

ing to find out the names of the pale, clear stars overhead, far beyond the tall masts that kept swaying this way and that as the vessel rose and fell on the long waves. Or were we wondering whether the man at the look-out, whose form was duskiy visible against the clear, dark sky, could make out some small and distant speck—some faint glimmer of a light, perhaps—to tell us that we were not quite alone in this awful world of waters?

Then the stars grew paler; for a new glory began to fill the lambent skies, and the white deck began to show black shadows that moved on the silvery surface as the ship rose to the waves.

'Do you remember that moonlight night at Grasmere?' says Queen T—— to her friend. 'And won't you sing us "The Flowers of the Forest?"'

It was quite another song that she sang—in a low voice that mingled curiously with the monotonous, melancholy rush of the waves. It was about the bonny young Flora who 'sat sighing her lane, the dew on her plaid an' the tear in her e'e.' Why should she have picked out this ballad of evil omen for our very first night on the Atlantic?

'She looked at a boat wi' the breezes that swung
Away on the wave like a bird o' the main;
An' aye as it lessened she sighed and she sung,
"Farewell to the lad I shall ne'er see again."

Perhaps her conscience smote her. Perhaps she thought it was hardly fair to suggest to this poor young thing who was thrown on our care that the cruel parting she had just undergone was a final one. At all events, as she began to sing this other song, it seemed to some of us that she was taking a clear leap across a long interval of time, and imagining herself somehow as already returning to English shores. For she sang—

'Rest, ye wild storms, in the caves of your slumbers!
How your dread howling a lover alarms!
Wauken, ye breezes, row gently, ye billows,
And waft my dear laddie ance mair to my arms!
But oh! if he's faithless, and minds na his Nannie,
Flow still between us, thou wide roaring main!
May I never see it, may I never trow it,
But, dying, believe that my Willie's my ain!'

Perhaps it was only our idle fancy, on this beautiful and pensive night, that coupled Bell's selections with the fortunes of our guest; but all the same, one of us—who is

always tenderly thoughtful in such small matters—suddenly called out,

'Come, Bell, we shall have no more sad songs. Who was it that used to sing 'The Braes o' Mar' with a flushed face as if all the clans from John O'Groat's to Airlie were marshalling under her leadership?'

Bell is an obliging person. She sang that song, and many another; and there was an attempt at a modest duet or two; while the ceaseless roar of the waves went on, and we watched the moonlight quiver and gleam on the hurrying waters.

'Oh, my dear,' says Queen T——, putting her hand on the head of her old friend and companion, who was nestled at her feet, 'this is not at all like crossing the Channel, is it?'

'Not much,' says Bell. 'I am already convinced that my ancestors were Vikings.'

Nor was it at all like crossing the Channel when we went below for the night—passing the great ruddy saloon, with its golden lamps and hushed repose—and sought out the privacy of our quiet and neat little cabins. But here an act of retributive justice had to be administered. There were two people standing alone in one of these cabins, amid a wild confusion of slippers, dressing bags, and clothes-brushes. Says the one to the other, sternly,

'What did you mean by that suspicious glance when the steam-yacht was mentioned?'

'What steam-yacht?' says she innocently; but in the dusky light of the lamp her face is seen to flush.

'You know very well.'

Here her fingers become somewhat nervous; and a piteous and guilty look comes into the eyes.

'Do you mean to deny that Balfour was in that boat, that you knew he was to be in it, and that you dared to keep the knowledge from his wife?'

'And if he was,' says she, with her lips beginning to quiver, 'how could I tell her? It would have driven the poor thing mad with pain. How could I tell her?'

'I believe you have a heart as hard as the nether millstone.'

And perhaps she had; but it was certainly not her own sorrows that were making the tears run down her face, as she pretended to be busy over a portmanteau.