

mind as he let the handles of the bag slip slowly into the boy's outstretched hands, but it was quickly over. Still, after that he did not let the boy get far enough away from him so that he could not have brought him back with a quick grip upon his collar.

Once alone in his room, he sat on the side of the bed for a few moments, and then arose with the air of having solved several puzzling problems to his satisfaction.

He took from his pocket the flask of gin which he had had the girl put up for him at the public house, and drank greedily. He was very white and was breathing hard, as does a man after a great strain for a moment ceases.

He opened the bag and took from it the belt which he had secured from the vault of the safety deposit company. It was of the kind often worn by travelers and others who are obliged to carry large sums of money, jewels or other small treasure with them on their journeyings. Its surface had been polished with much wearing and several protuberances along its length showed where the treasure was hidden in it.

His fingers lingered lovingly on the bunches which marked its contents and for a moment toyed with the small slit which formed the opening to the secret recess within its length. Then he deftly slipped two fingers into this opening and drew forth four or five pebbles which to one unaccustomed to jewels would have seemed to be but worthless things, but which, by the experienced eye, would have been recognized as diamonds in the rough.

"Well," he said to himself, "£60,000 is a sum worth fighting twice for. Once I won the fight. It can scarcely be harder to win the one just begun."

Now, quickly and with no more dalliance with its contents, he buckled the belt about his waist and removed his outer clothing. From the bag he took a suit of blue serge, with a sack coat and a soft woolen peaked cap. The suit he quickly put on. That which he had taken off he made into a careless bundle and with a sigh of rueful regret thrust it into the bag.

The new top hat, under which he had left the house on Russell square, he smashed remorsefully and crowded it into the bag with the other discarded elegancies. It had been the first top hat which he had upon his head for five weary years of adventuring.

He rang the bell and waited for the arrival of the answering boy. To him he gave the bag and the circular ticket for Paris, with instructions to book the bag through to the French capital. He watched its departure with a genuine regret. It had been his companion on many a rough and many a pleasant journey. To lose it was to lose an old, if inanimate, friend.

Before long the boy returned with the ticket and a small slip of white paper, which is the incompetent European substitute for the American brass check, and Parton placed them in his pocket. But after the boy had left the room he took the baggage receipt, twisted it into a small wisp, and used it as a cigar lighter, while a moment later he burned the Paris ticket.

Then, with that almost automatic skill which some men acquire in hand-drawn razors upon their own faces, he attacked first the mustache and then the black, pointed beard.

After he had roughed them off he ran his hand carefully over his face to find where the work had been ineffective. He corrected these errors and examined the reflection in the mirror minutely. He smiled as he realized that this simple disguise was a most effective one.

He placed the shaving outfit in one of the pockets of his coat. Then, with a traveling cap upon his head, he was ready to go out into the world again a very different person from the young man in immaculate afternoon dress who had entered the hotel.

He listened at the door for a moment with the idea of avoiding meetings as he emerged from his room, and then boldly opened it and stepped out into the corridor.

Just as he reached the stairway he met the boy who had attended him to his room. He saw, with some satisfaction, that he merely glanced at him, evidently without recognition. The young man took heart at this and went upon his way, passing through the office without recognition by the clerk, and, so on, down in the elevator.

Once again in the train shed he sought the densest part of the crowd that was gathered there. Within five minutes, by easy maneuvering, he had again satisfied himself that he was not followed. Keeping always as many people between himself and the front of the station as he could he edged his way to the extreme left of the place, and then, going close to the outer wall, passed along it until he reached the entrance to a small stairway, which leads downward to the narrow side street.

The passage across the great train shed had been nervous work, and despite the fact that he had so materially altered his appearance Parton almost trembled as he made it. Once actually in the entrance to the stairway, and then on the narrow and ill-lighted stairs themselves, he felt much safer. He hurried down. It was a relief

to be able to hurry without feeling afraid that by so doing he might attract dangerous attention. He would not have dared to make any haste on the station platform.

Long before he reached the bottom of the stairway the friendly fog again enshrouded him and changed the sharp outlines of his figure into a dull, gray blur. When he actually stepped out into the street he did so with confidence and great gratitude toward the fog. It had surely been his friend that day. He stepped to one side and waited near the bottom of the stairway for a moment to see that none followed him and then went slowly down the street toward the Thames embankment.

#### CHAPTER III.

With wind and tide to fight, sometimes a port that is in plain sight, seems further off than China—The Log Book of The Lyddy.

The embankment walks were so dimly lighted and the fog along the river was so dense that Parton found it difficult to keep in the paths instead of wandering off upon the grass plots. When at last he reached the river's edge progress was easier, for he could guide himself by keeping his hand upon the low granite wall.

Thus, carefully feeling his way, he eventually reached the hill which precedes the approach to Blackfriars bridge and, climbing it and crossing Blackfriars road, found himself in the tangle of narrow streets which lay beyond it—busy by day, but almost deserted after nightfall.

After he had plunged deeply into this darkness and found it to be puzzling, he sat down upon a stone post to think. His plans, indefinite as they had been, had so far worked out well. The first stage of his flight had been successfully accomplished. He had dropped out of the sight of that part of London where he might reasonably be expected to be found, and had not once been questioned in the process.

By what he considered, as he sat there on the post, rather clever maneuvering, he had left a distinct suggestion of a trail to Paris by booking his bag and his passage for that city. Both these actions, he reflected, were matters of record, and in case inquiries were made at Charing Cross station those records would be found.

Where he was really bound for he did not quite know. He had chosen the West India docks as the starting point of his flight from London. He had decided, purely for purposes of prudence, that it must be some land over which there flew a flag other than the Union Jack, because of the danger of extradition in case he fled to a British colony.

He reflected, bitterly, that England no longer held for him any binding ties. A fleeting suggestion of an interest, which, even in his then unpleasant pass, he wished were a binding tie, he tried to put out of his mind as being too absurd for consideration. He realized that the fact that he had fallen in love with a girl almost at first sight was a poor basis from which to argue that she might have fallen in love with him as suddenly. And the fact that this girl would in all likelihood be taught to regard his flight as the sequel to a fraud upon herself was bitter to him.

He knew very little about that part of London into which he had wandered, but he was certain, in a general way, that he had been going in the direction of the docks. The points of embarkation for most of those who go as passengers from England are Liverpool, Southampton and Portsmouth, though London itself is the greatest British port for the reception and embarkation of ocean freight. Parton argued that the police would be unlikely to look to the docks in London for a fugitive who had plenty of money and whose desire would naturally be to flee from England as rapidly as he could.

But as time passed after he had again started on his wandering he became more and more impressed with the fact that finding the docks without making inquiries would be a matter of unexpectedly serious difficulty. Many times he became so confused in the smother of the fog and the labyrinth of twisting thoroughfares that he knew not whether he was going right or whether he might not be turned about and passing back over the track which he had already followed.

Then suddenly a man approached him and a blue-clothed arm reached out toward him. The hand at the end of the discerning sleeve had lightly caught his arm before he had time to shrink back, almost faint from shock.

Involuntarily he clenched his fist, quickly resolved to make a fight of it and then cut and run if he succeeded in getting away, taking his chances on being able to elude his pursuer in the fog.

Parton was ready for the words which should have followed this grip from a blue-clothed arm, "I arrest you in the name of the law!"

The words which really came to him were different. The stranger said to him in a voice which had both pleading and complaint in it:

"I'll beg your pardon, but we're in 'ell's Blackfriars bridge?"

With a relief which could be scarcely exaggerated in description, Parton told the stranger how to get to Blackfriars bridge. The mere feeling that the man was not his enemy reacted on him and made him regard him as a friend.

He commented on the thickness of the

weather. He found that it was exceedingly good to talk to some one. Also, as he saw that the blue of the stranger's coat was that of the somewhat faded uniform of a steamship's petty officer instead of the smart apparel of a policeman, it occurred to him that the stranger might be able to return his service by making clear the way to the distant docks. He suggested that they adjourn to discuss the streets of London at their leisure in a nearby public house whose lights were glimmering faintly through the fog.

Parton had decided that he would leave London, if possible, on a sailing vessel, because, he argued, that their passengers would be less carefully scrutinized than those who sailed on the more important steamers.

The sailor told him that one of the best of the few sailing vessels still in the transatlantic trade was in port at that moment, although he thought that it was to sail in a day or two. Its name was the Lydia Skolfeld.

Parton made a mental note of this and the two men parted with mutual expressions of esteem for each other and contempt for the weather. He walked on and on, until he saw by his watch under a flickering gas jet that it was about the time when the sun would have begun to shine on him had there not been too much fog to make such a phenomenon possible in London that morning. He had begun to lose faith in the directions which the sailor had given to him when he realized suddenly that his journey was at an end. There were the odors of salt and tar and oakum and bilge water, as well as that strange, sweetish, almost sickening smell which always seems to go with ship cargoes, and there came the unmistakable odor of the sea from the big basin.

Parton walked along the sidewalk, which is separated from the great gates leading to the docks by a space wide enough to be a plaza in any other city. The fog had thinned with the coming of the day; but it was still necessary for him to walk slowly and to peer closely in order to see the signs.

At last he found one which informed the wayfarer that within might be found good food and comfortable lodging at moderate prices. He entered. He was ravenously hungry and satisfied his appetite. Then he was shown to a room which was clean.

He undressed as quickly as he could, and, locking his door carefully and seeing to it that the precious belt was buckled tightly about his body, piled into bed and almost instantly fell into a deep sleep.

#### CHAPTER IV.

On a lonesome voyage a floatin' chip 'll chink you up the way a brass band wouldn't when you was to home.—The Log Book of The Lyddy.

It was almost noon when Parton awoke. His head was whirling from the effort of the night before and too much drink, and his heart was heavy with that depression which comes to all at times, when they are in course of a hazardous enterprise. The fear of the police came back to him a hundredfold stronger than it had been at any time before.

He listened nervously to the noises which came in through the open window from the street. He had small doubt that by this time the police had at least been notified that he was missing. It might be that the whole meaning of his disappearance had not yet been guessed, although of this he was by no means confident.

His stepfather—the man who was most vitally interested in his disappearance—would scarcely have had time as yet to learn at what safety deposit company the belt and its contents had been on deposit, and, therefore, it was at least improbable that he had found that he had carried it away, but he was sure to grow suspicious early and to worry about the £60,000 worth of diamonds which Parton had carried away with him.

When he entered the miserable eating room the sight of a blue coat and police helmet would scarcely have surprised him. Even after he had settled at a table and ordered what the last night's liquor had left taste for in his stomach, he could not avoid occasional nervous glances at the door. He noticed that all those who were in the dingy place wore their hats while they ate, and this was a relief to him. He pulled his cap well down over his eyes.

The problem which confronted him now was how best to investigate the ships then lying at the docks and engage passage on one of them without occasioning remark. This was not an easy matter to figure out. Well dressed young men without baggage wanting to take passage on sailing vessels probably were rare.

Mercifully the time which elapsed after he gave his order and before the food appeared was long and gave him an opportunity to collect his scattered wits. He called the waiter to him and sent him to get the morning papers. After his return he ate as heartily as he could, entirely from a sense of necessity for it and not because of appetite.

While he ate his thought was attracted by an article that told how Rudyard Kipling, in order to describe the experiences of one of his characters, during a long trip through India in a bullock cart, had made the journey himself.

Parton jumped at the suggestion. That

was the solution of his awkward situation.

He had just reached this conclusion when, in laying the paper down, he folded it by chance so that the first column of the first page came uppermost. This is always, in the London Times, devoted to "Personal Advertisements" and is known the world over as the "agony column." It is probably the most widely read column in any European newspaper. And in it Parton read:

Henry Parton: Don't return. I understand your reasons for going and think you are justified. Watch this column for any information which I may be able to give to you. N. M.

"N. M." could not mean any other than Norah MacFarren. He was elated and encouraged, although it warned him that his fears concerning the attitude of MacFarren were accurate and well founded. Also, suddenly, and almost with a shock, he realized that he was in love with the girl who had sent the message to him.

He thought wildly for a moment of going to her—of offering to give his treasures to the old man with the hope that he might, perhaps, win a second fortune which she should share with him, but this plan was quickly rejected. If he gave up the treasure he would have nothing to offer her and the idea that he might find another was too visionary for practical consideration.

But the message from the girl put heart into him.

He called the mournful looking waiter who had been attending to his wants and inquired where the Lydia Skolfeld lay in dock. He found that he had stumbled almost on its berth in the fog, and within a few moments he was on board.

The master of the American barkentine Lydia Skolfeld was a short, chunky, good-natured looking New Englander with gray mustache and a close cropped beard. He laughed comfortably as he looked Parton over.

"Good day, young man," he said jovially. "Do you want to ship before the mast on my old hooker?"

"No," said Parton, "I don't want to ship before the mast. But I want to ship behind it, if that is where the passengers ship."

The old man looked at him with some surprise. It had been many years since a stranger had asked for the privilege of crossing with him as a passenger.

"What's the matter?" he asked. "You don't look consumptive, nor yet you don't look as if you'd been drinkin' yourself to death. Them's the on'y folks that wants to cross in sailin' ships nowadays."

"My name is Carter," said Parton, "and I want to gather material for a story."

It seemed to him that the captain scarcely believed what he said; but it was also evident that if Parton really did want to write a story about a voyage in a sailing vessel, the captain would be glad to have it made in the Lydia Skolfeld. It was quickly apparent that he was inordinately fond and proud of his ship, although he ostentatiously called it an "old hooker," a "wind jammer" and a "rag power liner." Before he finally accepted Parton's offer he had devoted half an hour to a eulogy of it, and had explained that he owned it himself, having bought the last share of it very recently.

"How much are you willin' to pay?" he asked, finally.

"Whatever you think is right," answered Parton. And then added quickly at the thought that he must be cautious, "That is, of course, if it is reasonable."

"It'll cost you more'n it would to go over in a steamer, but I s'pose you got your own reasons for wantin' to go on th' Lyddy," said the captain, ignoring the reason that had already been given.

"How much?" asked Parton, trying hard not to speak hurriedly.

"Twenty pounds," said the captain. "You c'n go on almost any of th' steamers for less 'n that. It's about a hundred dollars good money—I mean United States money."

"Twenty pounds seems like a fairly high price," said Parton, as if considering. "Well," said the captain, reflectively, "there's one good thing about it, by John! you don't have to pay it! Not 'less you want to, by Quincy! Nobody ain't got no rope on you, by Adams! You can suit y'rself, by John Quincy Adams!"

"Oh, I'm willing to pay it," said Parton somewhat hurriedly, "but I shouldn't want to pay much more. I couldn't afford it."

"Well," said the captain, having passed the sharp annoyance that made him swear so wickedly, "there ain't nobody askin' you to pay any more, so far's I can see."

It was evident that he felt a little ashamed of and sorry for his outbreak.

"You see, it's like this," he went on. "Mebbe it don't seem reasonable for me to charge more for passage in th' Lyddy than you'd have to pay in some steamer'n other. But th' biggest part o' th' cost o' my passage of you is what you eat, by John. All right. You see that, don't you? Yes. Course you do. Blind baby could see that. Well, one o' these Quincy steamers—one o' the slow ones—wouldn't have to feed you at th' outside for more'n ten or twelve days.

"Now I've got to feed you prob'ly thirty days, anyway, an' I've had a passage take me four months. It's a speculation with me. I have to take chances. If God's good 'n' th' wind's fair, an' you don't eat too much for your size, I may make some-

(Continued on Page Sixteen.)