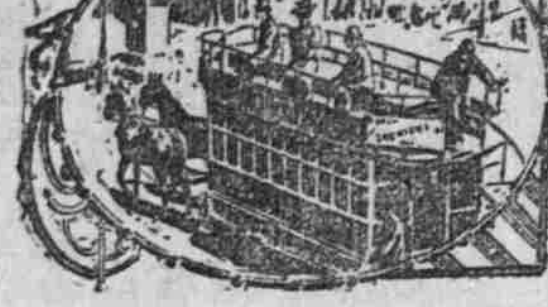


AN AMERICAN GIRL ABROAD.



BY WILLIAM BLACK.

CHAPTER III.—(Continued.)

It is gratifying to be able to state that during the whole of this evening the conduct of Miss Rosslyn was quite beyond reproach. Young Duncombe was in rather an eager and talkative mood—perhaps from the consciousness that he was entertaining those people; and she paid him the most scrupulous and courteous attention. Whether he was in jest or in earnest, she listened; and he had adopted a kind of don't-you-think-so attitude toward her, and often her eyes smiled assent and approval even when she did not speak. One could see that Queen Tita occasionally threw a glance toward the girl that seemed to savor of sarcasm; but women are like that, and are not to be heeded.

Now, when we left this snug hostelry to return to our "Nameless Barge," the two women led the way, and they had their arms interlinked and were engaged in conversation. What that conversation was we were not permitted to overhear; but on reaching the boat—which was all lighted up, by the way, and in the darkness looked something like one of those illuminated toy churches, with colored windows, that Italians used to sell in the streets—it was found that Miss Peggy was pretending to be very much annoyed with her friend. She wore an injured air. When Murdoch had got out the gangboard and we were all in the saloon again, Mrs. Threepenny-bit went and took down the banjo.

"Come, now, Peggy, don't be vexed. When I talk to you, it's for your good. Come along, now, and we'll have 'Carry me back to old Virginia' as a kind of general good-night."

"Oh, no," says Miss Peggy, "I'm afraid Mr. Duncombe would think it stupid, for no one knows the words."

Miss Peggy reaches over and takes the instrument that is handed to her.

"No," she says, "but I'll try an English ballad I heard a little while ago—I don't know whether I can manage it with this thing."

She struck the strings, and almost directly we recognized the prelude of one of the quaintest and prettiest of the old ballad airs. And then Miss Peggy sang:

"Early one morning, just as the sun was rising,
I heard a maid sing in the valley below:
'O, don't deceive me! Oh, never leave me!
How could you use a poor maiden so?'"

And thereafter she looked across the table at Queen Tita, with eyes that spoke of injury and reproach, as clearly as the mischief in them would allow.

CHAPTER IV.

All this world of young summer foliage was thirsting for rain; you could have imagined that the pendulous leaves of the lime-trees, hardly moving in the light air of the morning, were whispering among themselves, and listening for the first soft pattering of the longed-for shower. They were likely to get it, too. The swifts and swallows were flying low over the river, the sky was a uniform pale white, without any definite trace of cloud; there was a feeling of moisture in the faint-stirring wind. It was when we were passing Holme Park that it began—a few louches on hand or cheek, almost imperceptible, then heavier drops striking on the glassy surface of the stream, each with its little bell of air and widening circle around it. The four of us were now together in the stern—Murdoch being engaged in the pantry. On this occasion Jack Duncombe was entertaining us with a lively account of certain gayeties and festivities that had taken place just before he left town. Incidentally, he mentioned the banjo craze, and made merry over the number of people, among his own acquaintance, who, with a light heart, had set about learning to play, and who had suddenly been brought up short, through want of ear or some other cause.

"I had a try myself," he said, modestly; "but I soon got to the end of my tether."

"But you play a little?" said Miss Peggy.

"Oh, yes, a little—in a mechanical sort of way. It isn't everybody who has the extraordinary lightness of touch that you have."

"I am not a player at all," she said, "I am only a strummer. Anyhow, my banjo wants a thorough tuning some time or other, and I should be so much obliged to you if you would help me; if you would screw up the pegs while I tune the strings; it is much easier so."

"Not in the rain," he protested; for a much less ready-witted young man than he could not have failed to perceive the chance before him. "No; we will go into the saloon, and have a thorough overhauling of the strings. It will be a capital way of passing the time, for I don't see much prospect of the weather clearing at present."

She was quite obedient. She rose, and shook the rain drops from her sleeves and skirts, and passed through the door that he had courteously opened for her, he immediately following. When they had thus disappeared, Queen Tita was left alone with the steersman.

"That young man had better take care," she remarked, significantly.

"Why, what have you to say against her now? Did you ever see anybody behave better—more simply and frankly and straightforwardly?"

"If you only knew, it was when Peggy is best behaved that she is most dangerous," was the dark answer. "She doesn't take all that trouble for nothing, you may be sure."

"You are always inventing spiteful things about women."

"Perhaps you can tell me how long it takes to tune up a banjo?"

They certainly were an unaccountable time about it. The rain had almost ceased; different lights were appearing in

the sky—warm grays that had a cheerful look about them; and the birds had resumed their singing, filling all the air with a harmonious music. We crossed the mouth of the River Kennet, thus beginning the long loop which we hoped to complete by means of the Thames, Severn, Avon and Kennet, with the intermediate canals, until we should return to this very spot.

Nearing Purley, the towpath twice crosses the river; and now Jack Duncombe appears at the bow, and gets hold of the long pole, while Miss Rosslyn comes along and joins her friends aft.

"I had no idea it had left off raining," she observes, innocently.

"I hope you got the banjo properly tuned?" one of us says to her.

"Oh, yes; it is much better now," she answers pleasantly, and with an artless air. "But Mr. Duncombe was too modest. He can play very fairly indeed. He played two or three things just to try the banjo, and I was quite surprised."

"Oh, you can give him some lessons, Peggy," her friend says; but the young lady won't look her way; and the sarcasm—no more was intended—is lost.

We moored at Wallingford that night; and by the time that dinner was ready it was dusk enough to have the lamps and candles lighted. And perhaps, as we sat in this little room—and observed our young damsel's feeble efforts to guess at what dishes were the handiwork of the amateur cooks—the place looked all the more snug that the pattering of the rain on the roof was continually audible.

Dinner over, the two womenfolk retired to the upper end of the saloon, next to the big window; and Mrs. Threepenny-bit took down the banjo, and, without a word, handed it to Miss Peggy.

"Ah, I know what will fetch you," the girl said, with a not unkindly smile.

She struck a few low notes of introduction, and then began: "Once in the dear dead days beyond recall." It was an air that suited her contralto voice admirably, and when she came to the refrain—"Just a song at twilight, when the lights are low"—she sang that with a very pretty pathos indeed; inasmuch that when she had ended Queen Tita did not thank her with any speech, but she put her hand within the girl's arm instead and let it remain there. With her disengaged arm Miss Peggy held out the banjo.

"You now," she said to Mr. Duncombe, in her frank way.

He took the banjo from her, of course. "Oh, I can't sing," he said; "but I'll try to give you some idea of a rather quaint little ballad that most people know of, though very few have heard the whole of it, I imagine."

Then he sang, with good expression, if with no great voice:

"It's I was a-walking one morning in May
To hear the birds singing and see lambskins play,
I espied a young damsel, so sweetly sung she,
Down by the Green Bushes where she chanced to meet me."

"Remember," said he, "the words were written down from memory, and I may have got them all wrong."

Then he went on:

"'Oh, why are you loitering here, pretty maid?
I'm waiting for my true love,' softly she said;
'Shall I be your true love, and will you agree
To leave the Green Bushes and follow with me?'"

"I'll buy you the beavers and fine silken gowns,
I'll give you smart petticoats flounced to the ground,
I'll buy you fine jewels, and live but for thee,
If you'll leave your own true love and follow with me."

"The flounced petticoats make me think the ballad must be old," said the throbber; and he continued:

"'Oh, I want not your beavers, nor your silks, nor your hose,
For I'm not so poor as to marry for clothes;
But if you'll prove constant and true unto me,
Why, I'll leave the Green Bushes and follow with thee."

"Come, let us be going, kind sir, if you please,
Oh, let us be going from under these trees,
For under is coming my true love, I see,
Down by the Green Bushes where he was to meet me."

"And it's when he came there and found she was gone,
He was nigh heart-broken, and cried out forlorn:
'She has gone with another and forsaken me,
And left the Green Bushes where she used to meet me.'"

"Well, now, I call that just delightful!" Miss Peggy cried at once. "Why, I haven't heard anything so quaint and pretty for many a day! Just delightful, I call it. Mr. Duncombe, it is always a shame to steal people's songs, and especially this one, that is in a kind of way your own property; but, really, I should like to take it back home with me. Would you mind singing it over to me some other time? I think I could remember it."

"But I will copy it out for you," he said, instantly.

"It would be too much trouble," she rather faint-heartily suggested.

"It would give me a great deal of pleasure to copy it out for you," said he, quite earnestly, and she thanked him with her eyes cast down.

We had some further playing and singing (but no "Virginny"; oh, no; she was too well behaved; the time was not yet). And by-and-by the hour arrived for our retiring to our several bunks.

CHAPTER V.

It rained the next morning, but the afternoon was clearing, though there was still an April look about the banked-up clouds, with their breadths of bronze or saffron-hued lights here and there. We had had some thoughts of pushing on to

Oxford that evening; but as rain began to fall again, and as we wished Miss Peggy's first impressions of the famous university town to be favorable, we resolved upon passing the night at Abingdon. Indeed, we were all of us glad to get in out of the wet; and when water-proofs had been removed, and candles lighted, the blinds drawn, and Murdoch's ministrations placed on the table, it did not much matter to us what part of England happened to be lying alongside our gunwale.

We had no music this evening, for every one was busy in getting his or her things ready for going ashore on the following morning. Alas! for one fond desire that Miss Peggy should approach Oxford under favorable influences of weather. All that night it rained hard; in the morning it was raining hard; when we left Abingdon it was pouring in torrents.

Well, we may get a better day before we leave Oxford. We are not likely to encounter a worse. The rain leaks peeping away, in a steady, unmistakable, business-like fashion, as we draw nearer to those half-hidden spires among the trees. The river is quite deserted; there is not a single boat out on the swollen and rushing stream. And so we get on to Salters' rafts, and secure our moorings; while Jack Duncombe, good-naturedly volunteers to remain behind and settle up with Palinurus, and see our luggage forwarded to the hotel. In a few minutes three of us are in a cab, and driving through the wan, cold, dripping black-gray thoroughfares. And it is little that the grave and learned seniors of those halls and colleges suspect that a certain Miss Peggy has arrived in Oxford town.

Now, whether it was that the gay morning that had raised Miss Peggy's spirits, and thereby in a measure softened her heart, or whether it was that she was bent on a little willful mischief after having played Miss Propriety during these past few days, she was now showing herself a good deal kinder to Jack Duncombe, and he was proportionately grateful, as he went with the women from shop to shop and carried their parcels for them.

We went to the Canal Company's office to get our permit, and they walked along to the first lock—a little toy box kind of basin it looked; and there we loitered about for awhile in expectation of the "Nameless Barge" making its appearance. Time passed, and there was no sign. Of course it was all very well for those young people to be placidly content with this delay, and to heed nothing so long as they could stroll up and down in the sunlight and the blowing winds—her eyes from time to time showing that he was doing his best to amuse her; but more serious people, who had been reading the morning papers of the hurricanes and inundations that had recently ravaged the whole country, and whose last glimpse of the Isis was a yellow-colored stream rushing like a mill race, began to be anxious. Accordingly it was proposed, and unanimously agreed, that we should make our way back along the river bank, to gain some tidings.

When, at length we came in sight of our gallant craft and her composite crew, we found that Captain Columbus was making preparations for getting her under a bridge, and also that about half the population of Oxford had come out to see the performance. When we looked at the low arch, and at the headstrong current, it was with no feelings of satisfaction; nevertheless we all embarked, to see what was about to happen, and Murdoch took the tiller, while the tow-ropes was passed to the Horse-Marine. Now, we should have run no serious risk but for this circumstance; half of the bridge had recently fallen down, and the authorities, instead of rebuilding it, had contented themselves with blocking up the roadway. Accordingly, when, as we had almost expected, the "Nameless Barge" got caught under the arch, we found the masonry just above our heads displaying a series of very alarming cracks; and the question was as to whether of those big blocks, loosened by the friction of the boat, would come crushing down upon us. However, the worst that befell us was that we got our eyes filled with dust and our hands half flayed with the gritty stone, and eventually we were dragged through, and towed to a place of seclusion.

And that was but the beginning of our new experiences; for when—Columbus and the Horse-Marine just above our heads displaying a series of very alarming cracks; and the question was as to whether of those big blocks, loosened by the friction of the boat, would come crushing down upon us. However, the worst that befell us was that we got our eyes filled with dust and our hands half flayed with the gritty stone, and eventually we were dragged through, and towed to a place of seclusion.

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GENERAL PIETER ARNOLDUS CRONJE.

Pieter Arnoldus Cronje, whose heroic stand at Paardeberg against an army ten times his strength in men and guns, has challenged the admiration of the world, is not only a brave soldier and excellent commander, but is believed by military men to be as cunning and as resourceful a strategist as any man alive. Such Spartan heroism as he displayed in the battle of Paardeberg is a rare spectacle in military history. It has elicited expressions of the highest appreciation from the press of London.

Gen. Cronje is a Boer from top to toe. He has all the stern religion of his race, all its courage, its purposefulness, its sublime faith in God, its great love of the patriarchal life and its implacable hatred for everything that is British. He is a descendant of the Colonial Dutch who trekked north before the pressure of British invasion. Cronje is about 63 years old. He never had any school military training. In times of peace he is very shy and simple. About four years ago he was a farmer. Then he was made superintendent of natives in the Orange Free State. In war the man's whole nature appears to change. His mind works like a flash. In battle he is all over the field, directing and encouraging his men. Cronje became prominent in the uprising, of 1880-81. His later fame rests upon the Jameson raid. It was he who arranged the trap into which Jameson walked. He chose the place and personally directed the men.

WEST UNDER SNOW COVER.

Storm Is Widespread and Delays Business and Traffic.

The heavy snowstorm which has enveloped the entire West and Northwest, covering almost every State in those parts of the Union, is almost unprecedented in damage to all manner of traffic as well as interrupting seriously the ordinary vocations of life. Press dispatches show the storm to have been general from Omaha to Toledo and from Milwaukee to the Gulf of Mexico.

In Illinois, northern Indiana and eastern Missouri snow fell to a depth of eight to fifteen inches. The high winds and snow has also interfered with traffic from northern Ohio over western Pennsylvania to the lower lake region to the interior of New York. Moline, Ill., reports a freight wreck on the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad at Fort Byron. At Mattoon snow and sleet played havoc with wires. Jacksonville fears a coal famine. Waukegan, Bloomington and many other cities report the schools closed on account of the snow.

All of Indiana felt the force of the storm. Trains were much delayed throughout the northern and central portions, and in the southern part sleet caused much damage to wires. In Michigan, Lansing, Three Rivers, Saginaw, Benton Harbor, Kalamazoo and Niles report from ten to eighteen inches of snow on the level. Keosauqua, Wis., was storm-bound, and at Burlington, Iowa, street car traffic was blocked. Toledo, Ohio, reported a severe storm, with all the attendants of wind, delayed railroad trains and blocked traffic.

In the southwest Dennison, Texas, reports the storm the worst in years. Six inches of snow fell in Indian Territory. Rain, hail and snow prevailed throughout Texas.

PORTO RICO BILL PASSES.

House Adopts Tariff Measure by a Vote of 172 to 161.

The struggle in the House over the Porto Rico tariff bill Wednesday afternoon when the bill was amended by reducing the tariff to 15 per cent and making the law temporary, and passed by a vote of 172 to 161. The Republican managers seemed surprised at the majority of eleven received by the bill, for up to the hour of voting they claimed only a majority of from three to five.

There were six Republicans who voted against the bill. They were McCall of Massachusetts, Littlefield of Maine, Crumacker of Indiana, Lorimer of Illinois, and Warner of Illinois, who was absent by reason of illness, was paired against the bill. Representative Lorimer announced that were Mr. Warner present he would oppose the bill.

These five Republicans were not enough to defeat the bill had the Democrats been united in opposition. On a strict party vote, with all members present, the Republicans have a majority of fourteen, and it would have required the change of eight Republican votes to defeat. Four Democrats voted for the bill, four others were absent without pairs, and one was present without voting. In this way the bill received a majority of eleven votes.

The four Democrats who voted for the bill were Davey and Meyer of Louisiana, Devries of California and Sibley of Pennsylvania. The four Democrats absent without pairs were Stallings of Alabama, Small of North Carolina, Smith of Kentucky and Fleming of Georgia. Bellamy of North Carolina, Democrat, was present, but did not vote.

CAN CHOP DOWN THE DOOR.

Rights of a Husband Defined by a St. Louis Judge.

It remained for a St. Louis judge to define the rights of a husband in case of a domestic lockout. In the case of Richard Maetzold, charged with chopping down the door of his residence, Judge Sidener, in discharging the defendant, said: "A husband, paying rent and owning his own furniture, has a perfect right to his home. If his entrance is balked, he may take an ax and chop down whatsoever he pleases in order to gain admission to his residence."

Congressmen to Cronje.

About fifty Congressmen signed a cablegram sent from Washington to Gen. Cronje, congratulating him and his soldiers on "the magnificent display of courage and heroism in his brave fight for human rights."

Pronunciation of Cronje.

The correct pronunciation of the name of Gen. Cronje, the Boer commander, is "Crony-a-j" sounded as in "old" and "a" as in "ate."

Guards sworn in to protect property in Williamsburg, Ky., from strikers.

Public Schools Gaining.
The current annual report of Dr. William T. Harris, United States Commissioner of Education, estimates the population between the ages of 5 and 18 at 21,458,294. Of these 15,038,636 are enrolled in the public schools. The increase in attendance in the public schools is in excess of the increase in population. The present enrollment is 70 per cent of the whole, against 65.3 in 1880 and 61.4 in 1870. The average term of the school year increased from 132 days in 1870 to 143 days in 1888.

The Meanest Man Alive.
"The meanest man I ever worked for," said the drug clerk, "was an old fellow who kept a store in the North-east."

"One night a colored mammy entered. She was so visibly poor that it ought to have gone against a man's conscience to have taken money from her under any circumstances. Approaching the old man she said:

"'Say, boss, is yo' got innny 'cated elskin?'"

"'What?' said the old man, for it was a new one to both of us."

"'Cated el'skin, boss, fo' de room' tism. I 'se bin' done tole dat 'cated el'skin am a sho' nuff cue fo' de misery, an' I 'se got de misery po'ful bad in mah back.'"

"The old skindint did some deep and rapid thinking, and pocketing the only dollar the old creature had, went to a drawer where we kept common oil silk, and tearing off a piece about four inches wide, worth 3 cents, handed it to her with a great display of importance."

"This is genuine medicated elskin of a superior quality of eels. Bind it on tight and it will cure you sure."

"I hated him all the more after that."

—Washington Star.

Blood Humors

Are Cured by

Hood's Sarsaparilla

"I always take Hood's Sarsaparilla in the Spring and it is the best blood purifier I know of." Miss CHARLES GRILEY FITEZ, Baldwin, Mich.

"Eruptions that came on my face have all disappeared since I began taking Hood's Sarsaparilla. It cured my father of catarrh." ALPHEA HAMILTON, Bloomington, Ind.

"I had scrofula sores all over my back and face. I began taking Hood's Sarsaparilla and in a few weeks I could not see any sign of the sores." OTHO B. MOORE, Mount Hope, Wis.

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Ely's Cream Balm

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