

## CHAPTER XXVI

The *Elsinore* is truly the ship of souls, the world in miniature; and, because she is such a small world, cleaving this vastitude of ocean as our larger world cleaves space, the strange juxtapositions that continually occur are startling.

For instance, this afternoon on the poop. Let me describe it. Here was Miss West, in a crisp duck sailor suit, immaculately white, open at the throat, where, under the broad collar, was knotted a man-of-war black silk neckerchief. Her smooth-groomed hair, a trifle rebellious in the breeze, was glorious. And here was I, in white ducks, white shoes, and white silk shirt, as immaculate and well-tended as she. The steward was just bringing the pretty tea-service for Miss West, and in the background Wada hovered.

We had been discussing philosophy--or, rather, I had been feeling her out; and from a sketch of Spinoza's anticipations of the modern mind, through the speculative interpretations of the latest achievements in physics of Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir William Ramsay, I had come, as usual, to De Casseres, whom I was quoting, when Mr. Pike snarled orders to the watch.

"In this rise into the azure of pure perception, attainable only by a very few human beings, the spectacular sense is born,.'" I was quoting.

"Life is no longer good or evil. It is a perpetual play of forces without beginning or end. The freed Intellect merges itself with the World-Will and partakes of its essence, which is not a moral essence but an aesthetic essence . . . "

And at this moment the watch swarmed on to the poop to haul on the port-braces of the mizzen-sky-sail, royal and topgallant-sail. The sailors passed us, or toiled close to us, with lowered eyes. They did not look at us, so far removed from them were we. It was this contrast that caught my fancy. Here were the high and low, slaves and masters, beauty and ugliness, cleanness and filth. Their feet were bare and scaled with patches of tar and pitch. Their unbathed bodies were garmented in the meanest of clothes, dingy, dirty, ragged, and sparse. Each one had on but two garments--dungaree trousers and a shoddy cotton shirt.

And we, in our comfortable deck-chairs, our two servants at our backs, the quintessence of elegant leisure, sipped delicate tea from beautiful, fragile cups, and looked on at these wretched ones whose labour made possible the journey of our little world. We did not speak to them, nor recognize their existence, any more than would they have dared speak to us.

And Miss West, with the appraising eye of a plantation mistress for the condition of her field slaves, looked them over.

"You see how they have fleshed up," she said, as they coiled the last

turns of the ropes over the pins and faded away for'ard off the poop. "It is the regular hours, the good weather, the hard work, the open air, the sufficient food, and the absence of whisky. And they will keep in this fettle until they get off the Horn. And then you will see them go down from day to day. A winter passage of the Horn is always a severe strain on the men.

"But then, once we are around and in the good weather of the Pacific, you will see them gain again from day to day. And when we reach Seattle they will be in splendid shape. Only they will go ashore, drink up their wages in several days, and ship away on other vessels in precisely the same sodden, miserable condition that they were in when they sailed with us from Baltimore."

And just then Captain West came out the chart-house door, strolled by for a single turn up and down, and with a smile and a word for us and an all-observant eye for the ship, the trim of her sails, the wind, and the sky, and the weather promise, went back through the chart-house door--the blond Aryan master, the king, the Samurai.

And I finished sipping my tea of delicious and most expensive aroma, and our slant-eyed, dark-skinned servitors carried the pretty gear away, and I read, continuing De Casseres:

"Instinct wills, creates, carries on the work of the species. The Intellect destroys, negatives, satirizes and ends in pure nihilism,

instinct creates life, endlessly, hurling forth profusely and blindly its clowns, tragedians and comedians. Intellect remains the eternal spectator of the play. It participates at will, but never gives itself wholly to the fine sport. The Intellect, freed from the trammels of the personal will, soars into the ether of perception, where Instinct follows it in a thousand disguises, seeking to draw it down to earth."