Sapper

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Published by Good Press, 2022

goodpress@okpublishing.info

EAN 4066338051653

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HENRY ST. JOHN CARRUTHERS was something of an enigma. Where he lived I have no idea, except that it was somewhere north of Oxford Street. But we were both members of the Junior Strand, which, as all the world knows, is not a club frequented largely by the clergy or the more respectable lights of the legal profession. It is a pot-house frank and unashamed, but withal a thoroughly amusing one.

It is not a large club, and the general atmosphere in the smoking-room is one of conviviality. Honesty compels me to admit that the majority of the members would not find favour in the eyes of a confirmed temperance fanatic, but since the reverse is even truer the point is not of great interest. Anyway, it was there that I first met Henry St. John Carruthers.

He was, I should imagine, about thirty-six years of age—neither good-looking nor ugly. Not that a man's looks matter, but I mention it en passant. He was sitting next to me after lunch, and we drifted into conversation about something or other. I didn't even know his name. I have entirely forgotten what we talked about. But what I do remember, as having impressed me during our talk, is his eyes. Not their size or colour, but their expression.

I sat on for a few minutes after he had gone trying to interpret that expression. It wasn't exactly bored: it certainly wasn't conceited—and yet it contained both those characteristics. A sort of contemptuous resignation most nearly expresses it: the look of a man who is saying to himself—'Merciful heavens! what am I doing in this galaxy?'

And yet, I repeat, there was very little conceit about it: it was too impersonal to be in the slightest degree offensive.

"Rum fellow that," said the man sitting on the other side of me, after he had gone. "You never seem to get any further with him."

It was then I learnt his name and the fact that he was in business in the City. "A square peg in a round hole if ever there was one," went on my informant. "From the little I know of him he'd be happier in the French Foreign Legion than sitting with his knees under a desk."

Time went on and I saw a good deal of Henry St. John Carruthers. And as my acquaintance with him grew—not into anything that may be called friendship but into a certain degree of intimacy—I realised that my casual informant was right. That City desk was a round hole with a vengeance. And the fact supplied the clue to the expression in his eyes. It was the life he lived that it was directed against—and himself for living that life.

Not that he ever complained in so many words: he was not a man who ever asked for sympathy. It was his bed and he was going to lie on it; he asked no one else to share it with him. Very much alone did he strike me as being: a man who would go his own way and thank you to go yours. It would be idle to pretend that he was popular. And in view of his manner it was not surprising. His somewhat marked air of aloofness tended to put a damper on the spirits of men he found himself with.

"Hang it all!" said Bearsted, a stockbroker, one night as the door closed behind Carruthers. "Has anyone ever seen that fellow laugh?"

I thought over that remark during the next few days, and finally came to the surprising conclusion that it was true. I'd

never considered the matter before, and now that it had been brought to my notice it struck me that I never had seen Henry St. John Carruthers laugh. I'd seen him smile, I'd seen a twinkle in his eye—but an outright laugh, never. So one evening I tackled him about it.

"Do you know, Carruthers," I said, "that in the course of the year since I first met you I've never seen you laugh?"

He stared at me for a moment; then he scratched his head.

"Haven't you?" he answered. "Don't I laugh? I wasn't aware of the fact. Though, incidentally, what there is to laugh at in life I don't know. Personally, I think it's too darned boring for words."

"Oh, come!" I said, "that's a bit scathing, isn't it? Everything has its funny side. Go and look steadily into the face of the Honourable James over there in the corner. That ought to do the trick."

"Thanks," he answered shortly, "I'd sooner keep the record unbroken. Besides, he wouldn't make me laugh: he'd make me cry. I suppose," he went on thoughtfully, "that there are uses for things like that in the world."

"Certainly," I answered. "The old man has some excellent shootings."

"Well, I wish to heaven you'd bag the son the next time you go there. Good Lord, he's coming over here!"

I glanced round: the Honourable James had risen and was bearing down on us.

"I say, dear old boy," he burbled, coming to rest in front of me, "my old governor wants me to bring down two guys next Saturday. Would you care to come?"

"Very much, James," I said.

"What about you, Carruthers?" went on James.

"Thanks, no," grunted the other. "I'm afraid I'm already engaged."

The Honourable James continued to burble, and after about two minutes Carruthers, with a strangled snort, got up and left.

"By Jove!" said James plaintively, "he never waited to hear the end of the story. You know, Bill,"—he waxed confidential—"I don't believe that fellow likes me."

"My dear James," I cried, "what put that idea into your head? I expect he's got an appointment."

"Yes—but he might have waited to hear the end of the story," repeated James. "No—I don't think he likes me. He never even laughed."

He drifted away—the personification of utter futility—leaving me shaking silently. I had been privileged to gaze on Carruthers's face as he left the room.

"It would take more than you, James, to make him laugh," I called after him. "In fact, if you ever do I'll stand you a drink."

A promise which I repeated to Carruthers when, half an hour later, he returned warily to the room.

"It's all right," I reassured him. "Our little James has gone. I gathered that he has a date with the most beautiful woman in London."

"Long may she keep him occupied," he grunted. "He is the most ghastly example of a Philandering Percy I've ever seen. Still, I suppose when a fellow has got the amount of money he possesses, beautiful women will suffer in silence."

And an hour later we rose to go home. The night was fine and warm, and refusing a waiting taxi we fell into step and walked. And Carruthers, I remember, was still inveighing against the system by which the Honourable Jameses of this world inherit totally undeserved wealth.

"Put that excrescence on his own feet," he argued, "and what would be the result? Take away his money and let him fight for his food, and where would he be?"

"Still," I murmured, "a man is the son of his father."

"Call that thing a man," he grunted. "Look here, I want a drink."

We were at the corner of Albemarle Street, and I glanced at my watch.

"It's half-past eleven," I remarked. "In a moment of mental aberration I joined the Sixty-Six a few weeks ago. Let's go there."

Now, the Sixty-Six, as all the world knows, is one of those night-clubs that spring up like mushrooms in a damp field, endure for a space, and then disappear into oblivion to the tune of a hundred-pound fine. The fact that they open a few weeks later as the Seventy-Seven, and the same performance is repeated, is neither here nor there.

"Right," said Henry St. John Carruthers. "One can only hope the police will not choose tonight to raid it!"

And at that moment he paused in the door and blasphemed. I glanced over his shoulder, and then, taking him gently by the arm, I propelled him across the room to a vacant table.

"If we get the police as well," I murmured, "our evening will not be wasted."

In the centre of the floor was the Honourable James. He hailed us with delight as we passed, and Carruthers sat down muttering horribly. "Can I never get away from that mess?" he demanded hopelessly. "I ask you—I ask you—look at him now!"

And assuredly the Honourable James was a pretty grim spectacle. I lay no claim to being a dancing man myself, but James attempting to Charleston was a sight on which no man might look unmoved. In fact, the only thing about the Honourable James which caused one any pleasure was his partner. To say that she was attractive would be simply banal: she was one of the most adorable creatures I have ever seen in my life. Moreover, she seemed to reciprocate James's obvious devotion. Three times did I see her return his fish—like glance of love with a slight drooping of her eyelids which spoke volumes.

"Evidently out to hook him," I remarked, turning to Carruthers. "Hullo! what has stung you?"

For he was leaning forward, staring at the girl with a completely new expression in his eyes.

"Good Lord!" he muttered, half to himself. "It can't be. And yet—"

He suddenly stood up and glanced round the room; then, equally abruptly, he sat down again. "It is." he remarked. "As I live—it is. How deuced funny!" And he grinned: he positively grinned.

"What is?" I demanded. "Elucidate."

"They will part him from his money," he went on happily. "And I hope they sock him good and strong."

"What the devil are you talking about?" I said peevishly.

"If you look over there to the right," he answered, "behind that woman in green, you will see a large and somewhat bull-necked man sitting at a table by himself. He is smoking a cigar, and gives one the impression that he owns the earth."

"I've got him," I said.

"Just a year ago," he continued, "I was over in Chicago. I was sitting in the lounge of my hotel talking to an American I knew who was something pretty big in the police. He'd been giving me a good deal of inside information about crime over there, when suddenly he leant forward and touched me on the arm. 'See that guy who has just come in,' he said, 'with a cigar sticking out of his face?'

"I saw him all right; you couldn't have helped it if you tried. 'Well, that bloke,' went on my pal, 'is just about the highest spot in the confidence game that we've got. He specialises in you Britishers, and I reckon he's parted more of you from your money than one is ever likely to be told about.'

"'What's his line?' I demanded.

"'Anything and everything,' he replied. 'From running bogus charities to blackmail. And he generally works with an amazingly pretty girl. There she is: just joined him.'

"'His wife?' I said. My pal shrugged his shoulders. 'I shouldn't imagine the Church has been over-worked in the matter,' he answered. 'But you can call her that.'"

Henry St. John Carruthers lay back in his chair and actually chuckled.

"You mean?" I said slowly.

"Precisely," he answered. "There they are. And so is dear James."

I glanced over at the table where the big man had been joined by James and the girl. He was smiling in the most friendly way and filling James's glass with more champagne. Then he handed him his cigar case, and James, coming out of a dream, helped himself. Then James relapsed into his dream to the extent of forgetting to light it. And the dream was what one would have expected in the circumstances.

Assuredly she was the most divinely pretty girl. And James was totally unable to take his eyes off her face. He was in the condition of trying to touch her hand under the table, of little by little moving his chair nearer hers, in the fond belief that the manoeuvre would pass unnoticed.

"Look here," I said, "we must do something."

"Why?" said Henry St. John Carruthers.

"Well, if what you say is right, they're going to blackmail that poor boob."

"And serve him darned well right," he answered shortly. "A man has got to buy his experience, and why should that horror be an exception?"

"That's going too far," I said, a little angrily. "You may not like him, but you can't let him be swindled by a couple of crooks."

He shrugged his shoulders indifferently. "I disagree entirely," he answered. "However, for the sake of argument, let's assume you're right. What do you suggest we should do?"

"Get James on one side and warn him," I said promptly.

"Try it," he remarked. "And then see the result. Do you really imagine, my dear chap, that you stand a dog's chance against that girl? The only result will be that you'll lose some good shooting."

"I don't care," I said doggedly. "Chance or no chance, I'm going to have a shot." I rose and crossed the room, leaving Carruthers smiling faintly.

"Excuse me, James," I said, bowing to the girl, "was it this week-end or next that you asked me to shoot?"

James had risen, and with my hand on his arm I drew him a little way from the table. "This coming one as ever is, old lad," he burbled. "I say, I want to introduce you to—"

"Look here, James," I interrupted urgently, "pay attention to what I'm saying." I was speaking in a low voice in his ear, and over his shoulder I saw the big man staring at me steadily. "These two people you're out with tonight are crooks."

"Crooks," bleated James. "Crooks?"

"For God's sake don't shout," I muttered. "Yes—crooks."

"Go to blazes!" said James succinctly. "And stay there. I'm going to marry this lady. What the dickens do you mean by crooks?"

He turned abruptly and sat down, leaving me standing there feeling a fool. And the feeling was not diminished by the look in the big man's eyes. I realised that he knew what I had come about; short of being deaf, he must have heard what James said. And his expression seconded James's remark as to my immediate destination.

"Well," said Henry St. John Carruthers, as I rejoined him. "What luck?"

"The silly fool can stew in his own juice," I answered shortly. "He says he's going to marry the girl."

"Quite possibly he may be," he remarked. "He's got enough money to make it worth her while. Well, I'm going to have another whisky-and-soda, and then I'm for bed."

"I still don't feel quite happy about it," I said. "After all, the old man is a very decent sort."

"Oh, dry up!" said Carruthers wearily. "You've done what you could, and you've got your answer. What the deuce is the good of worrying over a disease like that youth?" He finished his drink and rose. "I'm for the sheets. Coming?"

I followed him across the room, and we went into the cloakroom to get our hats.

James and his friends were still at their table, but though we passed close to them he took no notice of us. Which, when all was said and done, was hardly to be wondered at. I took my top-hat and put it on. As Carruthers said, he'd have to buy his experience.

And even as I was dismissing the matter from my mind the swing doors opened and the big man came in. His hands were in his pockets; the cigar still stuck out from his face. And he stood there in absolute silence, staring first at me and then at Carruthers. But principally at Carruthers.

It was an offensive stare, and I felt my pulse quicken a little. It was the stare that precedes a row: the stare that is designed to produce a row. And after a while—funnily enough, it seemed quite natural at the time—I faded out of the picture. Though it was I who had spoken to James, the issue narrowed down to the big man and Henry St. John Carruthers.

I think it was then that I realised for the first time that Carruthers was also a big man.

The depth of his chest was astonishing—and the broadness of his back. And with a queer little thrill I saw that his fists—big fists they were—were clenched at his sides. Moreover, for quite five seconds he had made no movement to take his opera hat, which was standing open on the counter beside him. He just stood staring at the big man, while the big man stared back at him. And neither the attendant nor I existed for either of them.

Then suddenly the music started, and with it the tension snapped. Like two dogs who have been eyeing one another and then at last move away, so did the big man pass back into the ballroom, while Carruthers turned round for his hat. And as he turned the swing door hit him in the side. Now, it was, I verily believe, accidental; the big man had passed through normally, and Carruthers being where he was, the door in swinging back had hit him.

But accident or no accident, the result was the same. Into Henry St. John Carruthers's eyes there came a look which spelt one word. And that word was murder.

That he was angry was not surprising. If there is one thing in this world which drives me to thoughts of battle, murder and sudden death, it is when a man lets a door swing in my face. But Carruthers was more than angry; he was white with rage. There was a pulse hammering in his throat, and for an appreciable time he stood there drumming with his fingers on the wall. Then he turned to me.

"The egregious James is lucky," he said quietly. "He shall not be parted from his money after all."

"You're not going to have a row in the club?" I said apprehensively. "It was an accident, I'm sure."

"An accident that I like not the savour of," he remarked in the same quiet voice. "But don't be alarmed; the sacred floor of the Sixty-Six shall not be desecrated."

"What do you propose to do?" I said, staring at him.

"If you care to wait and see, I shall be delighted to have your company," he answered. "If not, I'll say good night."

For a moment or two I hesitated; then, moved by a sudden impulse, I said: "I'll stand by to bail you out."

"Don't worry," he grunted. "If there's any bailing to be done, it won't be me."

He turned and left the room, and it was left to the attendant to sum up the situation. "Good night, sir," he said to me. "I reckon somebody is going to be 'urt."

So did I; and as I followed Carruthers up the stairs I had an attack of common sense. "Look here, old man," I remarked as I joined him in the street, "don't you think this jest has gone far enough? What's wrong with that bed you were talking about?"

It was then that Henry St. John Carruthers grew polite—astoundingly polite. And when a man grows polite at the same time that his nostrils are narrowed, the time for words is past. His hat was tilted back on his head: his hands were in his trouser pockets, and as he stood on the kerb he swayed a little on his heels. "I have already suggested that we should say good night," he said very distinctly—and held out his hand.

"Rot," I answered. "Where you go I go."

"Then shall we save our breath?" he remarked.

I shrugged my shoulders: the thing had got beyond me. And for a space of about ten minutes we smoked in silence. An occasional taxi went past in Piccadilly, and once a policeman strolled close by us along the pavement.

"Good night, officer," said Carruthers.

"Good night, gentlemen," he answered. "Looking for a taxi?"

"Shortly," said Carruthers, and the policeman walked on.

"He little knows," I murmured jocularly, "the desperadoes he has just encountered." And then, as he made no answer, I looked at him curiously. "What exactly are you going to do?" I said.

He held up his hand to a passing taxi. "Get in," he said curtly. "I want you to wait," he remarked to the man. "My friend and I will sit inside." He got in after me. "Do?" he said. "I'm going to break up that man."

And for a further space of ten minutes we smoked in silence, while I asked myself whether or not I was mad. To sit still solemnly waiting in a taxi, with the avowed intention of aiding and abetting, and quite possibly participating in, a street row was certainly a sufficient reason to induce the query. And yet a sort of excited curiosity kept me there. Mad or not, I intended to see the thing through.

"Sit back." Carruthers's voice cut in on my thoughts. "Here they come." I glanced through the window. Sure enough, there were the girl and James standing on the pavement. And a moment later the big man joined them. The commissionaire was calling up another taxi, and the

instant they were in Carruthers leant out of the window. "Follow that car," he said. "And keep a good fifty yards behind."

"Right, sir," grinned the man, and we started.

Now, I have since wondered what Carruthers would have done had they lived at the top of a block of service flats. He'd have got at his quarry somehow, I'm convinced, but it might have seriously complicated matters. As it was, that side of the affair proved easy. Up St. John's Wood Road and past Swiss Cottage the chase lay, and we soon realised that our destination was one of those large and ultra-respectable houses in Hampstead. "Go past him when he pulls up," said Carruthers to the driver. "I'll tell you when to stop."

It was a detached house, standing back from the road, that their taxi halted in front of, and Carruthers stole a look at it as we went by. "Excellent," he muttered. "There's quite a bit of vegetation in the garden. And we'll have to reconnoitre the land first." He rapped on the window of the car, and we got out. "Keep in the shadow," he whispered, "and if you see a policeman say good night in an affable voice."

"Lord help me!" I groaned. "Lead on. I leave it to you."

We strolled back towards the house, when suddenly, to my horror, Carruthers started to sing. And at the same time I felt his hand grip my arm, and force me past the gate.

Just inside was standing a weasel-faced man, who stared at me as we went by. "The plot thickens," said Carruthers when we were out of earshot. "He will be your share."

"You're too generous," I remarked.

He swung me round again, and once more we walked past the house. Weasel-face was no longer there, but a light was shining from one of the ground-floor windows through a chink in the curtains.

"Now's our chance," he whispered. "Keep under cover of the bushes and don't make a sound."

The next instant he was through the gate, and I found time even then to marvel at the quickness of his movements—and the silence. He skirted round the edge of the lawn, while I followed him as rapidly as I could. By this time I was as excited as he was; considerably more so, in fact. Certainly he seemed as cool as a cucumber when I joined him underneath the window. "It's pretty grim," he breathed in my ear, "but I don't think it will last long. Listen."

And grim was not the word. At odd periods in my life I had heard the Honourable James in varying stages of fatuous imbecility. I had heard him in his cups. I had heard him endeavouring to tell humorous stories; but I had never heard him making love. And I sincerely trust I never shall again.

Gradually I wormed my way up till I could see into the room. Her arms were round his neck, and she was gazing into his eyes with a look of rapt adoration on her face. In fact, I was just beginning to feel thoroughly embarrassed—even an object like James might reasonably object to being watched in such a situation—when I heard a whisper in my ear: "Watch the door!"

It was slowly opening. Now, James had his back to it; the girl had not. And as it opened she kissed James firmly. James

returned the compliment. And Carruthers chuckled.

"May heaven deliver us," he muttered, "but this came out of the Ark with Noah. Still, I suppose it's good enough for him."

Weasel-face was standing in the doorway—the picture of outraged horror. The girl had risen to her feet with a pitiful cry of terror, while James, plucking at his collar, was helping the situation by remarking: "I say, by Jove! what's this fellah want?"

"My husband!" gasped the girl.

"You hound!" hissed Weasel-face.

"Oh! but I say—dash it all!" spluttered the Honourable James.

And then Carruthers pushed up the window and vaulted into the room. "Good evening," he remarked affably. "Shall we cut out the rest?"

Weasel-face and the girl seemed bereft of speech; they just stood there staring at him blankly. In fact, only James seemed capable of utterance, and that was when he saw me. "Hullo, old lad!" he burbled. "What brings you here?"

"So it's you, is it?" came a harsh voice from the door. The big man was standing there chewing a cigar, and he came slowly towards Carruthers, staring at him through narrowed eyes. And once again I had a feeling of being out of the picture. The thing had narrowed down to the two of them. "May I ask what you're doing in my house?" said the big man.

"Waiting to give you a lesson in manners." answered Carruthers.

"Is that so?" said the big man softly, and a fist like a leg of mutton whizzed past Carruthers's ear. A believer in deeds, not words, evidently, but it is inadvisable to start scrapping with a cigar in your mouth. That cigar disintegrated suddenly, and the big man stepped back with a grunt as Carruthers caught him fairly on the mouth.

And then in perfect silence they got down to it. I was watching Weasel-face, but he made no attempt to interfere. A gentleman of discretion, he very wisely decided that the matter had passed beyond him. And no bad judge either, when two heavyweights are fighting for a knock-out in a room full of furniture.

Moreover, the big man could use his fists; there was no doubt about that. That first jolt on the face had roused the devil in him, and some of his blows, delivered with a grunt of rage, would have finished the thing then and there if they'd got home. But they didn't, and gradually his breathing began to grow stertorous, and he started to slog wildly.

It was a smash on the point of the jaw with the whole weight of the body behind it that ended it. It took the big man clean off his feet and landed him crumpled up in a corner, where he lay staring at his opponent with murder in his eyes.

"Had enough?" said Henry St. John Carruthers.

"I'll kill you for this," said the big man, but he made no movement to rise.

"Some other time I shall be at your service." remarked Carruthers politely. "Just now I think we will leave you. Come

on, you fellows. I know of a haunt where a man may obtain beer."

We left as we had come—through the window, with the Honourable James clinging to us even closer than a brother.

"But I say, dear old chaps," he burbled for the twentieth time as we got into a belated taxi, "what's it all mean—what?"

"Dry up," said Carruthers morosely. "Things like you ought to have a nurse."

"But she never told me she was married," pursued James.

"May Allah deliver me!" Carruthers contemplated him dispassionately. "She surely told you, didn't she, that her father had a living in Gloucestershire?"

"Yorkshire, she said," remarked James.

"And that one brother was up at Oxford? I thought so. He used always to be in the Guards during the War."

"By Jove! then—you knew her," said James. "What an extraordinary coincidence!"

"I shall weep in a minute," said Carruthers pessimistically.

"Don't do that, old man," I answered. "Once or twice tonight I thought you were going to break your record. You got as far as grinning, anyhow. Can't you raise a laugh, even out of James?"

"Laugh," he groaned. "Laugh! Come on—here we are. Let's get down to that beer. Perhaps if I look at him quietly for half an hour I might."

We went upstairs, and I left them to go and wash my hands. And all of a sudden I became aware of a strange noise. It was a discordant sound, rising and falling at, intervals, and somewhat reminiscent of the female hyena

calling to her mate. I suppose it must have been going on for about half a minute when the door burst open and the Honourable James rushed in.

"I say, dear old boy," he cried anxiously, "is that bloke Carruthers quite right in his head, and all that?"

"What's the matter?" I asked.

"Well, it was quite accidental, don't you know—what—but I never realised he was standing in the jolly old doorway. Just behind me, don't you know. And I went and unloosed the door, which caught him a frightful biff in the chest. I mean, I thought he'd be deuced annoyed and all that—but listen to him. Have you ever heard such a row? Do you see anything to laugh at?"

# II. — THE SNAKE FARM

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SANTOS was at its worst. The heat, like a stagnant pall, hung over the harbour: the few passengers who had not gone up to San Paolo lay about on deck and mopped their foreheads. And I was on the verge of dropping off to sleep when I saw them coming up the gangway.

They were new passengers and I studied them idly. The woman— she was little more than a girl—was of the fluffy type: pretty in a rather chocolate-box way, with fair hair and a charming figure. The sort that one expects to be the life and soul of the ship, dancing every dance, and, in the intervals, throwing quoits into receptacles ill-designed to receive them. And it came therefore as almost a shock when she stood close to my chair waiting for the man and I could see her face distinctly.

The expression lifeless is hackneyed, and yet I can think of no other word to describe adequately how her appearance struck me. She was wearing a wedding-ring, so presumably the man was her husband. He was arguing with a porter; perhaps it would be more correct to say that he was listening to the porter argue. And the result, as I guessed instinctively it would be, was the complete defeat of the Brazilian porter, who retired discomfited and cursing volubly.

Then the man turned round and came towards us. He was considerably older than the woman—twenty years at least, and he did not impress one favourably. Thin-lipped, thin-faced—one glance at him was enough to explain the

rout of the porter. Also perchance, I reflected, his wife's expression.

As he approached her she seemed to make an effort to become more animated. She forced a smile, and the two of them went below together, leaving me wondering idly as to their story. Perhaps I was wrong; perhaps it was the overpowering heat that had made her look like a dead woman. At any rate, I should have plenty of time to study them on the way home to London. And on that I dozed off.

The next time I saw them was in the smoking-room, before dinner. He was having a drink, she was not. They were seated in a corner, and during the five minutes I was there neither of them spoke a word. In her evening frock she looked fluffier than ever, whilst the black and white of his evening clothes seemed to enhance the severity of his features. And once again I found myself wondering what lay behind it. Was it merely the old story of youth married to age, or was it something deeper?

Once or twice it seemed to me that he was watching her covertly, and that she, becoming aware of it, tried to pull herself together just as she had done on deck that afternoon. And suddenly it dawned on me. Whatever might be the cause of her depression, she was afraid of him.

The Doctor joined me, and I drew his attention to them. "They've never travelled with us before," he said, "so beyond telling you that their name is Longman, I can't help. He looks guaranteed to turn the butter rancid all right, Incidentally, they're at my table."

And after dinner I met him on deck. "There's something rum in the state of Denmark," he said. "I can't make those