; though there is rather a gloomy, sepulchral look about her."

His brow darkened. "What do you mean?" he said, sharply. "If you admit these sort of fancies, we had better stop here. My time, and probably yours, is too valuable to be wasted."

"It was one of the sailors," I said, carelessly, "who made the remark. His words were, that she was 'coffin-like.'"

He started up angrily. "This ends the matter. I decline to sell my boat to you, sir. I must say it is hardly polite of a mere stranger to make such remarks to the owner. I shall not sell her."

"Good," I said; "in any case I fear we should not have come to terms. You give me your opinion of myself with great frankness. I may tell you that you are too sensitive a vendor for me."

He looked at me, and laughed. "I am fretted sometimes. You don't know the bother I have had with this boat. As to her cut and air, I can't help it. Possibly the builder was a gloomy one, or—But come to business. Will you take her for six hundred pounds? Take it or leave it at that price."

This was less than I had expected, but more than I could manage.

"It is much below its value," I answered; "but the truth is, I can't go to such a price. So I must leave it."

"Why, what do you want?" he said; "not surely one of those twenty-year old tubs which you can pick up for forty or fifty pounds, and on which you have to lay out a couple of hundred before you can take an hour's sailing. Here," he said, giving his desk a blow with his fist, "take her. Take her at five hundred—four hundred. God bless my soul, can't you manage that? Why—"

"I take her," I said; "and the 'Banshee' was mine."

## II.

## WHAT I SAW IN THE "BANSHEE."

After my purchase of the "Banshee," I felt rather depressed than elated. I went to look for the man in charge of her.

"So you've bought her," he said. "Well you've made a good thing of it. There isn't a better boat afloat."

"But why was he so anxious to be rid of her?" The man looked at me steadily. "Why?" he said; "ah! that's it. She didn't suit him, I s'pose. Nor more than she may suit you; nor

no more than she may the gent to whom you sell her at the end of the season."

"But he seemed such a strange man," I said. "That's it again," he said; "strange men will have strange boats. Not that there is a word to be said again her. She's worth double the money."

The next duty was to find three men and a boy to work the "Banshee." That was done in half an hour. There was really nothing to be done to the boat; she was ready for sea; and it was arranged that we should start in the morning.

I had just done dinner at the hotel, when word was brought up that "Ned Bowden," the skipper of the boat, wished to speak with me. He was in some confusion.

"Sorry, sir, to put a gentleman to inconvenience; but the fact is I and my mates don't wish to sarve. We'd be obliged to you to let us off."

"Let you off?" I said. "What's the meaning of this?"

"It looks unhandsome, I know, sir; but it can't be done; and we'd rather not. You see, we've been afloat a long time, and its takin' men rather short not to let them have a holiday on dry land 'tween vy'ges. And so—sir—"

"I wouldn't keep men," I said, "on any terms, who would think of behaving as you have done. There are plenty of as good men to be got. You may go."

"Thank you; thank you, sir," said the man, much relieved. "Don't think hardly of us, for we are more or less druv to it."

"Exactly," I said; "I am at least entitled to know your reasons for such a scandalous desertion."

He shook his head solemnly. "Why, there's why's, and why's, you know, sir; and some why's concerns one man, and some another. The boat's a good one, and will take you anywhere and allwheres. And I've nothing against your honor."

"You may go," I said.

This was not auspicious as a commencement. But it was to cause no inconvenience; for a handsome Cowes yacht came in that very night to lay up, and three smart men, and a smarter boy, volunteered on the spot. There was a pleasant breeze blowing, so we determined to get away in the morning.

With that commenced a new and most delightful life. The first day alone showed me what a charming mode of existence yachting was; and I foresaw that very soon, by this agreeable process, I should be quite restored to health and rational enjoyment of life. There was a surprising exhilaration in that fresh, open sea. The blue, salty waves were at their rude gambols, like lions in their more amiable moments. The fresh, piquant air brought back appetite, and seemed to give new strength. The effect, in these small boats, is as though one were standing on a plank in the middle of the ocean, the waves being but a few inches from your feet. You are not, as in the greater vessels, screened off, as it were, from the direct touch of the waves and the breezes that sweep keenly over the surface of the waves. The day seemed to fly by too quickly; and when, about seven o'clock, we dropped anchor in a little harbor, I felt quite in good humor with the "Banshee," and could have patted it, as one would a faithful dog.

The boat was brought round to take me ashore, for I was going to dine at an hotel. As I was "pulled" away by four stout arms, I looked back at my new craft, and was struck by the same curious, dark, sullen look of her hull, and the inky blackness of her rigging against the sky. It gave me the idea of something coiled up—something solemn—and had not the gay, airy look we associate with a yacht. I stepped ashore, and bidding the men be steady and careful, and not neglect their duties, I went to the hotel and dined. After dinner I sauntered along the pier—always a pleasant and romantic entertainment for one given to ruminating—and then hailed the yacht. In a few moments I heard the faint plash of the oars, and presently could make out the dark outline of the boat as it drew near. It was pulled by the smart boy, as the men were ashore, and it was not yet time for them to return.

I sat upon the deck, smoking and looking round at the lights twinkling at the bows of many vessels around me, at the glare of the lighthouse—always a picturesque object—at the amphitheatre of lines of yellow light, that rose in semicircles on shore, giving the idea of cardboard pricked with a pin. I was sitting on a little camp-stool close to the skylight, when I absently looked through the glass into the cabin, which was lit up, and, to my amazement, saw—yes, saw a woman lying asleep, as it seemed to me, on one of the sofas.

I was almost speechless with indignation. These were the new, steady men, who had brought such characters from their last employer. Here was the wife or sweetheart of one of these fellows; and I remembered now how anxious they had been that I should stop at this place, which they knew well. Much put out—for at this time I had grown nervous and irritable—I called the boy.

"Where is Pile and the others?" (Jim Pile, was the name of the skipper.)

"At the 'Blue Jacket,' sir, on the pier."

"Get the boat."

I was pulled ashore again, fuming. The "Blue Jacket" was exactly opposite the landing-stairs. I sent him for the men.

"I want you on board at once," I said. "I am greatly displeased."

"Sorry, sir," said Jim Pile, who had an off-hand way with him. "What have we done agin rule, sir?"

"I'll tell you when we are on deck." They rowed away silently. When we were on deck I said to them, in rather a fretful way. "I tell you this will not do. I have been ordered quiet. If I have only got a yacht to be exposed to this sort of worry, I had better go back at once. It is intolerable."

"What have we done agin the rules, sir?" again asked Jim Pile.

"Look down there. Who has dared to do this?"

I looked down myself, as they did. The woman had gone. She had got away in some boat of the harbour.

"Very clever," I went on. "But I shall be a match for these tricks another time. And now take this warning from me. If it happens again, or anything like it, you will leave me on the instant."

"God bless us, sir!" said Jim Pile, with some impatience, "what have the men done? If it were only having a glass at the 'Blue Jacket.'"

"Leave it so," I said. "I am content to pass it over for this time. That will do. Go forward now."

They went away with a bewildered air. It was very cunning of the woman to have got away so quickly. However, we were to sail in the morning, and the wife or sweetheart, or whatever she was, would find herself, in vulgar parlance, "sold."

## III.

## THE STORM.

We sailed along all the next day; and a pretty stiff breeze getting up, the "Banshee" began to show that she was an excellent sea-boat. We were all satisfied with her, and she was pronounced "to get along like a spanker"—high nautical praise. During the day I was sitting below in the saloon—an apartment which I could not relish, it was so depressing from its gloom and melancholy. To amuse myself I called in the boy, and we both began to set things in order, clearing out old lockers, which we found filled with empty bottles and the usual odds and ends which accumulate in a yacht. There were empty match-boxes, old pipes, account-books, and a number of torn-up papers, and an old letter or two, also torn up.

Some words on a fragment of these caught my eye. They were: "I will not trust myself to you alone. You know I am in terror of my life of you. I believe if you got me on board with you, I should not get ashore alive."

These were strange words, and I pored over them long. To them was assuredly attached some history, but too intelligible, associated with the owner or with one of his guests. The owner, to a certainty; it could be all read in his rough bearing, and what I was certain of, his almost infernal temper, which, with me, could scarcely be kept within bounds. But then the lady who was with him had scarcely the air of being "in terror of her life." She was, indeed, rather confident; and it might be suspected that within her eyes was lurking a devil as violent as his. I speculated long over this.

We were now coasting, and the enchantment of this mode of life began to grow more and more on me. It seemed the highest form of lotos-eating. There was an entertainment in seeing the shore unwind slowly, as though it were a diorama, new and newer objects coming in front, as others disappeared behind. That headland had such a name—that village was so called—and there was the light. The entering a little port, with its small harbor, lighthouse, and tiny amphitheatre of houses, is like the discovery of a new country.

That day wore on, and evening began to close. We saw the light of the port we intended to stop at twinkling afar off. By ten o'clock we had dropped anchor. Jim Pile and his men came for leave to go ashore, which was granted, with a wholesome caution. I could not help asking the question, had they any friends or relations at this place. They declared that not one of them had been there before. Good. Then they must be sober, steady, and be back before twelve o'clock.

I was not going ashore myself, but remained on deck, looking on at that pretty night scene. It was a fishing port. The lights were twinkling on shore, and twinkling the more as seen through the dark rigging of the fishing-boats, huddled together as fishing-boats always are. The hours passed away—it came to eleven—to half-past—and then I heard the slow plash of oars. The men were returning punctually. As I stood up to take a few paces up and down—for it had grown chilly—I glanced carelessly down through the skylight, and—thought I saw something—some one below. I looked again. Yes, there was a woman lying on the sofa. I looked at her steadily, so that I should know her again. She was asleep, and was in a white dress, with a heavy Indian shawl wrapped up about her.

The men were now alongside. For the moment I did not think of the improbability of their having brought a person thus dressed on board; but as soon as they were on deck I said to Jim Pile:

"You seemed to think I was unjust in reprimanding you all yesterday. Come down with me to the cabin. Look there," I added as I entered.

The woman was gone! I passed hurriedly through the forecabin; tried the ladies' cabin—the pantry—the skipper's. She was not there—not in the vessel at all.

Then it all flashed upon me. I felt a cold,