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the city. I sent messages by telegraph and telephone in every direction. I even ran down to Penzance, though I could ill afford the time to do so. But all to no purpose.

The last evening of my stay ashore came round. Recognizing my defeat, I had that afternoon put the matter in the hands of a private detective agency, that the quest might be continued in my absence. Feeling that I had done everything I could think of, I dropped into one of the theatres in the vicinity of the Strand, by way of giving my mind a rest. On the stair I met a boy with a bundle of programmes under his arm, and signified to him that I wished to possess one. While I fumbled for a copper I was surprised to hear him say:—

"The Tertius is in port again, I suppose, sir?"

I looked at him in astonishment. It was our stowaway, Matt Grimm. The row of shining buttons on his short, official jacket had made me overlook the fact.

"Oh, Mr. Manson," he hurriedly whispered, when I had looked him over, "couldn't you come and see the captain? He is so ill and out of sorts, I'm sure it would do him good."

Somehow, it had never once occurred to me to couple the boy and the man together.

"When are you free?" I asked.

"At the commencement of the second act," he answered.

"I shall wait for you at the door, then. Don't delay."

Somehow the mummery on the stage failed to rouse any interest in me during the opening scenes. The drama of the captain of the Tertius still held sway over me.

It was with some impatience that I waited Matt's appearance. He came at length, and together we issued into the Strand. Leading me through a perfect maze of narrow streets and alleys he brought me out upon the river front. From his intimate knowledge one would have thought him to be a true-born Cockney. As we went, I drew his story from him by degrees. He had somehow learned of the captain's losses, and, fearing that the operation might prove unsuccessful, had hovered round the hospital all the time. At first he had been content to procure a livelihood by selling wax vestas and cheap toys in the vicinity, but becoming acquainted with the porter of the institution, who promised to let him know when the captain was expected to leave, he extended his field so far as to attach himself to the theatre in which I met him. He was consequently on the spot when the old man was led forth and put into a cab. As soon as the vehicle rattled off, Matt started in pursuit, arriving at Paddington almost at the moment that Jehu drew up.

It was quite apparent from the captain's hesitating manner that his vision was well nigh gone. As soon as possible, therefore, the lad made himself known. The old man had decided to journey to Penzance, but as his means had now become extremely limited, he was readily induced to accompany Matt to the house where he himself had found shelter.

It was not by any means a place of superfluous or even moderate comfort. The district was squalid and the house inordinately so. At least, that was how it struck me, as I entered the low door and mounted the creaking stair. The room was on the second floor. It was dark, of course, when we entered. On Matt procuring a light, the wretchedness of the whole surroundings filled me with dismay. A table, a chair, and an iron bedstead with a mattress upon it, were the sole articles of furniture. On the latter lay the captain, grizzled and gaunt, and hollow-eyed; a mere battered and broken wreck that the inexorable sea of human circumstance had made derelict.

I spoke to him.

"Why, is that you, Manson?" he said, quite cheerily, "I'm glad to see you." But I knew by the groping way in which he held out his hand that he did not see me at all.

The news I had to tell was too important to waste time on preliminaries, so I launched out at once. When I mentioned how things had progressed with the Koolenben tobacco plantation, Captain Hayman simply sat up in bed and gasped. The next moment he fell wearily back.

"No, no, Manson," he said, "it's too good to be true."

"I have it from Schofield," I said, "and you know he is a man to be trusted. Besides, the shares are being quoted daily with the newspapers."

For a moment the old man lay quite motionless, then, in a quiet voice called Matt to his side.

"My boy," said he, taking hold of both his hands, "I want you to promise never to leave me. You have been good to me when you thought I was poor. It will go hard with me if you desert me now that I am rich."

I did not stay long with them, for I knew they wished to be alone to talk the future over. I thought it well to promise, however, to bring the letters from the company's office in the morning.

The Tertius was sailing with the afternoon tide, so as soon after breakfast as possible I took a cab to the captain's lodging, calling for the correspondence by the way.

"I have made arrangements," I said, as I entered, "to remove both of you for the time being, to a nice quiet house in the west. I know the people, you may rest assured they will make you comfortable. Here are the letters. As soon as you have looked through them we shall take our departure."

"Thank you, Manson," said the old man, radiantly, "now, like a good fellow, just read them for me, please."

The first was Schofield's, intimating the change in fortune and the change in name of the Koolenben Estate Company.

"He mentions that the name of the

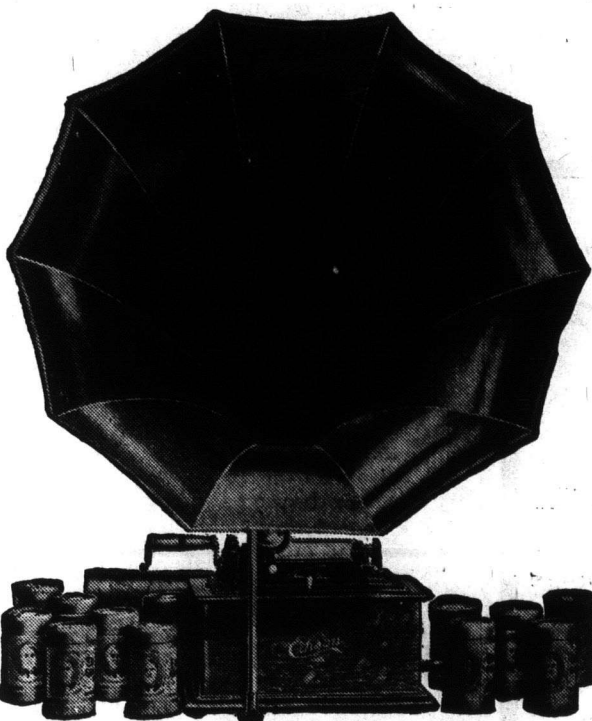
mining engineer who made the discovery was Gilbertson," said the skipper, when I had finished. "Now, do you think that by any chance this can be my daughter Manda's husband? I never set much value on his sagacity, but it is just possible I may have been mistaken about him."

As he spoke I broke the seal of the second letter.

"Why," I exclaimed, "here is a letter from your daughter. It may afford an explanation."

"Read it, read it," cried Captain Hayman, excitedly.

"Brisbane, Queensland, 4th October, 1895. My dear father, I have just received a Penzance paper which records the death of poor, dear mother. I cannot tell you how sad it



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