TO CHLORIS.

Ah, Chloris! you have greatly changed
Since we, then blithe and young together,
Across the summer meadows ranged
Or autumn heather.
I cannot always quite forget
The magic of your blush and dimple
Or choke the wish that you were yet
As sweetly simple.

For, Chloris, as the days went by
You grew, and took to longer dresses
And next—I ne'er discovered why—
You cut your tresses.
Thus marred, and in a sad loose frock,
The period fearfully uncertain,
You fell in love with Kant and Locke,
And went to Girton.

And there, in cap and gown arrayed,
(How could you, Chloris, copy men so?)
You waxed unconscionably staid
And read Colenso.
And when bright hours you might have spent
In sweet response to my affections,
Your faithless glance was ever bent
On conic sections.

It was too much! How could I brook
The rivalry of mathematics,
Or share the interest you took
In hydrostatics?
I have no sympathy with surds
(I never thoroughly attacked them),
Nor do I understand The Birds,
Or how to act them.

And, though you speedily became
A don and wore the hood of doctor,
And though you gained a greater name
Than Mr. Proctor,
I half regret you ever turned
To things so very far above me,
And wish that you had merely learned
To live and love me.
C.

JACK'S COURTSHIP.

A SAILOR'S YARN OF LOVE AND SHIPWRECK

BY W. CLARK RUSSELL.

*Author of "The Wreck of The Grosvenor," "A Sea-Queen," "An Ocean Free-Lance," etc.**

CHAPTER XXXI—CONTINUED.

There is all the difference in the world betwixt the fore and hinder parts of a ship, and the distinction is never more felt than when the vessel is at sea, sailing along. Aft everything is neat and clean and sparkling: ropes carefully coiled, deck white, and a glimpse of carpets and fine furniture through the brilliant skylights. But the forecastle is Jack's home, and the roof of his tapering habitation has as rough and coarse a look as the interior. The great anchors lie stowed behind the rails; the capstan has a rude appearance; maybe you'll find a pair of dungaree breeches and a shirt or two swelling upon the forestay; the giant bowsprit and jibbooms fork far away out, and the landsman's eye is bewildered by the complication of shrouds, horses, footropes, bobstays, which come into the ship from the vast spars.

"What is that hole there?" asked Florence, pointing with one hand, and keeping tight hold of me with the other.

"A hatch called the forescuttle; one of the doors which lead into the sailor's parlor and bedroom"; and I conducted her to the edge of it, and we peered into what looked as dark as a pocket, with a streak of light falling down upon a dark-green seaman's chest just below. An instant after a grimy Scandinavian face looked up at us out of a mop of sprawling red curls; whereupon we drew back, for, hard as the shore-going mind may find this saying to accept, it is, nevertheless, true, that the sailor is a human being, duly endowed with sensitiveness, and that he does not like people to peep and stare at him in his sea-home as if he were a bearded woman in a cage or a Chinese dwarf in a booth. There were one or two seamen at work on the forecastle, but no notice was taken of us beyond the sidelong squint which salts have a knack of throwing at you over the bronzed lump that stands for the outline of a junk of tobacco between the jaws.

"The right place to see the ship is from that spar yonder," said I, pointing to the flying-jibboom; "were there only a lady's saddle aboard, and I could manage to seat you there, you'd enjoy such a dancing gallop through the air, with this great ship thundering after you in your wake, and the sky opening ahead of you to receive your darling form as you come, that you'd have to go back to the time of the Arabian Nights to meet with such another flying steed."

"Oh, I never could get out there!" cried my pet, rounding her beautiful eyes at the distant dancing boom.

"No, and I don't mean that you should try," said I; "but, come with me; I'll show you all that is to be seen"; and I took her to the lee rail, just clear of the clew of the topmast staysail, and pointed aloft. Upon my word, it was a noble sight, well worth the journey to the forecastle. The trade-wind had settled broad abeam within the past two hours, and the yards were braced far enough forward to enable us to see past the lee-leeches as far as the mizzen-topsail. The ship was under royals and foretopmast stunsail; was flashing her lee channels through the leaping, blowing smother of white; the huge sails went leaning up, one above another, and one yardarm past another, until the blue sky, along which the clouds were driving, seemed to be a vast surface of canvas; the sun was to leeward of the royal-mastheads, and the white light poured down with a sort of blazing gushing upon the bosoms of the sails, leaving the foot of them in shadow against the dazzling azure which swept between the straight black lines of the yards and the rounded bottoms of the cloths; every staysail was in gloom, and stood, in their superb curves, like delicate pencil drawings; up behind the heads of the inner and outer jibs you saw the foretopmast stunsail pulling like an imprisoned cloud at its slender boom; and, looking from there to the end of the long, slightly bowed spars, which shot out of the forecastle betwixt knightheads, and soared above the line of the horizon, you ran your eye over the flight of carved-like, steady staysail and jibs, pointing one above another, one darkening a space of the brilliant white of the next with the shadow of its clew, while like the swing of a pendulum, these gleaming wings swept and soared over the deep, clear, yeasty ocean blue, that ran away up the dolphin-striker until the horizon stood as high as the junction of the bobstays upon that outrigger. But the wonder and delight of this most beautiful sea-picture lay not alone in the thunderous heights of canvas; whatever the eye sought yielded a charm; in the heap of gem-like white water, rushing in whirlpools past the line of her bulwark rails; in the play of surges smoothly rolling away to leeward, but coming along on the weather side in curved blue ridges that grew into a transparent green under the bows; every surge with a blowing of crystal smoke about its luminous brow, and here and there a fragment of rainbow, that swept along for a breath with the wind, and went out like the flying-fish that sparkled in silver showers from the violet-colored slant of the seas in a clear leap across the fresh foam of the melting crests, and a vanishing flash into the dark, gleaming blue of the billow beyond.

But the best thing of all was to lean over the weather rail, close up at the head, and look down to where you could see the sharp stem, with its sheathing of yellow metal, shearing like a hissing-hot thing through the water, with a liquid slide into the brilliant hollow that would heave the beautiful soft foam so high as to look almost close to our hands, while the rush of the half-buried bows would drive an acre of it creaming ahead faster than the vessel was sailing, until the outer line of the hissing swirl seemed a ship's length distant; and then up would float the knife-like cutwater, as if the noble ship meant to bodily leap the space of snow she had hurled forward on her path, the shining water draining down her, and the sea drawing into a hollow beyond, and you felt the glorious, buoyant life of the deep-blue surge—oh, how different from the drunken horse-play of narrow waters!—as the vessel poised her beautiful bows on the summit of a long, bright, washing Atlantic sea, looking down, as it might be for a breath only, into the gleaming shadow, laced with foam, that seemed to be rushing up to meet us, and *then*, with all her sails swelling out their white bosoms for the plunge, swept like an albatross into it, sending a blue wave roaring away on either hand, and filling the great trough with foam.

Man alive! there is no feeling like to what you get from this speeding of a great full-rigged ship athwart the steady trade! A fig for your steamers, say I! The delight, the hope, the sense of liberty, the overwhelming feeling of life that is put into a man by it makes a boy's heart of the weather-worn organ that beats behind the leather of his breast; and if tears should be in his eyes when he raises them from the windy, shining scene to the deeper blue above the mastheads, where the spirit of God looks down on the poor sailor, Jack Seymour would deserve but little mercy if he found anything in the sight to make you grin. And was it wonderful that rainbows should have gleamed in the foam under us, and that every bubble should have shone as if it were an emerald or a ruby, or some rich gem of that kind, under a crystal cup, when the light of my darling's eyes was upon the sea, and the lustre of her wind-swept face, made rosy by the steady blowing, streamed down upon the hurling snow?

Well, to be sure, this is a touch beyond nature and a shade too poetical, but I may safely say that never looked she more lovely than on that day, when she would turn her brilliant, wondering, admiring eyes from the blue sparkling that raced sweeping by, to me, that I might mark her enjoyment, and from me to the leaning towers of canvas above which she would watch, with one hand on mine to support her, and the other to her forehead, while the gold of her hair rippled and trembled under her hat, and the pearls between her open red lips shone like the foam-flakes which blew up with every send of the ship's crushing bows. Still too poetical, my lad; but, no matter, since this ends your bit of description.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A DEAD CALM.

Abreast of Sierra Leone we lost the northeast Trades; you may call the latitude nine degrees north. At noon the sun stood almost directly over us, and a man's shadow was so short that it needed half an hour's swim of the sun down the ecliptic to persuade him that he had one. You felt the heat when the Trade wind ceased to blow. It went out in a breath; the last of its steam-like clouds rolled away over the sea, and the ocean fell into a trance. This was in the afternoon, everybody was on deck, Aunt Damaris among them; but when that wonderful calm came along in the wake of the last soft, faint sigh of the wind, the hush of it seemed to fall like the night itself upon the ship. From under the shadow of the awning aft you looked along, and saw the light blue of the sky dazzling like silver over the sea betwixt the main and fore shrouds on either hand; and, whenever the delicate swell let the ship lie steady for a space on a level keel, then, wherever the sunshine poured, you would see all erect things—the lower masts, the figures of men and women, the galley chimney, the standing rigging—vibrating into the appearance of revolving in the hot, steamy atmosphere, like corkscrews slowly turned. The sea went away from the ship's side in a surface of blue oil, to the sky, and melted there in a haze that made the distance look immeasurable. The lull was so soothing that, in a very short time, Captain Jackson was snoring at the top of his pipes out of his wide-open mouth, his wife dozed over a book, Mrs. Marmaduke Mortimer slumbered on the skylight, with her head on the ship's ensign; everybody appeared mesmerized; the hens, in their coops, muttered, as you may hear them in their roosts at midnight; the emigrants lay about the deck wherever the shadows were, the sailors nodded over their jobs, and an ordinary seaman, greasing down the fore-royal-mast, swung there under the mighty violet dome, as though slumbering to the lullaby chanted by the soft, white canvas, as it gently came in to the masts with the gentle heaving of the vessel. It was desperately hot in the cuddy, in spite of wind-sails and open skylights, and nothing could have taken us to it, nor detained us in it, but dinner. The passengers were not in good temper, and Captain Jackson led off at table by exclaiming, as he stirred and looked into his plate: "What! pea-soup within a stone's throw of the equator!"

"Nothing like hot stuffs in hot weather," said Daniel, from his place at the head of the table; "they make you feel cool afterward."

"I say, captain," cried Mr. Thompson Tucker, "any chance of a breeze, do you know? There are more lively things than being stuck like a buoy in the middle of the ocean."

"Can't say, I'm sure," replied Daniel, turning up his red face to the skylights; "we never hope for much in the way of breezes hereabouts."

"Then what *are* we to expect?" exclaimed Aunt Damaris, sharply. She was sitting in her old place, leaving Florence to me.

"Why, ma'am, we're to expect what they call catspaws, troublesome currents of air, which keep common sailors swearing," answered Daniel.

"We're in the parallels termed the Doldrums," said Captain Jackson, with the perspiration standing in globules upon his face. "Scalding pea-soup in the Doldrums!" and he wiped his forehead with a large silk pocket-handkerchief.

"Why does he eat it?" whispered Florence to me.

"I don't think it much matters," said Aunt Damaris, snappishly, "whether you call these calms Dumdrums or Tantrums. They're very annoying, and always make me regret that I am not in a steamer."

"*I* called them Doldrums," said Captain Jackson warmly, "though no doubt they occasionally produce tantrums."

"Of that I am quite sure," exclaimed Aunt Damaris, with a giggle; "and hot pea-soup does the same thing, at times, doesn't it, Captain Thompson? Doldrums, indeed!" cried she, suddenly changing her manner; "if sailors give things imbecile names, I wonder sensible people can be found to repeat them."

"Steward!" bawled Captain Thompson, "tumble on deck, and see if there's a breath of air; and, if so, have the mouth of the wind-sail slewed to it"; while Florence whispered to me, "How pettish aunt is! I hope there won't be a quarrel"; and Mrs. Jackson scowled at the old lady. However, the navy-man made no answer, and we were hauled clear of what threatened to be a shindy by Thompson Tucker saying: "I always heard that the sea was monotonous, but never could have guessed what a real bore it is. How can people be sailors? Think of getting up every morning and always seeing the same thing! What have you got at sea? There are no theatres, no concerts, no balls; there's nothing to expect—no letters, no shooting, no hunting, no riding; there's nothing to do, except to eat and drink and go to bed. Who'd be a sailor?"

"If there were no sailors, you'd get no tea nor sugar, nor ivory fans, and ostrich feathers, and sealskin cloaks, and other nice things," says mild Mrs. Grant.

"And who'd fight your battles?" said Captain Jackson, defiantly.

"Yes," said Mrs. Marmaduke Mortimer, "if there were no sailors England would be invaded, and how dreadful that would be;" to which her husband added, "Dreadful indeed."

"As to fighting my battles!" exclaimed Thompson Tucker, "all that I can say is, if I can't do that for myself, I don't know who'll do it for me. However, I'm not going to argue that men are not very kind, to put on loose blue trousers or red coats, and go out and shoot my enemies. Whenever I consider how little I am asked to pay in support of the army and navy, I always feel that it's a cheap let-off for me. That's why I'm never annoyed when a military or naval officer gives himself airs. I say: 'No, let him be proud of being what he is; he's quite welcome to think himself a finer person than I; if he didn't, he'd call himself a fool, for venturing his life for a trifle of money, and a suit of livery which he has to pay for himself, and then you see *I* might have to do it instead."

Aunt Damaris applauded this loudly, no doubt because it looked to be a kind of slap at Captain Jackson, whom she detested, while Mrs. Jackson declared that she had never heard such sentiments, and Miss Grant piped out, "Oh, I dearly love soldiers." For my part, I could not help laughing loudly at the stupid creature's reasoning, and Daniel joining in, our volley of mirth set some of the others grinning, and the rest of the dinner-time passed off without any further marked exhibitions of temper.

Aunt Damaris was afraid of dew, but for all that the heat of the cuddy proved too much for her, and drove her on deck. It was about eight o'clock, and she found me sitting with Florence, but she said nothing; merely asked me to place a chair for her near her niece, and so joined us.

"Take care you don't catch cold again, aunt," said Florence.

"I must take my chance," she answered, "I cannot stand the atmosphere down-stairs; you could bake bread in it."

Here the vessel gently leaned, the mizzen-topsail and topgallant-sail came in sleepily to the mast, and shook down a shower of dew that pattered on the deck like a small fall of rain.

"Why, what is that?" cried Aunt Damaris, looking up into the breathless black heavens, in which the planets were shining like moons, while the myriad orbs behind them seemed to convert the firmament into one vast Milky Way.

"Dew," said I; "and I am afraid it will drop upon you wherever you go, for it collects fast upon the ropes and rigging, as well as the sails and yards. If you have an umbrella in your cabin, madam—"

"I have, Mr. Egerton; but I'm not an Indian princess," said she, "with a retinue of miserable black slaves, to hold umbrellas up over me; and I really feel too languid to hold up one myself."

"You need not do so, Miss Hawke," said I. "At all events, after your late bad illness, I am determined not to let you run any risks, so if you will allow me to get your umbrella—"

"Oh, Mr. Egerton, you are very kind and attentive," said the old lady, with a perfect gush of feeling coming out along with her words. "I am sure I am very sensible of your politeness, sir, I am indeed"; and another patter of dew draining down from the swing of the canvas on high, she started and said: "The steward will find an umbrella in a bundle, under the lower bedstead; tell him not to open the strap, but to pull the umbrella out, and to be very careful to—" and she followed up with about twenty directions, winding up with: "Florence, you had better fetch it; the steward is sure to upset something, and pull things about"; whereupon my darling jumped up, went for the umbrella, and returned with it.

I stepped up to one of the apprentices, and asked him to get me a couple of rope yarns, and fastened the handle of the umbrella to the back of the old lady's chair; and thus sheltered she pronounced herself very comfortable, and extremely obliged to me for my attention. When the other passengers caught sight of this umbrella, some titters went flying along the shadows along the poop, and I heard Captain Jackson say to somebody he was talking to near the wheel—the navy-man never could subdue his voice—"Well, confound me, if ever I saw an open umbrella at sea before. Were a squall to come now, and blow her overboard, damme if the picture wouldn't be like the flight of a witch on a broom-stick."

"Did you hear that?" gasped Aunt Damaris.

"I did," I replied; "it is a very rude remark, but as it was not meant to reach our ears it will not do to take any notice of it."

It was a wonder that I managed to speak, for I was nearly choked with suppressed laughter, while I could see Florence, by the clear light of the stars, that came slanting fair upon her over the port-quarter boat, shaking with merriment.

"Of all vulgar, horrid persons," began Aunt Damaris; but Florence put her hand on her arm; "Dear aunt, for goodness' sake don't let Captain Jackson's impertinence anger you. Think how uncomfortable it will be for us, should there be a quarrel. He cannot be a gentleman, to utter such a remark in a loud voice, and therefore you can very well afford to take no notice of him."

"Gentleman!" cried the old lady, with her face glimmering under the blackness of the umbrella like the reflection of your countenance in a looking-glass in a dark room: "why, I am beginning to think that word perfectly horrible. If a captain in the royal navy isn't a gentleman, if the son of a baronet of ancient family isn't a gentleman, who ought to be, pray? and what excellent samples of gentility the two specimens I mention prove!" she cried with a perfect writhe in her voice, in the bitterness of the sarcasm she intended. "The one falling drunk, and using disgraceful language, and the other shouting out insults to an old lady, at the top of his voice, like a costermonger crying fish!"

"He cannot moderate his voice," said I; "he has evidently been used to speaking-trumpets. However, if you wish it, Miss Hawke, I shall be glad to make his affront to you a personal one, and ask him what he meant by his remark."

This seemed to please Aunt Damaris, but Florence exclaimed: "Please do nothing of the kind. We cannot be sure that he is ignorant, or has no suspicion, of Mr. Morecombe's motive in joining this ship; at all events, it is best to be on the safe side, and consider that the secret may not be *wholly* our own; and I could never forgive you, aunt, if, by quarrelling with that man, you caused him to make remarks, and hunt about for ideas, and perhaps end in inventing some horrid story about us." I laughed in my sleeve to hear her talk in this way; she was not very sincere in her alarm, and Sophie would have called her a sly puss for speaking thus; but to me it was delicious to listen to her, for I could see the meaning that lay behind, and how intimately it concerned her and me. Her words acted like magic on her aunt.

"Well—yes—I think you are right, Florence. It will be more dignified, Mr. Egerton, to leave the man alone. So vulgar a mind is sure to be malicious—and he *might* invent, you know."

"What's that?" suddenly exclaimed Florence, with the shadowy outline of her arm pointing into the east, that the swing of the ship, in the dead calm, had brought broad on the port beam. I fancied she exclaimed in this way to abruptly change the subject, but when I looked I saw that what had attracted her was a faint, reddish light upon the sea-line. The water stretched up to it in a surface of liquid ebony, with here and there the flaking of a star-reflection, in the expanding heaving of the deep.

"Is it a ship on fire?" asked Aunt Damaris, peering and peeking at it with her face, out of the shadow of the umbrella.

"It's the moon rising," I exclaimed.

Just then the notes of a well-played concertina struck up on the quarter-deck, and three voices joined in, a tenor and two women's. I afterward heard they were steerage-passengers, among those, I mean, who lived under the cuddy; but they had never sung on deck before, and though I am not going to tell you that their singing was that of first-rate artists, nor that in daylight we should have found it very moving, yet the effect was perfectly thrilling amid the dark, deep ocean stillness, broken only by the moaning wash of waters along the ship's side, and the soft flapping of canvas, while the faint red light in the east grew clearer and lighter, until the arch of the crimson orb stood up over the horizon, stealthily flashing upon the black deep a blood-like ray, that slowly lengthened as the orb soared, swiftly changing to orange, then to pearl, then to silver, with an ice-like rim of the sea just under her. In a few minutes she had shot high and clear, and her light came along in a kind of flowing silvery sheen, that the eye could watch the approach of until it was rippling full upon the ship, transforming her canvas into squares of pearl, while every shadow took a deeper shade, and ice-like sparkles were kindled in the brasswork and glass. Oh, it was a sight most beautiful, to see the large, tropical stars in her neighborhood waning in the blaze of silver she flung over the wonderful indigo in which they were poised, and to come down from them to the fan-shaped glow of mild white light upon the water, trembling like a wake of quicksilver to the very side of the shadowy ship, while, in the soft pure radiance, every object that the eye rested on took a kind of ethereal delicacy, as if it were a picture that owed its creation to the moon-gleams: the shrouds and standing rigging, that were turned toward the light, running up into the glimmer overhead like silver wires; the pale shining of the sails waning as they soared, until they looked to dissolve in the airy splendor that was flowing out of the east; the decks looking like white satin, with the gloss and sheen upon them; and a sharp, jetty shadow was cast wherever a human figure stood, or wherever a rope, a mast, or a yardarm broke the current of light streaming out of the breathless sky, and over the tranced deep. The music ceased on the quarter-deck, and my darling, whose sweet face I had been watching, as her eyes followed the ascent of the moon out of the sea, started with a kind of sigh and exclaimed, in a low voice, "How beautiful, how melancholy."

"I don't see anything melancholy in it, if you're talking of the moonrise," said Aunt Damaris. "I consider it very lovely, though I wish it would bring us some wind. What was that they sang down there, Mr. Egerton? A kind of serenade, I think."

"I believe it was," said I, not having the slightest idea. "They chose the right moment to set it off," and I peeped wistfully at Florence, heartily wishing Aunt Damaris and her umbrella were off the poop; for if ever the melting mood was strong in my heart's delight it was at that moment, when moonlight and music and feeling were combined with that indefinable sense of sadness one feels at sea, when looking along the breathless leagues of water to where the haze of the moonlight seems to fall like a veil from heaven betwixt the watcher and the infinity beyond.

But Aunt Damaris remained fast, and the moonbeams shone in the dew upon the top of her umbrella. Presently the singing was resumed on the quarter-deck, this time by the tenor alone. His song was "Sally in our Alley," as sweet a melody as ever mortal composed, and the plaintive, beautiful notes were echoed aloft among the sails, and seemed to float away from them in dying tones. Most of the passengers aft went to the break of the poop to listen; and going there myself, to take a peep (though I speedily returned to Florence), I spied the quarter-deck crowded with the 'tween-deck and steerage passengers, and such of the crew as formed the watch on deck. In the midst of the singing two bells—9 o'clock—were struck; and the hollow, metallic sound rang with curious effect out of the darkness under the mainmast, where the shadow of the folds of the hauled-up mainsail lay dense. "It is strange," said I, resuming my seat, "how moonlight gives a kind of strangeness to the most familiar objects. Mystical is the only word to express the irradiation. Objects look the mere spectres of themselves in it, catching, I suppose, their vagueness and unreality from what, after all, is only the ghost or wraith of the light we live by. I mean the sun."

"It's a very becoming light," said Aunt Damaris. "It confers a chastity upon the features which is not imparted by any other kind of illumination, though sperm-oil is very soft," and I saw her old eyes fixed on Florence.

"It's a sad light," said my darling; "perhaps because, as you say," she continued, addressing me (she was always trying to shirk calling me Mr. Egerton), "it makes familiar things look unreal. It throws the hue of death on all that lives."

"Pray, don't be dreadful, my dear," exclaimed Aunt Damaris, giving herself a shake. "What sentimental views girls take of life! But cadaverous fancies are not poetical. Dear me! what a fearful calm! why, if this is to last, we shall never—Gracious mercy, what's that?" she cried; and as she uttered the exclamation she jumped out of her chair with such force as nearly to drive her bonnet through the umbrella, which, with the chair, went rolling over to the hencoop.

Many strange and stirring sights had I beheld in my seafaring days: the heavens in the east a bright red at midnight; half a dozen water-spouts, illuminated by lightning, whirling across the ocean in a tempest; fifty leviathans of the deep, leaping their black stupendous forms half out of the snow of the rushing surges, off the Falkland Islands; the storm-wave, like a white wall, rolling out of the pitchy blackness of the horizon; a cyclone half a mile in diameter, racing past the stern of our ship in a smooth sea, making the water boil as it went, but never touching us; but the like of the sight that had made Aunt Damaris cry out and jump from her seat; that had caused me to spring to my feet as if I had been seared with a red-hot iron; that had carried the passengers in a rush to the side of the ship; that had suspended the singing and all other sounds, as if a blight had fallen, and paralyzed and withered up the whole company of human beings upon our decks, never before had I encountered.

It was as if the sun had shot out of the dark, star-laden sky overhead and lighted up the sea to the nethermost confines of it. I looked where all the others were looking, and saw a huge flaming body descending from the heavens, within a few degrees from the zenith, on our starboard hand; the brightness of it was of the dazzling ardency of molten steel, when maintained at a white and blinding heat by a fan-blast; it resembled a star falling from its measureless altitude and growing into a world as big as this as it approached, kept furiously burning by its own velocity; the moonlight was eclipsed by the splendor; the sea was a bright gold under the rushing wonder; our ship stood out as if a noontide effulgence were upon her, and the consternation and awe and amazement that worked in our faces were as clearly to be seen as when the tropical sun stood over our mastheads; no noise accompanied its descent; the horrors of it, if I may so speak of any one feature of a spectacle of matchless, thrilling, breathless, awful beauty, lay in the leagues of mild, white light that it threw out, so that above it not a star was to be seen, while the moon, at which I threw a hurried glance, had changed into a wan, greenish disc, and the sea under her, even in the far-off east, gleamed like steel in the amazing radiance of that flaming, descending body. Mates, if you have never seen such a sight as this do not think I exaggerate in my description of it. You know that God's hand is most visible upon the deep and that those who are cradled on its mighty surface behold His wonders best here. Here was an incomparable manifestation, that I see now, after all these years, as though it were again happening, and the awe and the spirit of devotion and the sense of my human littleness visit me anew, with something of the oppressiveness I then felt, as I watched that wondrous fiery body sweeping down the sky. We held our breath to await the plunge of it into the sea and to hear the mighty hissing that we expected would follow; but when it had reached to about six degrees above the horizon, being then, as we were all afterward agreed, not more than a half mile distant from the ship, it exploded with the stinging crash of a burst of thunder, that went rolling along past us in a roar and died away out upon the glassy distance in a moan; a thousand glowing fragments leaped for a breath like an out-rushing of broken fire from the mouth of a volcano; and the pained, dazzled, affrighted eye was met by a wave of darkness, in the midst of which there was presently to be seen a faint bluish-white luminous smoke, that hung in a sort of ring around that part of the air in which the meteor had vanished, until the moonlight overpowered the spectral thing with its pearly film, and once more the stars were shining and the sea tenderly flaking the light of them as it softly heaved, while the ship melted back into the moonlit phantom she had resembled, and the ocean-line ran round in a soft, black sweep against the distant gloom.

All sorts of exclamations now broke forth from the people on the main and quarter decks, while the passengers aft closed round Daniel and Mr. Thornton to talk about the phenomenon; the sharpest and apparently the most impressed questioner being Aunt Damaris. I drew off to where Florence stood, near the foremost skylight.

"What did you think of that, my darling, as a display of fireworks?"

"I never saw anything more terrible and splendid. What could it have been, Jack?"

"A meteor," I said; "and I should think as large a one as ever fell."

"Oh, listen to Captain Jackson!" she exclaimed; he is trying to frighten Aunt Damaris."

The passengers made a block of dark shadow against the rail in the gloom of the mizzen-topsail, that the swing of the ship had brought betwixt them and the moon, and out of the midst of them came the loud tones of the navy man: "What I say is that if that body had struck the ship fair it would have knocked us into a cocked hat, doubled us up, and sent us to the bottom of the sea to add to the stock of human bones there."

"Oh, how dreadful! how fearfully dangerous the sea is!" I heard Mrs. Marmaduke Mortimer say.

"It is fearfully dangerous," whipped out Aunt Damaris's saw-like tones; "but I don't believe that that meteor would have done so much harm had it struck us. It was soft fire, nothing hard about it at all; it would have enveloped us like a flash of lightning and, perhaps, have cracked a mast; but as to splitting the ship—I consider such ideas nonsense."

"If it was soft fire," said Mrs. Jackson, jeeringly, "pray what made it burst like a bombshell and with the noise of a thunderbolt, and how came its fragments to fly about?"

"That don't prove it was hard," said Daniel. "Lightning's soft fire, as Miss Hawke calls it, but it's always followed by a noise."

"Whatever it was," observed Mr. Thompson Tucker, "I hope it won't occur again. These appearances may be interesting to witness from an observatory; but I'm one of those persons who can't swim."

"Had it struck us," cried Captain Jackson, "you wouldn't have wanted to swim. You wouldn't have known what hurt you. It would have smashed us all into jelly-fish, and there'd have been nothing left afloat but a few hats."

"Just now it was to have made bones of us, and now we were to have become jelly-fish," said Aunt Damaris. "Captain Thompson, can't you explain to this gentleman the nature of those fiery bodies, so that if another should fall he need not feel alarmed?"

"They're like cats and dogs," I whispered to Florence. "It's lucky your aunt isn't a man; we'd have them fighting in dark corners long before we are up with the Cape."

"Oh, she can protect herself," replied Florence, laughing; "but it's a thousand pities she should render herself so unpopular. It makes things things very uncomfortable for me; Mrs. Jackson is barely civil, and you may notice how the others leave aunt and me alone, instead of joining us as they do one another."

"So much the better for *us*, sweet," said I. "What more could I want than that you and I should be left utterly alone?"

She put her hand into mine and thus we stood, listening to the voices proceeding from the block of shadow near the quarter-boat. It is needless to say that Captain Jackson had witnessed the fall of a meteor twice the size of the one we had left behind, when he had the honor of commanding H. M. S. Cocksparrow. "It was in a gale of wind, blowing great guns; we were hove to under the lee clew of the close-reefed maintopsail, making abominable weather of it; it was in the South Atlantic, in longitude about two degrees west. Composants were burning at our yardarms and the air was chokeful of electricity. Just before midnight a meteor of immense size rushed down from out of the clouds—" And then he went on to describe the phenomenon we had just seen, greatly exaggerating its dimensions. I knew Daniel too well to suppose that he would let him off.

"That was a wonderful meteor, Captain Jackson, at least eight times larger than the one that dropped close aboard of us, north of the Mozambique Channel, the vessel being a small bark in which I was an apprentice. It fell at two bells in the middle watch; it took ten minutes to drop, and the blaze it threw out was so brilliant that it woke up the chief mate, who came on deck with his sextant, thinking he had mistaken the time and that it was just before noon; all the cocks started off a-crowing, and I met the cook coming along to light the galley-fire for breakfast."

"Do you believe that, Jack?" whispered Florence.

"It's as true as the navy man's yarn," said I.

"What dreadful fibs sailors tell!" she exclaimed.

"Captain," said Mrs. O'Brien, "is it likely, do you suppose, that meteors are pieces of the sun dropping off and tumbling upon the earth? The thought's just come into me head, captain."

"No ma'am," says Daniel, "there are too many meteors to make that theory possible; the sun would have crumbled out long since, and we should all be as blind as the fish which live three thousand fathoms deep under our keel here."

"What makes 'em flame, thin?" asked Mrs. O'Brien.

"Friction," replied Mr. Thompson Tucker; "they catch fire by rattling through the air so fast. Why, I suppose, now, Captain Jackson, that one of those bodies would travel at the rate of three or four miles a minute."

"Don't know, I'm sure," replied the navy man; "but the fact of their travelling at all proves that they are operated on by laws of gravity, and consequently have weight in them. Were they soft fire, as Miss Hawke here says, why, damme, they'd go up, as fire does; they couldn't come down."

"Then will you tell me," cried Aunt Damaris scornfully, "how lightning, that is merely fire without weight in it, falls down out of the clouds?"

"Oh, that's a convulsion—that's a matter of electricity—another affair altogether," answered Captain Jackson; and, probably afraid of being cornered by the old lady, he said something to his wife about the dew, and stalked off. Aunt Damaris joined Florence and me, exclaiming, very audibly, as she approached us: "A convulsion! No wonder he's given up the sea! Fancy such an ignorant man as that in charge of a ship-of-war." Florence begged her not to speak so loud, while I went to pick up the capsized chair and umbrella; but she had had enough of the deck, and after a brief stare around at the beautiful breathless night, she took my darling's arm and went below.

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CHAPTER XXXIII.

ON THE EQUATOR.

If there is one thing that should reconcile a sailor of the old school to steam, it is this: it makes a calm of no consequence. You cannot fully realize all that that means until you have been hanging about the equator for ten days or so, under a frying sun and on an ocean of molten brass, touched here and there with a draught of air that expires in its efforts to reach you.

Before I started on this voyage, I should have been quite satisfied, for the sake of being with Florence, had I been told that it would consist of nothing but dead calms and head winds. But a week of the doldrums was too much even for my passion. To look around hour after hour, morning after morning, day after day, and behold always the same eternal, placid, unruffled heaving, the same deep, satin-like blue, dazzling out into a thin tint that was neither green nor azure at the ocean line, where the thrilling violet of the sky went down behind it, the same throbbing, burning, cloudless luminary flashing at noon its tremendous fires right straight down over our heads, became soul-sickening before the week had expired, and yet we had ten days of it.

If you glanced over the side you saw your face there as clear as ever a mirror would give it back. If you gazed along the bulwarks you'd notice the rail of them twisting and writhing along the forecastle, in the giddy, breathless atmosphere, like the gliding motion of an eel. If you touched a deck seam, whether in or out of the sunshine, the pitch came up in a string at your finger-ends. A bluish haze hung low over the vessel, as though she were smoking as a manure-heap does. The crew stripped themselves half naked and went about their work with fiery face and messy breasts glistening with sweat. There was a constant throwing down of braces and hauling round of yards; for the officer of the watch would be incessantly testing the atmosphere with a moistened finger, and if he could detect ever so phantomlike a current of air abroad, whether by the feel of his finger or by the feeble flutter of the vane at the masthead, he'd fling an order forward from the head of the poop-ladder, and the yards would be braced to catch the mockery of a draught. The decks rumbled with curses; the sailors abhorred this boxhauling—what was the good of it, they thought; shiver the blooming ship! was it right to wring the sweat out of them when the blaze of sunshine on either side the old hooker was just a sheet of burnished silver, and when the heave of the swell never disclosed the faintest wrinkle for leagues and leagues? Better swing the light sails by manning the clewlines and buntlines, haul down the jibs and staysails, and leave nothing but the topsails to dust themselves against the masts, and wait for the wind to blow.

But for all that it was this day-and-night watchfulness that sneaked us along anyhow. Noon would come, and lo! we had crawled our eight miles, ten miles, some such distance in twenty-four hours, and nobody knew how it had been done; for all day long the stuff which the cook's mate had hove overboard in the morning, along with an empty bottle, had hung close, sometimes being under the counter, sometimes under the bow, sometimes alongside.

I found my account, however, in the deepening and the strengthening of my darling's love for me. As a theatre for the improvement and development of passion a sailing ship may be backed against all the ballrooms, country lanes, balconies, small, dull villages, and fashionable watering-places in the world. In olden times mothers sent their daughters to India, more assured of their finding husbands in the tall, glazed castles which carried them around the Cape of Good Hope than on dry land. Steam has put an end to this; passages are too short nowadays to make flirting worthwhile, as girls say. But you'd have understood what the old voyages tended to had you been with us in the Strathmore, hanging for ten days under the sun, with the dead ocean looking like a pavement of silver under the cathedral-dome of the heavens, whose violet it reflected. Why, such was the effect of it upon us, that before the week was out there was Thompson Tucker making eyes at modest Miss Grant, while her mother sat by, with alarm depicted in her countenance, but too mild to frown him down; the Marmaduke Mortimers grew several degrees fonder; and the Joyces carried a more distinctly attached manner in their method of walking about arm in arm. Mr. Alphonso Hawke was an old stager, had made the voyage between England and Australia several times, and kew how the monotony of the sea throws people upon one another; and his and Aunt Damaris's scheme for bringing Florence and Mr. Morecombe together never struck me more forcibly as a piece of judgment that might have proved fatal to me, had I been left at home and Morecombe taken my place, than it did during those ten days of the doldrums. I remember telling my darling this, and it made her indignant. "The more I saw of Mr. Morecombe the more I disliked him," she exclaimed. "How can you talk such nonsense, Jack?"

"You undervalue the effect of this calm," I said. "Behold its influence upon Thompson Tucker. Were Captain Jackson a single man I should not despair of seeing him and Aunt Damaris exchanging locks of hair. This tedium your father foresaw; and as I, being out of sight, would have been out of mind—" but an earnest, beautiful glance of her deep and speaking eyes brought up this badinage with a round turn; and in a breath I was pouring out repentance, vows, gratitude, love.

All this while her aunt made no sign. I do not say that she believed that Florence and I were deeply in love; when she was present we always threw a sort of reserve into our behavior and kept the full expression of our devotion for the stars; but she knew we were constantly together—indeed, she never came on to the poop, if Florence happened to be on deck, without finding me with her; and, therefore she was perfectly well aware that a very great deal was going on, though she did not know how much; but she made no objection, she showed no uneasiness; her manner toward me was always as full of amiability as her character would allow her to import into her bearing; whenever she found us together she would join us, but saying nothing about it, either before my face or to Florence behind my back, behaving, indeed, as if we were sweethearts and recognized as such by her.

I once had a talk with Daniel about this. He found me alone one morning early, fresh from the head-pump where I had got an ordinary seaman to play upon me for ten minutes with a sluicing stream of sparkling water out of the blue under the bows. My friend had come up to look for wind, and found me whistling for it over the taffrail. This set us talking of the weather and of old times, and, one thing leading to another, "Well, Jack," says he, presently, "what's the Strathmore going to do for you in the shape of getting you a wife?"

"You see how it goes with us, Daniel," I answered; "I suppose no fonder couple were ever found upon the ocean."

"The aunt seems quite willing, I fancy," said he.

"It looks so. She likes me as Mr. Edgerton; the question is, will she like me as Jack Seymour?"

"Any way, among us your secret had been wonderfully well kept. I never thought you'd have been able to maintain your alias long. I reckoned your girl would have split, whipped out with it unconsciously, and smothered the whole blessed job. I suppose if the aunt don't find out the truth for herself, you'll have to tell her who you are some of these days. You can't marry under a false name, can you?

"Of course I can't," said I; "my policy has been to make Miss Damaris Hawke like me as Mr. Egerton, and I think I have succeeded."

"Is there any chance now of her rounding upon you as Jack Seymour, and ordering you to leave her niece alone?" said Daniel.

"I can't tell you. If I knew for certain, I'd heave my alias overboard, for Miss Florence hates to call me Mr. Egerton. She says it makes her feel as if she were telling a story; while the masquerading is as little to my taste as to hers."

"There's no doubt," said Daniel, thoughtfully, "that the aunt don't object to you, as Mr. Egerton, making love to her niece. That's as clear as mud in a wineglass. She lets you and Miss Florence be together and never interferes, that I can see. That's a sort of victory, isn't it? If you have the talent to conquer under false colors, can't you do so under true?"

"Well, you see, Daniel" said I, "it's the false colors which have given me the advantage, by enabling me to sheer alongside of her without exciting her suspicion as to the real character of the apparently friendly stranger."

"But what are your particular charms as Mr. Egerton?" asked Daniel. "How is it that an alias has allowed you to forge leagues ahead of your old rate of sailing, when your father's name was written bold on your stern and head?"

"You are asking me questions," said I, "which are just as much riddles to me as to you; but I'll tell you my notions; first and foremost, Miss Florence was sent away out of England in order to be rid of Jack Seymour. Next the voyage was likewise planned to bring her and Mr. Morecombe together. Keep those points in mind. The plot, so far as Morecombe was concerned, has proved a dead failure. The aunt hates the name of him, and he' as completely out of the running as if he had been sewn up in a hammock and launched through the gangway. But Jack Seymour is still left ashore, and the aunt says to herself: 'When my niece returns—and return she must some of these fine days—she'll find that fellow waiting for her. My brother won't like that. He has described the youth as a common, insulting sailor-chap, and I, for one, never could endure such a family connection as he would make." So, with this thought in her, d'ye see, Daniel, she plumps up against me, Mr. John Egerton, a very gentlemanly, well-bred youth, extraordinarily polite to her, highly complimentary, the possessor of decidedly aristocratic name, and clearly an independent gentleman. She sees that I have fallen in love with Miss Florence, and that Miss Florence very much likes me. So her old mind goes to work, and she says to herself, 'Since Mr. Morecombe is quite out of the question, and since there is very great danger of my niece renewing her affection for that common person, Jack Seymour, when she returns to England, surely I shall be acting with great judgment in encouraging the attenions of this very genteel Mr. Egerton, who, if nothing else comes of it, will at least wholly displace Mr. Jack Seymour from my niece's heart.'"

"You seem to have hit it," said Daniel, grinning at me with a kind of admiration. "Hang me, if you haven't taken a header into the old maid's mind with a vengeance! But what on earth can she think of Miss Florence's constancy when she discovers in a few days that she has clean forgotten the Jack Seymour who was one of the causes of her being sent away from home, and fallen in love with the perfect 'stranger, Mr. John Egerton'?"

"She has said nothing about it," I replied, "and I'm not going to bother myself over her ideas outside those which particularly concern me. If she reasons at all, she'll conclude either that her niece is a very impressionable girl, or that Mr. Alphonso Hawke over-emphasized her love for Jack Seymour."

"If the latter's her notion, she won't be afraid of your girl's renewing her love for Jack Seymour when she returns home," said Daniel, very logically.

"But she can't be sure," said I. "She won't like to think her brother utterly mistaken. What has probably occurred to her is this—that Miss Florence finds Mr. Egerton more fascinating than Mr. Seymour, though, if she don't get Mr. Egerton, she'll return to the other."

"Well, that's very probable," said Daniel.

"And you must not lose sight," continued I—discussing the thing with some enjoyment of it, for it enabled me to see points which would not occur to me by thinking to myself—"of the marked attention I have paid the old lady, the hold I have on her by professing to have got her story from Mr. Morecombe, her natural liking for me—not impaired, I dare say, by my cheap excursion overboard t'other day—the belief—acquired, God knows how—in my social merits—"

"Ay," exclaimed Daniel, "and look how *I've* praised you, Jack! and the Joyces, you know, speak of you as if you were an angel. But, I say," he whipped out with a kind of groan, slewing his purple face round the sea, "this calm is getting serious. It'll kill my reputation for dispatch. Is there no wind left in the world?" and he dodged over to the compass, and flitted restlessly about the deck, and then, after speaking a while with the second mate, he hove a despairing glance aloft, and bundled below.

To be Continued.

ONE OF THE DISADVANTAGES OF A CLASSICAL EDUCATION.—Tommy (to rich spinster aunt, newly arrived): "Please, Aunty, who was Medusa?" Aunt: A horrid woman, whose hair was turned into serpents. Why do you ask?" Tommy: "I don't know, but I heard papa saying this morning, before you took your hair out of curl-papers——" Aunt: "That I looked just like her? Did he?" Ma: "No, no; I'm sure——" Tommy: "Oh, no, he didn't, did he ma? He said it might have been if you had made Juno angry, for the same reason, but that wasn't very likely." And to this day ma can't understand why aunt left her money out of the family.—[Judy.

"Fritz" Emmet, the actor, has been disconsolate ever since the death of his $2,500 dog "Bayard." A mere trifle will make some people feel sad. If we were to live 25,000,000 years, we don't suppose we should ever be disconsolate from losing a $2,500 dog.—[Norristown Herald.

JOEL.

A STORY OF DUTY.

From Every Other Saturday.

In the middle of a dark night, Joel, a boy of nine years old, heard his name called by a voice which, through his sleep, seemed miles away. Joel had been tired enough when he went to bed, and yet he had not gone to sleep for some time; his heart beat so at the idea of his mother being very ill. He well remembered his father's death, and his mother's illness now revived some feelings which he had almost forgotten. His bed was merely some clothes spread on the floor, and covered with a rug; but he did not mind that; and he could have gone to sleep at once but for the fear that had come over him. When he did sleep, his sleep was sound; so that his mother's feeble voice calling him seemed like a call from miles away.

In a minute Joel was up and wide awake.

"Light the candle," he could just hear the voice say.

He lighted the candle, and his beating heart seemed to stop when he saw his mother's face. He seemed hardly to know whether it was his mother or no.

"Shall I call——?"

"Call nobody, my dear. Come here."

He laid his cheek to hers.

"Mother you are dying," he murmured.

"Yes, love, I am dying. It is no use calling any one. These little ones, Joel,"

"I will take care of them, mother."

"You, my child! How should that be?"

"Why not?" said the boy, raising himself, and standing at his best height. "Look at me mother. I can work, I promise you"——

His mother could not lift her hand, but she moved a finger in a way which checked him.

"Promise nothing that may be too hard afterward," she said.

"I promise to try then," he said; "that little sister shall live at home, and never go to the workhouse." He spoke cheerfully, though the candlelight glittered in the two streams of tears on his cheeks. "We can go on living here; and we shall be so"——

It would not do. The sense of their coming desolation rushed over him in a way too terrible to be borne. He hid his face beside her, murmuring, "O, mother! mother!"

His mother found strength to move her hand now. She stroked his head with a trembling touch, which he seemed to feel as long as he lived. She could not say much more. She told him she had no fear for any of them. They would be taken care of. She advised him not to waken the little ones, who were sound asleep on the other side of her, and begged him to lie down himself till daylight, and try to sleep, when she should be gone.

This was the last thing she said. The candle was very low; but before it went out, she was gone. Joel had always done what his mother wished; but he could not obey her in the last thing she said. He lighted another candle when the first went out, and sat thinking, till the gray dawn began to show through the window.

When he called the neighbors, they were astonished at his quietness. He had taken up the children and dressed them, and made the room tidy, and lighted the fire, before he told anybody what had happened. And when he opened the door, his little sister was in his arms. She was two years old, and could walk, of course; but she liked being in Joel's arms. Poor Willy was the most confounded. He stood with his pinafore at his mouth, staring at the bed, and wondering that his mother lay so still.

If the neighbors were astonished at Joel that morning, they might be more so at some things they saw afterward; but they were not. Everything seemed done so naturally; and the boy evidently considered what he had to do so much a matter of course that less sensation was excited than about many smaller things.

After the funeral was over, Joel tied up all his mother's clothes. He carried the bundle on one arm, and his sister on the other. He would not have liked to take money for what he had seen his mother wear; but he changed them away for new and strong clothes for the child. He did not seem to want any help. He went to the factory the next morning, as usual, after washing and dressing the children, and getting a breakfast of bread and milk with them. There was no fire; and he put every knife and other dangerous thing on a high self, and gave them some trifles to play with, and promise to come and play with them at dinner-time. And he did play. He played heartily with the little one, and as if he enjoyed it, every day at the noon hour. Many a merry laugh the neighbors heard from that room when the three children were together; and the laugh was often Joel's.

How he learned to manage, and especially to cook, nobody knew; and he could himself have told little more than that he wanted to see how people did it, and looked accordingly at every opportunity. He certainly fed the children well; and himself too. He knew that everything depended on his strength being kept up. His sister sat on his knee to be fed till she could feed herself. He was sorry to give it up; but he said she must learn to behave. So he smoothed her hair, and washed her face before dinner, and showed her how to fold her hands while he said grace. He took as much pains to train her to good manners at table as if he had been a governess, teaching a little lady. While she remained a "baby" he slept in the middle of the bed, between the two, that she might have room, and not be disturbed; and when she ceased to be a baby, he silently made new arrangements. He denied himself a hat, which he much wanted, in order to buy a considerable quantity of coarse dark calico, which, with his own hands, he made into a curtain, and slung up across a part of the room; thus shutting off about a third of it. Here he contrived to make up a little bed for his sister; and he was not satisfied till she had a basin and jug, and piece of soap of her own. Here nobody but himself was to intrude upon her without leave; and, indeed, he always made her understand that he came only to take care of her. It was not only that Willy was not to see her undressed. A neighbor or two now and then lifted the latch without knocking. One of these one day heard something from behind the curtain, which made her call her husband silently to listen; and they always afterward treated Joel as if he were a man, and one whom they looked up to. He was teaching the child her little prayer. The earnest, sweet, devout tones by the boy, and the innocent, cheerful imitation of the little one, were beautiful to hear, the listeners said.

Though so well taken care of, she was not to be pampered; there would have been no kindness in that. Very early, indeed, she was taught, in a merry sort of way, to put things in their places, and to sweep the floor, and to wash up the crockery. She was a handy little thing, well trained and docile. One reward that Joel had for his management was, that she was early fit to go to chapel. This was a great point; as he, choosing to send Willy regularly, could not go till he could take the little girl with him. She was never known to be restless; and Joel was quite proud of her.

Willy was not neglected for the little girl's sake. In those days children went earlier to the factory and worked longer than they do now, and by the time the sister was five years old Willy became a factory boy; and his pay put the little girl to school. When she, at seven, went to the factory too, Joel's life was altogether an easier one. He always had maintained them all, from the day of his mother's death. The times must have been good—work constant and wages steady—or he could not have done it. Now, when all three were earning, he put his sister to a sewing-school for two evenings in the week and the Saturday afternoons; and he and Willy attended an evening school, as they found they could afford it. He always escorted the little girl wherever she had to go; into the factory, and home again, to the school door and home again, and to the Sunday-school; yet he was himself remarkably punctual at work and at worship. He was a humble, earnest, docile pupil himself at the Sunday-school,—quite unconscious that he was more advanced than other boys in the sublime science and practice of duty. He felt that everybody was very kind to him, but he was unaware that others felt it an honor to be kind to him.

I linger on these years, when he was a fine growing lad, in a state of high content. I linger, unwilling to proceed. But the end must come; and it is soon told. He was sixteen, I think, when he was asked to become a teacher in the Sunday-school, while wholly not ceasing to be a scholar. He tried, and made a capital teacher, and he won the hearts of the children while trying to open their minds. By this he became more widely known than before.

One day in the next year, a tremendous clatter and crash was heard in the factory where Joel worked. A dead silence succeeded, and then several called out that it was only an iron bar that had fallen down. This was true; but the iron bar had fallen on Joel's head, and he was taken up dead!

Such a funeral as his is rarely seen. There is something that strikes on all hearts in the spectacle of a soldier's funeral—the drum, the march of comrades, and the belt and cap laid on the coffin. But there was something more solemn and more moving than all such observance in the funeral of this young soldier, who had so bravely filled his place in the conflict of life. There was the tread of comrades here, for the longest street was filled from end to end. For relics, there were his brother and sister; and for a solemn dirge, the uncontrollable groans of a heart-stricken multitude.

SISTER LAVENDER'S CONVERSION.

From The Albany Evening Journal.

Sister Lavender, of Greenbush, the Widow Van Cott of the African race, is holding revivals among the colored folks of Syracuse. She told them of her conversion as follows: "I fell sick with typhoid fever and was taken to a poorhouse hospital in Albany, and when I looked at my hands all bleached out like birds' claws, I knew I'se going to kick the bucket sure. Then I wanted to get religion bad. I prayed O, Lord give me the Baptist religion! I used to know an old Baptist deacon, and he was so nice and quiet I says to myself I'll be a Baptist. But the Baptist religion wouldn't come, and I got desparate and prayed, O Lord, give me any religion! Then the Lord came down and made me a roaring, shouting Methodist! And I says to my nurse, 'Praise God, He has washed me whiter than snow!' And she says, 'O, stop your lying, you're just as black as the day you were born!' But the Lord made me whiter than snow all the same, glory glory, glory."

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The lecture on El Mahdi for the Pedestal Fund last week was both literally and figuratively the flinging of a stone at the British Lion.

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