

WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

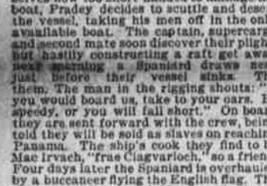
So many things there might have been Had our dear child not died; We count them all and call them o'er; We wish the less against the more; The joy she gave us is shared, The bitter we forever spared, The danger turned aside— Heaven's full security, and then, Perplexed, we sigh: All might have been.

We might have seen her sweet cheeks glow With love's own happy bloom, Her eyes with maiden gladness full, Finding the whole world beautiful; We might have seen the joyance fall, The dear face sadden and grow pale, The smiles fade into gloom, Love's sun grow dim and sink again— Either of these it might have been.

We might have seen her with the crown Of widowhood on her head, A queen of home's fair sovereignties, With little children at her knees; Or broken-hearted and alone, Bereft and widowed of her own, Mourning beside her dead; This thing or that, beyond our ken, It might have been, it might have been.

There is no need of question now, No doubts, or risks, or fears; Safe fold in the eternal care, Grown fairer each day and more fair, With radiance in the clear young eyes, Which, in cool depths of Paradisa, Look without stain of tears, Reading the Lord's intent, and then Smiling to think what might have been.

We, too, will smile, O dearest child; Our dull souls may not know The deep things hidden from mortal sense, Which find thy heavenly confidence; On this one sure thought can we rest, That God has chosen for thee the best, Or else it were not so. He called thee back to Heaven again, Because He knew what might have been. —S. C. Coolidge, in N. Y. Observer.



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SYNOPSIS.

Master Ardick, just reached his majority and thrown upon his own resources, after stating his case to one Houtwhick, a shipmaster, is shipped as second mate on the industry, bound for Havana. Mr. Tym, the supercargo, deserts a sail. The strange vessel gives chase, but is disabled by the industry's guns. In the confusion the crew killed Houtwhick and sent to fall. The captain is found to be dead, but the industry is little damaged. Sellinger, first mate, taken charge and puts into sidmouth to secure a new mate. Several days later, when well out to sea, an English merchantman is met, whose captain has a letter addressed to Jeremiah Hope, at Havana. The crew of the vessel tell strange tales of the buccannier Morgan, who is sailing under the king's commission to take Panama. One night a little later, the English vessel having proceeded on her course, a bit of paper is slipped into Ardick's hand by one of the sailors. This is found to be a warning of a mutiny plot headed by Pradey, the new mate. Ardick consults Mr. Tym. They resolve to secure the mate, but Pradey, eavesdropping in the cabin, makes through the door and arouses the crew. Capt. Sellinger joins the mutiny, and the crew break through the now barricaded door, but are forced to retire, having lost seven of their number. Finding themselves now too short-handed to manage the boat, Pradey decides to scuttle and desert the vessel, taking his men off in the only available boat. The captain, supercargo and second mate soon discover their plight, but hastily constructing a raft get away before the vessel sinks. The man in the rigging shouts: "If you would board us, take to your oars. Be speedy, or you will be left behind." On board they are sent forward with the crew, being told they will be sold as slaves on reaching Panama. The ship's cook, they find to be Mac Ivrach, "the Glasgow fiddler," so a friend. Four days later the Spaniard is overhauled by a buccannier flying the English flag. The three Englishmen and Mac Ivrach plan to escape to the buccannier on a rude raft. Sellinger, the last to attempt to leave the Spaniard, is disabled. Just after the others get out of their boat, a figure dashes from the yard arm, whom they suppose is Capt. Sellinger. Halting the buccannier, our three friends find themselves surrounded by the old mate, Pradey. He treats them kindly and offers to do them no harm if they will but remain quiet concerning the mutiny he headed. The Black Eagle, with Morgan's fleet proceeds as Panama. The command consists of about 150 men. Having landed, they march on to the city. The assault on the city is begun. Many of the buccanniers fall, and Ardick is wounded. Through the smoke he sees Pradey approaching the city. From the Ardick, coming to, finds Tym has rescued him from Pradey's Spanish hand by killing the villain. The Spaniard flag has been hauled down from the mast and the men allowed to plunder the city at will. Mac Ivrach spots a figure coming toward them, and exclaims: "The ghost of the captain! It is indeed Sellinger. He recounts his late adventures, then he leads them to the rescue of Don Enrique de Canabilla, who had been kind to him on the Florida. The Spanish vessel on which he had been a prisoner. Flight is the only course open to the don, his wife and daughter (Dona Carmen). They just manage to leave the building when Capt. Towland comes to claim the dona as his bride under the black banner's rule. Mr. Tym parries to gain time for the flight of his party, then allows the men to enter. Seeking shortly to join the others, they come upon his dead body. They find also his wife has been slain and the young dona taken prisoner to the castle and immediately conveyed a bold plan for her rescue. They soon discover her exact whereabouts, and amid the carousals of the men, manage to again free her and escape in a small boat. The third day out a sail is spied which they raise rapidly, their craft having little speed, but the wind soon falls and the boat is put out from the stranger. This comes with 15 armed men, among whom is Towland. A hand-to-hand conflict ensues, and Mr. Tym is wounded in the neck. In the end the hostile force is completely worsted, none escaping. Tym's wound is found not serious. Coming now out of their sorest straits, they learn from Dona Carmen her nearest relative is an uncle, a Jeremiah Hope, of Havana. Sellinger recalls he has a letter for this gentleman, so decides to sail for that place. Not long afterwards they come across a West Indian vessel bound for Panama. On board is her owner, the Jeremiah Hope they had all along wanted to encounter.

CHAPTER XXII.

OF TWO IMPORTANT INTERVIEWS.

The main cabin proved to be rather a small place, as most of the range athwartwise was taken up by sleeping berths, but all was well fitted and substantial. There were only a few passengers in sight, and those, by their pallor, recovering from seasickness; but a little way aft one cabin door was ajar, and from within came a lively sound of voices; wherefore I might guess where Mr. Hope and Dona Carmen were.

We were only too glad to fare so well, and told him so, and, indeed, the cabins looked wonderfully inviting after the quarters we had quitted. They were commodious and clean, and each was provided with two comfortable bunks. Mac Ivrach was well content with the berth promised him, and in fact told us afterward that he had no reason to complain of any treatment that he received while on the ship. Capt. Telatrava and Mac Ivrach being gone, we overhauled the cabins, and Mr. Tym and I took one—the larger—and Capt. Sellinger the other.

Capt. Telatrava appeared to have been hearted himself, and the passengers must have been generous, for the steward soon knocked and deposited a great pile of clothing, from which we very pleasantly proceeded to make a selection. In my own case the array was a little incongruous, for the coat was of black ferrandine, the waistcoat of blue velvet, and the breeches of a sort of yellow nankeen, but nevertheless I was very well satisfied. The fit was not bad, and when I had added a good Holland neckcloth and drawn on some brown hose and a pair of rather loose shoes, I thought I was very far from being unrepresentable. Before adding the last touches I shaved, and as Mr. Tym made a little dull of seeing in the small mirror, played barber to him also. This done I concluded to see what was going on above, and slipped out on deck. As I passed through the main cabin I glanced toward the senorita's berth, but the stir about there was over and the door closed. As I came out of the companion I found quite a company of the passengers assembled, and near them Mr. Hope and Dona Carmen.

Mr. Hope looked a little disturbed and anxious, and I had no sooner appeared than he broke off what he was saying and stood waiting for me. I hastened my steps and came up, and as I did so the senorita turned and gave me a pleasant smile of welcome.

I took off my hat to her, fetching a swift glance with the act, and was instantly pleased and in a manner confused at the change in her. I had not sufficiently conceived what this restoration to her own proper dress and the shedding of her former unsuitable and shabby clothes was to mean. There was no more of the rather under-sized-looking figure, the great flapping hat, with the old jacket, smalls and stuffed jack-boots, but instead a nobly grown woman, elegant in a silk gown, delicate lace, and a charmingly-draped mantilla.

Yet all this was only for a moment. I paid my respects—I know not whether with a little show of confusion—to Dona Carmen, and turned immediately to Mr. Hope.

"Well, sir," he began, "we have concluded to 'bout ship. I presume you have no further use for your sloop, and if so it will be a convenience to cast her off."

"Do so," said I. "We are done with her and she is not worth hoisting aboard. But whether do you now purpose to go?"

"To Valparaiso, as we think," he answered. "At first we had a mind to try some port hereabouts, but with the buccanniers so near it seemed too dangerous."

"I believe you are wise," said I. "Morgan has some ships, and there is no knowing how far he will cruise." "Then the sooner we get upon the opposite course the better. I but delayed to get this further knowledge." He turned to Capt. Telatrava and bade him put the ship about. While they were doing this I moved over by Dona Carmen, and though I was not sure Mr. Hope would approve, ventured to engage her in a little talk. I suppose I may as well admit at this point that I had come to find very keen delight in the senorita's company, and, though I had not plumped the matter in so many words even to myself, was most certainly in love with her. That this was great presumption on my part, and stood fair to end in nothing but wretchedness and disappointment, was easy to perceive, but even so I was none the less eager to go on and enjoy the dangerous delight while I could.

house. Mr. Hope was with her the chief part of the time, and on other occasions was never long absent; but though this (to be frank) was not just to my fancy, I could not find fault, for the merchant treated me with invariable kindness.

One evening, soon after two bells had been struck, I came on deck and saw Dona Carmen standing by herself near the after weather gang-port. My heart gave a bound, for it was not often that I found her alone at this hour, and with a glance about, to make sure that I was indeed so fortunate, I walked over to her.

"A beautiful evening," I began, taking care to speak in my usual tone. She turned quickly, putting back a falling end of her mantilla, and smiled. "So it is you, senior? Indeed, it is beautiful. I was just considering whether I would not fetch a chair to this open port and enjoy the view for a little."

"You could not pass the time better, and with your leave I will keep you company," I answered boldly, yet with affected lightness. "With which, only staying for her consenting nod, I fetched two bamboo chairs, and seated her in one while I took the other."

"This is the recompense of these hot days—the wonderful nights," she said, with a comfortable settling of her head against the back of her chair. "What a key, Senior Ardick, and what a sea!"

I followed her glance up at the heavens and out through the open port. "Glorious!" I answered. "It seems as though I could be content to have it go on forever," she said, with a sigh. "It is all so peaceful and restful."

"I can see how you feel so," I said, sighing a little in turn. "Yet pretty shortly you would tire of it and desire to be back in the stir and bustle of the world."

"Ah," she said, with a sad shake of the head, "you forget how little I have to go back to, senior. Rather I begin in a new world. I do not desire it, and in all earnestness prefer this peace and content."

"Which I am glad to hear you say," said I, my pulse taking the foolish freak to beat faster. "It is my own thought, to own the truth. Like you, I am satisfied to be here, and would be glad never to return to the world."

"My heart gave a bound." "That was a business sort of proposition that at once changed his bearing. He answered with urbanity that he was quite at my service, and led the way to the part of the deck I had just quitted. Making a sign for me to take one of the chairs, he dropped into the other and planted his feet comfortably against the gang-port chain.

"Proceed, if you please," he said, turning his head a bit so as to regard me. Again a kind of cold fit took me. This alert merchant way of his put me out, and then I had a growing sense of what there was at stake. I hung in the wind an instant, but in that time managed to confirm my resolution once more.

"The business, sir," I began with a sort of desperate bluntness, "concerns your niece. I presume some depression of my boldness may be in order, but yet I choose rather to come at once to the heart of the matter. In a word, I love her, and she has avowed she loves me. It lacks but your consent to wed her."

"Well, dearest," I said, with a sigh, "I suppose there are practical matters standing now to be settled. By what plan am I to make you mine, now that I have won you? What will avail to remove the obstacles, including the chief one, which must be the opposition of your uncle? Not that he shall prevail against my love," I added, sternly. "Nay, not 40 uncles nor the world! So much is settled, please God!"

She seemed to be a little frightened at my earnestness, and yet I could see that my desperation of resolve pleased her. "Why, Carlos mio," she answered, with a charming frown of thought, "I am not clear as to the way. I fear that my uncle would never consent, and though I love you—st, Carlos, with all my heart—I would not, save in a thing of extremity, disobey him."

"But you would not let him part us?" I cried, trembling with fear and jealous dread. "Not if with right and honor it can be compassed otherwise," she answered, gently. "Nay, dear heart, mitigate your fears. At least I will never consent to wed anyone but you, and I am sure that my uncle is no such man as to compel me. That will give us time, and with time who can say what may not be done?"

"Angel!" I cried, rapturously, and I was scarce able to keep back from snatching her into my arms. Perhaps the passing by of one of the sailors at the moment was the only thing that prevented me.

"But Carlos, there is yet another way," she went on. "Say you should boldly seek my uncle and ask him? You could do no more than fail."

"But I should do that," I said, despondently. "Ah, well, nevertheless I will try it; I will urge him. I will plead my cause. I will ask but for time to prove my worthiness and a mete place in the world. Content you. So he comes on deck I will have my answer this night."

She heard me gravely and as one troubled with doubts, but yet of my mind. Indeed, this was but the putting into words of her own thought. "Content, then," she replied at last. "Al," she added, turning her head and starting, "here he comes! Our Blessed Mother and every saint prosper you!"

She was up and moving across the deck before I had my surprise well mastered. Truly enough, Mr. Hope was coming toward us, having just stepped out of the companion.

I confess that the boldness I had shown but a moment before wonderfully diminished now that the moment of action was at hand. Carmen gone and Mr. Hope present was quite another thing from the reverse.

Still, I had, of course, no thought of hesitating, and I summoned my resolution afresh and made toward him. "A fine night," he observed, not quite heartily, as I thought. I guessed that he was not overpleased at finding Dona Carmen and me together. It was the first time it had fallen out in just this way—that is, that we had been by ourselves on an evening.

"I could not well be finer," I answered. "By this time my courage had a bit revived. He came up to me, and with an air grave and sober I went on: "With your permission I have something to say to you. Have you leisure to give me a few minutes of your time?"

That was a business sort of proposition that at once changed his bearing. He answered with urbanity that he was quite at my service, and led the way to the part of the deck I had just quitted. Making a sign for me to take one of the chairs, he dropped into the other and planted his feet comfortably against the gang-port chain.

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TRIBE OF BEN-HUR. MELBOURNE COURT, No. 34, T. R. H., meets every second Monday evening of each month in Grand Army hall. Visiting members made welcome.

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WELLINGTON CHAPTER, No. 109, R. A. M., meets on Tuesday night following each full moon.

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East. 28-Daily Col. & Clin. Ex. 5:05 am 26-Gallon Ex. 8:11 am 36-Daily Col. Ind. & St. L. Ex. 1:08 pm 24-Wellington Ex. 5:20 pm 2-Col. Clin. & Ind. Ex. 8:19 pm 52-Local Freight 5:20 pm

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