

your wife—you know she's not your wife. I know it, and you know I know it. Now if you don't leave this house and go home to your own wife, and your three children I shall get a cab and go and fetch her here and introduce her to the lady in the parlour." Well, you never see a man so taken aback in your life.

"Now," I said, "off you go—leave the house this instant. You don't enter that room again, or if you do I am away to bring your wife up and expose you both."

And the fellow sneaked out of the house saying never a word. So I waited patiently in the bar for more than half an hour, when the lady comes out and asked where the gentleman, her husband, had gone.

"I said, 'Ma'am, that man is neither a gentleman nor is he your husband. I don't want to know any more than I do know. If it will keep you from harm and sin you can stop here to-night, and go to wherever you live in the morning.' But she went away very quietly.

It was then I recollected that the whiskey hot and the sherry and water had not been paid for. I don't think it was intended I should have been done out of it; but still in a manner I was done.

Then three days afterwards it all come out. The man had forsaken his wife and three children, and had gone away with the lady who, although not a mother, was the wife of an honest man.

Yes, Mr Snyder, it was very sorrowful, and very sad, but, as my husband said, the whiskey hot and the sherry and water ought, under any circumstances, to have been paid for.

Men are great vagabonds, Mr Snyder. Some men you know—not all I hope, although I have not been able to see very many good ones. Of course, being married it's not my place to be looking after good nor bad men; but it's in our business to see things come up that ought never to come up.

Some time ago, about three months since, a respectably dressed young fellow, with a decent woman leaning on his arm, came to the house, and the man asked whether I could provide them with separate rooms. They had come down from from the country, and were going to get married in three days. So I said I could accommodate them, and I did so. On the night before the marriage the girl comes to me, and asks whether I would be present at her wedding, as she had no female acquaintance in Auckland. Well, she was a sweet, pleasant, trusting sort of a girl—she had been doing dairy work on a farm, she told me—and I said I would go to church with her if she did not wish me to go grand. And she said no, she wished me to go quite plain, nothing more; but she would, she said, very much like me to go.

Well, they got married at the Scotch Church, and I cooked them a nice bit of dinner in a room to themselves, and my husband and I joined them. The couple had, so I understood from them, agreed when they got married to go back to their old service. It was the second morning after the wedding, and when the two had gone out, as they said, for the purpose of shopping, my servant girl came to me, and holding out a leather bag, said she had found it under the mattress in the married couple's room, but she did not know who it belonged to. As I was quite as much in the dark myself, I untied the string and let the contents fall on the table.

There were several letters, and the photograph of a young woman holding an infant on her lap. Then I was as much puzzled as before. So I opened one of the letters to see whether I could learn anything as to whom the bags and its contents belonged. And there I read that it was from a wife to her husband, entreating him to send her some money for the support of herself and their child. She said she was not in real want, but that she had been compelled to obtain credit from tradesmen, promising to pay them as soon as she received a remittance from her husband, who was in New Zealand.

The letter was very affectionately written, and went on to say in many kind words how she hoped her dear husband would return to be with her before her next great trial of trouble came upon her. It would certainly be in less than three months, and she wished, because he wished it, that it might be a dear little son.

The letter was dated from Hobart,

in Tasmania, and was addressed to the name of the man who had got married from my house only two days before.

Well, Mr Snyder, you might have knocked me down with a feather; and I don't mind as you are so good as to ask me if I do have a glass of ale before I tell you the rest, giving a name at the same time to what you will have yourself.

Then the landlady went on and told me how she sat down and thought and considered what she should do in the matter when the vagabond returned with the unfortunate girl he had made his wife, while his first, with a young child, besides another which was going to happen, was still living. Then at last, when the two did come back, she asked them into her room, and having locked the door, she faced the man with the portrait and said, "Who is that the likeness of?"

The fellow, Mr Snyder, turned as white as a clean pillow case, but answered nothing. "I will tell you who it is," I said, warming up hot. "It is the portrait of the woman who wrote this letter I have in my hand, and that woman is your wife, and you know it, for a villain as you are. And then he stammered out that his first wife and his child had both died. "That will do for you," I said, "Now just go up stairs and commit some sort of suicide if you have the pluck in you, while I talk to this girl you have deceived."

So he went out, and then turned to the young woman who had sunk on to the sofa, with both hands covering her face. "Now my dear what are you going to do? This scoundrel has ruined you for ever, and he has a wife living." The only reply came with very, very bitter sobs.

"What shall I—what can I do? His wife may be dead, but he never told me he had been married."

The way that poor wretched creature took on I don't want to call to mind. She appeared to be going raving mad; but ended in a fit of hysterics, which lasted more than an hour. When she recovered, looking more like a corpse than a living woman, she went out of the room and walked quietly up stairs. Then after a time the fellow came and asked for his bill, which my husband made out, and which was paid. In a few minutes both left my house, and I have seen nor heard nothing of them from that hour to this. The vagabond, before going, asked me for the letters and the photograph, when I told him he had better apply for them to the police, as I should hand the bag and what it contained over to them. He said nothing. He saw I meant earnest, and that I was not to be talked over. So the two went their way as I have told. I did not go to the police, but I have the letters and photograph by me, which I shall give to the poor woman if ever she should come for them, as proof against her husband.

But I don't suppose she will come, Mr Snyder. Women are just as big fools as men are scoundrels. Wouldn't you take little of something at my expense?

SNYDER HAS BEEN ON HIS TRAVELS.

I HAVE been solicited to write and publish an account of my travels from Gisborne to the City of the Apostles, and the great centre of Joint Stock Bugus Companies, where and in which it has appeared to me that the great aim of man is to "do" his fellow man, and live luxuriously.

It was on a mellow Sunday morning I placed myself on board the life-boat, which—so it is printed on a board—is allowed to carry 30 passengers; but as it did not say how many more than 30 might be carried the owners had taken a liberal view of their privileges by stowing away 60. However, no one seemed to care much about the arrangement, and if any one had cared it would have amounted to about the same thing. Before getting under steam there are two bars to be encountered—the bar at the mouth of the river, and another bar at the mouth of the saloon. In crossing the first bar we took a roller on board, which made many of us wet without, and by way of compensation at the second bar we got within.

The Wairarapa, as I heard on all sides, was a magnificent boat. I should like to describe her, but feel myself quite unequal to the responsibility. As to size I should say she was twice as big as a good many steamers I have seen, but only about half as big as some other ships which plough the ocean wave. This I think will convey a very fair idea of the

capaciousness of the Wairarapa. I think if she at any time hit against a rock it would altogether depend upon what sort of a rock it was as to which would get the worst of it—the rock or the steamer. I have often wondered whether ships so often striking against rocks gave rise to that pathetic song of "Rocked in the cradle of the deep."

"A life on the ocean wave, and a home on the rolling deep," as sung to melody by young men at evening parties, no doubt tends to impress the ignorant and uninformed mind that such a career must be brimful of joyousness and hilarity. I think I have seen the reverse of this on occasions. I have seen men at the first half-hour of a start upon the ocean wave all joyousness and replete with the most pleasurable sensations; but at the end of this when the water has become, so to speak, "lumpy," I have seen their joyousness depart, and a look take its place expressive of a wish that they had never been born. I have seen men at the very commencement of ocean life tell the funniest stories and spin the drollest yarns which set everybody laughing, when hours after I have seen the same men who would have expressed feelings of unbounded gratitude if you had offered to throw them overboard.

So far as "a life on the ocean wave" goes I hardly ever saw a man who when the voyage had begun did not wish it had come to an end. I have, I am willing to admit, seen exceptions to this. I have known a few men in the course of my journeyings saying how sorry they were at so soon reaching their destination. But upon enquiry and examination I have invariably found such men to be weak of intellect, or else under terror of meeting a bailiff or a detective on the wharf.

A ship is a beautiful sight to gaze upon—at a distance. You see her stately hull, with the white sails glistening in the sun as she rises and falls with the undulating swell of the ocean. You see her walking the waters like a thing of life. You see her beauteous in her lines of proportion sailing now calmly but yielding kindly to the breeze with her bosoming sails. So much of the poetry of beauty cannot be passed over. But you pull alongside; you mount the bulworks; you stand upon the deck when you see a great deal of dirt; your nose is affected by various stenches while your ears are assailed by the captain reprimanding the cabin boy for not looking smart in bringing the dinner aft. Your sense of the beauteous is broken and shattered. The charm has been dispelled by an optical illusion. It is, I said, while communing with my soul, it is "distance lends enchantment to the view."—At this instant a sharp voice broke upon my ear—"You musn't smoke abaft the mainmast; its against the regulations." "What's against the regulations?" I asked still retaining my briar-wood. "Smoking abaft the mainmast," said a young gentleman in a blue uniform and a bit of gold edging round his cap. "That's hard lines," I said. "The funnel is smoking abaft the mainmast and right over the stern—why not me." "Yes, that's correct; and if you were a funnel you could do the same; but as you ain't a funnel you can't." I yielded to authority, and went forward to near the bows of the vessel, where I fell in with one of the sailors who was doing nothing in particular and taking his time over it. He was whistling. I got into conversation; I asked him how many boats the ship carried. He said he couldn't say until he had asked the chief steward; then perhaps he could, when he would let me know. I asked what boats the steward was in charge of. "Well," he said as he walked forward, "they have charge of the butter-boats. Then I knew I had been chaffed, and felt myself to be uncommonly small. I walked to amidship where the cooks carried on the business. I saw one of them preparing melted butter. I suppose the man knew his work; but I took nothing which had melted butter with it that day at dinner. I don't think I shall ever look upon melted butter again. The way it was done was this—but why harrow the feelings of my reader. The matter is too painful to contemplate even in print. We reached the end our journey, having made the quickest passage on record. I have noticed, I think, on previous occasions that a quick passage is invariably described in the same terms.

Throughout the voyage I never heard one word of command. Nothing about starboard and larboard, or hard a-port, or keep your bearings, or mind your luff. No singing out to put the hel-um hard

over; nothing about giving a pull on the tautsil braces. Everything was done in a whisper through a tube of some sort of another. I see the captain breathe something into one of the machines, when, like as it is done in a pantomime, up comes a stewardess. "Get that lady a glass or sherry and water, with a biscuit," and it was got. Every order was by signals. An officer on duty would blow once through a small whistle. This was one kind of order. When he blew twice it was another order. I quite longed to hear a bit of good wholesome swearing; and I thought I should have liked to see a hand knocked down with a belaying pin or a marling spike, in remembrance of the good old times of "life on the ocean wave;" but there was nothing of the kind, a proof that marine customs and manners have degenerated. At the setting down at dinner, the stewards ranged themselves on either side of the tables, their hands folded across each other, as if they were so many marines waiting for orders. A hand-bell was struck, when lo! in the twinkling of an eye, each cover was lifted with an exactness, and a precision, and a rapidity wonderful to behold. And here I pause.

The tables groaned with the luxurious food which was crowded dish after dish upon them. I have used the word "groaned," because I know that is the expression always used by newspaper reporters when describing a feed in public. I can't say I ever did hear a table groan, and I don't know anyone likely to look me in the face who would tell me he had witnessed the circumstance. I remember in my young and callow days, how nervous and weak in mind I used to feel when I was taken into a pastry cook's and told to have what I liked. Whatever it was I chose, I always saw something directly after which I would have liked better. So when a smart, polite steward, in blue cloth and gilt buttons, gracefully handed me the *carte*, and asked me what I should like, in my desire to look off-handed and confident, as if I had been used to these sort of fine dinners every day in my life, I put my finger on the first line that struck me, and only found it was what I didn't care for when placed before me; but how could I possibly make a confident of stewards always in silent but rapid motion, as if they had been highly charged with some kind of electric fluid. It was with sorrow I own it, that of each meal I never got exactly what I had craved for—such is one of the drawbacks to the possessor of innate modesty and humility the most profound.

On landing I found every hotel crowded—principally with land speculators and the promoters of companies. One land-lord, after running down what he called his "bed-book" said I could have a room if I had no objection to another gentleman being with me. I said I had every objection. Eventually, I was accommodated and had a room to myself. My experiences of the City of the Apostles are as yet unwritten.

MY LETTS' DIARY.

January 1.—This is the first day of a new year. I shall lay down for myself a set of golden rules which nothing shall induce me to depart from.

FIRST: I will pay my way—circumstances permitting. Circumstances not permitting I shall take legal advice as regards the interpretation of "The Bankruptcy Act, 1876."

SECOND: Mean to collect all moneys due and owing me, and will accept no excuses for non-payment.

THIRD: For the future shall refuse to shout or be shouted for. The habit is expensive, and leads to intoxication.

FOURTH: Will freely forgive my enemies, especially those to whom I have behaved badly, and who may have it in their power to do me an injury.

FIFTH: Will be civil to all men, and not lose my temper; but shall first look to every man to be civil to me, and not lose his temper, otherwise the resolve does not hold good.

SIXTH: Always to be particularly careful of myself as a duty due to society.

REFLECTIONS ON THE ABOVE.

Man! What is he? Here to-day and gone to-morrow—gone, perhaps, with some one else's wife, and without taking a farewell of his creditors. How frail, too, are man's promises. Said young Augustus to his tailor, "I like to pay as I go," but he "good" and did not pay. How many Augustuses are there who populate this sphere!

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