

**TOURMALIN'S TIME  
CHEQUES; PP. 1-190**

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Tourmalin's Time Cheques; pp. 1-190 by F. Anstey

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**F. ANSTEY**

**TOURMALIN'S TIME  
CHEQUES; PP. 1-190**



TOURMALIN'S  
TIME CHEQUES

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BY

F. ANSTEY, *scd.*

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THE BLACK POODLE, ETC.



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## TOURMALIN'S TIME CHEQUES.

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### THE PROLOGUE.

*On Deck.—Curry and Culture.—Alternative Distractions.  
—A Period of Probation.—The Oath and the Talisman.—Wavering.—A Chronological Error.—The Time Bargain.—Tourmalin Opens an Account.*

MR. PETER TOURMALIN was sitting, or rather lying, in a steamer-chair, on the first-class saloon-deck of the P. and O. ship *Boomerang*, which had not been many days as yet on the voyage home from Sydney. He had been trying to read; but it was a hot morning, and the curry, of which he had partaken freely at breakfast, had made him feel a little heavy and disinclined for mental exertion just then, particularly as Buckle's *History of Civilization*, the first volume of which he had brought

up from the ship's library, is not exactly light literature at any time.

He wanted distraction of some sort, but he could not summon up sufficient energy to rise and pace the deck, as his only acquaintance on board, a Mr. Perkins, was doing with a breezy vigor which Tourmalin found himself feebly resenting.

Another alternative was open to him, it is true: not far away were other deck-chairs, in which some of the lady passengers were reading, writing, and chatting more or less languidly. There were not very many on board—for it was autumn, a time at which homewardbound vessels are not apt to be crowded—but even in that small group there were one or two with whom it might have seemed possible to pass a little time in a pleasant and profitable manner. For instance, there was that tall, graceful girl in the navy-blue skirt, and the striped cotton blouse confined at her slender waist by a leathern belt. (Tourmalin, it should be mentioned, was in the habit of noticing the details of feminine costume.) She had regular features, gray eyes which lighted up whenever she spoke, and an expression of

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singular nobility and sweetness; her fair hair was fastened up in loose gleaming masses under her highly becoming straw hat.

Peter watched her surreptitiously, from time to time, from behind the third page of Buckle. She was attempting to read a novel; but her attention, like his own, wandered occasionally, and he even fancied that he surprised her now and then in the act of glancing at himself with a certain interest.

Near her was another girl, not quite so tall, and darker, but scarcely less pleasing in appearance. She wore a cool-looking pink frock, and her luxuriant bronze tresses were set off by a simple white flannel cap. She held some embroidery in her listless fingers, but was principally occupied in gazing out to sea with a wistful and almost melancholy expression. Her eyes were soft and brown, and her features piquantly irregular; giving Peter, who considered himself no mean judge of female character, the impression of a highly emotional and enthusiastic temperament. He thought he saw signs that she also honored him by her notice.

Peter was a flat-headed little man, with