

MISS MILNE AND I.

CHAPTER XI—Continued.

At eleven that night, having received no official intimation of the intentions of the government as to my disposal, I went to bed.

At twelve I was awakened from a sound sleep by a tremendous banging at the door. "Another suspicious case, sergeant?" I asked, as I opened the door and recognized the official.

"No; it's you I want this time."

"Me?" I replied, with an assumption of surprise.

"Yes; have you not heard that you are to go to quarantine? I thought you had been told. The boat has been waiting, loaded with people, for the last hour for you."

Remembering the advice of my friend, the reporter, I made him put his hand on my shoulder, and so make it an arrest in the eyes of the law. Then I collected my clothes, tobacco and books, got some whiskey for the sergeant, and started for Woolloomooloo, where the steam launch was awaiting me.

"Good-by," said the sergeant as I stepped on board. "I'm sorry for you, but 'tisn't my fault."

"Good-by, sergeant. I shall survive it; if I don't, well, we may meet in some other world where politicians are not devils till they die."

"You'll find room in the bow," growled the captain, in a voice indicating that his temper had not been improved by the delay.

After a good deal of trouble I succeeded in picking my way through the mass of morbid and motionless humanity with which the deck was covered. In the bow I found another medical man, one Dr. Moore, who, because he had seen the man Cox fourteen days since, was included in the idiotic order of the cabinet.

The "Prince" was a steam launch of about fifteen tons, become by age slow and almost unseaworthy. There was no cabin beyond a kind of a rat hole, in which the stoking was done, so that the passengers, patients, and "suspects" (i. e., men, women and children who had been taken from houses in which genuine cases were found) were mixed up indiscriminately on the deck and in the "stern sheets" behind.

The crew consisted of a captain and a stoker. I don't know what their powers of navigation may have been, but if they at all corresponded with their capacity for swearing, there was little risk of our being wrecked, although the night was dark and the weather dirty.

The vessel once under way, I had an opportunity of inspecting the cargo. And now, if for the next page or two I had the pen of Dante and the additional help of Dore's pencil, I might hope to give you some idea of a scene that in my hands defies all attempts at adequate description. The like of it has never been seen before in any civilized country, and will never be seen again. It was the outcome of official madness, brought on by the frenzied clamor of a public insane with fright.

The lurching of the launch had awakened Dr. Moore from a reverie. Turning round he recognized me, and without any preliminary formalities of the hand shaking order, forthwith deluged me with groans and complaints. The golden salve that was six months later laid on very thick by a repentant government did a great deal toward restoring it, but at that time his lot was an exceedingly hard one.

Dragged from a warm bed and the comforts of a luxurious home, forced to leave and neglect a practice that had cost in its building up years of effort, and given no opportunity of finding a substitute, or even of collecting sufficient linen for a week's wear, he had been hurried, as he said, "on board this dreadful vessel as though he were a criminal of the worst order, and huddled up with these horrible cases of smallpox, so that he must catch it." From this moment he lost and never regained, so long as I knew him, not only his self-command, but that fearlessness of disease that is the heritage of all medical men. Later on, when given charge of the hospital inclosure, he would flatten his nose against the window, and so, peering through the dirty glass from the outside, treat his cases. But he must be dealt with tenderly, for his ravings were certainly not those of a sane man.

With tears streaming down his cheeks, he would dwell on his wife's loneliness and her weeping when they parted, and in the same breath, and with even more pathos, deplore the stupid forgetfulness that had made him leave his nail brush and hand glass on the washstand at home. Then he would dry his tears and grow defiant. "How dared the government touch him. Doctor Moore, a man known and respected by thousands? He had friends in parliament, and when the morning came the city would rise in arms on his behalf."

So he raved on until I, thoroughly sick of it, and having troubles of my own to think about, picked my way through the people, in search of a quieter spot where Dr. Moore's moanings could not reach me.

In the bow, as I have said, was Dr. Moore, pacing up and down his little reserve like a caged lion. Every now and then he would halt, and with frantic postulations address the people near him; but they, being Chinese, and entirely ignorant of the English language, must have appeared to him remarkably unsympathetic.

Next to the batch of six Chinamen sat Mrs. Cox, the widow of the man who had died the day before, and

around her knees her family of eight small children clustered. They were all dressed in mourning, and bore upon their faces evidences of the privations, confinement and misery they had undergone. Opposite Mrs. Cox was a man named Warren, his wife and four children, one a baby in arms and one a child of four, a bright eyed little girl. Evidently, from the fond way in which she was playing with her father's hand, she was his pet. This Warren played a conspicuous part in the great quarantine tragedy. He had at this time a few pustules on his face (six or eight, perhaps) but they were characteristic, and quite justified me in pronouncing him a patient. He had a hard, firm face, typical of the London artisan; he wore a ragged mousache, and his chin was covered with the growth of many days, giving him an appearance of ferocity that was not natural to him, and that afterward altogether disappeared.

The stern sheets were crowded with Europeans and Chinese, patients and suspects, women and children all huddled up together, with barely room to stand.

It was 2:30 a. m. before we reached the pier that juts out from the quarantine station on which we were to land. Those of us who had the strength peered anxiously through the darkness to catch, if possible, a glimpse of the nature of our prison. By some oversight, no information of our coming had been forwarded to the superintendent, and there was therefore no one to receive us, no light visible, no information obtainable as to the housing of the patients and suspects.

I was the first to step on shore and the garrulous lunatic who had forgotten his nail brush followed. When we reached the end of the pier we stood aside and passively watched (for the ridiculous regulations would not allow us, to lift a finger in the matter) the mournful procession, as it filed past from the launch to the shadow and shelter of an overhanging rock.

At that moment a light was seen at the back of us, and in a few minutes the ancient, Mr. Warbler, was in our midst. He was eighty years of age, short in stature, very thin and had a marked stoop. As he leaned on his stick his long gray hair, bare eyes and strangely white beard gave him the exact appearance that one always associates with the ancient mariner. The resemblance was so pronounced that a few days later, when I had drawn the attention of the others to it, we rechristened him, and from that day he was spoken of—and I fear often, too—as the Ancient Mariner, or for brevity's sake, the A. M. When, "like a white haired shadow," he had wandered from group to group, vainly endeavoring to grasp the surroundings, he approached me.

"And who are you, pray?"

"I am Dr. Rigby, late and, for all I know, still government medical officer. You are the superintendent, are you not?"

"I am."

"Now, Mr. Warbler," I asked, "where are they to go?"

"Do you see that hut yonder?"—pointing to a just visible roof peeping over the top of a steep precipice.

"Yes."

"Well, that is the only place where they can go, and your quarters are close by."

"But how are they to get there?"

"There is no road; the only way is to clamber up the side of the hill."

"Good God, man, they can never do it!"

"But they must."

And they did. How even the healthy among them succeeded in clambering up the rugged and treacherous face of that cliff is to this day a mystery to me. As for the sick, some, of course, died, and others, though they recovered, had long and painful illnesses as a consequence of that terrible night.

CHAPTER XII. By noon of the second day we were well settled down to the work proportioned out to us. Dr. Moore was, much to his disgust, given charge of the hospital inclosure. He did not grow any more sane, but rather less so; he added to his other delusions the idea that I was the cause of all his troubles, and nothing would alter his belief. The consequence was that he spent hours a day walking round and round the fence that separated us, in the hope of catching a glimpse of me, and when he did see me he would howl and shake his fist at me, then go back to his hut happy.

and from it, when night came on, there issued rats, iguanas and anteaters in search of broken food.

The male patients were put on board an old hulk called the "Far Away," anchored 2,000 yards from shore. Among them was Warren. The conspicuous part this man played later on necessitates my setting forth in detail his position from his own point of view. As I have said, his attack of smallpox was such an extremely light one that nothing could convince him that he had had the disease at all; therefore, to be dragged with his wife and children from his home was bad enough, but to be separated from them and to be thrust on board that wretched and comfortless hulk, herded with Chinamen, deprived of all comforts and most necessities of life, was beyond all bearing. And then, as though this was not bad enough, on our journey down, the bright eyed little girl on whom all his affections were centered, caught the disease and was moved by me, on the third day, with her mother, into the hospital inclosure, to die about the eighth day. Throughout her illness, the man, in an agony of rage, paced the decks night and day, pausing only to peer anxiously through the telescope at the blank walls that inclosed his wife and dying child. On one occasion, while so looking, he saw, or thought he saw, his wife making signs to a policeman who was standing near the fence that surrounded the enclosure. This was too much for him to bear. Regardless of sharks that swam the bay, regardless of laws, regardless of everything, he threw down the telescope, dived from the ship and swam ashore, only to be seized and roughly hurried on board again.

When dusk came on he again swam ashore. This time he made a most desperate struggle for his freedom, but was at last overpowered, leg-ironed, and in this degraded state, in full view of his children, who were now, in their mother's absence, unwashed and uncared for, his wife, who stood weeping on the hill, and the rest of the community, dragged down to the water's edge, pushed into the boat and so on board the "Far Away" once more.

"Don't you think," I asked the sergeant, "that this man is being most brutally treated?" "I do; but orders must be maintained, and moreover, you ought to be the last man to complain," was his ominous reply.

"Why?"

"Because he has sworn that he will, leg irons notwithstanding, get free once more and 'settle your hash,' as he says; then the authorities may do what they like with him. Seriously, doctor you ought to have someone sleeping in your house with you. The man is a desperate character, and I know means mischief, and don't wonder he has been, as you say, most brutally treated. Have you seen anything of the new nurses?" "I saw them come down, that's all. Have you?"

"Yes; oh, yes. Charley and I made for them; we were to have tossed up for choice, but Charley was the first in the field, and then he's such a deuced goodlooking fellow."

"And what has Charley gone for, the tall or the short one?" I asked indifferently.

"Oh, the tall one, you bet! He saw her on the ocean side last night late, and commenced the attack at once. Charley said that he had all his old weapons ready for use, but they were unnecessary; she fell a victim to his charms without a struggle, and before they had been ten minutes together had prevailed upon him to loosen two pairings, so that she can slip out and walk down to the sea when he's on night duty. She came out at once, and they sat down and talked for an hour, all about the station and the people down here. He declares he could have kissed her then and there if he had liked; but she's just a little too tall to take such liberties with. I hope I shall be as lucky; nothing whiles away the time like spooning a pretty girl. Good night, sir."

(To be continued.)

WHY SHE SOUGHT HIM.

Judge Job Hedges the Victim of a Joke—Woman Came to Kill Him.

Judge Job Hedges was the victim of a joke last week whose point he does not yet clearly see.

A woman came into his office and started on a tale of woe. As she was in evident mental distress he had not the heart to turn her away, but sat patiently listening for a solid half hour to her rambling story. Unable to make any sense out of it he said at length:

"Madam, I should be glad to help you in any way I can, but I can't see what you're driving at. Kindly tell me, in as few words as possible, the object of your visit."

"Certainly, sir," she answered. "I went first to Lawyer Emanuel Friend, and he sent me here, and so I—"

"But he object of your visit," he interrupted. "Oh, yes," she said, recalling it, at last. "Now you speak of it, I remember. I came here to kill you."

"She is the thirty-fifth crank that man Friend has sent me in three months," sighed the judge afterward. "I don't generally kick, but when it comes to killing its time to draw the line."—New York World.

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