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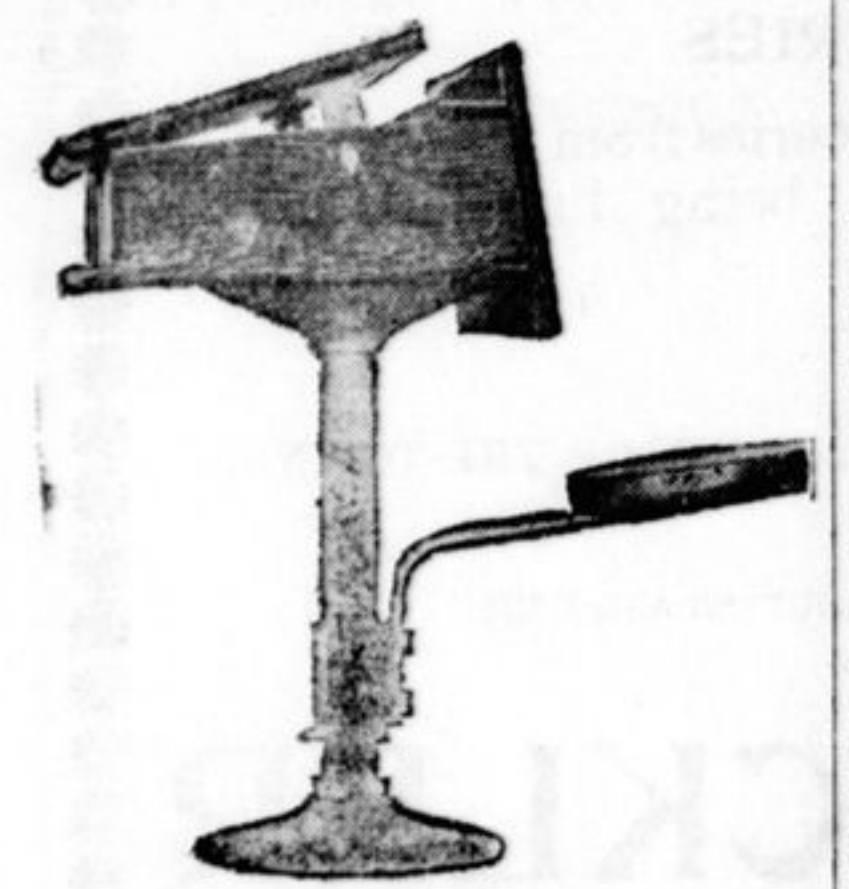
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The Wings of the Morning

By LOUIS TRACY
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girl devoutly, "God has been very good to us. Do you remember this hour yesterday?" she murmured. "How we suffered from thirst; how the Dyaks began their second attack from the ridge; how you climbed down the ladder and I followed you? Oh, father, darling," she went on impulsively, tightening her grasp, "you will never know how brave he was; how enduring; how he risked all for me and cheered me to the end."

"I think I am beginning to understand now," answered the shipowner, "I remember this hour yesterday?" she murmured. "How we suffered from thirst; how the Dyaks began their second attack from the ridge; how you climbed down the ladder and I followed you? Oh, father, darling," she went on impulsively, tightening her grasp, "you will never know how brave he was; how enduring; how he risked all for me and cheered me to the end."

"I didn't exactly mean to put it that way, Deane, but my temper is a little short these days. My position on board this ship is intolerable. As a matter of fair dealing to me you should put a stop to your daughter's attitude toward Anstruther on the ground that her engagement is neither approved of by you nor desirable under any consideration."

It may be assumed from this remark that even the earl's sardonic temper was ruffled by the girl's outrageous behavior. Nor was it exactly pleasant to him to note how steadily Anstruther advanced in the favor of every officer on the ship. By tacit consent the court martial was tabooed, at any rate until the Orient reached Singapore. Every one knew that the quarrel lay between Robert and Ventnor, and it is not to be wondered at if Iris' influence alone were sufficient to turn the scale in favor of her lover.

The shipowner refused point blank to interfere in any way during the voyage. "You promised your co-operation in business even if we found that the Sirdar had gone down with all hands," he retorted bitterly. "Do you wish me to make my daughter believe she has come back into my life only to bring me irretrievable ruin?"

"That appears to be the result, no matter how you may endeavor to disguise it."

"I thought the days were gone when a man would wish to marry a woman against his will."

"Nonsense! What does she know about it? The glamor of this island romance will soon wear off. It would be different if Anstruther were able to maintain her even decently. He is an absolute beggar, I tell you. Didn't he ship on your vessel as a steward? Take my tip, Deane. Tell him how matters stand with you, and he will cool off."

CHAPTER XVII.

SIR ARTHUR DEANE was sitting alone in his cabin in a state of deep dejection when he was aroused by a knock, and Robert entered.

"Can you give me half an hour?" he asked. "I have something to say to you before we land."

The shipowner silently motioned him to a seat.

"It concerns Iris and myself," continued Anstruther. "I gathered from your words when we met on the island that both you and Lord Ventnor regarded Iris as his lordship's promised bride. From your point of view the arrangement was perhaps natural and equitable, but since your daughter left Hongkong it happens that she and I have fallen in love with each other. No; please listen to me. I am not here to urge my claims on you. I won her fairly and intend to keep her where the whole house of peers opposed to me. At this moment I want to tell you, her father, why she could never, even under other circumstances, marry Lord Ventnor."

Then he proceeded to place before the astounded baronet a detailed history of his recent career. It was a sordid story of woman's perfidy twice told. It carried conviction in every sentence.

At the conclusion Sir Arthur bowed his head between his hands.

"I cannot choose but believe you," he admitted huskily. "Yet how came you to be so unjustly convicted by a tribunal composed of your brother officers?"

"They could not help themselves. To acquit me meant that they discredited the sworn testimony not only of my colonel's wife, but of the civil head of an important government mission, not to mention some bought Chinese evidence."

"But you are powerless now. You can hardly hope to have your case revised. What chance is there that your name will ever be cleared?"

"Mrs. Costobell can do it if she will. The vagaries of such a woman are not to be depended on. If Lord Ventnor has cast her off her hatred may prove stronger than her passion. Anyhow, I should be the last man to despair of God's providence. Compare the condition of Iris and myself today with our plight on the ledge!"

The shipowner sighed heavily.

"I hope your faith will be justified. If it is not—the more likely thing to happen—do I understand that my daughter and you intend to get married whether I give or withhold my sanction?"

Anstruther rose and opened the door. "I have ventured to tell you," he said, "why she should not marry Lord Ventnor. When I come to you and ask you for her, which I pray may be soon, it will be time enough to answer that question should you then decide to put it."

infatuation for Anstruther or bring about the ruin of her father. There was no mean.

"If she declines to become Countess of Ventnor she can marry whom she likes, as you will all be paupers together," was the earl's caustic summing up.

This brutal argument rather overshoot the mark. The shipowner's face flushed with anger, and Lord Ventnor hastened to retrieve a false step.

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Why Tea Quality Varies

YOU know how the quality of strawberries from the same patch will sometimes vary from one day to another.

One day sweet, compact, well ripened, well colored, richly flavored—next day it rains, is cloudy,—following picking is soggy, sour, green, coarsely-flavored, poor.

Tea, also, on account of its volatility of flavor, after picking and during the curing process is very susceptible to weather changes. A few hours of sunshine or bad weather after picking may make the difference between good and poor tea.

So that while one picking may be first class, the next from the same garden may be very poor.

I select only the pickings which come up to the Red Rose standards of richness and strength in Indian, and delicacy and fragrance in Ceylon teas, and thus that "rich, fruity flavor" of Red Rose Tea is produced and maintained.

Red Rose Tea

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put it."

It must be remembered that Robert knew nothing whatever of the older man's predicament, while the baronet, full of his own troubles, was in no mood to take a reasonable view of Anstruther's position.

Thus, for a little while, these two were driven apart, and Anstruther disdained to urge the plea that not many weeks would elapse before he would be a richer man than his rival. The chief sufferer was Sir Arthur Deane. Had Iris guessed how her father was tormented she would not have remained on the bridge, radiant and beautiful, while the gray haired baronet gazed with stony eyes despair at some memoranda which he extracted from his papers.

"Ten thousand pounds!" he muttered. "Not a great sum for the millionaire financier, Sir Arthur Deane, to raise on his note of hand. A few months ago men offered me one hundred times the amount on no better security. And now to think that a set of jobbing fools in London should so destroy my credit and their own; that not a bank will discount my paper unless they are assured Lord Ventnor has joined the board! Fancy me, of all men, being willing to barter my child for a few pieces of gold!"

The thought was mad, however. For a little while he yielded to morose despair. It was quite true that a comparatively small amount of money would restore the stability of his firm. Even without it, were his credit unimpaired, he could easily meet over the period of depression until the first fruits of his enterprise were garnered. Then all men would hail him as a genius.

Warily turning over his papers, he suddenly came across the last letter written to him by Iris' mother. How she coted on their only child! He recalled one night shortly before his wife died when the little Iris was brought into her room to kiss her and hush her infantile prayers. She had devised a formula of her own:

"God bless father! God bless mother! God bless me, their little girl!"

And what was it she cried to him from the beach?

"Your own little girl given back to you!"

Given back to him! For what—to marry that black hearted scoundrel whose pastime was the degradation of women and the defaming of honest men? That settled it. Instantly the cloud was lifted from his soul. A great peace came upon him. The ruin of his business he might not be able to avert, but he would save from the wreck that which he prized more than all else, his daughter's love.

The engines dropped to half speed. They were entering the harbor of Singapore. In a few hours the worst would be over. If Ventnor telegraphed to London his withdrawal from the board nothing short of a cable draft for £10,000 would prevent certain creditors from filing a bankruptcy petition.

In the local banks the baronet had about a thousand to his credit. Surely among the rich merchants of the port, men who knew the potentialities of his scheme, he would be able to raise the money needed. He would try hard. Already he felt braver. The old fire had returned to his blood. The very belief that he was acting in the way best calculated to secure his daughter's happiness stimulated and encouraged him.

He went on deck, to meet Iris skipping down the hatchway.

"Oh, there you are!" she cried. "I was just coming to find out why you were moping in your cabin. You are missing the most beautiful view—all greens and blues and browns! Run, quick! I want you to see every inch of it."

She held out her hand and pulled him gleefully up the steps. Leaning against the taffrail, some distance apart from each other, were Anstruther and Lord Ventnor. Need it be said to whom Iris drew her father?

"Here he is, Robert," she laughed. "I do believe he was sulking because Captain Fitzroy was so very attentive to me. Yet you didn't mind it a bit!"

The two men looked into each other's eyes. They smiled. How could they resist the contagion of her sunny nature?

"I have been thinking over what you said to me just now, Anstruther," said the shipowner slowly.

"Oh!" cried Iris. "Have you two been talking secrets behind my back?"

"It is no secret to you, my little girl!"—Her father's voice lingered on the phrase. "When we are on shore, Robert, I will explain matters to you more fully. Just now I wish only to tell you that where Iris has given her heart, I will not refuse her hand."

She took his face between her hands and kissed him. Lord Ventnor, wondering at this effusiveness, strolled forward.

"What has happened, Miss Deane?" he inquired. "Have you just discovered what an excellent parent you possess?"

The baronet laughed almost hysterically. "Pon my honor," he cried, "you could not have hit upon a happier explanation."

His lordship was not quite satisfied. "I suppose you will take Iris to Smith's hotel?" he said, with cool impudence.

Iris answered him.

"Yes, my father has just asked Robert to come with us—by inference, that is. Where are you going?"

The adroit use of her lover's Christian name goaded his lordship to sudden heat.

"Indeed!" he snarled. "Sir Arthur Deane has evidently decided a good many things during the last hour."

"Yes," was the shipowner's quiet retort. "I have decided that my daughter's happiness should be the chief consideration of my remaining years. All else must give way to it."

The earl's swarthy face grew sallow with fury. His eyes blazed, and there was a tense vibrato in his voice as he said:

"Then I must congratulate you, Miss Deane. You are fated to endure adventures. Having escaped from the melodramatic perils of Rainbow Island you are destined to experience another variety of shipwreck here."

He left them. Not a word had Robert spoken throughout the unexpected scene. His heart was throbbing with a tremendous joy, and his lordship's sneers were lost on him. But he could not fail to note the malignant purpose of the parting sentence.

In his quietly masterful way he placed his hand on the baronet's shoulder.

"What did Lord Ventnor mean?" he asked.

Sir Arthur Deane answered, with a calm smile: "It is difficult to talk openly at this moment. Wait until we reach the hotel."

The news flew fast through the settlement that her majesty's ship Orient had returned from her long search for the Sirdar. The warship occupied her usual anchorage, and a boat was lowered to take off the passengers.

The boat swung off into the tideway. Her progress shoreward was watched by a small knot of people, mostly loungers and coolies. Among them, however, were two persons who had driven rapidly to the landing place when the arrival of the Orient was reported. One bore all the distinguishing marks of the army officer of high rank, but the other was unmistakably a globe trotter. The older gentleman made no pretense that he could "hear the east a-calling." He swore impartially at the climate, the place and its inhabitants. At this instant he was in a state of wild excitement. He was very tall, very stout, exceedingly red faced.

Producing a tremendous telescope he vainly endeavored to balance it on the shoulder of a native servant.

"Can't you stand still, you blithering idiot," he shouted, after futile attempts to focus the advancing boat, "or shall I steady you with a clout over the ear?"

His companion, the army man, was looking through a pair of field glasses. "By Jove," he cried, "I can see Sir Arthur Deane and a girl who looks like his daughter! There's that infernal

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CHEMIST — AND — DRUGGIST
DURHAM, ONT.

scamp, Ventnor, too."

The big man brushed the servant out of his way and brandished the telescope as though it were a bludgeon.

"The dirty beggar! He drove my lad to misery and death, yet he has come back safe and sound. Wait till I meet him. I'll!"

"Now, Anstruther! Remember your promise. I will deal with Lord Ventnor. What! By the jumping Moses, I do believe—Yes, it is Anstruther! Your nephew is sitting next to the girl!"

The telescope fell on the stones with a crash. The giant's rubeund face suddenly blanched. He leaped on his friend for support.

"You are not mistaken!" he almost whimpered. "Look again, for God's sake, man! Make sure before you speak. Tell me! Tell me!"

"Calm yourself, Anstruther. It is Robert, as sure as I'm alive. Don't you think I know him, my poor disgraced friend, whom I, like the rest, cast off in his hour of trouble? But I had some excuse. There! There! I didn't mean that, old fellow. Robert himself will be the last man to blame either of us. Who could have suspected that two people—one of them, God help me, my wife—would concoct such a hellish plot!"

The boat glided gracefully alongside the steps of the quay, and Playdon sprang gracefully ashore to help Iris to alight. What happened immediately afterward can best be told in his own words, as he related the story to an appreciative audience in the ward-room.

"We had just landed," he said, "and some of the crew were pushing the coolies out of the way when two men jumped down the steps, and a most fiendish row sprang up—that is, there was no dispute or wrangling, but one chap, who, it turned out, was Colonel Costobell, grabbed Ventnor by the shirt front and threatened to smash his face in if he didn't listen then and there to what he had to say. I really thought about interfering until I heard Colonel Costobell's opening words. After that I would gladly have seen the beggar chucked into the harbor. We never liked him, did we?"

"Ask no questions, Pompey, but go ahead with the yarn," growled the first lieutenant.

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