She Didn't Sleep Well.

A woman who lives in an inland town, while going to a convention in a distant city, spent one night of the journey on board a steamboat. It was the first time she had ever traveled by water. She reached her journey's end extremely fatigued. To a friends who remarked it she replied:

"Yes, I'm tired to death. I don't know that I care to travel by water again. I read the card in my stateroom abotu how to put the life preserver on, and I thought I understood it, but I guess I didn't. Somehow I couldn't go to sleep with the thing on."—Ladies' Home Journal.

His System.

"How do you dispose of your garbage here?" asked the stranger, who was gathering data for purposes of publication.

"We always throw ours in the garbage can," said the man with the chin beard; "but I don't know, of course, about the neighbors."—Chicago Tribune.

Anything but Friendly.

"You astonish me. Your engagement with Miss Welloph is broken, is it? Are the relations between you still friendly?"

"I should say not! The relations between us are her relations, and they're my bitter enemies."

No Longer in the Limelight.

Then old Vesuvius checked his rage,
And straightway called a truce.
"There's too much competition now,"
He muttered. "What's the use!"

His Good Reason.

"Why does Smithy visit his wealthy aunt so often?"

"If he didn't he might have to visit his 'uncle.'"—Houston Post.

Defines the Court's Duty.

A. G. Jewett, lawyer, politician and man of sarcastic wit, was once trying a case in the supreme court in Belfast, Me., his home city. The judge presiding, before being called to the bench, had tried many cases against Jewett, who did not entertain a very high opinion of his ability.

In his closing argument, Jewett, in defiance of the rules of the court, started in to read some law to the jury. The court pounded on the bench and said: "Mr. Jewett, you must not read law to the jury in your closing argument." Jewett kept on reading, without so much as a glance at the court. The court in thunderous tones ordered him to stop.

Jewett, who had by this time read all he intended to read, turned calmly to the judge and said: "Did your honor address me?"

"I said," roared the judge, "you must not read law to the jury in your closing argument. I will give the law to the jury. What do you suppose the court is here for?"

"What is the court here for?" responded Jewett in high falsetto. "I suppose you know, sir, to keep order with the aid of the sheriff, sir, with all due respect to the sheriff, sir."—Boston Herald.

What Noon Means in Law.

The courts of several states have dealt with an odd question, none of them agreeing upon a similar answer. When is it legally noon? Fire insurance policies expire at noon and the word is admitted to mean exactly 12 o'clock, midday. But standard time has not been adopted in all communities. Many small towns cling to sun time, which may be from a few minutes to nearly an hour earlier than standard.

In one state a fire occurred at two minutes past noon, sun time, and the insurance company held that the policy had expired before the fire. Sun time is used in that town, but the insured sued the company, holding that local customs did not rule the policy and that he was entitled to his insurance. The state courts sustained him.

In another state a similar contention was taken to the courts and just the opposite decision given. Several conflicting precedents have been established in state courts, and it is said the question can only be decided for good and all when a case has been carried into the United States courts and passed upon by the Supreme Court.—New York Press.

Dealing with Deadheads.

Willie Collier, the actor, was asked if he was much annoyed by requests from deadheads.

"I receive them in shoals," he replied; "but generally manage to put them off politely, but firmly. The other day, for instance, I received a letter from a man, who wrote that he had had the pleasure of meeting me in California sometime ago. I had never even heard the man's name before. However, he added kindly that he was much pleased with my play, and maybe I could send him two seats for the next matinee."

"Did you answer the letter?"

"Oh, yes! I sent him a postal-card saying maybe I couldn't."

Edited Out.

"John," said Lorna Doone, "you ought not to come and meet me by stealth. It isn't right. My family wouldn't like it."

"All's fair in love or war, Lorna," chuckled John Ridd, "and this is both."

But Mr. Blackmore, fearing that this light play of the intellect was not suited to so heavy a man as Big John, omitted all mention of the incident in writing the story.

It Was Unbearable.

Towne—I hear you've got a first-class cook now.

Browne—Yes, but I'm going to get rid of her. She's making my life unbearable.

Towne—How?

Browne—Oh, my wife is always bothering me to get her gowns as swell as the cook wears.—Philadelphia Press.

Prisoners and Captives

By H. S. MERRIMAN

CHAPTER XXII.

Matthew Mark Easton was a quick thinker if not a deep one, and it is those who think quickly who give quickly. This man had something to give, something to tear away from his own heart and hold out with generous, smiling eyes, and, before Miss Winter's door had closed behind him, the sacrifice was made. He called a hansom cab and drove straight to Tyars' club. He found his friend at work among his ship's papers, folding and making up in packets his receipted bills.

"Morning," said the Englishman. "These papers are almost ready to be handed over to you. All my stores are on board."

"Ah!"

Tyars looked up sharply, and as sharply returned to his occupation. Easton was grave, and Tyars knew that he had come with news of some sort. He waited, however, for the American to begin, and continued to fold and arrange his papers.

"I have," said Easton, sitting down and tapping the neat toe of his boot with his cane, "hit quite accidentally upon a discovery——"

"Poor chap!" muttered Tyars, abstractedly.

"Which will make a difference in your crew."

"What?" exclaimed Tyars, pausing in the middle of a knot.

"One rule," continued Easton, his queer little face twisting and twinkling with some emotion, which he was endeavoring to conceal, "was that no sweethearts or wives were to be left behind."

"What are you driving at?" asked Tyars, curtly, in a singularly lifeless voice.

"Well, old man, I have discovered a sweetheart."

Tyars threw the papers in a heap and rose suddenly from his seat. He walked to the mantel piece.

"Of course," he said, "your discovery can only relate to one person."

"Yes; you know whom I mean."

Tyars nodded his head in acquiescence and continued smoking. The little American sat looking in a curious way at this large, impassive, high-bred Englishman, as if gathering enjoyment and edification from the study of him.

"Well," he drawled, at length, "you say nothing!"

"There is nothing to say."

"On the contrary," returned Easton, "there is everything to say. That is one of the greatest mistakes made by your people. I have noticed it since I have been in this country. You take too much for granted. You let things say themselves too much, and you think it very fine to be impassive and apparently indifferent. But it is not a fine thing, it is silly and unbusiness like. Do you give up Oswin Grace?"

"Certainly; if you can get him to stay behind."

"He will run his head against a wall if he can. That is to say, is there is a thick enough wall around."

Tyars hesitated. "I am not quite sure that it is my business," he said. "I hate meddling in other people's affairs, and, after all, I suppose Grace knows best what he is doing."

"Men rarely know what they are doing under these circumstances," observed Easton.

He waited patiently, hat in hand, to hear what Tyars had to say. While he stood there, Muggins, the bull-terrier, rose from the hearth rug, stretched himself and looked from one to the other in an inquiring and anticipatory manner. He took it to be a question of going for a walk, and apparently imagined that the casting vote was him.

"All right," said Tyars, suddenly, "I will speak to him again."

"To-day?" pursued Easton, following up his advantage, "or to-morrow at the latest."

"Yes; to-morrow at the latest."

Then the American took his departure, and Muggins curled himself up on the hearth rug again with a yawn of disappointment.

Oswin Grace was seated in the bright little cabin at a table writing out lists of stores. Many of these same stores were piled on the deck around him, and there was a pleasant odor of paraffine in the air. Tyars closed the cabin door with his elbow.

"I do not see," he said, slowly and uncomfortably, "how you can very well go with us."

Grace laid aside his pen and raised his keen, gray eyes. His brow was wrinkled, his lips set, his eyes full of fight.

"Because," suggested Grace, in a hard voice, "I am in love with Agnes Winters?"

Tyars nodded his head and stooped to pick up his gloves, holding them subsequently close to the bars of the stove, where they steamed gayly. There was a silence of some duration, and every second increased the discomfort of Claud Tyars.

"And you," continued Grace, at length, very deliberately, "love Helen!"

Tyars stood upright, so that his head was very near the beams. He thrust his gloves into his pocket and stood for some seconds, grasping his short pointed beard meditatively with the uninjured hand.

"Yes," he said, "I do."

Grace returned to his ship chandler's bills with the air of a barrister who, having established his point, thinks it prudent to allow time for it to sink into the brains of judge and jury.

"I do not mind telling you," he added, carelessly, almost too carelessly, "that Miss Winters is perfectly indifferent on the subject."

"Do you know that for certain?" asked Tyars, sharply.

"She told me so herself," answered Grace, with a peculiar little laugh which was not pleasant to the ear.

He waited obviously for a reciprocal confidence on the part of Tyars; but he waited in vain.

"Of course," he said, "I have no desire to meddle with your affairs. I ask no questions, and I look for no spontaneous confidences. It will be better for you to lose sight altogether of the coincidence that I am—her brother."

Tyars had seated himself on the corner of the cabin table, with his back half turned toward his companion. He had picked up a piece of straw, of which there was a quantity lying on table and floor, and this he was biting meditatively. It was as yet entirely a puzzle to him, and this was only a new complication. He could not understand it, just as better men than Claud Tyars have failed to understand it all through. For no one, I take it, does understand love, and no man can say whither it will lead.

"There need," continued Oswin Grace, perforating a series of small holes in his blotting paper with the point of a cedarwood pencil, "be no nonsense of that sort. I am going to take it upon myself to watch over Helen's interests; they are much safer in your hands than in mine."

Still Tyars said nothing, and after a little pause, Grace went on, in measured, thoughtful tones, carrying with them the weight of deliberation.

"There is one point," he said, "upon which I think there must be an understanding."

"Yes," said Tyars anxiously.

"Any risks—extra risks, such as boatwork, night-work up aloft—these must be mine. From what you have said, I gather that your intention was to be skipper, and yet do the rough work as well. When anything hazardous is to be done, I shall do it. You must stick to the ship."

"I have no doubt," said Tyars, seating himself at the table and beginning to open his letters, "that we are all constructing a very fine mountain out of materials intended for a molehill. I, for one, have no intention of leaving my bones in the far North. There is no reason why we should not all be back home by this time next year."

"None at all," agreed Oswin somewhat perfunctorily, adding, with a suspicion of doubt the next minute: "Suppose we succeed?"

"Well, what then?"

"Suppose we get there all right, rescue the men and go on safely; we get over the elemental danger, and then we have to face the political, which is worse."

"I do not see it," replied Tyars. "We sell the ship at San Francisco. Half the crew expect to be paid off there, the other half will disperse with their passage money in their pockets, and very few of them will find their way back to England. Our doctor is a German socialist, with several aliases; our second mate a simple-minded Norwegian whaling skipper. The exiles do not know a word of English, or pretend they do not, and none of the crew speaks Russian. There will be absolutely no intercourse on board, and only you, the doctor and myself will ever know who the rescued men really are. The crew will imagine that they are the survivors of a Russian ivory hunting expedition, and if the truth ever comes out, it will be impossible to prove that you and I knew better."

"But it will not be easy to keep the newspapers quiet."

"We shall not attempt to keep them quiet. It will only be a local matter. The San Francisco papers will publish libelous woodcuts of our countenances and a column or two purporting to be biographical, but the world will be little the wiser. In America such matters are interesting only in so much as they are personal, and there is in reality nothing easier than the suppression of one's personality. There is no difficulty in kicking an interviewer out of the room, just as one would kick out any intruder; and we are quite indifferent as to whether the American newspapers abuse us or not after having been kicked. As to the details of the voyage, I shall withhold those with the view of publishing a book, which is quite the correct thing nowadays. The book shall always be in course of preparation, and will never appear."

In this wise the two men continued talking, planning, scheming all the morning, while they worked methodically and prosaically.

The eleventh of March was fixed for the sailing of the Argo, exploring vessel, and Easton's chief thought on the subject was a vague wonder as to what he would do with himself after she had gone.

The Argo was to pass out of the tidal basin into the river at one o'clock, and at half-past twelve Easton drove up to the dock gates. He brought with him the last items of the ship's outfit in the shape of a pile of newspapers, and a bunch of hothouse roses for the cabin table, for there was to be a luncheon party on board while steaming down the river.

He found Admiral Grace strolling about the deck with Tyars, conversing in quite a friendly way, and endeavoring honestly to suppress his contempt for seamanship of so young a growth as that of his companion. The ladies were below, inspecting the ship under Oswin's guidance.

"She is," he said, addressing himself to the admiral, with transatlantic courtesy, "a strange mixture of the man-of-war and the yacht—do you not find it so, sir?"

"She is," answered the old gentleman, guardedly, "one of the most complete vessels I have ever boarded—though her outward appearance is, of course, against her."

"One can detect," continued the American, looking round with a musing eye, "the influence of a naval officer."

The old gentleman softened visibly. At this moment the ladies appeared, escorted by Oswin Grace—Miss Winter first, with a searching little smile in her eyes. Easton saw that she was very much on the alert.

"I feel quite at home," she said to him, looking round her, "although there are so many changes."

"So do I; the more so because the changes have been made under my own directions."

They walked aft, leaving the rest of the party standing together. As they walked, Oswin Grace watched them with a singular light in his clear gray eyes; singular because gray eyes rarely glisten, they only darken at times.

Presently the vessel glided smoothly between the slimy gates out into the open river. The tow-line was cast off, and the Argo's engines started. The vessel swung slowly round on the greasy water, pointing her blunt, stubborn prow down the misty river. She settled to her work with a docile readiness, like a farmer's mare on the outward road.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Had an acute but uninitiated observer been introduced into the little cabin of the Argo during the consumption of the delicate repast provided by her officers, he or she could scarcely have failed to notice a certain recklessness among the party assembled. Admiral Grace was the only one who really did justice to the steward's maiden and supreme effort, and he, in consequence, was singular in failing to appreciate the witticisms of Matthew Mark Easton and Oswin Grace. This was, perhaps, owing to the fact that when we have passed the half-way milestone in life, we fail to appreciate the most brilliant conversation. It is just possible that Admiral Grace did not think very much of the wit—taken as wit pure and simple. His position was not unique.

Once or twice Easton's words recurred to Miss Winter: "I intend to be intensely funny, and I guess you will have to laugh." This was her cue, and she acted upon it.

The meal came to an end and a move was made. There was nothing else to do but to go on deck. The moments dwindled on with the slow, dragging monotony which makes us almost impatient to see the last of faces which we shall perhaps never look upon again. Presently, the town of Gravesend hove in sight, and all on the quarterdeck of the Argo gazed at it as they might have gazed on some unknown Eastern city after traversing the desert. And then, after all—all the waiting, the preparation, the counting of moments, and the calculating of distances—the bell in the engine room came as a surprise. There was something startling in the clang of gong as the engineer replied.

Helen was the last to rise. She stood holding the shawl which Oswin had spread over her knees, and looked round with a strange, intense gaze. The steamer was now drifting slowly on the tide with resting engines. There were two boats rowing toward her from Gravesend Pier, one a low, green-painted wherry for the pilot, the other a larger boat, with stained and faded red cushions. The scene—the torpid, yellow river, the sordid town and low riverside warehouses—could scarce have been exceeded for pure, unvarnished dismalness.

Already the steps were being lowered. In a few moments the larger boat swung alongside, held by a rope made fast in the forecastle of the Argo. A general move was made toward the rail. Tyars passed out on the gangway, where he stood waiting to hand the ladies into the boat. Helen was near to her brother; she turned to him and kissed him in silence. Then she went to the gangway. There was a little pause, and for a moment Helen and Tyars were left alone at the foot of the brass-bound steps.

"Good-by," said Tyars.

There was a slight prolongation of the last syllable, as if he had something else to say; but he never said it, although she gave him time.

"Good-by," she answered, at length; and she, too, seemed to have something to add which was never added.

Then she stepped lightly into the boat and took her place on the faded red cushions.

The Argo went to sea that night. There was much to do, although everything seemed to be in its place, and every man appeared to know his duty. It thus happened that Tyars and Grace had not a moment to themselves until well on into the night. The watch was set at 8 o'clock. For a moment Tyars paused before leaving his chief officer alone on the little bridge.

"What a clever fellow Easton is!" he said. "I never recognized it until this afternoon."

(To be continued.)

Bone and Sinew.

"Do you see that distinguished-looking man over there with glue-colored whiskers? Well, he furnishes the bone and sinew of the nation."

"You don't say. Is he the head of a physical culture college?"

"Nope."

"Recruiting station?"

"'Way off."

"Then what is his line?"

"Why, he runs a 3-cent lunchroom."

Crafty Count.

"Do you remember how Count Cashnaught sympathized with America when he was wooing the daughter of the New York millionaire?"

"I should say so. Why, he used to sing 'Yankee Doodle' two or three times every day."

"And does he still sing 'Yankee Doodle' now that he has won her?"

"No; now he sings 'Yankee Boodle.'"