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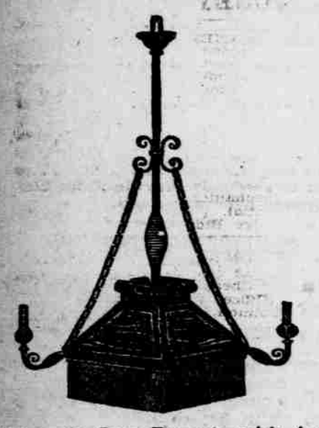

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# A SEA PICTURE CRITIC

## He Knew All About Ships and the Wild Ocean.

## ART COMMENTS OF A SAILOR

**The "Death of Nelson" Reminded Him of How 'Arkness Come Off the Main Yard—The Blood Red Sky Without a Cloud That Foretells a Storm.**

Crude perhaps and curious, the outcome of a life apart, sailormen have yet an appreciation of the arts, writes David W. Bone in the Manchester Guardian.

Once in the Walter gallery I was looking at "The Death of Nelson." There was a man with the look of a seaman standing near. He had a slight smell of drink and was chewing tobacco. He, too, was interested in the picture, and, recognizing me as seamanlike, he said something, and we got to talking about Nelson and his times, about ships and pictures. "B'gad, mate, them fellers" (the painters he meant) "knowed what they was a-doin'. Look at that 'ere glim" (lantern). "Looks as its trimmin' was forgot w'en they brought th' admiral down. * * * An' them eyes," pointing to a wounded seaman in the near foreground, "them's th' eyes o' poor 'Arkness wot come off th' main yard las' voyage an' struck th' fife rail full on!"

He told me of the accident, how it happened, and by his eyes and rude, simple speech I saw it all. As plain before me as the figure of the stricken seaman I saw 'Arkness come off the main yard, clutching wildly at the sheets and lifts as he fell. I heard him strike the rail with a sickening thud and lie stretched. I saw the running figures on the deck, and—"'e never larsted th' night. We buried 'im out there. Taital it was," said my speaker, involuntarily twisting a shoulder to an imaginary southwest.

There was a sea picture, a ship coming up to the Isle of Wight—clean curving sails, a good sense of movement and a fine, breezy atmosphere. "Jest wot it is," said my friend, "'omeward bound. Let 'er go, boys!" a burst of enthusiasm that made some visitor glance around, alarmed. "'Omeward bound it is!" There were other fine pictures, but we did not feel that we had a right to do more than look at them and admire. With sea pictures it was different. They were our world, and who had the right to criticise the way a sea was moving off the sky if we had not? Too often had we watched, anxious eyed, for a break in the clouds not to know the way of wind on the water, the scud of a cloud breaking free in a welcome shift. Well we knew the curve of a standing sail and the relation it bore to the sense of movement.

For a city of the sea Liverpool has no great representation of her foremost industry on her chamber walls. Sea pictures have apparently no attraction for her chiefest citizens. There was little call for sea critics downstairs, so we went to an exhibition of modern art in the upper galleries. Here we found ourselves properly confronted. "Setting Sail After a Blow" it was, a large canvas, a ship pitching heavily in the swell of a recent gale and the crew putting the canvas on her. It held a great message for my mate (black smoke and an ever throbbing screw had not yet dulled his sea fancy). He was highly pleased. "Them seas wot ye gets off th' Plate!" He wanted to show some word of cheer, to swing his right hand to the left shoulder in seamanlike admiration, but the cold gray eye of a tall hatted official was upon us—"Huh, sailors!"—and there was a group of young ladies near by worshiping at the shrine of a corporation purchase, so he contented himself by nudging me furiously. "That's wot I calls a picture," he said.

A sunset over water claimed our attention. A blood red sky with no clouds, only a slight density near the horizon. I said it was remarkable, perhaps unreal. "That's where ye ain't in it, mister! Look a' here! If ye wos t' take all th' colors in th' locker so's ye 'ad lots o' red an' yeller in, ye'd find a sky t' match it. Ain't ye never 'eard o' what them dagos calls blood o' Chris'—them dagos wot loads ye ballest in th' Plate?" I had not heard. "Well, it's a sky like that, an' it comes afore one of them 'pamperos.'

"Min' I wos lyin' in Monte Video oncet, an' we 'ad a sky all blood red an' never a cloud, an' th' fishin' boats wos all comin' in; not rowin' shipshape, same 's me an' you 'ud do; them shovin' th' oars 's if they wos pushin' a barrer." He spat into a dark corner and said something more about dagos, then continued: "Nex' day we 'ad a gale. 'Owlin', it was, an' her drivin' into it same 's we wos off th' Horn, an' a big German bark driv' down on us an' took th' fore to'gal'n'mast out o' 'er an' th' boom an' started all th' 'eadgear. Two ships wos driv' ashore, an' that's wot comes out o' them skies wot they calls th' blood o' Chris'."

It was an impressionist picture that annoyed my mate—an impression of a scene in dock, with masts and funnels and hulls all mixed up. The coloring was good, but the ships might have been ninepins or egg boxes or anything. At first he was perplexed, then amused, then indignant. "Oh, ——!" he said. "What's this? Ships b'gad, or I'm a Dutchman!" He burst into a fit of rude laughter. "Ships it is, mister, an' look at them tawps'l yards! Ships wi' tawps'l yards below the main, an' a hangman's gibbet fer th' mizzen gaff. Them fellers 's got some cheek, mate. That's wot I calls it—cheek—t' be paintin' things like that. 'Oly sailor! Look at them."

### Bright and Hot.

"Smith got off a bright thing the other day."

"What was it?"

"A lighted cigar some one had carelessly dropped into the chair he sat on."—London Fun.

### Disgusted.

Loafer the First—I thought this yere unemployed fund was for charity.

Loafer the Second—So it is, ain't it?

Loafer the First—It ain't. It means work.—London Sketch.

WANT ADS. CENT A WORD.

# LADY ATHLYNE

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(Continued.)

That sigh meant a lot. It was the reaction from an inward struggle. All day she had been suffering from the dominance of two opposing ideas, between which her inward nature swayed pendulum-wise. This "inward nature" comprised her mind, her, reason, her intelligence, her fears, her hopes, her desires—the whole mechanism and paraphernalia of her emotional and speculative psychology. She would fain have gone out boldly into the garden and there met Mr. Hardy face to face—of course by pure accident. But this vague intention was combated by a maiden fear; one of those delicious, conscious apprehensions made to be combated unless thoroughly supported by collateral forces; one of those gentle fears of sex which makes yielding so sweet. Following this came the fixed intention of that walk and its apprehensive possibilities were not very dreadful. Indeed she did not really fear them at all for she had privately made up her mind that, fear or no fear, she was going on that walk. The only point left open was its direction. The hour was positively settled; an hour earlier than that at which for the past few days she had driven out with Daddy! Even to herself she would not admit that her choice of time was in any way controlled or influenced by the fact that it was the same hour about which Mr. Hardy made his appearance in the garden.

But all the same her thoughts and her intentions were becoming conscious. For good or evil she was getting more reckless in her desires; passion was becoming dominant—and she knew it.

This is perhaps the most dangerous phase of a woman's trial. She knows that there is at work a growing desire for self-surrender which it is her duty to combat. She knows that all contra reasons which can be produced will be—must be—overcome. She knows with all the subtle instincts of her sex that she is deliberately setting her feet on a slope down which some impulse, perhaps but momentary, will carry her with resistless force. It is the preparatory struggle to defeat; the clearing away of difficulties which might later be hampering or even obstructive; the clamant wish for defeat which makes for the conqured the satisfaction if not the happiness of finality. To all children of Adam, of either sex, this phase may come. To the strongest and most resolute warrior must be a moment when he can no more; when the last blow has been struck and the calling of another world is ringing in his ears; to the resolute amongst men this moment is the moment of dream. To woman it is surrender of self; surrender to the embrace of eath—or to the embrace of Love. It is the true end of the battle. The test is but the carrying out of the Treaty of Peace, the Triumph of the Victory in which she is now proud to have a part—if it be only that of captive!

There was no sleep for Joy that night. She heard the hours strike one after the other, never missing one. She was not restless. She lay still, and quiet, and calm; patient with that patience which is an acceptance that what is to come is good. In all the long vigil she never faltered in her intention to take that walk in the forenoon. What was to happen in it she did not guess. She had a conviction that that tall figure would follow her discreetly; and that when she was alone they would somehow meet. It might be that she would hear his voice before she saw him; that was most likely, indeed almost certain, for she would not turn till he had spoken . . . or at any rate till she knew that he was close behind her. . . . Here her thoughts would stop. She would lie in a sort of ecstasy . . . whatever might come after that would be happiness. She would see Him . . . look into His eyes. . . . "Look at me, Joy!" seemed to sound in her ears in sweet low music like a whisper. Then she would close her eyes and lie motionless, passive, breathing as gently as a child; high-strung, conscious, awake and devoid of any definite intent.

When she was dressing for the day she put on one of the simplest and prettiest of her dresses, one which she had directed over night to be got ready; a sort of heavy guaze of dull white which fell in long full folds showing her tall slim figure to its perfect grace. Her maid who was a somewhat silent person, not given to volubility unless encouraged, looked at her admiringly as she said:

"I do not miss that is the most becoming of all your frocks!" This pleased her and sent a red glow through her cheeks. Then, fearing if she seemed to think too much of the matter it might seem suspicious as to some purpose, she said quietly:

"Perhaps then it would be better if I put on one of the lawn dresses. I am going for a walk this morning and as it may be dusty a frock that will not catch the dust may be better."

"It does seem a pity miss to wear such a pretty frock and soil it when there is no one here to see it; not even your father." This gave Joy an opening of which she quickly availed herself. She had not the least intention of changing the frock or of looking, if she could avoid it, one whit below her best.

"Fie, Eugenie! one doesn't put on frocks to attract. If you think that way, I shall wear it; even if it is to get dusty." The Abigail who was a privileged person answered gravely:

"That's quite true, Miss, exactly as you say it. One doesn't put on nice frocks to attract; and that one is yourself. But all the rest do!" Joy's merry laugh showed the measure of her ebullient happiness.

"Dear me! Eugenie. You are quite an orthoepist—indeed a precissionist. I shall have to polish up my grammar. However I'll keep on the frock if only in compliment to your sense of terminological exactitude!"

A little after breakfast, when the time for starting on the walk drew nigh, Joy did not feel so elated. Woman-like she was not anxious to begin. It was not that she was suffering from the nervousness which comes to those of high strung temperaments in momentous crisis. Humming merrily she put on her hat and finished her toilet for her walk. In the sitting room from the shelter of the curtain she looked out of the window, as she tried to think, casually. Her eyes turned towards the lilac bushes, but caught no indication of the tall figure that she sought. Her heart fell. But a second later it leaped most painfully as she saw Mr. Hardy sitting out openly on the seat and strange to say—for she had come to identify that seat with practice—not smoking. He evidently had no present thought of being concealed. Why? The answer to her own question came in a rush of blood to her face, a rush so quick and thorough that it seemed for a moment to deplete her heart which beat but faintly. . . When she looked again he had risen and was moving towards the lilacs.

Without a word she walked downstairs and out through the hall-door.

Athlyne had not slept either that night. But the manner and range of his thoughts showed the difference between the sexes. Both his imagining and his reasoning were to practical purpose. He wanted to see Joy, to speak with her, to prove to himself if his hoping was in any way justified by fact. He had for so long been concentrating his thoughts on one subject that doubts at first shadowly had become real. It seemed therefore to him that in his planning for the morrow he was dealing with real things, not imaginative ones. And, after all, there is nothing more real than doubt—so far as it goes. Victor Cousin took from its reality his subtlest argument for relief: "At this point scepticism itself vanishes; for if a man doubt every thing else, at least he cannot doubt that he doubts." So with Athlyne. By accepting doubt as reality he began the experiment for its cure.

In the silence of the night, with nerves high-strung and with brain excited he tried in those most earnest hours of his life, when for good or ill he was to organize his intellectual forces, to arrange matters so that the earliest time he might with certainty learn his fate. He had an idea that in such a meeting as was before him he must not be over-precipitated. And yet he must not check impulsiveness as long as its trend was in the right direction. He knew that a woman's heart is more often won by assault than by siege. For himself he had plenty of patience as well as a sufficiency of spirit; his task at present therefore was one of generalship alone: the laying out of the battle plans, the disposition of his forces. As he thought, and as his ideas and his intentions came into order, he began to understand better the purpose of those two preparations of his which were already complete: the overhauling of his automobile, and the supplying it with female wraps. He intended by some means of other, dependent on developing opportunity, to bring her for a ride in the motor. There, all alone, he would be able to learn, perhaps at first from her bearing and then form her own lips, how she regarded him.

Athlyne was a young man, a very young man in his real knowledge of the sex. There are hundreds, thousands, of half-pulseless boys, flabby of flesh and pallid with enervating dissipation, who would have smiled cynically—they have not left in them grit enough for laughter—at his doubting.

He would not frighten her at first. Here for a time he took himself to task for seeming to plot against the woman he loved. Surely it would be better to treat her with perfect fairness; to lay his heart at her feet; tell her with all the passionate force that swept him how he loved her—tell it with what utterance he had. Then he should wait her decision. No, not decision! That was too cold a word—thought. If indeed there was any answering love to his, little decision would be required. Had he made any decision! From the first moment he had looked in her beautiful grey eyes and lost himself in their depths, his very soul had gone out to her. And it might be that she too had felt something of the same self-abandonment. He could never forget how on that afternoon visit at the Holland she had raised her eyes to his in answer to his passionate appeal: "Joy, Look at me!" Then at that memory, when she had spoken the words herself only the day before—the sweetness of her voice was still tingling in his ears, a sort of tidal wave of love's rapture swept over him. It overwhelmed him so completely that it left him pysically gasping for breath. He was in a tumult; he could not lie in bed. He leaped to his feet and walked to and fro with long, passionate strides. He threw up the lower sash of the window and looked out into the moonlight, craning his neck round to the right so that his eyes were in the direction of Ambeside as though the very ardour of his gaze could pierce through distance and stone walls and compel Joy's white eyelids to raise so that he might once more lose himself in those grey deeps wherein his soul alone found peace.

In his passion of adoration all his doubts seemed to disappear, as the sun drinks up the mist. He felt as though uplifted. At the very idea of Joy's loving him as he loved her he felt more worthy, more strong, and with a sense of triumph which had no parallel in his life. He stood looking out at the beauty of the scene before him, till gradually it became merged in his thoughts with Joy and his hopes which the morrow might realize. He never knew exactly how long he stood there. It must have been a long time, for when he realised any sense of time at all he was cramped and chill; and the forerunner of the morning light coming from far away behind him was articulating the fields on the hill-slopes across the lake.

He was then calm. All the thinking and reasoning and planning and pasison of the night had been wrought into unity. His mind made up as to the first stage of his undertaking. He would bring the car to Ambleside and leave it with the chauffeur outside the town. Then he would take his place in the garden and wait till she came out for that walk of which she had told her father. He would cautiously follow her; and when there was a fair opportunity for uninterrupted speech would come to her. If he found there was no change in her manner to him—and here once again the memory of those lifting eyes made him tremble—he would try to get her to come for a ride in his car. There, wrapped in the glory of motion and surrounded by all the grandeur of natural beauty, he would pour out his soul to her and put his fate to the touch. Then if all were well he would send on the letter to her father and would pay his formal visit as soon as might be. He would take care to have ready a luncheon basket so that if she would ride with him they might have together an ethereal banquet.

It is strange that even those who are habitually cautious, whose thoughts and deeds alike are compelled and ruled by reason, will in times of exaltation forget their guiding principle. They will refuse to acknowledge the existence of chance; and will proceed calmly on their way as though life was as a simple cord, with Inclination pulling at one end of it and Fact yielding at the other.

### CHAPTER XIV.

A Banquet on Olympus.

On this occasion Athlyne did not continue to sit out on the lawn. Now that he wished to overtake Joy unawares he was careful to hide his presence from her as he had previously hidden it from her father. He had hardly ensconced himself in his usual cover when Joy came out on the steps. Her maid was with her and together they stood on the steps speaking. As she turned to come down the steps Joy said:

"Perhaps I had better arrange to come back after a short walk; there might be some telegram from father to be attended to. If there is not, I can then go for a real, long walk." She did not say more but moved briskly down the roadway without ever turning her head. Athlyne slipped through the gate of the garden, following at such distance that he could easily keep out of view in case she should turn. When she had cleared the straggling houses which made the outskirts of the little town she walked slowly, and then more slowly still. Finally she sat on a low wall by the roadside with her back partially turned to Ambleside and looked long at the beautiful view before her where, between the patches of trees which here shut out the houses altogether and heightened the air of privacy of the bye road, the mountain slopes rose before her.

This was the opportunity for which Athlyne was waiting. He had hardly dared to hope that it would be in a spot so well adapted to his wishes. Dear simple soul! he never imagined that it had been already chosen—marked down by a keener intellect than his own, and that intellect a woman's!

Joy knew that he was coming; that he was drawing closer; that he was at hand. It was not needed that she had now and again thrown a half glance behind her at favourable moments as she went. There was at work a subtler sense than any dealing with mere optics; a sense that can float on either waves as surely as can any other potent force. Nay, may it not be the same sense specialised. The sense that makes soul known to soul, sex to sex; that tells of the presence of danger; that calls kind to kind, and race to race, from the highest of creation to the lowest. And so she was prepared and waited, calm after the manner of her sex. For when woman waits for the coming of man her whole being is in suspense. Though in secret her heart beat painfully Joy did not look round, made no movement till the spoken words reached her:

"Miss Ogilvie is it not!"

Slowly she turned, as to a voice but partly heard or partly remembered. Athlyne felt his heart sink down, down as he saw the slowness of the movement and realized the absence of that quick response which he had long and continuous thinking since last night encouraged himself to expect. The quick gleam of pleasure in the face as she turned, the light in her marvellous grey eyes, the gentle blush which despite herself passed like an Alpenglow from forehead to neck did not altogether restore his equanimity or even encourage him sufficiently to try to regain that pinnacle of complacent hope on which up to then he had stood.

"Why Mr. Hardy,' 'she said warmly as she rose quickly to her feet. "This is real nice. I was afraid we were not going to see you whilst we were in England."

It was beautifully done; no wonder that some women can on the stage carry a whole audience with them, when off it so many can deceive intellects more powerful than their own. And yet it was not all acting. She did not intend it as such; not for a moment did she wish or intend to deceive. It was only the habit of obedience to convention which was guiding natural impulse into safe channels. For who shall say where nature—the raw, primeval crude article—ends or where convention, which is the artfulness necessitated by the elaboration of organized society, begins. A man well known in New York used to say: "All men are equal after the fish!" Kipling put the same idea in another way: . . . "the Colonel's Lady and Judy O'Grady are sisters under their skins!"

When Athlyne looked into Joy's eyes—and there was full opportunity for so doing—all his intentions of reserve went from him. He was lover all over; nothing but lover, with wild desire to be one with her he loved. His eyes began to glow, his knees to tremble, then every muscle of his body became braced; and when he spoke his voice at once deepened and had a masterful ring which seemed to draw Joy's very soul out towards him. Well it was for her main purpose that her instinct had given that first chill of self-possession; had the man been able to go on from where he had first started nothing that she knew of reserve of self-restraint could have prevented her from throwing herself straightway into his arms. Had Athlyne not begun with that same chill, which to him took the measure of a repulse, he would have caught her to him with all the passion of many kinds which were beginning to surge in him.

But what neither of them could effect alone, together they did. The pause of the fraction of a second in the springing of their passion made further restraint possible. There is no fly-wheel in the mechanism of humanity to carry the movement of the crank beyond its level. Such machinery was not invented at the time of the organization of Eden.

"I have longed for this moment more than I can say; more than words can tell!" His voice vibrated with the very intensity of his truth. Joy's eyes despite her efforts to keep them fixed, fell. Her bosom rose and fell quickly and heavily with the stress of her breathing. Her knees trembled and a slow pallor took the place of the flush on her face. Seemingly unconsciously she murmured so faintly that only a lover's ear could hear or follow it:

"I have longed for it too—oh so much!" The words dropped from her lips like faint music. Instinctively she put her hand on the wall beside her to steady herself; she feared she was going to faint.


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(To be Continued.)


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