Shore Leave

By MARY MOSS

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Although no devotee of Mr. Rudyard Kipling, my aunt was in perfect, if unconscious, accord with a line of his which proclaims a geographical limit to the Ten Commandments. To her mind, frost and virtue go as inseparably linked as self-indulgence and hot baths, and while her intelligence has never denied that a high mercury might be looked for in the tropics, the fact of needing a fan on the day after Christmas filled her with indignant disgust.

We had made this pilgrimage to avoid dampness, but on the way from the boat to our lodging a rain—such a rain as never fell in Boston—blotted out every feature of the village. The whole place was distressingly unlike Fairhaven, Mass.

Our hostess offered apologies. Yes, they were a trifle upset. Carpenters putting up a bathhouse in the garden, and 200 guests had just left (the house accommodated 18), sailors from a gunboat, on three days' shore leave, for Christmas.

"They have all left, did you say?" My aunt countenanced no belligerents but herself, and sitting upright on a couch in Mrs. Browne's mysterious parlor, she raked the shadowy corners for trace of naval occupation.

"Yes, ma'am. All gone, that is, but one. He's quiet enough now, poor lad." Mrs. Browne's voice nevertheless hinted at anxiety.

First a lightning-quick patter of unshod feet, then through the doorless doorway burst a lean, cinnamon-colored man, straight-haired, straight-featured, wild-eyed! Of course time only showed these details. Our first vision was a headlong tangle of brown nakedness and white drapery, radiating terror and haste. An escaping end of white stuff tripped him, and with a shriek he fell, rolled over, and shot under the sofa upon which my aunt sat waving her fan, just in time to escape the onslaught of a large, black devil who brandished a trident of great power and sharpness.

"You Johnson, you sir! You negroes are a perfect pest!" Mrs. Browne fearlessly addressed the fiend. "You scare that coolie man crazy with your nonsense. Clean crazy!"

The devil burst out in an impolite genealogy of all coolies; my aunt, partly reassured, raised a dominant Massachusetts voice. At that moment a young man lounged in the doorway, a curly-headed lad of some two and twenty, with thick black hair, bold black eyes and rosy cheeks smooth as a girl's. When he smiled, his full red lips parted over teeth as strong and white as a sound young dog's. He wore nondescript clothes, suggesting the sea, and a small gold seal ring, on the little finger of his left hand. A fine, lusty creature born to work hard, play hard, and satisfy his keen young appetite upon all the fruits of the earth!

Seeing, after a gleam of amusement, that my aunt's wordy anger covered genuine fright, he bade the intruders be gone, adding a touch of authority, as the masquerading negro seemed disposed to linger.

Then indeed my aunt's eloquence knew no bounds. . . . And doctors send invalids to this place! A nervous woman might easily have died for less!

"I shall see"—for all her wisdom turning in great crises to man, even to beardless adolescence—"I shall see that paper I write for is supplied with full details of the truth about this island! My niece shall help me get off the letter by to-morrow's boat!"

Now why was it that at this, the lad lost color, grew sullen? The look he gave us became distinctly hostile, nay, worse! Fright, controlled but unmistakable, showed in his whole bearing, fright and discouragement. Turning on his heel to leave, he marched straight into two uniformed officials, one quasi-white, one black, both wearing stiff linen tunics, helmets, blue trousers with a stripe of red.

"Mr. Frank Liston?" the white man asked. "Gunboat Hecla?"

Where was the lad's spirit, his natural gayety? With a surly nod of assent he followed the uniforms through devious passages, out of sight.

My aunt, now interrogation personified, turned to Mrs. Browne. "They come every day, just to see he's all right. A mere form," the landlady explained.

"Do all strangers on this island live under police surveillance?" My aunt had passed into regions far beyond surprise.

Before Mrs. Browne had time to reassure her, a gong summoned us to a repast whose oddity struck me as a merit and outraged my aunt's tradition and digestion.

Appeased by coffee of high perfection, Aunt Mary discovered a writing room. Busily occupied with journal and letters, she reviled the heat and sat close to a student's lamp.

I strolled out on the gallery for a first glimpse of the crowded little town. To one side, a hall, fiddles and dancing; through open windows I could see pretty brown girls waltzing with smart brown beaux. Music floated out agreeably, also many odors. . . .

"You ladies don't really mind him being here?" Mrs. Browne whispered at my elbow. "He seemed right young and innocent to go to gaol. He'd never feel the same about himself, after he came out."

"Mind him—Mr. Linton? He seems a nice quiet boy." I felt magnanimous in forgiving his open dislike.

"Now, that's what I say," Mrs. Browne went on. "But a lodger left today, because of me keeping him."

"A lodger left? But why, what did he do?"

"Look at that town!" Mrs. Browne waved a despising hand. "There's a few white people up on the hill, but much they know or care about a parcel of sailors, just strange young men, with mothers of their own at home, and sweethearts."

"Yes, I noticed he wore a ring."

Mrs. Browne had much to tell. "Yes, and you will notice how bad he feels when he looks at it, too. And a gayer boy than he was, three days ago! But what do people expect? Keep 'em afloat three months, turn 'em loose ashore in a black-and-tan town like this, with money in their pockets, and not a thing for them to do! Not a home for the boys to go in, not a white woman to throw them a word. What do they expect?" she broke off impatiently.

"And what happened?" She seemed to await my question.

"What happened, miss? Why, the only thing! There's no decent amusement here for one white lad, not at the best of times, let alone a hundred and more. There's just two things they can do, and getting drunk's not the worst."

Beyond, in the avenue of palms, I could dimly see Frank Liston pacing to and fro, with bent head, dejected shoulders and the invincibly springy step of youth.

"And he could have dodged arrest, if he'd been willing to quit like the others," Mrs. Browne continued. "They'd have never caught him. Easy enough for a sailor to swing out of any window in this town. But he saw the girl was dying."

"The girl?" But this time I was to learn without further question.

"Yes, miss. Of course he never should have been there. You and I know that. They were all, or most of them, in one of those coon joints. I don't know just how it began, but a girl's black fellow got in, fighting drunk, of course, with a machete. Slashed an artery, and she was bleeding badly. The other boys lit out. No one wants to be mixed up in those rows. By the time the police got in, there was no one but her and Frank. He waited to try and stop the flow. And that's how he's here now, under surveillance. No friends to go bail for him, till the trial. Say, you don't mind, do you?" she asked abruptly. "But maybe we'd best not tell your aunt."

With this I heartily agreed. "And the other lady left?" I marvelled.

"Perhaps being a mother is just why," I suggested, watching the lonely young figure on its disconsolate promenade.

Presently the police officers again interviewed Frank Liston, and Mrs. Browne further volunteered that they required him to keep early hours. "Not that he's getting much sleep, these nights. He's so afraid his people will catch wind of it, and the girl at home. He comes from New Hampshire, a country lad, and she's a schoolmarm."

Certainly if a creaking couch be a sign of troubled slumbers, Frank Liston spent a night the wakefulness of which passed over the partition between our rooms. He tossed and I tossed, and all the while a sense of guilt, of adding to his troubles, lay upon me, ridiculously, fantastically, but with a shiver of growing responsibility.

At daybreak he was up, softly dressing. I could swear that he wrote a letter. Then came a queer sound, a click, another. I could not place that sound, it worried me.

Sudden light flooded my room, the dawnless tropic sunrise. Slipping on a dressing-gown I passed out through open doors into the quiet garden. Strange hot-house plants bloomed like weeds, strange fragrances wafted in over the harbor. Far to the right, long rollers of surf broke on a rocky promontory, sending up fountains of gleaming spray. Circling gulls hovered above the anchored shipping. On the sea wall a solitary man seemed busy with some planks, a heavy stone. Frank Liston! He balanced a stout board over the water, staying its earthward end with stone after stone; then coming back, he picked up a small object from the grass. It glittered in the sun.

Quickly I moved towards him. "You are making a nice diving-board, Mr. Liston, but are there no sharks?"

"None get in over that reef you see yonder, where the water is light blue." Following his pointing finger, I saw a strip of turquoise lying athwart the lapis-colored harbor. Today he was paler, more nervous.

"What paper do you write for?" he suddenly asked.

"I? None at all," I began. "It's my aunt." Certainly there was something sinister hidden in his clenched fist. There was no way out, I must see. Little as I might wish it, my responsibility had grown real, and very pressing.

"Lend me that pistol!" I looked straight at him. "Those gulls are a good mark."

His lips tightened, but seeing my extended hand, he reached me a small revolver, clean and new. Without another word I joined him on the wall, and before he could stay me, had dropped it in the deep blue water.

"Why did you do that?" He turned on me angrily. "You're here for copy. You've got me. Think of your headlines. I'd have been worth more to you . . . so . . . than I'm worth to anyone . . . alive!"

So that was it! And here he stood, quivering with life; and if I had chanced to sleep one hour longer!

With what sailor's neatness he had planned it! One moment on the end of his diving-board, a hole in his temple, and deep, sapphire waters meeting over his foolish, wasted youth!

While I was agonizing for the word to ease him, for the wisdom to hold him and yet not make light of his fault, the thing, the only right thing of itself naturally happened. I was crying, bitterly, as his sister might have cried.

"Why do you do that?" he asked, presently adding, "I'm nothing to you, only copy for your aunt!"

The time had come to speak. "You are not even so much," I took him up. "Do you suppose we're scavenging for things like that? My poor little aunt! She's literary critic for our village paper at home; she'd rather die a thousand deaths than mention you!"

"Then why . . . ?" He pointed downward to his lost pistol. "But why not let me . . . what business of yours?"

"None," I confessed. "But come, Frank Liston! Let us talk this out!"

"You're a woman," he objected. "You . . ." He eyed me doubtfully. "You're not old!"

"Any woman worth the name is old enough for that!"

"But women—ladies—" he corrected, "don't . . . can't . . ."

"Listen, boy," I turned on him. "This is bad enough, big enough, for you to die of, you strong, young thing, with a mother at home maybe, and a swetheart." How he winced at that! "And you stop to think whether we, you and I, two human beings, can talk it out! And three days ago you didn't stop at doing it!"

He shook his head. "You don't understand. No woman can! I don't see why it is, myself, but so it is." After a minute's brooding . . . "Suppose the people at home don't find out! Can I go back, and always think some day they surely will? You don't know what she's like. She believes!" The inarticulate young creature paused, struggled with some inner pocket, and held me out a picture. A girl with starry, trustful look! Again my eyes filled.

"What is it?" he again asked.

"Only thinking how she would have looked tonight, when the cable came. You would have been well out of it!" I could not spare him now.

He pondered. "But if she really knew . . . ."

"Women," I broke in, "know far more than you ever dream. Look at me. You say I am not old! You say I don't understand. Why, lad, it's simple, simple as the tides, and death, and life! Why? Who can say? But so it is."

"When we came down here," at last he softened, "I never meant . . ."

"Everyone knows that," I reassured him. "It's only this. You had been kept thirsty in a desert. Thirst is natural. Deserts are torments. Then you came where there were only gutters. Saints and heroes resist! But you are neither. And must you die, because you fall short of the best? It's hot here, and strange, and disturbing. That woman, yesterday, felt defiled at being under the same roof with you. Today, it seemed, poor lad, that you were copy for a harpy of a newsmonger. You forgot that whatever lay against you, you'd never been a coward. You had risked all this, rather than leave a dying girl. You've stood like a man, ready to pay; why default now?"

He raised his head a little, not meeting my eye. "I couldn't leave her!"

"The others did." I laid my hand on his shoulder.

Suddenly he broke out with his pent-up horror. "If you only knew how little I liked it! Time and time again they say, 'Come ashore with us!' And you don't go. There's your girl at home! And you write letters. You read stale books, you smoke pipe after pipe . . . and . . . but then there comes a time, you never know why . . . ."

"Ah, lad! Who does? But if you're flawed, pick up the pieces and go on. I'm often in New Hampshire; some day I'll see that girl of yours. Shall she be wearing black, and living under a silent dread, half knowing, half fearing to know?"

"But the trial, the court?" He objected.

"Write her today, don't leave it to chance!" I pleaded. "Tell her you've been in a scrape, a bad one. That you tumbled in, lad, because you were a man, and for the same reason you did not crawl out! That girl of yours will ask no questions!"

"Would you do that?" At last his eyes met mine.

"Good morning, you early birds!" Mrs. Browne, in what Fairhaven would surely deem unseemly deshabille, came clumping towards us. "Does your aunt take fresh butter, miss, or guava? Better send both? Her coffee is ready, and yours, too, Frank."

"Thank you, I want it," said Frank Liston slowly, "to brace me for a letter home. One they will get by New Year's."

"My Bob's civil engineering in Ecuador!" Mrs. Browne watched Frank's retreating figure, as he vanished among the croton and poinsetta bushes. "And, deary, deary me," she went on, after a moment's wistful silence, "if it ain't a queer world. I've just got this cable. Another boat and 200 boys coming down for New Year! Back pay in their pockets, and three days shore leave!"

JERUSALEM

By Pastor Russell
Brooklyn, N. Y.

"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins."—Isa. 11:1, 2.

Christendom, with united voice, admits that all of the divine revelation came to and through the Hebrew people. Listen to the argument of the Apostle Paul. "What advantage then hath the Jew? Or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way; chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God"—the Divine message respecting the Divine purposes, present and to come. The Apostle again informs us that the entire Gospel message was briefly comprehended in the Creator's promise to Abraham. "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Galatians iii, 8).

It was the most natural thing imaginable for the Jewish nation to suppose that the giving to them of the law at Mount Sinai, through the mediatorship of Moses, was the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham. Nevertheless they were mistaken.

Israel's mediator, and the sacrificing priests, and the sacrifices they offered and their Tabernacle, with its holy and most holy, and the temple, and all the features of the law Covenant were types or foreshadows of the "better sacrifices," higher priesthood, better mediator, and glorious blessings of eternal forgiveness and reconciliation yet to be accomplished. Nevertheless the period of Israel's types was not wasted. Not only were the types there given, but at the same time a special class of agents were selected: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets and worthy ones of that age, holy, consecrated to God, and accepted as agents qualified for the kingdom conditions. Of these the scriptures declare, "They fell asleep." They are still asleep in the dust of the earth, awaiting the glorious resurrection morning, and a grand share then with Messiah in the work then to be accomplished. In their lifetime, they were styled the fathers, because Messiah was fortold to be of the posterity of Abraham, and also "David's Son."

But other scriptures without contradicting these statements, show us distinctly that "David's Son" and "Abraham's Seed" is to be lord and father of both David and Abraham. Thus we read. "Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth" (Psalm xlv, 16). David's son, Messiah, will be David's father, or life-giver, when he will raise David from the dead. Similarly he will be the father of all of those ancient worthies; and as David's Lord, and "Lord of lords," it will be his pleasure to appoint the Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all of the ancient worthies, and prophets, and faithful ones a glorious share with himself in the great Messianic kingdom, which he is about to set up for the ruling and blessing of Israel and all the nations of the earth.

Glance with me at three different statements by the lord through the prophets of Israel respecting Israel's "double" of experience: The first, an experience of God's favor; the second, an experience of equal length without divine favor.

Turn now to Zechariah's prophecy, and note that prophetically he takes his standpoint at the very time when the second part of the "double" began. His words are, "Even today do I declare that I will render double unto thee (Zechariah ix, 12).

Come next to our text, and note that the prophet Isaiah stands with us, and views the matter from the standpoint that the "double" of experience has been fulfilled: "Speak comfortably unto Jerusalem, cry unto her that her appointed time is accomplished, because she hath received at the lord's hands double (two equal parts) for her sins." It is our understanding that this "double" reached fulfillment in the year 1878 A. D., and since that date we have been declaring to the best of our ability, as the lord granted opportunity, these comforting words to Israel, assuring God's chosen people that their period of disfavor has ended, and that they are gradually returning to prosperity, that divine favor began with them in 1878. Yea, more than this, our sermons which to some extent reflect this feature of the divine program relating to Israel's restoration to divine favor, are being read to a considerable extent by Hebrews as well as by Christians; their eyes are gradually opening, as the scriptures foretell they shall do.

Israel's history as a nation began with the death of Jacob, when he gave his blessing to the 12 tribes. The period from that time to the death of Jesus, according to the scriptures, was 1845 years; and a like period of disfavor, measuring from the day of Jesus' rejection marks the year 1878, as the end of Israel's disfavor—the time when the message of comfort should go forth. However, divine favor was only gradually taken from Israel, and altogether a period of 38 years intervene between the death of Jesus and the utter destruction of Jerusalem. Similarly we should expect that the return of favor would be gradual, a like period of 36 years; and this would bring us to the year 1914, as the time when God's favor for his people will be publicly and openly manifested.

ONE THING CERTAIN.

"Dou you know," shouted the earnest orator, "what to do to the trust?"

"No, but I know blame well what they're doing to us!" said a man in the front row.

She Lives in Bingville.

A South Missouri paper is carrying this ad.: "Attractive woman, not a day over thirty, would be pleased to correspond with eligible man. Not absolutely necessary that he should be young. Would prefer one with property, but one with a good paying position would be satisfactory. The young lady is of medium height, has brown hair and gray eyes, not fat, although, most decidedly, she is not skinny. Her friends say she is a fine looking woman. Object matrimony. Reason for this advertisement, the young woman lives in a little dinky town, where the best catches are the boys behind the counters in the dry goods and clothing stores, and every one of them is spoken for by the time he is out of his short pants. Address Hazel Eyes, Box 23, Bingville, Mo."—Kansas City Star.

Casey at the Bat.

This famous poem is contained in the Coca-Cola Baseball Record Book for 1910, together with records, schedules for both leagues and other valuable baseball information compiled by authorities. This interesting book sent by the Coca-Cola Co., of Atlanta, Ga., on receipt of 2c stamp for postage. Also copy of their booklet "The Truth About Coca-Cola" which tells all about this delicious beverage and why it is so pure, wholesome and refreshing. Are you ever hot—tired—thirsty? Drink Coca-Cola—it is cooling, relieves fatigue and quenches the thirst. At soda fountains and carbonated in bottles—5c everywhere.

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"To tell you the truth," replied Mr. Cumrox, "I'm not clear about him. I can't exactly remember whether he was a great marksman or a famous opera singer."

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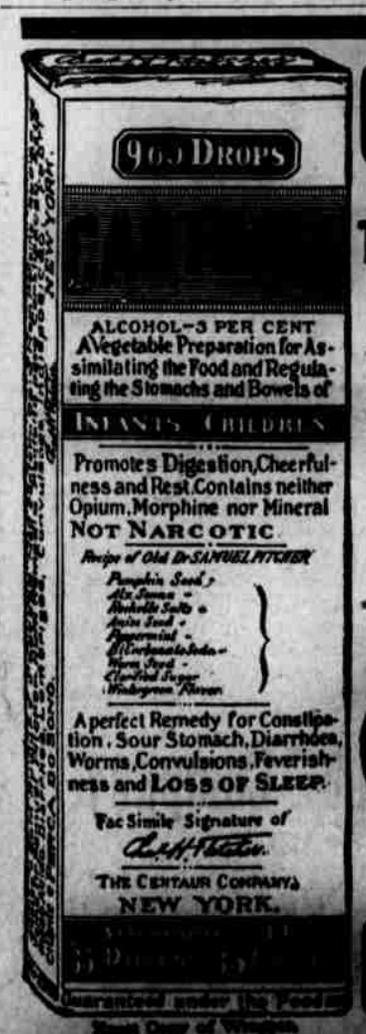

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