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(Continued.) SYNOPSIS.

Peter Clephane and Andrew Kilgour are cousins, students at Edinburg University, between whom is a bitter feud. The former is the son of a rich city lawyer and his cousin is the heir of an estate in the Highlands that has almost passed into the hands of creditors. After a bitter fight with his cousin, Kilgour is on his way home when he falls in with company at the "Hound and Stag" inn at Perth. Arrived home his companion on the journey turns out to be his uncle, Peter Clephane's father. To retrieve his family's fortune Andrew is sent to India.

"I am in for the ship's papers," he explained, looking up with a smile of intelligence, "but you can put more than hats in a bandbox. Here, take your choice of these," and he lifted an armful of pistols.

I drew back a step with a quick sensation of chilliness. The startling discoveries were crowding too closely upon each other for my nerves.

"Oh, you'd better have one," he said, in his matter-of-fact way. "It's nasty to be caught unprepared. I dare say you know something about firearms."

"I know more about fowling-pieces than pistols," I answered, taking one with a trembling hand.

"Well, well, you'll soon get used to it. Nothing trains a man with the pistol like knowing he may be turned into a target at less than a moment's notice."

"And do you really mean to say there's danger?"

"That's just as you look at it. If the risk of being killed without prayers is danger, then we are not in the safest place on earth. That's a good one, Mr. Kilgour; take it with you."

"I stowed the weapon away while he rummaged in the box."

"Here, will you have one of these?" he asked, a moment later, holding up a sheaf of daggers. But they were too suggestive, and I declined the offer.

"Well, well, so be it," he remarked, putting back daggers and pistols into their place. "Since you won't have a dagger, I suppose it's no use offering you a sword. No, I thought so. Well, now for the copstone of the counsel."

he continued, standing erect and looking me straight in the eyes. "Don't let anyone get too familiar. The moment you smell trouble, draw and blaze away. If you don't kill, you will be respected; if you do kill, it's but justice anyway. If you deliberate, you're lost. And, now, lest they should suspect a plot, let's go out." saying which he opened the door and we went on deck.

For the rest of that day I was hot, nervous, depressed, and ill at ease, yet with a certain feeling of consequence. Firearms give courage as the saddle confers authority. The touch of my pistol-hilt thrilled me, and many a time did I surreptitiously slip in my hand just to gain assurance by grasping it.

I kept, as you may think, a keen eye on the crew, for though there was not a whit more danger now than there had been from the beginning, I detected treachery and a murderous intent in every act and look of the men. I expected bloodshed, and tried to convince myself I was prepared for it.

But indeed it was to matter little to me whether I were armed or not. The feeling of heat and depression grew upon me hour by hour. At first I naturally referred it to my conversation with Mr. Watson. But in this I was mistaken. I went to bed deadly sick, to toss in the night, and next morning I was so giddy that on attempting to rise I staggered and sank to the floor. When I gathered myself together, the room was whirling like a huge spinning-wheel, carrying me with it in its gyrations. Steadying myself a little, I managed to crawl back to my berth on hands and knees, my eyes well-nigh sightless and my brows throbbing as if there were steam machinery inside. My skin burned with a prickly heat, and my throat and tongue were parched, sore, and swollen.

"I am in for it," I groaned. "God in heaven, and in such a hole as this!" And presently when Mr. Watson looked in to see why I was not getting up my worst fears were confirmed.

"I'm devilish sorry to see this," he said, after examining me and hearing my symptoms. "You've got the fever that Portuguese chap died of. You were brought in on board with you. It was raging in some quarters of the city. I'm devilish sorry, for anything that medicine or needs. But we'll do our best. I'll make you comfortable, and then I'll send the captain to see you." In the course of half an hour or so the captain came in, looked at me for a moment as he would at a sick beast, asked some perfunctory questions, and left me. A little later the mate, too, came in, and his kindness was, if possible, more cruel than the captain's callousness.

"There's no saying how this may go, you know, Mr. Kilgour," he said, after lying in his throat by saying he was sorry for me. "Fevers on board ship are bad at any time. They're doubly bad on East India traders. There's little room, evil smells, no resources, and the devil for a physician. If you have any message you would like delivered to your friends or anything to return to Scotland, I am at your service."

A man may be dying, but it hurts him to be brutally told so. For the first time in my existence I appreciated the boon of life, of the simple privilege of continuing to be and of the sovereign balm of sympathy. I shook with fright, and great beads broke out

on my brow, yet neither sickness nor fear could keep off anger. To die with fortitude, to renounce hopes, schemes, ambitions, to lay down life in its rosy morning hours, when the world is full of promise of bliss—to do this at a moment's notice and with resignation is possible, but it is not in human nature to be grateful for cruelty. The disease had not yet wholly mastered my spirit. There was one fierce spark left, and so, rising on my elbow and speaking in a voice that trembled and quivered, I ordered the man off.

"Go," I said. "Let me never look on your face again. And when you come to die pray you have a better comforter."

He went without a sign of compassion or contrition, indeed, with a smirk of disdain, and I, falling back with a feeling of being forsaken by God and man, lost heart, and a scalding torrent soaked the coarse blankets. And in that moment of dire punishment, as if present evils were not enough, there smote upon my conscience the lightning-like stroke of an accusing memory. The thwarted plans of my father, the unheeded sorrow of my mother, were as arrows of fire in my soul. Fate had indeed permitted me to please myself, but she was now exacting payment, and the payment was my life.

I had a feeling, I say, of being forsaken, but in the graciousness of Providence I had a friend even now. Not long after the mate left me, Mr. Watson returned, gave me some medicine, spoke cheerfully to me, telling me to keep up my heart, for that many a man had fever on shipboard and lived long years afterward to tell the tale. But I could see that out of his humanity he was dissembling his real thoughts, and so I determined if possible to get at them.

"You have seen cases of this sort before," I said. "Is it serious? Be plain, and tell me if you think I have a chance to pull through."

He seemed unwilling to answer the question, which, of course, was an incentive to me to press him.

"If you don't answer," I said, "I'll know it's because you're afraid to tell me the worst."

"You know the old proverb, Mr. Kilgour," he returned, slowly. "That while there's life there's hope."

"Just so," I said, "and that in cases like mine doesn't mean much, or, rather, it means a great deal."

"I will not mislead you, Mr. Kilgour," he rejoined, shifting about uneasily on his feet. "I think you have a bad attack, and this is a foul hole and we are without proper remedies. But then you are young and have a good constitution, and that, as any doctor will tell you, is worth gallons of drugs."

"Thank you," I said. "I wanted your candid opinion."

And now, when I thought there was no chance of life, I grew calmer. Indeed, my fear almost vanished, for, as the wind is tempered to the shorn lamb, there is hardly an evil but brings its antidote with it.

Mr. Watson left me abruptly, but presently he came back, carrying a book in his hand. It happened to be a Sunday evening, and I fancied he was coming to employ his leisure in reading a story to me. But it was a Bible, not a story-book, that the good soul held in his hand.

"I have been a good many years away from Scotland, Mr. Kilgour," he said, rather sheepishly, sidling up to my bed. "but I haven't quite forgotten the training of my youth nor the customs of my native land, and I am going to do now what, I think, your mother would be well pleased with."

And, sitting down on the edge of my berth, he began to read. His voice was not very steady, and he coughed a good deal more than seemed at all necessary.

As for me, I listened in a dreamy, half-conscious state, feeling no fear, only dimly pitying the reader, whose emotion was so keen. When he had finished reading, he bent over me, stroking back my hair. "It's got the golden glint of boyhood in it yet," he murmured, and then, lower and very huskily, "Would you like me to pray?"

It was a trouble to speak, so I held out my hand, caught his, and pressed the pressure, looking down upon my hand and caressing it for a moment, then, holding it softly but firmly between his rough palms, he went on his knees. When he rose, something at the porthole seemed suddenly to attract his attention. He stared hard for a minute or so, then cast a shamefaced, side-long glance at me.

"Damme, if I've played the parson for years before," he laughed, furtively drawing the back of his hand across his eyes, then, as if fearing an answer, he hurried away.

It might be that same evening, or it might be some days or even a week later, for I have but a dim and confused memory of that period, that he came to me with a terrified face, saying the ship was in imminent peril. His speech was not immediately intelligible, for I seemed to be recovering from a stupor, but at length I caught the word "waterspout," and even to my dull sense it sounded ominous. Hardly had the word passed his lips when the brig shook to her centre as a cannon was fired on deck.

"That's to try to break it," he said. "Good God," he cried, in the same breath, but in a tone that was startlingly different. "It's upon us! Mate, this means hell and destruction!"

(To be Continued)

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