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FORTY-NINTH YEAR.

BENTON, BOSSIER PARISH, LA., THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1910.

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THE SHIPWRECK OF GLOOM

A Lesson in Courage and in the Value of Life.

By HOWARD FIELDING.
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Mr. Bartlett had not visited his office that morning, and it may have been about noon when an elevator disgorged him on the level of his own place of business. Immediately he was aware of the high keyed, boyish voice of James, his handy man, a creature of many duties and of an anxious, devoted fidelity.

"There's a lady waitin' for you," said James. "She's in your room, she is."

"What sort of a lady?" asked Bartlett.

"A young lady," answered James. "She's been there about half an hour, with a suit case. I never saw her before. She's got blue eyes, very blue eyes, she has. And I guess she ain't feelin' well. I took her in a glass of water a couple o' times an' she drunk it. She was thirsty, she was."

Bartlett shook his head. He could not remember any young lady of this kind. And yet the eyes—

"China blue eyes, James," said he. "Like the color that you've seen on a fine cup and saucer?"

"Well, to tell the truth," said James earnestly, "I never seen such a color anywheres before—not on nothin', I didn't."

Bartlett spent some seconds in reflection. "Go into my office," said he, "and see if there's a letter from Mr. Carver of Philadelphia amongst my mail. If there is I want it."

Such a communication was indeed there, and James brought it out. It was the querulous letter of a worried and weary man, and it affected Bartlett like the filing of a saw, for his nerves were in no condition to endure the caterwaulings of a business associate. Carver was afraid of a big note of Bartlett's which was maturing in a Boston bank.

"You'll have to pull money out of the game to meet that note," he wrote, "and that will cripple us. Instead of a handsome profit, we'll be likely to make a loss." And he went on to bewail the loss as if it were already made. He declared that he was not fit even to think of the matter. The long siege of illness in his family had broken his nerve. "And, though we're all on our feet again," he added, "I'm thoroughly tired out. We never should have pulled through except for Celia Gilbert, and now the poor girl has broken down and must go home—nervous prostration, and pretty bad, too, I'm afraid. And she'll have to travel all the way to Boston alone unless you can go over with her Friday night. I see by your letter that you'll be going over Friday or Saturday to try to fix up some way to re-

duce that note. But you won't be able to do it. You'll have to pay up—couldn't find the luck!

"I'm sending Celia to you. She remembers you ten years ago, when you were one of Johnny Harvard's lambs, though she was only a child at the time. You used to call on her sister or cousin or somebody. And, by the way, if you can go over with her, go by boat. Celia has had the most confounded luck in traveling by train. She's been in three accidents—no fancy smashups, but just the usual thing—an engineer and a couple of mail clerks sent aloft; nobody hurt in the high priced seats. The last case was a carload of laborers that got in the way, and Celia saw some of them afterward. I think she'd get a better night's rest on the boat."

Bartlett took off his hat and passed his left hand downward from the top to the back of his head. His brain was sore to the touch.

"This is my finish," he said. "The girl will drive me crazy, but I can't in common decency let her go over alone. I have broken bread in her father's house, and the old chap was kind to me."

An ordinary man might have seen in Celia Gilbert only a very pretty girl who was pale and looked as if she had been ill. Bartlett saw far more. The slightly gathered brows, the steepled lips, the voice constantly controlled to guard against the revelation of a causeless excite-

ment, were eloquent to Bartlett. He knew that this girl's life from moment to moment was held to a determined standard of calmness by an unrelenting heroism, and when he remembered that she had come to this sad state through the mere exercise of helpful kindness his soul cried out against the government of the universe. She was cousin to Carver's wife; she had gone to that house of affliction because she was needed there and for no other reason.

Celia sat in his office all the rest of the day. At half past 5, when Bartlett went aboard the sound steamer with all his worries on his back and the pale, silent girl for sole companion he was conscious of a depression of spirits such as he had never felt before.

They had some dinner by and by, and perhaps the food was good for Bartlett. At any rate, in the course of the meal he was vouchsafed a revelation. He perceived that Celia's presence was not depressing; he had been laboring under a preconceived idea of what her effect upon him ought to be, in view of her condition, and this false notion had completely fooled him. In reality she had not uttered a complaint all day. She had expressed no despondent view, but had gently striven to dispel the gloom between them, all of which had emanated from himself.

"Upon my word," said he, looking across at her, "you are a very cheerful young woman."

"In comparison with whom?" "Myself."

She nodded her head and smiled at him. "I am a good deal worried," said he. "This business of mine in Boston sits on me like an incubus—whatever that is."

"I am sorry," said she. "Perhaps he had looked for a little curiosity, and perhaps the china blue eyes read this in his face, for she tactfully asked a leading question, and he told his story. There were few people in the world with whom he would have spoken as frankly.

"The trouble is," said he in conclusion, "that I dare not go directly to the president of the bank. He's a tartar, and this particular kind of renewal is his pet aversion. But if I can have the matter put up to him in just the right light by a friend of mine (and a pet of his) inside the bank the thing will go through. I don't want Boland even to know that I came over to Boston to see anybody in the bank. I wouldn't have him know it for a thousand dollars."

"Mr. Boland is the president?" "Yes."

"Suppose you should meet him on the street," she suggested. "I should dodge into the nearest open door," said he. "If he saw me in Boston at this time he'd know what I was there for, and he doesn't like wirepulling inside his bank."

"I don't like wirepulling anywhere," said Celia. "I think you should meet Mr. Boland deliberately."

"Not for gold and precious stones," she insisted, "and I don't like the idea that you're afraid of him."

"I don't like it myself," said he, "but I am."

"Then you'll surely meet him. I never dare to be afraid of anything for fear that it will happen."

"I admit there's something in it," said he. Celia retired to her stateroom early, and Bartlett went down to the main deck, where in the girl's absence he relapsed into gloom and consoled himself with strong cigars.

A streaky fog lay on the sound. In the thicker places the steamer would slow down as if bewildered, and her whistle would exchange impatient blasts of nautical conversation with other whistles. A human irritation seemed to animate these tones.

Bartlett thought of Celia lying awake and listening to the mournful and alarming chorus. Tenderness came to his heart. He regretted that he had not been kinder to her; that he had not spoken cheerier words at their parting.

"All the human sense and goodness have gone out of me," he growled. "I am the wreck of what I was."

It was past 11 when he went to his stateroom, and he sat for a long time on the edge of his berth, thinking despondently of the morrow. The whistle was now doing its worst, and the answers were more petulant. He distinguished one voice among them that seemed angrier than the others, and it drew constantly nearer. Then for an interval he missed that voice. Silence reigned for perhaps no more than a minute, but it seemed much longer. Bartlett rose to his feet—he knew not why.

In the depths of the vessel he heard a bell strike once. The vibration of the fabric ceased. The engine was at rest. Suddenly, close at hand, the whistle that he had listened for called out with its strong voice. Two quick blasts answered it from his own vessel, and instantly the bell in the depths rang sharply twice.

Bartlett was in part prepared for what came next, but not for the magnitude of it. The crash as the two ships met seemed natural to his ears, but the infernal din that followed shook the soul of him with terrors wholly unexpected.

Bartlett ran out into the saloon and looked across. He saw some tangled wreckage and a cloud of steam through which was visible a blur of light. This came from the other vessel.

Men were pouring up from below, drenched with water and many of them liberally dabbled with blood.

Celia! The name leaped into Bartlett's mind with a shock that made his head swim. He ran to the door

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of her room and thundered upon it, calling to her. She answered him very much in her usual tone.

"I will be ready in a moment," she said and almost immediately appeared. He was amazed that she should be dressed.

"Are many people hurt?" she asked. "We must try to help." And she crossed to the wreckage.

An officer and some uniformed negroes, with a passenger or two, were disentangling the injured from the wreck of staterooms. Bartlett joined this party and was astonished to see men and women come forth from this mass of splinters with but a few scratches. He worked with zeal for perhaps two minutes, which seemed long, and suffered for multitudinous service. Then he climbed out of the tangle and looked around for Celia.

The young lady with nervous prostration whose doctor had sternly ordered her to abstain from all exertion and excitement, was kneeling on the floor of the saloon deftly bandaging the wounds upon a man's head.

Admiration of her courage thrilled him. He remembered that his own work was not done. A hoarse voice was calling from behind a stateroom door which was jammed so that it could not be opened. Bartlett got his fingers into a crevice and ripped the lock out through the woodwork. The door swung open.

The interior of that room, if it could still be said to have an interior, was an impossible ruin. The rear wall had fallen into the netter wreckage, the floor was shattered so that it looked like the debris of a picket fence, but the scene did not have a chance to heal. Rest periods must be sufficiently consecutive to overcome consecutive fatigue—Luther H. Gulick in North American Review.

Bartlett extended a hand and drew him to a securer footing. Except for a few bruises and scratches he was unhurt.

"Ha, Mr. Bartlett," said he cheerily, "so you're my preserver. Where is Miss Gilbert? Safe, I trust."

Bartlett pointed across the saloon to where Celia still knelt among the wounded.

"God bless her!" said Boland fervently. "I know her well by sight—her father and I are neighbors in Brooklyn—but I have never met the young lady, so I kept aloof when I saw you with her in the dining room this evening. I expected to meet you later in Boston, of course."

The collision of the two vessels seemed a small shock compared to his collision with Curtis Boland. The service he had rendered utterly debared him from asking favors at the bank.

The floor did not sink under him. The night's calamities were at an end. Water tight compartments kept the vessel afloat, and she proceeded slowly under her own steam to New London, whence the passengers proceeded by train to Boston.

Bartlett, Boland and Miss Gilbert

were companions on this journey, and for a large part of a way the lady, utterly exhausted, slept profoundly. And one of the men watched beside her with something akin to a fatherly affection, the other with deeper tenderness. He knew now why the eyes that he had seen ten years before had never faded from his memory.

"Bartlett," said the banker, "I forget whether you are married."

"I am not," answered Bartlett. "A year from today—who knows?" There was a long pause.

"Bartlett, how are things going with you?" "Every prospect pleases," responded the young man.

The banker eyed him for some minutes. "Perfectly convenient for you to meet that note?"

"I can meet it," answered Bartlett, and then he straightened up in his seat. "I can do many things that would have been hard yesterday. I have had a lesson in courage, in self forgetfulness and in the value of life. I am worth a dozen of the Johnny Bartletts that have been walking the floor this last month, and one of the proofs of it is that I'm not afraid to tell you that I have been walking the floor. I am not afraid of anything or anybody."

Another silence. "Send me over a little money," said the banker, "as little as you please, just enough to make a showing. Send me the same kind of paper for the balance. Will that suit?"

"I should think so! But I don't ask!" "You have asked nothing," said Boland. "The proposition is mine."

"Exercise and Rest." What is the relation between exercise and rest? Work is that at which we must continue, whether interesting or not, whether we are tired or not. It used to be thought that the prime requisite of rest was the use of faculties other than those involved in the labor of the day. But there is such a thing as fatigue which goes deeper than daily work. We can work so hard as to become exhausted—too exhausted for any kind of work. Perhaps this is will fatigue. It is coming to be regarded as fundamentally true that rest from such fatigue demands continuity; that, for example, four periods of fifteen minutes each of rest is not the equivalent of one hour's rest; that a man who goes on a vacation and takes half an hour of his business work every day is doing the same thing as the man who had a horse with a sore back. He kept the saddle on only a few minutes each day, but the sore did not have a chance to heal. Rest periods must be sufficiently consecutive to overcome consecutive fatigue—Luther H. Gulick in North American Review.

Cheerfulness and Cholera. A cheerful disposition is held by some doctors to be the best protection against cholera. When this disease first visited Paris in 1832 a notice was issued advising the inhabitants "to avoid as far as possible all occasions of melancholy and all painful emotions and to seek plenty of distractions and amusements. Those with a bright and happy temperament are not likely to be stricken down." This advice was largely followed, and even when cholera was claiming over a thousand weekly victims the theaters and cafes were thronged. The epidemic was in some quarters treated as a huge joke, and plays and songs were written around it. Rochefort wrote a play, "Le Cholera Morbus," which proved a big success, and another production on the same lines, "Paris-malade," also had a long run.—London Chronicle.

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