SEAWARD.

The sight of ships, the rolling sea,
The changing wind to sing for me;
The moon-bound tide, a crimson west
Wherein the royal sun at rest
Rides like a golden argosy.

With mastlike rays in cloud-sails dressed—
A voyager on an endless quest,
Whose farewell fills with majesty
The sight of ships.

Like prisoner struggling to be free,
Out of the mountain land I flee.
Again I see the heaving breast
Of ocean, where the petrel nest,
And there across the sandy lea,
The sight of ships.

—*Thomas P. Conant.*

TURNING OVER A NEW LEAF.

CHAPTER I.

"I declare, Spencer, you're the most careless man on the face of the earth!" remarked Captain Dalrymple, half seriously, half banteringly, to his friend and comrade, Godfrey Spencer, as the two young men strolled along the promenade of the important naval station and garrison town of Mudport. "You're always losing something, or forgetting something, or getting taken in by somebody, or——"

"Don't row at me, Dalrymple, just because I don't happen to be as orderly and precise as you are," returned the other, a handsome young fellow, with a pair of mischievous brown eyes. "I can't help being naturally untidy and lazy. I would if I could. And after all, what does it signify losing a trumpery card case? The old thing wasn't worth five shillings. Though I grant it was annoying to have no card to leave on the new people on the Dockyard, after hunting all my pockets through twice for my case, until I looked like a fool. But it's just my luck."

And he began softly to hum a tune, as though he wished to change the subject.

"Just your carelessness, you mean," ruthlessly retorted the other, whose Scotch method and thrift were often being outraged by his friend's slipshod ways. "I wonder how many cigar-cases and purses and sticks and umbrellas you have contrived to lose since I came to Mudport?—to say nothing of your being always ready to empty your pockets at the request of any plausible vagabond who comes to you with a whining tale. You'll get yourself into some unpleasant mess one of these days, you mark my words."

His friend, whose happy temperament was not easily ruffled, merely laughed in reply, and thought no more of the card-case, which had mysteriously disappeared from his pocket in the course of a stroll. The description given by his friend Dalrymple was so accurate, that I need offer no further delineation of Captain Godfrey Spencer, except to say that, though highly popular in his regiment, his careless habits were always placing him in some dilemma or other. Perhaps unfortunately for himself, he was possessed of sufficiently ample means to enable him to bear losses with equanimity, for he was entirely his own master, having lost both parents when a child.

"There's a gentleman in your room, sir, waiting to see you," the Captain's servant informed his master, upon the latter's return to barracks an hour later.

"'Mr. Algernon Lascelles Mortimer,'" read Godfrey from the card which was handed to him. "Don't know the name. Are you sure he asked for me?"

"Oh, yes, sir. He came about half an hour ago, and when I told him you were out, he said he'd wait until you came back."

Easy-going Godfrey asked no further particulars, but plunging up stairs, entered the small, untidy sitting-room, which was so thoroughly characteristic of its owner, and there found himself confronted by a dark, resolute-looking and gentlemanly young man of about his own age, who held out his hand, with a smile.

"I need not ask if you are Captain Spencer, for I should have known you anywhere from your likeness to your brother George. Your name is very familiar to me, and it is possible that my friend George may have mentioned mine to you in return. Has he?"

"Well, no. I can't call to mind just now that he ever spoke of a friend named Mortimer," returned Godfrey, whose younger brother, George, was a Lieutenant in an infantry regiment stationed at Dublin. "Do you come from Ireland?"

"Well, not just lately. It is about a month since I left Dublin," replied Mr. Mortimer. "And your brother has so many friends—you know how popular he is—that it is not surprising that my name should escape his memory, although I spent many a pleasant evening in the mess-room of the dear old Twenty-second. I always call it so, because so many of my people have been at one time or another in the regiment. But it was quite by accident that I came to call upon you to-day." He paused and drew something from his pocket. "I believe this card-case belongs to you. I picked it up this afternoon in the High Street, and looking at the cards to find out to whom it belonged, I saw the name of Spencer, and it occurred to me that you must be the brother at Mudport of whom I have so often heard George speak."

"Thanks," said Godfrey cordially, pleased to have his property restored. "It was awfully good of you to take the trouble to bring it back. I dropped it this afternoon. And so George has talked to you about me? I haven't seen him for more than a year, poor old boy. No, you must not think of going yet. Sit down and tell me how you liked Dublin."

He hospitably brought out spirits and cigars, and the two young men had a long talk. Godfrey was delighted with his companion, who seemed to have seen a good deal of the world. It appeared that he was a stranger at Mudport, where he was merely staying at a hotel for a day or two. Although not in the army, he seemed to be acquainted with the officers of most of the garrisons in England, and had an extensive knowledge of military affairs. It ended in his host giving him a cordial invitation to dine at the mess that evening, as it was guest night. But Mr. Mortimer declined, on the plea of a previous engagement.

"Then I'm afraid I'll hardly see you again, if you're not going to stay long," Godfrey said, in a tone of deep regret. "I have an engagement for to-morrow, and on Thursday I am going up to town to meet an old uncle of mine, Sir Horace Trevor, of whom you may have heard. He is coming from India to settle in England, after an absence of twenty years. A long time, isn't it?"

"I know Sir Horace well by reputation," said Mr. Mortimer, cordially. "Such a distinguished soldier is a relative to be proud of, Captain Spencer. He has no family of his own, I believe?"

"No, he never married. George and I are his two nearest relatives, and he looks upon us quite in the light of sons."

"He is wealthy, I presume?"

"I believe so. He was always very lucky in the way of appointments; and now that he is leaving India for good, he is bringing all his property with him—plate, and jewels, and so forth—and he wants me to meet him as soon as he lands, to see about taking care of them. It's rather nervous work, you see, to carry valuable property about nowadays. He has a presentation service of plate, and in addition some very valuable jewels which came to him in rather an odd way. He was able to render important services to an Indian Ranee who ruled a small territory, which was in danger of being snapped up by her more powerful neighbors. She was a widow, with only one baby son, and but for my uncle, who pleaded her cause before the Viceroy in person, she would have been robbed of her land. She was very grateful to him, but he would take nothing for his services; but when she died it was found that on her deathbed she had bequeathed to him a casket of valuable jewels, with such an urgent request that he would not refuse that testimony of her gratitude that he could not refuse to take them. There's a diamond necklace, I believe, worth several thousands, and other things to correspond."

"Quite a romance," said Mr. Mortimer, smiling, as he rose to go. "But I don't think Sir Horace need feel at all apprehensive. London is undoubtedly the safest Capital on the globe. Well, Captain Spencer, I'm very glad to have had the pleasure of meeting you, and I trust it may not be long before I see you again. Remember me very kindly to George when you write."

"Indeed I will," said genial Godfrey, as he walked to the door with his visitor. "By the bye, what did you say was your address?"

"I am just giving up my chambers in the Albany, and for a few weeks my movements will be uncertain," returned his new friend. "But I'll write when I am settled again, and let you know. I am rather thinking of going to Norway for a little salmon-fishing. Good-bye, and be sure you give my message to George. I shall never forget the many pleasant hours I've spent in his company."

Godfrey returned to his room, and then for the first time noticed that he had left his writing-table unlocked, and, indeed all, his keys at the mercy of the first-comer, for they were all depending from the lock which was intended to secure the lid of his davenport. They had doubtless been there ever since he went out that afternoon. It was a piece of gross carelessness, for inside were banknotes, a check-book and various valuables, to say nothing of all his correspondence. All must have been perfectly open to Mr. Martimer's inspection, during the half-hour he had spent in awaiting his host in solitude. But the idea that any friend of George's would be so dishonorable as to peep and pry into another man's desk was so preposterous that it never even crossed Godfrey's easy mind. He opened his blotting-book and took out his uncle's last letter, received that morning, in order that he might read over Sir Horace's instructions once more, so as to be quite sure that he had understood them aright.

S. S. BANGALORE, off Alexandria.

My Dear Nephew: When you receive this I shall be nearing England, although by not coming overland from Brindisi I lengthen the time which must be occupied in the journey. But I prefer to stick to the steamer, for I am getting too old now to undertake the long railroad journey. I hope you will meet me at the docks, and see me safely through the Custom-house to the place where I intend to put up, the Pelican Hotel in, Picadilly. I shall be glad to have a strong young fellow like you to look after me, for I am bringing no servant with me, and my sight and hearing are not quite so good as they were. I may as well tell you that I have a great deal of valuable property with me, which I mean to deposit at my banker's; until I have got rid of it, I shall not feel easy in my mind. You have often heard of the famous 'Ranee's necklace,' which I now have among my impedimenta, and it adds considerable to my anxieties.

The steamer is due at Gravesend on Thursday next, at noon, when I shall hope to see you. Rooms are already engaged for us at the hotel, and as long as you can obtain leave of absence from your Colonel—whose acquaintance I hope to make—I shall expect you to be my guest.

Your affectionate uncle,
HORACE TREVOR, K. C. B.

"Good old chap," meditated Godfrey, as he folded the letter up. "Although he's never seen me, I feel as if I knew him well already, and I'm sure his letters have always been most kind. A fine-looking old man, too," he added, looking at a photograph of the old General, which was inclosed in the letter. "Although he's nearly 70, I declare he hardly looks more than 50. I only wish George was going to meet us in town, too, and then I could be quite satisfied."

"Can I come in for a minute, old fellow?" asked his comrade, Dalrymple, appearing at the door. "You've just had a visitor, haven't you? I saw you shaking hands with a man in the lobby."

"Yes; and do you know, I've actually got my card-case back again, Dalrymple," said Godfrey, gleefully, as he took it out of his pocket and flourished it in his friend's face. "There must be a Providence which takes especial care of careless people, after all. A man picked it up in the High street, and, seeing my name, took the trouble to bring it to me, and, oddly enough, it seems that he knows my brother George very well, and has often dined with his regiment at Dublin."

"What's his name?" asked the other, quickly.

"There's his card on the table."

"'Mortimer—Mortimer,'" read Captain Dalrymple, thoughtfully. "And you say he is a friend of your brother's?"

"I suppose so. He knows all about his affairs and the garrison at Dublin, although I cannot call to mind at this moment that I ever heard George speak of him."

"You have never seen him before?"

"No, never."

"And have only his word for it that he is acquainted with your brother?"

"Good gracious, Dalrymple?" crid his friend, out of patience. "I declare you're always fancying something or other. Pray, what have you got in your head now?"

"I am almost certain that Mr. Algernon Lascelles Mortimer is nothing but a common swindler. His face seemed familiar to me, and I'm sure I've seen him before. Two years ago, when I was stationed at Barminster, a plausible fellow obtained entrance to our quarters on pretense of knowing somebody or other connected with the regiment, and, after borrowing money from several of our fellows, suddenly disappeared with a number of small articles of value from our rooms. He called himself Percival then; but if he is not Algernon Mortimer he must be his brother, for I never saw two men more alike. We sent for the police, and then found that this imposter had been carrying on this game for years—going about to different garrison towns and scraping acquaintances with the officers, in order to steal anything he could lay his hands on. In the course of his wanderings he has acquired a knowledge of military affairs which render it easy for him to delude the unwary."

"Mortimer's all right," doggedly repeated Godfrey. "He spoke like a gentleman; and he's a friend of George's."

"I should like to hear your brother's corroboration of that fact."

"Well, I'll write to him soon and ask, since you won't be satisfied without. I'm sure, though, you're mistaken. This fellow never tried to get anything out of me; and, to quite settle the question," said Godfrey, triumphantly, lifting the flap of his writing table, "he was waiting half an hour for me, with the keys in this davenport, and, though I had left twenty pounds in notes, as well as six sovereigns in this drawer, besides checks and other things, there's nothing missing. If he had been your man, of course he'd have walked off with the lot. Now, what do you say, Dalrymple?"

"I say what I've always said," his friend answered quietly; "you are too hasty in bestowing your confidence. Some day you'll find yourself taken in, and then, perhaps, you will acknowledge the truth of what I say."

Godfrey only laughed in his light-hearted way, and nothing more was seen or heard of Mr. Mortimer, contrary to Captain Dalrymple's expectations. But Godfrey was surprised to receive the next evening a telegram from his uncle, dated "Paris:"

"Have changed my mind, and am coming back overland. Will write. Do not go to London until you hear again from me, as I may stay here a few days."

Such a sudden change in his uncle's plans was unexpected and astonishing, under the circumstances. Godfrey had always believed Sir Horace to be a man of firm and inflexible will, and not likely to vacillate in such a manner. Yet there was the telegram, and to disregard it would be absurd.

He must defer going to London until he heard again from the General, and then it would doubtless be manifest that his uncle had good reasons for this alteration in his route, which he could not intrust to a telegram. Still, thinking of the valuables which the old man had in his possession, he was conscious that he would feel relieved when his uncle was safely in England. But that he feared to wound the independent spirit of the old soldier, he would have gone to meet him in Paris; but he did not like to do so unasked, knowing that Sir Horace was very impatient of anything like interference.

Careless Godfrey would not have dismissed the subject of his uncle's change of plans so lightly had he guessed that the telegram was a forgery, and emanated from a scheme concocted in the subtle brain of Mr. Algernon Mortimer, who was just what Captain Dalrymple had designated him—a common swindler. Profiting by the accident of the keys being in the Captain's escritoire, a very brief study of Godfrey's correspondence had suggested to his mind a plan, of which the simplicity was only surpassed by the audacity. He, Algernon Mortimer, would go to meet Sir Horace at Gravesend, and lighten his responsibilities by taking upon himself the care of the Ranee's jewels.

CHAPTER II.

"And now let me have a good look at you, nephew Godfrey," said Sir Horace Trevor, when the traveler and supposed nephew were safely installed in their private sitting-room at the fashionable hotel. "What with the bustle of the Custom-House and the jolting of the cab, I've scarcely been able to look at you yet; but it seems to me," he added, as he put his hands on his companion's shoulders and gave him a searching glance, "that photograph of yourself that you sent me at Christmas could not have been a very good one, for I don't see that you have much resemblance to it."

"It was an excessively bad likeness, uncle," said the young man, candidly. "In fact, it was not good enough to send to you; but it was the only one I happened to have by me, and I thought you would like it better than nothing. I knew you at once, to-day, by your likeness to the photograph of you I have in my room at Mudport. How I wish George were here, that you might see what a fine fellow he has grown! He is not much like me—he has blue eyes and light hair."

"Like your poor father," said Sir Horace, with a half sigh. "And now, my boy, we had better see about getting these packages safely bestowed." He rose as he spoke, and went to a corner of the room, where were two or three small packing cases, and a little iron-clamped box. He held up the latter to his supposed nephew, saying: "The jewels are in this. Would it gratify you to have a peep at the Ranee's necklace?"

His nephew's sparkling eyes were a sufficient answer, and carefully locking the door, the old General took a small key from his watch-chain and unfastened the box, of which the lock was of peculiar construction. He removed some wrappers, and displayed the necklace and several ornaments, besides a number of unset stones. Barbaric as was the style of some of the jewels, according to Western ideas, the size and luster of the stones made it evident that they were of great value. The younger man took up the diamond necklace and passed it through his fingers with manifest admiration.

"Beautiful stones, are they not?" said Sir Horace. "The cutting and polishing leave something to be desired, but a good jeweller will soon rectify that, and they shall be equally divided between you and George, with the exception of the necklace, which is destined for the first bride—either your wife or George's. Those cases," continued the General, "contain a few valuables I especially prize, while the residue of my plate will arrive with the heavy luggage to-morrow. I intend to give them all, with the jewels, into the care of the hotel manager, that he may put them into the strong-room for to-night; and in the morning we will take them to the bank."

The other turned perceptibly pale.

"Don't you think it rather a risk to intrust such valuables to the tender mercies of an utter stranger, uncle? The strong-room might be broken into and robbed this very night."

"I don't think it likely," said Sir Horace, smiling. "The strong-room here is guaranteed fire and thief-proof, and constantly contains property of great value belonging to visitors. I shall be glad to be rid of the responsibility. These diamonds have been a perfect nightmare to me all the way home."

"If I might be permitted to advise, uncle," said the young man, "I think it would be better not to call anybody's attention to the fact that you have any valuables with you at all. London thieves have such extraordinary ways of getting information that they might attack us even in broad daylight to-morrow as we are taking the jewels to the bank. Let us have the cases quietly carried to the room, or, better still, to mine, and locked up in a wardrobe for to-night, without telling anybody about them."

"Why would you rather have them in your room than mine?" asked Sir Horace, rather sharply.

"Because, uncle, I am young and strong, and, in case of any alarm, I should be better able to defend myself. Besides, I don't like to think you should suffer from any anxiety. Let me take the burden on my own shoulders for once," pleaded the young man respectfully.

Sir Horace pondered.

"There is the risk of fire. In the strong-room there could be no danger of that."

"But, on the other hand, you must call the attention of the hotel servants by having the cases carried there," urged his sham nephew.

"Well, my boy, that's true; and no doubt you know more of English ways than I do, after being abroad for so long," said the old man at last. "You shall have it your own way, and keep the things in your room for to-night. If the bank had not been closed I would have taken them there at once. Let's have a look at your room."

Nothing could have been better adapted to the purpose, for it was close to their sitting-room, and isolated at the top of a short flight of stairs, from the main passage. The old General's practiced eye at once took in all the advantages of the position. It contained a massive wardrobe, deep enough to hold all the cases, if they were piled one on top of the other. Sir Horace tried the lock, which was of sound construction, and gave his nephew permission to carry out his suggestion. The two men carried the cases, which were not heavy, into the bedroom, and carefully arranged them inside the wardrobe; after which the supposed Godfrey took out the key and put it in his pocket.

"Now," said he triumphantly, as they left the room, "with the bedroom-door also locked, and the key in my pocket, I'll venture to defy all the burglars in London until to-morrow!"

He accordingly fastened that also, and they returned to the sitting-room.

"And now let's order dinner," said Horace, and he seated himself once more.

The youthful imposter walked to a window, and stood looking down at the throng hurrying along the street below. It was still broad daylight, for it was not 7 o'clock, and the days were at their longest. But in reality he saw nothing of what was passing before his eyes. His heart was beating madly with the anxiety to carry out his design without exciting Sir Horace's suspicions. Practised hypocrite as he was, his powers were strained to the utmost. He had never yet played for such a magnificent stake as the Ranee's jewels, and to have them in his very grasp, and then be compelled to relinquish them, would be tantalizing indeed.

"Don't you think, sir, that I ought to telegraph to George at once, to let him know of your safe arrival? He asked me to do so."

"Perhaps so. I had thought of writing to him to-night, but I am rather tired, and, after all, a telegram would be sufficient."

"There is a telegraph office in connection with this hotel, so it will be very easy to dispatch a message," said Godfrey, leaving the window. "If you will excuse me for five minutes, I will go and fill up a form at once."

Sir Horace smiled as the door closed behind his companion.

"How fond the boys are of their old uncle to be sure! Godfrey's a good fellow, although I must say he hardly comes up to my idea of a soldier; but it doesn't do to be too exacting nowadays. More kind and thoughtful for my welfare he could not be."

Had the General's eyes been able to follow the subject of his eulogium, he would certainly have been puzzled by his eccentric proceedings. Instead of going down to the telegraph office, he proceeded to his bedroom, where he unlocked the wardrobe, and, taking out the jewel case, slipped it inside a black hand-bag. Then he tried the weight of the other cases, but found that they were not sufficiently portable.

"Too heavy. If I had had a pal I might have managed it; but alone it would be too risky. I might force them, to be sure," and he looked for a moment at a beautiful little bright steel jimmy he took from an inside pocket. "But that would take time, and if they only contain plate it isn't worth the risk, as I must get away unobserved. The necklace alone is worth a hundred times all I've risked in order to get it. Ah, Sir Horace Trevor, K. C. B., I wonder what you'll look like when you find your nephew and your jewels both missing!"

He carefully refastened the wardrobe, and, putting on his hat, took the bag and left the room, locking the door behind him. In the hall he stopped to speak to the manager.

"If Sir Horace Trevor should inquire for me—his nephew, Captain Spencer—will you kindly tell him that I have been unexpectedly compelled to go out for a few minutes, but that I shall return at the very latest in half an hour?"

Then, hurrying into Piccadilly, the thief hailed an empty hansom, and directed the man to drive to Waterloo Station. Then, and not until then, he breathed freely. "To Southampton and then to America!" he exultingly thought. "With the start I've got, there's no risk of detection, and my fortune's made for life! Ah, Captain Godfrey Spencer, it was a lucky day for me when the accident of picking up your card-case in the street suggested this fine piece of work!"

CHAPTER III.

Having duly reached the station, Algernon Mortimer took his ticket, and then looked about to find a vacant compartment in the train, which was timed to start in ten minutes. He would have preferred a carriage to himself, but the train was so full that the nearest approach he could obtain to solitude was a smoking carriage which was only tenanted by an elderly gentleman, placid, large faced and spectacled. He beamed so good-naturedly upon the young man as he came up and placed his bag on the seat, preparatory to getting in himself, that the thief felt that he could not have a more promising traveling companion, but just as his foot was on the step in the very act of entering, he was suddenly dragged back by a fierce pull, and an exultant voice exclaimed:

"What! I've caught you at last, have I?"

"I don't know what you mean," said the "Captain," angrily, trying to shake himself free. "Let me go instantly!"

"Not if I know it! I'm not going to be robbed of a gold brooch and a diamond ring and thirty-nine pounds in money, and not collar the thief when I see him! It's no use trying to escape me. You're caught this time. I could swear to you among a thousand!"

The old gentleman in the carriage was staring with evident bewilderment, and, attracted by the commotion, a little knot of people began to gather round, among whom was a policeman.

"Policeman!" said the captive, desperately, beckoning to that functionary, "I give this man in charge for being drunk and disorderly, and assaulting without any provocation. I am an officer in her Majesty's service, and I cannot stop to argue with every drunken vagabond who chooses to mistake me for somebody else."

"Drunk indeed!" said the accuser, who was a little jeweler named David Roberts. "Don't you believe it, policeman. He's a thief and a swindler, who cheated me out of a brooch and a ring and £39 a fortnight ago; and I swear I'll bring him to justice for it!"

"But I tell you I am an officer and a gentleman, and never saw this madman before to-night!" retorted Algernon. "I am traveling on important business, and if I lose this train the consequences will be most serious. Do your duty, constable, and take this fellow into custody. There's my card, with my name and address, to show who I am."

"'CAPTAIN GODFREY SPENCER,'
Third Battalion Royal Reds,"

read out the guardian of order, with manifestly increased respect for the person who claimed the title. "I say, you know this won't do," he went on, addressing the excited accuser. "You can't be allowed to go about annoying gentlemen in this way, and I shall have to run you in if you persist in it. The gentleman says he's never seen you before, and it's plain you're mistaking him for somebody else; and if you take my advice, my man, you'll go home quietly without any more disturbance."

"But I tell you he did rob me by pretending to be a detective! I remember him perfectly, and I'd swear to him anywhere!" said David excitedly.

"What proof have you?" asked the Constable, disdainfully.

"Proof! My own eyes, to be sure!"

"That wouldn't be enough for a Court of law, I'm afraid. If you'd seen as many cases of mistaken identity as I have, you'd be unwilling to swear to your own brother," remarked the guardian of order. "It's clear you're mistaking Captain Spencer for somebody else. If you don't want to be locked up as drunk and disorderly, you'll go about your business at once." And he took the little man firmly by the arm.

"You talk about my own eyes being no proof; but what proof have you, except his own word for it, that he is Captain Spencer?" returned the little Welshman, defiantly.

"Haven't I seen his card?" drawled the policeman with lazy superiority, as if that were a most convincing argument. And it is very singular, if the reader will reflect a moment, to notice the marvelous influence a minute scrap of pasteboard, inscribed with any name, however unfamiliar, has in calming the suspicions and bespeaking the confidence of all ranks of society. Not a day passes but the production of a visiting-card with a flourish extricates many a man and woman of dubious antecedents from many an unpleasant dilemma, and serves them as a passport to society.

"His card!" contemptuously returned the jeweler. "He might have had it printed on purpose, or picked it up in the street. Pray, what is there to hinder me calling myself the Duke of Somewhere on a card, if I choose? I say he's the very man who came into my shop at Moortown and swindled me out of my money and my goods."

"There, that will do," said the policeman very sternly, forcibly retaining David with his strong arm, and motioning to the other to get into the carriage, as the warning whistle was sounding. "I don't believe a word of your story, and if you are not quiet, I shall have to lock you up. I'd advise you not to compel me to call for assistance."

As the train slowly left the station, the last objects to meet the escaping swindler's eyes were David Roberts, with his face convulsed by rage, forcibly held back by the tall policeman, who towered above him, a very giant in size and strength. The sight would have been most ludicrous, had his escape been less narrow. He drew a long breath of intense relief and subsided into a corner, with a feeling of exultation at his own foresight in keeping two or three of the cards he had picked up in case they might prove useful in an emergency.

The plan which the perusal of Captain Spencer's correspondence had suggested to him had not only prospered beyond his utmost expectations, but had also served to stave off an unexpected danger in the recognition of himself by David Roberts.

"Well, really, sir," began his good-natured opposite neighbor, with an affable smile, "you must permit me to congratulate you on bringing about a successful termination to a very unpleasant scene. Your nerve and judgment were admirable under circumstances of great provocation. For an officer and gentleman to be accused of being a common swindler was almost too much for human nature to bear."

"The fellow was evidently half-drunk," returned the sham Captain disdainfully. "I could not feel seriously annoyed with a person so far beneath contempt. That he should be incapable of discriminating between a man in my position, and a fellow who would steal jewelry and bank notes, shows that his statements are not seriously worth consideration."

"Certainly not," said the other warmly. "But all the same, it was a trying position for you to be placed in Captain ——— by the bye, I have forgotten your name for the moment?"

"Godfrey Spencer."

"Ah, yes! of the Royal Reds, I think you said? Very fine regiment, that. I had a brother in it once. When I was a lad I was wild to wear a red coat myself, and it was all that my father—he was a banker and intended me to follow the same profession—could do to dissuade me from it. I've got over that weakness now; but still I like a chat with a young soldier now and then, though soldiering is very different from what it was in my young days. They didn't require a man to learn 'Paradise Lost' by heart before they thought him worthy of a commission!"

At Basingstoke the train stopped for a few minutes, and there another passenger got in. He was a fine-looking man of about 40, with a keen eye gleaming from beneath a cloth traveling-cap. Algernon Mortimer's loquacious traveling companion, who was evidently not afflicted with shyness, soon began a conversation with the stranger by asking if he would like to see an evening paper.

"Thanks; I've read it," said the newcomer opening his cigar case. "No news worth mentioning. It appears that the police have as yet no clue to the Brixton murderer."

All England was just then ringing with the details of a particularly atrocious and dastardly crime, the perpetrator of which had for several days effectually baffled justice, and seemed likely to do so; although every day men who resembled the published descriptions of the murderer were being arrested in different parts of the country.

"I see that two men were detained at Gloucester yesterday, but afterwards set at liberty," answered the old man. "And only the other day a member of Parliament was positively arrested on the same charge—the police not knowing who he was, of course."

"Yes, there have been some queer cases of mistaken identity," assented the other. "And, really, you can hardly wonder at it. I have myself made the most absurd mistakes at times, and I suppose that is the experience of everybody, more or less."

"There was a case in point this very evening," eagerly assented the loquacious old gentleman; while the sham Godfrey Spencer, seeing what was coming, bit his lips in futile annoyance without daring to stop him for fear of exciting suspicion. "This young gentleman here was set upon at Waterloo Station, in the most insulting manner, by a rude person, who persisted that he was a common swindler, and would hardly be convinced that he was mistaken, and was accusing an officer in her Majesty's service of the most atrocious conduct. Fortunately, Captain Spencer was able to produce his card and testify that he was an officer in the Royal Reds, and so shake off the importunity of the fellow."

He was so full of the subject that he did not notice what a change had suddenly come over the features of the person to whom he was talking. The stranger shot a keen glance at the "Captain Spencer," who, in some embarrassment, was looking out of the darkened window, and then asked quietly:

"You are Captain Godfrey Spencer of the Royal Reds?"

"Certainly. Here is my card," said the imposter, thinking it best to brazen it out to the very last.

"Stationed at Mudport?" went on his questioner in a careless tone.

"At Mudport."

"Then, Captain Spencer, I am very happy to have made your acquaintance," said the other after a short pause, as he bent down to strike a match. "And I believe, from what this gentleman was saying, that some foolish person made some unpleasantness at Waterloo by mistaking you for somebody else."

"He actually accused Captain Spencer of being a common thief," eagerly put in the talkative old gentleman, delighted to have the opportunity of telling the whole story. He plunged eagerly into the details, repeating almost word for word what David Roberts had said; and his auditor listened without comment, but with evident interest. Nevertheless, Algernon Mortimer was truly rejoiced when the train stopped at Bishopstoke, where he hoped to shake off both his companions, as all the passengers had to alight and change carriages.

Tightly clutching his precious bag, he followed the others on to the platform, rejoicing at the thought that Southampton and the steamer were so near. He turned away in order to avoid his two late fellow-passengers; but the gentleman in the traveling-cap contrived to keep near him, at the same time giving an almost imperceptible sign to a policeman.

Suddenly the thief felt his arms clutched from behind in a powerful grasp, and, turning, beheld Nemesis in the shape of a stalwart officer of justice and the traveler who had entered the carriage at Basingstoke. Between two such powerful men he felt he had but little chance of escape; but he determined to maintain an air of innocence to the last.

"What do you mean by this insolence?" he cried passionately.

"Take him in charge, policeman," said the gentleman in the cloth cap coolly. "I undertake the responsibility of prosecuting him. He is a liar and an imposter, and will have to explain before the magistrates why he has thought fit to arrogate to himself a name and rank to which he has no right. He is accused of being a swindler, and he will have to clear himself from that charge—if he can."

"But I tell you, policeman, this is all a mistake, and I'm an officer and a gentleman ——"

"You fool!" contemptuously returned his fellow-passenger. "Don't think to keep up that farce any longer. I happen to be Colonel Mostyn, the officer commanding the real Godfrey Spencer's regiment at Mudport, and as I see him every day of my life, I'm not very likely to be deceived by a plausible scoundrel who has borrowed his name and his card. What your object is, I confess I can't quite see; but there's some villany in it, and the police shall find it out."

The convicted cheat hung his head in terror of the danger he had incurred. He was not acquainted with the person of Godfrey Spencer's commanding officer, and it had never entered his head to calculate upon the possibility of some one who knew the real Captain being the witness of his own assumption of his name. How he cursed in his heart the loquacious old gentleman who had brought about his detection at the eleventh hour.

"What have you got in that bag?" demanded the policeman sternly; and wrenching it from him, he forced it open, and there was revealed a small clamped box, with the inscription:

"HORACE TREVOR, K. C. B."

"Godfrey Spencer's uncle!" cried Colonel Mostyn. "There's some deep villainy in all this, that's evident. That box is palpably stolen property, and that alone is quite sufficient to warrant the taking you into custody."

There was nothing for it but for the wretched young man to submit to his fate. David Roberts was communicated with, as well as Sir Horace Trevor, and bit by bit, the true story of Algernon Mortimer came out, first as a sham detective who had robbed the jeweler, and then as the pretended nephew who had persuaded the old General to entrust his jewels to his keeping. Nor was that all. Captain Dalrymple again related the suspicions he had before confided to Godfrey, and, being confronted with the prisoner, unhesitatingly identified him as a swindler who had defrauded his brother officers at Barminster. George Spencer was written to and declared that he knew "Algernon Mortimer" only too well, as a scoundrel of that name had scraped acquaintance with his comrades at Dublin, and been expelled from their society for the most barefaced cheating at cards. It appeared that the rogue had many aliases, and for years had subsisted on the credulity of the public, whom a plausible tongue and a good education enabled him to gull.

He was sentenced to penal servitude for fifteen years, to the great glee of David Roberts, who had blessed the lucky chance which had taken him to Waterloo Station on his way to visit a sick relative at Wimbledon at the same time the thief was effecting his flight. Congratulations showered upon Sir Horace Trevor for the marvelously lucky recovery of his jewels; and "The Ranee's Necklace" was a nine-day's wonder. But Godfrey Spencer was observed to be remarkably thoughtful and subdued; and in a few words he explained to his friend Dalrymple the reason why.

"You were quite right, old fellow," he began, with an embarrassed laugh. "You told me that my careless habits would get me into a scrape some day, and I shudder to think what might have come of my losing my card-case, and leaving my desk open. That scoundrel had a loaded revolver in his pocket, and my uncle might have lost his life for the sake of those jewels—and all through me. He ran a fearful risk when he was alone in London with that desperate fellow. I can't help thinking about it."

"All's well that ends well," suggested his friend consolingly.

"But it is no thanks to me that my uncle and his property are safe," Godfrey returned remorsefully. "I've had a lesson, indeed, this time; and it will be a warning to me, to the end of my days, against carelessness. I mean to turn over a new leaf, and that, too, on this first day of the New Year.—*All the Year Round.*"

Honeymoon.

"Say, Perkins, old boy, why don't we see you at the club any more? Has your mother-in-law shut down on you?" "No, Brown; the fact of the matter is, my home is so happy now that there is no inducement for me to leave it. You look incredulous, but it's a positive fact. You see, my wife used to suffer so much from functional derangements common to her sex, that her spirits and her temper were greatly effected. It was not her fault, of course, but it made home unpleasant all the same. But now, since she has begun to take Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription, she has been so well and so happy that we are having our honeymoon all over again."

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L. NEUBOURG, President.
H. J. GOETHE, Secretary. d27-12t

For thirty years I have had Catarrh. It became chronic and very bad. I have used only one bottle of Ely's Cream Balm, and can say I feel like a new man. I make this voluntary statement, that others may know of the Balm.—J. W. Mathewson, Pawtucket, R. I. MWF

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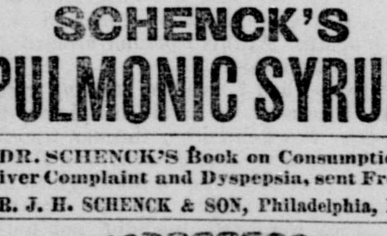

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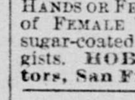

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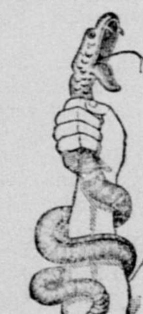

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