Red Heart and Black Arrow

A Tale of the Rolling Wave

CHAPTER VI.

If there was any hidden meaning in the doctor's speech, the snowy-haired passenger showed no sign of suspecting it. Raising his hat lightly more especially to me, but so as to include the general company, he said:

"Emerson C. Waldo, sir, is my name—General Waldo, late of the United States Cavalry—on a Yurrup tour for the benefit of health and education. I reckon I've powerfully neglected both, sir, in my time, having mostly spent my life in fighting Indians on the plains."

"Well, General," I said, "I hope that you will make up for lost time, and get all the arrears of enjoyment due to you on the Queen of Night. It is not in the contract, but we mean to give you fine weather, smooth seas, and when we get down south, blue skies—if we can. We start fair anyhow."

I remained chatting a minute or two, and when I moved away, Zavertal separated from the group and joined me in a promenade of the deck.

"You have been so occupied sir, that I have got the start of you with the passengers." he said. "I may as well take the opportunity of posting you in what I have picked up. They are an average lot."

"Many invalids ?" I asked, with a vivid remembrance of the bo'sun's reference to "sea-funerals," though my question seemed almost silly amid that scene of gaiety and robust health.

"A few, but not many serious cases. There, though you might not think it, is one of them," the doctor replied, pointing to a happy looking, chubby-faced boy of fourteen who was amusing some of the elders by skylarking on the lower ratlins. "That is the young Earl of Darranmore, who, if he ever attains his majority, will possess a rent-roll of forty thousand a year. I fear that the lad is doomed, though—heart complications." And Zavertal sighed sympathetically as we wheeled for another turn.

"That is hard lines," I said. "Are there any others about whom you are anxious ?"

"There's a man called Desmond Orlebar whom I doubt if we shall bring home again. He has gone the pace and got himself into a generally played-out condition. There he is—sitting wrapped up on the other side of the deck, and indulging in his old games to the last, I see."

Following the direction of his glance, I saw a thin, sallow-faced man of forty, wearing a thick plaid ulster and propped up with pillows on a portable bamboo lounge. A steward had just brought him a mahogany-colored brandy and soda, and Mr. Orlebar's efforts to take the glass from the tray into his shaking hands were painful to witness. There was no doubt about this passenger's illness.

"Poor beggar," I said. "And does that complete the list of dangerous cases ?"

"Of the really dangerous ones, yes," replied Zavertal. "There are one or two other patients who came to me with bad reports from their relations or private medical attendants, but I see no reason to be apprehensive about any of them—except perhaps one."

"Who is that ?" I asked, somewhat carelessly, I fear, as we reached the limit of our promenade at the stern. Facing about, we both turned inwards to each other, so that, as Zavertal answered my question, his eyes for a moment dwelt on mine. Again they had that strange glint.

"She is a Miss Challenor," was the reply that so startled me, that it would have been affectation on his part to have pretended not to notice its palpable effect. He hastened to add : "I rather fancy Nathan, before he went ashore, told me that you had met her."

"Yes, in a way I may be said to have saved her life," I replied, and seeing no reason for further concealing a fact which was sure to get abroad in the ship, I briefly narrated the circumstances, only suppressing my present relations with Aline. "But surely," I concluded, "there must be some mistake about the state of Miss Challenor's health. I had a few words with her yesterday, and she laughed at the idea of there being anything wrong with her."

We turned again, and again I met the doctor's gaze piercing me from out of a face that smiled with sad benevolence in every feature but the eyes. "The old story," he said sympathetically. "Every one concedes the danger but the patient herself. I have not been called on to examine her yet, but her guardian wrote that it was an almost hopeless case of pulmonary phthisis. I presume her friends thought it unnecessary to frighten the poor girl by letting her know the nature and extent of her malady. However, as you take a very natural interest in her, I will observe closely and let you know in a day or two. Excuse me, but I think I am wanted—and, Captain, if you will allow me to advise. you will turn in for a spell. Your night-watch has taken it out of you, and you look as if you needed rest."

Needed rest ! As he left my side to go to some one who was beckoning to him, the sun seemed to be blotted out, and the voices and laughter around made a horrid blur in my ears like the "racing" of machinery when the main-shaft breaks. To think that Aline—my sweet Aline in the heyday of her youth and beauty, and in the height of our new-found happiness—was dying of consumption. Then gradually the weight of sudden oppression was lifted, and, reaction setting in, I would not, could not, believe that the trouble existed at all. I recalled what Aline had said about the "wish being father to the thought" with Sir Simon, and began to suspect that he had imagined what, probably from interested motives, he desired to become a reality. It was the first inkling of the truth, but how far short of it the events to be related must show.

The wind was light and steady from the east, and the glass high. We were clanking down Channel at an easy sixteen knots, with the massive front of the Mainbench cliffs glistening white in the sunlight five miles away on the starboard beam. There was nothing to keep me on deck, and having satisfactorily explained away the cause of my anxiety, I decided to take Zavertal's advice and turn in till dinner-time, leaving him to do the honors at the luncheon-table. In going to my room I had to pass the spot where Mr. Orlebar's lounge was placed, and just as I was approaching it I met Aline's chaperon, as yet unknown to me, coming along the deck alone from the opposite direction. The sick man caught sight of her while I was within two feet of him, and the effect of her appearance upon him was as inexplicable as it was sudden. His shaking fingers dropped the now empty glass with a crash upon the deck, and I distinctly heard him murmur—

"My God ! It's Ella."

The recognition, if such it was to prove, did not appear to be mutual. Mrs. Brinkworth's attention was of course attracted by the falling glass, flush and a fleeting expression of and she looked at the occupant of the lounge, but beyond a slight disgust, which might very naturally have been called up by Orlebar's repulsive, drink-sodden features, no sign of knowing him escaped her. She passed on, stately and unmoved to the after-part of the deck, where I had no doubt that Aline was waiting for her.

I had seen too many chance meetings on shipboard for the incident to make any impression on me, and I should have dismissed it altogether from my mind if one of the parties to it had not been so intimately connected with Aline. As it was, I merely noted it mentally for future inquiry, in the event of anything tending to show that Orlebar's presence on the ship would cause annoyance to a lady who had already won my dear girl's regard.

After a good sleep I awoke refreshed, and comforted with the reflection that, after all, beyond specifying the nature of her imaginary illness, Zavertal had really said nothing more than Aline herself to confirm Sir Simon Crawshay's estimate of her health. The doctor had not examined her chest, and his statement was based on nothing more substantial than a second-hand opinion which was probably all moonshine. I dressed, therefore, with every anticipation of a pleasant evening, and after a short visit to the bridge to see that all was right, I went down and mingled with the passengers, eventually making my way to where Aline was sitting with Mrs. Brinkworth.

I have the instinct, common to most people, of knowing a friend from an enemy at first sight, and something told me from that moment that the quiet, sad-faced woman was Aline's friend and therefore mine. I think she had already guessed our secret, but, if not, she had every opportunity of doing so in the cheery half-hour we three spent together before the first gong sounded for dinner. We lovers were too confident in the future and in the freedom which Aline's majority would bring her in a few months to affect more reserve than etiquette demanded in public. The shy and sentimental stage of courtship had been got over in the old Dahlia, and there was a very frank understanding between us.

When I sat down presently to preside, for the first time, in the saloon I found that I had General Waldo for my left-hand neighbor, and on the other side an ancient dowager—Lady Carberry—who took the place of honor by right of her title. Aline and Mrs. Brinkworth were seated at my table, but some way down, and too far off for sustained conversation with them. Parallel with mine was another table, at the head of which Doctor Zavertal presided, with the little Earl of Darranmore and the latter's tutor on one hand, and a financial magnate and his wife on the other. Mr. Desmond Orlebar was also placed at the doctor's table, but some half dozen seats away. The "Captain's table" of course accommodated those who were or considered themselves the elite of the ship, and it was not till I found myself at the head of the brilliant assemblage, and the most deferred-to personage in it, that I appreciated Nathan's compliment in selecting me for the job.

Dinner proceeded gaily, and I worked hard to make up for lost time in cultivating friendly relations with the passengers. General Waldo kept our end of the table in a constant roar of laughter with comic descriptions of Western life, at which even the starchy old lady on my right had to unbend, and by the time dessert was reached I concluded that the social part of my duty was easier than I had expected. Things were going equally smoothly at the other table, where, with his quips and cranks, the young Earl was evidently establishing himself a general favorite. The interest in the merry youngster even spread to our table, his boyish laughter at Zavertal's good humored sallies causing many heads to be turned to look at him. General Waldo, who could see him as he sat, seemed to watch him unceasingly with the sympathetic attention due to a kindred spirit.

Suddenly, as the ladies were beginning to leave the saloon, Waldo plucked me by the sleeve and exclaimed,—

"Thunder, Captain ! The swell of the ocean ought to be kinder to the swell on the ocean. What's up with our young aristocrat yonder ?"

I thought at first that the veteran was merely cracking one of his copious wheezes, but I looked round to the head of the other table, and sure enough there was the Earl of Darranmore leaning back in his chair and gone deathly white, while Zavertal had risen and was deftly unbuttoning the boy's collar with one hand and feeling his pulse with the other. The night was dead calm and, save for the slight tremor caused by the pulsing of the engines, the ship was as steady as a church. Waldo's suggestion of sea-sickness seemed, therefore, wide of the mark, and I recollected what the doctor had said of the lad's weak heart in the morning.

At Zavertal's bidding a couple of assistant-stewards lifted the young Earl's limp form and bore it away to his state-room, the doctor himself following, but pausing as he passed out to say to me—

"It is only a faint. He will be all right to-morrow, but I fear this confirms the report I had of him—poor little chap." And Zavertal hurried away, tapping his broad waistcoat in the region of the heart, and repeating again—"Poor little chap."

The tables were already pretty well thinned, and in a couple of minutes the incident was forgotten by such as remained, Waldo resuming the thread of a yarn, in which he had been interrupted, about a Texan horse-thief, scoring all his points, bringing the story to a close, and thoroughly enjoying the applause that greeted the climax. For a moment or two he sat as though meditating a fresh narrative, then suddenly jumped up and exclaimed—

"Pineapple, by Jove ! I guess I'm a whale on pineapple," and before I could tell him that the steward should bring him some he had crossed over to the now vacant table where Lord Darranmore had been sitting, and had seized a dish of the fruit that was there, coming back with it to his own place.

As he resumed his seat he looked at me, for the fraction of a second all the babbling fun in his face changed to stern scrutiny, and in that brief steadfast gaze remembrance came to me of some one quite different whom I had seen before—of Kennard, the American visitor to Nathan's office, who had forfeited his passage.

The likeness was one of expression only, and was gone like a flash, as with one of his jokes Waldo set to upon the pineapple with a relish that justified his eagerness to secure it.

(To Be Continued.)

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Dr. Williams' Pink Pills are woman's best friend. They enrich the blood, tone up the nerves, and strengthen the vital organs to perform their functions regularly. They bring the rosy cheeks and shapely forms that tell of good health and happiness. To the growing girl they are invaluable. To the mother they are a necessity. To the woman of forty-five they mean relief and ease. Dr. Williams' Pink Pills are the best medicine that science has devised for women at all periods of life. These pills succeed when all else fails. Thousands of grateful women endorse the truth of these statements. Mrs. John White, Sahanatien, Ont., says :—"It gives me pleasure to bear testimony to the great value of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills as a cure for the ailments that afflict so many women. I suffered greatly and the periods were very irregular, but thanks to these pills I am now quite well and free from the pains that made my life almost a burden. I cheerfully give my experience for the benefit of suffering women."

Remember that substitutes cannot cure and see that the full name "Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People" is on the wrapper around every box. If in doubt send direct to the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont., and the pills will be mailed, post paid, at 50c per box, or six boxes for $2.50.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

The Japanese tradesmen of Tokio are becoming very fond of hanging out English signs. In one street appears the notice, "Restaurant shop, European nourishing cakes." Another shopkeeper has in large letters over his doorway the words, "Photographer executed." The principal barber of the town calls himself a "headcutter," and has taken to wearing a long white gown of approved nightshirt pattern.

MARTIAL ENDURANCE.

A notable feat of endurance during the late war by the 1st Battalion Essex Regiment, has just come to light. The battalion had been left behind at the Zand River to assist in getting the whole of the large baggage train across, and after working for twenty-four hours, the men marched a distance of forty-two miles in just half as many hours, in order to catch up its division. Such a feat of endurance as this has seldom been equalled.

BERTHS FOR FORGERS.

Constant employment, according to an advertisement in an Italian newspaper, can be obtained by experts capable of imitating the handwriting of old manuscripts. Seldom, perhaps, has a forger been advertised for quite so openly.

SAFETY FOR LITTLE ONES.

Mothers Should Exercise Great Care in Choosing Medicine for Children.

Every little one needs a medicine at some time, and mothers cannot be too careful in making a selection. The so-called "soothing" preparations, invariably contain opiates and other harmful drugs, which stupify the little one, and pave the way to a constant necessity for the use of narcotic drugs. Undoubtedly the very best, and the very safest medicine for little ones is Baby's Own Tablets. They are mildly laxative and gentle in their action and cure all stomach and bowel troubles, relieve simple fevers, break up colds, prevent croup, and allay the irritation accompanying the cutting of teeth. Where these Tablets are used little ones sleep naturally, because the causes of irritation and sleeplessness are removed in a natural way. Experienced mothers all praise this medicine. Mrs. H. H. Fox, Orange Ridge, Man., says :—"Baby's Own Tablets are the best medicine I have ever used for children of all ages. They are truly a blessing to baby and mother's friend."

These Tablets are guaranteed to contain no opiate, and can be given to a new-born babe. Sold by all druggists, or sent post paid, at 25c a box, by writing direct to the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

AN ELEPHANT'S THEFT.

The proprietor of Bostock's menagerie, which recently left Dax, in France, has been served with a summons as the result of an act of theft committed by Bob, the big elephant of the show. Bob was leading the procession out of Dax when the horses attached to a peasant's cart became restive, and the efforts of the peasant and several of the menagerie men were required to calm them. Meanwhile, Bob availed himself of the opportunity to extract the peasant's dinner, which was in the cart wrapped up in a serviette, and swallowed the lot.

DOCTOR'S COSTLY ERROR.

Hearing of the efficacy of the Rontgen rays for the removal of hairs from the upper lip, a lady in Hanover, aged thirty-five, applied to Dr. Bruno Schurmayer, a properly qualified doctor and Rontgen ray specialist, for treatment. He operated twice, but instead of removing the superfluous hairs the operation resulted in the skin of the face becoming red and the lips swollen. The ladt thereupon brought an action against the doctor and was awarded $75 damages, against which he appealed, but the decision has just been upheld.

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