

MY WELCOME.

In the lighted homes at evening, pressed against the window-glass... Little eager faces watching for a father's coming feet...



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SYNOPSIS.

Master Ardick, just reached his majority and thrown upon his own resources, after stating his case to one Houthwick, a shipmaster, is shipped as second mate on the Industry, bound for Havana...

He puffed out his lips, somewhat in Mr. Tym's fashion, and squared about to his former posture. I thought my undauntedness and straightforwardness had at least shaken him.

"But, granting this, what then? At best your plan requires considerable time."

"That I admit," I said, reluctantly. "It could not well be compassed under a few years."

"And meanwhile my niece might lose a desirable match. Come, I would not be unreasonable. You seem a likely enough fellow, and all I have heard of you commends you, yet notwithstanding I cannot now concede what you wish. Go on and achieve the things you speak of, if you can, and then we will see what is to be said."

He ended with a little more severity than he had begun, yet not harshly, and seemed to await my answer.

In good sooth, I could not find much fault. He had not given me the sort of reply I could have wished, to be sure, and I did not go to the length of finding much encouragement in his generalities; yet, on the other hand, he had not flatly refused me, and he had not treated my suit with contempt.

"I can ask nothing more. I am aware that the greatness of what I seek is beyond my deserts. Let it stand as it is, then. You do not positively refuse me, and I have my own success to work out, and I am beholden to you, sir, for your consideration."

"Why, you are welcome," he answered, quite genially. "And, Master Ardick," he went on, as I rose and made to go, "I would say that I wish to stand your friend. I have very keenly in mind the obligation you have placed me under—you and your companions. I trust at no distant day to be able to repay some small share of the debt."

"I thank you in turn," I said, rather coldly, "but in the present hospitality you repay all that I, at least, can accept. I wish you good-night."

And with a well-managed bit of loftiness (albeit my heart was heavy) I turned and stalked over to the companion.

"Master Ardick!" he called after me, to my surprise. "Aye, sir," I responded, wheeling instantly, my pulse suddenly quickened.

"Mentioning your companions suggests another matter. Do you recall that I once asked you whence they hailed?"

"I do," I answered, considerably disappointed. I had expected something to another purpose.

"And you said that Mr. Tym and the captain were from Southampton and Mac Ivrah from Glasgow? I am asking merely to be sure I understood you."

"You are a little astray," I answered, my silly irritation passing; "only the captain is from Southampton. Mr. Tym, though he has of late lived in London—that is, when not at sea—was born and reared in some town in Sussex."

"Is it so?" he said, with a little surprise. "Then I misapprehended you. That alters the case. I must see Mr. Tym. I will explain to you that the business concerns the letter that Capt. Sellinger brought. This letter was from a dear friend of mine, now dead, and is of very much importance."

It was written in New York, where my friend lived, and came to me in the strange and roundabout way you know of. Among other things, I must now get upon the track of a certain family of Sussex. If you are about to go below, will you not ask Mr. Tym to step up hither?"

"Certainly," I answered, and with a slight distraction from my own matters for the moment, I wished him good night and left the deck.

CHAPTER XXIII.

OF THE DETERMINATION OF THE WHOLE MATTER.

But once dived down into the quiet (none of the passengers were in sight), the concern and trouble of the old matter returned. The prospect came back, dubious and uncertain, and the pride which had sustained me so well till now incontinently left me. I made forward with heavy feet, and only pulled myself together at the door of the berth, where I took thought that Mr. Tym might notice me.

"Oh, then there is hope!" she cried, tingeing instantly with color and clasping her hands. "He did not despise you?"

"Nay," I answered, trembling with love and tenderness, "not so bad as that."

I could not find it in my heart to disclose the doubts and dubiousness that were oppressing me.

"But yet you speak heavily," she said, looking at me more narrowly, "and there is that in your air—What were his words, Carlos?"

"That he bids me rise to a station in life fit to sue for you," I was now pressed to answer; "but even then promises nothing. In short, he treated me with civility, and perhaps beyond my deserts, but has left me with near as many doubts as I had at first. And yet—"

"Poor Carlos!" she gently broke in, and to my infinite delight she laid her hand gently against my cheek. "I perceive how it is. He has played the shrewd merchant with you, and has dealt with you in a fashion to avoid offense, yet to afford little hope. But be not discouraged, for if he did not come out with harshness against you, he is not offended with you, and that I am sure is much. I am now better heartened than I have been at any time before, and believe that all will yet come out in triumph for us."

"Dear heart," said I, with a shaking voice, and, unable to utter any more words, I clasped the caressing hand to my lips and with another motion drew her unresisting to my breast.

God wot never was a purer woman, but she was no prude, and the generous blood of Spain flowed in her veins. She slipped her arms about my neck and put her lips to mine, and let me draw her loving weight to me, and so we clung for a single moment.

The shortest moment in my life. Feet began to clatter down the companion stairs, and with one swift, tender kiss and "I am yours, Carlos, or if not, then the veil! The Holy One keep you!" she was inside and the door closed, and I was speeding to my cabin.

I reached the door just as the person coming down fetched into the range of the lamps. To my relief, it was Mr. Tym. Nevertheless, I had never seen him when he was less welcome.

"Is't you, Ardick?" he asked, as I paused by the door. "Why, yes, now I see it is. Come in, for I have a thing to tell you."

I felt little curiosity, for the greater matter moved me, but I passed after him into the berth.

"Well, Ardick," he began, "to save you guessing, I will go straight to the bowels of the matter. I have fallen heir to a great fortune."

Distraught as I was and full of the other affair, this, nevertheless, gave me a start. Recollecting myself and how I ought to behave toward one who had deserved so well of me, I caught his hand and shook it heartily.

"I congratulate you, with all my soul," I cried. "No man in the world deserves the luck better!"

"Avast! you over-exalt me," he laughed. "But it is the strangest thing in the world. To come to the point, then, it is Torrycoorn's letter which has brought so much to pass. First, a certain cousin, that I never saw, died, and left me his entire great possessions. He did it out of regard for my mother, it seems, whom he greatly loved. While dying he wrote a letter to Mr. Hope, his dear friend and business agent, begging that he be executor of the will, and sent the letter to a sea captain, who was soon to sail for Havana. By mistake the letter went to Capt. Torrycoorn, and soon after Mr. Hope himself sailed for Panama. Having considerable business on the way he was deterred from the first plan of his voyage, and reached this point later than he had expected. Yet still he did arrive in precise season to meet us, to receive his letter, and to find at his very elbow the man the letter concerned. Shall you find the match of all this for strangeness and the very whim of fortune?"

"Indeed," said I, much surprised, "it passes all that I ever heard of. But what is the amount of the fortune?"

"It is set forth in the letter to be ninety thousand pounds sterling, but may fall something short," he answered. "It is mainly invested in lands about New York and in ships. It was in the business of the last that my cousin made his fortune. I mean in the plantation trade. It is a bit strange that I never heard of him, but then his ships plied mostly between our easterly ports and New York, and I had no great knowledge of matters in those parts."

But here something gave me a little start. "Ships, then," said I, "will cut a considerable figure with you. Do you mean to keep them or sell them?"

"That I can answer better when I

see them, and likewise come to some determination as to the other property," he answered. "But it may be I apprehend you. You would like to bespeak a berth?"

"It seems hasty and eager to mention it," I replied, a little in deprecation, "but the fact is—"

"Say no more," he cried, clapping me on the back. "Can you doubt me? Why, man, you shall be second mate of my best ship. After that mate, and then captain. Why not? And your pay shall start with a round sum, and I not cheated, either, for you are worth it. Sellinger at first shall be your superior—for I have him also in mind, to advance his fortunes—and I think you could not ask for a better."

"God bless you!" I cried. "This is more than you think!"

In spite of me the tears came into my eyes.

"Why, Ardick, man, you have something behind the lighter!" he said, looking at me sharply. "Nay, out with it and relieve your mind. I much doubt if you will find more sympathetic ears."

"That I know," I said, with a sob, "but, indeed, I am but a poor creature. I think I have lost the little courage I had. Yet here is the matter, since you are foolish enough to consent to hear it, and with no words spared and many flounders and pullings up I disclosed my secret."

"And so," he said with an odd kind of precision, "that is the thing behind the lighter? A stirring enough little matter, too, but not calling for much dwelling on."

"Sir!" I cried, reproachfully. "Nay, but hear me," he said, waving his hand. "Eight-and-twenty years ago I was young and was in love. I thought as you did, and was intoxicated in the same fashion. I married after a time."

I was silent. I thought I knew what he was about to say. His marriage had proved unhappy.

"In two years my wife died," he went on, his voice dropping and sobering. "Those two years were happier than all the time before or since. When it came to the last I asked Margaret to thank God for me that He had given me the sweet loan of her. I promised that I would strive to join her some day, notwithstanding my many imperfections, which still I mean to do, yet in chief through the merits of Christ, blessed be His name! for He must make up my lack. And now to your matter, which you must think I have strayed from. Having been in this way happy myself, I conceive it a good and sweet thing if I might make you do likewise, and this I believe I can do. I have now neither kith nor kin—poor George Benther was surely the last, as I thought another was before him—and it will be fitting if I name an heir. Why not you, Ardick, whom in truth I love? I will adopt you, and so at last I shall have a son. And now do you think your matter worth much dwelling on, for have we not found a way to men? I trow my heir and the agent of my ships, with good ventures of his own and what not, may aspire to this young woman's hand? If not, let me know, and we will see whether the house of Reginald Tym has forgotten how to uphold its honor by the sword!"

Long before the end of this epilogue, which indeed the man spoke with the water standing in his eyes, I had seized his hand and with trembling lips had kissed it.

He broke off with this, standing up and clapping on his hat.

"Yet wait a little, for, after all, the business is not quite concluded. I would see Mr. Hope."

He retreated out of the berth, and with feelings which you may guess, but which I cannot hope to put into words, I dropped down on the side of the bunk and awaited his return.

He was gone about 20 minutes. When he came in he made a grave bow and pointed to my hat.

Laughingly and yet in a great tremble I clapped it on, which done, he took my arm and led me out and up the companion stairs.

Near the top he only said: "The lady is on deck. Why there I cannot say, unless it might be to greet a certain person. But in any event she is in my way. I wish to have a further talk with her uncle. Therefore you will oblige me by conducting her one side, and I recommend the after part of the quarter-deck, on the larboard side, which is in shadow."

THE END.

Bismarck's Experience. Bismarck was one day in company where among other things the subject of how much it cost to gain experience in life cropped up. He kept silent for a time, but presently joined in the conversation and said: "Fools pretend that you can only gain experience at your own expense, but I have always managed to learn at the expense of others."

Mercy Preliminary. "Well, Louise, where's your new hat?"

"I haven't any new hat."

"Why, you said you were going downtown to-day to get a new hat."

"Arthur, you never hear anything straight; I said I was going downtown to-day to look at new hats."—Chicago Daily Record.

Time He Was Buried. "Please, sir," said the energetic office boy to the active member of the firm. "I want to get off this afternoon. My grandfather's dead."

"Is that so, James? When did he die?"

"About five years ago, sir."—N. Y. World.

The Height of Cruelty. Benedict—A man out west has been severely punished for having five wives.

Bachelor—What! You don't mean to say that he was compelled to live with all of 'em?—Yonkers Statesman.

A RARE INSTANCE.

An Unusual Experience Which the Bicycle Dealer Would Like to Have Repeated.

A heavy man with a square jaw walked into a bicycle exchange the other afternoon. The proprietor advanced to wait on him.

"Gimme a bike," said the square-jawed man.

"To buy?"

"Yep."

"What make?"

"Any old make."

"Here's our specialty—good machine."

"All right, is it?"

"Good as any made."

"How much?"

"Fifty."

"Dab a little graphite on the chain and pump her up."

The proprietor dabbed a little graphite on the chain and pumped her up. The square-jawed man pulled out a wad of the size of his wrist, skinned off a fifty and handed it to the proprietor. Then he ran the machine out to the curb, got on it and rode off.

When the proprietor got over being stunned he went to three or four friends on the block to get their opinion as to whether the \$50 was counterfeit or the real thing. The bill was genuine, and the proprietor has been more or less dazed ever since.

"I can't understand such swift action as that in the bike business," he says, with a puzzled air.—Washington Post.

Looks All Right. "Doesn't the bicycle make you feel younger?" asked the expert.

"Well, I won't exactly say that," replied the elderly novice, "but it certainly makes me look younger."

"How is that?"

"Why, to sail through space as I occasionally do certainly gives the appearance of youthful activity, no matter how I may feel about it.—Buffalo News.

College graduaes and thermometers are marked by degrees.—Chicago Daily News.

OZARK AGRICULTURE.

How Farmers Practice Rotation of Crops in That Prolific Region.

Ozark humor appreciates the story that a scientist was quite amazed the other day at observing a farmer, after killing a nest of snakes turned up by the plow, arrange the dead snakes in the furrow before he went back to the plow.

"Why did you do that, my good man?" the scientist asked.

"The farmer looked curiously at the scientist and, seeing that he was really in search of information, replied:

"I do that so the plow, will cover the snakes on the next round."

"Seeing that the scientist was still mystified, the farmer continued:

"I cover the snakes so that they will decompose. That is what you call it, isn't it?"

"Yes," said the scientist, with a rising inflection.

"Well," continued the farmer, "the decomposition of animal matter furnishes nourishment for plant life, I believe?"

"Yes," again said the scientist.

"Then, snakes will make corn grow, won't they?" triumphantly asked the farmer.

"Yes," said the scientist.

"And more corn will make more whisky, won't it?" said the farmer.

"Yes," said the scientist.

"And whisky will make more snakes, won't it? Mister, that is what we call rotation in the agriculture of this region."—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

They Were Up-to-Date. Totsie McPadden—Say, we is disappointed. De las' chapter of dis book says dat de beautiful heroine lived to be an old woman and was highly respected. We don't want nothink about no old woman. What we wants is de new woman, an' if youse can't give us some think about de new woman, give us our nickle back and we'll buy chestnuts. See?—Washington Post.

One who has a mind to think will soon have a thinking mind.—Ram's Horn.



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Cuticura

The itching and burning I suffered in my feet and limbs for three years were terrible. At night they were worse and would keep me awake a greater part of the night. I consulted doctor after doctor, as I was travelling on the road most of my time, also one of our city doctors. None of the doctors knew what the trouble was. I got a lot of the different samples of the medicines I had been using. I found them of so many different kinds that I concluded I would have to go to a Cincinnati hospital before I would get relief. I had frequently been urged to try CUTICURA REMEDIES, but I had no faith in them. My wife finally prevailed upon me to try them. Presto! What a change! I am now cured, and it is a permanent cure. I feel like kicking some doctor or myself for suffering three years when I could have used CUTICURA remedies.

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Bathe the affected parts with HOT water and CUTICURA SOAP to cleanse the skin and scalp of crusts and scales, and soften the thickened cuticle. Dry, without hard rubbing, and apply CUTICURA Ointment freely, to allay itching, irritation, and inflammation, and soothe and heal, and lastly take CUTICURA RESOLVENT to cool and cleanse the blood. This sweet and wholesome treatment affords instant relief, permits rest and sleep in the severest forms of eczema and other itching, burning, and scaly humors of the skin, scalp, and blood, and points to a speedy, permanent, and economical cure when all other remedies and even the best physicians fail. Price, The Set, \$1.25; or, SOAP, 25c., OINTMENT, 50c., and RESOLVENT (half size) 50c. Sold throughout the world. POTTER DRUG AND CHEM. CO., Sole Props., Boston, Mass. "How to Cure Itching, Scaly Humors," mailed free.