

**THE WRECK OF THE CONEMAUGH:
BEING A RECORD OF SOME EVENTS
SET DOWN FROM THE NOTES OF
AN ENGLISH BARONET DURING THE
AMERICAN WAR WITH SPAIN**

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The Wreck of the Conemaugh: Being a Record of Some Events Set down from the Notes of an English Baronet During the American War with Spain by T. Jenkins Hains

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**THE WRECK OF
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THE WRECK OF THE CONEMAUGH

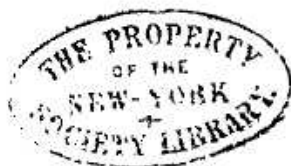
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BY

T. JENKINS HAINS

AUTHOR OF

"THE WIND-JAMMERS," "CAPTAIN GORE'S COURTESHIP," ETC.



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TO
MY WIFE

2825

THE WRECK OF THE "CONEMAUGH"



CHAPTER I.

THE morning after I reached New York was cold. I had arrived during the night on the Montreal Express in company with my cousin, Lord Esterbrook, and we had put up at one of those towering hotels.

I was not particularly anxious to leave my bed, and I lay for a long time thinking over my proposed future. I was twenty-five and a bachelor, and had an unlimited income, but the morning brought no smile to my face as I lay there looking out at the bright sunshine in the crisp, wintry air of the street. It was now early spring, and I had just gone through an unusually bad winter. I was dying slowly of that incurable malady, consumption, and my phy-

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sicians, who had prophesied that I could not live another six months, now were peremptory in their orders that I should make a sea-voyage as a last resort to prolong my useless life. I had debated the matter carefully, and had made up my mind that I would rather die at home comfortably than be further inconvenienced by trying any such absurd treatment; but as my cousin, John Esterbrook, had pleaded with me to such an extent that he had even offered to accompany me, I had weakened, wavered, and finally agreed to make the trip to Melbourne on one of the first large clippers we could reach. So here the morning found us in the great American city, all ready to take passage on the four-masted English bark, "Golden Arrow," for Australia.

My thoughts were rather bitter as I lay there thinking over the useless twenty-five years of my life, and memory, that treacherous friend, had begun to add some fresh venom to them. I gazed at my trunk and thought of a photograph it contained, and as I did so my throat swelled and I cursed silently for many minutes. "Oublier." I



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must learn the meaning of that word; but, well, a man has other than physical weaknesses at twenty-five. If there is a just God, he will forgive a man his curses when, as in my case, he sees his life and hope slipping swiftly and surely away from him, and all through no fault of his own. My eyes must have been red when my man entered and inquired my wants, for he looked sharply at me.

"William," said I, "damn you for a meddling fool. Pour me out a drink of brandy, and be quick about it." Then I gulped it down, swallowed my memory with the liquor, and arose. I stood upon the cold carpet for several moments to the great amazement of William, but as the liquor warmed my wasted frame I felt some of my old strength come back to me, and I was a man again.

It was best to face the inevitable with a silence due the dignity of my birth and position, and even if I could not feel the subdued spirit of religious resignation upon me as I had been told by the cardinal I should, I would at least make a stand against fate