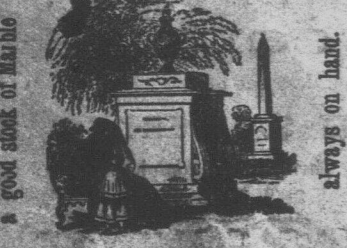


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Government vs. Opposition!

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Mr. Meeson's Will.

CHAPTER VII (Continued).
Augusta clung to the nettings to let the rush go, trying to collect her scattered senses and to prevent herself from catching the dreadful contagion of the panic. Being a brave and cool-headed woman, she presently succeeded, and with her restraining clearness of vision, she realized that she and all on board were in great peril. It was clear that so frightful a collision could not have taken place without injury to their own vessel. Nothing short of a miracle could save them from such a shock. Probably they would founder in a few minutes, and all be drowned. In a few minutes she might be dead! Her head stood still at the horror of the thought, but more she recoiled herself. Well, after all, life had not been pleasant; and she had nothing to fear from another world; she had done no wrong. Then suddenly she began to think of the others. Where was Lady Holmshurst? Where were the boy and the nurse? Acting upon an impulse she did not try to realize, she ran to the saloon hatchway. It was fairly clear now, for most of the people were on deck, and she found her way to the child's cabin with but little difficulty. There was a light in it, and the first glance showed her that the nurse had gone; gone, and deserted the child—for there he lay, asleep, with a smile upon his little round face. The shock had scarcely wakened the boy, and, knowing nothing of shipwreck, he had just shut his eyes and gone to sleep again.

"Dick, Dick!" she said, shaking him, and then threw him down again saying: "Dick sleep!"
"Yes, but Dick must wake up, and Annie" (he called her "Annie") "will take him up to deck to look for mummy. Won't it be nice to go on deck in the dark?"

"Yes," said Dick, with confidence; and Augusta took him on her knee and hurried him into such of his clothes as came handy, as quickly as she could. On the cabin door was a "warn little" postcard which the child wore when he was cold. This she put on over his blouse and flannel shirt, and then, by an after-thought, she took the nurse's hat and wrapped them round him. At the foot of the nurse's bed was a box of biscuits and some milk. The biscuits she emptied into the pockets of her ulster, and having given the child as much of the milk as she could, she hurriedly returned to her room, pinning a shawl which lay about round her own shoulders, she took up to the child and made her way with him on to the deck. At the head of the companion-way she saw Lord Holmshurst himself, sitting down to look for the child. "I have got Lord Holmshurst," she cried; "the nurse has run away. Where is your wife?"

"Blow you!" he said, fervently; "you are a good girl. Beesie is all seawater; I would not let her come. They are trying to keep the people of the boat—they are all mad!"
"Are we sinking?" she asked, faintly.
"God knows—ah! here is the captain," pointing to a man who was walking, or rather pushing his way, rapidly toward them through the maddest, seething mob. Lord Holmshurst caught him by the arm.

"Let me go," he said, roughly, trying to shake himself loose. "Oh! it is you, Lord Holmshurst!"
"Yes, step in here for one second and tell us the worst; speak up, man, and let us know all!"
"Very well, Lord Holmshurst, I will have run down a whaler of about five hundred tons, which was crawling along under reduced canvas and showing no lights. Our fore compartment is stove in, bulging out the plates on each side of the cut-water and loosening the fore bulk-head. The carpenter and his mates are doing their best to shore up from the inside with balks of timber, but the water is coming in like a mill-race, and I fear that there are other injuries. All the pumps are at work, but there's a deal of water, and if the bulk-head goes—"

"We shall go down," said Lord Holmshurst, calmly. "Well, we must take to the boats. Is that all?"
"In Heaven's name, is not that enough?" said the captain, looking up, so that the light that was fixed in the companion-way threw his ghastly face into bold relief. "No," said Holmshurst, "it is not all. The boats will hold something over three hundred people. There are about one thousand souls aboard the 'Kangaroo,' of whom more than three hundred are women and children."

"Therefore the men must drown," said Lord Holmshurst, quietly. "God's will be done!"
"Your lordship will, of course, take a place in the boat," said the captain, hurriedly. "I have ordered them to be prepared, and, fortunately, day is breaking. I rely upon you to explain matters to the owners if you escape, and clear my character. The boats must make for Kerguelen Land. It is about seventy miles to the eastward."

"You must give your message to some one else, captain," was the answer; I shall stay and share the fate of the other men."
There was no possibility about Lord Holmshurst now—all that had gone—and nothing but the simple, gallant nature of the English gentleman remained.
"No, no," said the captain, as they hurried aft, pushing their way through the fear-distracted crowd. "Have you got your revolver?"
"Yes."

"No, then, keep it handy; you may have to use it presently; they will try and rush the boats."
By this time the gray dawn was slowly breaking, throwing a cold and ghastly light upon the hideous scene of terror. Round about the boats were gathered the officers and some of the crew, doing their best to prepare them for lowering. Indeed, one had already been got away. In it was Lady Holmshurst, who had been thrown there against her will, shrieking for her child and husband, and about a score of women and children, together with half a dozen sailors and an officer. Augusta caught sight of her friend's

face in the faint light. "Beesie! Beesie! Lady Holmshurst!" she cried, "I have got the boy. It is all right—I have got the boy!"
She heard her, and waved her hand wildly toward her; and then the men in the boat gave way, and in a second it was out of sight. Just then all form melted into a sea of light. From the moment the Pectoral was given, the child's breathing grew easier, and in a short time it was sleeping quietly and breathing naturally. The child is alive and well to-day, and I do not hesitate to say that Ayer's Cherry Pectoral saved its life.—C. A. Woodbridge, Woburn, Mass.

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