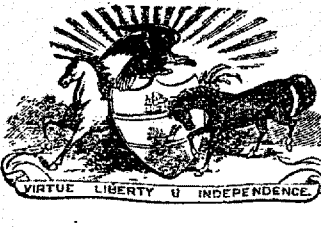


OF EVERY DESCRIPTION... ADVERTISING OFFICE, LEBANON, PENNA.

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LEBANON, PA., WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5, 1862.

WHOLE NO. 663.

The Advertiser.

A FAMILY PAPER FOR TOWNS AND COUNTRY... RATES OF POSTAGE.

Miscellaneous.

PICKING UP WAIFS AT SEA.

I shall consider it in the light of a personal favor, at starting, if you will compose your spirits to hear a pathetic story, and if you will kindly picture me in your mind as a baby five minutes old.

Do I understand you to say that I am too big and too heavy to be pictured in anybody's mind as a baby? Perhaps I may be—but don't mention my weight again, if you please.

My story begins thirty-one years ago, at eleven o'clock in the forenoon; and starts with the great mistake of my first appearance in the world at sea, on board the merchant ship Adventure, Captain Gillop, five hundred tons burthen, coppered and carrying an experienced surgeon.

In presenting myself to you (which I am now about to do) at that eventful period of my life, when I was from five to ten minutes old; and in withdrawing myself again from your notice (so as not to trouble you with more than a short story), before the time when I cut my first tooth, I need not hesitate to admit that I speak on hearsay knowledge only.

Mr. Sims, a middle-aged man, going out on a building speculation... Mr. Purling, a wealthy young gentleman, sent on a long sea-voyage for the benefit of his health.

These four cabin passengers, as I have already remarked, were well enough off for their accommodation. But the miserable people in the steerage—a poor place, at the best of times, on board The Adventure—were all huddled together, men and women, and children, biggledy pigglely, like sheep in a pen; except that they hadn't got the same quantity of fine fresh air to blow over them.

Though I myself had not, perhaps—strictly speaking—come on board when the vessel left London, my illness as I firmly believe, had shipped in The Adventure to wait for me—and decided the nature of the voyage accordingly. Never was such a miserable time known. Stormy weather came down on us from all points of the compass, with intervals of light boding winds or dead calms.

gain for on board my vessel? What have you got to say for yourself, before I clap the irons on you? 'Nothing, sir,' answered S. Heavysides, with the meekest connubial resignation in his looks and manners.

'It's no use waiting, sir,' remarked Simon. 'In our line of life as soon as it's over, it begins again. There's no end to it that I can see,' said the miserly carpenter, after a moment's meek consideration—except the grave.

'I mean, there's a fifth cabin passenger coming on board,' persisted Mr. Jolly, grinning from ear to ear—'introduced by Mrs. Smallchild—like I to join us, I should say, towards evening—size, nothing to speak of—sex, not known at present—manner and customs, probably squally.'

'Where's her husband?' broke in the captain, with a threatening look. 'I'll speak my mind to him, at any rate.' Mr. Jolly consulted his watch before he answered.

'Half past eleven,' he said. 'Let me consider a little. It's Mr. Smallchild's regular time just now for squaring accounts with the sea. He'll have done in a quarter of an hour. In five minutes more, he'll be fast asleep. At one o'clock, he'll eat a hearty lunch, and go to sleep again. At half past two, he'll square accounts as before—and so on till night. You'll make nothing of Mr. Smallchild, captain—Extraordinary man—wastes tissue, and repairs it again perpetually, in the most astonishing manner. If we are another month at sea, I believe we shall bring him into port totally comatose. Halloo! what do you want?'

'You're wanted in the steerage, sir,' said the steward's mate to the doctor. 'A woman taken bad, name of Heavysides.'

'This ship is bewitched,' said the captain, wildly. 'Stop!' he called out recovering himself a little, as the doctor bustled away to the steerage. 'Stop! If it's true, Jolly, send her husband here at once, Damme, I'll have it out with one of the husbands!' said the captain, shaking his fist vigorously at the empty air.

'I'm very sorry, sir,' Simon remarked, politely—'very sorry that any inadvertence of mine or Mrs. Heavysides—'

'Take your long carcasses and your long tongue forward!' thundered the captain. 'When talking will mend matters, I'll send for you again. Give you own orders, Jolly, be went on, resignedly, as Simon staggered off. Turn the ship into a nursery as soon as you like!'

Five minutes later—so expeditious was Mr. Jolly—Martha Heavysides appeared horizontally on deck, shrouded in blankets, and supported by three men. When this interesting procession passed the captain he shrank aside from it with as vivid an appearance of horror as if a wild bull was being carried by him instead of a British matron.

'You are very good sir,' said Simon; 'and I am indeed thankful to you and to these gentlemen. But please to remember, I have seven children already in the steerage—and there's nobody left to mind 'em but me. My wife has got over it uncommonly well, on seven previous occasions—and I don't doubt but what she'll conduct herself in a similar manner on the eighth. It will be a satisfaction to her mind, Captain Gillop and gentlemen, if she knows I'm out of the way, and minding the children. For which reason, I respectfully take my leave. With those words, Simon made his bow, and returned to his family.

'Well, gentlemen, the two husbands take it easy enough, at any rate!' said the Captain. One of them is used to it, to be sure; and the other is—'

'The afternoon wore on into evening, and evening into night. Mr. Smallchild performed the daily ceremonies of his nautical existence as punctually as usual. He was aroused to a sense of Mrs. Smallchild's situation when he took his biscuit and bacon; lost the sense again when the time came round for squaring his accounts; recovered it in the interval which ensued before he went to sleep; lost it again, as a matter of course, when his eyes closed once more—and so on through the evening and early night. Simon Heavysides received messages occasionally (through the captain's care), telling him to keep his mind easy; returned messages mentioning that his mind was easy; and that the children were pretty quiet, but never approached the deck in his own person. Mr. Jolly and then showed himself—said 'All right,—no news' took a little light refreshment, and then disappeared again, as cheerful as ever. The fair breeze still held, the captain's temper remained unruined; the man at the helm eased the vessel, from time to time, with the most anxious consideration. Ten o'clock came; the moon rose and shone superbly; the night-grog made its appearance on the quarter-deck; the captain gave the passengers the benefit of his company; and still nothing happened.

'Twenty minutes more of suspense slowly succeeded each other—and then, at last, Mr. Jolly was seen and then to ascend the cabin stairs. To the amazement of the little group on the quarter deck, the doctor held Mrs. Drabble, the stewardess, fast by the arm, and without taking the slightest notice of the captain or the passengers, placed her on the nearest seat he could find. As he did this, his face became visible in the moonlight, and displayed to the startled spectators an expression of blank consternation.

'Compose yourself, Mrs. Drabble,' said the doctor, in tones of unmistakable alarm. 'Keep quiet, and be a conceivable subject, all through the voyage. Before, however, they could continue the dispute about Mr. Smallchild, the doctor surprised them by appearing from the cabin.

'Any news below Jolly?' asked the captain, anxiously. 'None whatever,' answered the doctor. 'I've come to idle the afternoon away up here, along with the rest of you.'

'I spoke a little sharp to you just now, my man,' said the captain, 'being worried in my mind by what's going on on board this vessel. But I'll make it up to you, never fear—Here's your wife in, what they call an interesting situation. It's only right you should be within easy hail of her. I look upon you, Heavysides, as a steersman-passenger in difficulties; and I freely give you leave to stop here along with us till it's all over.'

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in the main cabin, and said, 'Mrs. Drabble, your mind's getting confused; sit down and collect your scattered intellects; and you sit down, and tried to collect them—'

'(And couldn't, sir,' interposed Mrs. Drabble, parenthetically. 'Oh, my head! my head!')

'(And tried to collect your scattered intellects, and couldn't!') continued the doctor. 'And the consequence, was, when I came out from the Small-child cabin to see how you were getting on, I found you with the clothes-basket cradle hoisted up on the cabin-table, staring down at the babies inside with your mouth dropped open; and both your hands twisted in your hair? And when I said, "Anything wrong with either of those fine boys, Mrs. Drabble?" you caught me by the coat-collar, and whispered in my right ear these words: "Lord save us and help us, Mr. Jolly, I've confused the two babies in my mind, and I don't know which is which!"

'(And I don't know now!') cried Mrs. Drabble, hysterically. 'Oh, my head! my head! I don't know now!'

'(Captain Gillop and gentlemen, said Mr. Jolly, wheeling around and addressing his audience with the composure of sheer despair, "that is the Scrape—and if you ever heard of a worse one, I'll trouble you to compose this miserable woman by mentioning it immediately.")

'(Can't you throw any light on it, Jolly?' inquired the captain, who was the first to recover himself.

'If you knew what I have had to do below you wouldn't ask me such a question as that,' replied the doctor. 'Remember that I have had the lives of two women and two children to answer for—remember that I have been cramped up in two small sleeping-cabins, with hardly room to turn round in, and just light enough from two miserable little lamps to see my hands before—remember the professional difficulties of the situation, the ship rolling about under me all the while, and the stewardess to compose into the bargain—bear all that in mind, will you, and then tell me how much spare time I had on my hands for comparing two boys together inch by inch—two boys born at night, within half an hour of each other, on board a ship at sea. Ha! ha! I only wonder the mothers and the boys and the doctor are all five of them alive to tell the story!'

'No marks on one or other of them that happened to catch your eye?' asked Mr. Sims. 'They must have been strongish marks to catch my eye in the light I had to work by, and in the professional difficulty I had to grapple with,' said the doctor. 'I saw they were both straight, well-formed children—and that's all I saw.'