The Professor and the Lion

"From The Sketch"

By J. Sackville Martin.

Bravery, Doctor, said my friend the third officer, isn't such a simple thing as you think it. One man is brave in one way, and another in a different one. Often enough, that which is called bravery is nothing more than custom. You wouldn't go up on the fore-royal-yard in half a gale to reef sail, would you? Not you! You'd be afraid. Well, you might think me a brave man because I would. But then I'd be afraid to cut a chap's leg off, and you wouldn't.

That was what old Captain Hoskins, whom I used to sail with, could never understand. If a man was a bit nervous about the sea, he used to look down on him as all sorts of a coward. But there came a day when he learned better.

It happened when I was with him in a three-masted sailing-ship, the Arrow. We lay at Singapore, alongside Tanjong Pagan wharf, loading with a general cargo for Liverpool. The principal object in that cargo was a lion that we were shipping for London. It lay in a strong cage of wood and iron, with a door in the front through which it could be fed. It was a fine big brute, and every time it stretched itself you could see the muscles slipping over its sides and the big, wicked-looking claws peeping out of the pads of its feet in a way that made you very thankful for the bars.

We had a passenger or two, one of whom was a young girl who went by the name of Hilda Sandford. Directly the old man set eyes on her trim figure and her wealth of golden hair, he was struck all of a heap, so to speak, and I could see that he was promising himself a mighty pleasant voyage.

The other passenger was a strange, lean, wiry man, who wore gold eyeglasses, and kept peering about the ship in a most uncomfortable way. He gave his name as Professor Hay, though we didn't find out what he professed until later.

An hour or two before we started this Mr. Hay came up to the old man and began asking him a lot of questions.

"Captain," he said nervously, "I hope we shall have a quiet passage."

"I don't see why we shouldn't," said Hoskins genially.

Mr. Hay looked up at the sky.

"There seems to be a good deal of wind about," he said.

"Pretty fair," said Hoskins. "That's what's going to take us home. Not being a steamer, we can't do without it."

"You're sure it's quite safe?" asked Hay.

"Safe!" says the old man, getting on his high horse, "safe! I'm sailing this ship."

The Professor smiled apologetically. "You will excuse me, Captain," he said, "I did not mean any offence. The fact is I am constitutionally nervous on ship-board. It is a feeling that I have never been able to overcome."

The "old man" looked at him with a sort of good-natured contempt.

"You've no call to be alarmed," he said; "we'll take you to England safe enough."

The Professor smiled again and walked off into the waist, where we had fixed up the lion's cage. It seemed to have a sort of attraction for him, for he stood before it for at least a quarter of an hour. Hoskins looked after him, and then turned to Miss Sandford, who was sitting near.

"Nice sort of chap to have on a ship," he said. "A man like that ought to stick to dry land."

"Well, you know, I have a fellow-feeling for him, Captain," she answered; "I'm afraid of the sea myself."

"Ah," he said, "but you're a woman, you see. A bit of fear is all right in a woman. It's natural to them. But with a man it's different. A man ought to be afraid of nothing."

"And are you not afraid of anything, Captain?" she asked.

"Not I," said Hoskins. "You can have the biggest storm ever hatched by the China Sea and I'll thank you for it. It brings out all the good in a man."

"It must be nice to be so brave," she exclaimed.

"Oh, it's all right when you're used to it," said Hoskins modestly. "A brave man and a pretty woman are two of the finest sights in creation. They ought always to be together."

There was something in his tone that made her blush, and though she agreed with him, she took the first opportunity of clearing off to another part of the deck.

Shortly afterwards we put to sea. For the next few days we had the best weather, and everything went smoothly. I could see one or two things that set me thinking. The first was that the old man was making himself uncommonly attentive to Miss Sandford. The second was that Mr. Hay, in a quiet and timid sort of way, was thinking a good deal of her too. For my part, I thought the girl fancied Hay rather than Hoskins; and though she couldn't avoid the "old man," and could not help listening to his sea yarns, I could see her eyes turning forwards towards the waist, where Hay was putting in his time looking at the lion.

One afternoon the skipper was sitting beside Miss Sandford on the poop-deck, when Hay came up the companion and made his way towards them.

"There's something I want to tell you, Captain," he said. "It's getting on my mind and making me quite uncomfortable. That man whose business it is to look after the lion isn't doing his work properly. The animal isn't getting enough food. It is developing a savage nature. And yesterday, when I went to see the man about it, I found that he was intoxicated. I really think you should interfere."

Of course, the "old man" should have interfered. But he didn't like being told his duty by the little Professor, especially when the girl was about, so he just sneered.

"I suppose you're afraid of the beast escaping?" he said.

"I should certainly regard it as unfortunate," the little man replied. "You see, a drunken man might be careless about the fastenings. I must really insist upon your speaking to him."

"He's not one of my crew," said Hoskins. "I have enough to do to look after them. If any of them get drunk, they'll hear of it. But this chap is a passenger, even if he is only a steerage one. He can do as he likes with his spare time. If you're so darned frightened about the beast, you'd better look to the fastenings yourself."

"Excuse me," said the Professor stiffly, "that is not my business. The animal does not belong to me. I have done what I believe to be my duty and can say no more."

He turned away without even a glance at the girl.

"That man," said Hoskins, looking after him, "is frightened of his own shadow. Let me give you a bit of fatherly advice, Miss Sandford. When you are looking for a man to marry, never select a coward. A girl like you wants someone who will protect her in times of danger; someone she can rely on and look up to."

"I'm not thinking of getting married," she said shyly. "But when I do, I'll bear your advice in mind, Captain."

"That's it," said Hoskins. "Think over it carefully. And as for getting married, I'd be glad if you'd think over that too."

She started, with a frightened look.

"Oh, Captain!" she said. "Please don't."

"Miss Sandford!" he said. "Hilda! haven't you a word for a poor old seaman who worships the very ground you tread on? Think over it. None but the brave deserve the fair, you know."

"You mustn't speak like this," she exclaimed, rising as though she were distressed. "You are older than I am, and I don't know that you are a brave man. I have only your word for it. Please don't speak to me about this again."

The "old man" saw that he had gone too far. "Wait!" he said, "don't be frightened. I promise not to say a word until we reach England. Before we get there, if we have a bit of rough weather, I'll show you the sort of man I am. I should love a bit of danger for your sake."

About a week later, the girl was sitting on the poop-deck, reading a book. The "old man" was marching up and down with a quarter-deck trot, casting glances at her and thinking how pretty she was, when suddenly he uttered a howl that would have frightened an elephant and sprang into the port mizzen rigging. I was near at the time, and I looked at him, wondering whether he had gone mad. Then I saw what he had seen, and I went up to the starboard mizzen shrouds as quickly as he had gone up the port ones. The girl raised her head and looked up at the Captain and he gaped down at her and tried to shout. But for some time he could only make faces.

"Look! look!" he yelled at last, "come up the rigging!" The lion is loose!"

She sprang to her feet and looked about her. Not four yards away from her the lion was playing with a coil of rope, the terrible claws alternately exposing and sheathing themselves. The creature was paying no sort of attention to the girl at the moment, but of course it might take it into its head to spring on her at any instant. As she stood, she was cornered between the stern of the ship and the cabin door. There was nothing to be done but to climb up the rigging. She tried, but the first step was too high, and she could not manage it; when she realized that, I thought she was going to faint.

Hoskins was just going down to give her a hand, but at that moment the lion looked up and saw him, and lashing its tail gave a muffled roar. The "old man" stuck where he was then, and sort of shivered all over like a jelly. As for the girl, she moaned despairingly, and gave herself up for lost. Just then—out of the cabin came Professor Hay.

He took one look around and saw the lion. Then he picked up a broom that someone who had been washing decks had left leaning against the deck-house, and pushed at the lion with it, looking it straight between the eyes. He kept walking forward, pushing the beast gently before him right into the waist and back into its cage, in spite of several ugly snarls. When he had it safely fastened in, he came astern again, looking not the least bit excited or worried, and put the broom carefully back in its place. The girl was looking hard at him, and her eyes were shining; but he didn't seem to be aware of it. Captain Hoskins had come down the rigging and was looking a trifle ashamed of himself. He hadn't known it was so easy to push lions into their cage with a broom. After a bit he spoke up.

"That was a fine bit of work, Sir," he said. "If I hadn't seen it, I couldn't have believed it."

"Oh, it's nothing," said the Professor. "It was my business. I have tamed wild animals."

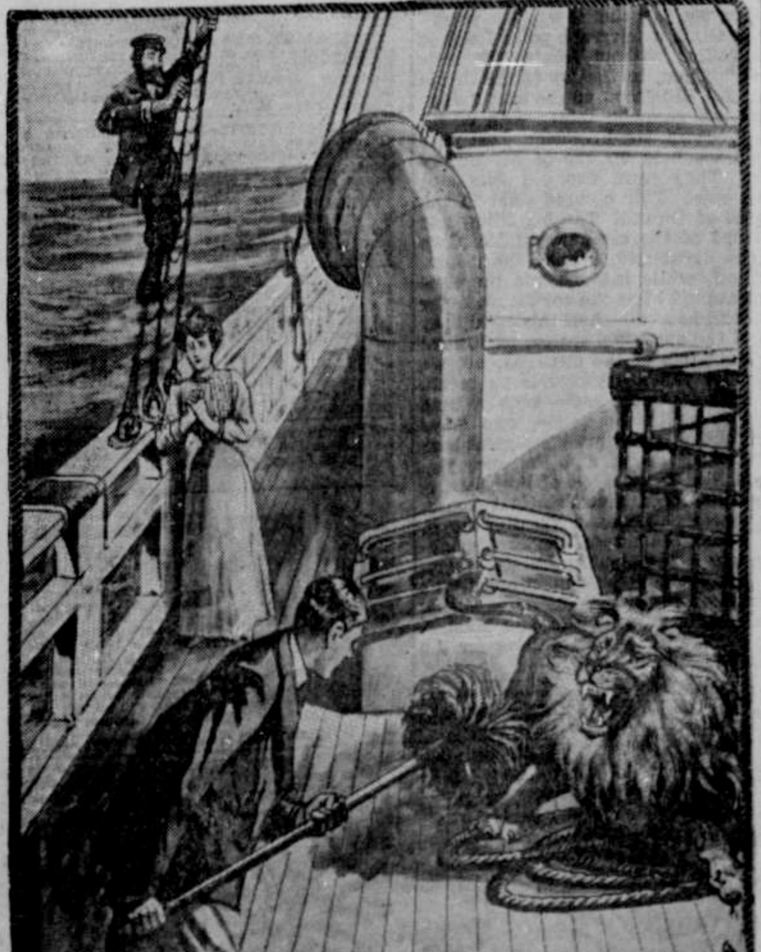
After that he seemed to dismiss the whole subject from his mind, and went down into the cabin. But I saw him, later in the evening, talking to that girl, and he must have had something important to say to her, for when the "old man" met her next morning and began making excuses for himself, she cut him short.

"Captain Haskins," she said, "do you remember advising me to marry a brave man?"

"I do," said Hoskins, a bit puzzled.

"Well," she said softly, "he asked me yesterday; and I'm going to take your advice."

All of which shows you, Doctor, that bravery is very much a matter of custom. As for poor old Hoskins, we had mill-pond weather the whole way home, and he hadn't even a chance to show himself.—Sketch.



"PUSHED AT THE LION, LOOKING IT STRAIGHT BETWEEN THE EYS."

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"So we toast all together
To the gray goose feather
And the land where the gray goose flew."

The White Company is the sequel to Mr. Doyle's great story, Sir Nigel, for which he received Twenty-five Thousand Dollars.

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A Russian does not become of age until he is twenty-six.

At the recent Grecian athletic games, the Russians made a particularly poor showing in the sprinting or running contests, notwithstanding their extensive Manchurian training.

The Washington Post says that that German stable hand who was imprisoned for three weeks for swearing at one of the Kaiser's horses "will hereafter curb and bridle his temper a bit." Should think he would.

It is nowstated that the Japanese General Kuroki is none other than Sir Hector MacDonald, who mysteriously disappeared or died some years ago in India. The story is ridiculed in Russian circles, as these people say they know, many of them personally, that Kuroki fought like anything but a dead one.

SEASONABLE FADS.

Unique and Striking Designs in Hair Ornaments, Hat Pins and Necklaces.

This year has its share of fads and frills quite as much as any that are past and these are used with no small degree of art and precision. One might almost think that the days of barbarism had returned so wide and fervid is the craze for beads, buckles and bracelets, were it not for the fact that each article which is donned gains that distinction by reason of its harmony or contrast. Color plays a great part in the present sartorial drama and the fashionable woman is always seeking for effect in its use. Beads in the form of necklaces are worn in all colors and they are used to further accentuate some color tone in the costume. The necklace worn with the lingerie blouse is often chosen to match the hat and gloves, or to offer a becoming note of contrast to a monotone ensemble. A girl of to-day does not own one necklace but a dozen, some of them expensive but the majority costing from $2 to $5 each. Some very beautiful shades of green and amethyst are seen in these beads, while amber is returned to favor with a vengeance.

Among the prettiest necklaces recently seen are those of shell from Honolulu with coloring of wondrous beauty. They come in all of the pastel shades, while the blue-grays, greens, pale yellows and old rose are beautifully combined. The shells are very small and alive with color. The necklaces are often long enough to wind several times about the neck.

Hatpins, too, are causing considerable interest this year, appearing in all manner of fantastic shapes and in rare colorings. The same idea of harmony is adhered to with these quite as much as in the choice of a necklace. Those pins with heads of amber are considered especially smart with black hats as well as those of tan and brown, while almost every fashionable color may be matched in hatpins of crystal or other persuasion. Some very dainty heads of Dresden china are hand painted and tinted with the delicate colors for wear with the white and flower hats.

Carrying out this idea of artistic adornment are the flowers of soft satin ribbon which trim many dainty frocks and hats. The gloss of the ribbon as well as its softness and exquisite shadings give to the blossoms of ribbon a rare beauty which is seldom seen in those of silk or velvet. Rare little bunches of violets or wild roses made of satin ribbon are frequently worn as bodice decoration instead of the real flowers, and while they prove an excellent suggestion of the flowers themselves, they have the added charm of not crushing and of being always fresh. A lady of fashion recently sailing for Europe carried several beautiful little corsage boquets of this kind.

There has been a greater demand for fancy combs and hair ornaments this year than for sometime past. Head dressing has reached its height during the past few years and coiffures were never more exquisitely arranged. It is small wonder then that the demand for combs has been so great. Here the idea of suitability is still followed and while the comb must be that in best harmony with the costume, the little bar or other shaped pin which holds the stray locks at the neck must match the comb. These are in all prices. One very striking and attractive comb seen recently was of a composition resembling amber. A huge dragon fly spread its wings across the top in beautifully shaded metal giving the effect of iridescence in coloring. The price was $3.50. Another of tortoise shell mounted in solid gold with dainty designs of leaves and berries was five inches wide and cost $21.50. The fruit was carried out in small Oriental pearls, the centre one being a large fresh water pearl. In spite of the good imitations which can be had, the real shell is unequalled for lightness and durability.

Margaret Anglin.

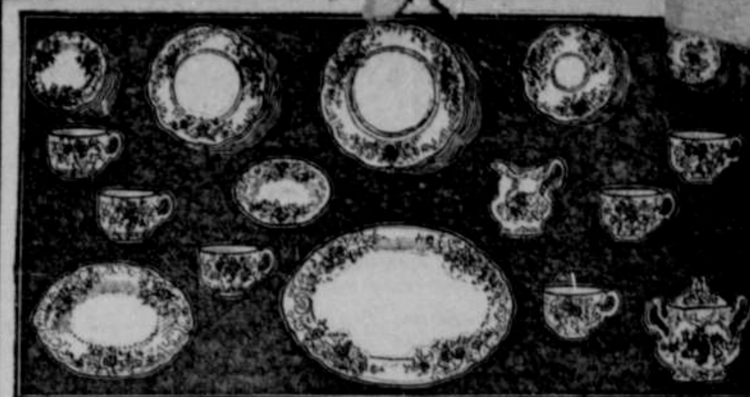
Margaret Anglin, who refused to proceed with the third act of William Vaughn Moody's play until he signed a document giving her the exclusive American, English and Australian rights to it, was born in the Canadian House of Parliament twenty-five years ago. That her birthplace was unusual resulted from the fact that her father, Timothy Anglin, was Speaker of the Canadian House and her mother was there during a session.

Miss Anglin has been on the stage ten years, her first important engagement being with James O'Neill, with whom she played Mercedes in "Monte Cristo." In Mansfield's production of the famous "Cyrano de Bergerac" she had the part of Roxanne, and later was star in the Empire Theatre Stock Company of New York. For two years she has been at the head of her own company, and has achieved marked success in "Zira."

The Muck Rake writers are said to be going after the fertilizer trust; probably not, however, tooth and nail.

It is annouced that the pump trust will increase its capital stock by some eight million dollars. We refrain from making the usual watery remarks which might be suggested in this connection.

Friends of Secretary Taft admit that a man constructed on his generous plan of architecture has a small chance of escape when an enthusiastic Presidential bee takes a notion to get after him in earnest.



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