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The Bride's Name;

Or, The Adventures of Captain Fraser

CHAPTER XIV.—Cont'd.

"Well, I don't know much about it," said the housekeeper, looking round appealingly. "I heard you speaking to somebody at the door in a low voice."

"It wasn't a low voice," interrupted Mrs. Banks, sharply.

"Well, I couldn't hear what you were saying, and then when you went outside and I asked you whether you were

going home you said 'yes,' didn't you?"

"Are you sure she said she was going home?" said Mrs. Banks's brother-in-law, in an awful voice, as the old lady sank back in her chair.

"Yes," said Mrs. Church, with a fine show of reluctance.

There was a dead silence, during which they all heard the smelling-salts drop.

"If this man said Captain Barber was ill at Mapleden, why didn't you tell me?" continued Mrs. Church, in a mildly aggrieved voice. "I think if anybody ought to have known, it should have been me."

"It's all a fuss about nothing," said Mr. Green, brazenly. "She stayed out a bit too late, and then wanted to put it all on to me."

A good Samaritan picked up the smelling-salts and held them to the victim's nose, while her scandalised relatives discussed the situation in hurried whispers. The brother-in-law eyed her with bewildered disapproval, and in the disjointed accents peculiar to surprise was heard to make use of the words "friskiness" and "gal-liventing" and "old enough to know better."

Her relatives' remarks, however, caused Mrs. Banks comparatively little pain. Her attention was fully taken up by the housekeeper, in whose satisfied smile she saw a perfect recognition of the reasons for her action of the previous evening. She got up from her chair, and with a stateliness which her brother-in-law thought somewhat misplaced, took her daughter's arm, and slowly left the room, her departure being the signal for a general break-up. By twos and threes the company drifted slowly up the road in her wake, while Captain Barber, going in the other direction, accompanied Captain Niblett's party as far as the schooner, in order that he might have the opportunity of saying a few well-chosen words to Mr. Green on the subject of precipitancy.

"If it 'adn't been for me tipping 'im the wink, so as to let him know what line 'e was to go on when I came down, where should I 'ave been?" he demanded of Captain Niblett's.

And that astonished mariner, with a helpless shake of the head, gave it up.

CHAPTER XV.

The "Blue Posts," Chelsea, is an old

time public-house pleasantly situated by the river, with an extensive connection amongst gentlemen's servants, "busmen, and other skilled judges of good beer, the subtle and delicate perfume of which liquor pervades the place from cellar to garret, and has more than once taken the police on duty to the back door, under the impression that something wanted looking into.

To some men imprisonment in such a place would have been little short of ecstasy. In the heat of summer they would have sat in the cool cellar amid barrels of honest beer; in winter, they would have led the conversation cosily seated around the tap-room fire. For exercise, profitable employment at the beer-engine in the bar; for intellectual exercise, the study of practical chemistry in the cellar.

To Captain Fred Flower none of these things appealed. He had visited the cellar certainly—in search of subterranean exits; he had sat in the tap-room—close to the open window; but his rabid desire to get away from the place and never see it again could not have been surpassed by the most bitter teetotaler that ever breathed.

His greatest trouble was with Porson, whose limpet-like qualities were a source of never-failing concern to the unfortunate mariner. Did he ascend to the drawing-room and gaze yearningly from the windows at the broad stream of Father Thames and the craft dropping down on the ebb-tide to the sea, Uncle Porson, sallow face and unclean of collar, was there to talk beery romance of the ocean. Did he retire to the small yard at the rear of the premises and gaze from the back door at the passing life of a Chelsea by-street. Uncle Porson was looking over his shoulder, pointing out milkmen with histories, and cabmen with a past.

The second week of his stay was drawing to a close before he fully realised the horror of his position. His foot, which had been giving him considerable trouble, was getting much better, though it was by no means well enough to give him a chance in a foot-race with Mr Porson or Charles; and as the family at the "Blue Posts" realised the improvement the attentions of his personal attendants were redoubled. The key of his bedroom door was turned every night after he had retired, a discovery he had made the first night, after carefully dressing for flight and spending an hour over the composition of a farewell note to Miss Tipping. There was no chance of reaching the roof from his bedroom window, and the pavement below offered him his choice between a wedding and a funeral.

And amid all this the fiction was maintained of preserving him from his lawless foes and his own inconvenient devotion to duty. A struggle for escape was not to be thought of, as the full measure of his deceitfulness would transpire in the event of failure, and the wedding drew nearer day by day, while his active brain was still casting about in vain for any means of escape.

"Next Tuesday," said Mrs. Tipping to her step-daughter, as they sat in the much-decorated drawing-room one afternoon, "you'll be Mrs. Robinson."

Miss Tipping, who was sitting next to the skipper, looked at him languishingly, and put her head on his shoulder.

"I can hardly believe it," she said, cooly.

Flower, who was in the same predicament, patted her head tenderly, as being easier than replying.

"And I must say," said Mrs. Tipping, regarding the pair, "I'm a plain woman, and I speak my mind, that if it was me I should want to know more about him first."

"I'm quite satisfied, mar," said Miss Tipping, without raising her head.

"There's your relations to be satisfied, Matilda," said Uncle Porson, in an important voice.

Miss Tipping raised her head and favoured the interrupter with a baleful stare, whereupon Mr. Porson, stretching his neck feebly, glanced at Mrs. Tipping for support.

"Our relations needn't come to see us," said his niece at length. "He's marrying me, not my relations."

"He's making me his uncle, at any rate," said Mr. Porson, with a sudden access of dignity.

"You don't mind, Fred, do you?" asked Miss Tipping, anxiously.

"I'd put up with more than that for your sake," said Flower. "I needn't tell people."

"That's all very fine," said Mrs. Tipping, taking up the cudgels for the speechless and glaring victim of these pleasantries, "but there's no mystery about your uncle; everybody knows him. He doesn't disappear just as he is going to get married, and be brought back in a cab months afterwards. He isn't full of secrets he mustn't tell people who ought to know."

"Never kep' a secret in my life," agreed Uncle Porson, whose head was buzzing under this unaccustomed praise.

"I know quite enough about Fred," said Miss Tipping, tenderly; "when I want your opinion, mar, I'll ask you for it."

Mrs. Tipping's reply was interrupted by the entrance of a young man from the jeweller's with four brooches for Flower to present to the bridesmaids. Mrs. Tipping had chosen them, and it did not take the hapless skipper long to arrive at the conclusion that she was far fonder of bridesmaids than he was. His stock of money was beginning to dwindle, and the purchase of a second wedding suit within a month was beginning to tell even upon his soaring spirits.

"There's another thing about Fred I don't quite like," said Mrs. Tipping, as she sat with the brooches ranged upon her capacious lap; "he's extravagant. I don't like a mean man, but

one who flings his money away is almost as bad. These 'ere brooches are very pretty, and they do him credit, but I can't say but what something cheaper wouldn't 'ave done as well."

"I thought you liked them," said the indignant Flower.

"I like them well enough," said Mrs. Tipping, solemnly; "there's nothing to dislike in them. Seems to me they must have cost a lot of money, that's all—I suppose I may make a remark?"

Flower changed the subject, and turning to Miss Tipping began to speak in a low voice of their new home. Miss Tipping wanted a sort of Eden with bar improvements, and it was rather difficult to find.

They had discussed the matter before, and the wily skipper had almost quarrelled with his bride-elect over the part of the country in which they were to live, Miss Tipping holding out for the east coast, while Flower hotly championed the south. Mrs. Tipping, with some emphasis, had suggested leaving it until after the honeymoon, but a poetic advertisement of an inn in Essex catching her daughter's eye, it was decided that instant inspection should be made.

(To be continued.)

Where the Danger Lay.

Crewe—Good heavens, how it rains! I feel awfully anxious about my wife. She's gone out without an umbrella.

Drewe—Oh, she'll be all right. She'll take shelter in some shop.

Crewe—Exactly. That's what makes me so anxious.

French scientists have demonstrated that the vapors of iodine and bromine pass through thin glass, even at ordinary temperature.

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Phenomenal Strides Made By Canadian Northern Railway System In First Year As Transcontinental

New System in the Past Year Carried Approximately 131,000,000 Bushels of Wheat, an Increase of 125 Per Cent. Over Previous Year. Company's New Mileage on Pacific Coast and Northern Ontario Makes Astonishing Showing Right from Commencement of Operation. Company's Lines Most Favorably Located.

From Our Own Correspondent.

Toronto, February 9th.

The phenomenal gains that the Canadian Northern Railway reports for its year as a transcontinental line makes the statement one of the most important that has ever been issued by any railway in Canada. It is even doubtful whether the tremendous increases in business handled have ever been duplicated by any system in the world. There are many features to the report that make it of special import to every Canadian, owing to the interest the country has in the building up of this important transcontinental line and the attractive territory that has been developed through the completion of the system. The feature of the report that is likely to be especially gratifying is that which shows the prominent part the Canadian Northern, with its transcontinental system, has been able to play in handling such a large proportion of the grain requirements of the Mother Country.

Right along it has been the contention of Sir William Mackenzie and his associates that it was only a matter of a very short period before Canada and the Empire would enjoy the benefits of the big system that had been built up across the Dominion, and the showing made in the report indicates that these hopes have been realized much earlier than it would have been thought possible when the transcontinental system was set in operation a little over a year ago.

Important Gains of Year.

A few of the outstanding features of the report are as follows: An increase in freight traffic during the year of \$8,352,412, equivalent to as much as 45.87 per cent.; increase in passenger traffic, \$717,246, of a gain of 13.25 per cent.; an increase in total operating revenue of \$9,564,168, or 36.91 per cent. over the previous year. That the company's lines handled over 131,000,000 bushels of grain is proof positive that the railway has been located in the best grain growing areas of the West.

The exact grain traffic handled amounted to 131,978,809 bushels as compared with 58,575,520 bushels in 1915, or an increase of 73,403,289, equivalent to an increase of as much as 125.31 per cent.

That the Company has been able to make such striking gains in the amount of traffic handled over its lines will undoubtedly be more readily appreciated when it is remembered that it was only operated as a transcontinental system during the last seven of the twelve months of the fiscal year, and when it is recalled that last winter the weather conditions in the Western provinces, and more particularly in British Columbia, were the most severe that had been experienced in a great many years, in fact, in some instances, were the most difficult that Canadian railways had ever to meet in that part of the country. It should also be pointed out that the Company had the disadvantage, owing to the conditions arising from the war, of being without its own terminals in

such important centres as Vancouver in the West, and Montreal in the East.

Company's Earning Power.

The development that is sure to be most favorably received by everybody who is following the growth of the larger Canadian railways will come from the fact that the Canadian Northern Railway has come within hailing distance of earning its total fixed charges, the deficit for the year being brought down to less than a quarter of a million dollars, a reduction from the previous year of almost \$1,400,000. As was to be expected, a great proportion of the increased revenues come from the large crop gathered in the Canadian West in the fall of 1915, but since that time there has been a marked increase in the general freight traffic handled over the lines, and during the first four months of the current fiscal year gross earnings have continued to show large increases over the corresponding periods of the year now under review. Perhaps the most striking development in this connection is that it is in the month of October that the heaviest grain movement occurs, and yet in October, 1916, the gross earnings showed a gain over those of the same month in the previous year. As the grain crop was very much lighter, this evidently indicates that the growth in the traffic in other commodities has more than offset the lighter grain movement of the year now being reported on.

Some of the interesting features of the Board of Directors' report as indicating the position of the line and the progress it has made include the following:

An agreement of great importance in the development of the System's freight and passenger traffic was made with the Canadian Steamship Co. In future the Canadian Line and the Canadian Northern Railway will be, in fact, a single transportation unit between Europe and Canada.

The possession of such favorable grades as those on the System's lines has given the Canadian Northern an already important advantage in the economy of operation, particularly in carrying the two commodities offering in largest volume, viz.: lumber and grain.

The main line of the Canadian Northern Railway from Quebec to Vancouver is superior to any line crossing the continent of America in points of grade and curvatures favoring traffic.

The lines of the Company's system are now serving 75 per cent. of the aggregate population of the cities and towns of all Canada, having 5,000 inhabitants and over.

The present situation emphasizes the fact that the Railway is not as dependent upon grain crop movement as in the past, and in becoming transcontinental has acquired a highly diversified traffic. The developments of the year confirm the Directors in the belief that they strongly hold, that the ultimate prosperity of the Canadian Northern Railway System is measurable only by the prosperity of the Dominion of Canada.

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