

The Bride's Name;

Or, The Adventures of Captain Fraser

CHAPTER XXIII.—(Cont'd.)

"Look 'ere," said Joe, suppressing his natural instincts by a strong effort. "You keep quiet for three days, and I'll be a friend to you for life. And so will Will-yum, won't you old man?"

Mr. Green, with a smile of rare condescension, said that he would. "Look 'ere," said the bargainer, "I'll tell you what I'll do for you; You gimme another tanner each instead; and that's letting you off cheap, 'cos your friendship 'ud be worth pounds and pounds to anybody what wanted it."

He gazed firmly at his speechless, would-be friends, and waited patiently until such time as their emotion would permit of a reply. Joe was the first to speak, and Tommy listened unmoved to a description of himself which would have made a jelly-fish blush.

"Tanner each," he said, simply; "I don't want friends who can talk like that to save sixpence."

Mr. Green, with a sarcasm which neither Tommy nor Joe understood, gave him the amount in coppers. His friend followed suit, and the boy, having parted with his reputation at a fair price, went below, whistling.

Fraser came on board soon afterwards, and Mr. Green, with his celebrated drunken scene fresh in his mind, waited nervously for developments. None ensuing, he confided to Joe his firm conviction that Miss Tyrell was a young lady worth dying for, and gloomily wondered whether Fraser was good enough for her. After which, both men, somewhat elated, fell to comparing headpieces.

Joe was in a state of nervous tension while stean, was getting up, and glued to the side of the steamer, strained his eyes, at the dimly lit stairs. As they steamed rapidly down the river his spirits rose, and he said vaguely that something inside him seemed to tell him that his trouble would not be in vain.

"There's two days yet," said Mr. Green. "I wish they was well over."

Captain Flower, who had secured a bed at the "Three Sisters Hotel" in Aldgate, was, for widely different reasons, wishing the same thing. His idea was to waylay Fraser immediately after the marriage and obtain Poppy's address, his natural vanity leading him to believe that Miss Tipping

would at once insist upon a change of bridegroom if she heard of his safety before the ceremony was performed. In these circumstances he had to control his impatience as best he could, and with a view to preventing his safety becoming known too soon, postpone writing to his uncle until the day before the wedding.

CHAPTER XXIV.

He posted his letter in the morning, and after a midday meal took train to Seabridge, and here the reception of which he had dreamed for many weary months awaited him. The news of his escape had spread round the town like wildfire, and he had hardly stepped out of the train before the station-master was warmly shaking hands with him. The porters followed suit, the only man who displayed any hesitation being the porter from the lamp-room, who patted him on the back several times before venturing. The centre of a little enthusiastic knot of fellow-townsmen, he could hardly get clear to receive the hearty grip of Captain Barber, or the chaste salute with which Mrs. Barber inaugurated her auntship; but he got free at last, and, taking an arm of each set off blithely down the road, escorted by neighbors.

As far as the cottage their journey was a veritable triumphal progress, and it was some time before the adventuresome mariner was permitted to go inside; but he escaped at last, and Mrs. Barber, with a hazy idea of the best way to treat a shipwrecked fellow-creature, however remote the accident, placed before him a joint of cold beef and a quantity of hot coffee. It was not until he had made a good meal and lit his pipe that Uncle Barber, first quaffing a couple of glasses of ale to nerve himself for harrowing details, requested him to begin at the beginning and go right on.

His nephew complied, the tale which he had told Poppy serving him as far as Riga; after which a slight collision off the Nore at night between the brig which was bringing him home and the Golden Cloud enabled him to climb into the bows of that ill-fated vessel before she swung clear again. There was a slight difficulty here, Captain Barber's views of British seamen making no allowance for such a hasty exchange of ships, but as it appeared that Flower was at the time still suffering from the effects of one fever which had seized him at Riga, he waived the objection, and listened in silence to the end of the story.

"Fancy what he must have suffered," said Mrs. Barber, shivering; "and then to turn up safe and sound a twelvemonth afterwards. He ought to make a book of it."

"It's all in a sailorman's dooty," said Captain Barber, shaking his head. "It's wot 'e expects."

His wife rose, and talking the while, proceeded to clear the table. The old man closed the door after her, and with a glance at his nephew gave a jerk of the head towards the kitchen. "Wonderful woman, your aunt," he said, impressively; "but I was one too many for 'er."

Flower stared. "How?" he inquired, briefly. "Married 'er," said the old man, chuckling. "You wouldn't believe wot a lot there was arter her. I got 'er afore she knew where she was a'most. If I was to tell you all that there was arter 'er, you'd hardly believe me."

"I dare say," said the other. "There's good news and bad news," continued Captain Barber, shaking his head and coughing a bit with his pipe. "I've got a bit of bad for you."

Flower waited. "Lizabeth's married," said the old man, slowly; "married that stupid young Gibson. She'll be sorry enough now, I know."

His nephew looked down. "I've heard about it," he said, with an attempt at gloom; "old George told me."

The old man, respecting his grief, smoked on for some time in silence, then he got up and patted him on the shoulder. "I'm on the look-out for you," he said, kindly; "there's a niece o' your aunt's. I ain't seen her yet; but your aunt praises of her, so she's all right. I'll tell your aunt to ask 'er over. Your aunt sees—"

"How many aunts have I got?" demanded Flower, with sudden irritation. The old man raised his eyebrows and stared at him in offended amazement.

"You're not yourself, Fred," he said, slowly; "your misfortunes 'ave shook you up. You've got one aunt and one uncle what brought you up and did the best for you ever since you was so 'igh."

"So you did," said Flower, heartily. "I didn't mean to speak like that, but I'm tired and worried."

"I see you was," said his uncle, amiably, "but your aunt's a wonderful woman. She's got a business 'ead, and we're doing well. I'm buying another schooner, and you can 'ave her or have the Foam back, which you like."

Flower thanked him warmly, and Mrs. Barber returning, he noticed with some surprise the evident happiness of the couple for whose marriage he was primarily responsible. He had to go over his adventures again and again, Captain Barber causing much inconvenience and delay at supper-time by using the beer-jug to represent the Golden Cloud and a dish of hot sausages the unknown craft which sank

her. Flower was uncertain which to admire most; the tactful way in which Mrs. Barber rescued the sausages or the readiness with which his uncle pushed a plate over a fresh stain on the tablecloth.

Supper finished, he sat silently thinking of Poppy, not quite free from the fear that she might have followed him to New Zealand by another boat. The idea made him nervous, and the suspense became unendurable. He took up his cap and strolled out into the stillness of the evening. Seabridge seemed strange to him after his long absence, and, under present conditions, melancholy. There was hardly a soul to be seen, but a murmur of voices came through the open window of the "Thorn," and a clumsy cart jolted and creaked its way up the darkening road.

He stood for some time looking down on the quay and the shadowy shapes of one or two small craft lying in the river. The Foam was in her old berth, and a patch of light aft showed that the cabin was occupied. He walked down to her, stepping noiselessly aboard, peered through the open skylight at Ben, as he sat putting a fresh patch in a pair of trousers. It struck him that the old man might know something of the events which had led up to Fraser's surprising marriage, and his curiosity being somewhat keen on the point, he descended to glean particulars.

Ben's favorite subject was the misdeeds of the crew, and the steps which a kind but firm mate had to take to control them, and he left it unwillingly to discuss Fraser's marriage, of which faint rumors had reached his ears. It was evident that he knew nothing of the particulars, and Flower with some carelessness proceeded to put leading questions.

"Did you ever see anything more of those women who used to come down to the ship after a man named Robinson?" he inquired, carelessly.

"They come down one night sooner arter you fell overboard," replied the old man. "Very polite they was, and they asked me to go and see 'em any time I liked. I ain't much of a one for seeing people, but I did go one night 'bout two or three months ago, end o' March, I think it was, to a pub wot they 'ave at Chelsea, to see whether they 'ad heard anything of 'im."

"Ah!" interjected the listener. "They was very short about it," continued Ben, sourly; "the old party got that excited she could 'ardly keep still, but the young lady she said good riddance to bad rubbish, she ses. She hoped as 'ow he'd be punished."

Flower started, and then smiled softly to himself. "Perhaps she's found somebody else," he said.

Ben grunted. "I shouldn't wonder. She seemed very much took up with a young feller she called Arthur," he said, slowly; "but that was the last I see of 'em; they never even offered me a drink, and though they'd asked me to go down any time I liked, they was barely civil. The young lady didn't seem to me to want Arthur to 'ear about it."

He stitched away resentfully, and his listener, after a fond look round his old quarters, bade him good-night and went ashore again. For a little while he walked up and down the road, pausing once to glance at the bright drawn blind in the Gibsons' window, and then returned home. Captain Barber and his wife were at cribbage, and intent upon the game.

With the morning sun his spirits rose, and after a hurried breakfast he set off for the station and booked to Bittlesea. The little platform was bright with roses, and the air full of sweetness of an early morning in June. He watched the long line stretching away until it was lost in a bend in the road, and thought out ways and means of obtaining a private interview with the happy bridegroom; a subject which occupied him long after the train had started, as he was benevolently anxious not to mar his friend's happiness by a display of useless grief and temper on the part of the bride.

The wedding party left the house shortly before his arrival at the station, after a morning of excitement and suspense which had tried Messrs. Smith and Green to the utmost, both being debarred by self-imposed etiquette from those alluring liquors by which in other circumstances they would have soothed their nerves. They strolled restlessly about with Tommy, for whom they had suddenly conceived an ardent affection, and who, to do him justice, was taking fullest advantage of the fact.

(To be continued.)

THESE I PITY.

I do not pity these boys young and brave,
Who, having heard the clear, authentic call,
Offer their unspent years, their lives and all,
Man's last great hope, democracy, to save.
I know that war may stretch them on its rood,
Their eyes still radiant with charm of youth;
Even so they triumph. Dying for Truth
They live to serve in richer amplitude.

But these I pity, who midst agony
Of strife that now convulses half our earth,
Debate and bargain over cost and toll,
And seek as end their own security.
These I pity, who in high honor's dearth
To save themselves make forfeiture of soul.

—Clyde McGee.

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Had the antiseptics, now a compulsory treatment at the hospitals of the allies, been in use since the beginning of the war, the speaker said, 150,000 lives would have been saved and 70,000 amputations which have crippled the victims would have been avoided. In one hospital alone, he added, only one amputation a day is necessary, against twenty a day before the new treatment came into use.

"Eighty per cent. of the amputations in the present war are the result of infection," the speaker said.

"Ninety-five per cent. of secondary hemorrhage is due to infection. Heretofore the medical profession has not had a cure for infection, after it had once made itself apparent, other than the opening of the wound with free drainage.

The antiseptic is easily made and costs but little. It consists of a solution of twenty-five per cent. chlorine activity bleaching lime in one to two hundred solution, to which sodium carbonate and bicarbonate are added to free it from caustic alkali.

"Another surgical discovery which will be of great use to the industrial surgeon is the discovery of a new method of treating burns," Dr. Sherman said. "This method consists in the spraying or painting of a liquid paraffin, bees wax and resin mixture directly over the burn. The treatment is comparatively free from pain, and the patients recover two or three times more quickly than under any other method and are practically free from scar."

Usually the man who kicks the loudest about the rich is the man who has always knocked off work as soon as he had a couple of dollars to spend.



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