Youths' Department.

Up the Ladder; or, Striving and Thriving.

(Continued.)

CHAPTER XIV.

THE PARTED SHIP.

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble."

The City of Calcutta is situated on the Hoogly river, which is a branch of the Ganges, navigable to ships of the largest size. The Dolphin was a merchant ship, and was laden with ice and provisions, which the captain wished to exchange for leather, saltpetre, and other heavy commodities. The crew were required to remain and assist in unloading the vessel; but, after this had been accomplished, they were allowed to wander about the city, provided they returned to the vessel at the expiration of forty-eight hours.

Alfred was not slow to avail himself of this privilege. He visited the part of the city occupied by the English, and was delighted to see the elegant houses, many of them like palaces. These, he found, were not built in rows, or blocks, as in cities at home, but stood apart, at some distance from each other, on account of the intense heat. They were built with high, airy apartments and flat roofs, and surrounded with verandahs.

From this part of the city he went to what is called the Black town, occupied by the natives. This presented a striking contrast with the former. The houses, which are formed of mud, bamboo, or straw mats, stand upon narrow and crooked streets, interspersed with small gardens and tanks of water.

Here, I am sorry to say, he was led by his companions into all species of low dissipation. In this way, day after day was passed, until the captain announced the time of sailing. His conduct had been such since his arrival in port that no suspicion was entertained of his wish to desert. Now was his chance to do so, if ever. The next time he went out he put on a double suit of clothes, and carefully securing the small sum of money which remained from his wages, he took his final leave of the vessel. On several occasions he had purposely separated himself, for a short time, from his companions, that they might not suspect him of wishing to do so eventually. But now, as soon as an opportunity occurred, he ran away and secreted himself, trembling with fear, until he thought the vessel must have sailed. Here in a strange land, unable to comprehend a word of the language, he suffered so much that he almost wished he had returned home with the ship. But when he came forth from his concealment, and ventured to ask if the vessel was still in port, he was too late. The Dolphin had sailed. Now he returned to the haunts of vice which had attracted him when he first came to the city, where, in pandering to his wicked passions, he soon spent every copper he had in the world, and when night came on he found himself homeless and penniless. Many times in the course of the next week did the words of Harrison, so long forgotten, come to his mind, "the wages of sin is death." Many times he thought he should starve, and probably would have done so had it not been for the kindness of sailors whom he accidentally met.

One day when he was so extremely reduced by want that he could scarcely stand, he tried to crawl along toward the port of Calcutta, and endeavor to find a vessel ready to sail for America. "I may as well die in one place as another," he said to himself, "and I shall certainly die if I remain here."

At length, when he had nearly reached the shipping, he was accosted in his native tongue by a youth near his own age.

"You look ill, my poor fellow; what is the matter?"

"I am dying of hunger," replied Alfred, feebly.

"Come with me, then; I think we can soon cure him. Don't you think so?" turning to his companion, "Here, let me help you;" and placing a strong arm around the emaciated boy, he led him on to the side of the vessel lying at the harbor. After requesting him to wait a minute, he darted away, and soon returned with a fine fresh cocoa nut, which he gave the famishing youth. He appeared to him like an angel of mercy. He had often in his distress fallen asleep to dream that tempting fruit, such as he now held in his hand, was placed within his reach, but he had not strength to take it. Now he feared he should awake and find this also but a dream.

Feeling greatly revived by this seasonable supply of food, he readily consented to accompany his new friend to the captain of the vessel, and endeavor to obtain a berth in the barque, which was named Josephine.

Though he had been so long on board ship; yet here everything seemed new and strange. The youth, who was called Frank, approached the captain with the ease, vivacity, and confidence of a child; while in return the gentleman appeared to feel for him the affection of a father. Leaving Alfred standing near the forecastle, Frank went on to tell his tale, and interest the officer in the distressed youth.

"Bring him here," said the gentleman, with a smile; "I'm afraid your warm heart has led you away, as usual, on some wild-goose chase."

Frank obeyed, and summoned Alfred aft.

Sad to relate, the wicked boy commenced this new acquaintance by a false tale. He said that he had been sick ever since he was in port, so sick that he could not reach the vessel; that the captain sent one of the crew the day before they sailed, to say that they were ready for sea, and that as he was so unwell he had better remain on shore for another ship. Since that time, which he alleged was some months previous to this, he had not been able to work enough to obtain food sufficient to restore him to health, though his fever had long ago left him.

The marks of vice were too visible in the countenance of Alfred for Captain Monroe to mistake his real character; but he saw no reason to doubt the story of the lad, and, after ascertaining from him that he knew something of the business of a sailor, he promoted him from the duties of a boy to those of an ordinary seaman.

This is one who, from want of sufficient age or strength or experience, or all of these, is not competent to perform all the duties of an able seaman, and therefore receives less wages. He is expected to be well acquainted with all the rigging of a ship, and able to steer under ordinary circumstances, to bend a top-gallant sail, or a royal, which is a light sail next above it. It is commonly expected that he should be able to make spun-yarn, to turn by twisting two or three rope yarns together, to make sennet, a braid plaited together of several rope-yarns or spun-yarn; that he should understand the art of splicing ropes, forming the eye, and making a great variety of knots common among sailors' knots.

Alfred, as we have seen, had never tried to fit himself for the performance of these duties, though his former captain had recommended him to do so, as he wished to be promoted. Indeed, he had determined never to go another voyage, so that he had not been at sea many hours before the latter, repeated him entirely unfit for a seaman, and, therefore, degraded him to the rank of what is termed a green hand.

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(*To be Continued.*)

The Number of Thousands.—Thousands of [illegible] live, and live—pass off the stage of action, and are heard of no more. Why! They [illegible] of good in the world, and [illegible] by them as the instrument of [illegible] could [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]