

him. Half an hour passed, but he did not return. Opinions were divided as to whether he was having a *l'été-à-l'été* with the beautiful Jewess, or whether her grin, custodian was making it unpleasant for him.

II.

I had just stepped out on deck for a breath of fresh air, when Westcott suddenly brushed past me, with a strange, set look upon his face. He appeared so different from the gay, careless, young fellow who had left us a short time before. I was positively startled at the change in him. Instead of making for the smoke-room, he went straight down into the saloon, where I heard him call to the steward for brandy. It was plain that the adventurous youth had received some sort of a shock, which had sobered him considerably. We saw no more of him for the remainder of that evening.

The following morning he was extremely reticent upon the subject of his visit. We could scarcely get a word out of him about it. To all our questions he simply replied that he had learned nothing regarding the relationship between the girl and the man, though he admitted having had a conversation with the latter. He appeared so anxious to avoid all reference to the affair, and took such pains to have his escapade hushed up, we began to suspect there was something amiss. The general belief was, however, that he had fallen hopelessly in love with the girl.

Later in the day I happened to encounter him on deck, still looking uncommonly grave. He immediately took me aside as if he had something of importance to communicate.

"Mostyn," he said, in the most serious manner, "this is a shocking affair!"

"What is?"

"Why, about that girl."

"What about her?"

"Quite enough I can assure you. Listen: that lovely, innocent-looking creature is a murderess!"

"A murderess?"

"It's a fact, and a horribly cruel one into the bargain. That man who is accompanying her is a detective, and is taking her back to the States in custody. As soon as ever they arrive, she will be put on trial for her life."

"You amaze me!"

"I shouldn't wonder. I tell you it has been a bit of a shock to me—about the worst I have had for some considerable time. Last night the detective, whose name is Wade, gave me all particulars, and showed me a newspaper cutting with a full report of the case. Briefly, her history is this: It appears that her name originally was Rachel Adams, and she formerly resided at Hartville, in the State of New York.

About twelve months ago she married a man named Levi, a middle-aged, miserly Jew, but immensely wealthy by all accounts. The marriage, of course, was a wretched one, as was only to be expected under the circumstances. Before the year was out, the girl had murdered her husband in the most cruel and premeditated manner, plundered the safe and escaped to England. Wade was sent after her, and succeeded in arresting her in London."

"But, my dear fellow, judging by her appearance when we saw her on deck yesterday, she looks anything but a murderess."

"That is the curious part of it," Westcott replied, gravely. "Wade tells me he can't very well make her out. On ordinary occasions she seems as gay and lively as possible, and apparently is quite oblivious of the fact that she has committed any crime whatever. At times, however, the knowledge of her guilt appears to burst upon her all in a moment, and then he has actually to restrain her lest she should do herself a fatal injury. Of course," he added, pulling himself up suddenly, "the detective didn't want the story to be blabbed all over the ship; in fact, he asked me specially to keep it to myself, so I tell you in strict confidence, you know."

It was only to be expected that before the day was over, Westcott had told the same tale to two or three others—also "in strict confidence." A sensational report of this kind does not take long to spread on board ship. That evening the smoke-room was ringing with the news; poker and cards were neglected for the time being, and the men fell to discussing the case in all its bearings. It was evident that the general opinion was setting strongly in the girl's favour.

"Even supposing," said Kelston, a Cincinnati lawyer, "she was really guilty of this act, it must have been done in a fit of temporary insanity. Her whole bearing goes to prove this. I don't believe there's a jury in the States would convict her."

"Ah, but you lose sight of the fact that, according to Wade's statement, the evidence clearly shows the crime to be premeditated," put in Westcott. "Besides, he tells me there's a strong Jewish element in Hartville, and they are all up in arms against her. He declares they will move heaven and earth to get her convicted."

"That alters the aspect of the case considerably," remarked Kelston, reflectively. "If the Jews have the upper hand, I wouldn't give much for her chances."

"It's a blue look-out for her, certainly," said Senator Wiles, of Dakota.

Thereupon an animated discussion ensued as to what could be done for the