

STORIES OF THE SEA

By EDWARD JENKINS, M.P.

Author of "Little Hodge," "Lord Bantam," "Ginx's Baby," &c.

CHAPTER XII.—Continued.

"You've pocketed the key by mistake, Mr. Stillwater. Open the door and come along."

Stillwater hesitated a moment. His face became dark and menacing, and his hand with an undecided motion, sought not the pocket where he had deposited the key, but his bosom.

"Bah!" said Mr. Crog, who was watching every moment, and he threw himself with all his force upon the man, and seized his hands. "You would try that on, would you?" He shouted, "Engineers there—help!"

A terrific struggle ensued within the narrow limits of the cabin. Stillwater, surprised for an instant by Mr. Crog's unexpected promptness, recovered himself with the resourceful readiness of a man accustomed to situations of danger, and well trained in all the arts of defence. He soon shook off Mr. Crog's grasp upon his arms, and, closing with him, threw him on his back upon the floor, with his head against the sofa, which ran along the ship's side of the cabin, a position which left the poor steward at his mercy. In the scuffle a revolver had dropped from the valet's breast and fortunately for Mr. Crog at the moment, it was lying under him, to his great discomfort, so that his foe was unable to recover it. Meantime the steward's tongue had not been silent. Men were already knocking at the door. As Stillwater, kneeling on the breast of the prostrate Crog, was striving to get his powerful hands fairly fixed on his neck, an effort which Crog resisted as well as he could in his awkward position, two or three sturdy engineers, applying their shoulders to the slight panel which constituted the door, burst it in, with its fastenings, and they and the wreck came tumbling in together upon Mr. Stillwater and his intended victim.

The so-distant valet displayed immense strength, and the blood which was afterwards found scattered on the white French paint showed how terrific was the struggle that ensued. But weight and numbers soon told, and in about five or six minutes, Mr. Stillwater, with his hands artistically tied behind him in a way known only to sailors, his face bleeding and his clothes nearly torn off his back, was seated on the sofa, facing several panting and excited men, whose figures and dress gave proof of the prisoner's desperate force and energy.

Mr. Crog, more breathless and discomposed than the rest, was resting upon the edge of the lower berth, with one eye artificially closed and coloured, his side face covered with blood from a scalp wound, and his general appearance, as a cabin steward by no means as trim and taunt as the ship's regulations required. He was intently studying, with the single eye that remained open, in which there seemed to play a malicious gleam, the face and aspect of the so-called Mr. Stillwater. And, indeed, that person's exertions had wrought in him a remarkable transformation. His red hair had vanished. It was lying about the floor of the cabin in rough tags. He now showed black, ruffled, short-clipped hair, above a high, strongly-marked forehead. But his whiskers still bore their carotid colour, as it was now clear, produced by dyeing. His face showed marks of rough handling. It had assumed a pale bluish tinge. He replied to Mr. Crog's stare with a cynical grin, and muttered through his teeth—

"Ah! if I had only had another minute of loving caress on your neck, my friend, you and I might have died happily."

Mr. Crog was not inclined to reply. A sickly sensation came over him, and he lay down. Meantime the captain, who had been summoned, entered, and after Mr. Crog had been revived by some brandy, received an account of the extraordinary occurrence. Determined this time to act with caution, he sent a message to the so-called Mr. Fex, stating that a suspicious person had been discovered on board in the person of Sir Benjamin's valet, and begging that he would give him the benefit of his advice. The messenger found the ex-Master, Lord Pendlebury, and Sir Benjamin together. They at once proceeded in company to the engineer's mess-room, to which the prisoner had been removed. As it was now dark, the swinging lamps over the table had been lit. The light fell on the expressive face of the captured man. Mr. Corcoran had no sooner glanced at it than he seized Lord Pendlebury's arm with a spasmodic grip, and said to him aside—

"Pendlebury, that is the man, as sure as fate—the rascal from Homburg that gave evidence against me. He has shaved off his beard and dyed his whiskers; but I should know him, if his face were skinned."

Lord Pendlebury instantly saw the importance of this discovery, but he whispered a caution to his friend, for the present to say nothing about it.

"Now, gentlemen," said the captain, "you shall first hear Mr. Crog's account of his acquaintance and dealings with this person, and then we can proceed to make other inquiries."

Mr. Crog, watching with his single eye the prisoner and his hearers alternately, told at great length, and in every particular, the story of his relations with the prisoner. When he stated that Mr. Stillwater's left eyebrow had borne on the first day out that mark which was designated in the description of the accused Darnley, murderer, every one was struck with astonishment. And when he went on to speak of the engagement of the prisoner by Sir Benjamin Peakman, and to tell the story of his mysterious movements in the early morning, the knight became painfully interested.

"I thought," said Mr. Crog, "that maybe Sir Benjamin was requiring something during the night—"

"Certainly not!" interrupted Sir Benjamin. "He left me in my berth last night at ten o'clock, and I did not see him until eight this morning."

The knight's face grew pale with alarm as Mr. Crog, proceeding with his narrative, described the finding of her ladyship's jewel-case, and his own interview with Lady Peakman.

"I can settle Lady Peakman's difficulty in a moment," cried the knight. "I never said a word to this man about the case."

During Mr. Crog's narrative of his interview with Lady Peakman, the face of the so-called Stillwater had worn a sardonic smile. At the exclamation of the knight, he opened his lips.

"Lady Peakman gave me the case herself," he said, quietly.

The four gentlemen looked at each other.

"Shut up, you rascal," cried the captain. "You are a liar."

"Well, if you bring Lady Peakman here, I will soon get her to own to it," said the fellow with a malicious grin.

"Do not take Lady Peakman's name into your mouth, sir!" said the knight, smiling in his most enraged manner. "Your story only confirms our impression that you are a dangerous fellow."

"Her name has been very often in my mouth," said Mr. Stillwater, "and will be again, Sir Benjamin, before I have done with you."

"I shall have you gagged, if you don't keep your mouth shut," said the captain. "Go on, Crog."

Mr. Crog finished his recital with an account of the struggle in the cabin, pointing out the disclosures which had resulted from it in the extraordinary change wrought upon Mr. Stillwater's personal appearance.

"Has he any luggage?" asked Mr. Corcoran.

Crog answered in the affirmative.

"Then, captain, I should have it searched."

The prisoner's face grew deadly pale.

"Mr. Turbot," said the captain to the first officer, "remove all the baggage into the mail-room, and examine it carefully in the presence of the mail-officer. Make out a list of everything found."

"Now," said Mr. Corcoran, looking again sharply at the prisoner, "look at me, sir. Have you ever seen me before?"

The man examined him an instant with a cool scrutiny, and a flash of recognition passed swiftly over his features, followed by a smile, which made them more ghastly than ever.

"O yaus! Corcoran—and Corcoran," said the man, adopting a foreign accent. "I remember well ze Meinheer und Frau at ze Hotel of ze Ambassadors at Homburg—eh?"

"I thought so," said Mr. Corcoran.

"And you gave evidence at Westminster?"

"Yes."

"Pendlebury," said the ex-master, "will you see if you can get a certain lady to step down here?"

As Lord Pendlebury left the cabin, the ci-devant Mr. Fex turned to the captain and asked him to have the room cleared of all except the three gentlemen. By the time this had been done, and a guard had been established at the door, the peer returned. Leaning on his arm, in a highly excited state, was Mrs. Belladoran.

As she entered, the gentlemen rose. Mr. Corcoran was at the upper end of the table, about ten feet from the door. Their eyes met. They bowed to each other. The captain and Sir Benjamin watched the scene with curiosity and surprise.

"Madam," said Mr. Corcoran, politely, "a very extraordinary thing has happened, which has led me to put you to the pain and trouble of this interview. Our common friend, Lord Pendlebury, agrees with me that it is desirable you should be present."

Lord Pendlebury bowed.

"Do you know this man?" said Mr. Corcoran, pointing gravely to Mr. Stillwater.

Mrs. Belladoran looked earnestly at the prisoner, and colored violently. She put her hand on her heart, and staggered to a seat. Lord Pendlebury hastened to her, but she recovered with a few whiffs from the scent-bottle.

"I scarcely recognize him," she said, "for I only saw the person twice in my life, to my knowledge. He is much altered. But he is the man who—"

"Precisely," interrupted Mr. Corcoran, "who committed perjury in the case of Corcoran v. Corcoran."

"Perjury!" exclaimed Mrs. Belladoran.

"Yes. Perjury, madam. What do you say, sir?"

"A man is not bound to criminate himself," replied the prisoner, coolly. "You are a lawyer, sir, and know that as well as I do."

In speaking these words, this extraordinary individual appeared to assume a new character. His manner became dignified, and his tone was that of a cultivated gentleman.

"True, Mr. What's-your-name. But you are now in a very serious position. And it was on your evidence chiefly that the Judge-Ordinary relied—that this lady was deceived—that a great and terrible calamity has come upon two innocent people."

"Pooh!" said the man, the black-guard coming out of him again. "All that is a matter of sentiment. People that will go into the Divorce Court are not much concerned about either dignity or decency, innocence or guilt. I was paid to help you both out of a scrape," he said glancing with an impudent smile at Mrs. Belladoran, "and

I was very happy to be of service to you."

"You bad man!" cried the lady, "do you mean to say you perjured yourself? What induced you to commit such a wickedness?"

"You did, madam, through your solicitors, or rather through the agents they employed to get up the evidence. It was very easy for one so well used to the world and its way as I am to imagine on your behalf those peccadilloes which it was desired to bring home to your husband."

Mrs. Belladoran wrung her hands and raised her eyes to the ceiling. Lord Pendlebury, with exquisite tact, gave her his hand, and led her from the cabin.

"You admit, then," said Mr. Corcoran, "that the evidence you gave before the Ordinary in the suit of Corcoran v. Corcoran was false?"

"If it will give you any satisfaction for me to admit it," replied the man. "Yes. Though for my part," he added, shrugging his shoulders, "I don't understand your wishing to know it. You were set at liberty by my testimony from a troublesome connection. I should scarcely have thought, from my own experience, that you would have been anxious to put on the noose again."

"Happily my motives, feelings, and sentiments are not submitted for your opinion," replied Mr. Corcoran with severity. "Gentlemen, I may rely on you to carry in your minds the important statement we have heard. By some singular and blessed Providence I appear to have been brought on board this vessel, to find at once the means of clearing myself from a cloud which was resting on my life, and of convincing one for whom I had a deep and sincere affection that she has been the victim of a villainous perjury."

Lord Pendlebury here returned, and was immediately followed by the first officer. The latter carried in his hand a packet of papers. They had been found concealed in the false bottom of the prisoner's portmanteau. Among them were several bonds and documents shown by the endorsements to belong to the "Darnley Branch of the National Provincial Bank." More important still, a small dagger, wrapped in a handkerchief covered with blood, had been found hidden in the casing of the hat-box. The manager of the Darnley Branch Bank, as every one knew from the newspapers, had, when working late one night in the office of the bank—the upper portion of which was used as his dwelling-house—been stabbed to the heart by a single blow, delivered over his right shoulder by an expert and powerful assassin. So noiselessly and quickly had the crime been committed, that the wife and servants of the victim, who were sleeping upstairs, knew nothing of it until, waking towards morning, the lady descended, to find her husband cold and dead, and the safe of the bank rifled.

When these evidences were adduced, Mr. Stillwater's face became a ghastly green. His confidence vanished; his head drooped; he seemed to be completely overpowered. The captain ordered that he should be heavily ironed and confined in the carpenter's room, which abutted on the space, surrounding the main hatchway on the spar-deck. Two armed sailors patrolled around this marine prison.

CHAPTER XII.

Lady Peakman's first impulse, when Sir Benjamin related to her with graphic verve and particularity the story of the terrible scene in which his valet had been the ignoble hero, and of the still more terrible discovery that had ensued upon it, was to faint away. And she yielded to the impulse. Sir Benjamin naturally, and the doctor scientifically, attributed the syncope to the shock given by a horrible surprise to an enfeebled system. On her recovery, all that she demanded was quiet. In the quiet she wept and prayed. She felt certain that this ruffian, who knew so much, would now, out of mere malice, if from no other motive, let out the secret of her early life—of his relations to her. It was true that she had honestly believed him to be dead. Moreover, it was true that since then, she recalled to herself how much of that better existence had been given to mere selfishness and pride: to how many she—a reclaimed sinner—had been a harsh and unrelenting critic, nay, frequently a cruel censor; and how often she had pursued the aims of her paltry ambition to be something in society, by means which her awakened conscience now recalled with disgust and sorrow.

It is in those hours, when all our plans seem to be failing, and disaster or humiliation threaten to overwhelm us, that we realise with the most startling clearness the exact value or worthlessness of our most cherished aims, our dearest triumphs. Lady Peakman saw before her only mortification, exposure, her husband's anger and hatred—for she knew well how he would be affected by the inevitable discovery—and her daughter's lifelong shame.

Nevertheless, out of the depths her poor heart, feebly reaching forth in the darkness for something to lay hold of, cried out in anguish to the unseen and eternal Helper.

But the interest excited in the vessel by the extraordinary events of the afternoon soon yielded to the livelier sensations caused by a brisk and growing gale from the north-east, which towards ten o'clock that evening created among the passengers familiar and irrepressible horrors. Once more the hatches were battened down, the deadlights were screwed on, and the roof without was almost deafened by the tumult within. There was a general collapse. The gale increased steadily during the night, and by Wednesday morning the ship was before it at the rate of fourteen knots an hour. Everything gave way to the overpowering influences. What are sentiment, or sorrow, or fear, or mortification, or good will, when man or woman has no stomach for anything? In such circumstances you lie indifferent to the loss of your wife, and

might even view without a pang the drowning of your wife's mother. Mr. Corcoran, Mrs. Belladoran, Lord Pendlebury, Lady Peakman, Sir Benjamin, Mrs. McGowkie, Miss Araminta, and many another, might on that morning be said to be tossing about with all their ordinary purposes and wishes in a state of suspended animation. During those dreary hours some of them may have wished that they could die.

It is certain that Lady Peakman would have done so if she could. It was the only thought that crossed again and again her fevered brain. She wished a higher power would decree her misery should end. At length she fell in an uneasy slumber—a doze, wherein the noise of the howling storm and the loud anguish of the creaking ship were mixed up with the grim shadows of sorrows and despair which hovered around her excited brow.

How long she lay in this frightful doze she knew not. But at length she started up with a shriek. Her cabin door had opened—she thought a man was standing between her and the light—she thought his hand was stretched out, was already clutching her throat.—There was a man. His hand was unloosing the knitted hood she wore tied round her face and neck. She looked again. It was her husband. A cheerful morning sun was rising through the round-eyed port. The time was past eight o'clock.

"Oh!" she cried, shudderingly, as she caught sight of his face, which looked pale and alarmed. I thought it was— She stopped and clasped her hands together.

"The thief, I suppose you were going to say? No, I thought you were ill. You were struggling and mumbling in your sleep, and I was afraid you were going to have a fit, so I was undoing your hood. How do you feel now?"

She fell back.

"Oh," she said, "it was a nightmare. How came you here so early?"

"I have been called up. A terrible thing has happened, and I desired that you should learn it at once, and from myself, lest you should be told of it suddenly by the women. It relates to that wretched creature who was called Stillwater."

She closed her eyes.

(To be continued.)

REVIVAL OF LACE MAKING.

We owe to the Renaissance the introduction of lace as we know it in these days. Pillow lace was an invention of the Flemings, and even at this late day the laces of this country are superior. There has been a great revival of this dainty adjunct of dress; in fact, there has been a new Renaissance, and we are to reap the benefit, for every woman comes as near adorning lace as is compatible with her early Christian education.

Point lace is the favorite of the hour, and whole dresses are made of the expensive material. Velvet and silk laces have front breadths of the lace in which braid figures intermingled with a variety of stitches is used. Zouave jackets are again the mode, made of point, lace, as are also long basques, fichus, ruffles, capes and tunics, all of which the amateur may imitate.

Many of the center pieces that come to us from Paris are made of shot glass silk of neutral shade, with this Renaissance lace let in a jour in the most effective way. In many of the embroideries worked with colored silks over the designs of white and self-colored brocades have an applique scroll bordering the needlework, made with lace stitches, inclosed between broad bands of satin stitch. Twenty-inch squares of Renaissance lace have let into them faintly-painted heartsease with pretty faces in the midst. These are used for table scarfs. Dollies are made with white silk centers and point lace borders. Pincushions are also covered with these pretty effects.

Any one who can work the point of Flandre, point de Valenciennes, point d'Espagne, point de Brabancon and point de Bruxelles will be able to copy any point lace pattern. In the Middle Ages the nuns in the convents wrought in their leisure hours many beautiful patterns. Delicate as the spider's frail web were the fairy creations of their patient toil. Light as gossamer, fit for fair Titania's wear were the misty veils they wove, often as an offering to the virgin mother, who no doubt brought to them peace of mind that compensated for the long, dreary days spent in darkness after the light of their eyes had gone out.

The artistic Venetians were the first to produce fine lace, and the story goes that a fisherman brought his sweetheart some lace of the mermaids, which the girl learned to produce in thread. Those beautiful old days of leisure are unfortunately no more, and such lace as they wove is worth a queen's ransom. We are prone to be content with an imitation, knowing the difficulty of obtaining the real.

Point lace was originally worked on parchment, with a buttonhole stitch, and as time went on, brides, pearl ties and barrettes were developed. The picots, thornes, punti a spina, are the loops or knots on these brides; the cordoned raised rim outlining the pattern; filling, jours or moles, the fancy stitches; the footing or engreure, the heading of the lace.

Venetian point was the lead from 1660, and its distinguishing feature is that the pattern is connected by an irregular network of pearl brides, with a couple of picots on each. Spanish point is more irregular in its groundwork; the brides have pearled coxcombs and starred devices, and much of the richness of the design is attributable to the Moors and the school of embroidery established by Philip II. "Rose point" applies to work of Venice and Spain; point d'Alencon is very complicated in its pattern. France was first in the Renaissance movement, and strove to carry out at Alencon and Argentan the laces for which Venice was famous.

DIAMONDS AS PAVEMENT.

Kimberley Road Made of Earth Contains Precious Stones.

It is not often that it is given to many outside of the favored gentlemen who figured in the stirring story of Aladdin and his wonderful lamp and kindred productions of rich Oriental imagination, to travel daily on a high road literally groaning with diamonds. When such an unusual privilege is vouchsafed, it would appear to be the proper thing to admit that one might love the very ground one walked on. Until a few years ago there was such a road, and it was neither a vision of the pipe nor the press agent. It was located in the Kimberley district, in South Africa, and when a man walked over it he walked over millions of dollars' worth of the precious stones.

Five thousand dollars a yard was the record of some parts of the road. The diamonds are not there now, so it will do the gentle reader no good to take a ticket for Kimberley and seek to find a fortune in the street. It seems that when the diamond mining industry was some years younger than it is to-day there was a vexing scarcity of water in the Kimberley country. So when a miner couldn't get a supply of water to help him in his search he had to do the best he could and hustle around with his tools in the dry earth. He would spade here and there until he struck a lump of earth which held the eagerly sought prize. Then he would abandon the little mound of earth his spade had overturned and seek for diamonds in another place. After a while, several years, in fact, these mounds amounted to a considerable obstruction to travel and further digging. The loose earth was in the way, but no one would volunteer to cart it away. Finally the Kimberley Municipal Council offered to use the dirt in macadamizing the roads around the city, which was branching out and reaching quite respectable proportions. The offer was gladly accepted by the mine owners, and the mounds were cleared away.

Nearly a score of years later there was a drop in the diamond market. The price of the stones fell, and in order to bring about a return of high figures the mine owners decided to restrict the output. This necessitated a big cut in the pay roll, and as a result the Kimberley district was soon overrun with unemployed miners. Then some of the wise men of the land came to the conclusion that they might pick a few overlooked gems from the high road if they could get municipal permission and a plentiful supply of water. They got both, for each year a portion of the road which had been strengthened by the mound dirt was turned over to the men, and they worked on it with astounding results. Diamonds to the value of \$200,000 were recovered yearly for several years. From one little piece of road no bigger than the floor of a common drawing room there was taken \$100,000 worth of diamonds.

AUSTRALIAN COAL.

Production Has Tripled Within the Last Twenty Years.

The coal of New South Wales was discovered 100 years ago by a shipwrecked sailor, but it has only been worked on a commercial basis within the last fifty years or so, says the Nineteenth Century. The carboniferous strata of Australia are said to extend over 10,000,000 acres. The coal measures of South Wales cover about 24,000 square miles, with Sydney in the centre, although Newcastle is the most accessible port for the coal fields now being worked. In quality the coal of New South Wales is reputedly not much inferior to that of old South Wales for steaming purposes, and not at all inferior to that of Northumberland. Last year a very large increase took place in the output, which was raised to 4,417,600 tons from 3,910,000 tons in 1896. About three-fourths of the whole output was exported to the Pacific States of America, to China, the eastern archipelago, the Straits Settlements, the Pacific Islands and further India. The production has more than tripled within the last twenty years, and as yet is only a fraction of what it is destined to become. Before Macaulay's New Zealand bridge makes its appearance on London bridge the Newcastle and the antipodes will have become as large and prosperous and important a city as Newcastle on "Coaly Tyne."

New South Wales does not monopolize the coal of Australia. That of Queensland is of enormous value, spread over an area of some 14,000 square miles, though as yet the output does not exceed 500,000 tons per annum. For certain markets the ports of Queensland are favorably situated, and the coal of Queensland is destined to play an important part in the commercial future of the Pacific and the east. Victoria produces a little, but not as yet sufficient for her own requirements, and she has to draw from the mother colony. New Zealand has very extensive supplies, hardly as yet tapped, of very excellent coal. Indeed, the colonists are never tired of reminding us that it was with New Zealand coal that the Calliope waged her successful battle with the cyclone at Samoa; and New Zealand coal is regularly used by steamers in the intercolonial and Pacific trades. In Western Australia there are large deposits which, when the problem of transport is solved, would find ready markets in the eastern archipelago.