

CHAPTER V THE DEPARTURE OF THE "DUNCAN"

WE have said already that Lady Helena was a brave, generous woman, and what she had just done proved it in-disputably. Her husband had good reason to be proud of such a wife, one who could understand and enter into all his views. The idea of going to Captain Grant's rescue had occurred to him in London when his request was refused, and he would have anticipated Lady Helena, only he could not bear the thought of parting from her.

But now that she herself proposed to go, all hesitation was at an end. The servants of the Castle had hailed the project with loud acclamations-- for it was to save their brothers--Scotchmen, like themselves-- and Lord Glenarvan cordially joined his cheers with theirs, for the Lady of Luss.

The departure once resolved upon, there was not an hour to be lost. A telegram was dispatched to John Mangles the very same day, conveying Lord Glenarvan's orders to take the DUNCAN immediately to Glasgow, and to make preparations for a voyage to the Southern Seas, and possibly round the world, for Lady Helena was right in her opinion that the yacht might safely attempt the circumnavigation of the globe, if necessary.

The DUNCAN was a steam yacht of the finest description. She was 210 tons burden--much larger than any of the first

vessels that touched the shores of the New World, for the largest of the four ships that sailed with Columbus was only 70 tons. She had two masts and all the sails and rigging of an ordinary clipper, which would enable her to take advantage of every favorable wind, though her chief reliance was on her mechanical power. The engine, which was constructed on a new system, was a high-pressure one, of 160-horse power, and put in motion a double screw. This gave the yacht such swiftness that during her trial trip in the Firth of Clyde, she made seventeen miles an hour, a higher speed than any vessel had yet attained. No alterations were consequently needed in the DUNCAN herself; John Mangles had only to attend to her interior arrangements.

His first care was to enlarge the bunkers to carry as much coal as possible, for it is difficult to get fresh supplies en route. He had to do the same with the store-rooms, and managed so well that he succeeded in laying in provisions enough for two years. There was abundance of money at his command, and enough remained to buy a cannon, on a pivot carriage, which he mounted on the forecastle. There was no knowing what might happen, and it is always well to be able to send a good round bullet flying four miles off.

John Mangles understood his business. Though he was only the captain of a pleasure yacht, he was one of the best skippers in Glasgow. He was thirty years of age, and his countenance expressed

both courage and goodness, if the features were somewhat coarse.

He had been brought up at the castle by the Glenarvan family, and had turned out a capital sailor, having already given proof, in some of his long voyages, of his skill and energy and sang-froid.

When Lord Glenarvan offered him the command of the DUNCAN, he accepted

it with right good will, for he loved the master of Malcolm Castle, like a brother, and had hitherto vainly sought some opportunity of showing his devotion.

Tom Austin, the mate, was an old sailor, worthy of all confidence.

The crew, consisting of twenty-five men, including the captain and chief officer, were all from Dumbartonshire, experienced sailors, and all belonging to the Glenarvan estate; in fact, it was a regular clan, and they did not forget to carry with them the traditional bagpipes.

Lord Glenarvan had in them a band of trusty fellows, skilled in their calling, devoted to himself, full of courage, and as practiced in handling fire-arms as in the maneuvering of a ship; a valiant little troop, ready to follow him any where, even in the most dangerous expeditions.

When the crew heard whither they were bound, they could not restrain their enthusiasm, and the rocks of Dumbarton rang again with their joyous outbursts of cheers.

But while John Mangles made the stowage and provisioning of the yacht his chief business, he did not forget to fit up the rooms of Lord and Lady Glenarvan for a long voyage.

He had also to get cabins ready for the children of Captain Grant, as Lady Helena could not refuse Mary's request to accompany her.

As for young Robert, he would have smuggled himself in somewhere in the hold of the DUNCAN rather than be left behind. He would willingly have gone as cabin-boy, like Nelson. It was impossible to resist a little fellow like that, and, indeed, no one tried.

He would not even go as a passenger, but must serve in some capacity, as cabin-boy, apprentice or sailor, he did not care which, so he was put in charge of John Mangles, to be properly trained for his vocation.

"And I hope he won't spare me the 'cat-o-nine-tails' if I don't do properly," said Robert.

"Rest easy on that score, my boy," said Lord Glenarvan, gravely; he did not add, that this mode of punishment was forbidden on board the DUNCAN, and moreover, was quite unnecessary.

To complete the roll of passengers, we must name Major McNabbs. The Major was about fifty years of age, with a calm face and regular features--a man who did whatever he was told, of an excellent, indeed, a perfect temper; modest, silent, peaceable, and amiable, agreeing with everybody on every subject, never discussing, never disputing, never getting angry. He wouldn't move a step quicker, or slower, whether he walked upstairs

to bed or mounted a breach. Nothing could excite him, nothing could disturb him, not even a cannon ball, and no doubt he will die without ever having known even a passing feeling of irritation.

This man was endowed in an eminent degree, not only with ordinary animal courage, that physical bravery of the battle-field, which is solely due to muscular energy, but he had what is far nobler--moral courage, firmness of soul. If he had any fault it was his being so intensely Scotch from top to toe, a Caledonian of the Caledonians, an obstinate stickler for all the ancient customs of his country. This was the reason he would never serve in England, and he gained his rank of Major in the 42nd regiment, the Highland Black Watch, composed entirely of Scotch noblemen.

As a cousin of Glenarvan, he lived in Malcolm Castle, and as a major he went as a matter of course with the DUNCAN.

Such, then, was the PERSONNEL of this yacht, so unexpectedly called to make one of the most wonderful voyages of modern times. From the hour she reached the steamboat quay at Glasgow, she completely monopolized the public attention. A considerable crowd visited her every day, and the DUNCAN was the one topic of interest and conversation, to the great vexation of the different captains in the port, among others of Captain Burton, in command of the SCOTIA, a magnificent steamer lying close beside her, and bound for Calcutta. Considering her size, the SCOTIA might

justly look upon the DUNCAN as a mere fly-boat, and yet this pleasure yacht of Lord Glenarvan was quite the center of attraction, and the excitement about her daily increased.

The DUNCAN was to sail out with the tide at three o'clock on the morning of the 25th of August. But before starting, a touching ceremony was witnessed by the good people of Glasgow. At eight o'clock the night before, Lord Glenarvan and his friends, and the entire crew, from the stokers to the captain, all who were to take part in this self-sacrificing voyage, left the yacht and repaired to St. Mungo's, the ancient cathedral of the city. This venerable edifice, so marvelously described by Walter Scott, remains intact amid the ruins made by the Reformation; and it was there, beneath its lofty arches, in the grand nave, in the presence of an immense crowd, and surrounded by tombs as thickly set as in a cemetery, that they all assembled to implore the blessing of Heaven on their expedition, and to put themselves under the protection of Providence. The Rev. Mr. Morton conducted the service, and when he had ended and pronounced the benediction, a young girl's voice broke the solemn silence that followed. It was Mary Grant who poured out her heart to God in prayer for her benefactors, while grateful happy tears streamed down her cheeks, and almost choked her utterance. The vast assembly dispersed under the influence of deep emotion, and at ten o'clock the passengers and crew returned on board the vessel.