

STORIES OF THE SEA

By EDWARD JENKINS, M.P.

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

Sir Benjamin had been more than lucky in finding a wife every way as clever and as ambitious as himself. She was devoted to the joint interest, and promoted it by every means in her power. Nothing was too low or too high for her to attempt. She resolved that they should be asked to the Prince's parties at Chiswick, and they were asked. In her Canadian home she had been known to spend her mornings in whipping cream and preparing compotes with her own hands for an evening ball-supper to the Governor-General. It had always been a mystery who she was and where she had come from. It was known that Mr. Peakman had first met her at Baden. It was said she had been known as Countess Stracchino, and of course that her first husband was dead. It was a favourite joke with the officers of the garrison at Quebec to say that she was "the real cheese." Whatever might have been her early history, her later days were in every way exemplary. She bore children to Mr. Peakman. She aided him in all his efforts. She led society in the ancient city of Quebec over the heads of ladies who were great-grand-daughters of earls and third cousins of the wives of marquises. Every attempt to oust her had failed. She patronised the Anglican Church of the colony, and was, in the estimation of the Bishop, his real defender of the faith. She was omnipotent. Success always stirred up hatred. There was a good deal in her that laid her open to attack. Her manners were a trifle vulgar, her pronunciation and grammar were not unexceptionable. Her face and figure were neither handsome nor elegant. But nothing could stand against the combination of a millionaire with a conciliatory manner and the spouse of a millionaire with the ambition to rule.

This lady had been the mother of several children, as we have already said but of these only one survived infancy—the daughter, Miss Araminta. A pretty girl, with a nice fresh complexion, a straight nose, beautiful blue eyes, brown hair, sweet lips, rather too full for perfect form, and a dimpled chin.

Now the Lady Peakman and her daughter had the best cabin in the ship, except the captain's, to wit, the large cabin which was immediately behind the captain's chair in the saloon—at the end of the port passage. Their maids occupied the next room, with a narrow gangway between. Sir Benjamin preferred the inner line of cabins on the other side of the passage and had one to himself some few numbers down towards the middle of the ship. It was in the afternoon of the second day out. Neither the knight nor his ladies had thought it discreet to attempt to leave their cabins. Lady Peakman in the upper, lay panting and screaming and dozing and trembling, in turns, all through the dismal hours, as the great vessel for its part rolled pitched, vibrated, shrieked and groaned like a vast tormented Cyclops.

"Oh! Oh! shrieked Lady Peakman. "Maria, Maria! The—There! Go this instant and tell Sir Benjamin I'm dying. Tell him to come to me immediately. I have something to say to him before I go."

"Yes, my lady," said the unhappy maid, rushing out of the room with suspicious alacrity and throwing herself into the opposite cabin, where for a few minutes she mingled her tears and—well, we won't go into particulars—with those of Miss Fanny Ringdove, the young lady's maid. By-and-by she returned to Lady Peakman, who had begun again to shout for her.

"Sir Benjamin's compliments, my lady, and he is very ill himself, or he would come to you immediately, but he dare not leave his berth. He would like to say a few words to you, my lady, if you could go to him, in case the worst should happen."

"Oh, the wretch!" sighed my lady. "Araminta! Ar-amin-ta! Do you hear?"

"Yes, mamma!" very feebly.

"I'm dying, do you hear? and your father won't come to me! Oh, I know it! I have a presentiment that we're going to the bottom. Maria! Maria! Be quick!"

In rushed the unhappy maid again, and produced that basin which is at once our horror and our relief when we yield to the antic tricks of the bounding sea. But alas! alas! the girl herself was uncontrollably ill. At times like these nature's longings cannot be repressed, and mistress and maid mingle their sorrows in the flowing bowl!

"Mamma!" shouted Araminta, when this disagreeable duty had ceased, and Lady Peakman sank back exhausted, are you better?"

"Oh no: what is it?"

"Where do you think Lord Pendlebury can have been last night?"

"How should I know, child? Probably in his berth."

"Have you ever seen him?"

"Never. And now I never shall. I'm dying!—Maria!"

"My lady."

"Sal, volatile, brandy, choliform: quick, or you'll be too late! Ah! there! O dear! I cannot go any farther, my heart will come up next. Why, where's the girl gone to? Maria!"

But Maria had rushed off in paroxysms of a grief of her own, which was by no means a silent one, to the cabin on the other side, and my lady might have been away, for there was no answer.

Mamma. Yes. I see by "Burke" he has all the Hordean estates, and several county properties. Are you not ill, Araminta?"

Araminta. A little, but I try to conquer it. Do you think Sir Benjamin will make Lord Pendlebury's acquaintance, Mamma?"

Mamma. Oh, certainly. If ever we get a chance with this weather. Mind do your best. It is your first opportunity.

Araminta. I don't believe I shall ever see the deck again, if this horrible storm continues. Oh, there! did you hear that crash? Oh, deliver us! Something had happened.

Miss Araminta was right. Something had happened.

The gale, which had been blowing with increasing strength from north-west while the great swell of Atlantic waves came sweeping up from a point or two south to west, had already created in the cross purposes of these mighty forces a sufficiently troublesome state of circumstances even for a huge steam Triton three hundred and sixty feet long. The wind was charged with icy wet, which was disseminated not so much in spouts of rain as in a ceaseless drizzly scour, which sought out and penetrated every crevice in anything human or inanimate that was exposed to its action.

The look-outs on the fore-deck, the captain and the mate, who, clad in india-rubber from head to foot, anxiously moved about on the reeking bridge, peered over the dripping masts from the terrific blast against which the ship was driven with all the power of the engine below.

"What does she say, Dick?" shouts the captain in the mate's ear; for, in the horrible ruck and roar, voice is blown away into eternal space before it can pass an inch from a man's mouth.

"Twenty-eight all but a tenth, sir," shouts the mate, who has been down to the chart-room to examine the barometer. "We're near the worst of it."

The instant he speaks, high up to heaven, right in front of them, heaves the bow of the great vessel. The two men, holding on to the stanchions, of the bridge like grim death, and knowing that something is coming, cast an eye through the drift up the long incline of deck before them, up to the farthest end, where for a moment they catch a glimpse of two men, like themselves, hanging on there with desperate vigour to lee and weather braces. Then there is a moment's poise; the whole of the mighty hulk of the steamer seems to be balanced of the somewhere about the middle of the keel, on the top of a shivering mountain; then there is a sudden twist of the mountain beneath them, as it throws the vessel contemptuously off its shoulder sideways with an angry shudder! Down a terrific yawning pit into a sea-green hell rushes the great ship, rolling, as she runs, over on her lee beam, till the boiling waves hiss up the scuppers and into the waterways, and now suddenly recovering herself with a mighty trembling and straining, in the midst of which the huge flukes of the screw are released from the water, and fly round with a roaring noise and a prodigious vibration that can be heard and felt by every soul on board, she slowly rolls back again on the weather beam; and then, with a mighty roar, a huge green curl of seething waters raises a frightful crest for twenty feet above the bulwarks on the weather bow, and looking and moving like a thing of life, menacing with annihilation the two awestruck men beneath, dashes some thirty tons of water over on the upper deck. See, where it sweeps along, hissing, boiling, prancing, swirling; four feet deep from bow to stern, and then finding no ready outlet, thrashes away some ten or fifteen feet of bulwark, and pours back in a torrent to the sea from whence it had leaped. The noble vessel, shaking herself free from the tormenting wave, rises again proudly to her work, and bids defiance once more to the giant powers of storm and sea.

This was what the two officers saw, and they breathed more freely when out of the seething waters the two look-outs emerged, still hanging on manfully, and shaking the water out of their eyes and hats, as half frightened and half laughing they tried to look at each other across the deck, and to shout congratulations which could not be heard.

But in hurtling along the space of deck confined by the bulwarks, the water, foiled in its devious purpose, resolved to make malicious use of its assumed right of way. As it rushed round the stern deck-houses, gathering momentum from the upward incline of the triumphant bow and the starboard roll of the vessel, a mass of water was thrown with great force against the closed door or the little gangway at the top of the companion on the starboard side, and of the door next to it, which was that of the purser's cabin. The impact of a ton or two of fluid was too much for the strong brass fastenings of these defences, and in an instant bursting them in, the uproarious water rushed on, and tumbling down the stairs in a green cascade, seethed and gambolled tumultuously along the passages, overtopping the combings of the nearer cabins, and flooding the floors with briny foam. Shrieks went up on every side. Forgetting nausea and decency together, men and women jumped out of their berths, splashing into the cold water, and dashing out of their cabins into the long passages, clasped each other with new-born fervour for the brotherhood and sisterhood of hu-

manity. Down through the open doorway the fierce wind, finding entrance, now blew cold and cutting.

Ye gods! What is man or woman either in such a time as this? Lady Peakman, having cast off the shawl in which her large head had been encased, presented herself in a good long role de nuit, at the extremity of which appeared her sturdy limbs swathed in long white woollen stockings, with which she plashed up and down in the water, that with every motion of the vessel washed to and fro in and out of the surrounding cabins. Miss Araminta, poor child, in a vain effort of decency, had seized and thrown around her neck the first thing that came to hand—a short flannel toilet jacket—and screaming at once for her father, her maid, and the captain, darted up the companion hatchway into the arms of a gentleman who, in very perfect costume, and wet from head to foot, seemed to have freshly come in from taking a bath in the open. Her screams were mingled with his groans and entreaties, for the terrified young lady clung to him as if he were a life-buoy.

"Let me go, miss, if you please, for heaven's sake! She's coming, she's coming!"

Shrieks were heard from the upper deck, and suddenly into the gangway a door there rushed into the gangway a middle-aged female, with a turban of flannel on her head and a red petticoat of the same material put on over her long robe, which, clinging in wet folds to her knees and legs, very oddly impeded her freedom of motion.

"Tis she! 'Tis she!" shouted the man; and breaking free from Araminta, he bolted down the companion and, locking the first cabin that appeared, locking the door behind him, and jumping without ceremony into the lower berth, which was unoccupied. It was the cabin of Lady Peakman's maids, one of whom, Miss Ringdove, still lay in mortal terror and sickness in the upper berth. No sooner did she witness this bold intrusion, than she added her part to the universal chorus. But people outside were far too alarmed on their own account—thinking that they were all going straightway to the bottom—to be stirred by Miss Ringdove's exclamations.

"My dear young lady," said the gentleman from below, sticking out his night-capped head, and shouting as loud as he could, in a vain effort to rise superior to the horrible racket, "pray, pray be quiet! I'll do you no harm whatever."

"O dear, O dear! O-o-o-o-o-o!" shrieked Ringdove.

"I'm in earnest! On my honor I won't hurt you!" On my honor I won't hurt you!" roared the man.

"O-o-o-o-o-o!" screamed the maid. The man jumped out of the berth in desperation and the woman went off in a fit.

Miss Araminta, thus rudely cast off, had caught hold of the brass balustrade at her side to keep herself from being thrown down the stairs.

At this moment a gentleman ran up from below, enveloped in an ulster. Notwithstanding his excitement, which was however not that abject terror from the outbreak of which he was escaping, he could not help appreciating in an instant, in all its absurdity, the scene before him. Poor little Araminta, pale as a sheet, and with utterly inefficient scarlet jacket and white fluttering muslin, as she clung to the side of the companion, was gazing awestruck at the apparition of the lady above her, dressed as we have described, who no sooner saw the gentleman than she whipped out of the gangway and into the storm again.

Hardly able to suppress his laughter, the new-comer addressed the trembling damsel.

"Pray, miss, don't be frightened. There can be nothing the matter. A little water has burst in; but, don't you see, we should all have been at the bottom long ago if anything really serious had occurred. Take my arm. Here, put on my coat;" and throwing off his ulster, the youth, who was dressed, wrapped it around shivering little Araminta, and buttoned her in safely, and then asked where she would be taken to.

"Oh, to Captain Windlass, to the captain's cabin, please. I'm so frightened!"

The young man made no reply. He did as he was told, carrying the young lady in his warm ulster up to the deck and into the cabin of which we have spoken, the door of which was open. There was a foot of water within, the combing retaining it, but he splashed through this and laid her on the sofa.

"Where is Captain Windlass?" said little Araminta. "Oh, please find him, sir; ask him to get me a place in his boat."

The young man saw that she was wandering, and with great delicacy he said, "Do believe me, that there is no danger. May I go and fetch your father?"

"Yes, do, please. Sir Benjamin Peakman, No. 35. God bless you! thank you; thank you ever so much!"

The young gentleman forthwith departed in search of the knight. As he descended the companion he heard a tremendous row below. The reader must remember that all this time the steamer had been pitching and rolling as madly as ever. The water downstairs was running out of the passage and into the water-ways at the gangway on either side of the main-hatch. The excited passengers had been calmed down by the stewards, and were returning to their berths. The cabins were being swabbed out by boys, who, laughed as they listened to the groans of the shivering victims. But at Lady Peakman's cabin things had not settled down as quietly as elsewhere. There were collected—Sir Benjamin, in a neat all fresco costume of which he was evidently unconscious—for he was a man of very particular dignity; Lady Peakman, as we have before depicted her, wringing her hands and weeping; Lady Peakman's maid Maria, also weeping; and a couple of stewards.

"Base man!" screamed Lady Peakman. "What have you done with my daughter. Let us in."

From inside proceeded the subdued

sobs of Miss Ringdove, who, having slightly recovered, had wrapped her head in the counterpane, and was ineffectually screaming "Murder!"

"If you don't let us in, we will break open the door!" shouted Sir Benjamin, for once in a passion. "What do you mean, sir?"

"All right, sir; all right," retorted a hoarse voice. "I beg the young lady's pardon, I'm sure. I have done her no harm. But is Mrs. Corcoran out there?"

"No, no!" cried the steward. "There's no Mrs. Corcoran here."

"Well, ladies and gentlemen, make way!" cried the malefactor; and before they had had time to obey his injunction he had thrown open the door, and, rushing out, dashed his head straight into the manly chest of the knight, and pitching him and the stewards over like ninepins, narrowly escaped doing the same trick for Araminta's benefactor, who was turning into the passage, and then he sped up the companion way and out upon the deck like a maniac. In another moment Mr. Fex, for it was he, had darted breathless into the captain's cabin. Slamming and bolting the door, he was about to drop exhausted on the sofa, when a succession of piercing screams from that quarter filled his ear.

"Great heavens!" said the distracted Fex. "What does this mean? Am I mad? One woman after another!—(Oh, Oh!) screamed Araminta.) I beseech you, miss (he went down on his knees in the water,) for any sake, miss, calm yourself. How did you come into my cabin? Where on earth am I to go to? Every cabin is full of women."

"Your cabin, sir!" cried Araminta, who was a good deal cooler than she pretended. "Is not this the captain's cabin?"

"Yes, my dear young lady; but I have engaged it."

"Oh, murder! Papa! Mamma! Help here! Mur-d-e-r-r-r!"

The unfortunate Mr. Fex was more than at his wits' end. He was ready to jump overboard. At this moment a knocking was heard without. There, no doubt, was the young man, who had come back with a steward and Sir Benjamin.

Mr. Fex in desperation leaped into his berth and wrapped the clothes around him. Araminta, who had not lost her presence of mind, jumped up and unlocked the door. The young man was the first to enter, followed by the knight.

"Where is that rascal?" cried the knight, in a towering passion. All his principles had given way under this severe strain. "What on earth do you mean, sir?" he shouted, as Araminta pointed to the berth, and catching the young man's glance, they both collapsed in hysterics of laughter.

To be Continued.

THE KAISER AND THE APOTHECARY

How Frau Siek Obtained William II.'s Signed Photograph.

Apothecary Siek of Bergkirchen in Westphalia entertained the Kaiser against his will at the time of the army manoeuvres in September. The apothecary owns a house in the outskirts with a piazza running along the first story. He had been obliged to quarter a number of officers and men during their stay in the town, and had turned over to them every spare room and bed. He kept the room opening on the piazza for himself and his wife, and one night went to bed leaving the house door on the latch for the convenience of his guests. At 4 o'clock in the morning Kaiser Wilhelm, with his staff, entered the town. The Kaiser noticed the piazza and thought it a good place from which to observe the country. An officer was sent ahead to clear the way, the Kaiser following immediately behind. The officer, who was the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg, came to the door of Herr Siek's bedroom, knocked, and getting no answer, pushed it open, and walked into the room, where he found the worthy apothecary in bed with Frau Siek. The clatter of his sword woke up the apothecary, who was naturally indignant and cried out. "This is too much. Are you crazy?"

"Excuse me," answered the Duke. "I knocked, but no one answered. May we not go out on your balcony? At any rate, here is his Majesty already coming up the stairs."

"Woman, get out," cried the apothecary, jumping for his clothes, while Frau Siek rolled out of bed into a closet just in time. The Kaiser entered before Herr Siek had fully covered his nakedness, nodded, and said: "C'est la guerre, doctor; don't be angry. That was a friendly greeting you gave the Duke Regent of Mecklenburg. I didn't know that he was crazy."

He then passed on to the piazza, followed by his whole staff, and stayed there for an hour. On leaving the Emperor said to Herr Siek, who tried to excuse himself:

"Your good wife is probably very much frightened. I hope in some way to show you my thanks."

After the officers had left Frau Siek came out of her closet. Some days later she received from Berlin, the Kaiser's photograph, with the inscription: "In friendly memory of the attack on the night of Sept. 9-10, 1898, 4 o'clock. William I. R." Herr Siek's night adventure has been published with embellishments throughout Germany, so that he has been obliged to issue an authoritative statement of the facts as they occurred.

D'WARD'S BLOOD & NERVE PILLS

DR. WOOD'S NORWAY PINE SYRUP. Cures Coughs, Colds, Lung and Bronchial Affections that other remedies won't touch. Mr. THOS. J. SMITH, Caledonia, Ont., writes: "A year ago I had a very severe cold which settled in my lungs and in my throat, so that I could scarcely speak louder than a whisper. I tried several medicines, but got no relief until I used one and a half bottles of Norway Pine Syrup, which completely cured me."

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