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CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL OF POPULAR LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART, NO. 686

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Содержание

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DERELICTS

Has the idea ever occurred to any one that at all times there are ships of one kind or other floating about at sea without a living creature on board? They have been abandoned by their officers and crew in what seemed a hopeless condition. Some are dismantled and mere hulks. Some are swimming keel upwards. Some are water-logged, but being laden with timber will not sink. There they are driving hither and thither on the ocean, as wind and waves direct, a dread to the mariner, who may unawares come against them in the dark. We remember seeing an account of one of these derelicts, as they are called, being fallen in with after having been abandoned for weeks. It was water-logged up to the very deck, and sitting on a scrap of the exposed bulwarks was a poor cat, still alive, in the last degree of attenuation. We have often with commiseration thought of that accidentally deserted cat, its hunger, its misery, its hopelessness night and day in the midst of the dreary and spacious ocean. How the creature must have been delighted when rescued from its floating prison! Occasionally derelicts are taken in tow and brought into port, where they are broken up, or if of any value, are reclaimed by owners, to whom they are delivered on a payment of 'salvage.'

We are going to speak of a kind of derelicts out of ordinary experience.

On the 17th of September 1855, while sailing in the American whaler *George Henry*, in Davis's Strait, and when about forty miles from Cape Mercy, Captain Buddington descried a vessel having something peculiar in her appearance. No signals were hoisted, none answered, and no crew visible when he approached. Going on board, he found no living being in the ship; but in the best cabin were documents declaring the abandonment of the ship, and explaining the circumstances under which it had taken place. The wastrel, the treasure-trove, the lost-found, was the famous *Resolute*, whose story we shall tell presently.

Jurists and legislators have had to determine the ownership of property that seems for the time to belong to no one. *Derelict* is the lawyers' name for such property, so far at anyrate as regards abandoned ships. Where a crew merely quit their ship to obtain assistance, or for any other temporary purpose, it is not derelict: they intend to return; but when the master and crew abandon her without hope of recovery, she becomes ownerless for a time, and then falls to the lot of the finder. Not necessarily to keep, however, but, as has been said, to hold as a claim for salvage from the crown, the owners, or the under-writers. If the solitary ship is found near any coast, there is generally some claim put forth by the owner of the sea-shore, whether the owner be government or a private individual; but when out in the open sea, far distant from land, international maritime law may have to settle the matter. In practice, however, very little of this takes place; a ship really abandoned out in mid-ocean is seldom worth the expense of repair; the finders and salvors regard it chiefly in the light of saleable old materials; and the derelict, if it be taken in tow or otherwise navigated to port by its discoverers, usually finds its way into the hands of the ship-breaker.

A curious inquiry it would be, How many abandoned ships are at this moment locked up in densely packed ice? No great difficulty will be felt in understanding that derelicts have a peculiar history in the Arctic regions. When a ship is left forlorn in any sea or ocean, the probability is that fire or leakage has rendered the abandonment necessary as the only chance of escape for passengers and crew. Or it may be that the ship has been cast upon some coast or outlying rock, and so become tenantless. In the intricate channels of the frozen regions, on the contrary, a ship may be in a sound

condition, but so hopelessly hemmed in on all sides with huge floes and fields of ice, that the crew would have exhausted all their food and necessaries of life before liberation comes; they quit the luckless vessel, and wend their way by sledge or by boat to regions of civilisation.

Many of the illustrative instances of this kind of derelict are exceedingly interesting. In 1821 Lieutenants Parry and Lyon, in the *Fury* and *Hecla*, encountered such terrible difficulties that the first-named ship was nipped and then wrecked; the crew fortunately were able to reach the *Hecla*, which after a time returned home with a double company of officers and men. The *Fury* was derelict, but not the stores, as we shall presently see. In 1829 Captains John and James Ross started on the expedition which was destined to last till 1833. What they suffered during four successive winters, their narrative told in moving terms. They lost their ship, and would in all probability have perished from starvation, had it not been that they were able to reach Fury Beach, and there avail themselves of the provisions which the wrecked *Fury* had on board. This ship, as well as that which had been under the Rosses, probably fell to pieces by degrees, in a grave of ice or water or both.

Poor Sir John Franklin's fate will always be bound up in our recollection with that of the *Erebus* and *Terror*. It is pretty generally known to our readers that those two ships left England in 1845, under Captains Crozier and Fitzjames, with Franklin in supreme command over both; that they wintered near the south-east entrance of Wellington Channel; and that when the summer heat of 1846 had sufficiently melted the ice, they proceeded south through Regent Inlet to the west side of King William Land. They were hopelessly and helplessly iced in for the remainder of that year, all through 1847, and on into 1848. Poor Franklin succumbed to illness, anxiety, cold, and disease, and died on the 11th of June 1847. Seeing no hope of extricating the ships, and worn down by every kind of privation, Crozier and Fitzjames abandoned the *Erebus* and *Terror* on the 26th of April 1848, accompanied by the remainder of both crews – numbering in all somewhat over one hundred souls. How many of them reached King William Land and Montreal Island, in sledges or on foot, we shall probably never know; but certain it is that not one of the hapless men was ever again seen by Europeans; whether any of the Eskimo met them or saw them, is doubtful. There were the two deserted ships, left to fate to decide whether they would ever again be liberated from their icy home, and enabled to render useful service. Rumours were communicated in later years by the Eskimo to some whaling crews that two ships had been iced up for several winters: supposed to have been the *Erebus* and *Terror*.

In 185 °Captain M'Clure commenced the famous voyage which, though it led to the abandonment of the good ship *Investigator*, enabled him to be the first commander who really effected the North-west Passage. (Whether he was the first to *discover* it, is a question on which much controversy has arisen.) Sailing down the Atlantic to Cape Horn, up the Pacific to Behring's Strait, and through the Frozen Sea to Banks Land, he there passed three frightfully severe winters, from the autumn of 1850 to the spring of 1853. There he quitted his trusty but ice-bound ship; and there, so far as human testimony goes, the *Investigator* still is, in Mercy Bay. In imminent peril of starvation, M'Clure and his gallant crew were compelled to this abandonment; they sledged over the ice to Melville Island, where fortunately they met with another expedition, and safety was insured. This other expedition, the most remarkable of all for derelict, comes next for notice.

Sir Edward Belcher, at a time when the public anxiety about the unknown fate of Franklin was most intense, was in 1852 placed in command of an expedition more complete than any that had been previously despatched to those regions. It comprised the *Resolute* under Captain Kellett, the *Intrepid* under Captain M'Clintock, the *Pioneer* under Captain Sherard Osborn, the *Assistance* under Belcher himself, and two or three auxiliary vessels. We have not here to tell how it arose that the ships made few or no discoveries, and disappointed the government in more ways than one. The sledgings, however, were splendid; and it was a joy to all that the expedition brought M'Clure and his crew safely back to their native land. Never were officers more deeply disappointed than when Belcher commanded them, one after another, to abandon their ships in 1854. He had been out two winters; some of the ships had been long ice-bound; and the sense he entertained of his responsibility

impelled him to adopt a step which certainly could not have been adopted willingly. He ordered Kellett to abandon the immovable *Resolute*, M'Clintock the *Intrepid*, and Sherard Osborn the *Pioneer*; he himself abandoned the *Assistance*; and the officers and crews of all four ships obtained a passage to England in such other vessels as happened to be available in the autumn of 1854. Not only so, but they also brought with them M'Clure and the crew of the *Investigator* (as denoted in the last paragraph). Out of these five abandoned ships four have never, so far as we are aware, been since seen by Europeans. They may perchance be iced up still, or have fallen to pieces by repeated shocks from masses of ice loosened during the brief summers. One at Mercy Bay in Banks Land, two on the shores of Melville Island, two in Wellington Channel – such were the localities of the derelicts. Perhaps some future explorers will tell us something of four of these brave old weather-beaten craft, of which, for more than twenty years, we have known nothing.

Not so concerning the fifth. And here we are brought to the deeply interesting episode of derelict briefly indicated at the beginning of this paper. Judging from such facts as appear reliable, it is probable that the ice around the *Resolute* loosened somewhat during the autumn of 1854; that she was drifted slowly by the current until another winter nipped her, and held her ice-bound at some point nearer the entrance to Baffin's Bay; that she was again loosened in the summer of 1855, and drifted leisurely down Davis's Strait to the point where Captain Buddington espied the wanderer. Two facts are certainly known: that the distance drifted could not have been less than a thousand miles, from Melville Island through Barrow Strait, Lancaster Sound, and Baffin's Bay to Davis's Strait; and that four hundred and seventy-four days elapsed between the abandonment and the recovery. The tough old ship was still sound; a little water had entered the hold, and a few perishable articles had decayed, but in other respects the *Resolute* appeared not much the worse for her strange voyage.

When the English government heard of this remarkable recovery of the old weather-beaten craft, they at once waived any right or claim they may have had to it, and surrendered it to Captain Buddington and his crew as the salvors. After nearly a year had elapsed since the recovery, an Act of Congress was passed, empowering the United States government to expend forty thousand dollars (about eight thousand pounds) in the purchase of the ship and its trappings from the fortunate finders, and the presentation of it to England as a graceful act on the part of the Great Republic. The plan was excellently carried into effect. In one of the American navy yards the *Resolute* was thoroughly overhauled, the defects repaired, all the equipments and stores replaced – even the officers' books, pictures, and miscellaneous articles returned exactly to the places they had occupied in the cabins. Captain Hartstein, of the United States navy, was commissioned to bring the ship to England. He arrived near Cowes shortly before the close of the year 1856; the Queen, the Prince Consort, and other members of the royal family went on board and inspected the old *Resolute*. The royal visitors having taken their departure, the vessel was towed into Portsmouth harbour amid much gay ceremonial, and was handed over to the authorities of the dockyard. Early in 1857 Captain Hartstein and his companions returned to America. It is mortifying to have to read that, owing to some niggardliness at the Admiralty, or perhaps more correctly that want of sentiment in English officials, we gave a shabby return for a graceful act. The *Resolute* should have been maintained as a memento of a most remarkable episode, even if not actually employed in further service; instead of this, the ship was dismantled and converted into a mere hulk! Another derelict was the *Advance*. This vessel, provided by the munificence of an American merchant, Mr Grinnell, was placed under the command of Dr Kane, and sent northward in 1853 to search for Franklin. Kane made an historically famous progress up Smith Sound to such a latitude as to bring that route into favour among Arctic explorers. The return journey was, however, a terrible one. After two winterings in the ice he abandoned his poor ship in April 1855, and made a three months' sledge-journey to the Danish settlements in Greenland. Has the *Advance* ever been seen by later explorers; has it been iced up for twenty-two years; or have shocks and nippings shattered it to fragments?

The *Polaris*, connected with an American expedition, was abandoned in October 1872, and the officers and crew returned to the United States by boats. Storms, driftings, and other calamities led to a division of the crew into two parties. One worked their way down Davis's Strait, or were drifted thither, and were picked up in April 1873 by the *Tigress*, off the coast of Labrador; the others, making boats out of some of the timbers of the *Polaris*, managed to reach the eastern side of Baffin's Bay, where they were picked up by the *Ravenscraig* whaler in the autumn of the same year. The poor *Polaris* scarcely deserved the name of a derelict; for only portions of a hull were left stranded on a coast of the icy sea.

One more example, and this also from the Arctic regions. In 1872 the Austrians did excellent work in furtherance of maritime research by fitting out a private expedition in the small ship *Tegetthoff*, under the management of Lieutenants Weyprecht and Payer. Instead of taking the Baffin's Bay and Smith Sound route, the *Tegetthoff* coasted round Norway to Nova Zembla, and wintered off that island. Instead of being free to sail in the following summer, the ship was fast locked in an ice-floe from which she could not be extricated, and drifted when the floe drifted. Luckily the drift was just in the direction which the explorers wished to go, almost due north. They came most unexpectedly to a group of islands until then totally unknown, the largest of which they named Franz Josef Land, in honour of the Emperor of Austria. They wintered in the high latitude of eighty-one degrees north, and made excellent sledge-expeditions in the spring of 1874, an account of which, together with other interesting details, was given last month in this *Journal*. Returning to the *Tegetthoff*, they found her still immovably fixed in the ice. A prospect of exhausted stores and provisions led to a resolution to abandon the ship; this was done in the summer; and a boat-voyage of three months brought the hardy adventurers to the mainland in the autumn of the same year. We cannot help fancying that the abandoned ship will one day fall into friendly hands; and if it does, the salvors will find many interesting things on board; for the crew brought away as little as possible with them, in order not to overload the boats. Meanwhile the *Tegetthoff* is 'waiting till called for.'

THE LAST OF THE HADDONS

CHAPTER IX. – ARTHUR TRAFFORD'S CHIVALRY

When the first hurry and excitement was over, I found that the duties I had to perform were anything but arduous in a house like Mr Farrar's. I had only to see the genteel solemn undertaker, and give him a *carte blanche* to furnish the best – out of respect for what I knew would be Mr Farrar's wishes, I did not add, 'and the plainest' – as it is becoming good taste to do. It was equally easy to arrange with the milliners and dressmakers, &c. They all seemed to know precisely what the size of the house required, and assured me in a few hushed words that everything should be in the best taste, and the servants' mourning all that was proper for such an occasion; every shade of difference in position being duly considered. Moreover, the question of my own mourning, which had somewhat puzzled me, was settled upon at once, in a way which would have not a little amused me had the occasion been a different one. 'Friend staying in the house – chaperon of Miss Farrar's – everything would be found quite correct.' During the next few days, Lilian did not allude to the revelation made by her dying father. I believe she was at the time too much absorbed in grief to be able to realise anything beyond the one fact that she had lost him. Mr Farrar had been a loving indulgent father; and though for the first fifteen years of her life she had seen very little of him, that little had shewn her all that was best in his nature, and given her faith in him.

On coming to live at the great palace he had built, she found herself treated like a princess in a fairy tale, surrounded with luxury, the richest gifts showered upon her, a host of attendants ready to obey her slightest whim, and above all, the orthodox Prince Charming to lay his heart at her feet. It was natural enough that her grief should be strong for the loss of the father, to whom she owed all this; as well as a love which was itself stronger and deeper than is lavished upon all daughters.

I did not attempt any commonplaces in the way of condolence; just in a quiet, undemonstrative way made her feel that a friend was near, and trusted to the first terrible anguish wearing itself out. With poor Mrs Tipper it was different, though I knew her grief was in its way just as genuine as Lilian's. I saw that it did her real good to moan and cry, and talk over her brother's goodness, generosity, wonderful cleverness, and so forth; and fully indulged her when she and I were alone. I am glad to believe that I was of some service to both in the time of need.

Mr Farrar had no immediate relations to be bidden to the funeral. Mrs Tipper hesitatingly mentioned something about a cousin in the 'green-grocery line;' but presently opined that perhaps 'dear Jacob' might object; and he was dropped out of notice. Major Maitland, Lilian's uncle on her mother's side, who promised to attend 'if possible;' Arthur Trafford; Robert Wentworth; and the doctor and lawyer, were to be the followers at the funeral.

I saw more of Arthur Trafford during that week of seclusion than I had previously done; and I was more than ever dissatisfied with him. For the first few days, Lilian kept her room, almost prostrate from the shock which had come upon her at a time when she was so entirely unprepared. I think too that it would have appeared to her almost like irreverence for the dead to listen to love-speeches just then. Nevertheless, she might have been expected to turn to him for comfort, and I thought it significant that she did not do so. I acted as messenger between them; and if I had had a very high opinion of Arthur Trafford before, I should have lost it now. The one only thing I could see in him to respect was his love for Lilian. It was not his lack of love for her, but his too evident love for something else, which offended me. It might be that I was not marked 'dangerous' in his estimation, now that circumstances were altered, and that therefore he was more unguarded with me. I can only say he appeared to very great disadvantage under the new aspect of affairs. In our first

interview after Mr Farrar's death, I saw that he was thinking a great deal more of the large fortune which would revert to Lilian than anything besides.

'So I hear there is no will, Miss Haddon?'

'You have made inquiries already then!' was my mental comment. I knew that the fact was not public property yet, and that he must have taken some pains to find it out.

'I believe not, Mr Trafford,' I coldly returned.

But my coldness was not of the slightest importance. He was too much absorbed in the one thought to notice my manner of speaking.

'And Lilian inherits without restrictions of any kind. Just the kind of man to have made all sorts of unpleasant complications – meant to do it too – and now my darling is unfettered!'

And in his gratification, he so far forgot the *convenances* as to whistle softly to himself, whilst he carefully readjusted one of Nasmyth's little gems, which hung slightly aslant upon the wall. 'She says she knows how much you are sympathising with her just now, Mr Trafford.' He coloured to his temples as he replied: 'Of course I am, Miss Haddon. It's – it's a great loss, make the best of it, to an only child; and it came upon her so suddenly, poor girl.' Adding, a little consciously (I daresay it was not pleasant to have me silently eyeing him as I was doing), 'Tell her, please, that I am longing to do what I may to comfort her – beg her, for my sake to keep up. It will never do to let her get low and desponding, you know. Hers is a nature of the tendril kind – so entirely dependent upon those she loves.'

'I do not think so, Mr Trafford; and I do not think that those she loves will find it so. At anyrate, she does not give *me* the idea of being weak.'

'I meant only the kind of delicacy which accompanies refinement, and which is so charming in a woman, Miss Haddon;' adding a little more pointedly than was necessary, I thought: 'such fragility as arouses the chivalry of men.'

'As the chivalry is dying out, I must hope that the exciting cause is getting scarcer, Mr Trafford.'

We eyed each other a moment, and then tacitly agreed for an armed truce. I left him, and went to Lilian's room with lagging steps and a heavy heart.

'Arthur feels it terribly,' she said, lifting her eyes to mine as I entered the room; fortunately for me, taking it as a matter of course that he did. 'Dear papa was so good to him.'

'He hopes you will bear up for his sake, dear Lilian.'

'I will, indeed I will. Tell him he shall not find me selfish by-and-by.'

Still no allusion to the one subject which was engrossing all my thoughts. It was not until the evening after the funeral that she approached it, and then she waited until she and I were alone, before doing so. Flushing painfully, and with downcast eyes, she hesitatingly begun: 'Have you been thinking of – of what dear papa told us – that night, Mary?'

'Yes, dear, I have; a great deal.'

'I am so thankful that you and you only were present.' She paused a few moments, and I tried to help her.

'I think that there is no doubt – you have a sister, and that the packet, which I have taken care of, is intended for her, Lilian.' Taking it from my desk, I shewed her the words on it in her father's handwriting: 'Quarter's allowance due 24th for Marian;' with an address, 'Mrs Pratt, Green Street, Islington.'

'Marian! Yes; that was the name,' she murmured.

'I have since found out that she was born three or four years before Mr Farrar was married to your mother, Lilian.'

A bright hope sprang to her eyes. 'Perhaps he was married before, Mary?'

'I do not think that is likely, or it would be known. But I know you will none the less do what is just and right.'

'I shall *all the more* do what is right – I owe her so much more. If wrong has been done, it is for me to make what reparation I can. And – Mary, try to always remember how anxious he was to' – She broke down; an expression in her face which shewed how deep was the wound which her loving, sensitive nature had received. Her grief was so much the harder to bear, for the knowledge that her dead was less perfect than she had believed him to be. She was already obliged to plead for him.

I knew that fragile as she looked, and tender and yielding as she had hitherto seemed, it arose more from humility at finding herself blessed as ordinary mortals rarely are, than from any lack of strength. We had not seen the best of Lilian Farrar yet. Least of all, did her lover know her. Already I could have given a better reason for loving her than he could have done.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.