

## CHAPTER V.

IN WHICH THEY PREPARE TO GO, AND AT THE END OF WHICH THEY GO FOR GOOD.

Before the long voyage together through life, which men call marriage, Godfrey then was to make the tour of the world--a journey sometimes even more dangerous. But he reckoned on returning improved in every respect; he left a lad, he would return a man. He would have seen, noted, compared. His curiosity would be satisfied. There would only remain for him to settle down quietly, and live happily at home with his wife, whom no temptation would take him from. Was he wrong or right? Was he to learn a valuable lesson? The future will show.

In short, Godfrey was enchanted.

Phina, anxious without appearing to be so, was resigned to this apprenticeship.

Professor Tartlet, generally so firm on his limbs, had lost all his dancing equilibrium. He had lost all his usual self-possession, and tried in vain to recover it; he even tottered on the carpet of his room as if he were already on the floor of a cabin, rolling and pitching on the ocean.

As for William W. Kolderup, since he had arrived at a decision, he had

become very uncommunicative, especially to his nephew. The closed lips, and eyes half hidden beneath their lids, showed that there was some fixed idea in the head where generally floated the highest commercial speculations.

"Ah! you want to travel," muttered he every now and then; "travel instead of marrying and staying at home! Well, you shall travel."

Preparations were immediately begun.

In the first place, the itinerary had to be projected, discussed, and settled.

Was Godfrey to go south, or east, or west? That had to be decided in the first place.

If he went southwards, the Panama, California and British Columbia Company, or the Southampton and Rio Janeiro Company would have to take him to Europe.

If he went eastwards, the Union Pacific Railway would take him in a few days to New York, and thence the Cunard, Inman, White Star, Hamburg-American, or French-Transatlantic Companies would land him on the shores of the old world.

If he went westwards, the Golden Age Steam Transoceanic would render it

easy for him to reach Melbourne, and thence he could get to the Isthmus of Suez by the boats of the Peninsular and Oriental Company.

The means of transport were abundant, and thanks to their mathematical agreement the round of the world was but a simple pleasure tour.

But it was not thus that the nephew and heir of the nabob of Frisco was to travel.

No! William W. Kolderup possessed for the requirements of his business quite a fleet of steam and sailing-vessels. He had decided that one of these ships should be "put at the disposal" of Godfrey Morgan, as if he were a prince of the blood, travelling for his pleasure--at the expense of his father's subjects.

By his orders the Dream, a substantial steamer of 600 tons and 200 horse-power, was got ready. It was to be commanded by Captain Turcott, a tough old salt, who had already sailed in every latitude in every sea. A thorough sailor, this friend of tornadoes, cyclones, and typhoons, had already spent of his fifty years of life, forty at sea. To bring to in a hurricane was quite child's play to this mariner, who was never disconcerted, except by land-sickness when he was in port. His incessantly unsteady existence on a vessel's deck had endowed him with the habit of constantly balancing himself to the right or the left, or behind or in front, as though he had the rolling and pitching variety of St. Vitus's dance.

A mate, an engineer, four stokers, a dozen seamen, eighteen men in all, formed the crew of the Dream. And if the ship was contented to get quietly through eight miles an hour, she possessed a great many excellent nautical qualities. If she was not swift enough to race the waves when the sea was high, the waves could not race over her, and that was an advantage which quite compensated for the mediocrity of her speed, particularly when there was no hurry. The Dream was brigantine rigged, and in a favourable wind, with her 400 square yards of canvas, her steaming rate could be considerably increased.

It should be borne in mind all through that the voyage of the Dream was carefully planned, and would be punctually performed. William W. Kolderup was too practical a man not to put to some purpose a journey of 15,000 or 16,000 leagues across all the oceans of the globe. His ship was to go without cargo, undoubtedly, but it was easy to get her down to her right trim by means of water ballast, and even to sink her to her deck, if it proved necessary.

The Dream was instructed to communicate with the different branch establishments of the wealthy merchant. She was to go from one market to another.

Captain Turcott, never fear, would not find it difficult to pay the expenses of the voyage! Godfrey Morgan's whim would not cost the avuncular purse a single dollar! That is the way they do business in the best commercial houses!

All this was decided at long, very secret interviews between William W. Kolderup and Captain Turcott. But it appeared that the regulation of this matter, simple as it seemed, could not be managed alone, for the captain paid numerous visits to the merchant's office. When he came away, it would be noticed that his face bore a curious expression, that his hair stood on end as if he had been ruffling it up with fevered hands, and that all his body rolled and pitched more than usual. High words were constantly heard, proving that the interviews were stormy. Captain Turcott, with his plain speaking, knew how to withstand William W. Kolderup, who loved and esteemed him enough to permit him to contradict him.

And now all was arranged. Who had given in? William W. Kolderup or Turcott? I dare not say, for I do not even know the subject of their discussion. However, I rather think it must have been the captain.

Anyhow, after eight days of interviewing, the merchant and the captain were in accord, but Turcott did not cease to grumble between his teeth.

"May five hundred thousand Davy Joneses drag me to the bottom if ever I had a job like this before!"

However, the *Dream* fitted out rapidly, and her captain neglected nothing which would enable him to put to sea in the first fortnight in June. She had been into dock, and the hull had been gone over with composition, whose brilliant red contrasted vividly with the black of her upper works.

A great number of vessels of all kinds and nationalities came into the port of San Francisco. In a good many years the old quays of the town, built straight along the shore, would have been insufficient for the embarkation and disembarkation of their cargoes, if engineers had not devised subsidiary wharves. Piles of red deal were driven into the water, and many square miles of planks were laid on them and formed huge platforms. A good deal of the bay was thus taken up, but the bay is enormous. There were also regular landing-stages, with numberless cranes and crabs, at which steamers from both oceans, steamboats from the Californian rivers, clippers from all countries, and coasters from the American seaboard were ranged in proper order, so as not to interfere one with the other.

It was at one of these artificial quays, at the extremity of Mission Wharf Street, that the Dream had been securely moored after she had come out of dock.

Nothing was neglected, and the steamer would start under the most favourable conditions. Provisioning, outfit, all were minutely studied. The rigging was perfect, the boilers had been tested and the screw was an excellent one. A steam launch was even carried, to facilitate communication with the shore, and this would probably be of great service during the voyage.

Everything was ready on the 10th of June. They had only to put to sea. The men shipped by Captain Turcott to work the sails or drive the engine

were a picked crew, and it would have been difficult to find a better one. Quite a stock of live animals, agouties, sheep, goats, poultry, &c., were stowed between decks, the material wants of the travellers were likewise provided for by numerous cases of preserved meats of the best brands.

The route the Dream was to follow had doubtless been the subject of the long conferences which William W. Kolderup had had with his captain. All knew that they were first bound for Auckland, in New Zealand, unless want of coal necessitated by the persistence of contrary winds obliged them to refill perhaps at one of the islands of the Pacific or some Chinese port.

All this detail mattered little to Godfrey once he was on the sea, and still less to Tartlet, whose troubled spirit exaggerated from day to day the dangers of navigation. There was only one formality to be gone through--the formality of being photographed.

An engaged man could not decently start on a long voyage round the world without taking with him the image of her he loved, and in return leaving his own image behind him.

Godfrey in tourist costume accordingly handed himself over to Messrs Stephenson and Co., photographers of Montgomery Street, and Phina, in her walking-dress, confided in like manner to the sun the task of fixing her charming but somewhat sorrowing features on the plate of those able operators.

It is also the custom to travel together, and so Phina's portrait had its allotted place in Godfrey's cabin, and Godfrey's portrait its special position in Phina's room. As for Tartlet, who had no betrothed and who was not thinking of having one at present, he thought it better to confide his image to sensitised paper. But although great was the talent of the photographers they failed to present him with a satisfactory proof. The negative was a confused fog in which it was impossible to recognize the celebrated professor of dancing and deportment.

This was because the patient could not keep himself still, in spite of all that was said about the invariable rule in studios devoted to operations of this nature.

They tried other means, even the instantaneous process. Impossible. Tartlet pitched and rolled in anticipation as violently as the captain of the Dream.

The idea of obtaining a picture of the features of this remarkable man had thus to be abandoned. Irreparable would be the misfortune if--but far from us be the thought!--if in imagining he was leaving the new world for the old world Tartlet had left the new world for the other world from which nobody returns.

On the 9th of June all was ready. The Dream was complete. Her papers, bills of lading, charter-party, assurance policy, were all in order, and



two days before the ship-broker had sent on the last signatures.

On that day a grand farewell breakfast was given at the mansion in Montgomery Street. They drank to the happy voyage of Godfrey and his safe return.

Godfrey was rather agitated, and he did not strive to hide it. Phina showed herself much the most composed. As for Tartlet he drowned his apprehensions in several glasses of champagne, whose influence was perceptible up to the moment of departure. He even forgot his kit, which was brought to him as they were casting off the last hawsers of the Dream.

The last adieux were said on board, the last handshakings took place on the poop, then the engine gave two or three turns of the screw and the steamer was under way.

"Good-bye, Phina!"

"Good-bye, Godfrey!"

"May Heaven protect you!" said the uncle.

"And above all may it bring us back!" murmured Professor Tartlet.

"And never forget, Godfrey," added William W. Kolderup, "the device which the Dream bears on her stern, 'Confide, recte agens.'"

"Never, Uncle Will! Good-bye, Phina!"

"Good-bye, Godfrey!"

The steamer moved off, handkerchiefs were shaken as long as she remained in sight from the quay, and even after. Soon the bay of San Francisco, the largest in the world, was crossed, the Dream passed the narrow throat of the Golden Gate and then her prow cleft the waters of the Pacific Ocean. It was as though the Gates of Gold had closed upon her.