

*SANDY M'TARTAN'S VOYAGE TO GOVAN.*

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I GAED abroad last Saturday afternoon, and returned safe hame again the same evening.

“Get oot my storm hat, my prospect gless, an’ my dooble-ribbit umbrella,” said I to my wife, Kirsty, “for I’m bound for a foreign land!”

“A foreign land!” exclaimed Kirsty, “an’ hoo faur’s that?”

“A’ the way to Govan in the penny steamers—sink or soom!”

Weel, I got a’ finely rigg’t oot for the voyage, an’ Kirsty, richt reason or rang, wad see me awa’ at the quay, as there was nae sayin’ what micht happen on the voyage oot.

“It wasna the first ship that had left auld Scotia’s shore,” she said, “an’ never returned to tell the tale!”

But the voyage to Govan didna fricht me very much; it

was the smell o' the Clyde that bothered me. I had been farrer abroad than Govan in my day, an' was, in a sense, a sort o' experienced Clyde sailor.

But, speaking aboot the fine strong sea smell o' the Clyde, I ventured the length o' the foreign shores o' Bowling twa years since, an' I got sic a friecht wi' the smell o' the river that I cam' back to Gleska by the Canal, for I'm fair daft for the sea. But danger o' anither kind overtook me there. When hauf way hame the horse-rope suddenly broke, an' we drifted back an' struck the bank. A' was confusion an' despair for twa minutes.

"The horse-rope's gone!" sang oot the captain; "stand by the pumps!"

But I had got enough o't, I thocht, so I jump't in an' waded ashore, and syne walked hame!

But aboot my recent voyage to Govan. It was a Saturday afternoon, as I said, an' there was a big crood o' emigrants waiting for embarkation, like mysel', at Victoria Quay, near the fit o' the auld Stockwell. I got planted weel forrit, near the neb o' the boat, an' after a lot o' preliminary fareweels and haun'-shaking, the ship's whussle was blawn, an' we cast aff in fine style amid a lot of heart-heezin' hurrahs, an' gettin' oor neb turned seawards, we steamed doon the river in grand style, no leavin', as far as my observation went, yae single dry e'e ahint us.

"Write soon," were the last words I heard Kirsty utter, as she stood on the quay wringin' the tears oot o' her pocket-handkerchief.

"I will," says I, "the moment I set my fit on foreign soil, if there's a post-office within fifty miles o' me."

We had a splendid voyage to Jamaica Street Brig, the weather being nice an' moderate a' the way doon, an' the sea quite calm an' smooth. When passing under the Suspension Brig we spoke the Clutha No. 2 on the up run. Oor captain hailed her, an' Captain M'Sporran, her gallant

skipper, reported "all well," but intimated "rough weather below the bridges."

When nearin' the Broomielaw we saw signs o' civilization in the shape o' some auld cabbage leaves floatin' in the watter, alang wi' an empty match-box, an' some orange skins. At this port we took on board some mair emigrants, an' then stood oot to sea yince mair. A wee bit below Jamaica Street we encountered a heavy fog frae the smoke o' an engine crossin' the Caledonian Railway brig, but oor gallant skipper kept on his course, blawin' the fog-signal a' the road like mad. Below the brig the win' began to blaw an' the sea to rise, so that I took the precaution o' tying doon my hat wi' an auld buit lace I had brocht wi' me for that express purpose.

"What's yon?" asked yin o' my fellow-passengers as we emerged frae the heavy fog.

"That's the tower o' the Sailors' Home," said I, applying my prospect gless to the object.

"Eh, man," he answered, "we're faur oot to sea!"

"I've been a bit faurer than this," I answered, "an' said less about it."

"Hoo faur?"

"Dumbarton!" I firmly replied, without movin' a muscle o' my face.

That settled him! He gied me yae incredulous look, an' hurried awa' abaft as fast's he could.

When crossin' owre to Clyde Street ferry we passed by a tug steamer which flung up some terrible big waves, an' gied us twa-three desperate "shoos." Some o' the women folks were yellin' for mercy, and haudin' on by whatever was nearest them.

Yae auld wife, wi' a basket o' dishes an' a hawker's bundle, cried oot to me—"Oh, sir, save my bundle!"

"In a crisis like this," quo I, haudin' on by my hat, "it's every man for himsel'!"

After that wee bit incident I gaed aft the vessel an' peeped doon into the reserved cabin, whaur I saw an auld maid adjustin' her dress-improver, that had got sair knockit ajee in the tussle.

We had four o' a crew, I may tell ye—the skipper, first and second mate, an' a wee “ticket” laddie. The captain I found to be a fine, experienced, weather-beaten seaman. He had been twice wrecked on the Paisley Canal, and had to jump ashore on each occasion for his life. He was a rale A1 at Lloyd's son o' the ocean, an' spoke quite calmly o' an approaching storm which was likely to nozzle us between Stobcross Docks an' Partick. He had every confidence in his ship, hooever, an' the passengers had every confidence in him.

Speaking o' the passengers, oor company was a mixed lot. The feck o' the folk aboard were Gleska men like mysel'; but we had, in addition, twa Paisley buddies, a when Irish quay workers, twa-three women wi' dish baskets an' hawkers' bundles, a fond young couple on their marriage jaunt, an' a mechanic, wha had lost an e'e lookin' for wark in Gleska.

Weel, jist outside o' the Stobcross docks the weather got heavy, an' we had a gale, jist as the captain had prophesied. To mak' things worse, twa river steamers passed us at the same time, an' left us heavin' wildly in the trough o' the sea. Talk about gales at sea. It was for five minutes a perfect wee Atlantic. In the worst bit o' the crisis we shipped a heavy sea that wash't awa' a hawker's bundle an' twa watter buckets. After this the maist o' the passengers gaed doon below for shelter, but I stuck by the saloon deck, an' watched, wi' the e'e o' a poet, the wild play o' the watters. At this juncture I saw yin o' the passengers haudin' his heid owre the side, an' tryin' to vomit; his face was the colour o' writin' paper.

“Are ye sick, my man?” quo' I.

"Yes," says he, "I could stan' the smoke o' the funnel but the smell o' the watter's finished me."

Shortly after this the sky darkened doon, an' we lost oor reckonin' a' thegither. I confess that I felt sort o' nervous, when I heard the ca'ptain hurriedly summons all hands on deck, including the wee ticket laddie.

"Stand by the fore chains," he cried, "we're three yairds off oor track; look out for Partick Pier!"

"Ay, ay, sir," sang back the look out, "ship on the weather-bow, hard-a-port!"

"Hard-a-port it is," shouted back the captain, an' round to port we swung, jist in time to escape collision wi' a Clyde Trust tug.

I confess I never was gladder in my life than I was to see the familiar form o' Partick Pier loomin' in the distance. As we steamed in I asked yin o' the crew if they often had a storm like this?

"Oh," says he, "this is naething; the kittly bit's to come yet, crossin' owre frae Partick to Govan."

"What!" says I, "an' we're no' thro' the warst o't yet?"

An' wi' that I jumps on the pier, jist as the vessel was backin' oot.

"Hillo! you there!" cried the sailor after me, "this is no' Govan, it's only Partick Pier yet."

"A' richt, my frien," says I, "sea-voyagin' is nae better than its ca'd; I'm gaun back to Gleska by the tramway cars."

An' so I did gang back by the Partick cars, as I wisna willin' to face a side-sea in crossin' owre to Govan. On the road hame I consulted my note-book, an' I found that I had coontit nae less than seventeen different colours o' watter between the Broomielaw an' Partick. There's variety for ye! Talk about the different shades o' the briny ocean. Tak' a voyage to Govan in yin o' the Clyde "penny" steamers, an' ye'll get material for a learned essay on the

subject. Besides, the watter's a' rale genuine sea-watter the hail way doon, for there's no a single drap o' fresh watter to be seen frae the yae en' o' the voyage to the ither.

Neither should I omit to mention the balmy breezes we enjoyed a' the way doon, an' which were perfectly suffocating. They stuck to the nostrils like bile't glue. Then we had some delicious whiffs o' the many oderiferous sanitary tributaries that empty themselves intae the Clyde. They're a' alike, highly perfumed, refreshin' streams, an' affect the nostrils like strong snuff.

Mercy, me! what a sunburnt face I had when I got back to my ain bit hoose in the Cocaddens; Kirsty didna ken me!

"What hae ye brocht me frae abroad," says she, the moment I entered her presence; "a grand new bonnet frae Paris, I hope?"

"Tuts, woman, you women folks are aye after bonnets an' sic-like falderals; I've brocht baith you an' mysel' somethin' mair substantial an' lively than that; I've brocht mysel' hame a pund o' sweet tobaccky ——"

"An' me, what?"

"A cocoa nut an' a blue monkey!"

Weel, frien's, I've been abroad in foreign pairts, as ye noo ken; but, I wad advise a' ye wha intend takin' a sea-voyage for the benefit o' yer health in yin o' the Clyde "penny" steamers, to securely plug your noses wi' cotton before startin', or ye're likely to be kept sneezin' a' the road up an' doon, like an' auld horse affected wi' the glanders.