

not aware, and with a faint cry the detective officer went over the rail, which Mildred clutched with both hands as he gazed downward to where there was a brilliant flash as the phosphorescent water parted, and from somewhere near at hand as Mildred turned away, a voice shouted, "Man overboard!" a cry which seemed to thrill the vessel from end to end.

The music had ceased as if by magic, and as he stood holding on by the rail, gazing aft into the golden phosphorescent water that had been churned up by the screw, John Mildred was conscious that the deck, the whole vessel, was palpitating with life. Orders were ringing out, a boat was being lowered, a buzz of question and answer raged around him, but no one seemed to heed his presence—he, the mainspring of the whole, was no more than the meanest man in the ship.

And yet it vibrated within his brain that by this last act in resistance of the law whose operation he had been ready to welcome, he might have added another crime to his account. And why was this? he asked himself, though the question was needless, for the answer thrilled him. He wished now to live, if only to go through some long and painful penance that should make him fit to take that hand he had shrunk from touching, and live and love the only woman who had ever awakened that great passion within his breast.

They were alone—he and that man who was trying to arrest him—and his action had been the almost unconscious natural effort for life. No one had seen in the darkness; no one heeded him now. Everyone was intent upon the efforts being made to save him who was floating half a mile astern, the direction plainly marked by two bright lights that had burst out like blue stars of hope, as the triggers were touched which set free a couple of life-buoys, to be left behind by the liner when the screw had ceased to revolve.

Thought crushed out thought in the wretched man's brain as an awful mental struggle went on, his eyes meanwhile fixed on the flashing water as the oars of the boat that had been lowered splashed up a golden spray.

He felt that he could not die. It was impossible now to give up. The eyes he had gazed into that night had avowed a sweet sympathetic love, and if she knew all, he read that within them as something which repeated itself now—she would bid him for her sake live.

And meanwhile, the wild excitement in what was taking place literally raged around him, but no finger pointed at him. There was none to accuse, none to say, "Behold the murderer! Seize him, for it was he!"

No. It was more and more beginning to be forced upon him that there had been no witness to his act, and he had but to stand firm with closed lips and wait.

His secret was that officer's alone, and he was far away astern, waiting to be saved, or to meet his end. Which was it to be?

Thought ran more swiftly still in John Mildred's breast. Would the boat reach him? Would he have swum for one of the lit-up life-buoys? Would he be picked up? And if picked up, would he be living, or would they be too late? That man alone knew his secret, and if picked up dead—dead was the secret too.

John Mildred loosened one hand from the polished rail and tried to stand firmly as he drew out a handkerchief to wipe away the drops that streamed from his forehead, trembling the while lest his action should be observed, conscious the next moment that even if he were noticed, the mildest interpretation would be placed upon his act.

Then came the desire to look round, and see whether she, who had influenced him so strangely, was near him upon the deck; and his nerves quivered as something seemed to tell him that she must be amongst the trembling agitated women who were gazing wildly astern; and at last, making a desperate effort, he hurried down to his cabin, turned up the light, busied himself at his cabin trunk, and then, opening the door, stood listening and trying to make out what was passing on deck.

What was it to be? What fate for him did Justice hold in her carefully balanced scales? He was not fit to live, he felt; and yet there was that within him that said it was now too hard to die. He could not die now, with such a dazzling future before him as life seemed to hold out. But what was it to be? He stood with his teeth set, his eyes staring, every nerve upon the strain,

until, no longer able to bear it, he hurried once more on deck and stood close to the cabin stairs, listening to the distant shouts that he knew must come from the boat; and these were answered by a wild cheer from the deck, and his heart sank, for the meaning was too plain.

The boat had reached the drowning man; he had been saved; and that meant—arrest—trial—death!

Death, when almost for the first time, hope and happiness had shone down upon his accursed life.

He descended and walked back slowly to his cabin, to stand and think. If he could go back now to the music room and take that hand and hold it for a moment to his lips, he could then have come back here. A few brief words would have aroused her compassion, and it would have been easier then.

"No; it would have been a coward's act. He could not have spoken. How could she have understood, even if he had confessed all?"

He waited till an hour must have passed, and no one disturbed the silence.

Then there was a burst of talking, and through his slightly open cabin door he gathered from the eager voices that the ship's surgeon had said all was over, that the unhappy passenger must have committed suicide, and no one knew who he was.

Dead, then—and his secret too!

Life began bubbling up, as it were, till every nerve was palpitating with a joyous thrill that drove down repentance, desire for reparation, the purging of the great offence.

"I must—I will live for the future, for the life I have never known; and then some day—ah!"

There was a buzz of voices outside the cabin. They were talking aloud, and he could hear more—hear the endorsement of the fact that his secret was dead, and he had but to live and wait in penitence and hope.

The next moment the captain and two of his officers pressed open the cabin door and stood before him.

"Mr. John Mildred," said the officer sternly—"That is not your name on the passenger list?"

"No," said the unhappy man firmly. "Then the warrant for your arrest is right?"

"Quite," was the reply, firmly. "That, sir, is what is written upon the warrant found upon the detective officer just picked up astern."

"Well, sir!" said Mildred gravely. "The unfortunate man you were seen to struggle with to-night and throw over the side."

"Who saw that?" said Mildred quietly. "I," said a voice, "the officer of the watch. Quick!" shouted the speaker, and he made a start to catch Mildred's hand, but the bullet was quicker still.

A loud report, the cabin filled with smoke which floated out after the spirit had gone to seek judgment in the great Beyond.

Novelty in Trimmings.

PRETTY MIXTURE OF REAL AND ARTIFICIAL FLOWERS.

A curious fashion has made its appearance in company with the tailor-made gown, writes a London correspondent. Real and artificial flowers are mixed as trimmings for hats and as neat little buttonholes to tuck in the cut-away coat.

"Real flower trimming for a straw hat is no novelty for the summer months," a West End modiste says, "but the combination of real and artificial blossoms for winter millinery is very uncommon. "Only a very small quantity of the real

flowers are used, as they must be renewed every day. For instance, a hat covered with artificial violets will have one real pink rose pinned in at the side.

"Another popular mixture is a toque of white velvet roses, with a large cluster of real parma violets.

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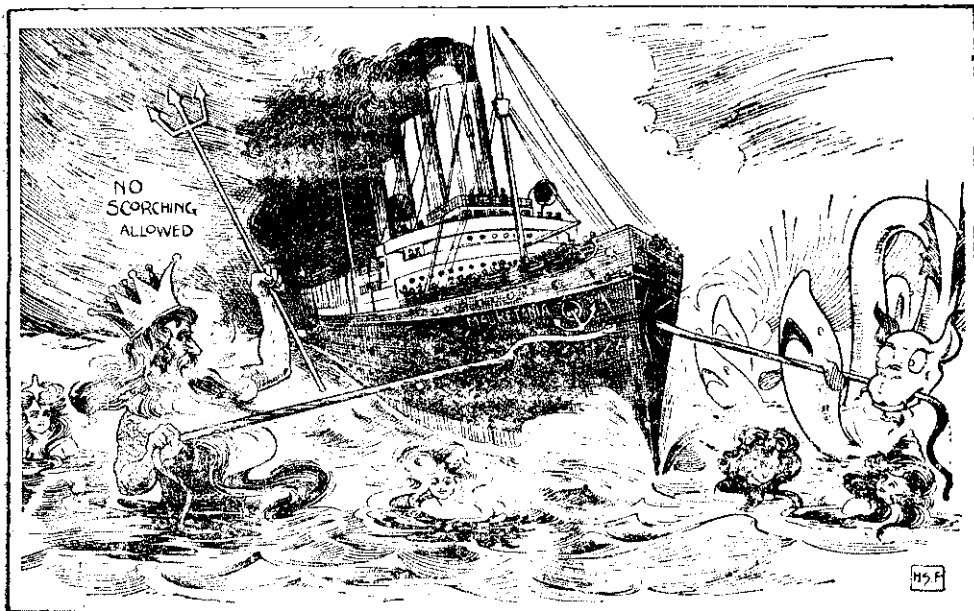
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