

The Whaler's Last Cruise.

"I HAVE come to say good-bye, Dorothea."

The speaker was a man who was known as the best whaler in New Bedford, and he uttered his words in the presence of a handsome girl, whose confused manner told that they were giving her pain.

He stood near her, hat in hand, and was looking into her flushed face with much anxiety and fear.

"Aren't you going to say something, girl?" he said, vexed with her silence, for she stood over the flower-pots uttering not a word in reply to him. "Ours is going to be a long cruise; for whales are becoming scarce. I may not return for three years."

"Three years!" she echoed, starting. "That's a long time."

"Yes, but it might not seem long to me, if—if—"

"Pray go on, Mr. Maynard."

"If I but knew that Dorothea Kyle loved me. There, you have it at last, girl! I knew that I must tell you before I left for the North."

Again the eyes of the fair young girl fell to the floor, while the sailor regarded her with great expectancy, and ventured to lift the delicate hand that hung at her side.

"Send me to the northern sea with a happy heart, if you can, Dorothea. If you do not love me, tell me plainly, and I will cherish you for your frankness."

Then it was that Dorothea Kyle lifted her head bravely and encountered the whaler's gaze.

"Then go with the happy heart for which you ask," she said. "God forbid that I should send such a gallant man as you to the ice-seas with the burthen of rejected love. No, David Maynard, I have loved you, and here is the hand of Dorothea Kyle. You have long possessed her heart."

Too full for utterance, the whaler seized the girl's hand and covered it with kisses, while blushes mantled to her lofty temples.

She glanced upon him, smiled with conscious pride, and turned her head to conceal her emotion.

But the next moment she started back with a loud cry. Her face was quite pale.

"Mr. Maynard—David! The window! Look! There's a man's face pressed against the pane."

While Dorothea uttered these words, her quivering finger pointed to the window.

Startled by her action, the whaler sprang forward, but could see no face against the pane.

"I see nothing," he said, returning to her side. "May you not have been mistaken?"

"I could not have been, for I saw the face distinctly," she answered. "I saw it as plainly as I see your face now."

"Strange," muttered David Maynard, impressed by Dorothea's words. "The eavesdropper may be lurking without.—I will see."

So saying, he opened the door and stepped out into the night; but nothing rewarded his investigation. He saw no human figure crouched in the shadows of the trees that grew before Dorothea's house, and heard no retreating footsteps.

The apparition puzzled him to no little degree, and his face was pale and disturbed when he entered the house.

"Did you recognize the face, Dorothea?" he asked, with the uneasiness still upon him.

"It was a strange one to me. It wore a wild, woe-begone expression, and the eyes flashed like a maniac's. I call it a dark, evil face."

"Perhaps it was one of our new men," the whaler replied. "They are strolling about New Bedford to-night, steeping themselves in grog; for tomorrow we sail. If the insolent fellow comes to the window again, he will wish that he never saw the whaler's nest."

"You would not know him, David," she said, pleadingly.

"Why, he has already frightened you. Your face is as pale as ashes. Come, girl, quit trembling, and let us talk of the future."

With his strong arms, the whaler drew the yielding form of his love to him, and told her all his plans for the future. For he had planned just as if she had been his betrothed, and together they reared golden palaces, and with their gorgeous glitter decked the life that was to come.

But at last David Maynard withdrew—tore himself from the beauty of New Bedford, and hurried through the little town towards the shipping that dotted the pretty harbor.

He was happy, yet sad. He was eager to sail for the North seas, yet did not like to leave the beautiful being who had just promised to become his bride. The dangers of the whaling grounds were numerous and great; but he trusted in the "luck" which had attended his former cruises and hoped for the best.

Left alone to herself, after the whaler's departure, Dorothea Kyle, after a few moments of happy reflection, was about to retire from the parlor, when a rap startled her.

With the words "Who can it be?" on her lips, she hastened to open the door. The next moment, with an exclamation, she started from the person who stood on the step, with the lamp-light upon his wild, revengeful face.

"Miss Kyle, I believe?" he said, crossing the threshold unbidden, at the same time doffing his sailor hat.

"Yes, sir," said Dorothea, scarcely knowing what she was saying. "To whom am I indebted for this late visit?"

"Late, eh? My name is Cyrus Parton. As you have just dismissed a fellow, I supposed that I might call."

The speaker's words and manner were insolent, and the fair girl regretted that she had opened the door before learning his identity.

And then what added to her fears was that she had seen his face lately pressed against the window pane.

"You will favor me by making known your errand," she said, wishing to get rid of her unceremonious visitor as soon as possible.

"Certainly, and as I wish to broach a delicate subject, I trust I shall have your undivided attention. Dorothea Kyle, you have long been the object of my affection. For many months—"

Dorothea lifted her hands for him to desist.

"I cannot listen to a declaration of love," she said, gently, yet with a firmness that must have irritated her rude visitor.

"Because you have already listened to one, to-night," was the rejoinder.

The girl blushed, but her eyes brightened.

"That is one of the reasons," she said. "I have never met you before, sir."

"Your memory serves you poorly; but then it was nothing more than an introduction. You were in New York last season, and there you met Captain Parton of the Zenith. I am that very man."

"I recall that meeting now, and I must say that you have changed since then."

"Perhaps I have," he said, with a light laugh. "But will you listen to what I was going to say?"

"It would avail you nothing, sir."

"But it would be a satisfaction to me. A man feels better after declaring his passion, even though the woman rejects it. I am the strongest and I could force you to listen to anything I might say, but I do not intend to resort to harsh measures to secure an audience."

Dorothea's eyes thanked him silently, and he continued:

"I was an eavesdropper a while ago, and heard everything that passed between you and David Maynard and yourself. So you really love him, do you?"

"I do."

"Well, that may be right, but it does not suit me," the man said, going towards the door.

"But what are you going to about it?" asked Dorothea.

"I shall try to win you," replied the man.

The girl's face paled again, for there was a mad light in the man's eye.

"If you harm him, woman as I am, I will have vengeance!" said the girl, following him up. "Were we to live a thousand years, I could never to love you. Where I have given my heart, there it must abide. You make a bitter enemy if you attempt to injure him in your disappointment."

Grandly beautiful she looked, standing erect before Cyrus Parton, and threatening him with a woman's vengeance if he attempted foul play with David Maynard.

For a moment he looked upon the fair girl, then, with a bitter and derisive laugh on his lips, he opened the door, and passed out with a bow of mock politeness.

The next moment Dorothea shut the door and walked faint and sick, to the sofa on the farther side of the room.

Then she buried her face in her hands and trembled like the aspen, convulsed by the storm of her own fears; but her face suddenly brightened, and she looked up.

"Thank heaven, the Plover sails tomorrow at daybreak, and the winds will carry David far from the bold, bad man."

Thus thought the young girl, and the clouds left her face; but she did not dream that Cyrus Parton had also shipped on the Plover, and that he would sail in her to the northern seas.

But such was the case, as the reader will presently see.

grounds, and his harpoon never missed its mark.

Much of his life had been spent among the icebergs; he was familiar with their strange floating, and knew when to sail past one and when to keep his distance. Good service entitled him to promotion, but he had steadily refused it, preferring to remain the Plover's second mate.

The first gleams of day were flushing the east and silencing the waters of New Bedford's bay, when the Plover, with sails well trimmed, sailed slowly eastward. There was a lively commotion on her decks, for many of her crew were leaving families behind, and they wanted a last, longing look at the "whaler's nest," as the old place was called.

But the spires soon disappeared, and the Plover found her real journey inaugurated. The north seas were her destination, and the breezes seemed eager to bear her thither.

Without accident the Plover reached the whaling grounds, and the prey, discovered in great numbers, betokened a short stay there.

At the beginning of the hunt, one of the best harpooners was taken sick, and the captain feared that his place could not be supplied. But at that moment, Cyrus Parton offered to fill the vacancy, and, through the second mate's entreaties, he was selected.

David Maynard and his rival had not been on terms of familiarity with each other during the voyage; but he was prompt to note that Parton was a good whaler and an adept with the harpoon.

He did not dream that the new sailor was his rival; but he had early decided that he was not an honest man.

The situation craved by Parton was thus obtained through the man hated by him from the bottom of his heart, and it caused him much delight.

"If you but knew me, David Maynard, you would have kept poor Gosnold's harpoon from my hands!" Parton muttered, after receiving the appointment. "I did not ship in the Plover for the purpose of striking the whale. No! I am going to strike Dorothea Kyle's heart, even in the northern waters. And the blow shall put an end to the disappointments of one mad wild life."

It was on the afternoon of a cold clear day when the lookout sighted a monster sperm whale off the starboard bow. As it was supposed to be the giant which had lately eluded the Plover's boats, the excitement speedily became intense, and the best harpooners were commissioned to give the fish battle.

These men were David Maynard and Cyrus Parton.

Each in a strong whale boat, well manned, they put off in pursuit of the leviathan. But the whale became furious, and forced the mate's boat to leave a harpoon in his blubber, while the rope was cut to save the crew. In his anger the monster lashed the sea into foam, and threatened to destroy the boats. But the rivals determined to win the contest.

At a critical moment the whale found himself between the boats, which rapidly and fearlessly advanced to the charge. The harpooners stood erect, and the sturdy tars believed that the coup de grace was about to be given.

David Maynard cast his harpoon with his usual precision, and the rope attached to it was hidden by the foam. But he knew that he had struck the whale in a vital part.

The next moment, as a wave lifted his boat upon its white crest, he saw Cyrus Parton with a harpoon poised in his hand. The man's face was stamped with a dark villainous expression, and his flashing eyes seemed to be regarding him, and not the whale.

A moment later the harpoon left the rascal's hands. Like an arrow it flew over the whale's back, and, struck by the keen point, David Maynard staggered back with a shriek, and fell into the arms of his men.

"Secure the whale!" he gasped, but a hatchet severed the ropes, and the fish dived into the sea tinged with his blood.

Both boats pulled rapidly towards the ship, and the stricken mate was lifted gently over the side.

Cyrus Parton declared that a sudden lurch of the boat caused him to miss the whale, and strike the man.

But the sailors shook their heads at this, and began to talk in whispers among themselves.

An examination of the mate's wound showed that it was serious, and in their love for him the sailors refused to further pursue the whales. They clustered everywhere in groups and discussed the situation.

Many wished that the second mate was back in New Bedford, for they knew that a certain woman there would love to nurse him back to health and strength. But hundreds of miles intervened between the Plover and her native harbor, and many months must

elapse before she could anchor there again.

"I missed my mark and he is getting well. I will not fall the next time!"

These words fell from Cyrus Parton's lips, as he stood in a spot on the Plover's deck, which he believed was not tenanted by any one save himself. But he was speedily undeceived.

"What did you say?"

He started at the sound of the voice, and confronted the speaker.

A burly sailor, his superior in strength, stood before him.

"We thought you did it on purpose," the old salt continued. "Now we will see if a man can commit crime on the whaling grounds and go unpunished."

It was in vain that the man protested his innocence. He was placed on trial for attempted murder, and his own words convicted him! A jury of exasperated whalers found him guilty, and banished him to a long stretch of dreary coast.

His punishment was stern, but not undeserved; and it is safe to say that the revengeful sailor had made his last cruise.

David Maynard recovered a long illness, and at last anchored within sight of the spires of New Bedford. To Dorothea Kyle his return was a source of much joy, and not long thereafter he retired from the sea and made her his wife.

The Plover has made several voyages to the boreal seas since the eventful one of which we have written; but no trace has been found of the revengeful exile.

The Foolish Calf.

A calf with the thoughtlessness of vealy youth, could not abstain from insulting an honest hard working ox that was toiling at the plow.

"Excuse me," said the calf; "what a fool you are to wear that heavy yoke upon your neck, and go all day long drawing a plow at your heels to turn up the ground for your master. Why don't you exchange your yoke for a paper collar and have some style about you? See what a jolly time I have of it; nothing to do but enjoy life. Knock off work, old fellow, and let's have some fun."

But the ox kept right along about his business, saying to himself:

"When that young fellow gets as furrow long in life as I have he will know more and won't talk calf as much as he does now."

That evening while the ox, whose day's work was over, was at his repast, he saw a butcher's cart driving by containing the insolent calf, who was destined to be reduced to cutlets, calveshead jelly and material for sewed boots before morning.

"Ah, my fine fellow," said the ox, "you won't have an opportunity to insult honest labor for one while, you can bet your life."

"Moral—Never despise an ox because he wears a heavy yoke."

An Unexpected Answer.

A sneak concealed himself in the parlor closet of a San Francisco house, early one evening, without the suspicion that there was to be a little entertainment in the room that evening. A young ventriloquist was in the party, and when he began his performance he went innocently to the closet door, knocked and said:

"What are you doing in there? Come out of that."

The thief came out so suddenly that the ventriloquist struck the floor with the back of his head. The former was not too much surprised, however, to sweep the spoons off the table into his pockets, and the hat-rack overcoats across his arm as he made his escape.

Bishop Vail, of Kansas, during a recent diocesan visitation, stopped at Parsons and called upon several of his flock. At one house where he dropped in, the lady of the house was absent, and her little granddaughter was installed as mistress. After a brief conversation with the little lady he arose and left, saying, "Good-by, my little dear. Please tell your grandma that Bishop Vail has been here, and left his respects for her."

The little housekeeper replied: "You needn't leave them; grandma's got some 'specs,' and don't want any more."

A cunning Californian tore his clothing, rolled himself in the dust and tied himself to a tree by the wayside, hoping to excite the pity of the passengers of the stage-coach when it came along by relating how he had been robbed by highwaymen. The stage that day took a short cut by a new road, and when the cunning Californian was about to untie himself a grizzly bear came along and ate part of his leg.

Never Return.

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