

The Last Cruise of the Galatee.

CHAPTER I.

The French cruiser Galatee was to sail from the port of St. Malo for Valparaiso, on the morning of September 2d, 1889. In a pretty stone house overlooking the harbor lived her captain, Jean Moreau. Captain Moreau could not bear to be out of sight of the sea even when on land; consequently he built his house on a high bluff overlooking the water.

On the afternoon of the 1st of September, Arthur Lempriere, the young physician of the Galatee, called at the home of his captain to report himself in readiness to sail on his vessel. He had just arrived from Blois, where he had been on a visit to mother and sister.

Lempriere had remained almost an hour in conversation with his superior officer. From time to time his eyes sought the door as though he expected someone to enter. At length he asked, with lowered eyes and a faint flush rising to his cheek, "Mademoiselle Moreau well, I hope?"

"No," replied the captain shortly, "she is not. For the first time in my life I must sail leaving Marguerite ill in bed."

"She is ill!" cried Lempriere, and then in a lower voice, which he steadied with an effort, "it is not serious?"

"Oh, no—a slight cold and a fever. Marguerite will quickly recover from it." With a twinkle in his eye he added: "Would you like to see her, Lempriere?"

"If I dared—is it possible?" asked the young man.

"Certainly, in your character of physician," replied the captain laughing. "Indeed, I think perhaps you may be able to benefit her. Come with me," and the captain led the way up stairs.

"Marguerite," he called softly, tapping at the door which was ajar, "are you awake? May we come in?"

"Yes, father," answered a sweet low voice; "but why do you say 'we'?"

"The doctor is with me," replied the captain, going to his daughter's bedside and bending affectionately over her. "Perhaps he will give you a prescription."

Arthur lingered beyond the threshold. He scarcely dared lift his eyes when the voice of his captain bade him enter. This was a sanctuary—the chamber of the woman he loved.

The beautiful pale face of Marguerite brightened with pleasure when she saw the young man. There was a trace of embarrassment in her manner as she extended her hand to Arthur.

"It is good to see you," she said, "I was so lonely lying here. I cannot remember when I was ill before. But why have you not been to see us sooner?"

It was Lempriere who was embarrassed now. His voice trembled with his emotion as he spoke, still holding the soft white hand in his.

"I have been at Blois with my mother for three weeks. I only came to St. Malo this morning."

"And before you left St. Malo?" The words were almost on Marguerite's lips as she raised her eyes to his. He seemed to read the question there, and the look in his

face silenced her. It was a look of ardent adoration. Could he tell her how, on the evening of the Galatee's arrival from Havre, he had paced the deck watching the light in her window until it disappeared, and had afterward stood leaning on the low stone wall beneath her window until the hour when he should catch the early morning train for Blois? He had then seen her only twice in his life; but the first time he loved her. She read his secret now. Her eyes fell, and a blush suffused her face. The captain was busy at the little porcelain stove, piling on fagots; but there was no need for further words between the two.

"You are not going to be ill?" he asked in a voice of tender solicitude. "May I—will you let me prescribe for you?"

Marguerite flashed a smile at him. "I do not like to take medicine," she said, "but you I am sure would give me nothing unpleasant."

Lempriere took the slender wrist between his fingers and held it in silence for a while, then seating himself at a little table beside the bed. He had conquered his emotion and was all physician now. He wrote a prescription and turned to hand it to the captain, but he was gone. Five minutes later his voice was heard calling from below, "Lempriere! The purser is here, and is asking for you!"

Lempriere came to Marguerite's bedside.

"Promise me," he said, "that you will be well and strong when I return, and then I shall have something, I hope, I may tell you—"

"Lempriere!" came the voice of the captain.

"I promise," she said, her beautiful face radiant with happiness. "Go now, my father is calling for you. Farewell."

"No, not farewell—au revoir."

He caught her hand and kissed it; then snatching a flower from a vase on the table beside the bed he left the room.

(To Be Continued.)

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