

CHAPTER XXI.

Showing how the Owner of the Tankadere nearly lost the Bonus of Two Hundred Pounds.

This voyage of eight hundred miles was one of great risk at that season of the year in those seas, which are usually very rough, particularly during the equinoxes, and it was then the beginning of November.

It would have been very much to the advantage of the owner of the Tankadere to have gone on to Yokohama, as he was paid so much a day, but such a voyage would have been extremely rash. It was a risk to go to Shanghai; still, John Bunsby had confidence in his ship, which sailed like a bird, and perhaps he was right.

"There is no need for me to urge you to speed," said Fogg to Bunsby, when they had got out to sea.

"Your honour may depend upon me," replied Bunsby; "I will do all I can."

"Well, it is your business and not mine, pilot, and I trust you thoroughly."

Phileas Fogg, standing upright, with his legs stretched apart, was as steady as a sailor as he gazed over the foaming sea. Mrs. Aouda, seated aft, was somewhat nervous as she contemplated the ocean. The sails bellied out overhead like great wings, and the schooner ran before the wind at a great pace. Night fell. The moon was only in the first quarter, and her light would soon be quenched beneath the horizon. Clouds were rising in the east, and already banking up.

The pilot hung out the vessel's lights, an indispensable proceeding, for collisions were by no means unfrequent, and any such occurrence, at the speed they were now going, would shatter the gallant little craft to pieces.

Fix, seated up in the bows, held himself aloof, as he knew Fogg was not much of a talker; besides, he did not quite like to enter into conversation with this man whose good offices he had accepted. He thought of the future, for it now seemed certain that Fogg would not stop at Yokohama, but would immediately take the steamer for San Francisco, so as to reach America, where he would be safe. Fogg's plan seemed to the detective to be very simple.

Instead of embarking in England for the United States, like a common swindler, Fogg had made a tour three-parts round the globe, so as to gain the American continent more safely; and once there, he could enjoy himself comfortably with his spoil. But what could Fix do in the

United States? Should he give up the man? No, certainly not; and until he had obtained an act of extradition, he would not lose sight of him. This was his duty, and he would carry it out to the bitter end. There was one thing, at any rate, to be thankful for, Passe-partout was not now with his master; and after Fix's confidence imparted to him, it was very important that the servant should not see his master again in a hurry.

Phileas Fogg was himself thinking about his servant, who had so curiously disappeared. But after consideration of the circumstances, it did not appear improbable that the young man had gone on board the Carnatic at the last moment. This was also Mrs. Aouda's opinion, for she deeply regretted the worthy fellow's absence, as she was so deeply indebted to him. They might, therefore, find him at Yokohama, and if he were on the Carnatic, it would be easy to ascertain the fact.

About ten o'clock the breeze began to freshen, and though it might have been prudent to take in a reef or two, the pilot, after taking an observation, let the sails stand, for the Tankadere carried her canvas well; but everything was prepared to furl the sails in case of necessity.

At midnight, Phileas Fogg and Mrs. Aouda went below. Fix had already turned in, but the owner and his crew remained on deck all night.

By sunrise next morning the schooner had made a hundred miles. The log

showed they were going about eight or nine knots an hour. They were still carrying on, and, if the wind held, the chances were in their favour. The vessel made her way along the coast all that day. The sea was not so rough, as the wind blew off-shore, which was a very fortunate circumstance for such a small vessel.

About noon the breeze fell a little, and shifted to the south-east. The owner spread his topsails, but furled them again, as the breeze showed signs of freshening once more.

Mr. Fogg and Mrs. Aouda did not suffer from sea-sickness, and ate with a good appetite, and Fix, invited to partake of the meal, was obliged to accept very unwillingly. He did not like to travel and eat at the expense of the man he was tracking; but yet he was obliged to eat, and so he ate.

After dinner he found an opportunity to speak to Mr. Fogg privately. "Sir," he said--this term scorched his lips, so to speak, and he had to control himself; his impulse was to arrest this "gentleman"--"sir," said he, "it is very good of you to give me a passage; but although I cannot spend money as freely as you do, I shall be happy to pay my expenses."

"You need not say anything about that," replied Mr. Fogg.

"But if I insist upon it?"

"No, sir," replied Fogg, in a tone which admitted of no discussion, "this is included in my general expenses."

Fix bowed, he felt half stifled; and going forward, he sat down and did not speak for the whole day.

Meantime they were making good progress. John Bunsby was in hopes of succeeding, and frequently said to Mr. Fogg that "they would be in time;" to which Fogg merely replied that "he counted upon it." The crew, also inspired by the hope of reward, worked hard. Not a sheet required bracing, not a sail that was not well hoisted, not one unnecessary lurch could be attributed to the steersman. They could not have worked the schooner better if they had been sailing a match in the Royal Yacht Club Regatta.

By the evening the log showed that they had run two hundred and twenty miles, and Mr. Fogg hoped that when he arrived at Yokohama he would not have to record any delay in his journal. If so, the only check he had met with since he left London would not affect his journey.

Towards morning the Tankadere entered the Straits of Fo-kien, which separate Formosa from the Chinese coasts. The sea was very rough, and it was difficult to stand on deck. At daybreak the wind freshened still more, and there was every appearance of a storm. The mercury rose and fell at intervals. In the south-east the sea rose in a long

swell, which betokened a tempest.

The pilot studied the aspect of the heavens for a long time, and at last said to Mr. Fogg:

"I suppose I may tell your honour what I think?"

"Of course," replied Fogg.

"Well, then, we are going to have a storm."

"From the north or south?" asked Mr. Fogg calmly.

"From the south. A typhoon is approaching."

"I am glad it is coming from the south, it will help us on."

"Oh, if you look on it in that light," said Bunsby, "I have no more to say."

The presentiments of Bunsby were fulfilled. During the summer the typhoon would have been probably dissipated in an electric cascade, but in the winter it would probably have its course. So the pilot took his precautions. He took in his sails and set merely the storm-jib, and waited.

The pilot begged his passengers to go below, but in such a narrow and confined space the imprisonment was far from agreeable, so none of them would quit the deck.

About eight o'clock the hurricane, with torrents of rain, burst upon them. With nothing but the small jib, the Tankadere was almost lifted out of the water by the tempest. She darted through the sea like a locomotive at full-speed.

All that day the vessel was hurried towards the north, borne on the top of the monstrous waves. Time after time she was almost engulfed, but the careful steering of the pilot saved her. The passengers were drenched with spray, but took it philosophically. Fix grumbled, no doubt; but the brave Aouda regarded her companion and admired his coolness, while she endeavoured to imitate it. As for Phileas Fogg, he took it as a matter of course.

Hitherto the Tankadere had been sailing northwards, but towards evening, as the pilot had feared, the wind veered round to the north-west. The schooner plunged terribly in the trough of the sea, and it was fortunate she was so solidly built. The tempest increased if possible at night, and John Bunsby began to feel anxious; he consulted his crew as to what they should do.

He then came to Mr. Fogg, and said, "I think we should make for one of the ports hereabouts."

"So do I," replied Fogg.

"Yes," said the pilot; "but which?"

"I only know of one," said Fogg quietly.

"And that is--?"

"Shanghai."

This reply took the pilot aback rather at first; but recognising Mr. Fogg's firmness, he said: "Yes, your honour is right, Shanghai be it."

So they kept their course.

The night was fearful; it seemed a miracle that the little vessel did not founder. Twice she was caught in the trough of the sea, and would have gone down, but that everything was let fly. Mrs. Aouda was knocked about, and more than once Mr. Fogg rushed to her assistance, though she made no complaint.

At daybreak the storm was still raging, but suddenly the wind backed to the south-east. This was a change for the better, and the Tankadere again proceeded on her course, though the cross-sea gave her some tremendous blows, sufficient to have crushed a less solid

craft. The coast was occasionally visible through the mist, but not a sail was in sight.

At noon the weather cleared a little, the gale had blown itself out, and the travellers were enabled to take some rest. The night was comparatively quiet, and the pilot was induced to set a little more sail, and at day-break next morning John Bunsby was able to declare that they were less than a hundred miles from Shanghai.

A hundred miles, and only one day to accomplish the distance. On that evening they ought to be at Shanghai if they wished to catch the steamer for Yokohama; but for the storm, which had delayed them several hours, they would then have been within thirty miles of their destination.

The breeze continued to fall, and the sea went down. All canvas was spread, and at twelve o'clock the Tankadere was only forty-five miles from Shanghai. Six hours still remained, and all were afraid they could not do it. Everyone on board, except Phileas Fogg no doubt, felt the keenest anxiety. They must maintain a speed of nine knots an hour, and the wind was falling rapidly, and coming in puffs.

Nevertheless, the schooner was so light and carried such a spread of canvas, besides being aided by the shore currents, that at six o'clock Bunsby reckoned they were only ten miles from the Shanghai river. The town itself was situated about twelve miles higher up.

At seven o'clock they were still three miles from Shanghai. The pilot swore a formidable oath as he perceived the bonus of two hundred pounds slipping away from him. He looked at Mr. Fogg; Mr. Fogg was impassible, although his whole fortune was in the balance.

At this moment a long black funnel, from which a thick train of smoke was issuing, appeared. This was the American steamer leaving Shanghai at the proper time.

"Confound it!" cried Bunsby, as he kept the schooner away a point.

"Signal her," said Fogg quietly.

There was a small brass cannon on the forecastle, which was used during fogs.

This piece was charged to the muzzle, but just as the pilot was going to fire, Phileas said:

"Hoist your flag."

The ensign was run up half-mast. This was a signal of distress, and they hoped that the steamer would see it and heave-to to assist them.

"Fire!" exclaimed Mr. Fogg.

And the report of the little cannon immediately boomed over the sea.