

FLOTSAM.

By OWEN HALL, in Lippincott's.

BOOK I.—AT SEA.

Chapter I.

STATEMENT OF TOM HART, ABLE SEAMAN.

It were somewhere about the beginnin' o' December, 1860, when I shipped for able seaman aboard the Tanjore, then lyin' Calcutta. She were bound for London, and were part loaded when I joined. She were a good craft, and well found too, an' her officers had a good name, which I ain't got no call for to say as they didn't act accordin' while I was aboard. The rest of her cargo was took in the first ten days or so arter I joined, and she were ready for sea as it might be the end o' the second week in December. On the 14th it were as we took passengers aboard, all but one o' two swells as didn't come off till mornin', when we was under way. We gets out o' the Hoogly all right, an' the pilot he leaves us final at sundown, a-wishin' of us a good voyage, which cheer wasn't no reason as we shouldn't 'a' had but for had luck.

The weather it were fine, though the wind were light an' we soon settles down ship-shape. She were a comfortable ship, an' their weren't no call to complain o' the treatment nohow. We had some passengers, though not to say many, an' them in the poop. Come to think on it, I don't suppose there was a dozen on 'em altogether, an' them mostly millitary swells. There was one major an' his wife; he were on the sick-list, an' very bad at that, an' his wife, poor thing, didn't do, nor, for the matter o' that, think o' nothin' else but nussin' o' him. Says I to my mate, "There's one as ain't likely to want no landin' in Old England, if I ain't much mistook." Nor I wasn't, neither, though I ain't sayin' as I takes no credit for that, for it couldn't 'a' been looked for nohow. Along of the major an' his wife there were likewise a young gal as were the toast o' the fo'c'sle an' no mistake. She were a beauty, as it might be seventeen years old maybe. Tall an' lissome she were, wi' a skin like milk, an' eyes that big an' dark ye might think ye was a-lookin' into a calm sea near about the line just afore sundown, when ye got a chance to look in 'em. An' her hair—well, I ain't sure as ever I see hair jest that color afore. It were a sort of a gold color, an' yet it weren't that neither, unless it were took by the sun. But I ain't rightly sure as I can say what that gal were like, for I don't think as she looked not altogether the same not two days together. Anyways, she were a beauty, an' there was more nor me o' that opinion. Bless ye, there weren't not a man forward as wouldn't 'a' give a week's ration o' grog any day for to get a look an' a thank'ee from that gal. Nor, for that matter, it weren't us only; she were a favorite fore an' aft, wi' passengers an' crew, she were. Nor I ain't sayin' but she had her favorite, too: what gal was there ever aboard ship as didn't, I should like to know? He—for incoarse it were a he, as were but natral an' ship-shape—were a good-lookin' feller too, come to that; one o' them army officers as had got wounded an' was orded on the long sea voyage to bring him round, an' to keep him round, an' to keep him out o' the old country, maybe, till the worst o' the winter was past. A captin' he were, as near as I could make out, in one o' them cavalry regiments, an' a fine young man he must 'a' been afore he got hurt, for he were tall, with broadish shoulders. Nor I ain't good at givin' the bearin' of a face, not altogether, an' I ain't sure as I can say jest what it were as took her fancy when ye looked at the captin' neither. His name were Jervis, Cap'n Arthur Jervis it were as were marked on his luggage, which I knows, bein' as how I carries the same to his cabin when he comes aboard, whereby I gets a thank'ee; which it ain't not every swell as gives ye, not to mention a survin, which I keeps aboard my breeches-pocket for lock. Well, the captin' he were not by no manner o' means what ye might call ship-shape when he first came aboard, and had to be looked arter by his man—which were a soldier chap by the name o' Tompkins, an' a poor soldier he were at that, too—for the first week or two aboard. He used to lie in a low chair, one o' that sort as you can have yer book and yer grog, or what not, alongside while ye lie down, an' the gal-her name was Miss Ramsey—would throw a bit of a look, half shy an' half curious, at him as she passed on the deck. By-an'-by, in course, they gets to know each other better, an'

then she gives him a look an' a smile o' mornin', an' he takes off his hat an' looks arter her when she has passed, wi' a look as much as to say he wouldn't mind not if she was to heave to. She might 'a' seen, or again she might n't; Lor' bless ye, ye can't say not rightly what them gals sees an' what they don't. Anyhow, by an' by she heaves to when she comes within hail, an' says a word or two, an' looks at the captin' out o' them brown eyes. She didn't say much, not at first; no more didn't he, but jest looked at her pleasant, as if it did him good to talk to her, not bein' strong. I ain't sayin' as the captin' were altogether a fool neither, for she looked jest the sort as might 'a' turned out skittish if so be she'd 'a' been startled jest at first. Anyhow, I watches o' 'em as it might be for a week when I has my spell at the wheel, near which it were as the captin' lies mostly in his chair. In course I hears an' sees everything, for nobody never minds the man at the wheel, he don't never see nothin', he don't; an' I sees them two craft a-sailin' day arter day jest a half-point or so nearer each other's course, until by an' by they joins company. He were all right, were the captin', an' I knowed jest how much stronger to grow so as to make her feel as if she were a-nussin', or leastways helpin' to bring him round, though, bless yer heart, I could see well enough he were a precious sight stronger afore we'd a-been out a month nor ever he let on to be when she were anywher around.

The Tanjore she had good weather, on'y the winds was light and mostly contrary, an' we didn't promise to make no great passage. It was nigh on a month afore we was in the latitude o' Mauritius, an' another fortnight afore we was nearin' the Cape. Not as our passengers was in any great hurry, neither. It was all good deck weather, wi' a winn's spread, jest the very weather for curin' of invalids, an', for that matter afore. I don't mean for to say as there were much o' that last done aboard the Tanjore, seein' as how there weren't many aboard as were in any sort o' danger, but I weren't altogether sure as the captin' an' Miss Ramsey weren't jest as safe and snug as might 'a' been. Not as they hoisted no signals o' distress, nor there weren't no signs o' them fallin' foul o' one another, so to speak, in a calm, but they kep' on gettin' friendlier an' more an' more sailin' as reg'lar consorts. She'd took to readin' to him as he lay in that their chair, an' I don't say, mind ye, as it warn't jest to watch him a-lyin' their, takin' an observation now an' then out o' the weather corner o' his eye at her face as she was a-readin', as earnest as ye please out o' the book. Then he'd take a spell at the book for a bit, an' she'd jest glance now an' again at his face, an' he'd make believe as he didn't see, not him, ye may lay to that safe. Many's the hour I've a-stood at the wheel a-seein' nuthin' but the lift o' the main' topsle while them two was a-readin' alongside, an' me thinkin' o' things as I'd been an' done thirty year back.

Well, as I was a-sayin', them two didn't hev not to say a bad time, take it altogether, an' I ain't a-sayin' neither as the captin' didn't hev rather the best on it too, seein' as it stands to reason as he knowed the ropes the best, an' she could only guess, even if she got the length o' doin' that same, what was up. Neither on 'em seemed not to say sorry that the winds was light an' the voyage looked like bein' a longish one, an' I don't say as I couldn't 'a' gone on pretty comfortable myself a-watchin' o' 'em. O' course it stands to reason as young folks aboard ship will go sweetheartin' if so be there's anybody to go along of, but I can't say, not rightly, as ever I seen a neater job o' that same than what Captin' Jervis was a-doin' of aboard the Tanjore atween Calcutta and the Cape, nor I ain't a-blamin' o' him, neither.

On the 30th day o' January we had run down our latitude,—leastways so I heard the skipper a-tellin' of the captin' about half an hour arter eight bells, an' as he reckoned, we was a matter o' two hundred an' eighty-miles east'ard o' the Cape. It was fine weather, bein' as how it was summer in them parts, an' I takes it as how we was in about thirty-eight south latitude, wheer it had ought to be middlin' warm in summer-time. The wind were rather fresher than what it had been that day, a-blowin' as it might be west-nor-west, so as her head were a-lyin' to the south'ard o' her course, but the sea it were smooth an' pretty well all hands aboard was on deck till arter sundown.

It might 'a' been an hour arter eight bells, an' in course it were my watch below, an' there I were a-settin' on the fo'c'sle, takin' a look around afore

turnin' in. It were not to say dark, though gettin' on that way, an' I were jest takin' a draw at my pipe final, when I casts my eye fore an' aft along the deck below an' sees a haze o' smoke, or suthin' as looks to me like smoke, a-comin' out o' the main hatch. "Hallo!" says I, an' wi' that I jumps up an' steps aft. There weren't nobody thereabouts, but afore I gets within five fathom o' the spot I knowed what it were by the smell. I'd been there afore; an' I jest ups wi' my two hands to my mouth sharp an' hollers, "Fire!" An' fire it were, an' no mistake about it.

Chapter II. STATEMENT OF ARTHUR JERVIS, CAPTAIN 11TH HUSSARS.

I have been in England six weeks, but I find it impossible to stay. I believe my people think me almost insane, and sometimes I could fancy they are right; but, sane or not, I feel that I must do something. In spite of some hardships, my health is almost restored, and, whatever the doctors may say, I feel that nothing can do me so much good as to know that I am doing something which may possibly lead to the clearing up of the mystery that surrounds her fate. People tell me—they have told me ever since I could ask the question—that there could be no doubt what her fate has been. They have said it was madness to suppose that any fate but one could have befallen a delicate girl cast adrift, alone, in an open boat with hardly any food and, without one drop of water. They have pointed out—even the oldest and most experienced of them—that the best hope is that the boat went down in the first high wind and rough sea it met. I know it is true—and yet I feel as if it were false; as if, after all, hope were not yet dead, as if it were still possible that I am not condemned to go through life with a brand upon me worse than that of Cain,—the brand of the man who by his own folly destroyed the fairest and dearest life that was ever given by Heaven into man's hands, only to be thrown away.

To-morrow I start for Cape Town by the steamer, in the hope of setting the question at rest in some way, but before I go I feel that I owe it to her father, whom I have never seen, to leave some record of the facts of the tragedy which may perhaps have wrecked his life almost as terribly as I feel that it has wrecked my own.

I had been an invalid for nearly four months before the doctors pronounced me fit to be sent home to England, and even then they insisted that I should take the sea voyage round the Cape, so that I might not reach England too early. I had been eager to go. Anything had appeared a change to be welcomed after months of a camp hospital in India, and I believe I had worried the doctors into consenting to my starting sooner than they really approved of, to get rid of me. It was not till I found myself fairly embarked on board the Tanjore at Calcutta that I began to look forward with all the dread of an invalid to the prospect of three or four months on a ship where, except my servant, I didn't know a soul, and where, no doubt, the passengers were all invalids like myself. I could have wished myself back again in the hospital that day, as we dropped slowly down the Hoogly, and I lay under the deck awning more dead than alive from the unusual exertions I had made in getting on board. As I lay there I could here the slow gurgle of the water as it passed us by; I could mark the gradual passage of the slow hours by the shadows cast by the masts and rigging; I could fancy I heard the complaining voices of invalid fellow-passengers; and more than once I wished myself back again where at least the face of a brother officer might be looked for from time to time to cheer my loneliness.

Next morning we were at sea, and it was then that I saw her for the first time. I was just recovering from the exertion of being brought on deck, and the very sight of one so young and so beautiful seemed to send the stagnant blood bounding through my veins in a way to which it had long been a stranger. It was several days before I made her acquaintance, but at first I hardly missed that. It was almost enough to see her pass, as she walked the deck with the quick elastic step of youth and health, to catch a passing glimpse of her fair young face and of her sun-bright hair, and now and then to see, or fancy I saw, her cast a passing glance of pity upon me as I lay, unable still to take more than a languid interest even in so fair a vision.

After a day or two, however, I began to grow impatient for something more than this, and I contrived through the captain to obtain an introduction to

Miss Ramsey. Even then it was days before I could persuade myself that I had made any progress in establishing more than a passing acquaintance. Now, indeed, she would nod and smile at me as she passed, and sometimes she would even say a word or two in a voice so soft and sweet in its tones that I could fancy I heard it for hours afterwards.

(To be Continued.)

GUNS THAT BLAZED AT THE SPANISH ARMADA.

An interesting find has been made at Bidford, that most interesting of North Devon towns, where the first tobacco that ever reached England was landed, and where Charles Kingsley wrote most of "Westward Ho!" For many years five old guns have been used as mooring posts on Bidford quay. When the quay was widened they were taken up and thrown aside as of no further use or interest. Then it was suggested that they were relics of the Spanish Armada, that in fact they had once belonged to San Juan, which was taken in the second day's fight. They correspond in a remarkable degree to the guns owned by Lord Archibald Campbell, which were taken from a galleon wrecked in the Sound of Mull during the fight of the Armada round Scotland to Spain.

Johnny—Did they hurt you much at the lodge Saturday night, papa? Papa—No, Johnny; why do you ask? Johnny—Cause I heard Mr. Johnson say you were about half shot.

NERVOUS PROSTRATION.

THE FREQUENT CAUSE OF MUCH MISERY AND SUFFERING.

The Victim Helpless and Unreliable—It saps the Constitution and Makes One Involuntarily Ask is Life Worth Living.

From the Lindsay Post. It is at least commendable to bow before the inevitable. But what appears to be inevitable may be delayed or altogether averted. What were considered necessarily fatal diseases twenty-five or even ten years ago in many instances are not now placed in that category—thanks to medical and scientific skill. Life is sweet. We must either control the nerves or they will master us. Hysteria may prove fatal. It renders the person afflicted helpless and unreliable, and casts a continual shadow upon a hitherto bright and cheerful life. It saps the constitution and makes one involuntarily ask, "Is life worth living?" Miss Fanny Watson, daughter of Mr. Henry Watson, living on lot 22, in the township of Somerville, Victoria county, is one of those whose life for years was made miserable from nervous disease. At the age of twelve Miss Watson met with an accident which so seriously affected her nervous system, that during subsequent five years she was subjected to very severe nervous prostration, resulting in convulsions with unconsciousness for three or four hours at a time. This condition continued until March last when she had an increased and prolonged attack by which she was completely prostrated for the space of a fortnight. The disease so affected the optic nerve that Miss Watson was forced to wear glasses. Many remedies were tried but with no avail, and both Miss Watson and her friends feared that a cure could not be obtained. Ultimately Dr. Williams' Pink Pills were strongly recommended by various friends and the young lady decided to give them a trial. A half dozen boxes were brought, and by the time one box was used there was an improvement in her condition, and before the half dozen boxes were used, Miss Watson was, to use her own words, a different person altogether. Her entire nervous system was reinforced to such an extent that she is now able to dispense with the use of the glasses which previous failing eye-sight had made necessary. Miss Watson is now a staunch friend of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, and says: "I have pleasure in recommending them to all similarly afflicted." Rev. D. Miller, a friend of the family, vouches for the facts above set forth.

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills create new blood, build up the nerves, and thus drive disease from the system. In hundreds of cases they have cured after all other medicines have failed, thus establishing the claim that they are a marvel among the triumphs of modern medical science. The genuine Pink Pills are sold only in boxes, bearing the full trade mark, "Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People." Protect yourself from imposition by refusing any pill that does not bear the registered trade mark around the box.

Testimony to the hold which Dickens maintains over the hearts and minds of the English, or at least the London public, was affected recently on the anniversary of his death, when his tombstone in Westminster Abbey was covered with flowers, and with cards containing extracts from his writings.

NAVAL BRIGADE.

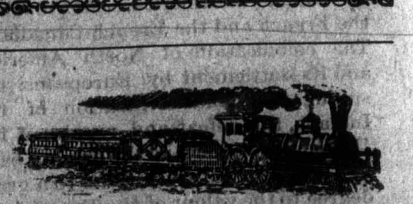
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