

## CHAPTER VII.

IN WHICH IT WILL BE SEEN THAT WILLIAM W. KOLDERUP WAS  
PROBABLY RIGHT IN  
INSURING HIS SHIP.

During the following days, the 13th, 14th, and 15th of June, the barometer slowly fell, without an attempt to rise in the slightest degree, and the weather became variable, hovering between rain and wind or storm. The breeze strengthened considerably, and changed to south-westerly. It was a head-wind for the Dream, and the waves had now increased enormously, and lifted her forward. The sails were all furled, and she had to depend on her screw alone; under half steam, however, so as to avoid excessive labouring.

Godfrey bore the trial of the ship's motion without even losing his good-humour for a moment. Evidently he was fond of the sea.

But Tartlet was not fond of the sea, and it served him out.

It was pitiful to see the unfortunate professor of deportment deporting himself no longer, the professor of dancing dancing contrary to every rule of his art. Remain in his cabin, with the seas shaking the ship from stem to stern, he could not.

"Air! air!" he gasped.

And so he never left the deck. A roll sent him rolling from one side to the other, a pitch sent him pitching from one end to the other. He clung to the rails, he clutched the ropes, he assumed every attitude that is absolutely condemned by the principles of the modern choregraphic art. Ah! why could he not raise himself into the air by some balloon-like movement, and escape the eccentricities of that moving plane? A dancer of his ancestors had said that he only consented to set foot to the ground so as not to humiliate his companions, but Tartlet would willingly never have come down at all on the deck, whose perpetual agitation threatened to hurl him into the abyss.

What an idea it was for the rich William W. Kolderup to send him here.

"Is this bad weather likely to last?" asked he of Captain Turcott twenty times a day.

"Dunno! barometer is not very promising!" was the invariable answer of the captain, knitting his brows.

"Shall we soon get there?"

"Soon, Mr. Tartlet? Hum! soon!"

"And they call this the Pacific Ocean!" repeated the unfortunate man, between a couple of shocks and oscillations.

It should be stated that, not only did Professor Tartlet suffer from sea-sickness, but also that fear had seized him as he watched the great seething waves breaking into foam level with the bulwarks of the Dream, and heard the valves, lifted by the violent beats, letting the steam off through the waste-pipes, as he felt the steamer tossing like a cork on the mountains of water.

"No," said he with a lifeless look at his pupil, "it is not impossible for us to capsize."

"Take it quietly, Tartlet," replied Godfrey. "A ship was made to float! There are reasons for all this."

"I tell you there are none."

And, thinking thus, the professor had put on his life-belt. He wore it night and day, tightly buckled round his waist. He would not have taken it off for untold gold. Every time the sea gave him a moment's respite he would replenish it with another puff. In fact, he never blew it out enough to please him.

We must make some indulgence for the terrors of Tartlet. To those unaccustomed to the sea, its rolling is of a nature to cause some alarm, and we know that this passenger-in-spite-of-himself had not even till then risked his safety on the peaceable waters of the Bay of San Francisco; so that we can forgive his being ill on board a ship in a stiffish breeze, and his feeling terrified at the playfulness of the

waves.

The weather became worse and worse, and threatened the Dream with a gale, which, had she been near the shore, would have been announced to her by the semaphores.

During the day the ship was dreadfully knocked about, though running at half steam so as not to damage her engines. Her screw was continually immersing and emerging in the violent oscillations of her liquid bed. Hence, powerful strokes from its wings in the deeper water, or fearful tremors as it rose and ran wild, causing heavy thunderings beneath the stern, and furious gallopings of the pistons which the engineer could master but with difficulty.

One observation Godfrey made, of which at first he could not discover the cause. This was, that during the night the shocks experienced by the steamer were infinitely less violent than during the day. Was he then to conclude that the wind then fell, and that a calm set in after sundown?

This was so remarkable that, on the night between the 21st and 22nd of June, he endeavoured to find out some explanation of it. The day had been particularly stormy, the wind had freshened, and it did not appear at all likely that the sea would fall at night, lashed so capriciously as it had been for so many hours.

Towards midnight then Godfrey dressed, and, wrapping himself up warmly, went on deck.

The men on watch were forward, Captain Turcott was on the bridge.

The force of the wind had certainly not diminished. The shock of the waves, which should have dashed on the bows of the Dream, was, however, very much less violent. But in raising his eyes towards the top of the funnel, with its black canopy of smoke, Godfrey saw that the smoke, instead of floating from the bow aft, was, on the contrary, floating from aft forwards, and following the same direction as the ship.

"Has the wind changed?" he said to himself.

And extremely glad at the circumstance he mounted the bridge. Stepping up to Turcott,--

"Captain!" he said.

The latter, enveloped in his oilskins, had not heard him approach, and at first could not conceal a movement of annoyance in seeing him close to him.

"You, Mr. Godfrey, you--on the bridge?"

"Yes, I, captain. I came to ask--"

"What?" answered Captain Turcott sharply.

"If the wind has not changed?"

"No, Mr. Godfrey, no. And, unfortunately, I think it will turn to a storm!"

"But we now have the wind behind us!"

"Wind behind us--yes--wind behind us!" replied the captain, visibly disconcerted at the observation. "But it is not my fault."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that in order not to endanger the vessel's safety I have had to put her about and run before the storm."

"That will cause us a most lamentable delay!" said Godfrey.

"Very much so," answered Captain Turcott, "but when day breaks, if the sea falls a little, I shall resume our westerly route. I should recommend you, Mr. Godfrey, to get back to your cabin. Take my advice, try and sleep while we are running before the wind. You will be less knocked about."

Godfrey made a sign of affirmation; turning a last anxious glance at the low clouds which were chasing each other with extreme swiftness, he left the bridge, returned to his cabin, and soon resumed his interrupted

slumbers. The next morning, the 22nd of June, as Captain Turcott had said, the wind having sensibly abated, the Dream was headed in proper direction.

This navigation towards the west during the day, towards the east during the night, lasted for forty-eight hours more; but the barometer showed some tendency to rise, its oscillations became less frequent; it was to be presumed that the bad weather would end in northerly winds. And so in fact it happened.

On the 25th of June, about eight o'clock in the morning, when Godfrey stepped on deck, a charming breeze from the north-east had swept away the clouds, the sun's rays were shining through the rigging and tipping its projecting points with touches of fire. The sea, deep green in colour, glittered along a large section of its surface beneath the direct influence of its beams. The wind blew only in feeble gusts which laced the wave-crests with delicate foam. The lower sails were set.

Properly speaking, they were not regular waves on which the sea rose and fell, but only lengthened undulations which gently rocked the steamer.

Undulations or waves, it is true, it was all one to Professor Tartlet, as unwell when it was "too mild," as when it was "too rough." There he was, half crouching on the deck, with his mouth open like a carp fainted out of water.

The mate on the poop, his telescope at his eye, was looking towards the

north-east.

Godfrey approached him.

"Well, sir," said he gaily, "to-day is a little better than yesterday."

"Yes, Mr. Godfrey," replied the mate, "we are now in smooth water."

"And the Dream is on the right road!"

"Not yet."

"Not yet? and why?"

"Because we have evidently drifted north-eastwards during this last spell, and we must find out our position exactly."

"But there is a good sun and a horizon perfectly clear."

"At noon in taking its height we shall get a good observation, and then the captain will give us our course."

"Where is the captain?" asked Godfrey.

"He has gone off."

"Gone off?"



"Yes! our look-outs saw from the whiteness of the sea that there were some breakers away to the east; breakers which are not shown on the chart. So the steam launch was got out, and with the boatswain and three men, Captain Turcott has gone off to explore."

"How long ago?"

"About an hour and a half!"

"Ah!" said Godfrey, "I am sorry he did not tell me. I should like to have gone too."

"You were asleep, Mr. Godfrey," replied the mate, "and the captain did not like to wake you."

"I am sorry; but tell me, which way did the launch go?"

"Over there," answered the mate, "over the starboard bow, north-eastwards."

"And can you see it with the telescope?"

"No, she is too far off."

"But will she be long before she comes back?"

"She won't be long, for the captain is going to take the sights himself, and to do that he must be back before noon."

At this Godfrey went and sat on the forecastle, having sent some one for his glasses. He was anxious to watch the return of the launch. Captain Turcott's reconnaissance did not cause him any surprise. It was natural that the Dream should not be run into danger on a part of the sea where breakers had been reported.

Two hours passed. It was not until half-past ten that a light line of smoke began to rise on the horizon.

It was evidently the steam launch which, having finished the reconnaissance, was making for the ship.

It amused Godfrey to follow her in the field of his glasses. He saw her little by little reveal herself in clearer outline, he saw her grow on the surface of the sea, and then give definite shape to her smoke wreath, as it mingled with a few curls of steam on the clear depth of the horizon.

She was an excellent little vessel, of immense speed, and as she came along at full steam, she was soon visible to the naked eye. Towards eleven o'clock, the wash from her bow as she tore through the waves was perfectly distinct, and behind her the long furrow of foam gradually growing wider and fainter like the tail of a comet.

At a quarter-past eleven, Captain Turcott hailed and boarded the Dream.

"Well, captain, what news?" asked Godfrey, shaking his hand.

"Ah! Good morning, Mr. Godfrey!"

"And the breakers?"

"Only show!" answered Captain Turcott. "We saw nothing suspicious, our men must have been deceived, but I am rather surprised at that, all the same."

"We are going ahead then?" said Godfrey.

"Yes, we are going on now, but I must first take an observation."

"Shall we get the launch on board?" asked the mate.

"No," answered the captain, "we may want it again. Leave it in tow!"

The captain's orders were executed, and the launch, still under steam, dropped round to the stern of the Dream.

Three-quarters of an hour afterwards, Captain Turcott, with his sextant in his hand, took the sun's altitude, and having made his observation, he gave the course. That done, having given a last look at the horizon,

he called the mate, and taking him into his cabin, the two remained there in a long consultation.

The day was a very fine one. The sails had been furled, and the Dream steamed rapidly without their help. The wind was very slight, and with the speed given by the screw there would not have been enough to fill them.

Godfrey was thoroughly happy. This sailing over a beautiful sea, under a beautiful sky, could anything be more cheering, could anything give more impulse to thought, more satisfaction to the mind? And it is scarcely to be wondered at that Professor Tartlet also began to recover himself a little. The state of the sea did not inspire him with immediate inquietude, and his physical being showed a little reaction. He tried to eat, but without taste or appetite. Godfrey would have had him take off the life-belt which encircled his waist, but this he absolutely refused to do. Was there not a chance of this conglomeration of wood and iron, which men call a vessel, gaping asunder at any moment.

The evening came, a thick mist spread over the sky, without descending to the level of the sea. The night was to be much darker than would have been thought from the magnificent daytime.

There was no rock to fear in these parts, for Captain Turcott had just fixed his exact position on the charts; but collisions are always possible, and they are much more frequent on foggy nights.

The lamps were carefully put into place as soon as the sun set. The white one was run up the mast, and the green light to the right and the red one to the left gleamed in the shrouds. If the Dream was run down, at the least it would not be her fault--that was one consolation. To founder even when one is in order is to founder nevertheless, and if any one on board made this observation it was of course Professor Tartlet. However, the worthy man, always on the roll and the pitch, had regained his cabin, Godfrey his; the one with the assurance, the other in the hope that he would pass a good night, for the Dream scarcely moved on the crest of the lengthened waves.

Captain Turcott, having handed over the watch to the mate, also came under the poop to take a few hours' rest. All was in order. The steamer could go ahead in perfect safety, although it did not seem as though the thick fog would lift.

In about twenty minutes Godfrey was asleep, and the sleepless Tartlet, who had gone to bed with his clothes on as usual, only betrayed himself by distant sighs. All at once--at about one in the morning--Godfrey was awakened by a dreadful clamour.

He jumped out of bed, slipped on his clothes, his trousers, his waistcoat and his sea-boots.

Almost immediately a fearful cry was heard on deck, "We are sinking! we are sinking!"

In an instant Godfrey was out of his cabin and in the saloon. There he cannoned against an inert mass which he did not recognize. It was Professor Tartlet.

The whole crew were on deck, hurrying about at the orders of the mate and captain.

"A collision?" asked Godfrey.

"I don't know, I don't know--this beastly fog--" answered the mate; "but we are sinking!"

"Sinking?" exclaimed Godfrey.

And in fact the Dream, which had doubtless struck on a rock was sensibly foundering. The water was creeping up to the level of the deck. The engine fires were probably already out below.

"To the sea! to the sea, Mr. Morgan!" exclaimed the captain. "There is not a moment to lose! You can see the ship settling down! It will draw you down in the eddy!"

"And Tartlet?"

"I'll look after him!--We are only half a cable from the shore!"

"But you?"

"My duty compels me to remain here to the last, and I remain!" said the captain. "But get off! get off!"

Godfrey still hesitated to cast himself into the waves, but the water was already up to the level of the deck.

Captain Turcott knowing that Godfrey swam like a fish, seized him by the shoulders, and did him the service of throwing him overboard.

It was time! Had it not been for the darkness, there would doubtless have been seen a deep raging vortex in the place once occupied by the Dream.

But Godfrey, in a few strokes in the calm water, was able to get swiftly clear of the whirlpool, which would have dragged him down like the maelstrom.

All this was the work of a minute.

A few minutes afterwards, amid shouts of despair, the lights on board went out one after the other.

Doubt existed no more; the Dream had sunk head downwards!

As for Godfrey he had been able to reach a large lofty rock away from the surf. There, shouting vainly in the darkness, hearing no voice in

reply to his own, not knowing if he should find himself on an isolated rock or at the extremity of a line of reefs, and perhaps the sole survivor of the catastrophe, he waited for the dawn.