

AN OPEN LETTER.

Grand Lake Range, Queen's County, N. B.

March 10th, 1893.

The Groder Dyspepsia Cure Co., Ltd.

GENTLEMEN:

I am 72 years of age and have had Dyspepsia for several years. I have employed numerous physicians and taken many patent medicines, but all were of no use in my case. I began to grow worse. There was severe distress in my stomach; everything I ate, even the lightest food caused me intense agony. My appetite was poor and I could not sleep. I was almost without hope when I saw a testimonial in the newspaper stating what Groder's Syrup had done for others. As a last effort to regain health, I thought that I would buy it. Just before Christmas last my son Fred went to St. John and brought me home a bottle of your remedy. I used with the following results:

I eat as I wish and have no distress from my food; my appetite is first-class, my food tastes good to me now, I sleep as sound as a child, I do all my own work without the aid of a servant and can do a day's washing without feeling much tired whereas I could not do it at all before taking Groder's. I do feel grateful to you, gentlemen, for placing so valuable a remedy upon the market. I give all the credit for present state of good health to your medicine.

I am willing to answer any questions concerning the above, for I firmly believe your remedy will cure other sufferers as it has cured me, I conscientiously make this statement without any inducement or reward knowing it to be one of the best medicines in the market for Dyspepsia.

Respectfully yours,

ELEANOR BURKE.

The Broken Shaft.

A STORY OF THE SEA.

Little Brown cupids, eh auntie? A peal of merry laughter framed the sentence in music, and the words and joyous tones were the first intimation to a young man who sat under the life-boat on the starboard side of the Pacific Mail steamship "Colon" that there were other passengers in his immediate vicinity. He looked meditatively at his cigar. No, the smoke wouldn't betray his presence, for the light wind wafted it toward the stern and away from the two persons who had just drawn up camp stools under the protecting sheltering of another lifeboat, the hull of which kept off the burning rays of the sun.

For at this time the "Colon" was plying between New York and that port known to all Americans as Aspinwall, even though the name has been changed to suit certain English fancies. At this hour the "Colon" was tied up at the wharf taking in the last tons of cargo—a lot of green bananas. The train from Panama had just rolled in and passengers who had taken the water route from San Francisco were already coming aboard. The two women whose conversation interrupted the thoughts of the cigar were the first to arrive and they were already making themselves comfortable. Raymond Curtis had been on board two days. He had come up from Callao; where he had been on business, and the steamer "Islay" of the Pacific Steam Navigation Company had arrived four days since on the Pacific side of the isthmus. Two days in Panama had sufficed and the two days in Aspinwall seemed even worse. For the heat was intense even for this steaming region. The isthmus is never baked by the sun's rays. First it pours for half an hour a warm rain that makes one think nature has turned on the hot water faucet by mistake; then out comes the sun and draws up the moisture until sufficient has been raised to warrant another downpour. Thus it seems to be raining all the time, first up and then down, a continual vapor bath. At the time the above remark was made the sun was having his innings and making good use of his time. A score of perspiring laborers were running about the wharf swinging in the bunches of bananas. They were stripped to the waist and from forehead to the sash they wore looked like so much polished mahogany. Playing on some bales that stood at some distance back were a half dozen children. Following the custom of Aspinwall adolescence they were clad as they came into this world, only in their tight-fitting skins. These were the little brown cupids that a certain person referred to then, and Mr. Curtis listened for further conversation. But at this moment that fend on ocean steamships, the deck hand appeared, and with a "Bog your pardon, sir; please move your stool, began to sweep the already clean deck in the vicinity of the young man. The noise made by moving attracted the attention of the younger of the two women. Her pretty face flushed crimson as she recalled the remark made for her companion's ear only, and rising hastily, she exclaimed,

Come auntie, the sun is so hot; let's go to the social hall.

The two disappeared, and Raymond Curtis, effectively routed from his reverie sauntered forward to try and find the captain, with whom he had become fast friends. As he passed the spot where the two had been seated he noticed something on the deck. Stooping down he picked up an elastic affair with a silver buckle. Nobody was looking, so he dropped it into his pocket and continued his promenade.

In the pilot-house, busy with some charts stood Captain Griffin. We will be out of this hole within an hour or two, Mr. Curtis, he said, and then for the cool ocean breezes.

They talked a few moments on unimportant matters and Curtis interrupted a story about how the "Colon" had on the last trip been compelled to put to sea because of a norther by exclaiming:

Who is that pretty girl who came over from the Frisco boat and is travelling with an elderly relative.

Aha! So that's the way the wind blows, is it? I thought you didn't look quite so bored. And you really think you may take some interest in the trip after all? They are aunt and niece. They have been out for a three months' visit on the Pacific Coast, where the young woman's father lives. They came out with me four trips ago. Hard study at a seminary had somewhat affected her health, but I think it has returned, don't you?

Captain can you arrange the seats at the table so that I can be near her?

Let me see. I did think of placing Miss Thornydyke on my right and you on my left, but there is a friend of one of the managers on board, so I reckon I will place him at my left. I will tell the purser to put Miss Thornydyke on my right, then Miss Campbell, then yourself.

But how will that get me next to Miss Thornydyke?

Near Miss Thornydyke is the aunt, Miss Campbell's mother's sister, a jolly, fat creature, seasick all the time. Miss Campbell—Minnie Fay Campbell—is the niece. Nominally, Miss Thornydyke will be at my right, but before dinner time this evening she will be stowed away in her bunk, and except on very calm days none save the stewardess will see anything of her. So I will have a good view of the young lady, who is an excellent sailor and so will you.

Thanks, replied Curtis. Have a cigar? Well, this is arrant bribery, but those weeds of yours are so good I think I will accept it.

Minnie Fay Campbell; Curtis was saying to himself a half hour later. What a pretty name.

That intolerant gong that always warn people who are not going with the boat to disembark, and is so often the signal for tears to flow, interrupted his thoughts and he went up on the bridge, where Captain Griffin accorded him the privilege of standing. But no one shed tears at leaving Aspinwall, and everybody felt better when the good ship pointed into a northwest breeze and began to pitch just enough to occasionally toss a few drops of spray over the bow, that is, everybody save the unfortunate beings who sink into a dull stupor when the boat leaves the dock, persons always anxious to take ocean voyages where they can only be miserable. Miss Thornydyke was one of this class. She enjoyed telling of the many times she had crossed the Atlantic, to say nothing of other trips, but the history of each on her could be condensed into hour after hour passed lying in a lower berth, nibbling cracked ice, taking a drop of lemon juice and now and then a biscuit and a sip of beef tea, all the while gazing out of a little porthole first at the green sea, then at the blue or cloudy sky as the ship rolled from side to side. It had become a second nature with her to flop into a berth before land was lost from view, and she was therefore absent from dinner that evening.

Poor auntie, said Miss Campbell. I am afraid it will be several days before she is at table.

Captain Griffin expressed some sympathetic words, though he did not look especially distressed, and then introduced her to Mr. Curtis. The young woman did not show by her manner that she recognized her comrade at table as the one who had overheard her on deck, and the three soon entered into a lively conversation.

The fourth day out one of those sudden changes came. The wind died down and the sea became like glass; it was like riding on a river. It became quite warm and the awning was spread over the after deck, when steamer chairs were placed in requisition. It seemed as if more passengers had come aboard during the night, so many new faces were to be seen. Raymond Curtis and Miss Campbell amused themselves looking at and talking about individuals whom Neptune had released from the cabins below. At the luncheon table every seat was taken, even Miss Thornydyke allowing the good-natured stewardess to help her to her place. There was much merry laughter, light banter, hopes expressed of a calm trip the rest of the way, and to all the talk the rhythm of the propeller as it churned the water astern was the only accompaning sound.

Miss Thornydyke; try some of the curry, said the captain. He passed the dish, and was about placing it by the side of her plate, when he dropped it on the table and jumped to his feet. At the instant every face was blanched, for it seemed as if a power from the infernal regions was delivering blow

after blow at the vessel's hull, while the massive iron framework quivered under the attack. This awful noise seemed to continue indefinitely, but in reality it was over before the captain and chief engineer reached the deck. Both had started at the same moment. Then there was silence, a quiet more fearful than the noise, for even the reassuring sound of the propeller was stilled. Women and children cried and men looked solemn. The officers who had remained in the saloon did their best to still the alarm. Only a slight accident to the machinery, said they. We will be all right in a few hours.

Instinctively, Miss Curtis had drawn near her male companion during those awful seconds, and neither noticed till afterward that he had placed his arm around her.

Come, Raymond, help me with auntie, she said a moment later. For, worn out with three days and three nights of torture, Miss Thornydyke's nerves had given away and she was lying back in her chair in a dead faint. But so were other women, and the stronger ones were kept busy for awhile. In ten minutes the captain reappeared. The shaft is broken, said he, but there is no danger, as no damage was done to the hull. The break is in the collar where we cannot get at it, and the only thing is to proceed under sail. We have plenty of provisions, and must make the best of it and pray for good weather.

Some men cursed the delay. They were those whose hours were precious, and a few days longer at sea meant business losses. One little woman at the end of the table wept bitterly. Her husband would be down on the dock to meet her on the day the "Colon" was due, and what agony he would be in. But before night all were cheered up somewhat and were prepared to make the best of it. Curtis was really delighted at the delay, though he kept his thoughts to himself. She had in a moment of terror called him "Raymond," and he—well he now thought she might be persuaded to some day use that name forever.

Captain, said he an hour after the accident, is it not strange that the shaft broke during such smooth weather?

Yes it is unusual, but I suppose it cracked a little during the norther we ran out in last trip, and the crack has been spreading since. It was fortunate it did happen in fine weather and not in a gale.

How fast can we go under sail?

Oh, perhaps four or five knots. You see in these days of steam we don't carry much canvas. At present we are barely making steerage way. But if the average wind keeps up we can make Navesink light in ten or twelve days and get a tug. There are so few steamships running this course that the chances are we will sight nothing but sailing vessels till we see the coast. All we want is good weather. There will be no danger unless a gale comes on, and then you know what might happen if we should get into the trough of the sea. Curtis shuddered, but he was thinking of Minnie for just then she stepped out of the companion way into the glowing sunlight that flickering in her hair wreathed her face as with a halo.

A pretty picture said the Captain, as pretty as one as could be wished.

The girl came forward. Captain, she said, you and Mr. Curtis come and play quoits. You must do something to interest your passengers.

Laughingly he complied, and a merry evening was the sequel to an afternoon of fright and worry.

For five days fortune seemed to be with the Colon. The wind came from the southeast, and with every bit of canvas set she reeled off an average of 100 miles a day. Sunday morning the wind was quite heavy and the Colon was rolling with a sea just off the quarter. But all the sails were drawing well and the officers assured the passengers that the little gale was helping them along. At 10 o'clock the stars and stripes were spread over a deck in the dining saloon, a large Bible was opened and an Episcopal clergyman began the service. The beautiful words were repeated and then the divine came to that solemn prayer "For those at sea." Just as it was begun Curtis noticed a quarter-master beckon to Captain Griffin. The young man, who was seated near the companion-way, also arose and went out.

First officer wishes you on the bridge, sir, said the sailor.

The commander hastened there, then went to his room, where Curtis followed him. As I feared it's coming. The glass is falling rapidly. We will catch it soon. I wish you would go down below and as soon as the services are over tell the people not to be alarmed if they hear noises on deck, for the wind is freshening and we may have to take in sail.

Curtis did so and in ten minutes returned. Miss Campbell clad in a waterproof, accompanied him upon the bridge. Captain, she said, we are going to have a storm and I want to stay up here. See I am not a bit afraid. I won't be in your way, and I don't want to be cooped up in that close room.

The captain hesitated. But your aunt—Oh, auntie is lying in a stupor. She hardly knows what is going on. Well you can stay. Curtis watch out for her. Then: Around with those yards haul in the starboard sheets: hurry men.

These words were shouted, for the wind from the south had suddenly ceased, the canvas was flapping to and fro and in the northwest a low bank of cloud was moving toward them with inaudible rapidity. No not cloud; it was water—

water caught up from wavetops by the rushing wind.

Let go everything! Clew up! yelled the captain. By this time the crew of twenty men was re-enforced by officers, firemen, engineers and a few passengers. Curtis left the bridge and helped. In a few moments all the canvas save the first to gallantsail was so fastened as to be protected for the time being.

As Curtis came on the bridge again a blinding rush of spray swept over the steamer. He caught the little woman, who seemed to bend with the wind's fury, and helped her resist it. Over, over to the starboard reeled the "Colon" until the water was level with the scuppers, and even the heavy steamer under the strain of the one sail scudded along at a frightful rate. The forecast bent like a flagstaff; then there was a report like the discharge of a canon and the ship righted a little. That one sail had been blown from the boltropes.

Come, you had better go below, this is no place for you, said Curtis, and she allowed him to help her along the lee side to the companionway. In spite of their cloaks, both were drenched, for the air was full of salt water and the decks were covered with foam.

In the saloon there was a deathlike silence save for a sob heard now and then. The passengers were huddled together, waiting. There is nothing more creditable than this inactivity, this waiting during a storm at sea. All the afternoon the gale kept up, and soon the steamer began to pitch and toss as the sea rose. Waves swept over the port side, and the water dashing against the deckhouse oozed down the companionway. About three o'clock Captain Griffin came below for a few minutes for a cup of coffee. He whispered to Curtis, We are all right if the canvas holds.

Miss Campbell noticed this, and when he has gone asked him what had been said. He told her. She was showing great bravery, this girl barely out of her teens. And if the sails give way. Oh, I know. I have read and heard people talk about the trough of the sea.

But she did not seem afraid, and with Curtis's assistance did her best to reassure others, laughing at the efforts of the stewards to pass around a few edibles at the dinner hour, for it was impossible to set the tables. The first part of the night was like the day. Wildly the wind whistled through the rigging and the wired screech was blended with the creaking of the woodwork and the splash of water, then interrupted by the dull, heavy sound of a blow as a wave struck the steamer, bringing her for an instant almost to a standstill. One by one the passengers fell into slumber, some lying on the floor, some on the sofas. A few crouched in corners. At midnight there was another sharp report. Curtis knew what it meant and, glancing at his companion, saw that she did also. No one else seemed to pay any attention to this one among so many hideous sounds. Come, let's go to the head of the stairs, said Curtis.

She went with him. A deckhouse sheltered the companionway. It was strong and well protected. Through the windows in front they could see the deck and the heaving snowcapped sea. The moonlight had broken through the scurrying clouds and revealed the truth—the mainsail had gone. Men, clinging to lifelines, often knee-deep in water, almost hauled themselves along the deck toward the foremast. Captain Griffin on the bridge trumpet in hand, was issuing orders, but his words could not be heard where they stood. As the Colon pitched, he was at one moment below, and next above them the spray glistened in the moonlight as it blew from the oil suit, and he looked like a spectre.

They are trying to set the foresail, said Curtis. Slowly the canvas unrolled, was caught in the wind and bulged out like a balloon. The ropes tightened and stretched. Inch by inch they were hauled in, and none too soon for the steamer's head was falling into that grave, the trough of the sea. But aided by this new force the Colon answered to her helm once more.

Will it hold, Raymond?

I don't know. Nobody knows. If it does not there is nothing else. We are near death and it may come at any minute. Minnie, Minnie Fay, I want to tell you that I love you dear heart. And if this means life or death my love is the same. In answer she put her hand in his and nestled close to him.

For an hour they stood watching the spray-dashed window, watching the ropes that held the sail, the ropes the breaking of which meant death. The sail tugged at its restraint and at times seemed ready to burst its bonds, but it held. At 2 o'clock the moon that had been shining occasionally through the angry mass of vapor cast a soft light over all and the clouds seemed to melt away. In half an hour the captain came into the deckhouse, smiled as he saw the two so near together and said, The worst is over.

Five days later the Colon, in tow of a tug, passed up the Narrows. It was a beautiful morning, and the grass on Staten Island never looked greener. Raymond and his betrothed stood together when they passed Fort Hamilton. Then it will be as soon as you hear from your father? said he.

Yes. Minnie dear, I have a confession to make, he said a minute later: I stole something of yours the day we sailed; I picked it up off deck. See! and he drew the elastic affair from his inside coat pocket.

She looked perplexed for a minute; then her face grew crimson and busting into a hearty laugh she exclaimed:

Why Raymond, that's auntie's garter. I should think you would have known better.

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