

'TWIN CHAPTERS II. AND III.

'I shall be at the Derrmans' party on Thursday. That is, we are both leaving England for a space, will be our next, and last, meeting for some considerable period. Will you arrange to give me a little conversation then (tete-a-tete)?'

That was the note written by the promising young author, Aubrey Young, to Miss Alice Ashton. Here is the latter's reply, in a straggling hand, upon rose tinted paper:

I will not arrange to give you the tete-a-tete conversation you impudently request.

Aubrey Young read the reply many times before finally depositing it in a cabinet drawer that already held quite a number of broken kneed aspirations—including a dramatic poem and a pastoral play. Then he turned the key, drew in a long breath, stirred the fire until it blazed again, kicked the toy-terrier that fawned sympathetically between his legs, and began to whistle softly one of Mendelssohn's songs.

Then he remembered that the song was the one she had so often played at his request; he changed it for the tag of a ditty roared by a passing butcher's boy, and ended by laughing aloud—at his own misery.

'Good-bye!' he murmured, addressing an imaginary companion. 'We part friends, I presume? They generally do in fiction, and surely that dream of mine was the sorriest fiction I ever perpetrated. So good-bye! You answer me cruelly brief, but so much to the point that it absolutely prohibits complications. The dream of a year! The masterpiece of my life! Finish! At Chapter Two!'

Accepting the situation as pitilessly inevitable, Aubrey Young opened his remaining letters. One—and the most important at this juncture—was from the master of a schooner lying in the river, and to him the heart-sick man repaired.

'As I said in my letter,' said Captain Green, 'we'd best talk the matter over. How I understand you is just this: you're going to write a novel and your plot makes it necessary that you go on a voyage in a trading vessel and mix with the hands.'

'That's it. And to study these fellows in their element, without the modifying influence of a stranger's presence, I propose actually to sign as one of your crew and to be in every respect subject to your orders and discipline, captain, even as the youngest apprentice. I know a rope's end from a stanchion and can rough it with the toughest. Lead your crew to believe that I was bred to the sea, had a bit of luck, spoil my opportunity, and am obliged to return to my earliest vocation. I'll do the rest.'

'Well,' said the captain, 'if owners don't object I don't. You know your way about a ship, and when, as Mr. Jones in cap and j. rsey, you step upon by deck you'll have to make yourself useful, and put up with things as you find 'em sir.'

On Thursday evening, the night of the Derrmans' crush, Aubrey Young went aboard the schooner Bonifacia, and spent the dreary hours conjuring up mental pictures of the lost party, picturing which, despite the efforts he made to be general, could resolve themselves into two familiar with a background of cool palms in the lowlight of softly shimmering fairy lamps—Alice Ashton and Sidney Preece.

II.

'I tell yer I don't like it. When it ain't fog it's a blessed jurrickin', an' when it ain't blowin' like an Aldershot field-day it's slow down to a crawl an' 'owl-owl from the blessed fog 'orn. Dirty weather's dirty weather, an' I don't grumble at no ordinary share, but these yer samples day after day, night after night, ain't nat'ral, an' I don't like it.'

Joe Blewett's glowing eyes challenged the opinion of mates, but there was none to accept. The crew of the Bonifacia simply nodded acquiescence. Mr. Blewett had put their own thoughts into suggestive words.

Oh is he, anyway? asked one, with an upward nod towards the deck where Aubrey Young was engaged.

'The cap'n knows,' said the ship's carpenter. 'E's a pal of his, like as not, runnin' from the gillers.'

'E's got a awful uneasy conscience.'

'Ah!' exclaimed Joe Blewett. 'You've heard 'im dreamin', 'ave yer?'

'Lots o' times.'

'So've I. An' it's my firm belief—an' far be it from me to say a wrong word agin John Jones—Joe Blewett dramatically extended his arms to the heavens—'

'I'm my holy belief, mates, that that John Jones, as he calls hisself, is guilty o' murder, an' that neither 'im nor us'll have a minute's peace till 'e's off this ship.'

Joe Blewett resumed his seat amid a solemn, acquiescent applause. Again had he expressed the thoughts that for days had vaguely flitted through the heads of his audience.

'What does the skipper think?' queried one.

'I've spoke to the second mate, an' 'ee just agreed with me. 'There can't be nothin' but bad in a ship when you carries a murderer,' says he. 'Just cast yer eye, Blewett, over the time since we left the river,' he says. 'Ole Ben Wimple steps overboard in a fog an' that's the last of 'im. Young Dick Emmett breaks 'is leg an' goes below, indefinite. First mate took bad, only three days out. An' as for weather—'

'Did the second mate say anything about what the cap'n thought?'

'Ee knows as well as you or me as the skipper's in the know, an' that Mr. John Jones—'

At that moment Aubrey Young's legs appeared on the ladder, and the crew immediately went aloft, leaving the suspected criminal to sit down to his solitary meal and his fruitless attempts to banish actual sorrow in the realms of his vivid imagination.

In work, he had concluded, lay his salvation, and while all day he labored with a hunger easily suggestive of an unhappy conscience, more than half the time spent in his bunk was divided between recollections of the woman he had loved and lost and the details of his coming novel.

And as his feelings were distraught and dramatically tense, so did he cast the hero of his fancy amid scenes of exciting realism. Hence his troubled sleep, in which the figures of his imagination played their invented parts. Whole scenes of wild excitement revolved in his restless brain, and daring scraps of dialogue escaped his burning lips.

His shipmates overheard, and were awed. To their superstitious minds the awful scratches of nightmare admitted but of one explanation: John Jones had committed a murder and was suffering the mental anguish of the righteously tormented.

That night was a memorable one for the crew of the Bonifacia. Enveloped in a terrifying fog, with the captain stricken with a mysterious illness and the first mate hovering between life and death, with the second mate, borne down by his responsibility, alternately ramping and praying, and the crew, exhausted with superstitious fear, grouped upon deck, socially awaiting their doom, the inevitable reaction was near.

Joe Blewett gave whisper to the deed. The man with the wicked conscience was at the bottom of their imminent peril. Nothing but bad luck could be expected on the vessel. In his early removal lay their one hope of ever reaching port and looking again into the longing eyes of wife and barn. They were by no means blood-thirsty. They wished no harm to the man whose very presence on board the schooner was fraught with evil. But men with comparatively clear consciences must be considered before one whose hands were stained with another's life. Therefore John Jones must go overboard before the next watch.

The unsuspecting author was leaning over the rail peering into the dense fog. Suddenly his arms were pinioned from behind, and before he could shriek an alarm a piece of cotton waste was stuffed into his mouth and secured by a scarf tied at the back of his head. Then, quick as thought a couple of life-belts were slipped under his arms.

'This ship ain't big enough to 'old you an' yer unhappy conscience,' explained Joe Blewett. 'So we're goin' to put yer over the side. The second mate, 'ee calculates as a line o' rocks lays 'alf a mile to Leeward. Swim for 'em, mate, and—' 'evvin 'elp yer! Now, mates! Lower away!'

Chance, and the tide, drifted Aubrey Young towards the line of rocks. Conscious that his body was bruising itself against a solid substance, he took a grip and feebly pulled himself on to a rocky ledge and liberated his choking mouth.

Then, immediate danger past, he fell into a semi-conscious swoon, with Joe Blewett's broken sentences lapsing in his brain and the wish of the beating waves playing fantastic airs to his imagination.

Later, he became sensible of a pain in his arm that grew ever more acute. An effort to relieve it by a change of position forced a cry from his lips. His arm was broken.

Truly his fate seemed hopeless. The bewildering fog—wet and chilling—grew more dense as the long night passed and trebled the sense of utter desolation engendered by his hopeless position.

For the fog was reminiscent of home—of Alice Ashton and Sydney Preece. The lapping of the tide against the rocks cunningly turned itself to Mendelssohn's Venetian song, played by Miss Ashton at the young author's half-whispered entreaty.

'To die, to sleep. To sleep; perchance to dream.' That was his last memory; that the tune that rocked him to a restless slumber from which, a half-formed whisper suggested there would be no awakening.

'Too late! He's gone! poor chap!'

(Aubrey Young, washed from the rocks by the flowing tide, was rocking in the sea. An officer of a passing liner engaged in pointing out treacherous rocks—a matter of anxiety until the fog lifted—to a passenger, had brought his glass to bear upon the young author's body. A boat was instantly launched.)

But Aubrey Young opened his eyes and rested them momentarily upon the ship's boat.

'Not him!' cried a sailor's voice. 'See his eyes open? Steady! 'Lide! Easy! the word! Now's the time? Got him?'

It was touch-and-go for twenty-four hours, but the ship's doctor worked heroically, and Young constitution was healthy. Three days later willing hands helped him on deck. The sky was blue, the sun danced upon the shimmering water. The world was glad again.

Aubrey Young lay in his deck chair, filling lungs and eyes with Nature's best restorers. At a distance a merry crowd encircled a game of deck cricket, and their laughter would have been good to hear if it had not recalled painful memories of a laugh he should never listen to again.

He closed his eyes, and shutting out the existing scenes, recalled the suggested ones.

Presently a light touch upon his arm aroused him.

'Mr. Young!'

The author opened his eyes, and his lips said 'Miss Ashton!' But no sound escaped them.

'I have startled you,' she added. 'I am so sorry. I forgot, in the pleasure of seeing you about again, that you were weak from your awful experience. The doctor held us spellbound with the recital. . .

Oh, please don't try to get up. No, no I insist. I came here to offer an explanation, and—if you don't keep perfectly still, I'll—'

'An explanation? Not the—'

'The letter! It was tampered with after I wrote it. I have it, on confession, that—'

'Sidney Preece—'

'Sh! I would rather not. It is only necessary to say that the letter was intercepted on its way to the post, and two words added—"not" and "impudently." You know I often leave big gaps at end of my lines. Most foolishly I forgot to seal the envelope; the rest was easy. But I thought—the crimson flush had left her face; it was now pallid. She seemed to be trembling nervously—"I thought—some explanation—was due to you for my apparently rude—"

'Alice!'

The crimson blush returned to her cheeks. It was the beginning of Chapter III.

Two months later the Bonifacia was reported overdue. It has long since been given up for lost.

'I am going home to mother,' said the young wife, 'and what is more, I am not coming back till I hear you have eaten that pie I took so much trouble and pains to make for you.' 'I am glad to hear,' meekly said the young husband, 'that you think enough of me to attend my funeral.'

Of the late Earl of—, who, when young, was noted for cajoling his creditors with a future pay day, it was observed by one of his friends that it was a pity that fortune should neglect so promising a young gentleman.

Downtown—'Here comes Jackson. He's got a new baby, and he'll talk us to death.' 'Upon—' Well, here comes a neighbour of mine who has a new setter dog. Let's introduce them to each other, and leave them to their fate.'

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Halifax, May 24, to Mr. and Mrs. S. P. Hubley, a son.

Digby, May 18, to Mr. and Mrs. O. T. Haines, a son.

Springhill, May 22 to the wife of Warren Johnson, a son.

Parrish's Cove, May 23, to the wife of Geo. Harvey, a son.

Truro, May 17, to the wife of Fred W. Henderson, a son.

Moss Glen, April 24, to the wife of Alfred G. Brien, a son.

Middleton, May 17, to Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Dudley, a son.

Springhill, May 24, to the wife of Arthur Gilroy, a daughter.

Halifax, May 26, to Mr. and Mrs. R. W. Thomas, a daughter.

Halifax, May 23, to the wife of J. H. McKenzie, a daughter.

Port Saxon, May 12, to the wife of Louis A. McLean, a daughter.

Spry Harbor, April 18, to the wife of Peter Gerard, a daughter.

Pope's Harbor, May 17, to Mr. and Mrs. Alfred D. Hay, a son.

Elwood City, Penn., May 2, to Mr. and Mrs. Rod. W. Hay, a son.

Parker's Cove, May 23, to the wife of Thomas Milner, a son.

Santa Cruz, Cal., May 11, to Mr. and Mrs. B. E. Knight, a son.

Pope's Harbor, May 16, to Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Conrad, a son.

Clark's Cove, May 10, to Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Newell, a son.

Fredericton, May 27, to the wife of C. Fred Chestnut, a daughter.

Brockton, Mass., May 10, to the wife of Franklin Caldwell, a son.

Kingsport, May 18, to the wife of Mr. W. H. Farham, a son.

Lockport, May 21, to the wife of Rev. Geo. I. P. Peter, a daughter.

Brooklyn, Queens, May 18, to Mr. and Mrs. E. M. Dexter, a daughter.

Bristol, Queens, May 19, to Mr. and Mrs. F. L. Minard, a daughter.

Sand Beach, May 15, to Mr. and Mrs. George W. Cusack, a daughter.

Milton, Queens, May 16, to the wife of Leonard Kempton, a daughter.

Fort Lawrence, N. S., May 27, to the wife of H. H. Atkinson, a daughter.

Fredericton, May 23, to the wife of W. Fred Nicholson, a daughter.

Clark's Cove, May 15, to Mr. and Mrs. Thomas C. Crowell, a daughter.

New Glasgow, by Rev. A. Rogers, Foster P. Doane to Minnie MacKay.

Pictou, May 24, by Rev. Dr. Heitz, O. E. Smith to Ada B. Sargeant.

Amherst, by Rev. A. F. Newcomb, Winslow Trewhell to Vice Rena Oulter.

Oswego, May 24, by Rev. J. H. Chase, James A. Morrison to Margaret Bates.

Woodstock, May 22, by Rev. H. D. Marr, Wm. A. S. S. to Margaret Appleby.

Grimby, Ont., by Rev. P. R. McKay, P. G. Mode to Maud Frances Wolverson.

Woodstock, May 13, by Rev. H. D. Marr, Wilmet Jarvis to Minnie Cunningham.

River Bourgeois, May—by Rev. Fr. O'Handley, Finlay Carter to Lizzie Burke.

Springhill, May 18, by Rev. H. D. Bambrick, Archibald Page to Violet L. Ely.

Advocate, N. S., May 23, by Rev. M. Porter, Clarence Field to Flora Maud Embree.

Folly Village, May 24, by Rev. J. B. MacIsaac, Alex. MacDonald to Louanna Bentley.

Folly Village, May 24, by Rev. William Dawson, G. S. S. to Margaret Appleby.

New Richmond, May 17, by Rev. Jas. F. McCurdy, John H. Hamilton to Addie Harrison.

Thorburn, May 20, by Rev. J. A. MacKenzie, Alex. Plumb to Barbara J. MacDonald.

Springville, May 19, by Rev. James Sinclair, J. Fraser McInnes to Catherine McDonald.

Albert Co., May 23, by Rev. C. W. Townsend, Walter Robert Killam to Josephine Hawk.

Melrose, Mass., May 20, by Rev. Joel M. Leonard, Albert Walter Hardaker to Estelle McCurdy.

Murdoch.

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F. A. YOUNG

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DIED.

Halifax, May 24, Louisa Baker 53.
Smithville, May 20, Howe Snow 94.
Westport, May 20, Daniel Welch 63.
Elgin, May 20, William Chisholm 66.
Port Moncton, May 19, Joseph Fisher.
Milton, May 23, Alexander Michaels.
Middleton, May 22, Henry Taylor 78.
Halifax, May 24, William H. Bauld 72.
St. John, May 25, John Macdonald 62.
Halifax, May 26, Francis P. O'Brien 38.
Sisiboo Falls, May 22, Frank McBride.
Moose Harbor, May 18, Edward Myr 64.
Dartmouth, May 25, Dr. W. H. Weeks 61.
Southampton, May 22, Amos Lawrence 81.
Margaree Forks, April 29, Cecily Coady 69.
Pugwash, May 20, Mrs. Donald McLeod 24.
Kingston, Kent Co., Mrs. David Palmer 55.
Halifax, May 26, wife of Cornelius Scanlan 54.
Five Islands, May 24, William Prendergast 70.
Brenton, N. S., May 13, Joseph A. Danforth 3.
Cumberland, May 21, Christopher H. Edgson 56.
Alma, A. Co., May 22, Charlotte A. Wilson 14.
Sambro, May 23, Hannah, wife of James Gray 87.
Cape George Point, May 15, Catherine McLain 81.
Halifax, May 24, Herbert, son of George Holdcroft 3.
Kingston, Kent Co., May 21, Mrs. David Palmer 55.
Wolfeville, May 23, Minnie A., wife of Thomas D. 31.
Sydney, C. B., May 22, Matilda, daughter of Thomas Post.
Moncton, May 27, widow of the late Richard Delahunt 79.
Annapolis, May 20, Martha, wife of Capt. Joseph Mitchell 79.
Gates Mt., May 24, Larina, widow of the late John Bowley 84.
Halifax, May 24, Mary, widow of Godfrey M. Schwarz 84.
Lawrencetown, May 24, Amariah, widow of the late W. P. Dodge 72.
Hampton, N. B., May 23, Elizabeth, wife of Robert D. Scribner 78.
Providence, R. I., May 21, Bella, widow of the late Donald McDonald 38.
Judique, May 20, Sarah A. infant daughter of Donald McDonald 7 months.
Harvey, York Co., May 28, Gertrude E., daughter of Andrew Dries 6 months.
Lower Salmon Creek, Queen's Co., Matilda Jane, widow of the late James Wilson 74.

STEAMERS.

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Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday.
Lve. St. John at 7.15 a. m., arr. Digby 10.00 a. m.
Lve. Digby at 1.00 p. m., arr. St. John, 3.45 p. m.

EXPRESS TRAINS

Daily (Sunday excepted).

Lve. Halifax 6.30 a. m., arr. in Digby 12.30 p. m.
Lve. Digby 1.00 p. m., arr. Yarmouth 3.35 p. m.
Lve. Yarmouth 9.00 a. m., arr. Digby 11.43 a. m.
Lve. Digby 11.55 a. m., arr. Halifax 5.45 p. m.
Lve. Annapolis 7.20 a. m., Monday, Thursday and Saturday
Lve. Digby 3.20 p. m., Monday, Thursday and Saturday
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and after Monday, the 3rd October, 1899 the trains of this Railway will run daily, Sunday excepted, as follows.

TRAINS WILL LEAVE ST. JOHN

Express for Campbellton, Pugwash, Pictou and Halifax..... 7.00
Express for Halifax, New Glasgow and Pictou..... 12.00
Express for Quebec, Montreal..... 12.30
Express for Sussex..... 16.40
Accommodation for Moncton, Truro, Halifax and Sydney..... 22.10

A sleeping car will be attached to the train leaving St. John at 16.30 o'clock for Quebec and Montreal.

A sleeping car will be attached to the train leaving St. John at 22.10 for Truro. Dining and Buffet cars on Quebec and Montreal express.

TRAINS WILL ARRIVE AT ST. JOHN

Express from Sussex..... 8.
Express from Halifax..... 16.
Express from Halifax, Quebec and Montreal..... 19.
Accommodation from Pt. du Chene and Moncton..... 22.45
Accommodation from Moncton..... 23.45

All trains are run by Eastern Standard time.