

HAPPY ON THE WAY.

Partridges a-callin',
Hick'ry nuts a-fallin',
Country jest a-sittin' all around;

THE "SULTAN" MYSTERY.

BY W. CLARK RUSSELL.



IN the year 1860 I sailed in the ship Sultan, a vessel of seven hundred and eighty tons' burden, from the port of Liverpool, bound round the Horn to Valparaiso with a valuable general cargo.

I was astonished by his cool reception of a piece of news that whether the steward was mistaken or not, must be charged with significance, even in the lightest, most careless whisper of it.

I straightway descended the companion-steps, and the steward followed me by way of the cuddy front. We entered the steerage, a part of the hold under the saloon or cabin deck.

As I, however, held no certificate as "only mate," I signed as chief, and the boatswain, a man named Benjamin Matthews, took the working part of second mate under me; that is, he relieved me when my watch was up, walked the decks and trimmed sail at his discretion.

Captain Jortin was a tall, lean, long faced man, with so remarkable a fall of chin that his mouth seemed to be placed almost exactly in the middle of his face.

I had been struck by the figure he made when I first boarded the ship in the docks. Nothing could less correspond with the traditional notions of the old salt, with purple nose and bow legs, eyes deep sunk by peering to windward, and a stormy voice broken by years of drink and bawling, than this master of the ship Sultan, buttoned up as he was in a coat of clerical cut, his black hair smeared smooth as though his head was painted, limp stick-up collars and long, square-toed Wellington boots.

All went well with us till we had gone clear of the northeast trade-wind and struck the "Humbugged" parallels, as they are called, where you get sheet-calms with a wide ocean white as a level ice-field, then faint draughts crawling up in the direct line of the ship's course, painting the burnished surface with the darkling shadows like huge marine spiders creeping down from the edge of the horizon.

It was the second dog-watch; the hour about half-past six; the ship's yards were braced well forward, and she was rippling along to the pressure of a three-knot breathing of air, coming hot as steam from out of the glowing pavilions of the west.

It was sickeningly close, with the menace of an electric storm in a delicate winking of violet dumb lightning away down in the southeast, where the shadow of the night was gathering, with a large star already trembling low down over the sea right ahead.

A fiddle was going upon the forecastle-head. A sailor was chanting a ditty to the tune. Most of the ship's company were listening, lounging about the overhead and against the rail, pipes in mouth. Their open shirts disclosed their mossy breasts, their legs were bare to the knee for the comfort of the coolness, and their bedewed faces reflected the angry red in the west as though every man had tiled himself.

The captain was walking aft, alone, measuring a space of the deck from ahead of the wheel and something forward of the mizzen rigging. His gait was that of a man in a funeral procession—stiff, solemn, self-conscious.

He had not been on deck above half an hour, and in that time had not once addressed me. Not, indeed, that there was anything strange in this; mates and captains seldom converse at sea.

All hands passed a very restless night. Captain Jortin was incessantly up and about. During the middle watch, which was mine, his shadowy figure was repeatedly shaping itself out of the companion hatch, and flitting in a ghostly fashion about the deck.

I had some earnest conversation with the boatswain and carpenter, but none of us could make head nor tail of this piece of rascality, nor in the dimmest degree conjecture who was the villain who had attempted the atrocious act.

I went below at eight bells—that is at 4 o'clock in the morning—first taking care to go the rounds of the after part of the ship, very carefully looking into each cabin and peering and listening. Somehow I had a fancy that there might be a stowaway on board, intent on a criminal purpose, in league, for all I knew, with some one interested in the vessel to defraud the underwriters.

I slept soundly, and at eight o'clock turned out and went on deck. The first person I met was the boatswain, Matthews. He said to me: "The captain seems to have made up his mind, sir."

"On what?"
"As to the man who's holed the ship."

"Have they discovered him?"
"Jackson's in irons. That's all I can say, sir," he answered, with a singular expression of incredulity and temper in his face.

Just then the captain came out of the cuddy, and Matthews went seaward.

"Mr. Fletcher," said Captain Jortin, beckoning me to him, and speaking in a low, level, preaching voice, "we shall be able to prove that Jackson's the man who attempted to scuttle the ship."

"Indeed?" said I, vastly astonished. Jackson was an able seaman in my watch. I had always found him a respectable, willing, alert sailor. "What in that man has excited your suspicion, sir?"

"I heard him muttering the other day," said he, "when he was at work on a sail stretched along this poop. Every time I passed he glanced askance at me and muttered. I don't like the man's looks. He has a hanging face. Then again, yesterday afternoon he was observed to go forward as though he was just come out of the cuddy."

"Who saw this, sir?"
"His so," he answered, abruptly, with a short, spiritless stare at me, and then stepped to the binnacle.

In the course of that morning I asked the steward if it was true the man Jackson had been seen to walk out of the cuddy. He answered that, happening to come up through the steerage hatch, he had seen Jackson going forward close from the cuddy front as though the man had just stepped from the cuddy itself.

"Well, but," said I, "you were in the steerage, and had he been there with an auger, you'd have seen him, wouldn't you?"
"I don't think it was him that did it," said the man.

I looked hard at him; for to be sure, if the thing was not the work of a stowaway—of some one hidden in the steerage—it must at least be the act of a person living aft with access, without suspicion, to the cabins.

Well, nothing happened for three days after this. Then, as I well remember, it being a very beautiful, glowing forenoon watch, the wind a light breeze aft, and the ship swaying upon the delicate pulse of swell with scarce more than steerage way on her, the carpenter came from the pumps, where he had been sounding the well, and standing under the break of the poop, with the sounding-bell in his hand, called up to me:

"There's three foot of water in the hold, sir!"

The steward was on the main deck when this was said, and instantly ran into the cuddy. The captain was walking aft. I bawled the news to him, and added that if the ship had not been scuttled at sea she had sprung a leak.

He told me to call the carpenter on to the poop; and just then the steward, white as a sheet, came rushing on the companion-steps, crying out, as he sprang through the hatch, that he could hear the water running into the ship in the same cabin where the holes had before been discovered.

The captain ran below as stiffly as his stiff, angular figure would permit. I and the boatswain and carpenter and steward followed. On entering the cabin we immediately heard a loud noise of cascading waters.

It was high morning, and there was plenty of light. This time the would-be scuttler had given himself as little trouble as possible; he had simply knocked out the plugs from the ship's side, leaving the holes in the skin open.

The carpenter rushed forward for tools and a broom-handle to serve as plugs. Once again the leak was stopped, and as on the former occasion, on our returning on deck the pumps were manned and the hold freed from water.

But now the sailors grumbled furiously. First they insisted on Jackson being released; next on the ship being narrowly searched.

From ten o'clock till four bells in the afternoon watch we were employed in overhauling the vessel. We probed every nook and cranny of her from the forepeak to the lazaret, diligently seeking likewise for any signs of a hidden man in the steerage—all to no purpose. The villain, whoever he was, must certainly be one of the ship's company.

For my part, I suspected the steward, and so did Shirley, the carpenter; Matthews did not know what to think. The captain stalked apart, gloomy and silent.

That evening, in the first dog-watch, I was in my cabin smoking a pipe, turning over in my mind some scheme for protecting our lives by stationing a watch day and night aft, and wondering if Captain Jortin would see his way to some arrangement of this sort, when the steward knocked on my door and walked in.

The fellow addressed me civilly, with an air of reluctance and astonishment.

He said Captain Jortin had just given him ins. actions to look me up in my cabin, where I was to consider myself as under arrest, on suspicion of attempting to scuttle the ship. My meals would be served regularly. "I'm sorry, sir," added the fellow, "to have to do this duty."

So saying, he closed and locked the door, and I heard him withdraw the key.

I sprang from my bunk, put my pipe down, and stood overwhelmed with surprise and consternation. To be merely suspected of such a crime was to be professionally ruined.

I thought the captain must be mad to lock me up without first charging me. Why did not he confront me and accuse me in the presence of others, and give me a chance to prove my innocence? Those holes had been bored by an anger; an anger is a tool not very readily concealed in a small cabin. Why had not the captain caused my berth to be searched?

Since I knew that I was an innocent man, I cannot express how great was my grief and wrath as I paced the deck of my cabin that was now my prison, wondering with a burning heart and with throbbing brows who the real offender could be—whether it was indeed the steward, as I now perhaps in my temper was the more willing to suppose; whether, if the ship was actually sunk under our feet, as was threatened by the mysterious villain who had twice subtly sought to drown her hold, the crew would remember that I lay a helpless prisoner, locked up in my berth?

I think it was about half-past 8 when the steward unlocked the door and entered with a tray of food, some cool water and a few glasses of rum in a pannikin.

He seemed very shy in his manner, and was for making haste. I bade him tell the captain I was an innocent man, and begged for an interview. He promised to deliver my message.

"And I will ask you," said I, "to remember, should they sound the well and find the ship taking in water, that I am locked up here and helpless."

He said: "Ay, ay, sir," and left the cabin, turning and withdrawing the key as before.

Captain Jortin did not come near me. All that night I lay awake. All next day I awaited a visit from him with consuming impatience. Nobody came to me but the steward, who thrice in the day brought me a meal.

On the evening of the third day of my imprisonment I was startled out of a nap by a disturbance in the cuddy outside. I heard a tramp of feet and the growling sound of seamen's voices. I thought a mutiny had happened, and listened with my heart beating hard in my ears.

Presently my door was struck upon, and the handle violently tried. Then the voice of Matthews bawled for the steward to bring the key. In a few minutes the door was flung open.

Matthews stood in the doorway; at least two-thirds of the ship's company were massed round about him.

"Come out, sir," said the boatswain; "we've discovered who's been trying to sink the ship."

"Who?"
"As I live to tell yer, it's the captain himself!" cried Matthews, bringing his right fist into the palm of his left hand with a mighty report.

Half a dozen voices wanted to deliver the yarn at once. I got it clearly from the carpenter, but I was thunderstruck whilst I listened.

Half an hour before this time the steward had observed the captain come out of his berth and enter the steerage. There was something strange in his walk and aspect. The flush of the sunset was upon the skylight; the steward saw very plainly.

The captain concealed something that resembled a large parcel under the breast of his coat. The steward resolved to follow him, saw him go into the cabin where the auger-holes had been bored, and by the faint light in that interior observed him produce an auger from under his coat and apply the tool to the plugged orifices. The extraordinary part was that the motions of the captain were those of an automaton.

The steward fled on deck. The boatswain was in charge of the ship; he shouted to some of the crew to follow him as witnesses, and they rolled in a body into the steerage, where they found the captain coolly and mechanically boring away with his auger.

They seized him; and now it was they discovered, so they said, that the man was acting in his sleep!

This at least was the opinion of those who witnessed his behavior when he was seized. He cried out like one violently awakened, and swore he did not know where he was nor what he was doing. The men conveyed him to his cabin, locking him up in it, and then came to me.

To end this singular experience: The crew insisted upon my taking command, and practically forced me to navigate the vessel to Buenos Ayres. They would not suffer me to free the captain, who they feared would serve them some diabolical trick if I gave him his liberty.

As for him, he solemnly declared over and over again to me that he knew not what he had done, and that he had a trick of walking in his sleep.

On the arrival of the ship I went to the British Consul with my report, and he thought proper to take charge of Captain Jortin with a view of sending him to England in a British man-of-war that was then lying at Buenos Ayres. The Consul shook his head when I talked of sleep walking. He said:

"He must have brought the anger aboard with him; it formed no part of the carpenter's tool chest. Next, the ship was scuttled in daylight; I cannot somehow reconcile somnambulism with sunshine."

It was to remain a mystery, however, to the end. I was detained at Buenos Ayres by a number of our men running, and before the ship sailed the news came aboard that Captain Jortin had been found dead in his bed. The doctors found that he had died from apoplexy.

Thus the mystery remains. It never could be shown that the unfortunate man had any motive in scuttling the ship. He had no risk in her; but his command of her was a living to him, and the foundering of the vessel could only have proved an injury to himself.

Possibly madness was the true solution, though it does not quite explain to my satisfaction, why it was that he went to sea with an auger in his cabin—Youth's Companion.

A Curiosity in Bees.
A curiosity, which has just been exhibited before the Austrian Horticultural and Apicultural Society in Vienna, and which has attracted great attention from scientific men, is a hive of bees that has two queens. Heretofore it was looked upon as an established fact, which could not be called in question by the most skeptical, that each community of bees was distinguished by its ultra-monarchical principles and its loyalty to one queen. The members of the hive would never hear of a pretender, still less a demurvirate or triumvirate, and any attempt to bring about such a change in their political system would have produced a revolution. But the lawful queen herself would not allow things to go to any such extremes. The moment a rival presented herself, she would, speaking figuratively, attack her tooth and nail, and the duel would end only in the death of one or both. In this Austrian hive, however, the two queens get along together in perfect accord. One of the greatest authorities on apiculture, Dr. Dzierzon, whose name is favorably known throughout the world in connection with several ingenious inventions for the comfort of bees, sat for hours at a stretch observing the conduct of the two queens. They approached each other from time to time without the slightest antipathy, and on two or three occasions actually caressed each other most tenderly, and then separated quietly and peacefully, followed by their devoted suite.—New Orleans Picayune.

Lincoln's Views on Assassination.
That night, as we walked back to the White House through the grounds between the War Department buildings and the house, I fancied that I saw in the misty moonlight a man dodging behind one of the trees. My heart for a moment stood still, but as we passed in safety, I came to the conclusion that the dodging figure was a creature of the imagination. Nevertheless, as I parted from the President at the door of the White House, I could not help saying that I thought his going to and fro in the darkness of the night, as if it was usually his custom, often alone and unattended, was dangerous recklessness. That night, in deference to his wife's anxious appeal, he had provided himself with a thick oaken stick. He laughed as he showed me this slight weapon, and said, with some seriousness: "I long ago made up my mind that if anybody wants to kill me, he will do it. If I wore a shirt of mail, and kept myself surrounded by a body-guard, it would be all the same. There are a thousand ways of getting at a man, if it is desired that he should be killed. Besides, in this case, it seems to me the man who would come after me would be just as objectionable to my enemies—if I have any."—Noah Brooks in the Century.

Killed the Father of Rattles.
The largest rattlesnake ever killed possibly in the entire State of Georgia was killed Saturday afternoon in the East Macon district. It had twenty-two rattles and a button, making it twenty-three years old. It measured a fraction over five feet in length. No body can be found to have heard of a snake that carries fourteen or sixteen rattles and a button is considered a monster in these parts, and is looked upon with most respectful bearing. The men had quite an exciting time killing the snake. None of them dared go within several lengths of him, and when he shook his mighty bunch of rattles the noise was awful, and struck terror to the hearts of the spectators, causing them each time to retreat farther. They finally dispatched him with a long pole.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

A Wild Ride on a Deer.
Dr. and Mrs. Derby, of Riverside, were guests of Mr. and Mrs. J. T. Leonard, of Moreno, recently. Dr. Derby is an expert hunter, and when Mr. Leonard mentioned that there were deer in the hills back of his ranch his friend was eager for a hunt.

After tramping the hills for several hours they started a deer. The doctor fired and the animal dropped. Elated over the prospect of having killed a deer the hunter pulled his knife, threw his leg over the animal and grasped one of its horns. No sooner had the knife pricked the skin than it jumped to its feet and started bounding over the grade, the astonished hunter on its back.

Mr. Leonard at last found his friend in a snare bush, head downward, his clothes tattered and torn. It seems that the shot had only stunned the buck, and the prick of the knife had revived it.—Moreno (Cal.) Indicator.

The Head-Hunting Nagas.
Professor Peal, the ethnologist, recently described to the Asiatic Society the condition of the head-hunting Nagas on the borders of Assam. The women are to blame for the continuance of the practice; they taunt the young men who are not tattooed, and the latter go out and cut off heads to exhibit to them, fully half of which are those of women and children. The area occupied by the tribe is not more than twenty miles square, but in it during the past forty years more than twelve thousand murders have been committed for the sake of these ghastly trophies.—Chicago Herald.

Napoleon's Shrewdness.
When the great Napoleon was urged to conquer China he replied: "Better let China alone. The Chinese do no harm at present. If we conquer them we shall teach them the art of war. They may then raise and equip armies, buy or build navies, endanger France, and perhaps all Europe."

The shrewdness of the level-headed Corsican is being appreciated by several European statesmen just now.—Boston Globe.

In proportion to the population France has more money in circulation than any other country. In France it averages \$40.56 per capita; in the United States, \$24.34; in England and Germany, \$18.42; in Japan, \$4.99; in China, \$1.85; in Central America, 84 cents.

Hard Times.
It is not merely the fact that a million men are said to be out of work with consequent loss of time, peace and money, that makes the times seem so tough, but there are other aggravations superadded, growing out of the willful neglect of so many, that make the times seem hard, indeed. If better times were at hand and good places open to all that are now idle, there are thousands who would betotaly unfit to go to work by reason of the neglect of some infamously wealthy units them to accept a proffered chance. What better opportunity could there be to get their physical condition in good shape than the enforced idleness gives them? To do so is making profit out of misfortune; not to do so is making hard times so much harder. It is poor logic to make anything but grow worse, and it is no economy at all to save expense by sacrificing health. A man wants brain, muscle and brain in as nearly a perfect condition as is possible, to gain a victory in the battle of life. It is mostly from a beginning in little things that the greater ones accumulate and finally overwhelm us. There is hardly one man who labors with his muscles, from the skilled mechanic down to those who work with pick and shovel, but has some bodily ailment neglected. What costly trifling it is, looked at from results. For example: the bones, joints, ligaments, tendons and muscles are all under constant strain from the nature and demands of work. Aches and pains must ensue. These, neglected, soon reach the chronic stage of stiffened limbs from contracted muscles. How many old mechanics have bent backs and lank-aches we know. This is simply a condition of neglected imbrigo, which had it been treated in time could have been cured in ten minutes by St. Jacobs Oil. This is also true of all the minor aches and pains. So certain a cure ought certainly to be in every workman's house to make hard times lighter.

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