

FROM THE GERMAN OF KARL VON SCHLÖZER.

**H**ERE I am, in New York; and, as luck will have it, forced by circumstances over which I have no control to take up my abode close to the Union Telegraph Station; and worse still, in an attic, in front of which the telegraph wires of half the world seem to cross. In the daytime there is such a disturbance in the street that collecting one's thoughts is out of the question, and at night the wires moan and howl like souls in torment. Even as I write one of them is beginning to whistle. Ten to one it is the thick, fat wire just opposite my window, the most irrepressible of them all. Yes; I was not mistaken. Now the wretch is humming the refrain, "No rest for us by night or day." The other wires take up the tune, which seems to amuse the signal bell, for it is seized with such convulsions of laughter that it begins to ring aloud.

But this is more than I can stand, and, drawing up the blind, I fling open the window, muttering as I do so, and call out into the night:—

"Will you have the goodness to be quiet out there?"

A moment's pause, then the thick wire begins to speak:—

"Come now, that's rather hard lines! Pray, are we never to enjoy ourselves? The live-long day do we toil for you mortals—toil, I repeat, till I've actually got a stitch in my side with the effort, and then



"I FLUNG OPEN THE WINDOW."

in the evening you grudge us a little recreation!"

"Stitch in your side, forsooth!" cried I. "And do you think I can afford to be idle? Within an hour I must knock off an article for *The Morning Dispatch*—something new and thrilling; but while you make such a row my best ideas go."

"Ideas! ideas!" sneered my friend. "As if ideas were still needed in the nineteenth century! Nowadays, if you wish to write romances, you no longer invent, but experience them. I could write volumes from the facts that have come under my own notice. How many sighs, wishes, and hopes have I destroyed, accomplished, and buried! How many great and noble, how many small and mean transactions have I promoted and prevented!"

"Well, then, if you know so much," said I, mollified, "give me some of your experiences. I am all ears."

"All right," said the Wire. "I shall tell you the little history of Alice Parker and George Duff."

"What! George Duff? Dear, foolish old George, the friend with whom I travelled all through Italy, and with whom I made the bet in Sorrento that within a year he would be a happy husband! I heard afterwards that he had lost his heart in America, and, with his usual vagueness, only became aware of the fact when he was back in Europe."

"The same man," nodded the Wire, "and it is his story you are about to hear. I shall give you the seventeen telegrams relative to the affair, exactly as they passed through my hands. But if you are going to make use of my communications for your newspaper, you must mention no names. These are State secrets."

"Of course not," I promised, and so the Wire began its tale as follows:—

## HE AND SHE.

*A Novel of the Day in 17 Telegrams.*

I.

TO PARKER, Banker, Baltimore.

FROM GEORGE DUFF, London.

During stay in Baltimore, seized with fancy for your daughter Alice. Feel now I love her. Cannot live without her. Believe Alice reciprocates affection. Am independent. My mother consents. Beg for hand of your daughter. If no, answer unnecessary. If yes, wire. Shall start directly for Baltimore.

II.

TO GEORGE DUFF, London.

FROM PARKER, Baltimore.

Alice loves you. Give my blessing. Come.

III.

TO PARKER, Banker, Baltimore.

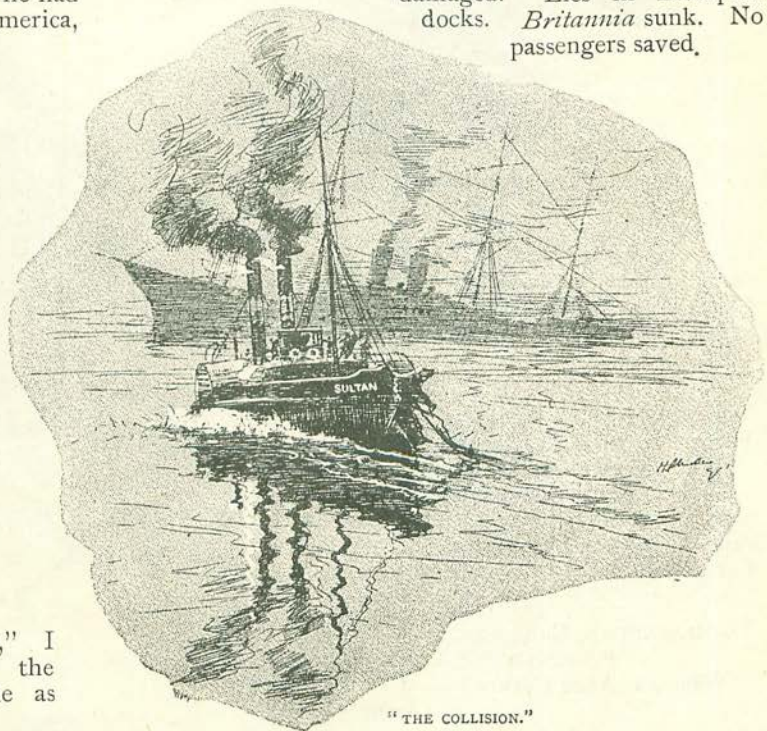
FROM GEORGE DUFF, London.

Start to-morrow, six o'clock, per passenger steamer *Britannia*. Much love, and many kisses.

IV.

Telegram of *The Times*.

Passenger steamer *Britannia*, bound for New York, during dense fog on Sunday came into collision with the packet-boat *Sultan* (Captain Johnston). *Sultan* severely damaged. Lies in Liverpool docks. *Britannia* sunk. No passengers saved.



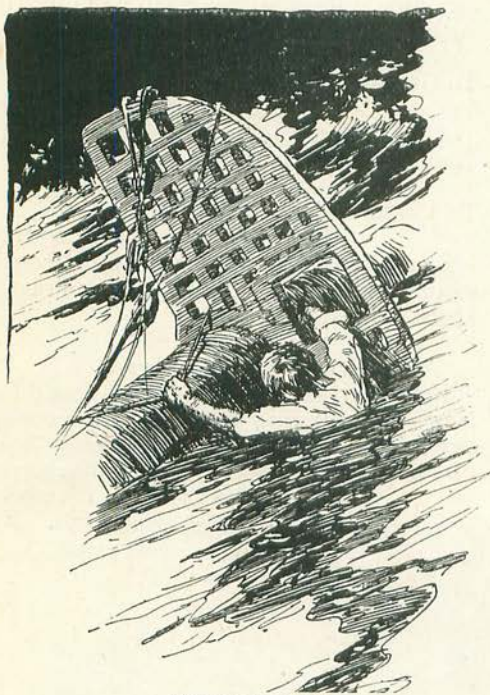
"THE COLLISION."

V.

Telegram of *The New York Herald*.  
*The Times* report of the sinking of the  
*Britannia* as usual exaggerated. Passengers  
 mostly saved.

VI.

To PARKER, Banker, Baltimore.  
 From GEORGE DUFF, Funchal.  
 Wonderful escape. Just landed here.  
*Britannia* sunk through collision. Clung



"CLUNG TO MAST."

to mast, and drifted whole night on the  
 sea. Following morning sailing-ship to  
 Cape Town picked me up. Landed me  
 at Madeira. Shall come first opportunity to  
 Baltimore.

VII.

To GEORGE DUFF, Funchal.  
 From BLACKBURN, Manager of Bankruptcy  
 Court, Baltimore.

Parker, Banker, no longer exists. Partner  
 forged and absconded. Other houses with  
 capital shaky. Parker committed suicide.  
 Letter from daughter awaits you here.

VIII.

To BLACKBURN, Baltimore.  
 From GEORGE DUFF, Funchal.  
 Where is Alice Parker?

(Answer paid.)

IX.

To GEORGE DUFF, Funchal.  
 From BLACKBURN, Baltimore.  
 Vanished!

X.

To Mrs. DUFF, London.  
 From GEORGE, Baltimore.  
 Just arrived. No trace of Alice. Says  
 in letter too proud to bind me under  
 circumstances. Don't return till I find her.

XI.

To GEORGE DUFF, Baltimore.  
 From JOHNSTON, Captain of the *Sultan*,  
 Liverpool.

Earnestly implored to return. On your  
 evidence in *re Britannia* depend my honour  
 and existence.

XII.

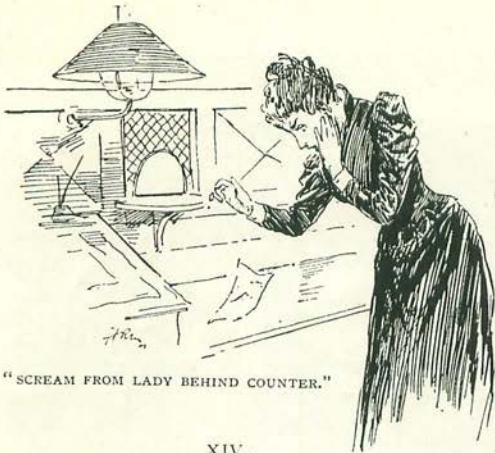
To Mrs. DUFF, London.  
 From GEORGE, Baltimore.  
 Duty recalls me. Can find Alice no-  
 where. Go to-day to New York. Next  
 day to England, per passenger steamer  
*Victoria*. Am very miserable.

XIII.

To GEORGE DUFF, New York.  
 From BLACKBURN,  
 Baltimore.  
 Miss Parker sup-  
 posed to be in New  
 York.



"VERY MISERABLE."



"SCREAM FROM LADY BEHIND COUNTER."

## XIV.

To Mrs. DUFF, London.

From GEORGE, New York.

Found! Took advertisement about Alice to office. Scream from lady behind counter—Alice herself. Just going on steamer *Victoria* to Southampton, direct to London.

## XV.

Telegram of *The Times*.

Fearful disaster! Incalculable consequences! Passenger ship *Victoria*, bound for Southampton from New York, arrived this morning. Shortly before landing an explosion took place on board. Four stokers wounded. Kitchenmaid missing. Origin supposed to be a Fenian dynamite plot. Two passengers—a gentleman and lady—suspected, and immediately arrested.

## XVI.

Telegram of *The New York Herald*.

*The Times* report of the dynamite explosion on the steamer *Victoria* of course exaggerated. It appears that some samples of American tow had caught fire. The suspected passengers were, with many apologies, at once set free.

The telegraph-wire had spoken these last words rather faintly. Now he ceased entirely. "Not bad," said I; "the adventures of the worthy George have interested me deeply. Of course, the style of your story is a little abrupt, the development perhaps too rapid, and the matter does not seem to me quite original.

All the same, your memory is marvellous. But now for the conclusion. We have landed safely in the harbour of old England, have sailed round the cliff of dynamite, but we are anxious to know if 'he and she' arrive happily in the haven of matrimony?"

A long pause ensued.

"What, you are going to leave me in the lurch at the critical moment? I wish to know if I have won my bet? You continue silent. Possibly the young people have left London, and your lines may not reach further. Am I right?" Instead of an answer there is a knock at the door.

"My worthy reporter," said I, stepping to the window, "now I can supply the last chapter to your novel. Listen." And I read in a loud voice:—  
To —, New York.

From GEORGE DUFF, Sorrento.

Blue sky. Sunshine. Sitting with my young wife on the terrace. Glorious honeymoon. Give us your blessing. You were right.

"Well, what do you think of that?" asked I, folding up the bit of paper.

But the Wire still said nothing, and when I looked more narrowly I understood his silence—he had fallen asleep.

"Come in." A telegraph boy appeared and handed me a telegram. I tear it open.

It is from—by Jove, it is—  
"Stop. Hi!" The boy was already downstairs.



"A GLORIOUS HONEYMOON."