

THE COLUMBIA SPY.

SAMUEL WRIGHT, Editor and Proprietor.

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Selections.

(From Chambers' Journal.)

Locked In.

It was on a leaden-looking evening in October, 1858, that the fast sailing packet *Cambria* steamed out of the harbor at Holyhead. Dark clouds were gathering overhead the short, chopping waves, slapped the sides of the vessel impatiently, and the thick black smoke shot straight from the funnel to the receding shore, as if anxious to escape from the restless turbulence of the water, and from a sooty canopy over dry land.

There were but few passengers on board, and a drizzling rain sent them below. One gentleman alone stood his ground upon the quarter deck, and, comfortably ensconced in a suit of oil-skin, puffed his cigar in defiance of the weather. He was a tall, fair-haired man, with a bright eye, thin, high-bridged nose, and light, wavy moustaches, through which was seen a good-humored but sarcastic mouth. He accommodated himself to the motion of the vessel like an experienced traveler, and, with well-gloved hands deep in his capacious pockets, looked on the steersman, the funnel, the lights upon the distant pier, and the vibration beneath him and about him, with an easy and comfortable nonchalance of manner that seemed peculiar to him.

Upon an obsequious and curly-headed steward—who kept coming on deck, and then diving down into the cabin upon those purposeless errands which would appear to be the continual employment of those functionaries when on duty—passing near the traveler he said: "Have you come to tell me that I mustn't smoke?"

"No, sir," said the steward, with his usual deprecating smile; "you can smoke if you choose, sir; there's nobody on deck but you."

"Very few passengers to-night," remarked the gentleman.

"Yes, sir, very few, sir," replied the steward; "you're the only cabin passenger aboard."

"An IP" said the gentleman. "Then I suppose I shall have my choice of berths?"

"Whichever you please sir, when you come below. We've only one other passenger, and she's a lady."

"Ah!" said the gentleman, looking down the skylight, as if to see his fellow traveler were in the cabin. "I am afraid we shall have a rough passage."

"Yes, sir," answered the acquiescent steward; "it does look very dirty to the windward, sir; and he dived down again."

The traveler lit a fresh cigar, tossed away his old one, looked at the white foam in the vessel's wake and resumed his march. He was a tall, fair-haired man, with a bright eye, thin, high-bridged nose, and light, wavy moustaches, through which was seen a good-humored but sarcastic mouth. He accommodated himself to the motion of the vessel like an experienced traveler, and, with well-gloved hands deep in his capacious pockets, looked on the steersman, the funnel, the lights upon the distant pier, and the vibration beneath him and about him, with an easy and comfortable nonchalance of manner that seemed peculiar to him.

After half an hour's more walking, he looked down the skylight once again, and saw a lady seated in the cabin taking tea.

"She doesn't suffer, at all events," he thought to himself; "I may as well have a look at her;" and he finished his cigar, and descended the brass board steps leading to the "candy."

The lady about whom he felt so interested, was over thirty years of age, and despite a pale complexion and languid, mournful eyes, possessed great beauty. Her manners were elegant and refined; and a tinge of exhaustion in her face and voice heightened the sense of subdued sentiment that hung around her. Overwrought sensibility and sensitive nervous organization were written in the constant play of her short, thin upper lip; and the perfect taste of her dress, completed the charm of a very fascinating invalid.

When the gentleman entered the cabin, she was seated at the table, waited on by a bustling and active stewardess. He took of his cap—as it were—at hand, and disembarrassed himself of his oil-skin covering. He coughed in token of his presence, but she took no notice, but continued playing with

her teaspoon, all unconscious of his entrance.

With a glance at the mirror, that betrayed a knowledge of the possession of a good appearance, and a smoothing of a well fitted cravat, the gentleman advanced towards the table, and coughed again. The vessel gave a slight lurch, and the tea service clattered at the same time. The lady looked up saw the few corners, and bowed slightly.

"I fear we are going to have a rough passage," began the male traveler, when the lady shrieked, and would have fallen had not the stewardess run forward to her support. The gentleman turned pale and red, and pale again, and trembled in every limb. "Bring some water," he said, after a moment's pause. "Don't be alarmed; it's the—the surprise—the sudden—Let me!"—He wetted his handkerchief and laid it on her forehead, while the stewardess ran for her smelling bottle. By the aid of their united exertions, in about five minutes the lady recovered, and looked about her as if just aroused from an unpleasant dream.

"Better leave us," said the gentleman.

"Do—do you know the lady, sir?" asked the stewardess, hardly knowing what to do.

"Know her? Yes."

"You've only got to call, mum," said the stewardess. "Can I do anything more, mum?"

"No—no, thank you," said the lady; "I'm quite well now. You need not trouble yourself further."

The stewardess quitted the cabin, leaving the two passengers staring at each other in mute wonder.

"Good God, Maria; is it you?" said the gentleman.

"It seems almost impossible it can be you," answered the lady in low faltering tones.

"Are you—better now?" inquired the gentleman. "Can I get anything for you?"

"Nothing, thank you—if it be really you."

"It seems like a dream," continued the gentleman—"to think that after ten years, we should meet on board this boat! It is the most unexpected accident."

"Accident?" repeated the lady with an inquiring look.

"Accident? Yes; really accident!"

"Are you sure that you did not know that I was coming on board this—"

"How could I?" interrupted the gentleman. "I only landed at Southampton last week. Not a soul I knew was in London; so I took a run over to Dublin to visit Vincent Maguire. It's the most impossible adventure, to think of man and wife, ten years apart, meeting in the cabin of—Are you going, Maria?"

The lady had risen from her seat. "I see no reason for my remaining," she said quietly.

"If you cannot bear to breathe the same atmosphere with me, I will retire," said the gentleman. "I will not turn you out of the cabin; I'll go on deck."

"The lady looked up to the skylight above her, on which the rain was pattering furiously.

"Impossible to stay on deck in a night like this," said she, with a faint return of the interest of a wife.

"Think you for that, Maria?"

"I did not mean that," she explained hastily; "I—"

"You are unkind not to let me think you did," said the husband. "At all events, since we have met in this strange way, do not let us meet as enemies."

"Enemies? No!" smiled the lady.

"Yield to a suggestion of mine for once," continued the husband. "You were taking tea—don't let me deprive you of that; it will refresh you; or—his face lighted up with a bright idea—"suppose we take tea together?"

"Together!" echoed the lady.

"Oh! don't be alarmed," said the gentleman; "you shall pay for your own, and I for mine, and we'll have it on different trays, in the most tonic manner possible."

Despite the rapid beatings of her heart, the lady could not repress a smile, of which her husband took immediate advantage by ordering tea for himself at the table opposite his wife.

Mr. and Mrs. Thirly had been married in the year 1846. Miss Harbrow was a noted beauty, and Francis Thirly a somewhat erratic bachelor. After a honeymoon, and three or four other months more of unmitigated sweetness, spent abroad amidst grand old ruins, crumbling columns, and colossal statues, like ghosts of greatness passed away, under dreamy skies and over pent volcanoes, they returned to cold and cloudy England—its tempestuous summers, mild though marky winters, and gracefully concealed domestic hurricanes.

"A year passed, and among old friends, old haunts, and old associations, easy going Mr. Thirly became the usual careless husband, engaged more with his Greenwich dinner and clubs than home, unless he gave a party, when he would shine with his customary brilliance. When alone with his wife, he appeared absorbed in meditation. She resented his want of assiduity, he resented her resentment. She had been an only child; so had he. Neither would be the first to yield! Each was largely endowed with the fatal gift of sarcasm, and used it mercilessly. They stabbed their mutual happiness with epigrams, and battered down their home with the artillery of bitter words. Months passed in fierce storms and low-

ering threatening calms. The last provocation was given. Mrs. Thirly was jealous. She left the house, and shortly after a separation was agreed upon.

Mr. Thirly, finding his friends cold, and his home merely furnished apartments, resolved upon adopting a career. He had interest at the India House, and obtained an appointment in the Civil Service. Years had passed. He had returned; and as he looked at the wife he had once so loved, and had so strangely met, he felt that he could have begun his courtship once again; the last fourteen years were annihilated; she was before him; the old charm floated around her, and felt his heart liquefy as he traced the well remembered features and their play beneath the swinging light in the close, trembling, rocking cabin.

Mrs. Thirly sat with her eyes fixed on the tumbling sea—externally calm, violet-eyed, impassive, and grand. Her husband, leaning his elbow on the table, and his head upon his hand, said: "Upon my word, Maria, you are looking handsomer than ever!"

A flush of pleasure surged up to Mrs. Thirly's face; she bent it back again bravely, but could not resist a slight smile, for she felt, with the self-consciousness of a handsome woman, that her husband had spoken truly, and as he thought.

"This is a remarkable meeting is it not?" continued he, hardly knowing what to say, yet disliking silence more than hazarding something commonplace. "By the way you have a servant with you, haven't you?"

"No," replied the lady.

"No! How's that?"

"Harriet had never seen the sea in her life, and refused to embark. She said we were sure to be drowned; so I came without her."

"How odd!" said the husband—"there's not a single passenger—I mean in this cabin—but ourselves."

"We are single!" said the wife, relaxing to a smile.

"Of course we are—at present!" said the husband.

"And mean to keep so," continued Mrs. Thirly, observing that her husband's eyes were fixed on her's with an expression of deep interest. Finding that his earnest gaze was noticed, that gentleman swallowed nearly a whole cup of tea at a draught.

"I haven't enjoyed my tea so much for years," said he, putting down the empty cup—"I may say ten years."

It was always Mr. Francis Thirly's practice to jest when he was in earnest, until he felt his way, and his antagonist's power of resistance.

"Shall I be indiscreet in asking what native you have in visiting Ireland?" he asked, finding that no reply, verbal or facial, was made to his last observation.

Mrs. Thirly poured herself out a second cup of tea, and said: "I am going to pass a few months with—Oh!"

She shrieked with pain. Thirly rose with anxious and perturbed countenance.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"I have scalded my hand," replied his ex-wife, applying her lips to the part affected.

"Allow me," said he, about to take hold of the injured member.

"Thank you, no," said the lady hastily withdrawing it. "I permit no interference with what is entirely my own property."

The face of the husband turned red, and the wife felt the cruel pressure of victory.

"Better put a little dry soap on it; best thing in the world for a scald," said he, "I have some in my bag."

"You are very kind," answered the wife touched with the attention.

"Not at all, Maria," said Thirly, following up his success with the Christian name.

"I am something of a traveler now, and am always provided with these little comforts—I should say necessities."

He opened a black leather bag, scraped some soap on a clean white handkerchief, and applied it to his wife's hand tenderly and carefully. He saw the wedding ring shine over the white skin, and gave over so small a sign as he tied a knot just above it.

"Poor little hand!" said he caressingly, as he bent his head down towards it.

"Thank you; that will do very well!" remarked his wife, putting it under the table.

"Nothing like soft soap," said he, smiling.

"No," answered the lady, with placid dignity.

"You answer one question by asking another. I remember you always did. It used to irritate me."

"Everything I did used to irritate you," interrupted the wife calm and provoking.

"When it was irritating," amended Mr. Thirly.

"You found it so," said the lady, with feminine emphasis.

"Of course it was me," said the lady, with feminine emphasis.

"Of course it was me," returned the husband; "I was the villain—husbands always are!"

"No; I was the temptress—wives always are!" repeated the lady.

"My love, you were always good, and right, and pious, and virtuous," said Thirly, his love of sarcasm overcoming his better sense. "You were always provokingly proper—all broken hearted submission, meekness, mildness, and down-cast eyes, as if advertising to the world. Look here! my monster is breaking my heart; not that I complain, oh, dear, no; I am too good for that. He is killing me, and I am rather glad he is, I am so angelic and resigned!"

Mrs. Thirly knit her brows; for a moment she hesitated between quitting the cabin and replying. Temper triumphed, and she spoke.

"If so, you pursued the opposite tactics," said she. "You were all smiles, frankness, jollity and good humor—to the world; a sort of proclamation of: See what a fine, generous, open-hearted fellow I am, and yet my wife—a wicked wife—is miserable with me! Oh, thank Heaven, I am not your wife now!"

The ship lurched again, and Mrs. Thirly's tea cup fell to the floor, but without breaking.

"You needn't get into a passion," said her husband, "nor upset the tea things; you're not at home now, you know."

"I did not upset it," said the lady angrily.

"Yes, you did!"

"No, I didn't."

"Yes, you did!"

"I did not stir!" repeated the lady, tapping the table authoritatively with her undamaged hand, and so knocking off the other cup, which broke into a dozen of pieces.

"There," said the husband, picking up the fragments carefully, and arranging them before her, "perhaps you didn't break that either?"

It would be impossible to describe the extent to which handsome Mrs. Thirly was put out by this accident. Her face darkened, and without losing its beauty, looked a thunder storm—the six-eyed Juno wrathful with Jupiter.

Thirly tried to walk the cabin. "Time has not subdued that awful temper thou!" said he.

"Nor the recollection of your ill-usage," she replied. "Neither ten years nor ten hundred can do that."

"Ten hundred!" he remarked; "you'll be a fine old lady by then."

"And so will you," retorted the wife; "you're more than forty now."

"Well, if I am," answered the husband angrily, "you're five-and-thirty—no chicken either."

One of the chief reasons that matrimonial differences are so bitter is, that each party is so well informed of the enemy's weak side.

"Why, positively you're bald," said Mrs. Thirly, who had not before perceived the shining scalp in the centre of her husband's cranium; "Yes, quite bald at the top!"

Mr. Thirly turned white with passion—he was a very vain man—and walked up to her as if about to make some overwhelming reply. Unfortunately her hair was as black as lustrous, and as such as ever.

His wife guessed his intention, and said aggravatingly: "Poor old man, he was bald then?"

"You know you were always a beauty," sneered the husband.

Mrs. Thirly rose to her seat and bowed, as if she said: "I know," which irritated her husband more than ever.

"As lovely as afflicted," continued he.

"At all events," replied the lady, that Mrs. Thirly.

"Silence, madam!" thundered the husband. "You have too often repeated that lady's name and I forbid it!"

"You forbid, indeed!" cried the wife—"And pray, who are you that command me? Why should I not mention that woman's name? I beg pardon—lady's name? Who is to prevent me? Not her lover, sir," she continued, lashing herself into a rage, "when he has ceased to be my husband."

"By Jove!" said Thirly, "this is as it used to be; but, as you say, we are separated; and he bent his head over the table and droned: "For this and other mercies, Heaven make us truly thankful!"

Mrs. Thirly tore the handkerchief from the scalded hand, and threw it across the table—the fragments of soap fell into the sugar basin.

"What noble vengeance!" continued he in a pompous tone. "What greatness what magnanimity of soul! and what a brilliant repartee! 'Pon my word, this is refreshing! What a meeting, after ten years' absence! The breeze without, the row within. Any one could swear to us for man and wife!"

"Do you raise my feelings that—that—that—"

"That what?" asked the husband.

Poor Mrs. Thirly began to feel the effect of the motion of the vessel. "I—I—I don't feel well," she gasped.

"Ah! excitement," said the husband unconcernedly.

"No, sir, the sea—I mean the tea. I shall go to my berth. When we get to Kingstown, you can see Franky and—"

"Franky! Who's Franky?" asked the husband.

Mrs. Thirly looked him full in the face as she answered: "Your son, sir!"

Another lurch of the vessel threw Mr. Thirly into a seat as he repeated, "My son!"

He hardly understood the meaning of the word.

"Your son and mine," said the lady; "My dear, dear boy Franky."

Something rose to the husband's throat and eyes as he bowed first to her and then down at his long lost boy, as the position of the cabin floor hinted or lowered her.

"He was born three months after your departure," continued Mrs. Thirly.

"Why did I not know it?"

"I kept it out of the papers purposely," said the wife.

"And you called him Francis," said the husband thoroughly lumbled husband.

"Yes—after his father."

"Thank you, Maria; that was kind." "My duty—nothing more," said the lady. "How old is he?"

"Ten in August—on the fifth."

"God bless him," said the father; "is he handsome?"

"Oh! very—very handsome," said the mother.

"At all like me?" inquired the father.

"Like what you were—very."

"And in his manner?"

"He is passionate in the extreme; like what you were—very. Here is a letter I had from him last Thursday. He is on a visit to my cousin, who was married to Colonel O'Grady three years ago."

The father took the letter, and held it under the shaking lamp. The gale had blown itself into a perfect storm, and he could hardly keep upon his feet as he read the large school-boy hand:

"MY DEAR, DEAR MAMMA.—I am so glad that you are so soon coming. I have no news. I am quite well. Freddy's pony hurt one of his knees yesterday. We go to Sandy Mount every day. Aunt sends her love—so does Freddy. God bless you. Your affectionate FRANKIE."

Morryon Square, Dublin, Ireland.

The letter was read and re-read till the lines became blurred and indistinct, and a deep sob heaved up from the father's heart as he stretched forth his hand to his wife and said: "Maria forgive me!"

But Mr. Thirly remained silent and impassive.

"For the sake of our boy," he urged, "the child of whose existence I was unaware—till—till—forgive me!"

"Do you wish to keep the letter?" inquired the wife.

"With your permission. Do you ever speak to him about me?"

"Often."

"O, Maria, let us be friends!"

Mrs. Thirly answered slowly and deliberately, with a pause between every third or fourth word: "After an absence—of more than ten years—meeting so unexpectedly—you could not control—your violent and sarcastic nature—I will not be its victim. I pardon what is past—but when I leave this boat—we never meet again!"

"Maria!"—he tried to take her hand, but she withdrew it—can't you forgive me!"

"The past—yes; the future I will not trust in your hands. As I said when we leave this boat—"

And minute after minute, each longer than the last, passed away, every succeeding shock and lurch of the frail boat, they expected to feel the floor sink under them, and the water pour into their cushioned seat.

A violent crash shook the ship from stem to stern; the cabin lamp fell shivered into atoms, and all was darkness. They clutched tightly hold of each other, and thought their time had come.

The night passed. A ribbon of grey light in the horizon separated sea from sky; the grey grew whiter and more bright—it was morning. Husband and wife looked into each other's haggard faces; they had thought they should never see them more.

The daylight was an inexpressible relief; they should not perish in the dark. Light was the breath of Heaven. They were not forgotten!

"Thank you there is any hope?" whispered the wife, almost afraid to trust the sound of her own voice.

As she spoke, there was a noise upon the deck, and the sound of sea and wind, and straining boards and creaking cordage grew more audible. The cabin door flew open, and the steward, wet as from a bath, and his face bleeding, looked in. "All right!" he gasped; "we're saved—saved! Where's my missus? Jane, dear, open the door—we're saved, I tell you!"

The stewardess opened the door, and both couples repaired to the deck.

"We shall weather it, praised be God!" said the white-haired captain. "Who would have thought this six hours ago?"

"Maria!"

"I wish we had received a severe and proper punishment for our presumption and our crime."

A steam tug came out to their rescue, and carried them safely into Kingstown harbor.—There was a smiling lady, a mustached gentleman; and a handsome yellow haired boy awaiting them.

"Mamma!—my dear, dear mamma!" cried the young gentleman, with undisguised ecstasy.

"Franky, my own. Here's papa!"

"Papa!" said the boy, rounding his eyes. "Papa from India!"

"Yes, dear."

"Mr. Thirly!" said Mrs. O'Grady. "Had you forgotten me, Elinor?" that gentleman.

"Mamma, why hasn't papa been with you before, when—"

"Hush, dear!" said the mother.

Mr. Thirly did not return to India; and both his and his wife's name are always set down for a handsome sum in all subscriptions for life-boats or preservations from shipwreck.

Doesticks Sees Santa Claus.

I've seen him.

He looks exactly like a big Dutchman, with a pressure of six quarts of lager to the square inch, and a funnel on his head to let the steam off. When I was just beginning to bloom into pantalons and bald into brass buttons, I got my first idea of Santa Claus from Damphool, who was then about as high as a hitching-post, and expected a "big thing" for his New Year's. The little Damphool, I remember, used to speak very low down in his stomach when he talked to me, and always took care to wink at little crinolines, and spit a great deal when I was by, by way of showing, I suppose, that he was a venerably-experienced man of the world, and his usual respectability of his family—Little Damphool had a weakness for peanuts and when I would pay for a pint in our daily walk, he would help me to eat them with such a look of compassion that I often had to wipe away tears of humility with a borrowed half of his apple. I always paid for the apple. Sometimes we would make a princely meal on taffy-candy. Damphool said that taffy-candy was excellent for a cold and he always had a dreadful cough at the sight of a confectionery. He bought the candy always, and I paid for it. Sometimes we would stroll as far as the Park on Saturdays, and then Damphool would ask me to take an oriental draught of ginger-beer. After drinking his share, I remember he would suddenly see something on the Museum that he never noticed before, and look at it so hard that he couldn't see me feeling in my pockets. By way of doing my share, I always paid for the beer.

But I was going to tell you how Damphool told me about Santa Claus. It was the day before New Year's, in the year eighteen hundred and none of your business, and I had just been taking some ginger-nuts with Damphool at his own expense (his pocket-book was in his other trouser's pocket), when he suddenly asked me what Santa Claus was going to give me. I said I never heard of him, and he said didn't I? And I said no, I didn't. Damphool frowned to keep his cap on, and was so overcome that he had to have some root beer. I paid for it because he was sick. When he came to (three cents a glass), he informed me in strict confidence that Santa Claus was a good judge of reanders, and brought presents down the chimney on New Year's eve for me and other boys. He said Santy kept a toy shop in the moon, and supplied the young angels with peg-tops and celestial drums.

I was greatly impressed with this revelation, for my parents had too much good sense to delude me with the silly holiday talk. I went home and made up my mind to sit up all night, and told my mother I

wanted to see Santa Claus; she said, "Nonsense, child