

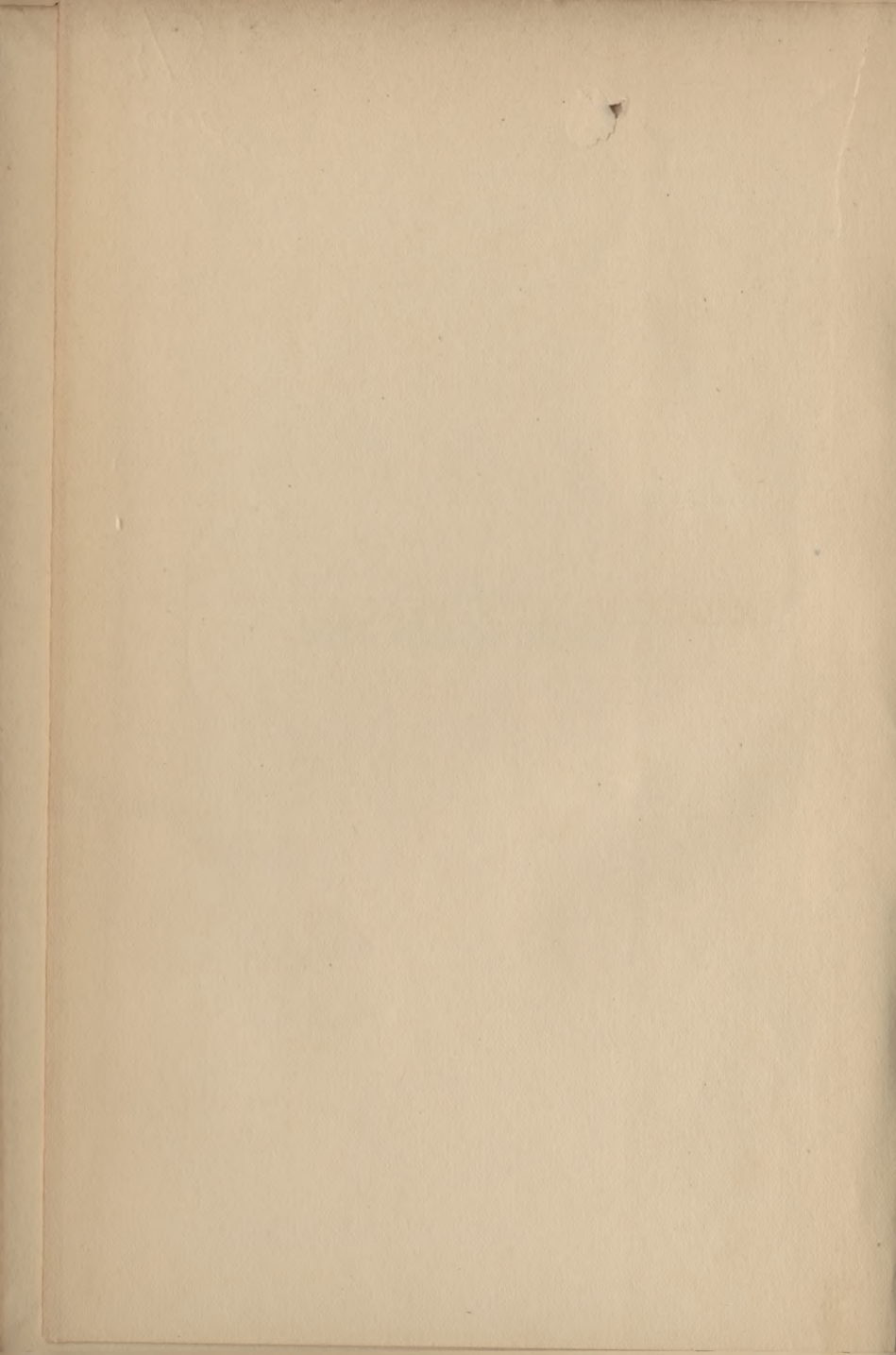
**KEEPING THE
PEACE**

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KEEPING THE PEACE

BY GOUVERNEUR MORRIS

KEEPING THE PEACE

THE WILD GOOSE

HIS DAUGHTER

WHEN MY SHIP COMES IN

THE SEVEN DARLINGS

THE INCANDESCENT LILY

THE PENALTY

IT, AND OTHER STORIES

THE SPREAD EAGLE, AND OTHER STORIES

THE FOOTPRINT, AND OTHER STORIES

IF YOU TOUCH THEM THEY VANISH

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

KEEPING THE PEACE

BY
GOUVERNEUR MORRIS



NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

1924

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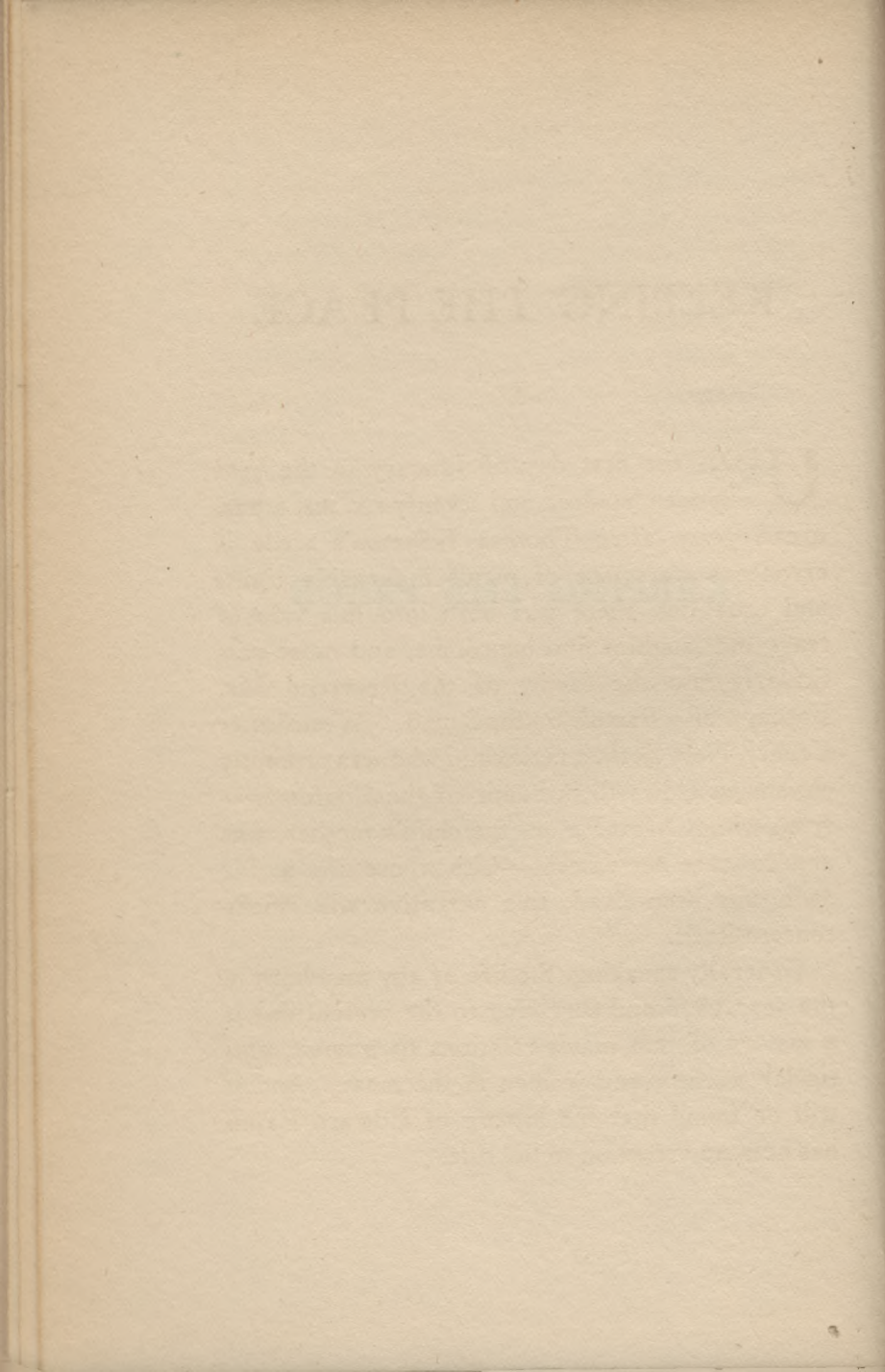
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TO
EDGAR T. GLEESON

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KEEPING THE PEACE



KEEPING THE PEACE

I

UPON the first day of January in the year eighteen hundred and seventy-six, just a hundred years after Thomas Jefferson's virile if erroneous statement of man's inalienable rights and equalities, there was born into this vale of tears and laughter and buncombe, and more particularly into the family of the Reverend Mr. Eaton, of Bartow-on-the-Sound, Westchester County, New York, a male child who was promptly christened Edward, in honor of the Confessor—from whom Mrs. Eaton, the child's mother, was able to trace her descent—with whose life, so far as it has been lived, this narrative will chiefly concern itself.

Generally speaking, the life of any man born in the year 1876 and surviving to the present day is a history of that man's relations to women; particular women, and woman in the mass. And it will be found that the history of Edward Eaton has been no exception to the rule.

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In more than one way he owed the fact that he was born at all to his mother. For if she had not wanted another child to make a round half-dozen in all, she wouldn't have had one.

The first face which Edward learned to distinguish from other faces resembled the face of a horse. It was long, narrow and Roman. The upper teeth projected in a kind of shelf and gave the face an extraordinary air of command and self-satisfaction. The face surmounted a long, bony, awkward, strong, tireless body. And it was the dwelling place of a highly cultivated voice which, without being raised or forced in any way, could be made to penetrate into the most remote fastnesses of the house and grounds.

Though Mrs. Eaton would have called herself a Christian gentlewoman, it is probable that in her heart of hearts she took more pleasure and pride in her pedigree than in her religion. Oddly enough, she had swallowed both upon hearsay evidence; but she had caused the pedigree to be emblazoned and fine writ on parchment, and it was a thing of beauty and carried conviction in every leaf and twig of the design. Mrs. Eaton's pedigree—she had been Harriet Burton before her marriage—so far as it could be made visible, took the form of an extraordinarily gnarled, aged oak, and so imperishable that Edward used to wonder why, if the

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roots were not buried in loam, the top did not wither.

Tangled among the roots of the oak were lozenges—not the kind sold in drug stores to amend sore throats, but heraldic lozenges—on which were printed the names of remote ancestors. Ordinary ancestors were printed in black, more than ordinary ancestors were printed in black with the capital letter in red. But the lozenge of Edward the Confessor was red and larger than the others, and the lettering was gold. Almost every crest, motto and device known to heraldry was represented somewhere in or about the tree.

But there was one notable exception. There was not even one sniveling abortive example of the bar sinister.

Above religion and above pedigree, Mrs. Eaton maintained the sanctity and all the privileges of motherhood. She always spoke of her own mother as “dear mother,” and even when speaking hurriedly she never failed to tremolo the words. As soon as her own children were old enough to speak at all, they were taught the “dear mother” formula. And they were taught to speak of their grandmother as “dearest” grandmother, and of their mother’s many sisters, living and dead, as “dearest” Aunt So-and-so. They were taught not only the preciousness and sanctity of their own

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mother, but of everything in any way related to her or connected with her.

She seldom punished them. She didn't have to. Without lifting her voice to rage or her hand to strike, she could inspire unreasoning terror, almost instantaneously in almost anyone.

A day came when Edward's brother John—the oldest of the children—a brave, likable boy of eighteen, did not come home from Mr. Harrington's school in Westchester. He had, it seems, failed in a trivial examination and durst not bring the report of that failure home to his mother. So when he came to Westchester station with the Bartow, Pelham Manor and New Rochelle children, and saw that the up train and the down train were pulling in at the same time, he slipped around the rear end of the up train and boarded the other. When the down train got to Van Nest and nobody was looking, he flung his school-books out of an open window; while it stopped at West Farms he rose and marched boldly forward until he came to the smoker. Here he breathed deeply the perfume which is dearest to the persecuted American male—tobacco smoke.

It is curious that the boy John left his brothers and sisters, his father, his school and his school-mates, but most especially his mother, with a passion of regret. He had a tender and sentimental

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nature; and as the train pulled into Harlem his world seemed to have contained an infinite number of things which it was going to be next to impossible to leave behind forever.

He was without a plan. He had less than fifty cents in his pocket. He was a country boy without any knowledge of city ways. There was only one thing certain. He could not go home and face his mother. He had to go on, on into that dusk which was so quickly turning into dark. But there was good breeding in John, and his face presented a fine calm.

There had come to him in his homesickness and desperation thoughts of ships and the sea. If he went to work in the city, big as it was, his mother was sure to have him found. And possibly she might have him committed to some institution for the wayward and incorrigible.

He left the elevated at the Battery and made his way by a kind of instinct to Front Street, which had upon one side ships tied to wharves and upon the other the offices of the ship companies, the stores of ship chandlers, and innumerable saloons and lodging houses for sailors.

Here under a lamp-post were two sailors in altercation. They were a little gone in liquor, and there was one who tempted and one who refused.

"I tell you," said the latter, "I'm going to sleep

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on board. She can't follow me past the guard, and we sail at daybreak . . ."

"She'd never think to look for you in Ratsey's, she wouldn't," said the other. "So come on."

But the refuser continued to refuse.

"Much obliged just the same," he said, "but enough's enough. She's wearing the same old hatpin she dipped into the Fleming's eyeball, and she's full of the same old juice. I'm through."

"Shore," said the tempter, "would be a 'eavenly place, Bill, if it weren't for the women. Whenever you see a man in a desperate hurry to get somewhere else, it's a ten to one shot he's running away from some woman or other."

The latter half of the phrase was lost to John Eaton, who had approached and passed as inconspicuously as possible. And of the snatches of loud spoken conversation which he had overheard he remembered only one succinct statement:

"Shore would be a 'eavenly place, Bill, if it weren't for the women."

That he remembered until his dying day; that and something about a hatpin that had been dipped into an eyeball.

Probably the first event which made a strong and unshatterable impression upon Edward Eaton was the fact that upon a certain afternoon in De-

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cember his brother John had not come home from school.

James had come home and Mark had come home. Ruth had come home, and so also had Sarah. Everybody and everything had come back home except John.

At the precise time that the other children came home, and John didn't, the Reverend Mr. Eaton was in his church setting the altar, as a clerk dresses a window, for a special Friday morning service. Mrs. Eaton had lighted a lamp and was making an elaborate pattern of red and purple cross-stitching upon a large rectangle of coarse hand-woven linen. This was to be a Christmas present for "dearest" grandmother.

At the precise time that John didn't come home and the door opened and the others did, Edward Eaton was going on six years of age. And he was sitting on a stool at Dear Mother's feet, practising self-control. A dozen times a day he would be told to stop whatever he was doing and to keep perfectly still for five or ten minutes. For Mrs. Eaton believed that in this way children are best taught poise and self-control. She began with them when they were nursing. So many minutes' milky indulgement, and then an enforced rest of one minute.

Edward's brothers and sisters came with an

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opening and a closing of the heavy front door—an arched door of thick oak, bound with iron and studded with nails—that was hardly seemly. The door had been flung open and it had been slammed shut. Following a blast of cold outdoor air appeared the comely faces of Ruth and Sarah, and behind them the less colorful and noticeable faces of James and Mark.

“Your train must have been a few minutes late, my darling,” said Mrs. Eaton, whose eyebrows, threateningly raised upon the slamming of the front door, had settled to their normal position. “And perhaps *that* was why you were in such an indecorous hurry to get into the house.”

“Dear Mother,” said Ruth, who, now that John was gone, was the eldest, “it must have been very late, because we ran all the way from the station. We are all here except John. He was with us at Westchester in *plenty* of time to catch the train, but we think that somehow he must have missed it.”

Mrs. Eaton continued her untroubled and rapid stitching.

“It is difficult to understand,” she said, “how, if you were all at the station in plenty of time to catch the train, John could have missed it. But there is another train in half an hour, so that we shall not have to wait dinner for him. I shall

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speak to him about his carelessness, however, and the evils which carelessness leads to."

Ruth had been dying to interrupt this speech. But she knew better. She knew that dutiful, well brought up daughters never interrupt their dear mothers—"Unless, my dear, it should happen that the house had caught fire, or something like that." But now, since Dear Mother had finished, it was obviously Ruth's turn to speak. The turns of daughters always came before the turns of sons, and of elder daughters before younger daughters.

"But we don't think he missed the train," said Ruth. "Charlie Buck said that he saw John dodging around the end of our train and boarding the other."

"What other?" asked Mrs. Eaton.

"The down train."

"But what in the name of common sense," exclaimed Mrs. Eaton, "would John be doing on board the down train?"

"We don't know, Dear Mother. We have no idea," said Ruth. "At least Sarah and I have no idea. But perhaps you had better question the boys. Mark has been acting mysteriously."

Ruth did not like to get Mark into trouble. But she had been taught that, when the brother of a dutiful daughter acts mysteriously, it is that daughter's duty to report the fact to her dear

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mother. And she had merely put her teachings into effect.

Mrs. Eaton dropped her embroidery in her lap and gave the uncomfortable Mark a look which seemed to draw him toward her. He came forward until he stood in the middle of the room.

"And so, my son," said Mrs. Eaton, "you have been acting mysteriously. What am I to understand by that? . . . And don't twiddle your hat." There was nothing mysterious about Mark at that moment. He was at the most awkward period of mental and vocal adolescence, and he was badly frightened. "And what light, my son, are you going to throw for us upon the extraordinary conduct of your brother John?"

Mark sincerely hoped that he wasn't going to throw any light on anything. He didn't feel up to it, and he didn't know what would happen to him if he did.

"I don't know what you mean, D-D-Dear Mother," he said, with a piteous mixture of bass and falsetto sounds.

Mrs. Eaton raised her eyebrows. And shot a question at the young ruin before her. "Did John say anything to you?"

Mark swallowed hard and nodded.

"*What* did John say to you?"

The girls came forward a little so as not to miss

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any gasp, gurgle or octave leaps of Mark's possible answer.

"He flunked in geometry, Dear M-M-Mother. And he said he didn't dare come home a-a-and f-f-face the music."

"Do you mean to tell me that my son John has run away from home? Ruth? James? Sarah?"

"Dear Mother," said Ruth, "that is what we are afraid of."

"Children," said Mrs. Eaton, and anger was getting the better of her, "I call Heaven to witness that I have done nothing to deserve this . . . Your father! What *will* your father say? James, run to the church as fast as your legs will carry you. But don't breathe a word of what has happened. Tell your father that I must speak with him at once. Tell him that it is upon a matter which will not brook delay . . . What are *you* staring at, Edward? Don't sit there like a ninny with your mouth wide open."

Edward recalls that he was able to close his mouth, and that if he had known just how a ninny sits he would have tried to stop sitting like one. He knew that something terrible had happened to his brother John and that his Dear Mother was going to do something about it.

The Reverend Mr. Eaton was slender and clearly featured. He had an intellectual head and

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was swift and graceful. Physically the children resembled him. Their mother's long horse face and protruding teeth would perish with her.

Having received James's message just as he was giving the final touch to the altar, the Reverend Mr. Eaton had come home at once. The faithful indeed might have seen their pastor flitting through the dusk at a gait which strongly resembled running. The Reverend Mr. Eaton would, as a matter of fact, have run his legs off at any time for the sake of peace.

Presently then, alert, quick stepping, unaffected and accompanied in an easy familiarity by his son James, the Reverend Mr. Eaton entered the room and perceived upon the instant that something peculiarly awful had happened and that he was going to be blamed for it.

He had a pair of very black and tragic eyes. In the lamplight, contrasting with his extraordinary white and smooth chin, they resembled pools of ink. His perceptions were very quick and from the group he missed, almost instantly, his son John.

Then Mr. Eaton said simply and quietly, "Where's John?" And the storm broke.

"Where indeed?" said Mrs. Eaton. "You may well ask. He has run away. He has run away from a mother who would have given her life for

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his, who would have worked her hands to the bone for him. And that is your work. You were weak with him. Weak as you are with the other children, as you are with the servants and with your parishioners. You are spoken of as that easy-going, tolerant Mr. Eaton, you who would always rather procrastinate, temporize and beat about the bush than face a duty which seems in any way unpleasant to you. You who have been known to side with your own children in their occasional rebellions against what is known the world over to be best for children. You who let them pull you and maul you and romp with you, as if you had no respect for your cloth, and the eyes of Him Who sees all were not upon you. So that now your son, profiting by the example you have set him, fails in the face of duty, turns tail and runs away. What have you to say? What are you going to do?"

"Try to find him," said Mr. Eaton simply.

"You had *better* find him," said Mrs. Eaton ominously; "you had better find him, Mr. Eaton. And when you have found him you had better talk to him, for once in your life, as a priest and a father ought to talk to a sinful and erring son. There are institutions for the wayward and incorrigible; let us hope that no one of our children, owing to bad example, shall ever live to see the inside of

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one. And when you find him, Mr. Eaton, if you do find him, don't baby him, don't spare him. The making or the breaking of my boy's character is in your hands. I have done *my* duty to him. My *whole* duty. Now do yours."

"Does anybody know," asked Mr. Eaton miserably, "which way John ran?"

"He boarded the train for New York."

"I'll catch the next train," said Mr. Eaton. "I had best put some things in a valise. I may be gone all night. New York is a big city. I wonder where the boy would go."

And he kept on wondering until far into the night.

It was not the most miserable night that the Reverend Mr. Eaton had ever spent. To begin with, he was not in the least worried about John's personal safety, and in the second place it was one of the few nights since his marriage which he had been allowed to spend anywhere by himself. Whatever feelings had impelled John to run away from home were understandingly shared by his father. He would have liked to run away himself.

And if he had been a son instead of a husband and father he would have run away. For the Reverend Mr. Eaton had pretty well concluded—and this would have shaken his congregation to the soul—that he had at best one life to live, and

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knew beyond peradventure that he was not being allowed to live it in any way but miserably.

Having the heart of a runaway, it was not difficult for the Reverend Mr. Eaton to think with the mind of one, and by two o'clock in the morning he had pretty well decided what course he himself would have undertaken if he had been actually instead of imaginatively wearing his runaway son's shoes.

Seven o'clock found the Reverend Mr. Eaton stamping his cold feet in front of the recruiting station which was just outside the gates of the Brooklyn Navy Yard. At eight o'clock the recruiting station opened for the day, and the Reverend Mr. Eaton went in. He stated his business to the recruiting officer and helped this hard-boiled seafarer to establish a fire in a little sheet-iron stove. Thereafter he sat on a wooden bench and waited. He had not long to wait. For the very first applicant to appear in the recruiting station on that cold December morning was John Eaton himself.

"Hello, John," said his father.

"Hello, father," said John.

"Had breakfast?"

"Yes, sir."

"So have I."

John was uncertain what he should do or say

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next. So was his father. They had always been on easy and pleasant terms with each other. John had always seemed a very satisfactory kind of son to the Reverend Mr. Eaton, and to John the Reverend Mr. Eaton had always seemed a satisfactory kind of father. But to meet as runaway and pursuer was a situation for which neither had a precedent in actual experience. Presently Mr. Eaton said:

"It seems best for you to be in communication with some one member of the family. You wouldn't want us not to know where you were or how you were getting on."

John drew closer to his father and spoke in a lowered, anxious voice. "Then you aren't going to order me back home?"

"Would you go if I did order you to?" The Reverend Mr. Eaton was smiling a little tremulously.

"I don't know," said John.

"Well," said his father, "I don't believe I ever ordered anybody to do anything, and I'm not likely to begin now. It may be that you are planning to do what is best for you. Travel and the companionship of men wouldn't have hurt me any at your age. But it is better for you to go to sea with my consent and approval than without it."

"Of course it is," said John. "It—it's wonder-

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ful. But mother won't consent and approve, will she?"

"Your mother has yet to approve of anything which she did not herself originate."

"That's just it," said John, nodding his head. "I couldn't have put it that way, but that's just where all the trouble is. If I'm ever going to amount to a row of pins, father, I've simply got to do my own thinking, and do what I think is right—even if it isn't always just what mother would think was right . . . And I *couldn't* go home now, could I? *You* know how it would be. I'd never be allowed to forget that I'd failed in an examination and that I had run away. I've never been allowed to forget any of the wrong things I've ever done. They are all held up against me, and of course there gets to be more of them, and—and what's the use of being sorry when you've done wrong if it don't get you a new start and if you are never allowed to forget? I'll bet that after God has forgiven sinners and let 'em into Paradise, He don't keep on nagging them."

"Let's not criticize your mother," said the Reverend Mr. Eaton. "After all, she's your mother. And if she weren't, you wouldn't be in a position to complain about her. Write to her; write to her whenever you get a chance."

"You know the kind of letter she'd write back,"

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said John. "I'll write to you. After all, you are the head of the family . . ."

"I don't like to see you so bitter, my boy. I don't like it."

"Who made me bitter?"

"Don't you love your mother, John?"

The Reverend Mr. Eaton received a reply which he did not expect.

"Do you?" said John. And he added, "If you do you're the biggest saint since Christ."

"*S-s-sh! S-s-sh!*" said his father, in an agony of embarrassment.

John turned to the recruiting officer.

"I want to be in the navy," he said. "What do I do?"

"Fill out this blank," said the officer, and in about half an hour John was a servant of the Government and could not have gone back home if he had wanted to.

"John," said the Reverend Mr. Eaton, "when you write, don't say that you had my consent and approval to the step you are taking. Don't mention that you even saw me. But write, write now, so that I will get the letter in the morning."

With his enlistment there seemed to have come over John a kind of aging and ripening. He had sworn allegiance to his Government. And this had made him feel that his allegiance was wanted and

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that he himself was no longer a schoolboy, but a man grown.

"What," said he, "are you going to tell mother?"

"I shall tell her that I was too late," said the Reverend Mr. Eaton. "I shall tell her that you had already enlisted. If I told her the truth, there would be no living with her . . . You are going to find that, in this world, a great many honest men have to tell a great many little lies for the sake of peace. I hate lies, John. I hope I do. But I hate some things worse."

Edward remembers that the telegraph agent himself paid them a visit, that he came in a buggy drawn by a white horse, and that he brought a yellow envelope for Dear Mother, and that that was how she got the word that brother John had become a sailor.

Then father came, and with him the first real snowfall of the year. He was not allowed to come into the house until Martha, the housemaid, had brushed the snow from his hat and shoulders and from his shoes. He submitted very patiently to this process. He looked tired, and it didn't seem as if he wanted to come into the house.

There wasn't much said about John in Edward's hearing. Only this:

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Edward's father: "They'll make a man of him in the navy."

Edward's mother: "We could have made a man of him in his own home if you hadn't been so weak."

Edward's father: "Yes, my dear, you are probably right, and if you wish me to admit that it's all my fault I do admit it here and now."

That was all that was said at that time in Edward's hearing. And it did not make a strong impression on him. Father was always admitting that he was at fault about something or other, and Edward himself often had to do the same thing, because when Dear Mother began to find fault it was the only way to stop her.

And it was the only way to stop Ruth and Sarah when, acting as their mother's duly accredited agents, they found fault with him, or when Martha the parlormaid did, or Ann the cook.

Fortunately for the boys, and for the Reverend Mr. Eaton himself, Mrs. Eaton was a great visitor. She believed it to be her duty to call on every one of her husband's parishioners at least once a month. The sight of the surrey at the door with the two long-tailed and long-maned black horses, Darkness and Shadow, George, the coachman, in the front seat holding the whip and reins, and Mrs. Eaton, with her long horse face, her protruding

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teeth, her immense bustle and her large tortoise-shell card-case, about to disappear for an entire afternoon, was a pleasant sight for all the persons at the rectory who loved a little freedom of speech and action. Usually Mrs. Eaton took her two dear, beautiful daughters with her. To the very moment of departure her mouth was filled with directions and admonitions.

Poor Mr. Eaton had long since come to the conclusion that a man's hell is not hereafter, but here, and that some woman, or a combination of them, make it for him. His own mother had hounded him into Holy Orders. His marriage had been another case of special pleading. He loved beauty, music, colors, flowers, and it had not been his natural instinct to marry a woman with a face like a horse and a shelf of projecting teeth. But politeness and courtesy and consideration were natural to him. These he had exhibited to her, and they had been magnified into marked and even compromising attentions. The first thing that he knew he was going to be married to a woman whom he did not love. He tried to make her a good husband.

Well, when the Reverend Mrs. Eaton and her two handsome daughters went visiting, the males of the family were free from care and happier than at any other time.

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So that there should be more time for play, Mr. Eaton would energetically help those who had lessons to do, would get his own sermon finished, and then be ready to go on expeditions with his boys to the shores of Pelham Bay or into the heart of Pelham Wood.

But one day that was damp under foot, Edward had a cold and had been forbidden to go out of the house and was left to his own devices. He was a good little boy and trustworthy. Mischief was comparatively unknown in the Eaton family. Nobody anticipated that he would set the house on fire, or do anything that he shouldn't do. And he didn't. Nevertheless, he got into a great trouble, which was to affect his character and his future life.

While he sat curled in a great chair before the library fire with an illustrated history of the world in his lap, he happened to look up and notice that one of the Dresden china urns which graced the mantelpiece had been cracked.

A curious sense of unrest and foreboding filled him. Presently he climbed down out of his chair and went into the servants' part of the house and asked the cook and the parlormaid if either of them had broken the Dresden china urn. They said that they had not, but that if by any chance he,

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Edward, had, he would certainly catch it when his mother came home.

His mother was always boasting about those urns, and showing them off to visitors. She could not possibly have known that it had been cracked, or there would have been an uproar. Edward was so filled with dubiety and vague forebodings that he could by no means return to a perusal of the pictures in the history.

He set up a watch at one of the front windows, and when toward dark the family surrey hove in view with one dear sister on the front seat and the other dear sister on the back seat alongside Dear Mother, he became frightened and ran back into the library.

Then he became more frightened. If Dear Mother found him in the same room with the broken urn she would at once suspect him of having broken it. So he ran out into the hall. Then it occurred to him that if he were *not* found in the same room with the broken urn the fact would be remembered against him when at length the break was discovered.

A clear conscience is supposed to transcend all evil. Edward's conscience was clear as a bell, but he had had clear consciences before now and they had availed him nothing.

He stood irresolute, a tiny figure in the dark old-

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fashioned hallway—a brightly colored, a robust piece of life against the dead black walnut furnishings and the ponderous draperies.

There was a scuffling of feet on the porch. Edward ran to the heavy door, turned the knob and pulled it open.

Dear Mother stooped from the awful heights of her dignity and kissed Edward on the forehead; at the same time she shooed him before her toward the library, and told Sarah to shut the door, and remarked that if little boys with colds in their heads didn't know enough to keep out of draughts, older and wiser people must so manage as to keep them out of them.

Edward, his eyes on the cracked urn, entered the library. His Dear Mother and the girls followed.

She advanced toward the fire, her heavy silks rustling and creaking, her hands held out to the warmth, and perceived that one of the two Dresden china urns had been cracked. She stopped short as if she had been stabbed. Then she said in a very quiet voice:

“One of my priceless Dresden china urns has been broken. Somebody has been touching one of my priceless Dresden china urns, which I do not allow anybody to touch, and has broken it.”

By what mental process Mrs. Eaton fastened

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the guilt upon Edward is unknown. But from the very first it was for his benefit that she spoke.

"Somebody," she said, "is going to be very sorry—very sorry that this ever happened and that my orders were disobeyed. Somebody is going to suffer for this."

And now she fixed her eyes on Edward's and held him thus for a long time. The little boy broke under the strain. Crimson crept up from his neck and spread over his face and into the roots of his hair. His eyes turned slowly away from his mother's face. They resembled two gentle and timid animals which had been wounded.

"I didn't do it, Dear Mother," he said, "*truly* I didn't."

"I had rather," she said, "that a thousand Dresden china urns were broken than that my little son should speak a single word that was not true."

"*Really* and *truly* I didn't," said Edward.

His dear mother lifted a finger not to her lips but to her shelf of projecting teeth, and said:

"Stay where you are, and do not speak to anybody."

Then she sailed majestically out of the room.

Convinced of Edward's guilt, the questions which Mrs. Eaton asked the domestics were perfunctory and leading. They were of this nature: "You didn't by any chance break one of my

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Dresden china urns, did you? Of course not. I am asking you merely as a matter of form."

She returned to the room in which Edward waited for her, as a condemned man waits for his executioner.

"The servants," she said, "know nothing about the urn. It was not broken when I went away. I come back and find it broken. No one has been in this room, my little son, but you."

She seated herself and beckoned him to approach.

"It will be best for you," she said, "to tell the truth—the whole truth *now*."

Once more the gentle, wounded eyes were lifted to hers. And in a voice half strangled with fear, Edward once more denied all knowledge of how the urn came to be broken.

There was "*One Above*" with whom Mrs. Eaton was often in communication and always on terms of perfect understanding. To that *One* she now lifted her hands and her face. It was as if she were entreating Him not to miss, not to miss for one moment the horrible trial to which she was being subjected, and the more than human patience with which she was supporting it.

In a paroxysm of fear Edward had crept close to his mother. He now flung his arms about the crinkling silks which covered her lower extremities

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and protested in a small and shaking voice that he hadn't done it, that really and truly he hadn't done it.

A pure woman contaminated by the touch of an evil man could not have shaken herself free with a greater show of injured virtue than the mother now shook herself free from the child. She sent him reeling. And as he reeled she smote him with words.

"A liar—my son, a liar—don't touch me—don't speak to me. And don't you dare speak to your father, or your brothers, or to your dear sisters, who will be *so* grieved when they hear of this. Don't you speak a word to anyone. For if you spoke you would probably lie, and there is enough falsehood on your conscience now. Quite enough. And no one will speak to you. . . . Not I, nor your father, nor your brothers, nor your dear sisters, and perhaps in that way the truth will be wormed out of you, and you will repent, and be forgiven. Even now the way to forgiveness lies open. Did you or did you not break the urn?"

At that moment Edward resembled a little ghost. But the fear that was in him was now mixed with a nobler emotion—the righteous anger of the witness who, speaking the truth under oath, and nothing but the truth, is not believed by the court.

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"I did not," he said. And his shrill treble had a certain ring of defiance.

"Silence!" cried his mother.

In winter the little bedroom at the north end of the attic was a cold and dark room. And since when little boys had sinned no thought was taken for their health or comfort, it was to this room that Edward was exiled until such a time as he should see fit to confess his faults.

He had no toys and no books to keep him company. Nobody spoke to him, and he dared not speak to anybody. His meals were brought to him in silence, and in silence they were taken away. He was intolerably washed and roughly helped with his dressing and his undressing.

He stood his exile with an extraordinary stoicism. At times the loneliness and the strange sounds in the attic terrified him but he managed to keep silent. His heart, when it didn't simply ache, for he was only a baby, was sullen and resentful.

When you have been brought up to believe that speaking the truth is always rewarded, and find that it isn't, you begin to wonder what would happen if you lied once in a while. Dear Mother always spoke the truth. She said so. But it was Dear Mother who had pointed out to him that truth-telling was *always* rewarded, and here he was

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being punished for telling the truth, and it began to look as if Dear Mother had——

Edward dared not even think the short and ugly word in connection with Dear Mother.

Still, something had happened which obviously could not be explained.

His cold got worse, and his nose ran terribly, especially at meal times. There was a register in the attic up which came an insufficiency of warm air. When he was not in bed he kept the register company.

Twice a day the silence was broken. Twice a day his mother creaked up to the attic and told him to let her know when he was ready to tell the truth. And twice a day he said to her, "I didn't do it, Dear Mother, really and truly I didn't." And saw her turn away, cold and contemptuous. He wondered if all mothers hated sin as much as his did.

One night his throat tickled so that he couldn't help coughing. After a long time he heard a cautious step coming up the attic stair. Presently the door opened and a kind voice spoke in the dark: "It's father, Eddie. Mother is having a meeting with some ladies in the vestry. I've brought you something for your cough."

It was a paste made of sugar and lemon juice. One ate it with a teaspoon. It didn't stop the cough, but it tasted splendid.

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The Reverend Mr. Eaton seated himself on the edge of the bed and, defying the thunder and lightning, began a conversation. The Reverend Mr. Eaton talked to children very much as he talked to grown people, without contempt or patronage, in a simple, easy, confidential way. "Eddie," he said, "what's the truth about this urn anyway?"

"I never touched it in my life, father," said Edward. "Not once."

"Of course," said his father, "your mother has convinced herself that you did. She won't even entertain a reasonable doubt."

"She wants me to tell her that I did when I didn't. And I won't."

"I wish you were a little older. I'd like to give you a piece of good advice, but I don't know how you'd take it . . . But if I were you, I believe I'd find some way of making peace with your mother. When men and women live together, the men, in order to keep the peace, have to say and do lots of things that aren't necessary for men when they only have to keep the peace among themselves. You've been brought up to believe that people who speak the truth are never punished, and you've discovered that that isn't the truth. You are going through a pretty upsetting experience. I'm so sorry for you that I could cry. And yet I hardly know how to help . . . I don't think women mean

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to be unjust or cruel; but if they can't get their way about everything, they are not above using any weapon they can lay their hands on."

Edward did not understand the half of what his father was saying; but he knew that he was being treated as an equal, and the knowledge comforted him and made him very proud.

"You don't think I broke it, do you, father?"

"Why should I? I have your word for it that you didn't. Men don't have to lie to each other to get along."

A hint could hardly have been stronger.

"Do men," asked Edward, "ever have to lie to women?"

"I'm afraid so, Eddie," said his father. "It's the only way sometimes . . . I've tried to reason with your mother about this business. But she's taken her position. And—well, you know as well as I do what that position is. You have told her the truth, and there is no power on earth which can make her believe you. There's the whole miserable matter in a nutshell. . . . I've tried prayer, old man, but here you are."

Edward clung to his father's hand.

"I prayed God to make mother believe me," he said, "but He's known mother so much longer than He's known me that I guess He'd take her side."

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"I must go now." The Reverend Mr. Eaton smiled in the dark. Then he said: "I promised your mother that I wouldn't come up. I've broken my promise, of course; but for the sake of peace, I'd rather she didn't know. But if she asks you—tell her the truth. A man can't afford to have *too* many fibs on his conscience."

The next day at the first opportunity Edward, who had always spoken the truth to his mother, lied to her. He confessed to having broken the Dresden china urn. And after that things were better; but never the same. The confidence which Dear Mother had once had in her little boy had been badly shaken. There would always now be the unpleasant thought that since he was not naturally truthful he might be lying to her.

But she did not despair in the long run of winning him over to a love of truth for its own sake.

Wherefore at ten or eleven years of age there was probably not to be found in the whole of Westchester County a child more experienced and astute in formulating and speaking those untruths which tact, good manners and the fear of hurting other people's feelings demanded.

Edward Eaton had no especial gift for jealousy. But he could not help noticing that when anything really important was done for anybody it was al-

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ways for some female or other—for one of his sisters, or for one of his dear aunts, or for dearest grandmother.

“Men,” as Mrs. Eaton often said, “are selfish creatures and may be counted on to take care of themselves, but girls must be guarded against their own generous impulses and their genius for self-sacrifice.”

In the case of Edward's sisters this guarding must have been successfully performed at an extremely early age. For by the time that his first clear recollection of them begins, their generous impulses seem to have been pretty well immolated and their genius for self-sacrifice nipped in the bud.

They were comely girls, except during adolescence when, as was the custom at that time, they were encouraged to hang their heads and look ashamed of themselves, and they were able girls with their heads and hands. Months after the Eaton boys, including the youngest, had spent the last penny of their Christmas money, the Eaton girls still had funds tucked away in safe places. They were always saving up for something “really worth while.” In addition, whatever money Mr. and Mrs. Eaton were able to save was put aside for them.

“Give a boy a sound education, teach him the

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difference between right and wrong, give him a fair chance in life and let him stand on his own feet," Mrs. Eaton would say, "and you may feel that you have done your duty by him—your whole duty."

It was a principle with her. She would not have left her boys well off if she had been able to. They might have been tempted to lead idle lives of enjoyment.

Mrs. Eaton knew perfectly well just who was going to Heaven when they died and just who wasn't. It seemed sometimes as if the Lord God had made her His special deputy on earth to keep a precise watch upon her neighbors' chances and prospects.

That family of Ruggleses, for instance, who lived in the outskirts of New Rochelle, would find the going very different after their deaths. Unless for a wedding or a funeral, they were never known to step inside a church, and Mr. Ruggles was said to believe only that man was descended from an ape.

Once at dancing school the master caused Edward to waltz drunkenly with the Ruggles girl. She was named Alice and wore a velvet dress which was delicious to touch. She had slim black legs and tiny patent leather pumps with silver buckles. It was Edward who made her dancing

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look a little drunken. She was really a graceful child with a fine sense of rhythm.

While they staggered about the room, and Miss Bent thumped upon the piano, and Mr. Bent beat upon a xylophone, Alice teased Edward and shocked him and infatuated him.

"You're Doctor Eaton's little boy, aren't you?" Edward mumbled that he was. "Are you pious? Do you go to church every Sunday?"

"Twice."

"We never go. Father don't believe in it. And he says it's a horrible bore. Your brother John ran away from home and went to sea, didn't he? That's what I'd do if I was a preacher's son and they made me go to church."

"What do you do on Sunday?"

"Father's almost always home on Sunday. We go boating and fishing and play ball in the back yard. And at night he reads Walter Scott and Cooper out loud to us. Do you know what father believes? He believes that we were once monkeys and lived in trees."

"My mother says that people who don't keep the Sabbath will go to Hell when they die."

"Do you believe that?"

"Of course," said Edward.

"Shucks!" said Alice. "And anyway I'd rather go to Hell than play a harp, wouldn't you?"

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Edward recalled that he had once made an effort to play on dearest grandmother's harp, that had been hers when she was a girl, and had been rapped over the knuckles for touching it. He didn't know.

"Once upon a time," said Alice, "there were gods and goddesses who danced and sang and got drunk and played tricks on people and each other. But they're all dead, and my father says that the new God will die too."

"When?" asked Edward.

"Of course father don't know exactly. But he sees signs and gives Him about seventy-five or a hundred years. Then there'll be another new God, and perhaps He'll approve of everything that the one we've got now disapproves of."

Edward had been taught to believe that for saying less than Alice had said people were sometimes struck dead right where they stood, as a lesson for them and for other people. And he finished the number nervously. To have the girl you were dancing with hit by a bolt from the blue would be altogether too close for comfort.

If he had repeated any of his conversation with Alice to Mrs. Eaton he would not have been allowed to dance with her any more, and Mrs. Eaton might have taken steps to have her expelled from the dancing school. But Edward kept the

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conversation to himself, and he also kept to himself the fact that the mere touching of her velvet dress had caused him to like her better than any other girl he knew. It was a pity that she would have to go to Hell later on.

He longed to save her, and while he was in that spell the missionary which is in all of us was born, lived unpracticably, and died.

They met at dancing school, and at a class for wood carving and modeling in clay. Of all the children gathered together to be cultivated in the arts, Alice alone had talent. She sat next to Edward in the modeling class, and under her compulsion a lump of clay would actually get to looking like the head of a sheep or a dog without any intervention by the teacher. One day she made a thing that had a long tail and looked less like a man than a monkey. She said it was an ancestor, everybody's ancestor—Edward's and Edward's father's and mother's, and the ancestor of the people who invented Heaven and Hell. The teacher scolded Alice for making something that she had not been told to make, but he couldn't help laughing at what Alice had made. He kept it and had it baked and gave it to Alice's father.

Edward's infatuation grew. It is probable that little boys love as ardently as grown men. And in order to please her, he took risks of Hell and

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joked about going to church and the descent of man. Nothing terrible happened.

Birthdays, since they reflected glory on Mrs. Eaton who had done the bearing, were always celebrated at the Rectory. Each child had its especial friends to a spread of ice cream and cake, and when Edward's day came around he asked to have Alice and was surprised and delighted beyond measure when his mother gave her consent.

"The Christian atmosphere of this house," said Mrs. Eaton, "can't fail to impress her. And it may be, my little son, that you may be the instrument by which a brand is to be snatched from the burning."

In the years which had elapsed since that memorable day when brother John had *not* come from school, Ruth Eaton had graduated from school and grown up and was very busily engaged in annexing to herself a young man. He was a graduate of Harvard College, and he was one of America's first apostles of the outdoor sporting life.

Bruce Armitage had inherited an income of nearly a thousand dollars a month. In the days when a dollar could hold up its head and not only look like a dollar, but be a dollar, this was a large income. There were young men even then who had larger incomes, but there weren't many. And

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there was certainly not another within the periphery of Ruth Eaton.

Of idlers, of young men who did not work at anything, she had been taught to disapprove. Her mother disapproved of such men, and so did God. But Bruce Armitage was different. His income made the difference.

Between them, Mrs. Eaton and her daughter created a virtue out of no better material than Armitage's idleness itself. He had enough, more than enough. To work for more would be to show greed, one of the seven deadly sins, and would be to take money out of the way of someone who really needed it. Wherefore it was noble in young Armitage not to work, and to be contented with what he had.

Westchester was a small world in those days and everybody knew everybody.

Ruth and Armitage were first thrown together, literally thrown, at a coasting party. But they had met before, in a more formal fashion, and Ruth's comely, brightly colored face had made a deep impression upon the fortunate youth.

Edward remembered the night of the coasting party.

Young Mr. and Mrs. Warren, who were very rich and fond of outdoor life, had hitched a pony to their bobsled and driven about the neighbor-

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hood collecting neighbors and packing them on to the sled. When enough neighbors had been collected they would drive to a place called Prospect Hill and coast.

Laughing and shouting, and with room for just one more, this gay party had stopped in front of the rectory in the frosty moonlight, and young Armitage had run up to the door and called out that he couldn't come in because he was covered with snow, but that they were all going coasting to Prospect Hill, and couldn't Miss Ruth be persuaded to come along too?

Edward now learned for the first time that his mother had always rather believed in coasting as a wholesome outlet for youthful spirits. As a girl she herself had been something of a coaster.

Edward learned also that to his mother a little snow tracked into the house now and then was more of a joke than a crime.

No matter how much Armitage protested, Mrs. Eaton succeeded in bringing him into the library to wait while Ruth ran upstairs and put on her snow clothes. She made him stand close to the fire, and laughed as the snow melted from his boots and made pools of water on the rug.

With the exception of Mr. Eaton, who was at the church, and John, who was somewhere at sea, the entire family was present and took an immense

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liking to Armitage. His face was glowing and winning. He was at once embarrassed and natural.

Sarah even forgot that she was fourteen, and ashamed of it, and, when he spoke to her, lifted her fine eyes to his and smiled at him. Mark and James noted the cut of the young man's blue and white blanket clothes—an importation from the wilds of Canada—and envied him his coonskin hat with the coon's tail hanging down behind for a tassel.

But Edward, a close student of curious matters since the episode of the Dresden china urn, marveled less at Mr. Armitage and his outfit than at his own mother.

She looked positively amiable and sport-loving. You would have thought that she lived entirely, in a big, wholesome, understanding way, for the profit of young people, especially men. You would have thought that rugs damaged by snow water meant nothing in the even, generous tenor of her life.

“But Mr. Armitage, I assure you that it doesn't matter in the least. It doesn't matter *that*——” Here Mrs. Eaton actually and quite loudly snapped her thumb and forefinger. Edward had never seen her do this before. “First, last, and always youth must be served. I haven't raised six chil-

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dren without learning to look tracked snow in the face."

Then, five minutes having passed, Edward's dear sister Ruth, who usually spent an hour at the simplest toilette, could be heard coming down the hall stair, and appeared presently at the library door, completely dressed for coasting.

Today at a costume revue on Broadway not even Ruth's comely face could down the laugh which would be provoked by her coasting costume. Her waist, laced to the size of a wasp's, made her bust and hips look enormous. Her hat of black velvet and squirrel was pulled down over her forehead and was shaped like a dice box. And her bustle, no longer the threat of a schoolgirl, but the full-fledged bustle of a mature and fashionable woman, stuck out a foot and a half behind.

It is perhaps enough to know that to Bruce Armitage she looked graceful and beautiful. His heart turned over at the sight of her.

"That's the quickest change I ever heard of," he exclaimed.

"Life's too short to waste any of it on dressing," said Ruth. "Isn't that true, mother?"

Mother said that it was, and rising, and sailing awkwardly forward, she shoed the young people before her.

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"You mustn't waste another moment of this beautiful moonlight."

As Ruth and Armitage passed out of the rectory they were welcomed by shouts from the bobsled.

Then Mr. Warren, who drove, clucked to the pony. But the runners of the sled had stuck, so that when it did start forward it was with a violent jerk, and everybody nearly fell off backward.

Later, it seemed, everybody did fall off.

Prospect Hill that night was "fast" to begin with, and as sleds traveled down it, it got faster. There is a turn halfway down the hill, and Mr. Warren made a mistake in steering, and his whole party, locked tightly in each other's arms and legs, were thrown off sideways into soft snow.

Nobody was hurt except Ruth. And she told only Armitage that she was hurt.

"It's nothing," she said. "Just my back—just a little twist. Don't say a word to the others and spoil their fun."

And she wouldn't let him say a word to the others, and she went right on coasting down the hill and walking back up it as if nothing was the matter, and she laughed and shrieked just as the other women did, and was altogether brave and admirable.

But she allowed Armitage to gather that the

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little twist hurt her a good deal, and she allowed his admiration for her fortitude to grow as much as it wanted to. What he admired most was pluck—especially in a woman. This girl from the rectory certainly had it. She wasn't the kind who complains and lets her own grief spoil the joy of others.

On the way home she confessed to him that she could not have walked up that hill even one more time without screaming. Yes, the pain was pretty bad, but it would be all right in a day or two.

The very next day he called to see how she was. She made light of her twist, but she lay in a long chair with many cushions and begged him to excuse her for not rising to welcome him.

Somehow the young man, as innocent young men will, believed that the accident was all his fault.

"It wasn't your fault a bit," she said rather sharply, "and you know it. If you had been steering it wouldn't have happened."

Mrs. Eaton smiled upon the pair and left the room. And she took Edward with her, though he would have liked to stay, and saw no reason why he shouldn't. Just as Mrs. Eaton and Edward left the room, Ruth said:

"But I had a grand time, and this is nothing."

And Armitage said, with much concern in his

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voice: "Have you seen the doctor? Backs are serious."

Now backs *are* serious. And a young man cannot take unto himself any problem that is more serious. But in the hands of an able woman a twisted back is one of the most tremendous weapons in the world.

Edward soon perceived that when she wanted it to his sister's back hurt her and laid her down flat in the long chair with the cushions, and that when she didn't want it to hurt her it didn't. He perceived that it was an obstacle in the way of the things that she didn't want to do, but an obstacle which a little cheerful courage could always overcome in the case of things that she did want to do.

Bruce Armitage became a constant visitor at the rectory. He loved courage.

And he loved children, so that when he learned that Edward was to have a birthday party he announced that he proposed to be among those present, and upon the word *present* he laid a peculiar accent, and discovered a wink for Edward's benefit.

It was a wonderful present—a knife with a pearl handle and four blades. The knife itself was in a purse-like case of chamois. This was in a neat box of pasteboard, the box was wrapped in green paper held by an elastic, and this in turn was wrapped in a white paper tied with a red ribbon, and writ-

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ten on by the donor, "For Edward, with the affection of Bruce Armitage."

All the children and grown-ups had watched while Edward unwrapped the Armitage present. And when, having dropped the white paper on the floor, he dropped the green paper after it and began to fumble with the pasteboard box, some of them began to laugh, and some to cry out with excitement.

It was Edward's mother who picked up the piece of green paper and smoothed it out and said: "Oh, my little son—what riches!"

The piece of green paper was a ten-dollar bill. The knowledge excited Edward, but not so much as the discovery that the four blades of his knife were of Sheffield steel. He has three of them left—worn very slender with much sharpening. He does his nails with them to this day. But the real wonder was not in the knife or in the ten-dollar bill.

On this his eleventh birthday he had begged his mother for a knife, and she had said that he was too young to have one, that he was too young and unformed in character to be trusted with a sharp instrument of any kind.

Well, now here she was facing right about and saying that a knife was just what her little boy had always wanted, but it had taken Mr. Armitage,

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who always knew what everybody wanted, to think of it, and Edward must be a good boy and not cut himself. His mother's facing about in the matter of the knife and allowing him to keep it was the real wonder.

Then Alice Ruggles—"that agnostic's child"—put her pert face and voice into evidence and caused everybody to laugh by saying: "Say, Edward, what are you going to do with the ten?"

He did not know. He would have liked to put it in his pocket, but he handed it over instead to his Dear Mother for safe keeping.

Ruth had never been a child's child, and she had not grown up to be a child's woman. But on the present occasion, in spite of her "poor back," she laid herself out for the entertainment and amusement of Edward and his small guests.

In spite of her wasp waist and her fashionable bustle, she was a lovely creature to the eye, and seeing her among the children, gracious and full of fun, young Armitage's mind swam, and he thought of her as his wife, and of the children as their children. These thoughts made him very happy.

And when, the party not quite over, she suddenly confessed to him, her face adorably composed and courageous, that she had reached the end of her tether, that her "wretched back" was

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"really a little too much," all his sympathy, chivalry and love became hers.

The children were forming two and two for a march into the dining-room. There was ice cream yet to be eaten, and Edward's cake to be cut.

Ruth took a step toward the piano and made a slight grimace of pain, which caught her mother's all-seeing eye.

"Don't play them in, darling—if your back hurts you."

"But Mother Dear," exclaimed Ruth with the smile of a suffering angel, "how can the blessed little angels march without music?" And she seated herself at the piano and played a jolly little four-square march that put a sense of time even into the least musical pair of feet. Edward himself became transfigured.

Suffocated all this time with repressed love for Alice Ruggles and her black velvet dress, he suddenly threw his right arm around her waist, seized her right hand in his left, and polkaed her out of the library, across the hall and into the dining room . . . Ruth's fingers lingered on the keyboard, slipped off and dropped listlessly to her lap. She closed her eyes, and straightend her hurt back. She made a little frown of pain.

"You're going to think me an awful baby," she

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said, "but I'm not really up to waiting on them. Sarah will help mother."

"Won't you *please* lie down?" said Armitage.

"*Must* I?"

It was wonderful that she should leave the decision to him.

"*Please!*"

So she left the piano and lay down on the long chair with the cushions. "I know," she said, "that it's fashionable to have aches and pains, but this is my first and I don't quite know how to manage it."

"You know how to manage so that it doesn't spoil anybody else's fun. I think you're perfectly wonderful about it."

"I'm not," she said simply, and then:

"Edward will be disappointed if we don't have a piece of his cake."

"Like some ice cream too?"

"Just a spoonful."

Armitage smiled upon her and hurried to the dining room. He returned after a short interval with two helpings of ice cream and two slices of the birthday cake.

"Don't swallow recklessly," smiled Ruth. "There's a thimble somewhere in this cake, a ten cent piece, and a ring."

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A shout of laughter reached them from the dining room.

"*That*," said Armitage, "sounds as if somebody had drawn the thimble."

The next moment Ruth, crumpling the cake, had found the ring. Lovers make much of symbols.

"Do you," said Armitage, and his voice trembled a little, "believe in omens?"

Ruth's eyes, serious and inquiring, met his frankly. "Do *you*?" she asked.

"Oh, yes," he said, "I do! I—I have to."

He knelt suddenly and took her in his arms and began to kiss her rosy face.

At that moment an all-seeing pair of eyes set in a long horse face appeared in the doorway.

To Mrs. Eaton kissing among the unmarried was no less than a deadly sin. Were the heavens about to fall? No. Armitage found Ruth's lips—she had never been kissed before—at the same moment that Ruth found his.

And Mrs. Eaton merely waited until that long kiss was about half over. And then she smiled showing her whole shelf of projecting upper teeth, and—vanished.

Very young lovers also place reliance on symbols and omens.

Alice Ruggles' piece of cake had harbored the

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thimble, symbol of spinsterhood, and young Edward's heart had sunk to a very low position in his breast. The dime, indicative of riches, had fallen to his own lot, but there was no comfort in that. If Alice were never going to marry anybody, why, then, of course she was never going to marry him, and he felt very miserable about it. But she did her best to comfort him—and to shock him at the same time. She leaned close and whispered in his ear:

“My father says that marriage is all poppycock anyway.”

Oddly enough, at that very moment Alice's father arrived to fetch her home.

Edward, who had never seen him before, expected an abnormal, perhaps a monstrous parent, with a malicious and rather diabolic face, the laugh of an ogre and a loud assertive voice. But Ruggles was unimpeachably quiet and easy. He was not even big. It was not possible to believe that the smooth, untroubled forehead concealed so many sardonic and outrageous thoughts.

One saw before one a man who by not believing in God had defied Him, who by not attending church had defied Edward's own father, who believed man to be only a superior monkey, who would go to Hell when he died and burn in ever-

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lasting fire, and to whose arms his little daughter now flew with a cry of love and delight.

No child of Mrs. Eaton's would ever have been permitted to fly at a parent like that. And this knowledge brought Edward to the conclusion that real goodness is inseparable from offishness and condescension. Whereas there seemed to be something in the wickedness of Ruggles and the inherited wickedness of his little daughter which permitted them to love each other without reticence, and to converse together like two rational human beings of the same age.

Edward accompanied them to the door.

"I've had a dandy time," said Alice. She turned upward to her father a pair of brilliant dark eyes, swimming with affection. "Did you know I got the thimble, daddy? But what do I care if I don't get married in a million years, so long as I've got you?"

Mr. Ruggles' eyes twinkled and narrowed so that crows' feet appeared at the outer corners of them.

"When we get home," he said, "we'll file off the top of your thimble and what you'll have left will be a ring—if that's what you want."

At the next dancing class, Alice, when she perceived Edward, swept down upon him, dancing as she went and holding her hands behind her back.

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"I got thinking of you," she said demurely, "and I decided that I would not be an old maid after all. Look!" She showed him her hand. On the little finger of the left hand was a broad silver ring. "Father," she said, "made it out of the thimble." She laughed and added: "He said that it was probably the first time in history that anybody had ever been clever enough to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear."

II

IN ALL the years which had passed since the famous day when brother John had not come home from school, brother John had never come home at all. He wrote often, in a strangely mature, far-off way, but the various ships in which he lived and labored were far-off ships, which carried the Stars and Stripes into far-off spicy seas. When it became possible he left the navy and shipped on a merchantman.

The navy, he wrote, was not a career. To begin with, it wasn't a navy, just the same old square-riggers left over from the Civil War. He had hoped to find a ship which was bound for New York, but he had fallen in with a skipper who was bound the other way who had offered to make a second mate of him . . .

It was fine that Ruth was going to be married—it didn't matter about there being so much money—if only Armitage was a straight, honest young fellow.

Please give his best regards to the young couple. He was sending Ruth a Philippine shawl.

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"No, Dear Mother," he wrote, "I *don't*. You have asked the question a good many times and I've ducked out of answering. But I'll answer now. I don't go to church. We had services in the navy and of course I attended. But in the merchant marine it's different. Some men read their Bibles and some don't. I don't read mine, first because I haven't got one and second because I was brought up in such a way that I know the Good Book inside out and I remember that nearly every statement in it contradicts some other statement . . . Shore leave is short, and the best thing that a sailor boy can do is to make it sweet—music and singing, and color, and pretty girls to dance with—sweet and not wicked . . .

"No. I am not glad that Mark is going into the church. I used to know Mark pretty well and he didn't seem to be cut out for that kind of a career. Is it his own irrevocable decision, or has somebody been telling him what he 'ought' to do and what he 'wants' to do until, well, he's decided to fire ahead, no matter what the consequence to him, so as not to give pain and disappointment to others?"

It was true that Mark, constantly worked upon since John's running away, and all his powers of individuality and self-determination and resistance worn down by Dear Mother's well known and un-

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relenting ways of bringing pressure to bear, had determined to be a minister of the Lord and to preach His gospel. He was to start work at a divinity school in the autumn and in the meanwhile his school days had come to a creditable ending. In June Ruth had been married and had sailed for Europe, and he had had the whole summer in which to consider his fate and to wriggle out of it if he could.

The girls' room, the second best room in the house, had been made over for him. Dear Mother had put a very large Bible on the table at the head of his bed, and over the bed itself had hung a cross of palm leaves. She had filled a whole bookcase with volumes of sermons and religious poetry. He had a writing table and a reading lamp, and there was an order that when Mr. Mark had shut himself into his room he was not to be disturbed.

Nevertheless, Mrs. Eaton kept an all-seeing eye upon the future clergyman's comings and goings and his deportment in general.

He was very acquiescent. Resistance, he felt, had got him nowhere and it never would. He was fond of violent exercise, of profuse sweatings and cold plunges, but his Dear Mother believed that violence except in the reproof of sinners and in the spreading of the Christian system had no place in the life of one dedicated to the service of God.

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Mrs. Eaton, being a mid-Victorian, had read many books which described clerical life in England and as exercise for her boy she was inclined to believe in long solitary walks. Young Englishmen, preparing for the clergy, often "did the Continent" on foot, carrying "their things" upon their backs in knapsacks. For Mark's sake she actually found herself wishing that the Continent was just a little more accessible to Bartow-on-the-Sound.

For a little while Mark Eaton enjoyed the distinction of having the second best room in the house, and being set a little apart as one whose clay was going to be turned into something rather superior to the clay of which the ordinary people are made; but the restraints and restrictions soon made a havoc of his nervous system, and when he shut himself up in his fine room it was less often to improve his understanding of religion than to sulk and bemoan his fate.

One night, immediately after dinner, when he had thus retired to sulk, he was presently aware of a knocking on his door, and of his father's voice asking permission to enter.

"Hope I'm not interrupting anything important, Mark," said the Reverend Mr. Eaton, "but I've been thinking that you haven't been quite yourself lately and—well, the truth is I haven't been quite

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myself lately . . . It's rather peaceful up here, isn't it?"

Mark was fond of his father and was without any particular awe of him. Father never nagged a fellow or preached at him.

"Your mother," said the Reverend Mr. Eaton, "said that if you were working I mustn't interrupt you."

"I'm not," said Mark hastily. "I don't come up here to work, anyway. Take this chair. It's the best I've got."

"Thanks," said Mr. Eaton, and he seated himself in a leisurely way, and at the same time he nodded in his son's direction a couple of times and smiled mischievously. "I've sometimes pretended that I was working behind closed doors, just so as to be let alone . . . I've nibbled through a good many novels that way . . . Do you know, there's one thing I hold in common with the Catholics, and that's confession—owning up. Now, I can't very well go to a priest, but I might very well go to a son of my own who was going to be a preacher and own up to something that for the present I'd rather that nobody else should know."

Mark felt at once flattered and puzzled.

"It's about your brother John," said the Reverend Mr. Eaton. "Do you remember the day he didn't come home and I posted off to find him?"

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"And you found him just after he had enlisted in the navy and it was too late?"

Mr. Eaton shook his head. "No," he said, "and this is where my confession comes in. I found him just *before* he enlisted in the navy and *I didn't stop him*. I didn't try to stop him. I encouraged him."

There was quite a long silence. Finally Mark said: "I guess you know what I think about it?"

"I'd like to be sure."

"I think you were the best friend to John that he ever had."

Mr. Eaton sighed and then laughed. "But your mother wouldn't think so, would she? And so I didn't tell her . . . Mark, I didn't dare tell her."

"I'm glad you told me."

"I'm going to tell you something else if you don't mind. Perhaps it's more serious, perhaps not . . . Mark, I don't like being a preacher. I never wanted to be one. I was hounded into it by my mother. I have never liked being one. I do my best to escape my own charges of hypocrisy, but if I only teach the things that I myself believe, the pickings are so small that without repetition and redundancy I can't for the life of me compose a thirty minute sermon . . . I came to tell you this, and ask you if your heart is really set on your being a preacher."

"Father," said Mark with feeling, "if you don't

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know that I'm being hounded into the thing just the way you were then you're blind."

"I'm not," said his father. "I know. But I thought it polite to ask."

"I'm no more fitted to be a preacher," said Mark, "than young Edward is fitted to train lions. And I no more want to be a saint than I want to be a devil."

"What do you want to be?"

"A farmer." A look of real surprise came into Mr. Eaton's face. Mark laughed. "I mentioned it to mother once, years ago. She didn't like the idea. She didn't think that it was 'quite nice' for a clergyman's son to go into farming. So I never said anything more about it—just for the sake of peace . . . If I had a choice I'd go West and farm. But mother is set on this church business, and you know how she is."

"For the sake of an argument," said the Reverend Mr. Eaton, "I will admit that I do. And I know that when an irresistible force bumps up against a mere man . . . But don't let us discuss your mother . . . She doesn't interfere much with John."

The poison slowly settled into Mark's mind.

"No," he said, "not with John . . . He is too far off."

"Exactly," said Mr. Eaton. He rose and

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stretched himself. "Do you know, there is a very interesting history of Westchester County in the library. It's in two long volumes, and it's pompous. But it's worth skimming. If I had the time and opportunity I'd put a knapsack on my back and go for a six weeks' walking tour. I'd look the County over from one end to the other . . . There's a lot of beautiful farming country here and there . . . Now I don't want to suggest anything, but as a matter of fact your mother strongly approves of pedestrianism for the righteous . . ."

"Wait a minute, father. You know how mother is; if I refuse to go to the church I can't hang around here afterward. Oh, I don't know why I should be afraid of my own mother! But you know how she is."

"There was a notion in the minds of the wise men who founded this nation," said the Reverend Mr. Eaton, "that every man has in the last analysis a duty to himself. They thought that every man is entitled to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

"But isn't a child's first duty to his parents, father?"

"Yes," said the Reverend Mr. Eaton, "of course it is, but only in the case of a child that deliberately asked to be born." Mark breathed deeply. "And in the case of my own children, I don't recall that

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any one of them had anything to say in the matter."

Edward recalls that on a certain night his father went upstairs to see his brother Mark, and that they came downstairs together, looking very cheerful, and that they went to one of the bookcases and pulled therefrom a couple of heavy volumes. He recalls that Dear Mother looked up from a tablecloth already heavy with violently colored pansies and morning glories and asked what book they were looking at, and that his father answered:

"It's the County history. There is an interesting account of the founding of St. Peter's Church in Westchester. Mark thinks that he would like to look it over."

Edward recalls that a day or two later Mark remarked across the breakfast table that if he only owned a saddle horse he would like to ride all over Westchester County, visiting the different points of interest, and writing down his impressions in a book. At the mention of the saddle horse, Dear Mother snorted and told Mark that he was a lazy fellow.

"The best way to travel," she said, "is on foot, unless the distances are prohibitive. In that way one sees much more than one would ever see from the back of a horse."

With the precedents of all those dear young English clergymen who tramped the Continent ever

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in mind, Mrs. Eaton was not long in determining that Mark should go for a tour of Westchester County whether he very much wanted to or not.

And one morning with a knapsack containing a change of clothes, and a small sum of money in his pocket, Mark actually set out. He seemed a little reluctant—rather as one who is going upon a long and perhaps a dangerous journey than as one who is merely off for a short and quiet lark.

It was noticed that he ate little breakfast. He seemed to have difficulty in swallowing. And when he actually set out it was suddenly. He jumped suddenly to his feet and said, "Well, Dear Mother, I'm off," kissed her swiftly, and with an awkward wave of the hand for the rest of the assembled family, went hurriedly out of the house.

Edward went with him to the gate and a little beyond. Here a strange thing happened. Mark stopped short and said:

"Don't come any farther, Eddie. I'm going to cut loose from here on and walk like Hail Columbia."

Then suddenly Mark lifted Edward in his arms and gave him a great bear hug and kissed him on both cheeks. Then he turned and made off with very long swift strides and his head very high in the air.

Twice Mark sent brief words concerning his

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progress and his whereabouts. Then there came a long letter for Dear Mother which sent her into a cold and merciless rage with everyone, and Edward gathered that brother Mark was a scapegrace, unfilial son, who had broken Dear Mother's heart and gone West to be a farmer. He had, it seemed, written that under modern conditions it was impracticable to walk in the steps of Christ. And that a man ought not preach what a man wasn't willing to do. He believed that the next best thing to helping people to be good was to help feed them. He had always, ever since he was a little boy, wanted to be a farmer, and to make a long story short he had answered an advertisement, and there was no time to consult anybody, it was a case of jumping at what looked like a golden opportunity or missing it, and he had jumped. Dear Mother would be disappointed and he was afraid she would be angry. He was sorry. He had to be what he was fitted to be, and not what somebody else thought he ought to be fitted to be.

The Reverend Mr. Eaton may or may not have been shocked by Mark's letter. But he bore up surprisingly well. It tickled his pride to know that he had sons who were willing to adventure greatly. He believed them to be good boys at heart and morally sound . . . But he wasn't sure of James.

Neither was Mrs. Eaton. She had never, for

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instance, looked at James and sighed and hoped that he would one day hear the call of the church. She made allowances for James which she never made for the other boys. If it looked as if some little domestic crime were about to be traced to James, further inquiries were usually suspended. That he might ever have been hounded into such an affair as that of the Dresden china urn was unthinkable.

If James had expressed the wish to become a sailor or a farmer he would have been listened to with toleration and even respect. But James had no particular wish to become anything or anyone in particular. At school he had a number of intimates but was not generally liked. He and his intimates thought a good deal about clothes and appearances. With regards to the ordinary school-boy sports they affected a certain cynicism. Their conversation was largely given to grown-up topics. They took a precocious interest in sex. If their humor had been original it would have been Rabelaisian.

But Mrs. Eaton, who of course did not know the whole of James' shortcomings, made much of him, and so far as it was possible for a disciplinarian of her egotism, spoiled him. The secret was not hard to come at. James was in no way effeminate, but being a sensualist in the making, he was

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not without feminine qualities. He loved clothes and took note of them, and could describe them afterwards. He loved textures and colors and music. He was more popular with girls at dancing school than with the boys at Mr. Harrington's.

He had a very easy, knowing way of dancing. And he could whisper things to his partners that made them blush and giggle without offending them. In those old days the thought of kissing a girl was shameful to the average schoolboy, but to James it was a pleasant thought. A good deal of the time he imagined himself to be in love.

Thus, if there were to be another clergyman in the family it would have to be Edward. And toward that end Mrs. Eaton began to bring pressure to bear upon him. This pressure at first consisted in mournful and reproachful references to the cruel and undutiful conduct of John and Mark. Ought a mother, such a good mother as everybody said she was, and as indeed she acknowledged herself to be, to have all her pains and sacrifices go for nothing merely because her children did not know what was best for them?

In telling of her pains and sacrifices she became almost confidential. And this change in her attitude flattered the little boy and made him anxious to please.

For a time the strong mind gained an ascendancy

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over Edward. He began to imagine himself a clergyman. The authority exercised by his father over the choir, the gentlemen who passed the plate and the congregation in general, appealed to Edward. It would be pleasant, he thought, to give out a text and lay down the law, and to be for such long stretches of time the most conspicuous figure among many. And so it will be seen that the call of the church to Edward was by no means spiritual.

He wished to be a clergyman presiding over a church in the same way that he wished to be a drum-major leading a band, or a conductor managing a train.

Then one day he got hold of Paul Du Chaillu's first African book, and thereafter a real and desperate longing took root in his breast. There was still a lordship and a dominion in the longing. Hordes of naked savages would follow him about like so many puppy dogs, and they would love him as children love a kind and indulgent father. Of course, his authority over them would be absolute, but he would always have their welfare at heart and it would be at once their privilege and their passion to obey. They would follow him upon mighty explorations through forests where the sun never shone, they would be in with him at the death of strange and mighty beasts.

But how was a little boy to make a start at ex-

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ploring and big-game hunting when his Dear Mother had decided that it was best for him to enter the church and preach sermons and take up collections? And when she told visitors that she believed it more than likely that one day her "Darling Edward" would go into the church—"he is curiously spiritual for a child"—what could her Darling Edward say or do?

It was never wise to make an issue of anything with Dear Mother. If he told her point-blank—and especially before visitors—that he was now bent on being an explorer and going about armed to the teeth, and no longer cared a fig for vestments or rituals and the saving of people's souls, there would be an awful row. It was best to let her think what she liked to think and to keep the knowledge that her thoughts were running on the wrong track entirely to himself. That way lay peace, and endless opportunities to peruse the African book, which he had had the cleverness to hide in a little attic over an outhouse.

But one day Dear Mother wanted to know why Edward was always disappearing into the said outhouse and remaining so long hidden therein.

She feared that he might be up to some mischief, and she let him see that it was her intention some fine day to pay him a sudden and unsuspected visit and see for herself.

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And so she did.

She climbed the attic stair so quickly that Edward didn't hear her, and what she saw delighted her so that she withdrew her face and presence without saying a word.

The little hypocrite had made an altar of a soap box, and on the wall above it he had hung two sticks of wood nailed in the form of a cross, and, prayer book in hand, and murmuring the words very softly, he was conducting a church service.

Edward had no notion that he was committing a sacrilege. He only knew that in order to keep the peace with a mother like his mother, a little boy cannot afford to stop at anything.

An event was the return of the Armitages from their honeymoon in Europe. Bruce was his old natural self, but somehow he seemed to be a less important and gilded personage than formerly. Ruth was the important member of the union. Her body had gained weight and her voice had gained authority. The fact that she was a married woman seemed more important to her than the characteristics and character of the particular man she happened to have married. Almost any man of twenty-seven with ten thousand a year would have done as well.

Well, it seemed that the plans for the future

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with which the hopeful young people had returned from Europe were altogether different from the plans with which they had gone abroad. These old discarded plans had been of Bruce's conception. And the fact that up to the day of her marriage and for a few weeks thereafter Ruth had seemed to approve of them with enthusiasm did not mean that she had ever intended to help him carry them out.

It will be remembered that Bruce had married Ruth for the following reasons: First, because he loved her. Second, because he loved children and thought that she did. Third, because he loved to live in the country and thought that she did; and fourth, fifth and sixth, because he loved her. It will be remembered also that he had been born with a silver spoon in his mouth and that he had no sympathy with men who slave for money when already they have enough.

A few months of marriage and Europe had wrought mighty and revolutionary changes.

But to listen to Ruth you would have thought that she had had less than nothing to do with them.

The very night of their arrival she flung across the dinner table an astonished:

"Oh, but Mother Dear, we are *not* going to live in Westchester! *Surely* I wrote you that Bruce

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had changed his mind about *that!* We are going to have a little house on Fifteenth Street and Bruce is going to read law. He feels that he would be ashamed to vegetate in the country and live on his income. The city has its disadvantages, but I don't feel that a woman's innate dislike of dust, hard sidewalks and crowds should ever be allowed to interfere with her husband's career. Personally I think only that my husband is ambitious and not content to be an idler, and I rejoice at it. . . . At least we shall be away from the mud in the spring break-up."

It was not at once easy to think of Bruce Armitage in any sympathetic relationship with city sidewalks and the study of the law. But Mrs. Eaton beamed, with her shelf of upper teeth in the middle of the beaming, and swelled like a pigeon. If there had been a battle between the young people, Ruth had won, as women, especially Mrs. Eaton's daughters, should and would. A young man, full of life and good nature, was being forced to live a life that he did not wish to live, and to learn and thereafter practise a profession for which he was unsuited and in which he never could take much interest. There was a triumph for you! And after such a short while of being married, too! What a splendid thing for Armitage's character!

At the news that the Armitages were to live in

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the city, the Reverend Mr. Eaton had smiled nervously, to hide a sudden and painful contraction in the region of his heart. Beginning with his own, he had seen so many decent men's lives spoiled by their women, and other lives, like those of his two runaway boys, which had been horribly threatened. It was too bad! "I never could quite understand," he said feebly, "why a man who has sufficient money should want to live in the city and work for more."

"That is a fine doctrine to preach in the presence of unformed boys!" exclaimed Mrs. Eaton. "Work is as necessary for a man as brushing his teeth. A man who does not work can hardly be said to be clean. Idle hands get into mischief."

But Armitage did not look troubled or put upon. He seemed to be very happy and very much in love. His eyes constantly came to rest on Ruth's comely face. It was obvious that until his love for her cooled he would not know what was being done to him.

During dinner Ruth did most of the talking. She talked about picture galleries and palaces. They had seen Queen Victoria—"not a beauty, Dear Mother, but every inch a Queen." What a pity Albert had died! No really nice people in London ever mentioned the Prince of Wales. How

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terrible to think that such parents should have such a child! . . .

"Poor dear Bruce," she said. "Switzerland was such a disappointment to him. And he was a lamb about it. We had counted on doing the Mer de Glace and Mont Blanc—and crack went my wretched back so that the least little uphill work was too much for me. . . . Bruce made me go to a great specialist in Lausanne—such a dear, wise man—Doctor Schminnelpfenning. He said that a woman's back is one of the greatest mysteries of creation—one of the most delicate and subtle of all mechanisms. . . . But it was very disappointing—very. He said that there was nothing to be done . . . I'll always have it—the trouble, I mean. It may not come on me for months at a time—or I might have a crick in the next five minutes . . . The maddening thing is that it is not really serious—just painful and upsetting. But Bruce and I are not going to let it make any difference in our lives, are we?"

"Of course not," said Bruce with loyal adoration. "But it kills me to see her suffer."

"When I have an attack," said Ruth, "Bruce is so gentle that you might think I was a basket of eggs."

"In Rome," said Bruce, "she fainted dead away!"

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"I'll never forget," said Ruth. "When I was better Bruce rushed right out of the hotel and came back with this wonderful Roman gold necklace that I am wearing tonight."

"Whenever we went anywhere," said Bruce, "you should have seen the way people looked at Ruth. I picked up enough French and Italian to know what they were saying. They'd say: 'Look! Look! The beautiful American.'"

"*Silly!*" said Ruth. But in her heart she was pleased that of a thousand memories her husband should have picked upon this particular one for exploitation.

Ruth laid down the law about Europe, its manners, customs and arts, and her mother agreed with her on every point.

As for the Reverend Mr. Eaton, he did not follow the conversation any further than the subject of Ruth's back. His reflections on this subject were rather those of a cynical philosopher than of an agitated parent.

Frankly, he did not believe in Ruth's back. He doubted if these mysterious attacks would ever interfere with anything which she herself wanted particularly to do. He had known wives who had controlled husbands by headaches and spells of dizziness. By his readings he judged that not fifty years had passed since in England women had

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been in the habit of swooning at the slightest difference of opinion.

The newlyweds remained at the rectory for a number of days. All Westchester called and was called upon.

One day the Ruggles family called—Mr. and Mrs. Ruggles and Alice. It was an unexpected call. If Mrs. Eaton had been prepared it is possible that she would have sent the servant with the message that "the ladies were not at home." But she was caught halfway down the front stairs. The Ruggleses could see her through the front doorway, and Mrs. Ruggles, who was an impulsive and affectionate little creature, called out: "How do you do, Mrs. Eaton!"

Mrs. Eaton was obliged to descend the remaining stairs, to invite the Ruggleses into the parlor, and to admit that she did very well.

Ruth sent word that she would be down presently; Edward, learning that Alice was in the house, felt his heart give a great thump and made a shy advance upon the parlor from the kitchen end of the house.

Tea was served; Mr. Eaton and Bruce came in from the study accompanied by a vague smell of pipe smoke. Alice and Edward were given a large piece of cake apiece, and retired to a far corner to eat it, to whisper and giggle and to listen to

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what their elders and betters had to say and to giggle still more.

Mrs. Eaton was on her mettle. There were atheists in the house, and people who believed in the descent or ascent of man from a monkey. Obviously such beliefs were no fault of Mrs. Ruggles. You could always look for a man at the bottom of blasphemy and free thinking. For Mrs. Ruggles, therefore, Mrs. Eaton had something the attitude which a condescending but sympathetic woman might have for a delicate sister woman who through no fault of her own was constantly exposed to contagious and fatal fevers.

Toward Mr. Ruggles she affected an air of complacent pity.

"Yes," she said, "it is a sweet old house. What I chiefly love about it is the sense of peace and security which it gives me. Many wise and godly men and women have lived in this house and left a certain something of their own righteousness and strong Christianity. Nothing so unites a family as a common belief—faith."

Even Mrs. Eaton felt that what she had said was a little forced and at the same time a little mixed. There was a short silence, which Mr. Ruggles broke with a most innocent expression on his face.

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"What," he said, "do you hear from John—and—er—Mark?"

Mrs. Eaton could have killed him. Mr. Ruggles might with no less insult have said, "If your family is as united as all that, why did the two older boys run away?"

"They are well," said Mrs. Eaton solidly. "We are looking forward to seeing them in the holidays."

This was Mr. Eaton's opportunity to make a fool of himself.

"You don't mean it!" he said excitedly. "You have had letters?"

Mrs. Eaton gave him a look which froze his marrow. "Yes," she said, "I have had letters."

Meanwhile the children in the far corner were taking stock of all that had happened since their last meeting.

"Is it true," said Alice, "that you are going to be a clergyman like your father?"

"So mother says."

"But when the time comes you'll run away like your brother did?"

Edward wriggled uncomfortably.

"Promise you will and maybe I'll run away with you."

"You *wouldn't!*"

"*Dare* me?"

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Edward nodded.

"Then I will," said Alice. "We'll go to the South Seas."

"Why?" asked Edward.

Alice quoted from a more famous Alice. "'Why not?'" she said.

This floored Edward completely and also delighted him so that he burst out laughing and received a reproving glance from his mother.

She had interrupted the conversation in which she was engaged, signaling peremptorily for silence in order that the reproving glance might be the more telling. She turned to Mr. Ruggles and said with a certain reproachfulness:

"At least, Mr. Ruggles, you will agree with me that some of the old sayings still hold water; as for instance, 'Little children should be seen and not heard.'"

"Bless me," said Mr. Ruggles—the agnostic—"I don't know which I'd rather give up—looking at the children or listening to them. I like to do both."

"Our children," said Mrs. Eaton, "will have to take up the burden of civilization where we leave off. That is where good training will tell."

"Don't you think it is a pity, Mrs. Eaton, that we should have allowed civilization to become such a burden? We have been reading Herman Mel-

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ville's 'Typee' out loud. It's all about the South Sea Islands. The people in those islands eat and swim and laugh and wear garlands of flowers. They are very sweet-natured. I find myself envying them. Out of such civilization as they have they have made a game."

"They live in darkness," said Mrs. Eaton, "except such as have been converted."

"But it wouldn't seem dark," said Mr. Ruggles, "if one didn't know that it was dark, would it, Mrs. Eaton?"

"I don't know what you mean, Mr. Ruggles, unless you mean that ignorance is bliss."

"I think that is just what I do mean, Mrs. Eaton. Yes, that is just what I do mean. And I go a step further. I believe that where ignorance is bliss it is folly to be wise."

"I shan't argue with you, Mr. Ruggles. I see that you are far better used to sophistry and hair-splitting than I am. I am an old-fashioned woman. And I daily thank God that this should be so."

Meanwhile Alice in the far corner: ". . . And you pick your bread and meat off the trees and when you bathe you simply go and stand under a waterfall, and if you've got an almanac with you and can predict an eclipse of the sun or of the moon they all beat their heads on the ground and make you king . . . But I'd be the queen."

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Edward: "How'd we get there?"

Alice: "In a boat, silly. They're islands."

Edward: "My brother John has been to some of them. He says in some places the mosquitoes are worse than in Westchester. And he says the natives are dying off from drinking whisky and smallpox."

Alice: "I know that, but that isn't everywhere. That's only in the islands where they've taught them to be Christians. Father says that drunkenness and disease follow the Cross . . . How do you suppose we would like it if they came over here and beat their religion into us?"

Edward: "I could stand it all right. But . . ."

Here the two children glanced at Mrs. Eaton. A thought had struck them in common. The notion of Mrs. Eaton's being converted to some other religion than her own by a sudden rush of naked savages was rather appalling. Alice giggled.

Edward: "Is it true that they eat people?"

Alice: "Some of them do sometimes. But we wouldn't go to those islands. They call it Long Pig. When there are too many babies they bury them alive."

Edward: "Last year when there was so many tent caterpillars mother burned whole nests of them with a torch. She said she'd teach them."

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Alice: "Probably that's just what they say to the babies."

Among their elders, and in some instances perhaps better, the brunt of the conversation had fallen upon Mrs. Eaton and Mr. Ruggles. Mr. Ruggles being always plausible and amiable, it would have been difficult for anyone less opinionated and belligerent than Mrs. Eaton herself to have conversed with him for five minutes without agreeing with everything he said. Neither Mr. Eaton nor Bruce Armitage cared to agree with Mr. Ruggles or appear to approve of him in Mrs. Eaton's presence. The consequences, after Mr. Ruggles's departure, would have been disagreeable. Ruth did not wish to exert herself for the benefit of persons whom she considered her social inferiors, and nothing was expected of persons so young as James and Sarah.

James pretended to himself that he was watching a game of tennis. When his mother spoke he looked at her as if she were the player who had just struck the ball, and when Mr. Ruggles spoke James looked at him in the same way. At a rapid interchange his head got to swinging so fast that Sarah, who had been watching him for some time, snickered and was promptly reprovved by Mrs. Eaton.

"It's James, mother," whispered Ruth. "He

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can't keep his head still. He keeps wagging it."

Not wishing to scold her favorite, Mrs. Eaton suggested that the children go outside and play.

James jumped to his feet and crossed the room to where Edward and Alice were sitting.

"Hello, Alice," said he. "We haven't shaken hands yet . . . Come along out . . . I'll show you some baby rabbits . . ."

Then James, always sophisticated and at his ease, pulled Alice's hand through his arm and, followed by Edward and Sarah, marched gaily from the room.

During the next half-hour Edward experienced his first symptoms of jealousy. James, perhaps because he wished to tease Edward, perhaps because he had been suddenly attracted by the child's prettiness, took entire charge of Alice and proceeded to ingratiate himself with her. He treated her as if she had been grown up. He said he liked the way she did her hair and said that he couldn't make out if her eyes were blue-black or purple. Anyway, she could go around telling herself that nobody else had a pair like them. Did she really want to see the baby rabbits? Well, they lived in a hole back of the big oak tree. They were wild rabbits, only they weren't wild.

James dipped his hand into the hole and pulled out the three baby rabbits by their ears. Alice

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hugged them, and laughed at their frightened eyes, and felt their hearts beat. When the rabbits had been returned to their nest, James suggested a game of hide and seek in the dusk.

"I'll count out," he said, "and see who's it."

Pointing rapidly to each of the children in succession, he repeated the old counting-out verse:

" 'Intry, mintry, cutry, corn,
Apple seed and apple thorn,
Wire, Briar, Limber, Lock,
Three geese in a flock.
One flew east and one flew west
And one flew over the cuckoo's nest.' "

Sarah was *the*—Alice was *cuckoo's*, and Edward was *nest*. Edward was therefore It. He was stood with his face to the big oak tree, and put upon his honor to keep his eyes shut until he had counted a hundred.

At the first count Sarah fled in one direction and James and Alice in another.

It took the little boy a long time to count an honorable hundred, and when he had finished, the dusky woods back of the rectory were empty and silent. Edward ran hopefully to the nearest tree and looked behind it. Then he ran to the next tree.

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He hunted everywhere. Twenty minutes passed. Once he thought that he heard James and Alice giggling at him. His heart grew heavy and bitter. It wasn't fair to leave him all alone like that and to hide where you couldn't be found. You were supposed to hide in easy places so that one person wouldn't have to be it *all* the time.

Then Ruth appeared at the back door and called, "Where's Alice, Eddie?"

"I don't know," he shouted back in a mournful voice. "Why?"

"They're going home."

At that, from almost directly above Edward's head there was a sound of giggling. Then James dropped lightly to the ground from the lower limbs of a tree and turning caught Alice in his arms as she half slid and half dropped. He held her there a moment with her feet clear of the ground.

"Give us a kiss," he said, "and I'll put you down."

Alice laughed and kissed him. And Edward's heart became very heavy in his breast.

But there were some things that Mrs. Eaton couldn't do to her boys. She couldn't keep them from growing up. And she couldn't keep the two who had run away from home from getting on in the world. This was a terrible cross to her. When John had gone to sea she had made dire prophe-

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cies. He would come home like a whipped dog with its tail between its legs and he would think that home was a pretty good place and Dear Mother a very wise woman, and he would be very happy to do exactly as he was told. But nothing like this had happened. And when John did finally come home he was the first mate of a fine three-master, and in love with the sea.

Edward had just passed his thirteenth birthday at the time of John's visit. He had a pimple on his chin and his voice was suffering from tremendous ups and downs. And except for the servants he was alone in the house. James and Sarah were on a visit to dearest grandmother, and Mr. and Mrs. Eaton had driven off in the carriage to condole with some parents who had just lost an imbecile child.

Edward was happiest when he had the house to himself. He had been getting along pretty well with Dear Mother, thanks to a highly developed system of lying and hypocrisy, but Sarah, who knew too much about him and was constantly threatening to tell, made his life miserable. James also chose to be rather horrid to his little brother, snubbing him and sneering at him, and for James, Edward entertained a scantily veiled hatred and contempt, not unmixed with fear. Though James was nineteen and occasionally talked of what he

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was going to do and be, it was obvious that he had no ambition to do anything worth while or to be anything except what he was. He came and went almost without question and Mrs. Eaton managed somehow or other to keep him fairly well supplied with money. He danced well and was a great ladies' man. Men did not like him.

Mrs. Eaton possessed a thick "Family Medicine" which the children were forbidden to look at, and into which Edward during his mother's absences had managed to read as far as those diseases which begin with an *M*. At the time of John's visit he had dug this book out of the lower drawer in which Dear Mother kept it hidden and had taken it down to the library, where the sitting was more comfortable than in Dear Mother's room; and he had read as far as, "*Mumps*—First symptoms of," when suddenly he heard the front door pushed boldly open and a strong merry voice that shouted, "Ship ahoy—ship ahoy!"

Seven years had passed since Edward had seen his big brother. But he had not a moment's doubt as to the owner of that voice. He was a loving child, and as he rushed out into the hall shouting, "John! John!" his heart throbbed wildly.

"My Lord, how you've grown!" exclaimed John.

First he hugged Edward to his breast and then

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he held him at arm's length and turned him this way and that.

"You're going to be a bigger man than I am," said John. "Let me feel your chest. It's like a young nail keg . . . Feel the boy's biceps once, will you!"

There was a short silence, during which the two brothers stared affectionately into each other's eyes.

John wore a close-cropped black beard and mustache. His hair was no longer parted in the middle but brushed back in a rough wave with curling tendencies. His eyes glistened, and he was deeply moved.

"But Eddie," he said presently, "what's all this I hear about you? Is it true? Mother writes that you are determined to go into the church when you grow up."

In answering, Edward's chief trouble was with his voice. It kept sinking suddenly to untried depths and rising toward unattainable heights. But he managed to say:

"Mother wants me to, John. She's dead set on it. But I don't want to, and when the time comes I'll get out of it. No use telling her I won't *now*. You know mother."

John sighed. And he understood perfectly.

"But where is everybody?"

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Edward told him. Mother and father would be back before long. James and Sarah weren't expected until tomorrow. Sometimes Bruce and Ruth came up for Sunday, but not so often as formerly. Ruth didn't like the country.

John knew that. He had called on Ruth and the new brother on his way home. Ruth had patronized him. She had not seemed to think that a brother in the merchant marine was much of a social asset. But Bruce had been fine. Pity to coop a fellow like that up in a city! He would have made a fine sailor.

They went into the parlor, and for a few moments John looked from one familiar object to another. There had been few changes. There were fresh pieces of Dear Mother's handiwork in her favorite reds and purples draped over chair backs and the corners of pictures, and there was a new rug in front of the fireplace. John noted everything. Presently he noticed the family medicine book lying open and face down. He picked it up.

"Mumps," he said, and laughed. Then he handed the book back to Edward and said: "I got as far as Opthalmia. When you read all about the horrible diseases in this book, do you feel as if you were developing all the symptoms? That's the way it made me feel. Does mother still keep this book in the lower drawer? If I were you I'd

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chase upstairs and put it back before she comes home. I'd hate to see you caught with it almost as much as I would have hated to be caught with it myself."

When Edward returned to the parlor it was to discover John in the act of lighting a short black pipe.

"You'll catch it!" said Edward.

"Nothing like trying," said John. "Ever smoke?"

Edward shook his head.

"It's a good plan not to smoke till you've got your growth, but don't go through life without giving it a trial. It never hurt anybody yet, and it's a lot of comfort."

"Mother says it turns people's lungs black."

"A blackish green, I believe," said John. "And what harm does that do? The sun turns faces brown, and cold weather makes fingers blue and noses red."

"A pipe smells good," said Edward, "don't it?"

John nodded.

"Lots better than some of the perfumes women use. Ruth smells like a drug store. What's the matter with her back, anyway? Is she faking?"

"She does it," said Edward, "to make Bruce feel bad, and then he'll do anything she wants."

A new photograph of James caught John's eye.

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"James?" he asked.

"Don't you recognize him?"

"Looks like a lady-killer," said John. "I don't hear of James doing anything very enterprising. Now Mark's different. There's a fine boy. I've gotten in touch with him and we correspond as regularly as the kind of life I lead lets us. Seems funny to think of Mark making two ears of corn grow where only one grew before. What do you want to be?"

"I'd like to explore places. At least, that's what I think I'd like to do. But one rainy day mother let me have the paints she used to paint on china with, and I mixed up a color that looked just like the sky, and I drew the big oak tree and colored it and it looked like it. And I painted every day till the paint was all gone."

"Show 'em to me—the pictures you painted," said John.

Edward ran away to the secret hiding place and returned with his little works of art.

Like all trained seamen, John was an accurate observer. He perceived at once that Edward had the same faculty. The subjects which the little boy had painted were astonishingly well drawn, and here and there the coloring was warm and true.

John made an instant and characteristic decision.

"I can't help you to explore places, Eddie," he

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said. "I wouldn't know how to go about it. But it'll be three or four years before you know what you really want to do. Whatever that is, if it's decent and honest, you do it. Promise?"

Edward promised.

"If it's painting, I'll help. I'll have a ship of my own then, and out of my pay I'll manage to keep you somewhere where you can get good instruction and learn all about it. Paris, I guess. But you'd be pretty young to be paddling your own canoe, and I wouldn't want to take the responsibility unless you'd make me some solemn promises and keep 'em—not to drink or smoke until you were twenty-one—the red and white wine you'd get in the Latin Quarter wouldn't count—that's good for people. And—I don't know how much you know about life . . . Men and women and all that?"

Edward turned a slow red, thus indicating that like most American boys of thirteen he was pretty well posted.

" . . . And I'd want you to promise not to get mixed up with any woman, either . . . Eddie, every trouble I've run across in this world or heard tell about has had a woman at the bottom of it. It's always either what the world calls a bad woman, or else it's what the world calls a good woman . . . How's father?"

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"He's all right."

"Don't ever forget," said John with sudden vehemence, "that father is the best father that anybody ever had."

John was able to remain at home for nearly a week. And all Westchester with the exception of a few families who had begun to imagine themselves people of fashion called to see how the minister's black sheep had turned out.

Westchester discovered that the black sheep had turned into an honest, straightforward and widely traveled young man. He had found time to read, and sea life, instead of roughening him, had made him very quiet in speech and fastidiously neat and clean.

But Dear Mother insisted on mourning over him. She felt that he had sunk pretty low in this world for a minister's son and that he would sink still lower in the next. A fine reverence for the created world and all that is beyond the reach of man's understanding, and conduct which closely resembled that outlined in the Golden Rule, could not pass for Christianity in Mrs. Eaton's eyes, and when one morning at breakfast John told Edward that there didn't seem to be very much doubt that man had descended from some kind of an ape, and that the ape in turn had descended from some

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kind of an oyster, she felt that he was indeed lost.

"Nice ideas, I must say," she said, "to put into the head of an innocent child who is destined to go into the church."

But John smiled and said:

"You *do* believe that the world is getting better, don't you, mother?"

"Through faith and prayer, yes."

"And that if it keeps on getting better and better it's bound to be perfect in the end?"

"That will take a long time, I fear."

"But you admit that it's bound to happen if we keep on improving?"

Mrs. Eaton admitted that.

"And you feel, mother, don't you, that even the best people alive today are far from perfect?"

Mrs. Eaton admitted this very readily.

"Then you believe in evolution," said John. "Father's the best man I know, but I believe there's more difference between father and a perfect man than there is between the highest type of ape and father."

"Man," asserted Mrs. Eaton sweepingly, "has a soul. That is what makes the difference."

John smiled very sweetly at his mother, and gave up. There was no arguing with her, or with Sarah, for that matter. Sarah snubbed him con-

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tinually and tried to make him feel that he had slipped socially.

On the afternoon of that preceding John's departure, a young woman called at the rectory and asked for James. As luck would have it, it was the housemaid's afternoon out, and John, who happened to be passing through the hall when the bell rang, opened the door.

The young woman, who was pretty but fragile looking, did not speak at once.

"Did you wish to see Mrs. Eaton?" John asked. "Because, I'm sorry, she's off visiting."

"I came to see young Mr. Eaton," said the young woman. "Mr. James Eaton."

John could not have explained why this simple statement should give him a sinking feeling in the pit of his stomach, but it did.

"Well, you can leave any message with me," he said slowly. "I am John Eaton—a brother."

"He isn't here?"

John shook his head.

"I could wait."

"Yes. But there's no telling when he'll be home. Not before tea time, I imagine."

The young woman's face hardened.

"I've walked all the way from Westchester village," she said, and then her eyes brightened a little. "You don't remember me, but I remember

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you. Father had a harness shop. You used to pass twice a day going to school and coming home."

"I remember your father. I broke my belt once, and he mended it for me and wouldn't take any money. He's well, I hope?"

She shook her head. "Father's dead," she said. "Your brother heard about it and came to see us. He was very kind and helped mother with money for the funeral."

"I'm glad to hear that about James."

The young woman shrugged her shoulders.

"Better come in," said John, "and rest. You've had a long walk."

She moved a little as if she were in a trance, and John finally led the way into the parlor, as he found difficulty in getting her to precede him. When she was seated he looked at her carefully, smiled suddenly but not very merrily and said:

"Why do you want to see my brother?"

She did not answer at once. But after quite a long silence she said: "I've *got* to see him."

"I wish you'd be frank with me and tell me why."

But she wouldn't be frank, at first. She set her lips in a straight line and stared past John at a picture on the wall. Her reticence, however, amounted to communication. And John's specu-

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lations were of an exasperated and unpleasant nature. He hoped that he would be able to get rid of this young woman before his mother's return.

"I'm sorry," he said after a while, "very sorry that James isn't here. I'm afraid you've had your long walk for nothing."

"I think," she said, "that I'd better wait till he comes. I've written him five times to come and see me and he hasn't even answered." She paused and added with deliberation, "He doesn't want to see me."

John had been trying hard to remember the old harness maker's name. He recalled it now—Jackson.

"You're Miss Jackson," he smiled. "I've just managed to remember. Tell me. Is it money you need?"

She jumped to her feet with her reticence broken and a sudden energy of revelation.

"I do need money like anything," she said. "And—surely you must have guessed—I need my name changed. It's got to be changed to Mrs. James Eaton and it's got to be changed quick. There, I've told you. And I don't care *what* you think of me."

John stepped suddenly forward and turned the girl to the light. His face was hard and set. For

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some moments he looked into her eyes, and she met the look without flinching.

"I believe you," he said, and smiled reassuringly. "And it's what I think about James that counts now . . ."

"He helped us after father's death," said Miss Jackson, "and I thought he was our friend and meant everything he said . . ."

"You don't need to tell me. I've guessed what kind of a boy he is. It's in his face. And now he wants to cut and run . . . But you want him to marry you? Well and good. He shall. But if I were you I'd face any disgrace or any poverty sooner than be married to James. Do you love him?"

"I thought I did. But I'm so mad with him now I don't know."

John pulled out his watch. "There's a train from Bartow Station in twenty minutes. You can just make it. I'll give you the money for the ticket. You want James to marry you. He shall. Don't be afraid. Don't worry . . . James and I will come to your house tomorrow at eleven o'clock."

"I believe you," she said simply.

"But I want you to promise me one thing—that the marriage will be secret until James is on his feet and can support you. You wouldn't like living here. My mother would make you unhappy."

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During dinner John was unusually gay and vivacious. After dinner he invited James to go for a stroll. Edward begged to be allowed to go too, but John laughed him off.

"There's something particular and peculiar and private that I am going to ask James to do for me," he said, "and nobody else can do it."

So the two brothers, tall strapping fellows, started off into the starlight, through swarms of twinkling fireflies, and became lost to view in the shadows of Pelham Wood.

James had not especially wanted to go for a walk with John, whom he did not like, but being easy-going and prone to follow all lines of least resistance, he had found difficulty in refusing.

"At sea," said John, when he had gotten his pipe going, "when you can't break a man to discipline by straight square dealing you sometimes find it necessary to lay him out with a belaying pin . . . This afternoon, James, the Jackson girl came to see you."

From a state of bored good nature James turned instantly to one of the liveliest anxiety and foreboding.

"She told me," continued John, "how after her father's death you came—and played the good angel."

John's voice was noncommittal, and from this

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fact James gathered a momentary hope. But this was to be instantly dashed.

"She needs money," said John, "and she needs your name. And for my part I don't choose to go to sea and leave behind me a niece or a nephew that hasn't any name."

"How do you know," said James in a truculent way, "that it is your—your relation?"

"It was obvious," said John, "that she was speaking the truth. What do you propose to do?"

"What do I propose to do? Well, I propose to think that out for myself, thanks." James's ugly streak was trying to show. "You paddle your own canoe and I'll paddle mine."

"You will marry her, of course," said John.

"Why should I? A lot you know about women. It was as much her fault as it was mine."

"I have often wondered," said John, "from whom you inherit your exquisite chivalry . . . Oh, James," he exclaimed, "shame on you! You have only one life to live. Don't you even want to start it right? Where are your fine clothes and your wheedling ways going to get you?—to what port will *they* bring you? There must be a streak of decency and manliness in you somewhere. Marry this girl—you've got to do that anyway—and then come to sea with me. She can manage somehow on what you can give her from your pay.

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I'll chip in. You don't like me. But the sea will make a man of you and you'll thank me and we'll be friends."

"I dislike the sea intensely," said James.

"What do you like—the land—business? You've got to support your wife somehow."

"I'm not married yet, you know," said James. "If you knew a little more about the world . . . Why, that girl would be like a millstone around my neck."

James may have known a lot about the "world" but he knew very little about his brother. John stopped short, knocked the ashes from his pipe with deliberation and returned it to his pocket. Then he drew a deep breath, clenched his right fist and drove it with a sudden demoniac force and fury into that part of James's anatomy which, after the famous fight between Corbett and Fitzsimmons at Carson City, received a tremendous publicity under its rightful Latin name of solar plexus.

And for a long time thereafter, in the heart of Pelham Wood, James Eaton lay unconscious at the feet of his brother John.

The first words that James managed to speak were: "You dirty coward!" Then he struggled to a sitting position and was sick.

John refilled his pipe and lighted it and waited.

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Then he said: "I hit you in the stomach so as not to mark your head. I don't want mother to know that we've been quarreling . . . If you want any more I'll give it to you in the same place."

"What did you come home for, anyway?" cried James angrily. "Nobody wanted you."

"Get up," said John, "and don't talk like a woman. You ought to have been a girl. But you aren't and we've got to make a man of you."

James got to his feet with difficulty, and without another word turned and started slowly back toward the house. John followed at the same pace, but when they had thus proceeded for some two hundred yards he quickened his steps, caught up with James and laid his hand on his shoulder.

James shook his shoulder to free it, much as a petulant child might have done.

"Before we go back to the house," said John, "I want your word that you'll marry the girl and come away to sea with me. That would be the easiest. Nobody need know about the marriage—least of all mother—if that's what you are afraid of." James made no answer. "I promised the girl that we would be at her house tomorrow at eleven and that you would marry her."

"If you're so interested in her, why don't you marry her yourself?" exclaimed James. "And

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besides, I thought you had to go back to your ship tomorrow."

"I can take the five o'clock train," said John. "That will get me to Boston by midnight. But I'll start right after breakfast as I always intended, and you'll come with me to see me off. And we'll simply stop off at Westchester to do the right thing and then you'll send back word from the city that I've persuaded you to make a voyage with me . . . It's to the Old World. You'd like that . . . We'll take a cargo of claret in Bordeaux and while it's loading we'll be able to run up to Paris for a day or two . . . When we come back if you find that you don't like the sea you can try something else. But it won't hurt you to give it a trial."

"Look here," said James, "I'm not going to marry that girl and I'm not going to sea with you. So what are you going to do about it?"

John's voice had been very kind and tolerant. But a stern note now leaped into it.

"What am I going to do about it?" he said. "Why, the best I know how—according to my lights."

And suddenly and once more in the region of the solar plexus he struck James a terrific blow.

This time James, who had not lost consciousness but thought that he had been killed, thrashed about on the ground like a newly landed salmon and

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gasped horribly to recover some of the air which had been knocked out of him.

When they reached the house at last he was a sick boy, but he had promised to do as John wished.

The next morning when John had dressed and was about to go down to breakfast he perceived a sheet of paper which must have been pushed under his door during the night. He picked it up and held it close to his face, for the light was bad, and read the following:

To John Eaton:

Promises made under force don't count,
you dirty bully. I am going to vanish for
a few days and you can go to hell.

James Eaton.

John walked to the narrow dormer window and looked out over the tree tops. He might have known better than to have trusted a man whose mind worked like a woman's. He was very angry—but with himself.

"A nice mess I've got myself into," he thought, "making promises that I can't keep to a girl I'm not under any obligations to, and trusting to the word of a dirty rat like that James. I wonder where the skunk is hiding."

III

JOHN was to find out what had happened to James when he had pulled himself together and joined the family breakfast. Dear Mother had the *dearest* letter from dear James. He had been invited to go yachting with the Montgomery Stairses and had refused, but during the night he had found himself wishing that he had not refused, and what had the dear, original, adventurous fellow done? He had packed his grip and set out on foot for City Island so as to join the *Winona* before daybreak, when she was to sail. The party had all spent the night on board, and wouldn't they be surprised and delighted when they found her darling at breakfast waiting for them?

Dear Mother then wandered off in speculation concerning rumors which she had heard hinting that between Miss Winona Stairs, who was a great heiress, and her James there was more than a passing interest.

"I only pray," said Mrs. Eaton, "that if it is true, she is good enough for him. He is so sensitive . . . He has never given me a moment's

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doubt or anxiety. It is a blessing to have at least one son who loves his home and his old mother."

John, who was usually hearty at meals, ate next to nothing. The praises of James sickened him, and a dozen times his outraged sense of justice almost caused him to leap to his feet and roar out the whole truth about the precious rascal to an accompaniment of breaking glass and china. But no good purpose would be served, and he managed to restrain himself.

There was about an hour before train time and this was punctuated with many awkward silences. Mr. Eaton kept thinking: "How long will it be before I see this fine boy of mine again? Perhaps I shall never see him again."

Mr. Eaton while reading in his study had recently suffered from a curious and painful attack. It had been as if a huge hand had suddenly seized his heart and squeezed it while it struggled and fluttered. He had not mentioned this to anybody. But the memory of it did not leave him often—the pain had been very great—and he lived in fear of a repetition.

Mrs. Eaton kept thinking that John's ways were not her ways and that people whose ways were not hers, and who did not smugly and with exaggerated cheerfulness fall in with hers, were better off at sea. To Sarah, John's visit had been

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anything but a pleasure. She felt that his occupation dragged the family down socially. Why hadn't he stayed in the United States Navy? That was bad enough. But surely it wasn't gentlemanly to be in the merchant marine. Edward was silent because of grief. He loved his big brother with all his heart, and believed that everything John did was exactly right, and that he was the wisest, kindest, and most accomplished gentleman in the world.

Edward and his father accompanied John to the station.

"Well, my boy," said Mr. Eaton, "good-bye and may God bless you."

"And may God bless you, father," said John. Then suddenly: "Father," he said, "if you hear about me doing anything and don't understand how I came to do it, please don't be in a hurry to condemn me. I try to live the way I think you would live if you were a sailor . . . Eddie, will you do me a favor? Will you please grow up to be as good a man as your father?"

Poor Mr. Eaton was embarrassed at this frank and open praise. His hand closed tightly on Edward's, and as the train pulled out from the station and John waved to them from the platform, tears gathered in his extraordinary black eyes and rolled out of them. He pulled himself together with a laugh and dashed the back of his hand across

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his eyes. Then he clapped Edward cheerfully on the back and exclaimed:

“And you’ve got to do *me* a favor too, young man—you’ve got to grow up to be as good a man as your brother John.”

To run off to sea without doing something to square matters for the Jackson girl never entered John’s head. So he got off the train at the old familiar Westchester station, left his valise with the ticket agent, who remembered him, and set out on the old familiar walk of his school days. He felt immensely older and very sad.

Here was the shop where the children used to buy “suckums” and licorice “shoe laces.” Next the fork of the roads with the triangular blacksmith shop. And John still saw and admired through the open door in the murky light the skilled play of the old smith’s vast brown muscles.

The harness shop came next, the littlest shop in the world, with the family quarters above it. There was a “For Sale” sign on the building, but in answer to John’s knocking the Jackson girl herself came to the door. It was obvious that she had relied on John’s promise. For she had put on her best dress and done all she could to make herself look neat and attractive. But her face fell when she saw that John was unaccompanied.

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John stepped quickly into the little leather shop and shut the door behind him. "My brother," he said, "promised me that he would come. He gave me his word of honor. So I went to sleep with a clear conscience. This morning I found that he had run away . . . I think you are well rid of him."

During this recital her face had turned hard and scornful. "I may be rid of him," she said, "but he's not rid of me."

"I feel the same way about him," said John. "I want to see him punished."

"He will be," exclaimed the girl, and she clenched her fists.

"They usually are—in the end," said John; "at least I hope they are. Meanwhile what you need is money so that you can live and a name to protect you against gossip." He tried to show her a light-hearted smile. "Will you take mine?"

She did not understand at first and he had to explain.

"You're all dressed up and expecting to get married, and I don't choose to have you disappointed. James is out of the question. Will I do?"

Her face softened and her eyes began to fill. She came a step closer to him. "Say," she said, "you're a real man, you are."

"It's about the only thing we can do," said

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John, and he blushed because of the admiration in her eyes.

"It's a dirty trick of me to take you at your word," said the girl. "But I don't see what else I can do. Honest I don't." John put his arm around her shoulders and patted them in a fatherly way. She had begun to cry. "Do you mean it?" she asked after a while. "Truly?"

"Truly," said John.

"Will you wait here while I tell mother? Mother don't hardly speak to me."

"I want to meet your mother."

The girl seemed a little taken aback. Then she appeared to smile. "Your voice," she said, "is like James's—a little. Mother's blind. Will you let her think you're James? She thinks it's James that's coming to marry me. It would take forever to make her understand what has happened."

"All right," said John. "But before you talk with your mother I want you to know just what I can do and just what I can't. It isn't much . . . I'm a sailor, you know, so I won't be—I won't be home much. I have a hundred and sixty dollars that I can spare and I can send you thirty dollars a month out of my pay. It won't ever be less and when I get to be master it will be more. I'd want you to move away from Westchester. You'll be getting something for the shop, won't you, when

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it's sold? I don't know where you'd better go, but somewhere where we're not all so well known. A fresh start won't do any harm."

"Mother's from Flushing," said the girl. "She's always wanting to go back. We could go to Flushing."

"And," said John, "I wouldn't think of lying to my father; but if he heard that we'd been married he'd have to learn about James. I think we'd better get married in New York. Nobody knows us there. You could come back to your mother then, and move to Flushing when you were ready. My ship sails from Boston in the morning, and I have to be aboard by midnight."

"It's more than I deserve," said the girl. "I've been a fool and a disgrace. But if you was to stay around, I'd show you there was some good in me. I'd work my hands off to the bone for you."

"I believe that I am getting a good little wife," said John simply; "and now let's tell your mother that we are going to the city to be married. Perhaps she'd like to come too."

The girl shook her head. "She'd like to, but it's hard for her to get about. It's awful to be blind."

And so John joined his life to another which a member of his family had wrecked, and went to sea

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feeling very much as if he had tied a millstone around his neck.

The adventure with Dear Mother's paint-box had shaken Edward's ambition to be an explorer. And he read no more about dwarfs and gorillas and elephant guns. He had now an intense wish to be an artist. He wished that he had been more attentive at the clay-modeling class where Alice Ruggles had showed so much talent. He might have learned something. But he had missed that opportunity. And now he had no clay to work with, nor paints nor brushes.

There were stubs of pencils to be filched from father's study, and the groceries were usually delivered in wrappings of brown or white paper which could be dampened and flattened out with a warm iron, and upon which it was possible to draw.

Being now keen to learn, it was a pity that Edward could not have had a teacher, for having a fine pair of observing eyes in his head and a flexible hand he must have made quick progress. But in the long run it did not matter. For in a few years' time his own experience and experiments turned teacher, and he could draw anything in creation very swiftly, surely and beautifully.

Dear Mother was down on artists, except Raphael and the old Italians who depicted religious

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subjects. Artists were low people who lived loosely. If Edward had said that he wished to be an artist, he would have been deprived of all pencils and grocery store paper. But Edward was a wise child. And he believed in being praised and encouraged instead of being scolded and opposed. Wherefore, although the two large library volumes filled with reproductions of masterpieces contained also pictures of battles and pagan odds and ends, he confined his copying to the religious subjects.

To this day Edward, with his eyes shut, can do a very forceful head of Christ, or having placed four or five curling and apparently meaningless lines on a sheet of paper can convert them with three or four touches of pure magic either into a classic Madonna and child or into the five little pigs who went to market.

The little hypocrite went to even greater lengths in order to win his mother's favor and praise. He confined himself to religious subjects, and when as sometimes happened the Old Master had omitted a fig leaf, Edward had tacked one on. When in later life he was painting the shadowed fig leaves on the gleaming white wall of the Corsican brigand's house in that fascinating little landscape which the Luxembourg bought, he smiled often to think under what circumstances and for what pur-

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pose he had first given his attention to the anatomy of that particular kind of leaf.

For a little boy who intended to be a minister to develop a passion for drawing Saints and Christs and Madonnas and bambini seemed normal enough to Mrs. Eaton and beyond censure. And if a little too much realistic blood sometimes flowed from the arrow wounds of his Saint Sebastians, she overlooked it. It wasn't quite nice; it would have been as well to have stuck the arrows in the Saint as one sticks pins in a cushion or cloves in a ham, but the main thing was that he had chosen to depict a Saint.

One day he tackled the three Marys and outdid himself. He made a drawing full of faults, no doubt, but filled also with grace and a certain flowing quality achieved by the sweetness and cleanness of the lines. And he knew at once that he had drawn better than he had ever drawn before.

He hid his masterpiece away until the next day, which was Dear Mother's birthday, and when she was alone after breakfast he presented it to her, with an assortment of well chosen and propitiating lies.

"I drew it especially for you, Dear Mother, for your birthday," he said, "and it's the nicest one I've ever done. It's the three blessed Marys, Dear Mother; and see, I didn't have to hide their

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feet with bunches of grass the way I used to do. And the hands *do* look like hands, Dear Mother, *don't* they?"

They certainly did, and Mrs. Eaton said so. She was in a good humor. And even in her lay, false-seeing eyes, the picture had a certain charm.

"There weren't any halos in the original," continued Edward. "I put them in out of my own head. I wouldn't want people to look at this picture and think I'd just gone and drawn three ordinary ladies." He looked now up into his mother's face and said: "Dear Mother, it will be my birthday in February, and if you'll only give me a little box of paints I'll color their lovely robes for you, and the trees in the distance. Mary Mother ought to have a sky-blue dress, and Mary Cleophas would look nice in pale yellow. Mary Magdalene is drawn after she stopped being bad and had repented and been forgiven. So we could make her dress pink instead of red, don't you think? . . . I do wish you'd think over about the paints."

Mrs. Eaton did. She thought over about the paints then and there and concluded that Edward should have them. But she did not tell him this. She believed in discipline. She did not believe in children having things *just* when they wanted them. It was far, far better for them to wait.

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So she said that she didn't know about the paints. One would see. It depended perhaps not altogether upon whether it was good for a little boy to have a box of paints or not, but much on whether between now and his birthday, during all those intervening months, not some of the time, but all of the time, he was a good boy, a good, God-fearing, Christian little boy in whom his Dear Mother might repose a certain amount of confidence.

Now to obtain paints at this period in his career Edward would have committed any crime, would have stooped to any lie, duplicity or hypocrisy. He was even willing to be a good, well conducted little boy for every one of all the long days of a good many months. It seemed a small price to pay.

The school year had opened and he had not now so much time to draw. The boys teased him because he was going to be a clergyman, a career which seemed rather girlish to them. And his voice seesawed so violently between high and low that when he was called upon to recite the whole class tittered, and was reproved by a tittering teacher.

Toward Christmas, however, Edward's voice settled into a pleasant, engaging place—rather low down in the scale, with a husky quality. One day at recess he fought a battle in the hickory wood

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back of half way house with a boy slightly larger than himself, and came out about even—so even, indeed, that although each boy claimed a victory and asked only to be let at the other again to prove it, each had already determined in his heart that his next fight would be with somebody else.

This fight did Edward a lot of good. He had been considered something of a sissy. That phase was over. Asked by a stern mother to explain a purplish, greenish circle about his left eye, he had told a long rigmarole about a religious dispute with another boy who had made fun of the miracles in the Bible. Mrs. Eaton could not approve of fighting, but the cause in which her little boy had fought softened her judgment. He was forgiven, but he was not to fight any more. He could show his contempt for scoffers in more telling ways.

But the true inwardness of the battle was altogether different. Between the boys' playground and the girls' at Mr. Harrington's school there was a high fence of pine boards. Here and there a knot had fallen or been punched from its socket, and through these peep-holes the boys and girls sometimes communicated, if only for the reason that during school hours such communication, even between brothers and sisters, was strictly forbid-

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den. Edward and Alice Ruggles were frequent offenders.

But their reason was different. There was really a sincere attachment between them. And each hankered after the society of the other. Sometimes they exchanged through a knothole choice tidbits from the school luncheons with which their respective mothers had provided them.

On the day of the battle, the Jepson boy had seen Edward receive at the fair and somewhat ink-stained hands of Alice, a luscious sandwich of thin bread and apricot jam. In places the jam had soaked through the bread. It was a morsel for the gods.

As Edward raised this delectable sandwich to his ravenous schoolboy mouth, the Jepson boy stepped forward and with a harsh, sibilant, sneering sound knocked it from his hand. Edward recovered the sandwich and looked at it. It had fallen on an ant heap and was a ruin of sand and struggling red ants.

For a moment Edward looked puzzled. He looked puzzled because he was puzzled. He was puzzled at a series of passions the like of which he had never experienced before. One of these passions was for Alice. Through her gift she had been insulted and belittled. His heart swam with

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an aching tenderness. Another passion was of disappointment at seeing something of a peculiar deliciousness, which he had been about to eat, spoiled. There were other passions in the mixture. And the least of these was the wish to do murder then and there upon the person of young Jepson.

As a preliminary Edward stepped suddenly forward and violently scrubbed the Jepson boy's face with the bread and the butter and the jam and the sand and the ants.

Blows must then and there have been struck had not big boys intervened. A dozen of them, scenting a difference of opinion, had swiftly gathered like so many buzzards from different parts of the playground, and these now took charge of the affair. Two appointed themselves Edward's seconds and two took charge of Jepson. Then the principals were taken at a sharp run—for recess was short and there was no time to be lost—to the hickory wood back of half-way house, and had their jackets stripped off, and were then thrown at each other with a brutal and joyous violence.

Americans believe that the average American is born with a knowledge of how to use his fists, and that in this he differs from foreigners as clearly as any man whose thumb meets up with his forefinger differs from a monkey whose thumb doesn't.

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No national belief was ever more charged with error. It is no more natural for an American or a man of any other race to strike straight and true blows with his fists than it is for a cat to kick out backwards like a mule.

Edward and Jepson were average American boys and their zeal to strike each other terrible blows was for some minutes only exceeded by their failure to hit each other at all. They brandished their fists as beetles brandish their antennae, and they leaped about and embraced and swung their arms like windmills. Something or other at the last moment always turned their most terrible blows into pushes. Edward's most painful injury was to his left instep. And it was not the fist but the heavy boot heel of the Jepson boy which caused it. It was the Jepson boy's right elbow which blackened Edward's eye. And it was the top of Edward's head in collision with the Jepson boy's soft stomach which, just as the school bell rang and stopped the sport, sickened the Jepson boy and made him wish that he had allowed Edward to eat his old sandwich in peace.

Through the convenient knothole the fair Alice had observed the insult, the challenge, the disappearance of the combatants behind half-way house and their subsequent reappearance. It was not

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easy to tell which was the winner. Nevertheless her heart beat high and she could not but regard Edward as a hero. She believed in fighting. It was one of her father's beliefs. The Ruggles family were also brought up to believe in wars. Mr. Ruggles believed that occasional wars were beneficial to populations and that what became of individuals if only they didn't revert to monkeys, which, so he averred, they only too frequently did, was of no consequence.

But for this battle, Edward's daily conduct up to the day of his birthday was exemplary and so were his reports from school. Consequently Mrs. Eaton, who had not been allowed to forget that there was a question of paints concerned, made up her mind that she would give them to him.

It had always been unfortunate for Edward that his birthday came so soon after Christmas. Because Christmas with its gifts to all and sundry had the effect of throwing Mrs. Eaton into a miserly state of mind for the rest of the winter. And it was not until the shrubberies had to be worked over and the grounds put in order in the spring that she again spent small sums of money at all freely. Eatons whose birthdays fell during the summer months always fared best.

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Furthermore, during this particular autumn, and especially at Christmas time, James had been a heavy drag on her pocketbook. For this particular ewe lamb her sacrifices were willing and cheerful. For James, as she frequently said, like Ruth, was "taking his place in the world," whatever that may have meant, and like most mid-Victorian Christians, Mrs. Eaton was a social snob of the most rampant nature. James frequented the society of the rich and the magnificent. He was said to be almost engaged to the beautiful and wealthy Miss Stairs. Wherefore money spent on James was well spent. He would do his family honor one of these days and make them proud. That James also frequented the society of the very low, if not humble, was not known to his mother. And sometimes when she imagined that he was spending the night with rich friends, he was not doing any such thing.

James would save up his money until he had enough to go on a tear, and then, when his eyes had cleared up, he would come home and tell the most magnificent and satisfactory lies, and begin once more the long and tedious process of wheedling and saving money.

Why the Jackson girl had left Westchester and no longer pestered him with her troubles, and

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whither she had gone, he did not know. And if only she remained absent and silent he did not care. But once in a while sudden misgivings woke him in the night. The mental picture of that young woman suddenly appearing at the rectory with a baby in her arms and telling Dear Mother all about everything was truly terrifying. But perhaps the fool of a girl had been mistaken about the baby!

Well, Dear Mother made a special trip to the great city to purchase some odds and ends which Edward, who was growing rapidly, really needed, and the paints which she felt he did not really need at all, but which she had made up her mind to give him. In those old days the English made the best and the most expensive water colors. And the Germans made the cheapest and worst. The German cakes were so hard and thin that only intensive rubbing with a brush loaded with water would extract any color from them whatever. Children, however, could eat them with safety, and for this reason they found a ready sale. The English colors had the reputation of murdering little children who ate them too freely.

So, although the honest young woman who waited on Mrs. Eaton assured her that for serious purposes of painting the German paints were

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of no use whatever, it was the German paints which Mrs. Eaton, feeling miserly from the Christmas spending, finally bought. Edward, she felt, would never know the difference.

But he did. And when he opened the paint-box and saw that for which he had so long waited, he suffered one of the most bitter and poignant disappointments of his life.

But he dared not let Dear Mother read the expression on his face, so he flung his arms about her and buried the expression against her rustling black silk dress.

Later he carried the paints to the little attic over the wood-house and tried them and gave up, and flung himself presently face down on the hard dusty floor and wept in an unmanly way. His father coming home from the church by the short cut through the woods heard the muffled sound of the weeping and climbed the attic stairs to ascertain the cause.

"Hurt?" he asked.

Edward was about ready to stop crying anyway and he got to his feet and quickly controlled himself, unless we may reckon an occasional snuffle a lack of self-control.

"Mother promised me some paints for my birthday if I'd be good," said Edward, "and I've

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been good for months and months, and she gave me these. You can't paint with these things."

Mr. Eaton took the japanned box in his hands and opened it. "I know you can't," he said cheerfully. "I've tried. You scrub 'em and scrub 'em, don't you, and the color won't come off on the brush. They aren't even good colors. I wonder why they make them. I think they are supposed to be harmless if taken internally. In other words, their virtues are all negative. Is this where you come to draw?"

"Yes, sir," said Edward, who was now perfectly composed.

"Will you show me some of your drawings? I haven't asked before. Sometimes, when you're working at something you don't like to show it to people, you like to put that off until you are sure that you've done the best you can."

Edward uncovered a whole sheaf of drawings in their secret hiding-place and brought them to his father. This one seated himself in the one broken chair which the place afforded and began to examine them one by one.

Father's judgments were Edward's gospel. And the little boy stood with an anxious beating heart.

When Mr. Eaton had looked at the last draw-

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ing, he smiled at Edward and said with a quiet sincerity: "Eddie, I think they are amazing. You have a strong and definite talent. And I don't blame you a bit for crying about the paints. The disappointment might have drawn tears from a stone. You never can tell. The next time I go to the city I'll get you the best box of water colors there is. You ought to have them. You need them. But let's keep it to ourselves. We don't want to hurt mother's feelings." Once more he looked at some of the drawings. "Do you like religious subjects best?" he asked.

"Not really and truly," said Edward. "But mother wouldn't like me to spend so much time drawing if I drew other things."

"I see," said the Reverend Mr. Eaton. "Well, some of the old Italian masters painted them for similar reasons, I imagine. And some of them didn't draw as well as you do."

"John," said Edward diffidently, "thought that I could be a real artist if I practised hard. He said that in a few years if I wanted to be an artist he would help me."

"I would help you too," said his father.

"But mother wouldn't like it," said Edward.

"No," said Mr. Eaton with a sigh, "your mother wouldn't like it." At that moment a

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ghastly look came over Mr. Eaton's face and he began to beat the air with his hands. Then his hands clenched, and with a sound half moan and half sob, he slipped from the chair to the floor and lay there writhing and groaning. The crisis of pain passed. "Don't be frightened, Eddie," he murmured. "I'll be all right. Oh, dear—dear—dear—that was bad! That was almost more than I could bear."

Sweat burst from his face at every pore. He lay still for a few long moments and then got slowly to his feet. He put a trembling arm around his little son and held him close to his side.

"That was a heart attack, Eddie, old man," he said. "I've had three of them. I didn't want anybody to know. But you know. And I don't want you to tell. Don't worry. I may never have another—and as you see—they are painful, but not fatal."

The minister smiled like a knight.

One important thing happened during Edward's sixteenth year. His friendship with Alice Ruggles, the atheist's daughter, had grown steadily and strongly. The children were never so happy as when they were together. They understood each other perfectly. Alice had turned into a perfect

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little beauty, and she was sweet-tempered, but Mrs. Eaton did not approve of her and awaited only a good opportunity to put an end to the friendship. During the autumn of Edward's sixteenth year this opportunity occurred.

Sarah at this time was twenty, and although she had been out for two years, Mrs. Eaton's efforts to get her married and settled had miscarried. Sarah had a sharp tongue and the young men were afraid of her. She could be very disagreeable on occasion, and the thought that time was passing and opportunities being missed did nothing to sweeten her temper. Sarah had something of James's temperament. Almost any man attracted her, but at the first sign of a budding romance becoming mildewed or blighted she would make the mistake of wooing her hero too ardently, and then turning bitter and tempersome when he shied off.

Mrs. Eaton had engineered a little supper dance for Sarah, and had also invited a few boys and girls of Edward's set to keep him company. People liked to go to the rectory dances. The food was always excellent, and the music, taken right out of the heart of an old square Steinway by Mr. Eaton's organist, was capital.

It was a warm night in Indian summer. The

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library had a good parquet floor which had been cleaned and waxed for the occasion. Most of the chairs had been carried out on the veranda, for when she had a daughter to marry, Mrs. Eaton believed in couples being privileged to sit out a dance. The windows of her own bedroom opened immediately above the veranda, and retiring now and then to this point of vantage she could often overhear what the young people were saying.

The first thing that Alice Ruggles did that night to offend Mrs. Eaton was to look so brilliant and pretty that all the other girls looked plain by comparison. Alice wore a high-necked black velvet dress with an Irish lace collar. Her eyes matched the dress, and her face was like a young rose. Women at that time wore what were called angel sleeves. These resembled half inflated balloons and destroyed the human shape almost as completely as the older fashion of bustles.

The fashion of Alice's dress was as old as the thirteenth century. It followed the lines of her slim body and gave her something of a boyish and princely look. This slap at fashion was an offense to Mrs. Eaton, but it was a minor offense. The real offense was deeper seated.

It happened that Sarah, having tried to stuff an enormous supper into a stomach laced out of all patience, had had a fainting spell and been re-

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tired from action. It was then that Alice was heard to remark in her clear boyish voice that people who wore corsets and laced themselves were always suffering the tortures of the damned, and deserved to. For her part she didn't wear corsets and never would.

Not only did Alice voice these outrages aloud, but she voiced them to a group of amused and admiring young men and boys. Among them Edward, still headed for Holy Orders.

It was too much. It was more than Mrs. Eaton could bear. She sailed into the midst of the group.

"You don't wear corsets," she cried, "and you let men put their arms around you and dance with you! If a daughter of mine were to speak as you have spoken I would whip her within an inch of her life. Not to wear corsets is immodest and indecent."

The attack was so wanton and unprovoked that Alice, taken wholly by surprise, found no words with which to answer, and turned slowly to the color of white paper. She did not, however, lower her eyes from Mrs. Eaton's face.

"It is precisely," said Mrs. Eaton, "what was to be expected of a child of your parentage and bringing up. How could a man who believes himself to be descended from a monkey have anything but a shameless daughter? You will have to sit

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out the rest of the dances, Alice; I cannot have an uncorseted female gamboling about the rectory."

Alice, hot with rage and shame, flung out of the room. She was for getting her hat and cloak and walking home, all the long miles, in her little high-heeled slippers. But Edward, who had followed her into the hall, begged and pleaded with her. And James, too, infatuated with the girl's beauty, came and added his pleadings to Edward's. She consented to stay then until her father came for her. But she would stay on the veranda—cloaked and hatted and ready to go.

"Even if she is your mother, Eddie," she exclaimed, "I don't ever want to see her again, and I won't ever speak to her."

The two children found two chairs in a dark corner of the veranda. Presently Edward had made her laugh.

Suddenly she laid her little hand on his and said: "You're sweet, Eddie. You're good as gold. Nobody could help loving you. I wish you weren't going to be a minister."

Edward smiled in the dark. He was not going to be a minister. But that was his secret. He was going to be a great artist. He was going to fill the world with paintings of a slim Alice in a black velvet dress with an Irish lace collar.

"When you are a minister, Eddie," said Alice,

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“are you going to hold with the Evangelist who states that Mary and the child spent the winter in Egypt or with the Evangelist who maintains that they remained in Bethlehem? Or are you going to be like your mother and believe them both?”

“*Sssh!*” said Edward, and he whispered a warning. But not in time. There came down to them from the window above where she had been listening the terrible voice of Mrs. Eaton.

“I heard what you said, you young Jezebel,” said she. “Don’t ever darken my door again. Don’t you dare!”

Later she forbade Edward to have anything more to do with the atheist’s daughter. He promised his mother that he wouldn’t, and he continued to see Alice whenever he had a chance.

Lying and hypocrisy, pretending to be altogether different from what you really are—these were the arts which Edward zealously practised in his own home in order to keep the peace with his mother. And these arts were real perversions of his nature, for he had been born into the world an honest, straightforward baby. It was only for his mother’s benefit, however, that it was necessary to practise them. With all the world outside the rectory and with his father inside of it he was frank and truthful.

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He was especially so with the Ruggles family. It was a long way to their house, and he was forbidden to go there; but as it was always possible to say that he had been somewhere else and get himself believed, he went often. He went not only for the sake of being with Alice, but for the sake of hearing her father talk.

Ruggles was an extraordinary man. He had enough income to live on, and he shocked the community in which he lived by refusing to do even a day's work at anything remunerative. He spent about half of his time reading and remembering what he had read, and the rest of his time studying nature in all its phases—including the human ones.

His home stood in the midst of two acres of ground. But instead of planting these grounds so that his neighbors could see into them and even into the windows of his house, he had surrounded them, European fashion, with a high brick wall, massed his planting along the boundaries, and made himself as private as a mouse in its nest.

When you went to call upon the Ruggles family you did not ring the front door-bell. You rang the bell at the front gate. Then while you waited for the Chinaman to come and open the peep-hole in the gate and look to see who you were, you had a chance to look about you and were almost under compulsion to examine the gate itself. This was

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made of heavy oak planks studded with fancy-headed nails. Some of the nail-heads were shaped like Tudor roses and some like Pilgrim shells; but others were shaped like letters of the alphabet and punctuation marks. And the Chinaman never came until you had had time to read several times over and commit to memory the following:

THEY SAY. WHAT SAY THEY?
LET THEM SAY!

That was Ruggles' motto. People gossiped about him. They said that he was an atheist, and that he believed man to be decended from a monkey, and was an advocate of free love. And he didn't care what people said about him. And hence the motto.

Some people went so far as to say that Mr. and Mrs. Ruggles were not married. As a matter of fact they were, but as they really loved each other very much and had always been absolutely faithful to each other, it didn't seem to matter very much whether they were married or not. As Mr. Ruggles himself often said: "Marriage wasn't invented for people who love each other and want to live together. It was made for people who hate each other and want to live apart." But he would usually add, and sometimes for the special benefit

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of Alice and Edward, "And it was also invented for people who only think they love each other and think they want to live together!"

And when he said that, Alice would say in a disgusted way: "I suppose that means you and me, Eddie"; and then she would laugh and everybody else would laugh. Edward would also blush.

Edward's idea of happiness at this time would have been to live always with the Ruggles family. He would have liked to have his father also with him inside of the tall brick wall, and nobody else—not Dear Mother, or dear Sarah, or brother James.

Here, he would have liked to live out his life in happy, stimulating talk and laughter and in an infinite painting of pictures.

At this time it was obvious to almost everybody who knew the boy, with the exception of his own mother, that Edward had a splendid talent for drawing and painting, and a speed and facility which were almost Japanesque.

As a record of his visits to the Ruggles he left a long series of drawings, which Mr. and Mrs. Ruggles, very old and broken people now, treasure to this day. They are mostly drawings of Alice. "Trilby" had just stormed the hearts of the world. And the old song, "Oh, don't you remember sweet Alice, Ben Bolt?" was on the lips of all who sang.

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So Edward drew his sweet Alice in every conceivable pose and lighting and in every kind of costume. The oftener he drew her the more exquisite she seemed to him, and the more exquisite he managed to make her look.

And to this day he could draw her with his eyes shut, if he wanted to. But he hasn't the heart—poor fellow!

Edward had long since made up his mind that one of these days he would tell Dear Mother that he was not going into the church, and that instead he was going to draw and paint for a living, and that if there wasn't a living in it, he was going to paint and draw just the same.

It was all very well, he argued, to be a hypocrite day in and day out for the sake of keeping the peace. It was all very well, in small matters and beliefs, to pretend that you were of Dear Mother's persuasion, but when it came to great decisions, like the choice between a divinity school and an art school, it would be necessary to come out into the open, take his own side and maintain it.

He faced this ultimate day of reckoning the more easily because it seemed always such a long, indefinite way off. But days galloped by, and months trotted by, and years crawled past, and all

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of a sudden something definite had to be done and done quickly.

The school year being over, Dear Mother took Edward in her arms and said: "And in the autumn, my darling son, you will go to the divinity school and begin your life's work. Father has arranged everything."

It would have seemed as if this was Edward's opportunity. But he did not so see it. He wanted to see it, and to seize it, but he couldn't. He wanted to say:

"I've decided not to go into the church, Dear Mother. I believe that God made everything and that Christ was the best gentleman that ever lived, and that if we all did what He wanted us to the world would be a better place. But the God of the Old Testament isn't the God Who made everything, but a jealous, horrible, old monster, and the Gospels contradict each other dreadfully. I don't believe that God wrote the Bible, because lots of it is pure drivel, and I'm not going to despise the whole Jewish race the way you do, and worship a member of it. . . .

"If a man goes down on his hands and knees, all the hairs on his body are so arranged that if he had enough of them and it rained, they would shed the rain. A newborn baby can hang by its hands. The worst dreams I've ever had have all been

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about falling. I think that we were monkeys before we were men and pollywogs before we were monkeys, and oysters before that . . . And you think that everybody that isn't an Episcopalian will go to Hell, and I don't . . . So I'm not going to stand up and preach what I don't believe for a living—the way poor father does.”

But Edward said nothing of the kind. Why spoil a whole summer? Why not wait till the very last minute, and *then* tell Dear Mother that he was going to duck out of being a minister? Besides, John would be home in August. If Dear Mother proved to be too awfully horrid and despotic, one could always go down to the sea with John, and John would help one to France and to the studio of a good master.

So he accepted Dear Mother's announcement about the divinity school with becoming gravity and until John's arrival in August continued to play the hypocrite.

July was a dull month for Edward. It was so hot that the pencil or the brush kept slipping sideways in his fingers, and so much water had fallen in June that mosquitoes made out-of-door sketching impossible. To make matters worse the Rugles family had gone to the White Mountains for the summer, and both Sarah and Dear Mother were almost murderously ill with hay fever.

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But this was really a blessing in disguise, for just when the two women seemed to be making life intolerable for the men of the family, dearest grandmother sent Dear Mother a check, and Dear Mother decided at once to take Sarah and herself to the White Mountains for a stay of three weeks. Edward begged very hard to be taken too. The White Mountains were vague to him, but he felt that somewhere among them he would be sure to stumble on the Ruggles family—Alice especially; and even if he didn't, the mountains and the trees and waterfalls would be fun to draw. But Dear Mother could not see how any good purpose could be served by Edward's going. He wasn't a daughter who might possibly land a husband, and the check was rather small.

So the two women, their noses red and angry, departed alone. And if they left much heat in the rectory and many mosquitoes outside, they left also an atmosphere of intense peace and quiet.

For a few days just before the return of Mrs. Eaton and Sarah, Edward and his father had the rectory to themselves. James had either gone to the city on one of his periodic sprees or else he had gone to Newport to visit some rich friends. He himself had said Newport.

Those few days with his father were perhaps the happiest days of Edward's life. Their meals to-

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gether had all the gaiety of little picnics. They discussed every subject under the sun, and for the time being were absolutely free from female domination or nagging. Upon the last night of those few happy days, just when it was getting to be bedtime, Mr. Eaton suddenly asked his son a leading question.

"Eddie," he said, "you're not going to the divinity school, are you?"

"No, *sir!*" said Edward.

"That is final, is it, and not subject to sudden change owing to irresistible pressure?" Mr. Eaton smiled as he spoke, and Edward smiled back at him.

"I'll have to tell mother that I'm not going," said Edward, "and there'll be a row. I've tried to tell her a hundred times. But nothing comes of it; I get too panicky. I'm a perfect coward where mother's concerned. And I don't know why. I'm too big to be whipped. There isn't a blessed thing she can do to hurt me, and yet I'm scared to death of her."

"But she'll have to know."

"If I could tell her that I was going to the law school instead of the divinity school it wouldn't be so bad. But it's the telling her that I'm going to be an artist is what I can't face. You know how she is about people who paint and sculpture and

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write—I mean live people. Dead artists are all right with mother—Walter Scott and Raphael and Milton and Praxiteles. But the live ones are beyond the pale. They are not only low and vulgar, but lost . . . What I'm afraid of is that mother will take sick or something like that, and that nothing will make her well except my going into the church."

"For a mere child," said Mr. Eaton, "you are hideously wise. That was what my mother did to me."

"And that is what Ruth is doing to Bruce with her back."

"In my experience," said Mr. Eaton, "there is nothing that the average woman won't stoop to in order to get her own way. She usually gets it, and usually it is of no especial benefit to herself or anybody concerned."

"I wish you would tell me what I'd better do."

"You mentioned once that John had promised to help you out if you wanted to study in Paris. Why not wait till John shows up and then we three will get together and thrash the thing out?"

Edward stroked his chin ruefully. "I know what that will lead to," he said, "and I suppose it's the only way. But I did hope that one of us Eaton boys would have the courage to stand up to mother and not run away."

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"John ran," said Mr. Eaton, "and Mark ran. But they don't either of them seem to run from anything else. They are fine men, both of them. Even if they did run once, I find myself admiring them and being proud of them. . . ."

"If I became a first-rate artist," said Edward, "and earned lots and lots of money, mother would forgive me."

"If you don't," smiled his father, "you will never forgive yourself, and that would be a lot worse . . . Personally I feel very sure of you. I have always felt sure of all my boys except James. I never had his confidence. I don't know what he is up to half the time, and I am not sure that I want to know."

"He's unlucky," said Edward. "There is nothing really worth doing that he really wants to do. That isn't really his fault, is it? It's no credit to John that he was born wanting to be a sailor or to Mark that he was born wanting to be a farmer. It's their good luck; and it's my good luck that I've got something that seems worth working for and sacrificing for. I can't remember now when it hasn't been more fun to draw and paint than to get into mischief, but I might have been born with the same feeling about getting into mischief—that it was more fun than anything else."

Mr. Eaton rose reluctantly and said that it was

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time to go to bed. Edward and his father lighted their respective candles.

"Why do women want to have their own way so much?" asked Edward.

"Nobody knows surely," said Mr. Eaton, "but it is probably vanity." And he started to ascend the stairs. He moved slowly and as if his feet were a little too heavy for him. When he had reached the top of the stairs with Edward a step or two behind him, he turned and said: "Good night, Eddie, and sleep well . . . How peaceful the house seems."

"Doesn't it," said Edward.

"It's a curious thing," said Mr. Eaton, "that the worst wars aren't fought by armies in the field, but within the four walls of human habitations which we call homes. They are nearly always wars of self-aggrandizement and oppression. I once heard Mark Twain make a speech. He said that he *loved* the human race, but that he wished he had it back in the ark—with an auger. Good night, Eddie."

During the small hours of the next morning Edward was waked by a train whistling for Bartow Station. A long time afterward he heard his brother James hunting for the keyhole in the front door. A little later he heard sounds similar to

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those which one hears on a ship at sea during rough weather.

But at the breakfast table James seemed sober enough and ate with a good appetite.

IV

ABOUT noon that day Sarah and Dear Mother arrived. They were in a highly satisfied, triumphant mood. They had found relief from their hay fever. Dear Mother had met the Ruggles family face to face in a hotel lobby—the first hotel they had gone to—and routed them. She had told the manager of the hotel that he was harboring atheists, and that either the atheists must go or she must. The manager explained that in the laws governing the expulsion of guests from hotels there was no mention of atheism and that therefore much as he would always hope to oblige Mrs. Eaton, there was nothing that he could do.

Mrs. Eaton and her daughter had therefore driven a dozen miles to a different hotel, and it was the luckiest thing in the world that they had done so. The hotel containing the Ruggles had caught fire—probably a divine hint of what the future held in store for them—and though the fire had been promptly subdued, there had been a panic and several guests had been hurt.

But the good luck was not so much in escaping

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this calamity. At the Jefferson—the hotel to which they had moved—they had met a Mr. Chumleigh, not a young man, my dear, but a lawyer and well-to-do, who had taken a great fancy to Sarah. They had taken many of the easier mountain walks together, played cribbage, and discovered that they had much in common. Both were sufferers in winter from chilblains and in summer from hay fever. Dear Mother was inclined to believe that the dear people had reached an understanding. It had been pretty to see how Mr. Chumleigh, by no means a callow youth, my dear, had jumped to do Sarah's bidding.

But she would not talk about Mr. Chumleigh too much or praise him too much. She, or rather Sarah, had invited him for the following week-end and they would be better able to judge for themselves.

In spite of Dear Mother's assertion that she would not talk about Mr. Chumleigh too much or praise him too much, she was not able to prevent herself from doing a good deal of both. And by the time he had arrived to spend the week-end, she had pictured him for the benefit of Mr. Eaton, James and Edward, somewhat as follows:

He was straight as an Indian and very broad-shouldered. In spite of the fact that he was no longer a callow youth, there wasn't a gray hair on

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his head. He had the alert, springy walk of a young man. His head was really the extraordinary thing about him. She had never seen a more intellectual forehead. And as for his dress, fastidiousness and taste could go no further.

Well, Mr. Chumleigh arrived bag and baggage, and Edward, who watched the arrival from the bedroom window—the bedroom that had been Mark's when he was preparing for the church—perceived at once that Dear Mother had spoken nothing but the truth. But she hadn't spoken the whole truth.

It was true that Mr. Chumleigh was straight as an Indian, but then he couldn't have been more than five feet high. His shoulders did have the appearance of being extraordinarily broad, but then they were as square as the end of a match-box and his head seemed to be placed directly upon them without the interposition of any neck at all. A dapper straw hat being removed disclosed the fact that whereas Mr. Chumleigh did not seem to have any gray hair, this was because such hair as had remained upon his head had been dyed a dead black. If height, breadth and the bulge of a Canada melon denoted intellect, then you might truthfully have said that he had an intellectual forehead. He wore a bushy little pair of curly black side whiskers, and the shaven areas of his

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face were a strong purple. His nose was lumpy and his smile disclosed a brilliant set of teeth, many of which were obviously too good to be true. The springy, youthful walk turned out to be a dipping motion, achieved by rising high on his toes at the end of each step. And as for his clothes—well, if it was true that fastidiousness and taste could go no further, it seemed to Edward that they had gone much too far. But Edward was prejudiced. He had always hated spats.

But Sarah and Mrs. Eaton were as proud of their little caterpillar as if it had been a real man, and on close acquaintance he turned out to be an unhappy, vulgar, kindly soul who would make Sarah an excellent husband if only she would take the trouble to make him an excellent wife. He called her either "My Lady" or "Princess," and it was amusing to observe the airs which she gave herself.

There was one thing about Mr. Chumleigh which Edward could not understand. Why had Mr. Chumleigh fallen in love with sister Sarah? The truth was that Mr. Chumleigh had had so little to do with women in the course of his life that he glorified them as a special and noble race apart. His mother had died when he was a little boy. His youth had been spent in a desperate struggle to complete his education and to advance

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his fortunes. Such love affairs as he had experienced had been entirely in his imagination. The face of some lovely female seen on a street-car would haunt him for days. He would imagine their meeting; the mutual attraction; the courtship; the presents which he gave her, and how she received them. His feeling for her was always that of a slave for a superior being. He was a Sir Walter to fling his best coat across the mud puddle for her to step on. In these marriages which take place solely in the imagination the little man had been a regular Turk. But it is doubtful if he had ever held a real live woman's hand. If any of a thousand women had encouraged Mr. Chumleigh he would have straightway fallen in love and been that woman's slave for life.

How a man so timid should have scraped acquaintance with a young woman so carefully brought up and hedged about by a watchful mother eye may seem mysterious. But one must remember that for a long time Sarah had been worrying about men, and had firmly determined to capture one before her years were too many and it should be too late.

Yet from the many men stopping at the Jefferson Hotel she had not especially singled out Mr. Chumleigh. Any man would have done, for she felt a perfect competence to take any man and

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make what she pleased of him. So what does Sarah do? She takes a long mountain drive with Dear Mother, and when they have returned to the hotel, and are crossing the veranda on their way to the big front door, she drops a glove.

She does not appear to notice that she has dropped it. It lies limp and abandoned upon the veranda floor while Sarah makes a great show of mothering her Dear Mother and watching over each precious footstep. But her ears are astrain for the sound of masculine steps. Isn't there a single "gentleman" upon the hotel veranda? She doesn't propose to lose that glove, but at the thought that she may have to turn back and pick it up herself, she rages.

Then suddenly there is a welcome sound of footsteps. One shoe has a faint squeak. But Sarah does not bat an eyelid. She has opened the big front door and is mothering Dear Mother through. The footsteps are pursuing them. Halfway to the desk, a voice is heard in their immediate rear.

"I beg your pardon, madam."

Mrs. Eaton and her daughter turn superbly. It is to Mrs. Eaton that Mr. Chumleigh has addressed himself and it is to that noble female that he is offering the glove. He holds it tenderly extended as if it were a wounded bird.

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"I beg your pardon, madam," he repeats, "but I think you let this glove fall."

Has Dear Mother a latent sense of comedy? She lifts her two hands, shows that there is a glove upon each, smiles benignly and says, "Perhaps it is my daughter's."

There is presently no doubt that it is. Sarah looks to see if she has lost a glove, finds that she has and exclaims: "How very courteous of you and how very stupid of me. Thank you."

It is almost impossible for Sarah to take the glove from Mr. Chumleigh's hand without touching the hand itself. Sarah does not attempt the impossible. The ball of her soft forefinger touches the side of Mr. Chumleigh's thumb ever so slightly. Meanwhile and during a mere moment of time her really fine eyes have searched into the depths of his.

She seems to him all that a woman should seem—gracious, beautiful, condescending. "I am very happy," he says, "to have been the means of rendering you this very slight service."

"The service," says Sarah, "is not so slight as you might think. I have a particular sentiment about these particular gloves." Mr. Chumleigh's heart sinks. He scents a romance in which he is not involved. But Sarah puts him out of his misery and at one and the same time shows him the

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kind of tender, loving daughter she is. "My darling father," she says, "gave them to me."

It was thus that Mr. Chumleigh swallowed Sarah's bait. In a day or so she gave her line a tug and felt confident that she had hooked him.

In the excitement of Dear Mother and Sister Sarah over Mr. Chumleigh, Edward's career was temporarily lost sight of by everybody except himself. He lived for John's return. It might be any day now. And when the morning paper was delivered, as sometimes happened, he tried to be the first at it in order to see if there were any word of John's ship, the *Aurora*, in the shipping news.

When at last the *Aurora* docked in Brooklyn and soon after a telegram came from John to say that he could not come home for another two days, Edward's patience snapped like an over-tightened string. Couldn't he go to Brooklyn to meet John and bring him home? No member of the family had ever so much as set foot on the deck of John's ship. It would be such an interesting experience. And it would cost only the fare to New York and two rides at five cents apiece on the Third Avenue elevated.

But Dear Mother's hay fever had returned and so had Sarah's. The novelty and excitement of Sarah's engagement to Mr. Chumleigh had worn

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off a little, and the notion of even a small sum of money being spent on an unnecessary trip to Brooklyn was vetoed.

"It is going to take the most careful management to give your dear sister a pretty wedding," said Dear Mother, "and we must all of us put a check upon our extravagances."

"But there'd be no harm in my going if it didn't cost anything, would there?" asked Edward. And Dear Mother, feeling that she was on safe ground and committing herself to nothing, said that there would be none. She even said that it was sweet of Edward to be so eager to greet his brother, and that she was sorry that the trip could not be afforded.

"Well, then," said Edward joyously, for he felt that Dear Mother had gone too far to withdraw, "I'll go and it won't cost anything. And John won't mind paying my way back."

"You'll go and it won't cost anything!" exclaimed Dear Mother. "How will you go?"

"I'll walk."

Here Sarah, whose nose was running unpleasantly, sniffed in with a disagreeable, "Silly, you don't know the way."

Edward's adventure hung in the balance. He realized that he must be cunning as the serpent or receive an immediate and peremptory order to

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stay at home. So he said: "It isn't altogether John and the *Aurora* that I want to see. I've never seen Brooklyn. It's the city of churches. From the Bridge you can see all the steeples—hundreds and hundreds of them."

The miserable hypocrite spoke in a voice that had a touch of awe in it, and Mrs. Eaton very promptly gave her consent to the expedition.

"The walk won't hurt the boy," she said, "and it will be an inspiration to him to visit such a wonderful center of religion."

Edward did not wait to have this permission recalled. He kissed his Dear Mother, dashed into the hall for his hat and left by the back door. In so doing he paused in the pantry to make a modest little package of bread crusts and chocolate.

Ten minutes later he was walking the ties between Bartow and Baychester. Half of the distance was a low trestle over salt water, and you had to watch your step. But it wouldn't have mattered much to Edward if he had slipped and fallen through, for like all the young people brought up around Pelham Bay, he could swim like an eel.

It was noon when he reached the Harlem River and crossed by the old Third Avenue bridge. It was a hot noon too, and it was pleasant to find

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how very much Third Avenue was cooled by the shadows of the elevated railroad.

A block is a block, and there were some hundred and thirty numbered blocks ahead of him, something over six miles of hard pavement. Beyond that the streets had names, he knew that much, but he could only guess how many such streets there were, and how many long hard miles separated him from the famous Brooklyn Bridge.

When at last he came to the Brooklyn Bridge it was after three o'clock and he had been walking steadily since breakfast. He was tired now and a little lame. But when he had walked well out on the Bridge, and saw the river and the ships below him, and the dizzy wires above, and all the spires of Brooklyn beyond, and to the right the great hazy stretch of New York's harbor, and felt the cool breeze mousing in under his sweaty jacket, he experienced a superb happiness and refreshment. Then there were no such things as fatigue in the world, or meanness, or swollen feet. It was glorious to be alive. Many times between Manhattan and Brooklyn he stopped and looked, and in his mind's eye superbly drew and painted the superb things that he saw.

And all the superb things that he saw, except the water and sky, were the works of men. Not women.

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The *Aurora* was a tall, full-rigged ship, and the hand of coincidence brought Edward over her side at just the moment that his brother John was about to go ashore. John had changed to a shore suit and was carrying a heavy valise. An ancient hack drawn by an ancient horse was waiting for him on the dock. It was obvious that John was a little disconcerted by Edward's unexpected arrival. And Edward perceived this at once.

"I oughtn't to have come, ought I?" he blurted out.

"It's all right," said John. "Don't worry. You come along with me."

"I will wait here till you come back," said Edward.

"I'm not coming back—not for a week. I'm going to Flushing for two days and then home."

Edward wondered why his brother should have to go to Flushing for two days. But he did not express his wonder.

"I was crazy to see you, John," he said. "And so I came. Mother thought it was an extravagant idea, so I walked. She wouldn't have let me come if it hadn't been that there's so many churches in Brooklyn. She thought that the sight of them might do me good."

"You walked?" asked John. They had reached the ancient hack and John held the door open

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while Edward climbed in. It rocked to his weight like a rowboat. John followed Edward into the hack. The driver cracked his whip. There was a great swaying and creaking and they were off.

"You walked?" repeated John. "All the way from Bartow?"

"I haven't told mother that I'm not going into the church, and I wanted to know if you still felt that you could help me to learn painting. Father'll help in every way *he* can."

"I'll help," said John. "I said I would. But I can't help as much as I'd like to. When I made you that promise, Eddie, I had nobody to think about but you and me. Nobody. Well, right after that I got married and—well, old man, my wife's got a baby. That's why I'm going to Flushing—to see them."

It wasn't easy for John to talk about his marriage—not even to Edward. No explanations were possible.

"Do you remember old Jackson, who kept the harness shop in Westchester?" he asked. "I married his daughter. She and her mother were kind of down on their luck—the old man was dead—and I was kind of down on my luck. It's nice for a sailor to think that when he gets back to shore he's got some place to go. It all happened in a

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hurry. I meant to write mother about it, but I didn't. I'll tell her."

"I never tell mother anything," said Edward, "unless I'm pretty sure she'll like it."

John sighed. Then he said: "Flushing's a dear old place. You'll have fun knocking about for a couple of days. Have you eaten?"

Edward nodded. He was trying to recall just what some knowing boys had once said to him about the Jackson girl and his brother James. When had John ever found the opportunity to fall in love with her and court her? It was all rather mysterious. John married and a father! Himself an uncle!

"How's everybody?" asked John.

"You knew father has some trouble with his heart?"

"I didn't know. Serious?"

"He says not. But it hurts him sometimes. It's as if somebody had knocked his wind out. I saw him have one attack. He never says much. But I think we ought to know just what's the matter with him."

"We will," said John. "How is he otherwise?"

"I'm so used to seeing him that he doesn't seem to change much. But I guess you'll think he seems old and tired. It's been a bad year for mother's and Sarah's hay fever. They went to the White

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Mountains for it. Sarah came back with a funny little bald-headed man in tow. Name's Chumleigh, a lawyer. They are going to be married. Mother's all for it."

"Ruth and Bruce?"

"Ruth cuts a lot of ice in high sassiety," said Edward, "and Bruce is her husband. He does all the things he doesn't like to do and isn't interested in, or if he doesn't Ruth will have a terrible back-ache. He's a mess."

Edward wondered if John was going to ask about James. But John didn't, so after a silence Edward said, "James is the same old James."

"I'm not interested in James," said John. "He's a bad egg."

"He can twist mother round his little finger," said Edward. "She's always giving him money, and he saves it until he's got enough to go on a big spree. He was sick the other night. If mother'd been home I'd have let her find out."

"Oh," said John, "he'd have told her some lie and she'd have believed him."

The house in which John's wife lived with her mother and her baby was an odd little white house covered with long hand-split shingles. There were some fine old lilac trees in the front yard, and above and beyond the roof, though growing on a

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near-by property, could be seen the top of the cedar of Lebanon which has made Flushing famous among botanists. Edward thought that the house and the lilacs and the cedar made a charming composition.

John, his face serious and troubled, moved up to the front door without stopping to see anything, and knocked.

His wife opened the door. She looked embarrassed and untidy. Edward noticed that John did not at once clasp her in his arms and kiss her. Instead they shook hands—John firmly and Mrs. John limply.

"This," said John, "is Edward—my kid brother."

Mrs. John gave Edward a limp hand. "Won't you come in?" she said. "Mommer's out back minding baby."

"You got my telegram?" John asked.

"It didn't say when you'd come; but I've been expecting you all day."

They went into the house, John lugging his big valise. The house was not so charming inside as out. The furniture was cheap and new, and the wall-paper old and dirty. It was obvious that Mrs. John was not a good housekeeper. Edward felt shocked and disillusioned. This was not the kind

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of wife for brother John. She was common and she didn't look clean.

They sat down in three chairs and made conversation. There were so many awkward silences that Edward could not keep track of them. His sister-in-law was dull and colorless and ill at ease. John tried to behave like the head of a house.

One gathered mostly that the cost of living was steadily mounting, that the doctor had advised Mrs. John to stop nursing her baby and that it was hard to get milk that agreed with him.

"I wouldn't want to live in Flushing at all," said Mrs. John, "if it wasn't for mommer. She was raised here. But I was raised in Westchester."

John, remembering how anxious she had been to get away from Westchester, was troubled. "But I wouldn't want to live in Westchester," said he.

"You wouldn't have to, only between voyages. I wouldn't think a sailor would care much where his family lived. He ain't hardly ever with them."

At this point there was a knocking on the front door. Mrs. John went so quickly and alertly to answer it that it almost seemed as if she had been expecting it. As she left the sitting room she closed the door. John looked at Edward in a helpless kind of way and then lowered his eyes.

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Mrs. John's voice could be heard, and a man's voice. The man might have been the milkman, or a book agent. The only thing that could have led one to believe him something else was the fact that when one first heard his voice it was loud and confident, but that immediately after Mrs. John had spoken it was greatly lowered.

Presently Mrs. John returned. She had a queer look in her eyes. They looked at once pleased and defiant.

More conversation; more awkward silences. Edward was miserably uncomfortable. Then mommer called from "out back" that she wanted to come in. And everybody went to help the blind woman get baby's carriage up the back steps. Baby was asleep. There were two dirty white veils over his face.

Edward dramatized the situation. A father who had never seen his child . . . Mrs. John lifted the veils. And both John and Edward, looking into the carriage at the sleeping child, were immeasurably shocked. Edward was shocked into speech.

"He doesn't look one bit like either of you," he said. "He looks exactly like his Uncle James."

Edward seemed to be busy looking at the child. Mrs. John took the opportunity to give John a

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questioning stare. John took the opportunity to frown at Mrs. John and shake his head.

But Edward, looking up suddenly, saw not only the questioning stare but the frown and the shaken head. It was just as if they had confessed everything to him . . . So that was it . . . He remembered what the boys had said about James and the Jackson girl.

To leave behind them Mrs. John and her mother and the baby who so resembled James was a great relief to both John and Edward. As their train neared Bartow, Edward, who had been worrying, said, "Where shall we say we've been?"

"If we don't say anything," said John, "mother will think that you've been on the *Aurora* with me. But I think I'll have to tell father about my marriage. If anything happened to me, my wife would have to come to him for help, and it would be better if he were prepared."

"Nothing's going to happen to you."

"I don't *want* to tell father—if that's what you mean, Eddie."

"If you are going to tell him, I think you ought to tell him everything. I think you ought to tell him why you married her." Edward was painfully embarrassed. "I think," he went on, "that I

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know why you married her. And it was dandy of you."

"It wasn't," said John. "I had to. The baby was our own flesh and blood. If there'd been an open scandal it would have just about finished father. But I can't tell father why I married her. It would sound too much like whining. Eddie, this business has made me feel very close to you, and I'm grateful to you for standing by me. I'll do the same for you to the limit of my ability."

But Edward did not see how John with his small pay and a wife and a baby and a mother-in-law on his hands was going to be able to give him the help that he had promised. And he said so.

There was no hack at the station and they took turns lugging John's big valise.

"About me going to Paris to study," said Edward. "I've been thinking it over. And I don't see how you can spare the money."

"We'll have to figure close," said John simply, "but you're going to have your chance. And maybe you can help yourself out a little. Some of those sketches you made for us last night were funny as the dickens. Why don't you make up a bundle of them and send them to *Puck* or *Judge* or the *Age*? Perhaps it would be better to take a lot of drawings under your arm and go to see the editor yourself . . . Do it tomorrow."

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"It's an idea," said Edward. "I don't feel very confident. But I can try."

They reached the rectory presently. And although John was warmly enough welcomed by his mother and Sarah, their manner toward him was patronizing and condescending. Mr. Eaton, however, was unaffectedly glad. James, it developed, though just returned from a "visit to Newport," had accepted some other invitation and departed hurriedly. He had left word, however, that he would return in time to see John. John smiled grimly. He did not think that James would be back in time to see him. And he was right.

When he was at home John made a point of doing everything that Dear Mother asked him to do without question. To have crossed her will in the matter of his career had been enough. The afternoon of his arrival she had the carriage out to make a round of her private charities, and she insisted on John's accompanying her.

Dear Mother and John having driven off toward Westchester, Edward lost no time in starting out at a trot in the opposite direction. He felt sure that by now the Ruggleses must have returned from their holiday in the White Mountains, and he ran all the way to their house in New Rochelle. He was very damp and red when he reached the gate in the wall.

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Mr. Ruggles himself opened the gate, and Edward had a distant glimpse of Alice and her mother, dressed in white, with broad sun hats, busy among the flowers.

"Well, well, Edward!" exclaimed Mr. Ruggles. "I am glad that you have come in person. *I've* stood up for you; now make your peace in your own way."

Edward's jaw dropped. "What have *I* done?"

Mr. Ruggles merely turned and called to Alice. "Alice, come here a moment. Come here and tell this young man what it is that he has done."

Alice came, but she came very slowly. She came as one who takes no interest whatever in any young man. Edward, his face quite abject with mortification and worry, went forward to meet her. He held out both hands to her, but her own were full of flowers.

"Oh, Alice!" exclaimed Edward. "What *have* I done?"

His distress was so obvious, and obviously so sincere, that Alice softened to him. "You might have written," she said.

"I did. I wrote many times. And you—you might have written to me."

Alice was frankly puzzled and taken aback and distressed. She dropped the flowers to the ground, made a swift step forward and caught both Ed-

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ward's hands in hers. "You *know* that I wrote to you," she said. "Don't you *know* that I did?"

"And don't you know I wrote to you?"

Here Mr. Ruggles, smiling in his kindly, cynical way, joined them. "Tampering with the U. S. mails," he said, "is a prison offense. Now who, I wonder, has been tampering? I can assure you, Edward, that it isn't any of the Ruggles family."

"I wrote to you twice," said Alice.

"I wrote to you five times," said Edward. "I would have written six times but I couldn't lay my hands on a sixth stamp. As a matter of fact I did write six times, but I only mailed five."

"Did you mail those letters yourself?" asked Mr. Ruggles. "Or did you lay them on the hall table?"

At this moment Mrs. Ruggles joined them and they told her about the letters. She merely smiled.

Both she and her husband as well as Alice and Edward knew who had taken the letters. But Edward found it difficult to name his own mother as the criminal, and the Ruggles family did not do so.

"Next time anybody goes away," said Alice, "we'll be more careful . . . And I thought you didn't like me any more."

"And I thought you didn't like me any more," said Edward.

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Then they both laughed at the absurdity of any such supposition. And then they stood and looked at each other until Edward became suddenly self-conscious.

"John's home," he said. "I met him in Brooklyn and we came home together. He's fine. There's worse things than being a sailor."

"That's true too," said Mr. Ruggles. "But speaking of sailors, how's art?"

"John says I ought to send some drawings to the comic magazines and see what happens."

"Don't send them," said Mr. Ruggles, "take them. We met one of the editors of the *Age* in the mountains and we told him all about the talent which we think you have, and he said, 'Put a roll of the boy's drawings under his arm and send him to see us.'"

"I told you that in one of my letters," said Alice.

"Oh, but that's wonderful!" Edward said. "Did he really say for me to come and see him?"

"He really did," said Mr. Ruggles. "We are all witnesses. But we want to warn you not to be disappointed if he can't use the pretty pictures. If he likes anything, he'll like the comic pictures of insects and bugs and caterpillars . . . You know, my boy, it would really be a fearfully good joke if you could start right in and earn your own liv-

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ing. A man who earns his own living honestly can tell anybody else in the world to go to blazes."

There was a short silence. "Wouldn't it be wonderful!" exclaimed Edward.

"Let's go into the house," said Mr. Ruggles, "and compel Mrs. Ruggles to make a pitcher of lemonade and furnish cookies. We'll have a good talk."

Edward and Alice lingered behind to pick up the flowers which Alice had dropped. It was wonderful being together again. "When are you going to tell your mother about the divinity school?" Alice asked.

"I don't know. I was planning to run away. But now I think I'd better wait until I've seen the editor. I hate to run away. Perhaps if mother knew that I could actually earn money by drawing pictures, she'd be more reasonable . . . What did you say in your letters?"

"Nothing. What did you say in yours?"

"The same."

Then they both laughed, and each carrying about half of the flowers followed Mr. and Mrs. Ruggles into the house.

On his way home from the Ruggles' Edward planned just exactly what he should say to Dear Mother about the letters, about the ministry and

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about the career of art which he intended to pursue. John might have run away, and so might Mark, but Edward wasn't going to do any such thing. He was going to have it out with Dear Mother and let her know what he thought about people who diverted and perhaps read other people's letters and caused misunderstandings among friends. Why shouldn't he defy her? Why be afraid? She couldn't hurt him in any way—neither physically nor mentally.

And when he reached the rectory he was a militant youth inflamed by the justice of his cause. But when he marched boldly into the library and found Dear Mother alone and knew that the hour of his opportunity to play the man had struck, his spirit weakened. He was not able to say any of the things that he had planned—not a single one of them.

"Where have you been, Edward?" she asked. "Not to New Rochelle, I feel sure, after all that I have told you about that dreadful Ruggles family."

She eyed him from under bent brows. Her shelf of upper teeth seemed to stick out at him more than ever. He wondered why he should be so dreadfully afraid of her, and only knew that he was. And he loved her, too. That was the queer thing. Why should he love her? She was a tyrant, she was unjust, she was untruthful in the cause of

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truth, crooked in the cause of straight dealing, a spy and a bigot, a snob and an egomaniac. She was without any lovely or lovable quality of either the body or the spirit. And yet he loved her. That perhaps is why he turned coward and evaded the issue. If he had treated her as indeed she soundly deserved, her power over him would have crumbled into dust.

"I believe that I asked you where you have been," said Dear Mother, "and if I did ask you, why then I am waiting for an answer—am I not?"

"I followed the beach all the way to the City Island bridge," said Edward glibly. "It was very interesting—all the marine life in the pools. Then I found how late it was getting to be and I came home by the road. I ran nearly all the way."

He wasn't in the least ashamed of lying to her. Every other possible way of keeping the peace with her had been tried by the various members of the family. James, who was the family's most successful and accomplished liar, got along better with her than anybody else.

"You look very messy," said Dear Mother. "I think you had better have a bath and change before dinner."

When he had bathed Edward carried his clothes into John's room to dress. Opportunities for private conversations were rare in the Eaton house-

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hold and he wished very much to tell his brother what Mr. Ruggles had said about the editor.

John's was the most interesting room in the house. It had an old stone fireplace with an iron crane, and above the mantel hung a pair of Revolutionary sabers which John when he was a small boy had bought—immediately after Christmas, when he was in funds—from the blacksmith in City Island. John had spent several weeks of his boyhood in working upon these relics with emery powder and oil. Of late years Edward had occasionally taken them down and given them a cleaning.

When Edward entered the room with his armload of clothes, John had taken down one of the sabers and was making cuts and passes at the air.

"You've been cleaning these old boys?" he asked. "I'm obliged to you. They're the only things that I ever really wanted when I was a boy that I finally got. You could put up an awful scrap with this thing if you knew how."

"I guess," said Edward as he exchanged his dressing gown for an undershirt, "that you could put up an awful fight with it if you were mad and didn't know how."

"The best way to fight a man," said John, "is to hit him first and to hit him in the pit of the stomach. But you want to be sure that you put

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everything you've got into that first blow." He replaced the sabers. Then he turned to Edward with a mischievous smile. "Was she home?" he asked.

"Who?"

"Mother told me a long song and dance about you and some fair Alice whom you have been forbidden to see. Mother added that she and her infidel family were just back from the White Mountains. And that she hoped and trusted that you would not go near them."

"Being forbidden to do something isn't promising not to, is it?" said Edward. "They were home all right . . . Their house seems more like home to me than this house does. There isn't a finer man in the world than Mr. Ruggles or a kinder one. Mother hates him because he doesn't believe that the whale swallowed Jonah."

"You know, Eddie," said John, "you're getting old enough to take things pretty seriously. Are you in love?"

To the shy and modest Edward there was something terribly rough and brutal about this sudden direct question. He had always loved Alice. Everybody knew that. As for being in love with her, that was a new idea. He had never thought about it in just that way. Their relationship had been a warm and happy drifting, an inarticulate

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strengthening of bonds. His first instinct was to laugh—as normally as possible—and to be surprised and say, “What! Me? Me in love?” And laugh some more. But that seemed disloyal to Alice. So he said:

“We’ve always been pretty close, John. But we’re just kids. I didn’t know anybody took us seriously until I found that mother was hooking my letters to her and hers to me.”

“It wouldn’t make you unhappy to go to Paris for a few years and leave her?”

Edward considered this and then said: “No—not unhappy. We’d find out mighty quick just how we did feel about each other. And if we found that we did want to be married—why, I’d be learning how to take care of her, wouldn’t I? . . . Say, John—Mr. Ruggles knows one of the editors of the *Age* and told him about me, and he says for me to bring him a lot of my drawings and paintings, all kinds, so’s he can judge if I’m any good at all. I thought I’d sneak off after breakfast tomorrow and go see him. And I wish you’d give me the fare if you can spare it. I’d ask you to lend it to me if there was any chance of my paying it back.”

“Gee, that’s exciting!” said John. “You can have anything I’ve got. Let’s go over all your

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stuff after dinner and see what you'd better show him."

The offices of the Age were in a tall narrow building on the north side of Union Square. It took all of Edward's courage to enter that building; he walked up and down in front of the door eleven times before he finally went in. He then ascended seven floors in an elevator and stood for a long time reading the words

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in gold letters on a glass door. His heart was beating much too fast, and he felt sure that he was going to stammer and make a fool of himself.

At last he pushed open the glass door and found himself confronted by a very small boy with a very much freckled face.

"Can I see Mr. Townley?"

"Don't know," said the small boy. "Got an appointment?"

"Not exactly. He said for me to bring him some drawings."

"Humph! What's your name?"

"Eaton."

"Sit down."

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The small boy pointed to a chair. Edward sat down with the big package of drawings on his knees. The small boy went away and came back. "You'll have to wait a few minutes," he said.

Edward waited for three-quarters of an hour. He became very miserable and despondent. Then all of a sudden a little round face with tortoise-rim spectacles appeared and a kind, brisk voice said:

"You Eaton? Sorry you've had to wait. Come with me. I'm Townley."

Mr. Townley's office looked out over Union Square. It was a cozy little place with some deep chairs and almost all the drawings in the world either tacked on the wall or heaped on the desks and tables. There were also photographs of celebrated people on which they had written their celebrated names.

"Our mutual friend Ruggles," said Townley, "is a whale of a good art critic. We don't always agree, but I have so much confidence in him that I've looked forward to seeing your work with real excitement."

Up to this point Edward had not been able to say anything. And he was not now able, though he made a choking sound which resembled an effort at articulate speech. He fumbled nervously at the knotted string which held the drawings.

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"Here," said Townley, "let me." He cut the string.

Then he sat down and in a silence which seemed to Edward peculiarly awful began to look at the drawings. When he had looked at the first six and laid them aside, he turned to Edward and said: "I don't know what it would be wise for me to say, Eaton. So I think I'll just try to be frank and honest, even if frankness and honesty aren't good for you . . . Of all the men who have brought their work to me, old men and young men, you have far and away the biggest talent."

Edward felt as if the breath had been knocked right out of him. He tried to speak and only got out one word: "Me?"

It sounded very thin and silly and inappropriate, and he blushed to the eyes. But little Mr. Townley put back his head and laughed until he had to take off his glasses and wipe them. Then Edward got to laughing, and then all at once he felt very happy to be where he was, and as much at ease with Mr. Townley as he would have been with Mr. Ruggles.

"I'm going to look at them all," said Mr. Townley. "I hope there'll be something that we can use right off. Obviously you drew these things for the love of it and not with a view to the peculiar needs of a publication like the *Age*."

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Twenty minutes passed, and Mr. Townley started to go through the drawings again. But this time he went quickly and sorted the comic pictures of insect and caterpillar life into one pile. There were eight of these, and Mr. Townley said that he would like to use them in the *Age*.

"I will use one every week," he said, "as long as you care to draw them, and probably when you have studied our requirements a little you will do other things that we can use. But my dear boy, I hope you won't get into a comic weekly rut. Mr. Ruggles has told me that you are very serious about art, that you wish to go to Paris and study. I think that with hard work you will become one of the very, very best—but not without the hard work. And just because you find that you can make a living by drawing caterpillars, don't for Heaven's sake pull up short and stop drawing pictures of the things that seem beautiful to you."

Edward touched one of the caterpillar drawings with a timid forefinger. "Can I make a living doing those?" he asked.

"We will pay you ten dollars apiece for them," said Mr. Townley, "if that is satisfactory, and if the pictures catch on and people like them, as I think they will, we will pay you more."

"And I'm to do one every week?" Mr. Townley nodded. "Gee!" said Edward. "That's a lot of

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money." And his face broke into a happy smile.

"It would keep you in Paris if you went there to study. When I was a student in Paris there were plenty of young men who got along on very much less."

Edward was pretty nearly dazed with happiness.

"Whenever you come to town," said Mr. Townley, "I hope you'll look me up. Anything that I can do to help you, I'll do gladly. Before you go abroad we had better have a long talk. I know the ropes pretty well, and I can give you some useful letters. And now I wish you'd do me a favor. This little head—is it Mary?" Edward nodded. "I wish you would write your name on it and make me a present of it. It is so full of feeling and the color is so sweet and cool. I'd like to have it." In one corner of the picture Edward wrote his name. "Thank you. I'll treasure that. I believe in my heart that some day these early sketches of yours will sell for large sums of money."

Those particular ones never did so far as anybody knows. Edward went home in such a daze that he left the drawings in the elevated train, and what became of them thereafter is sheer guesswork. To Edward the loss meant absolutely nothing. He had a check for eighty dollars in his pocket, and the future looked to him as if it were entirely composed of roses.

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That night he told his father and John. Dear Mother and Sarah had set aside this particular evening for a conference in which every item of Sarah's trousseau, every detail of her wedding day, and most likely the future activities and deportment of her husband, were to be decided. The ladies therefore having retired, the gentlemen had the library to themselves.

"Tell us what happened, Eddie," said Mr. Eaton the moment they had gone.

"He was dandy to me," said Edward eagerly. "He bought eight of the bug pictures and said he would buy one every week as long as I like to draw 'em. I bet I don't miss a week between now and the time I'm eighty."

"He bought them, you say?" asked John.

"Ten dollars apiece," said Edward. "Eight of 'em. Eight times ten. I can do that in my head. It's eighty." Then he showed them the check which Mr. Townley had given him and continued excitedly: "He made me promise to send him one of 'em every week, and he promised that every four weeks he'd deposit forty dollars in the bank; so that even if I were way off somewhere—even if I were in France—I'd know I had the money. And he said if I *did* go to France he'd give me letters to artists and people who would help me—so if I *did* go to France I wouldn't have

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to ask anyone to help me about money. He said I could live like a prince in the Latin Quarter on two hundred francs a month. A dollar, he said, was about five francs."

"Well," said Mr. Eaton, "are you going to France, or are we going to wake up some fine morning and find that you have gone?"

"If I said that I was going," said Edward, "and mother—you or mother—didn't want me to—you could stop me, couldn't you?—me not being of age?"

"Yes," nodded Mr. Eaton, "we could stop you."

"But," cried Edward, his face twinkling all over with lines of mischief, "if you woke up some fine morning and found that I'd gone, you wouldn't be able to drag me back, would you?"

"No," said Mr. Eaton.

"Then," said Edward, "I'd better not tell anybody whether I'm going or not."

But later that night he had a moment alone with John, and it was arranged between them that Edward should join him on the *Aurora* a few hours before she was to sail.

Edward could not go to sleep for a long time. It seemed so queer to him that he should have had such a wonderful and in all ways honorable boost to his fortune, and that he dared not tell his mother. He felt a little as if he would like to cry.

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Between Edward and his great adventuring into the world there were not now many hours. Some of them, and they were the happiest, he spent with Alice. But even if these hours were the happiest they weren't perfectly happy. They weren't perfectly happy because Alice managed to make Edward feel as if it was very selfish of him to go away and leave her. She was just the least little bit cool about his haste to convert himself into a famous artist. He might, she seemed to think, have put off his going for a year or two.

Were all women alike, Edward wondered? Wasn't there even one in the whole world who could let her man pursue his destiny in his own way, without interfering with him and jeopardizing his chances?

But in his grief at telling her good-bye Edward forgot that she wasn't perfect and only considered how much he loved her, and how much it was hurting him to go away from her. She went with him to the gate in the wall, and then, just when Edward was trying to nerve himself up to the point of kissing her and was failing, she said suddenly, "Aren't you going to kiss me?"

And that made it easy, and as he leaned for the kiss he heard his own voice murmuring "My darling" and felt terribly grown-up. It was a boy and girl kiss to start with, but right in the middle of it

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Alice suddenly clung to him very tightly and closely and changed it into a different kind of a kiss, and then just as suddenly she pushed him away from her and turned and fled.

Edward passed through the little gate and closed it behind him. His hat was still in his hand. He stood and looked at the gate and for the hundredth time read the words on it:

"They say. What say they? Let them say!"

Some of Edward's remaining hours were devoted to the composition of the following letter:

Dearest Mother:

John is going to take me to France in his ship, and I am going to study hard to be an artist. I can earn forty dollars a month right now by drawing pictures and that will be enough for me to live on. I know you will be angry and disappointed, and so I have to write this letter and leave it so that you'll get it when I am gone. If I saw you angry and disappointed I suppose I wouldn't go. But you ought not to want me to be a minister when I don't want to be one, and don't believe half the things they have to say, and when I love to draw and paint, and can't see any wrong in it.

I hope you will write and say you forgive me.

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It isn't easy for a boy even when he's far far away to have to think that his own mother is down on him. And I don't think it's right for a boy when he can earn his own living to stay at home and make just that much extra expense for his father and mother.

I am sitting at the little writing desk in my own room, right here at home, but writing this letter to you makes me feel homesick. So if I'm homesick right here at home, think how it will be when I get to Paris and don't know anybody or the language or anything. I don't like to go away from you and father. It hurts all over. But if I stayed home I'd have to go to the divinity school, and I couldn't stand that.

I don't seem to want to do very bad things, so I don't think you ought to worry about my being in Paris. A man who studied in Paris told me that all the talk about Paris being so wicked is—talk. He says it's just like any other big city, and that you can live the kind of life you want to, and that the good people are admired in Paris just like anywhere else, and bad people are despised.

So good-by, Dearest Mother, and try to forgive me.

Edward.

This letter flung Mrs. Eaton into a terrible

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rage. Three times now her will and her unquestioned knowledge of what was best for her boys had been defied. To make matters worse, the two older boys had not come whining home and acknowledging how mistaken they had been. They had prospered in their chosen lines. And now here was Edward running away from her and the church, and right on the top of that a letter from Mark to say that he was about to be married to the daughter of a neighboring farmer. It was bad enough to be marrying a farmer's daughter, though if George Washington had had a daughter she would have been one, but to make matters worse Mark had made no mention of the church to which his fiancée belonged. Obviously, therefore, she must be either a Roman Catholic or a creature who believed in nothing at all. The enclosed photograph showed her to be a little too plump but exquisitely pretty.

Mrs. Eaton proceeded to work herself into a series of devastating sick headaches, which caused more suffering to others than to herself, and her only comfort in the world was James. He saw his opportunity and toadied to her unmercifully and wormed his way deeper and deeper into her good graces and closer and closer to her pocket-book.

Meanwhile Edward was on the broad Atlantic,

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rolling over to France, and joyously and even gloriously drawing all the things which pertain to ships and the sea. He was neither seasick nor homesick. He thought a good deal about himself with the wholesome egotism of youth, and was for once in his life extraordinarily happy.

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AS a young and engaging duckling takes to water, so Edward took to Paris. Nothing surprised him. Everything seemed natural, fore-ordained and comforting. There must have been French blood in him. He absorbed words and phrases, remembered them, and from the first spoke them not too badly.

The letters with which Townley had provided him had made many things easy. He had the same rooms—five flights up in the rue des Saints-Pères—that Townley had lived in. He had the same kind old landlady. He traded in the same art store. And many established artists, students in Townley's day, became his friends. His talents were obvious. Young and old agreed that he had only to work hard. And he did.

For a few golden days he tramped Paris with his eyes wide open. Hunger always seemed to overtake him within a few steps of some charming little winery restaurant which nobody had ever found before and which nobody would ever find again. The distances were nothing to his country

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trained legs. He could go from the Place des Vosges to the Place de L'Etoile and back again without any other feelings than pleasure, wonder and excitement. A few days of time and then behold, he was at work.

A number of Townley's friends, liking the naive, friendly, talented, enthusiastic boy, had advised him not to join a class but to paint in their studios and pick up what he could from their greater experience.

He painted first with St. André. St. André was executing a very big and important commission for a new hotel in New York. Blind arches had to be filled with nymphs and goddesses, Plenty, Prosperity, Ceres, the Muse, the Graces and Heaven knows how many other lovely ladies. In the climate of these mural decorations the fig and the olive and the orange flourished, and it was so warm and jolly that the inhabitants hardly ever wore any clothes. St. André invited Edward to work on some of the least important figures. He had two other talented young men similarly employed. It was great fun. St. André himself did all the faces and hands and feet, even of the unimportant figures. His young assistants with much advice and encouragement and now and then a touch from the master hand did the rest.

St. André had one failing. He was economical

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of models. Three girls, hired cheap because their employment would be long and steady, did all the posing. And naturally you couldn't draw them and paint them just as they were—not once even. You had to make them mature or adolescent, dark, brown or blond, white or sun-kissed precisely as you were directed and as the needs of the composition demanded.

They were patient, intelligent, friendly girls who smoked vigorously during their resting times and earned their money many times over. That they were naked much of the time did not seem to be of any especial interest to them or to anybody else. At first Edward had been interested and embarrassed. That was only natural. Any boy would have been. But the embarrassment wore off quickly and the quality of his interest changed. It became an absorbing interest in planes and color and lights and darks, joints and articulations. He did not at first think that the female body, stripped of everything, was especially beautiful to look at. And he did not until he had made the discovery that neither he nor anybody else had ever drawn or painted anything quite so beautiful. And he learned at this time, definitely and for all time, that the coloring of the young human is lovelier than any combination of pigments that has ever been tried. He saw reds and blues and greens and yellows but in

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a subtlety which could never be imitated. But sometimes, not often, a piece of his coloring really looked a little like the original and then he was secretly very happy.

Painting those three girls in different poses day after day for weeks and months was splendid training for him. So were the long talks with St. André and the two assistants—Jean Duprés and Armand de Ville.

St. André assured the eager young men that they would all be successful painters. He prided himself on his ability to pick and to develop talent. He had never missed his guess, he said. He had even succeeded in teaching a young woman to paint, but she had come to a bad end. That was not his fault. But it had been a great disappointment.

“So few women,” he said, “ever succeed in doing anything worth while. But this girl was a wonder. If she had been ugly she would have become a great master. But she was beautiful. She undertook the portrait of a young baron who was rich and a great figure at Longchamps. In the midst of the sittings they eloped to the Riviera. She left him for a Russian prince who flattered her, and when she had changed hands a good many times she took to narcotics and her talent died in her breast. But women do not appreciate talent. They neither appreciate it in themselves if they

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happen to have it, nor in their husbands. Least of all does a woman appreciate talent in her sons. I will venture to guess that no man ever became a great artist except in the teeth of his mother's opposition . . . My own mother, for instance, though I send her a comfortable sum of money each month, would rather see me a merchant or an advocate at a tenth of the income . . . How about you, Jean? Did your mother persuade you to come to Paris to study art against your own better judgment?"

Jean Duprés grinned a little sheepishly and said:

"I had persuaded one of the girls about the farm to pose for me in the loft where the pears were ripening. My mother found this out—packed the girl off with a bad character which she had not deserved, burned my poor little supply of artist's materials, and I—when it was dark—climbed out of my bedroom window and footed it all the way to Paris. But when I am successful and begin to send money home she will relent."

"What," asked Armand de Ville, "became of the girl?"

"I'm sure I don't know," said Duprés. "And she was only posing for the head and shoulders."

"My mother," said de Ville, "had the same feeling about my wanting to be an artist. But the priest persuaded her to give me a trial . . . If at

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the end of two years I have not had a picture accepted at the Salon I have promised to return to the farm."

"My boy," said St. André, "you will have a picture accepted—if I have to paint it myself."

Then they all laughed, and St. André asked Edward if his wish to be an artist had met with parental encouragement.

Edward simply shook his head. He did not yet feel equal to an elaborate statement in the French language. But he wondered what Dear Mother would have said and done if she had marched suddenly into the studio and discovered him indefatigably painting nudes.

There was a fat painter—one of the open-air crowd—named Edmond Beaulieu who in the guise of a friendly critic often dropped in to see how the big murals of St. André were getting on. He had words of praise for everyone—for the models, for the assistants and for St. André himself. He preached a jovial gospel of enthusiasm and encouragement. And sometimes he even spoke of his own landscapes in an enthusiastic and encouraging way.

Edward became curious to see some of Beaulieu's work, of which on all hands he heard nothing but the highest praise. And one day he expressed

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his curiosity and was promptly invited to spend the following Sunday at Beaulieu's home in the country.

Beaulieu lived in a very small Louis Thirteenth hunting lodge in the outskirts of St. Germain. The lodge had some acres of park surrounding it, with what the English call "an ornamental water" and some groups of fine old limes. There were fine old flinty walls draped with ivy, a snailery, an antique glass-house and here and there a graceful urn carved from stone.

In this little park Beaulieu did most of his landscape work, arranging and rearranging nature. He painted many pictures in the course of a year, priced them modestly and sold them readily. Consequently he was a rich man for an artist and ought to have been very happy.

Madame Beaulieu was only half her husband's age—if he really was her husband—and very pretty. She was a little thing, compactly made, with a rich mouth and smoldering yellowish brown eyes. She made a great fuss over Edward on the occasion of his first visit and of his second. They succeeded in making him feel as much at home as if he had always known them and had always been made welcome in their house. And it was arranged that in the spring, when the St. André murals were finished, he should come to visit them

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and paint landscapes in the little park, under Beau-lieu's direction.

Spring came. It was lovely in Paris and it was lovelier in the country. Feeling that he had learned a whole lot about painting the human form divine, Edward packed his kit and removed himself bag and baggage to the Beaulieus.

Bartow-on-the-Sound seemed a very long way off. Dear Mother's letters under a texture of affection showed a cold and undiminishing resentment. Every letter contained some reference to her health. She no longer, it seemed, ever felt quite herself. She had not of course consulted a doctor. Doctors were always for bed and rest. Others might afford themselves these luxuries, but not Dear Mother. She had to keep going. It was a pity, perhaps, that old age was approaching, that she upon whom others had always leaned should have no one to lean on—no one but James, dear James. He at least would never leave his old mother while she lived—"or," as Edward ungenerously thought, "while any money remained in her purse"—and of course your father. The "and of course your father" was a kind of sneer—of course. And Edward resented it.

At first Alice had written often and Edward had written oftener. Then she had been presented to society and had perhaps begun to lose interest in a

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young man who so obviously preferred art to herself. And Edward perhaps, so filled with new contacts and enthusiasms, had begun to lose interest in her. Either he had really begun to lose interest or else resentment at the changed tone and diminished frequency of her letters had numbed his feelings for her. There was nothing in her later letters upon which he could have put his finger and said, "But I'm not" or "But I haven't," but nevertheless they had a quality which always made him feel as if he were being found fault with and put upon the defensive. Sometimes he wondered if he had written too frankly about the St. André murals and the nude models. But it *couldn't* be that. Alice wasn't a fool.

In the Beaulieus' little hunting-lodge he had a stone room in a gable. It had an arched ceiling, a hooded fireplace, leaded windows and walls four feet thick. The door was of oak, bound with highly wrought iron. When the bolt was shot it would have taken artillery to batter it down. His chief window looked out over the ornamental water and at the groups of limes beyond. In the morning sparrows, some of which quarreled and some of which made love, gathered in the ivy outside this window and wakened him. Very soon after the sparrows wakened him there would come an ancient Breton woman wearing upon her head

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a fabulous cap of starched linen and bearing in her hands a japanned tray delicately set with chocolate and cream and rolls of bread and rose-petals of butter.

By ten o'clock, if it didn't rain, Edward and Beaulieu would be in the park painting. They painted from ten to twelve and from three to five. Every day when it didn't rain Edward painted two small landscapes, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. Beaulieu believed in painting much boldly rather than a little with infinite pains.

As Edward's landscapes dried he painted other landscapes on top of them, but there was one view of the ornamental water with a group of old limes beyond to which he returned oftenest. This view, especially in the afternoon, furnished a beautiful problem and pattern in lights and shadows and reflections. And one afternoon he solved the problem, and when he had finished, the water that he had painted looked wet and the sunlight looked like sunlight. This miracle persisted even after the little canvas had been carried into the house and examined in the sobering light of the living room. It persisted after the paint had dried and flattened into the canvas. Beaulieu was triumphant.

"It is I who have taught the Master," he said.
"I told him never to forget that it was light he was

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trying to paint—not forms or fabrics, but light. Every morning as we have set up our easels I have said, 'Do not forget,' and every afternoon I have said the same thing. That, with a hint or two about mixing his colors, with a little specific statement upon which colors are permanent and which are not, is all that I have had to do. And now what has he done? He has painted a sunlight more warm and limpid and golden than I am able to paint myself."

Sometimes Madame Beaulieu brought a campstool and a parasol and watched the gentlemen paint. Sometimes she would say, "Pretty." More often she came in silence and watched in silence and went away without saying a word. Beaulieu seemed to adore her. If she had faults he was blind to them or explained them away. If she was extravagant, so were all women. If sometimes she lost her temper about nothing at all and made terrific scenes, so did all women.

Whenever he remembered how tender and loving she could be it was easy to forgive all the little failings. At least she was loyal to him, and faithful. And of all good qualities he prized those most highly.

There was a fine old beech tree in a far corner of the park. At certain hours the leaves of this tree broke the light of heaven into thousands of

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charming, dappling fragments and scattered them on the ground beneath. It was one of Beaulieu's favorite subjects, and Edward had tackled it more than once.

One day as he was starting to draw it for the third or fourth time Madame Beaulieu came to look on. She watched him for a minute or two and then suddenly she walked out in front of him and leaning toward the trunk of the old tree, turned, rested her hand on the great bole and faced him. She looked very charming in the dappled light.

"Is it to be a portrait?" Edward asked.

Madame nodded. "A surprise for father," she said. "Can it be done in one sitting?"

"In two," said Edward.

And in fact he finished the little open-air portrait in two sittings of two hours each. He had had some good luck, some happy accidents. It was the most likable thing he had ever done. He leaned back and saw that he had done all he could.

"Come and see how pretty you look," he said.

Madame Beaulieu came slowly forward from under the broken light of the tree and stood looking over his shoulder.

"Do I look like that—to you?" she asked.

"Yes," said Edward. "Just like that."

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She leaned over until her cheek was close to his. "You are a charming boy," she said.

Her cheek touched his. It must have been by accident. He was sure of that. She laughed and straightened herself.

"Father will be *so* pleased," she said.

He was. He raved about the portrait. He was the luckiest man in the world. His wife was the most beautiful creature in the world, and his young friend had been able to immortalize her on canvas.

Beaulieu and Madame Beaulieu ought to have been two of the happiest people in the world. And Beaulieu was one. Why Madame Beaulieu could not manage to be happy was one of those little mysteries of female psychology. On the credit side of life (1) she had an amiable, loving and talented husband, a little too fat perhaps, but not too old; (2) she had a house and grounds so charming and coquettish that only much money and several hundred years of time could have duplicated them; (3) she had a charming little apartment in Paris; (4) she was allowed to be extravagant without any complaint; (5) she was pretty and popular; (6) she was really very fond of Beaulieu.

Now what was lacking? What didn't she have that she needed to make her happy? Undoubtedly

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what she needed was sometimes one thing and sometimes another. Edward was her present source of discontent. He had lived under the same roof with her now for many weeks and she hadn't succeeded in making him fall in love with her.

Why did she want Edward to fall in love with her? Chiefly because he wouldn't. She did not want a serious love affair, an episode which, becoming known, would involve her in scandal and cause a breach with Beaulieu. Her bread was too well buttered for that and she knew it. She wanted Edward to be hopelessly unhappy, while she pretended to be. She wanted his love of her to tinge with melancholy the whole of his remaining life. She wished to play the leading rôle in a drama of passion and renunciation.

Over the portrait painting she had touched Edward's cheek with hers. If her cheek had been a cobweb the contact would have affected him as much and no more. She tried other wiles. And she really charmed the boy very much without touching his heart or his desires.

One day Beaulieu had to go to Paris on business and he suggested for the two who were to remain behind a sketching expedition to the ruins of a St. Bernard monastery—a beautiful tracery of stone arches in the midst of a dark forest.

From Madame Beaulieu's point of view the ex-

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pedition ought to have been a great success. A violent thunderstorm put an end to Edward's sketching and they took refuge in an ancient Gothic vault. There they were imprisoned for several hours.

At one time the lightning struck close at hand, and following a deafening crash of thunder Madame Beaulieu screamed and flung herself into Edward's arms for protection and pressed her warm, soft body close against him. He comforted her and reassured her as calmly as if she had been one of his own sisters.

The next crash of thunder was farther off. The storm withdrew, sweeping its wet skirts after it. Madame Beaulieu withdrew herself from Edward's cool embrace. She was angry and at the same time amused. What a fool the boy was!

Her next attack was by indirections. "It is curious," she might say to him, "that once in a while there is born into the world a male being with the nature of an iceberg. It may be a man, it may be a dog. Such creatures have no wish beyond eating and drinking and sleeping."

"But," Edward might answer, "wouldn't that be the most comfortable and least offensive creature there could be? It wouldn't ever make any trouble for anybody."

"Sometimes I am afraid we have such a creature

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living in the house with us. And it isn't Beaulieu. The day de la France brought his pretty daughters to 'five o'clock' it was obvious that the younger girl was taken with you at sight. She is pretty as a flower and yet you observed her and admired her, if you did admire her, much as if she had been a Chinese porcelain. A young man of your age should at least be thinking of marriage."

"On two hundred and fifty francs a month?" Edward smiled.

"You will soon be earning a lot of money. Beaulieu says so. He burst out swearing only the other day. He said: '*Mon dieu!* It may sound preposterous, but that boy of ours—that little Edward Eaton—is already one of the first painters in France.'"

"Did he say that—truly?"

Edward blushed deeply and felt for a few moments as if tears were trying to force themselves into his eyes.

"He did so—truly. And what he says he means—the dear old cabbage."

Edward laughed now. "And he said I was little!"

Edward was much bigger than Beaulieu, taller and broader, but without fat.

"You are really a tall, strong man," said Ma-

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dame. "But one thinks of you as a boy, and sometimes as an idiot."

"Why an idiot?"

"Because you can only be young once. A time will come when you will wish to remember that you were once young. And you will not be able to remember."

"Why won't I?"

"Because you never do anything or start anything that could be worth remembering."

On another occasion she was more direct and Edward could not quite dodge the issue.

"But," he said gravely, "how can a man lead the romantic life you seem to think he ought to lead if he doesn't feel romantic about anybody?"

"Have you never felt romantic about anybody? Tell me the truth."

"Yes," he said, "I have and I do. We were children together. But lately something seems to have happened. Perhaps she thinks that I ought not to have gone away from home for so long to study art."

"And perhaps," said Madame, a little viciously, "she has interested herself in some more ardent admirer."

"Perhaps," said Edward.

Before the summer ended Madame Beaulieu knew all that there was to be known about the

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Ruggles; how instead of taking other people's beliefs for granted they asked questions and did their own thinking; how they lived in a city founded by French Huguenots—people who had claimed the same privilege for themselves; and how they had always been kind and helpful to Edward.

One day Edward received a letter from Alice. It was very short and perhaps a little cool, but it caused a sharp disturbance in his breast.

We are coming abroad in October. We shall be in Paris for a while, and we hope that you will be glad to see us and not too busy. Afterwards we go to Rome for the cold weather. I see James sometimes at parties and he gives me more news of you than you do yourself. He's rather attractive, brother James is, in his bold, bad way. Don't you think so? . . .

It was not pleasant for Edward to think that Alice found anything to attract her in his brother James.

He told Madame Beaulieu the news and she pretended to be pleased; but she wasn't. She began at once to consider what she could do to make a little innocent mischief between the lovers.

Autumn was very beautiful that year. The

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whole of September and the half of October resembled that brief American season which is called Indian summer. It was a warm, hazy, soft, golden time that smelled of pears ripening against walls.

Edward lingered in the Beaulieus' house and painted the autumn. What he should do when he had finished painting out of doors with Beaulieu he did not know. Some of the wise old painters who came to see Beaulieu said one thing and some said another.

There came a friendly letter from Townley. With the letter came a short story by a new writer named Heller and an offer of fifty dollars apiece for three illustrations. The story was about a wasp, and models for the illustrations were always to be found between the hours of sunrise and sunset, among the ripening pears on the south end of the Beaulieu house.

In three days the illustrations were finished and on their way to New York. Even Edward felt that the wasp hero was sufficiently comical and sinister. He was pleased with himself and hoped that Townley would send him some more commissions. He did not wish to be an illustrator, but to a boy earning between forty and fifty dollars a month a hundred and fifty dollars all in a lump, with the possibility of more such lumps in the not too distant future, was rather thrilling.

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He hoped that the money would arrive before the Ruggles. He wanted to spend it all on them.

Beaulieu had sent the best of Edward's two-hour sketches to an art dealer and several of them had been sold for small sums of money. To Edward the future looked very bright. If the Ruggles encouraged him he would try to scrape together enough money to go to Rome with them. Beaulieu had fired his imagination with descriptions of spring in the old Roman forum—the heavenly color of the sunshine and of the old marbles, the smell of the acacias, the jasmine and the violets.

Alice herself began to haunt his dreams. And it made him remorseful to think how little he had really missed her.

"Edward," said Madame Beaulieu reproachfully, "you should not show *any* other woman how impatient you are. It isn't polite."

"But they are my oldest friends!" he exclaimed. "And they have always been so charming to me."

"*They!*" mocked Madame.

She was becoming the victim of nervous, irritable moods. Sometimes she uttered philosophies so reckless and heartless that Beaulieu looked at her with pained amazement. Once or twice he reproved her, very sharply—for him.

And it seemed to Edward that these two dear

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people who had been so good to him and who had seemed so much in love with each other were no longer getting on so well together.

Madame was often contradictory and difficult to please. Sometimes if her judgment upon a painter or a writer was not accepted without question she flounced off in a huff. She wished that Beaulieu would not smoke cigarettes. She wished that he would not eat so much. One needn't be fat if one didn't choose to be fat. Why did he keep her buried in the country? Why couldn't he give up landscape and be a fashionable portrait painter?

All these fault-findings were quite unnecessary and as disagreeable as they were meant to be.

Beaulieu began to confide in Edward.

"Of course I am too old for her," he would say, "but there is nothing sudden about that. And I was always too fat; but she never complained about it before. Just when everything was going along so merrily and happily she pulls these tantrums. And she doesn't seem to care what she says. She knows very well that if I do not live in the country I cannot paint landscapes. And if I cannot paint landscapes I cannot sell landscapes and we would hardly have any money at all. She knows that at my age I cannot turn to portraiture,

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and yet she keeps urging me and nagging at me to make the change.

“Why cannot I paint portraits? For a simple reason. I can draw trees and rocks and even cows and sheep and horses, but I cannot draw people. I never could. It is left out of me. The moment I try to draw a face I become confused. My art is baffled. I must try to draw it as it is, when my whole training has been to make ‘arrangements.’ If I could put both the eyebrows up in one corner of the face and add as many noses as seemed necessary to make an agreeable composition, it would be different. But the rules of portraiture will not permit . . .” Here he would shrug his shoulders in a comic mockery of despair.

Then it would be Madame’s turn to confide in Edward; but she made no bones about doing this in her husband’s presence.

“He neglects me,” she would say. “He thinks only of himself and his work. All I ask for is the little loving attentions that every woman asks for and that I do not get . . . He doesn’t make love to me any more . . .”

Here Beaulieu would interrupt, “But I do—all the time—with every thought I think—with every gesture I make.”

And Madame would deny the truth of this, and presently there would be as plain-spoken a quarrel

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as there might have been if a third person had not been present, and Edward would find himself in a painfully embarrassing position.

They were French people. Therefore they were frank. They did not make of love and marriage the same mysteries that the more hypocritical Anglo-Saxon makes of them. And when both were sufficiently exasperated, neither left anything unsaid if the saying of it might score a point against the other.

Their reconciliations were as sudden as their quarrelings. And they were almost equally warm and frank and embarrassing to the puzzled spectator. When the opportunity presented itself Beaulieu would apologize for the quarrel and explain it.

"Every woman is a dramatist. She dramatizes herself and her surroundings. She likes to feel that something terrible is going on and that she is the center of it. No woman really likes the idea of being peaceful and contented and self-effacing. They do not admire good sense for its own sake. When a woman says 'I can't' she means 'I won't.' When she says 'never' she means 'not right now.' And when she says 'forever' she means nothing at all . . .

"I am not talking about bad, spoiled women. I am talking about good women . . . The good

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God must have made Adam in a hurry since He omitted from him so much that is petty and small and unreasonable; but when He came to make Eve He found that He had all those materials on His hands and He did not let any of them go to waste—not so much as one little malice or uncharitableness . . .”

Edward became uncomfortable in the Beaulieu's house. Where formerly there had been none there were now several quarrels a day. And in the course of these rows the entire history of Beaulieu's relations with Madame was gradually revealed.

They were not married—to each other. Beaulieu was not married at all. Madame Beaulieu had a husband, who because she had abandoned him and their small daughter felt vengeful and would not divorce her.

That didn't matter, Beaulieu said. “We are really married,” he said, “because we have loved each other for so long and because we have been faithful to each other. And that, priest or no priest, is a true marriage.”

Beaulieu and Madame Beaulieu's husband had been friends. Beaulieu had often stopped with them. Theirs had been a quiet, peaceful country life. Too quiet. Too peaceful. Madeleine's energies had begun to seek diversion. She had fallen

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in love with Beaulieu. She had finally made him believe that in private her husband was brutal to her and that his affectionate and even-tempered conduct in public was a mask of hypocrisy.

All this Edward picked up bit by bit as the couple in their irritation and anger flung reticence aside and insisted upon washing their dirty linen in public.

But on this point or that there was often disagreement. Had Madeleine's husband really been unkind? At the time Beaulieu had believed so. Now he did not. Whether he had been or not, Madeleine now believed that he had been. Only she could possibly know.

"He was a brute to me," she would say, "but his was a coarse, honest brutishness and not the refined cruelty of this fat painter."

Here Beaulieu almost in tears: "How dare you say that I am ever cruel to you? You know very well that I wouldn't hurt a fly. You shall judge, Edward. Do I strike you as a man capable of cruelty?"

Here Edward might smile faintly and shake his head. He was very miserable and he wanted to escape. He felt as if he was living on the top of a volcano. But when he suggested going they joined forces to prevent him from doing any such thing.

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One day he learned about the final break between Madeleine and her husband and her elopement with Beaulieu. Beaulieu told him the story.

"I was much younger," he said, "and I believed all that she told me. I was not in love with her then, but she had touched my deepest sympathies. One night I heard them quarreling. Presently she began to scream as if she was being beaten. The next thing I knew she was hammering on my door with both fists, calling upon me to save her. At the same time I could hear her husband saying in a hoarse, terrible voice: 'I shall not forgive you for this! I shall not be able to forgive you.'

"I unlocked my door and opened it.

"I tried to pacify them. We were all in our nightgowns. We must have looked ridiculous.

"Madeleine flung herself into my arms. My embarrassment was pitiable. I tried to push her away from me. She only clung the closer . . . I give you my word of honor, Edward, that I had never so much as spoken a single word of love to her. Now I listened in a horrified silence while she in her rage and in her determination to hurt him told her husband that for a long time we had been lovers.

"At that awful moment I admired my old friend immensely. He looked for a space like a man

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who had been suddenly frozen into a statue. Then he spoke in a calm voice:

“‘You have accused Beaulieu,’ he said, ‘of something which I for my part do not believe, but which it would be utterly impossible for a gentleman to deny. To your face and in your presence it would be impossible for him to deny the charge that you have made. But whether you have spoken the truth or whether you have lied, everything between us is over. I am through. If Beaulieu wishes to risk your selfish, dissatisfied, drama-loving nature he is welcome to. It is nothing to me. I shall not even be angry. You will, however, both of you leave this house in the morning. And you will not either of you come back—ever.’

“Then he said, ‘*B—rrr!* It is cold!’ and turned on his bare heel and marched off. We could hear him locking and double-locking the door of their bedroom.

“‘See what you have done!’ I said. And I tried to take her arms from about my neck. But she only clung the tighter. She said, ‘I love you—I love you.’

“When a woman sacrifices her home and her position and her honor for a man what can that man do? In nine cases out of ten he will end by playing her game . . . I cannot tell you, Edward, how sweet she was and how good for years and

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years—during all the time of my poverty and unsuccess. And now that we have everything she is not contented . . . The next thing we know she will be accusing you of being her lover.”

“Oh,” exclaimed Edward, his face paling a little, “she wouldn’t do that!”

But she did—the very next night.

It seemed that Madame Beaulieu wished, once more before she died, to have something terrible going on of which she should be the center. All women, it seems, have this wish at times, but there are a few women who are able to resist the temptation. And it is to these few that the whole race of women owes its good reputation as wives and mothers.

Women, like horses, have long memories. Madame Beaulieu had such a memory. She never forgot any little trick or stratagem which she had once worked successfully, and she had supreme faith in her ability to make precisely the same trick work again.

Edward was waked that night by the sound of clenched fists pounding upon his door and the voice of Madame Beaulieu screaming to him for help. Edward was neither sophisticated nor worldly wise; nevertheless that which first flashed into his mind was the truth. His instinct told him that Madame Beaulieu had had a falling out with

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Beaulieu and that she was about to repeat the episode of long ago. If Edward could have trusted this instinct he would not have opened his door. But he could not trust it—not absolutely. It was just barely possible that Madame Beaulieu was in her right mind and really needed his help. It was possible that Beaulieu, who was fat and middle-aged, had had a stroke. It was possible that the house had caught fire. It was possible that thieves had made an entry. Incredible things were possible. All this flashed through his mind as he rushed to the door, fumbled a moment with the bolt and pulled it open.

Madame Beaulieu pitched forward into the room and Edward caught her as she was falling. If he had been carefully rehearsed he could not better have seconded her will to make trouble. She clung to him and when she began to call him her lover and to count aloud upon his protection he knew without looking that Beaulieu himself had arrived upon the scene.

A lowered gas-jet which burned all night in the upper corridor of the house, and touches of the moon, lighted their faces.

Beaulieu's face was a violent red and a network of swollen veins made him look really terrible. He was so angry that at first he could not articulate.

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Madame from the unwilling shelter of Edward's arms called him a brute and a monster and boasted how for weeks with Edward as her guilty partner she had deceived him.

It may be that she really wanted to end her long and happy relationship with Beaulieu and be driven from the house with Edward, who thereafter would be in honor bound to support her and care for her. It is more likely that she had simply lost her temper and preferred to make as many people as possible miserable and did not at the moment care what happened.

Edward was in a state of horrible embarrassment. He wished that the floor would open and swallow him, that he had never been born. Embarrassment began slowly to give place to disgust. The cold of the stone floor was rising through his feet and ankles. And then suddenly and without other warning he did the very wisest thing that he could have done under the circumstances. He screwed his eyes into two knots, opened his mouth wide, tipped his head back and then, with incredible violence, sneezed. He tried to speak and sneezed again.

The swollen veins in Beaulieu's face shrank and he began to speak in a hoarse, jerky way.

"You once worked this game on me," he said, "but you shan't work it on him."

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Here Edward sneezed again.

"I know exactly how innocent I was when you accused me of being your lover, and I know that Edward is just as innocent."

Edward's sneeze sounded like a blast of gratitude. Beaulieu went on:

"I've tried everything but one, in the hope of curing your temper. I've tried patience and generosity. That is no good with women. Our ancestors, the ancient Gauls and Romans, had a better way. Their slogan was kill or cure."

He stepped suddenly forward, and as Edward sneezed again and Madame Beaulieu turned her head to see what was going to happen, he hit her under the point of the chin with all his might and main. And for the next two hours Madame Beaulieu was like the dead in Ecclesiastes. She knew nothing.

Edward put on his slippers, stopped sneezing and helped carry Madame Beaulieu back to her bed. Her little face looked as sweet and gentle as a kitten's, and as innocent of wrongdoing.

Edward was for bathing her temples with cold water, but Beaulieu, who was still very angry, said: "Why revive her? She is better this way. She has what she deserves." And he added, "If I've killed her this is of course the end, but if I haven't, then it is perhaps a—beginning." His face soft-

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ened. "It will be best, my friend," he said, "for you to go back to Paris by the first train in the morning. Heaven knows I am very sorry for what has happened. But it was not my fault."

"And I don't see how it can be mine," said Edward. "I suppose it sounds silly to you, but I've never been any woman's lover."

"It doesn't sound silly," said Beaulieu. "If Solomon at the end of his days had been able to say as much I should have more respect for his wisdom."

Edward went back to his warm bed, but he could not sleep. Mingled with the anger and disgust which he still felt were disturbing memories. Those moments during which he had held, however unwillingly, the charming body of Madame Beaulieu in his arms had marked the end of his childhood.

VI

WITHOUT any further warning the Ruggles family arrived in Paris and put up at the old hotel of France et Choiseul. A short, friendly note—not from Alice but from her father—informed Edward of these facts and invited him to meet them at Voisin's for dinner.

Alice had changed. That was the important thing. She had become cool and aloof. It hardly seemed as if they could have grown up together and been intimate friends.

To the eyes she was lovelier than ever, but mentally she seemed to have traveled a long way and to have left Edward far behind. And mentally she seemed also to have parted company with her father and mother.

They dined and thereafter sat for an hour talking. It was an impersonal conversation—not one of the old warm, intimate, joking talks. Ruggles, a thorough man of the world in New Rochelle, seemed a little provincial and naïve in Paris. It was obvious that he did not know his way about. Mrs. Ruggles had been digging into French his-

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tory and wanted everybody to know it. Only Alice appeared thoroughly and even exasperatingly at ease.

They left Voisin's and strolled back to the hotel, Alice and Edward ahead. Edward felt hurt and troubled.

"You've changed a lot since I saw you last," he said finally.

"Yes," she said, "a lot."

"You're prettier if possible; but I don't think you like me any more."

"I do."

They paused to look at the flaming posters in front of the Nouveau Cirque and then passed slowly on.

"Do you know the Louvre well?" asked Alice.

"Only a little. I've been saving it for you."

"That's fine. When shall we begin?"

"Tomorrow?"

"Will you come for me?"

"About ten?"

"We could have luncheon somewhere and spend the day, couldn't we?"

"I bet we can!"

"I want to know the Louvre from *A* to *Z*. And then the Luxembourg. And between times I want to see everything that *you've* been doing."

"It would be kinder to look at my stuff first."

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"Tell me this—are you going to be very, very good?"

"There's lots of work to do before I even think how bad or how good I'm going to be. But I'm still glad I've got the chance to find out. It's such fun to draw and paint."

It was as if they had met for the first time, had not taken a great fancy to each other and had not hit upon anything of common interest to talk about.

Edward asked about home news. She told him of county happenings, deaths, births and marriages.

"Seen anything of my people?" he asked.

"Only James—he goes everywhere, you know."

"Yes. He was always the dude of the family."

"Don't you think that perhaps there is more to James than meets the eye?"

Edward laughed and said, "Lots and lots."

"You don't like him. But I do."

"Truly?"

"Really and truly. You should hear him boast about you. Don't you ever feel your ears burning? That's James and I boasting about our friend and brother, the Heaven-born artist."

Still talking about James, they reached the arched entrance to the France et Choiseul. Here they waited until Mr. and Mrs. Ruggles came up.

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"Good night," said Edward, "and thank you. I've had a splendid time."

"Have you?" said Mrs. Ruggles a little quizzically. "That's fine."

"Eddie and I are going to do the Louvre tomorrow," said Alice, "starting here at ten sharp."

"Are you?" said Mr. Ruggles and he looked even more quizzical. "Well, that's fine."

They finished saying good night. As the Ruggles family passed through the archway the magnificent old Swiss porter came out of his lodge and in stentorian tones called across the courtyard to the room clerk, "*Monsieur et Madame Roogells et Mademoiselle Roogells qui rentrent!*"

And Mr. Ruggles and Alice chuckled to themselves.

Edward, the tones of the Swiss porter echoing in his ears, hurried home. The evening, or Alice rather, had been a horrible disappointment. He had imagined that they would take up their friendship exactly where they had left off—that is, just short of being definitely engaged to be married, just short of being really in love. Instead they had met as strangers. Edward's heart ached and he could have cried. He had never had but the one real friend in all his life and she had turned cold.

Did all women fail one? Dear Mother, Ruth, Sarah, John's wife, Madame Beaulieu and now

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Alice? "Why," he thought, "she treated me as if we were meeting for the first time and she didn't care if it was the last."

But he comforted himself with the thought that the next day he would ask her pointblank what he had done to offend her and keep on asking until she gave him the answer.

They spent nearly the whole of the next day in the Louvre. Their intention to tackle the paintings first, then the statuary and then the odds and ends from Charlemagne's sword to the snuff-box of Napoleon fell by the wayside; for they ran plump into the Venus of Milo and had to sit down on a bench and look at her for a long time. Then the Victory of Samothrace held them spellbound and they went out to luncheon without having looked at any paintings at all. And it was not until then that Edward asked her why she was so changed toward him and what it was that he had done to offend her.

"Why, Eddie," she said, and there was a kind of pitying look in her eyes, "I haven't exactly changed. I love you better than almost anybody and always will, but—well, girls are funny animals. If you'd stayed around Westchester maybe we'd have run away or done something foolish like that; but you didn't stay around and after a while

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I got to thinking that maybe it was just as well you hadn't . . ."

"You *have* changed," said Edward, "and I haven't." He only looked glum, but he felt very tragic.

"Well," she said, "don't let's talk about it. You're a dear and I'll always love you and be your friend. I only came abroad because I wanted to see you, and Paris with you. That's the honest truth. If it hadn't been for you I'd have wanted to stay in New York . . . Shall we look at more statues this afternoon and start in with the pictures tomorrow?"

"Whatever you like," said Edward without enthusiasm. "How long do you really think your father means to stay in Paris?"

"Not long, I think. He wants to spent the winter in Italy and Corsica. He was wondering last night if you couldn't tear yourself away for a while and come to Corsica as our guest."

"That would be wonderful," said Edward, who had always longed to see Corsica. And he told her that he would accept the invitation if her father didn't change his mind.

"Father won't. Father doesn't, and he thinks the world of you."

They finished luncheon and returned to the museum and spent the afternoon looking at pictures.

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They looked at pictures till their eyes refused to have emotions of any kind and the backs of their necks ached.

Edward called a cab and drove her back to the hotel.

"I'm a fool to paint," he said. "There are too many pictures already. I don't feel as if I ever wanted to look at another picture as long as I live. If I ever go through those Rubens galleries again it will be blindfold. I never knew how much I hated muscular fat women with no eyebrows and red hair . . . But wasn't he a marvel? Acres and acres of paint and every brushful smeared on so that it would do the most good!"

"There *are* too many pictures," Alice agreed, "but most of them are awful. And you are going to be better than almost anybody. So what's the use of complaining? Rubens was a great and mighty lord, wasn't he? Where did he find the time for everything?"

"I don't suppose he had to look," Edward said. "There's always lots of time lying around loose and all you have to do is to take it."

"Oughtn't you to be working instead of chasing around with me?"

"Never!" he said stoutly, and they both laughed.

But there wasn't to be so much chasing around. They did the Louvre and the Luxembourg to-

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gether and some churches, and then Alice and her mother began the real business of Paris, which is shopping and having dresses made, and Edward began the picture which he intended to send to the Salon in the spring.

He had been thinking about this picture for a long time. Sometimes it was going to be a landscape and sometimes it was going to be three nymphs dancing. Then it became a nocturne—one of the bridges across the Seine at night. Then it became the same bridge only from a different angle; the night ceased to be clear and became foggy, with stars showing where the fog was thin, and when he had made a lot of sketches and experimental star and fog effects, the angle of the bridge had to be changed once more and he decided to introduce the dancing nymphs into the foreground.

At this point the Ruggles departed for Italy. Edward saw them off in the rain. He promised to join them in Corsica in the early spring. But there was only one thing certain. If there had ever been anything between himself and Alice it was over. During all their meetings she had held him at arm's length. Sometimes it seemed as if she had a kind of maternal tenderness and pity for him. But more often it seemed as if she had no sentiment for him at all.

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Somehow he had gathered that there was another young man in her life and that his own romance had been blasted in the bud.

He hurried home along the Quays and as he turned the corner of the rue des Saints Pères the rain began suddenly to fall in a torrent. He lowered his head and ran at top speed. As he reached the shelter of the archway of the building in which he slept and worked a voice hailed him: " 'Allo—Mistaire Eaton."

The voice belonged to Anne Brie—one of fifty models whom he knew by name and reputation. She had never worked for him and he had never even seen her at work; but once they had sat side by side on a sofa in a friend's studio and done some laughing.

" 'Allo, Anne!" he mimicked. "What are you doing in my tunnel?"

"Saving myself from the rain," she said. "I was going to supper—got caught—and ducked in here. Got anything to eat in your studio?"

"I shouldn't wonder," said Edward. "Come up."

He felt no more embarrassment than if she had been a man, for even the most moral artist finds it necessary to be casual about the conventions.

They supped upon bread without butter and rillettes de Tours out of a glass jar. And they

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drank chocolate made with water instead of milk.

Anne was charming and made herself very much at home. When she had turned all of Edward's canvases so that she could look at them she began to praise him. She said that he was a wonder, that she had worked in all the studios and ought to know. What was he going to send to this year's Salon? He told her about his bridge with the fog and the stars and the nymphs dancing.

She objected.

"Nymphs don't dance all the time," she said. "That is in pictures they always dance; but in real life they behave like real people."

"They would, of course, wouldn't they?" Edward agreed. And his face lighted with enthusiasm. She had given him a notion. He began to haul out his sketches for the bridge, but there was no angle which suited him, so that he had to use gestures to convey to her what was in his mind.

"Listen," he said. "Imagine that you have gone down to the river's edge and that the bridge, of course, is above you. There is an incline near the first arch, an incline of small cobblestones that dips into the river. Three shop-girls tempted by the heat and almost hidden by the fog are going for a swim. They are giggling for fear that someone will catch them at it—and, if it isn't the policeman, they don't care too much. Beyond and

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above is the arch and the parapet and the fog and the stars—and perhaps the little needle tip of the Saint Chapelle spire . . . I can't think of anything more foolish to paint, and yet it fills my head and I think it might be very arresting and charming."

"Who are you going to have for your nymphs—shop-girls?"

"I shan't need any models just yet. I've got to get the composition absolutely settled first."

"Wish you'd try me."

"Gladly—but you won't be angry if I say you're not just what I have in mind."

"Naturally not. I get that often. Tastes differ. I think that I have a very pretty body but lots of artists say that I look too much like a child."

"Well," said Edward, "one of these days when the time comes we'll have to see what *we* think."

While he was putting some chunks of coal into the stove Anne made a flank movement on his bedroom and returned with a double armful of clothes, socks and odds and ends which were really in a savage state of masculine neglect.

Anne seated herself and began to sort the possible from the impossible. She made three piles.

"These," she said, "are to be thrown away. Those only need to be laundered, and the rest I will

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make into a package and take home with me to mend."

"Where do you live, Anne, in case I want a model?"

She gave him her address and he wrote it down. Then presently, the rain having stopped, she gathered together the clothes which were to be mended and departed as casually as she had come.

And to Edward, all at once, the studio seemed extraordinarily empty.

It was a very rainy winter and the young man's loneliness was heavy upon him. He longed for the spring and Corsica, but these were a long way off.

He had many friends but they were mostly serious, hard-working friends and he saw so little of them at this time that he felt as if he didn't have any. One day Anne came with his mended clothes and made chocolate for him and went. He wished she had not been in such a hurry. The dreary studio with the rain-stained lights had been brightened by her presence.

For several days he could not get her out of his mind. But although the arrangement of his picture had reached a point where he wished to make some studies from living models, he did not at once send for her. Some instinct told him that if he wished to keep free from entanglements he had

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better not see her too often. He thought seriously of inviting some other model to pose for him. And all that prevented him from doing this was the fact that he had promised Anne the first trial.

Finally he wrote to her and said that if she was not under engagement and still wished to work for him he would be glad to talk with her. He wrote this letter, mailed it and regretted having done so. She was a popular model, however, and he comforted himself with the hope that she had plenty of employment.

But she appeared at the studio before it seemed as if she could have received the letter. She was all smiles, eager to work with him on his picture and delighted that he had remembered his promise.

Perhaps she did look a little too much like a child, but she had a lovely golden brown coloring and was delightful to draw. She gave him his poses without the slightest difficulty or awkwardness, and the artist in him at once suppressed the man. It was not until she had dressed and gone home that his thoughts became once more haunted and troubled by her.

They worked thus for several weeks. Friends began to talk about Edward's picture and to bring other friends to see it. Many older artists came. From all these brothers of the brush he received praise and support. And throughout the Latin

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quarter it was the accepted fact that the young Edward Eaton's genius had blossomed and that he was doing a wonderful thing.

He worked himself thin. Anxiety would wake him in the night and he would rise and light a candle and go shivering to see if his work still looked right to him.

One afternoon in the middle of work he stepped back from his easel and looked at his picture long and critically. Then suddenly he smiled a broad schoolboy grin and said, "Why, it seems to be finished." He was immensely surprised. "It's all done," he said—"finished."

Then Anne came and stood beside him and looked too. For a long time. She was a talkative little person and he wondered why she didn't say anything. He stole a look at her sidewise and saw that her eyes were filled with tears.

"What's the matter, Anne?"

"Nothing. It's been a happy time and now it's over."

"*Hm'm*. We're not going to end our career with this picture."

"You'll be going to Corsica now to be with those American friends of yours."

"Not right away."

"It amazes me to think that you would have

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made just as beautiful a picture with any one of a hundred models."

"Nonsense! The credit for this picture is yours too. If you don't know that, you don't know anything . . . Get your clothes on and we'll go somewhere or other and have a fine dinner and celebrate."

She obeyed meekly and Edward waited, still smiling, but no longer admiring his picture. He was smiling at the thought of models in general and Anne in particular. She always did her dressing and undressing with the utmost modesty behind the screen. And between times gave no more thought to modesty or immodesty than a fly.

During the making of the nocturne, Anne and Edward had dined together a good many times, and the Quarter had begun to talk about them. But the Quarter talked very pleasantly. Because in France as in the South Seas human nature is supposed to emanate from God and on that account to be highly respectable.

On this particular night they dined in the Café Brabant, which at the time was enjoying a huge popularity among the students and models. They had it to themselves, and, in old Madame Brabant, a friend who could be unusually patient with overdue accounts.

Certain students, having attracted Anne's and

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Edward's attention, drank toasts to them and made a semblance of shaking hands with them. Anne and Edward blushed comfortably and Anne shook her head with vehemence. This only gave the students excuse for loud laughter.

"Hereabouts," said Anne contentedly, "if a man and a woman are seen twice together in public—the murder is out. I am afraid, my poor Edward, that I have already compromised you beyond repair. But we don't care what they say—do we?"

"Don't you?"

"Not that!" She snapped her fingers.

"Well, I do care," he said. "It's hard on you, of course; but it's an enormous compliment to me." Anne was in high spirits. "A compliment," she said, "which you have done absolutely nothing to deserve."

The waiter came to Edward's rescue and received his order for dinner.

"We won't drink the ordinary wine tonight," said Edward. "Tell Madame to give us a nicely warmed bottle of good Bordeaux."

The end of the dinner found them happy and talkative, their elbows on the table, their faces close together, and the wine half drunk.

Edward kept thinking to himself, "What a charming companion she is!" Anne kept thinking: "If this silly boy really loves me, why in the name

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of all the saints doesn't he say so and have done with it? It must be obvious to him, now, what the answer would be. I'm certainly crazy about him."

She was a clever girl, who having posed for artists since childhood had a vast smattering of art. She flattered Edward and warmed his heart. She made him believe for the time being that he was far more talented than he really was, and destined to go to the very top of fame's ladder.

They finished their bottle of wine slowly, and then because it was so warm and cheerful in the café and because they had begun to exchange confidences and found it immensely profitable and entertaining, they ordered a half-bottle of the same and sat on for an hour more.

Then Edward paid his check and they rose and went out into the night. It was a soft and pleasant night for the time of year, not a shiver in the air.

As the door of the restaurant closed behind them Anne shrugged her little shoulders with a gesture half of amusement and half of disappointment. She had done her best to make Edward say that he was in love with her, and she had failed.

"When do you go to Corsica?" she asked.

"In about six weeks."

"Shall you do another picture in the meantime?"

"I don't know. I'm pretty well out of paints, and unless something turns up I can hardly afford

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to buy more, and the trip to Corsica too. I think I'll have to work in black and white. It won't hurt me."

"I suppose I'll have to look about for some work too."

Then Edward declared himself, and in a way that surprised and delighted her.

"I don't like to think of your posing for anyone but me," he said, in a kind of exasperated voice.

"You don't! Truly?"

"No. I don't."

"Why not?"

"I just don't."

Anne laughed in the darkness. A soft little laugh full of triumph.

"Edward," she said, "couldn't I have one last look at the picture before I go home?"

Edward did not answer.

She took his arm in a gentle possessive way and they walked slowly to the building in which he lived and worked.

Edward waked and lay in the darkness and wondered what Dear Mother would think of him now, if she knew, and Dearest Grandmother and his sisters, and his father, and John and Alice, and her mother and father. He told himself that he did not care; but telling was no use, he did

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care, and he hoped that none of them would ever know. Being found out was the great crime after all. For the rest he felt a kind of blissful contentment. He had misjudged women altogether. Here at his side, so silently asleep that you might have thought her dead, lay a girl so sweet, so loving, so gentle, so understanding, so solicitous that the whole world seemed changed for him and made more beautiful, and all his old cynicisms seemed to have been swept away.

It was wonderful how silently she slept. He stopped his own breathing that he might listen to hers. He could not hear it and became alarmed . . . He had seen a play recently at the Grand Guignol—a little horror of a play—in which just when it is high time for him to be gone by the latticed window in the dawn, the wife discovers that the lover has died . . . Edward shook Anne nervously by the shoulder and spoke her name.

She wasn't dead.

The whole of life—for a while—seemed to have changed for the better. The morning was exquisite—just like spring—and his mail consisted of one letter from Townley, containing commissions to illustrate two stories—these were being

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forwarded under separate cover—and an advance payment of two hundred dollars.

Within a few seconds after receiving and reading this letter he had made the mistake of telling Anne all about it. Two hundred dollars—a thousand francs—and two hundred more to follow when the finished illustrations had been received, was a lot of money in the Paris of those days. And Anne, who a moment before had been prepared and willing to work her hands to the bone for Edward, had sudden visions of a life of ease and plenty and of endless jollifications. The money made her feel rather important, and for the first breakfast of their life together she gave Edward chocolate which was burnt. But she sat on his knee while he drank it and so he never knew.

And indeed for some weeks he labored under the impression that everything in this world is just about right, and that nothing is ever burnt or spoiled. The stern moralist will perhaps regret that these weeks should have been the happiest that Edward had ever lived or that he was ever going to live. But the stern moralist is seldom a Parisian, or a supporter of the theory that God and nature may have put the sex impulse into man for precisely the same reason that they put it into flowers, molluscs, mastodons, ants, wasps and bees—namely, that occasionally it should be obeyed.

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Certain flowers, it is true, go to seeds and die, and some argue that in these cases undoubtedly the death is the punishment of the sin. Others, however, point questioningly to the high Sierras where the sequoia trees have been honeymooning for thousands of years.

Edward did not want to know anything about Anne's past. He closed the eyes and ears of his mind to it. He knew that she loved him with all her heart, and that was enough knowledge. And he believed that toward him at least she would never show any failure of tenderness and understanding. He did not realize that when a woman has given herself, even if it is not for the first time, her curious sense of justice makes her feel that in return she is entitled to everything in sight, including the moon.

A letter came from Alice and was the first cause of trouble between them. It was in English of course and Anne couldn't read it. Edward translated and Anne made it sufficiently obvious that she did not believe his translation to be quite literal. It was. There was nothing in Alice's letter which anybody might not have been allowed to read. It was a friendly letter and reminded him of his promise to join the Ruggles family in Corsica. The time was about ripe for that. The

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Ruggles family was about to move to Genoa. Would he join them there?

"Of course you're not going—now. You don't need *her* any more. You have me."

The slighting insinuation was not lost upon Edward, but he answered patiently. "I think I ought to go, don't you? I don't *want* to—not now. But they are the oldest friends I have, and I promised and I don't want to hurt their feelings."

"That's for you to say. When there is a question of two women, it is always the man's prerogative to choose between them."

He tried to put his arm around her and was repulsed—with a kind of a cold fury. Anne had about decided to work herself into a rage.

"It is only for a short time," said Edward.

"That's what you say."

"But Anne, don't you believe what I say? I couldn't tell you lies."

"You're in love with her."

"I'm not. I'm in love with you. And she doesn't care *that* about me . . . Be reasonable."

If he had been more experienced he wouldn't have said, "Be reasonable." He would have picked up the nearest loaded cannon and said, "Go ahead and make a fool of yourself."

She was going to, anyway. And what she managed forthwith to invent and shout aloud concern-

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ing Alice and Edward had better not be printed.

And how did the scene end? As all such scenes do, time after time, until at length, perhaps after many years, the patience of the male, and his love, come to the end of the same road and the scene ends differently—fatally, sometimes.

This time it ended in tears, from Anne, and plaintive little wolf-yelps of self-pity and contrition; and on Edward's side it ended in a fury of pity and a hugeness of forgiveness that were almost godlike—and then the usual mutual happy storm of passion.

After two days of peace Anne's brow suddenly puckered a little and she said in a flat voice, "You needn't think that I'm not going to amuse *myself* while you are in Corsica."

"Oh, *Anne*—I thought that *that* was all settled."

"I'm not so easy to get rid of as you think."

"Oh, *Anne!*"

"Then take me with you."

Silence.

"You're ashamed of me."

"Oh, *Anne*, won't you please stop?"

She wouldn't. And there was another row. During this row Edward wished that he had never been born, that having been born innocent he had

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so remained, and he would have taken oath in a court of law that the lilies and languors of virtue are incomparably better friends and neighbors and roommates than the roses and raptures of vice.

But he did his best to go on keeping the peace.

Edward's well-grounded habit of doing what he said he would do when he said he would do it was at the root of the trouble. Having promised the Ruggles to join them in Corsica he could only feel that the promise ought to be kept. Then one morning he waked with a new thought altogether. If Anne was so dead set against his going to Corsica, and so blatantly jealous and suspicious of Alice, why go? Why not break his promise and go somewhere else with Anne?

He did, and to his surprise it was to Corsica that they went. Anne chose to. Perhaps she hoped that there would be a chance meeting with Alice, at which it would be easily seen which of the heroines had walked off with the hero. But the Ruggles did not stay long in Corsica and the meeting did not take place. Edward painted his famous picture of the brigand's house and was very pleased with it, and with himself, and made love to Anne with redoubled fervor.

There is no Mann Act in Corsica. They came and went as they pleased, arousing only a tolerant,

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good-natured and perhaps envious interest. And presently, their money all spent and their faces brown and rosy from the sun, they returned to Paris.

Edward will never forget that vacation. If it did have its sinful sides, it had a glory of warmth and color and perfume and tenderness which almost compensated. His conscience didn't trouble him much at the time—indeed, all that did trouble him was the possibility of a chance meeting with the Ruggles—and it doesn't trouble him much now.

And be it said for conscience's sake that before leaving Paris the impetuous and generous youth had begged Anne to marry him and she had refused. Her reasons for refusing were excellent. She was already married. But what had become of her husband was another matter. She did not know. Nobody knew.

On the way to Corsica and on the way back, and during the whole of their stay on that exquisite island, she had behaved beautifully. There had been no tempers and no fault-findings. And they might have gone on being happy an indefinite period of time.

An accumulation of letters which Edward found waiting for him, however, so hurt his peace of mind that happiness was no longer possible.

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There was a letter from Dear Mother, the usual highly moral, complaining letter, and this had the usual depressing effect on him, and there was a letter from his father the cheerfulness of which was so obviously forced that it depressed him even more, and worst of all there was a letter from Ruth. She seldom wrote to him, and when she did she usually had something disagreeable to say. The present occasion was no exception.

Ruth and her husband, through friends recently returned from Paris, had heard all about Edward's "goings on" with "that woman" (Anne?) and were grieved and shocked beyond measure. She, Ruth, had felt her duty so strongly in the matter that she had not been able to rest until she had told the miserable tidings to Edward's father. She had indeed, at some inconvenience to herself, made the trip to Bartow for the purpose. That was that! Father would use his judgment about telling mother. Ruth hoped that he would not feel obliged to tell Dear Mother, as the knowledge would very likely kill her.

Ruth imagined that Edward must be so infatuated with that woman, or some other woman, that he could hardly find time to be interested in home news; still, she felt it her duty to set down such items as he ought, if only theoretically, to be interested in.

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As for herself, she forced herself to go a good deal into society for her husband's sake. Her back troubled her at times, and she was far from strong. Dear Mother—well, she was still Ruth's ideal of a mother and a Christian gentlewoman, but disappointment in her sons would undoubtedly kill her dead in the long run. She had not seen John or heard from him in a long time. Mark was having trouble with his wife ("or perhaps it is she, poor woman, who is having trouble with him"); "but James, whom I am really learning to like and understand, goes *everywhere* and keeps up the family name and prestige."

She spoke of their father last. He had been found unconscious on the floor of his church and had been obliged to confess that for a long time he had been suffering from heart attacks.

"He is not long for this world, and if you have learned all that you need to know about art, and *other* things, don't you think it time to think about coming home and doing your duty by your parents? Heaven knows they have done their duty by you."

The next day there came a letter from Edward's father.

"This," he wrote, "my dear boy, is a postscript to my last. Ruth has been to see me, for the sole purpose, apparently, of retailing some nasty gos-

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sip about you. But I am incapable of judging any man's actions without hearing both sides, and do therefore refrain from all comment. I hope you are coming home before very long. Townley has sent me copies of the illustrations. I am very proud of you, and happy to think that you are going to be able to make your way in this world without capitulations of any kind to anybody."

And Edward realized that he ought indeed to begin to think about going home. As a creative artist he was now able to stand on his own feet. Money was more easily earned in America than in Europe, and it would be possible for him to return to Paris whenever he saw fit.

He did not, however, feel that it would be right or indeed possible for him to break off his relationship with Anne. Perhaps he really loved her. At any rate, now that their violent quarrels were becoming a dim memory, he grew daily more attached to her. He would have married her without hesitation if it had been possible, and even consulted a lawyer about obtaining a divorce for her. It seemed, however, that this would require both money and influence and Anne herself discouraged the notion.

"We are doing very well as it is," she said. "We are faithful to each other and we have all our interests in common. Why worry?"

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Worry began for Edward with the return of the Ruggles family to Paris. He received a note from Alice begging him to call, and he said nothing about this note to Anne, and he called at the first opportunity. His motives in denying Anne his confidence were excellent. She had upon a previous occasion proved herself utterly unworthy of it, and he believed in peace even at the price of deception.

In the course of two weeks he saw Alice exactly five times. At those meetings nothing was said or done or thought which need have troubled Anne in the least. The barrier which Alice had erected between herself and Edward was still in place. They were old friends and no more. Still, Edward deceived Anne as carefully and elaborately as if he had been carrying on a base intrigue and his conscience did not trouble him. When a woman who has no grounds for being jealous persists in being jealous, she does not invite honesty or candor. Edward knew that if Anne knew that the Ruggles were in Paris and that he was seeing them, there would be a terrible row, and he could not believe that such a row would be of any particular benefit to anybody and therefore did his very best to avoid it.

Of course he could have seen Alice just once, and he could have told her why he ought not to

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see her any more. But he balked at that. He found it impossible to tell an American girl he was living quite openly with a very jealous young woman to whom he was not married. Alice had always pretended to be immensely broad-minded, but he imagined that her broad-mindedness dealt with general rather than particular lapses, and he avoided the issue.

Alice did not seem to be enjoying her usually blissful good health. She had lost weight, color and energy. Europe had not agreed with her, and her parents were in a hurry to get her home. At last they were able to fix the date of their departure, and at that, as if she felt the opportunity might never occur again, Alice began to make a great to-do about seeing the whole of Paris that she had not yet seen. It was a large order and put Edward in an embarrassing situation. She insisted upon his going about with her, and Anne began to feel neglected.

One night Anne amused herself by shooting an arrow into the air. She said, "Why didn't you tell me that your friends the Ruggles were back in Paris?"

Edward's face answered for him. He had no other answer. The question had been too sudden and unexpected.

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"You have seen her—that Alice—that old sweetheart of yours?"

Edward tried to speak with great calmness and dignity.

"They are very old friends of mine," he said. "It would be preposterous for me to refuse to see them. If you were reasonable I would have told you. But you aren't reasonable and so I didn't. Yes. I've seen them a number of times. They are going back to America Saturday and I shall see them before they go."

"Oh, no, you won't!" said Anne. "But I shall. I shall go to see them and tell them what I think of them—you brute!"

The fit was upon her and she raged unmeasurably and injuriously. She must have been heard in the street below. Fellow lodgers stopped their various activities the better to listen.

Edward pleaded with her, protested his innocence and became by turns furious, pitiful and cold with disgust. She called him the most horrible names she could think of and she was able to think of worse names for Alice.

He tried to take her in his arms and soothe her. She pounded his face with her little fists and tried to scratch his eyes. Then suddenly, shouting at the top of her lungs that she was about to throw herself in the river, she rushed from the room

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down the long flights of stairs and out into the Street of the Saintly Fathers. It was raining hard. Of course Edward didn't believe that she would drown herself, and he knew that the very best thing for him to do was to stand pat, as the poker players say, and wait until her rage cooled and she came whimpering back; but he dared not risk the one chance in a thousand that she would do what she had threatened. So with a heavy, resentful heart he followed her. When Anne perceived that she was followed, she chose to pretend that she was being followed to be hurt. So she began to scream, not *too* loud, and to run.

Edward caught up with her in a few strides and seized her by the arm. "For Heaven's sake behave yourself!" he cried.

Anne screamed and fought as if she was being feloniously attacked. She tore herself loose and darted off in the direction of the river.

Nothing in the whole of creation is half so reckless as a woman when she has made up her mind to punish and humiliate a man. No law of decency or reasonableness binds her. She does not care what she says or what she reveals or what she invents if only it will hurt.

So Anne, perceiving a thick-set burgher under an umbrella, who had paused to see what the run-

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ning was all about, flung herself upon him and cried, "You're a man—save me!"

The burgher was middle-aged, respectable and wise. He shook her off and turned to Edward. "Drunk?" he asked laconically.

Anne's mind turned completely over. She shook her fist in Edward's face and said, "Are you going to stand there and let him say that I am drunk? And you call yourself a man!"

Edward had turned icy cold with shame and disgust. "I am going home," he said, "and you had better come too and behave yourself."

This time it was Anne who followed Edward. At almost every step she spoke injuries. The burgher, smiling under his umbrella, made off in the opposite direction.

Edward felt that his love for Anne was dead. He was wrong. When her anger had passed, she wept and made him believe that all the wicked things she had said and done and threatened were for love of him. In all the world she had only Edward. If he abandoned her, as indeed she thought he ought, she would have nothing, nobody.

She crept onto his knees and snuggled her face against his. She lifted his arm and put it around her. She fought against his coldness and his aloofness as if they had been two devils. She kissed

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him and kissed him; but he would not kiss her back. He had made up his mind that all was over between them.

When Anne perceived that it was really a question of a final break, she begged for just one more chance.

"Don't you understand that if you leave me—I'll die? I wouldn't blame you a bit for leaving me after the way I've acted, but I'd die just the same. You don't know how much I love you."

Edward: "You have objectionable ways of showing it at times."

Anne: "But you don't want me to die—*do you?*"

Edward: "Of course I don't want you to die."

Anne (feeling that she has won a small victory): "I love you so much that there is nothing else in the world and I'm not able to see beyond you."

Edward: "If you really loved me, you'd trust me. Imagine me cutting up and making a fool of myself just because you wanted now and then to see some old friends of yours."

Anne: "But you're not jealous. Can I help it if I am jealous?"

Edward: "You don't even try."

Anne: "But I am going to try. I am never going to be bad any more. I swear it."

Edward (beginning to relent and to be a little

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glad that there is a pretty girl on his knees): "If you are bad again—I'll leave you like a shot out of a gun. We have everything to make us happy and contented and we are going to have more and more—and you insist on spoiling it."

Anne: "But I see that too. And I won't be bad any more. Won't you forgive me?"

Edward: "Of course."

Anne: "Of course! That's not forgiving me. That's just words. I might be sitting on a dead man's knees. Your arm is like the arm of a corpse."

Edward tightened the corpse arm and she sighed happily and he kissed her. His kiss was cool. It was like the kiss of a parent for an erring child. Nevertheless Anne smiled to herself. She had won her battle. She would have been willing to stake her life that his next kiss would be warmer. It was.

Thereafter for a few days Anne was very good indeed. It seemed as if she had really determined to get the better of her crazy temper and foolish jealousy. And she made no further objection to Edward's seeing the Ruggles.

The night before they left Paris he had dinner with them and after dinner strolled with Alice in the Tuileries Gardens. She said she had something to tell him that she had not felt like telling

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him before. He must have noticed that something had happened to her? That she was different? Yes, he had noticed that at once. And it had hurt him.

"Well," she said, "after you went away I was very unhappy and hurt. I had no right to be, but I was. I thought that if you really liked me, you wouldn't have found it so necessary to go to Paris to learn painting. I thought you could have studied in New York just as well. I tried to be very gay, just the same, and went to lots of parties and danced all night and flirted my silly head off . . . but I guess we never really did care about each other—did we?"

"Maybe not," said Edward defensively.

"Everywhere I went there was always a certain man. He made me believe that he was there because I was, and for no other reason."

Now although Edward loved Anne, this statement gave him a sharp twinge of jealousy. And he said rather sullenly: "I see."

Alice took no note of the sullen tone. "I got to care about him," she said simply. "I got so that I really cared."

There was a little time of silence.

"Do I know him?" Edward asked.

"Yes. You know him . . . Father and mother didn't approve one little bit. That's why we came

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abroad. They wanted me to have a chance to get over it. That was fair enough, and I was willing to come. Because I knew that I wouldn't get over it—ever."

"Why don't your father and mother approve?" asked Edward.

"I don't think that you'll approve when you know who he is. I don't know that I do."

"*You* don't?"

"I don't think we'll be happy. I try to look at it from the cold-blooded point of view of an outsider. And when I manage to look at it that way—well, then I don't think that it is a bit wise or sensible. But then you see I'm really an insider, and not a bit cold-blooded . . ." She spoke now with sudden passion: "And I can't give him up. I won't give him up."

Many phrases rose to Edward's lips, but it seemed foolish to utter any of them. Finally he said: "I don't know what to say, Alice. I don't even know who the man is and—well, I wish it was just the very last thing that had ever happened, but you say it isn't, and I don't know what to say."

"The man is your brother James."

Edward's eyes grew round with astonishment. And then the pupils narrowed with pain and resentment. "You're joking."

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She laid her hand lightly on his arm. He could feel that it was trembling slightly.

"Please don't say anything against him," she said. "It's happened. And it's not going to unhappen. And I'm going through with it for better or worse . . . and he loves me. He really does love me, and that's all that really matters—isn't it?"

Edward laid his hand warmly over hers. "But Alice, dear," he said, "you're not happy—and *that* is all that really matters."

VII

EDWARD was so unhappy that he couldn't keep it to himself. Anne believed that he was unhappy because Alice had left Paris; her jealousy got the better of her good resolutions and she started to work herself into a fury.

Edward simply caught up his hat and started coldly from the room. He was in the mood to leave Anne forever and ever. But she followed him down all the stairs, abusing him in a voice that grew stronger and stronger as her passion rose.

He dared not go out into the street. She would have followed and made a laughing-stock of him. He turned and caught her by the wrist—firmly but not roughly. At once she began to scream that he was hurting her. "Kill me if you must," she screamed, "but don't torture me!"

He was helpless. He tried to dart past her and run back to the studio, but she grappled with him.

"Let go of me," he said savagely, "or I *will* hurt you."

There must have been a dangerous look in his eye, for she did let go and she lowered her voice.

"Why are you so cruel to me?" she said.

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"I cruel to you! Oh, you fool! Why do you have to spoil everything?"

He went up the stairs slowly and wearily. She followed. When he reached the studio, he walked to a window and stood looking out. He was so miserable that he would almost have liked to throw himself out of the window and get his neck broken.

He even considered the notion.

Anne came and leaned against him. "I am sorry," she said. "I'll *never* do it again."

"I've heard that before."

"But this time I am serious. I mean it."

"When I am depressed and unhappy, instead of trying to help me, you stage a terrible scene. It is intolerable. You ought to be whipped."

"I know I ought. And if you really whipped me and hurt me it might make me behave. Women who are beaten occasionally are nearly always well behaved. I wish you *would* whip me."

"You know that I won't . . . I am going to tell you why I have been so depressed. Miss Ruggles is going to marry my brother, and she will be very unhappy."

"That is nothing to me."

"No. You have no heart where anyone but yourself is concerned. But I've known her ever

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since we were children. We have been like brother and sister, and I want her to be happy."

"You'd better marry her yourself."

"Are you going to start another scene? I advise you not to. My temper is pretty well lost, and that is the best advice I ever gave anyone."

For several hours both belligerents were sulky and miserable. Then came dinner and the amusing sights and sounds of a Latin Quarter restaurant to relieve the tension. Edward was always ready to forget and forgive at the slightest excuse, and Anne for all her jealousies and bad temper was really in love with him, and they went to their home finally as affectionate and happy as a couple of turtle-doves.

When Edward had taken Anne into his life and heart he had not given much thought to the future or to his relationship with other people. He had already perceived the drawbacks of being tied to Anne, and of course the tempers were really horrible, but he perceived also that there were very real advantages. He was never lonely or bored, and life had a genuine domestic touch.

She was a thrifty young woman with a passion for mending. And she could make even a few broad copper pennies do a lot of work.

He wished sometimes that he had no other ties or obligations in the world. He was going to be

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a very successful painter—and soon. Everybody said so. And it seemed a pity that he should have to have anything on his mind but the painting. In his day-dreams he pictured to himself a summer place with a fine big studio, outside of Paris, and a winter place—well, perhaps in Spain. He could earn enough money to make them very comfortable, and Anne would administer the money and cause the servants to work and the house and garden to be full of flowers. In time she would become so sure of Edward's single-hearted love and devotion that she would stop all her tempers and jealousies. He would paint her charming rosy body hundreds of times. All they would have to do would be to live happily and work happily and the world would be at their feet.

Meanwhile Edward's illustrations had impressed themselves upon certain editors in the United States, and he had so many orders that the execution of them interfered with his painting. He did not wish to be an illustrator; but it was wonderfully pleasant to earn so much money so easily and to have a growing bank account. And it was good training—doing things that you didn't especially want to do just as well as you could possibly do them.

One day he read in a stray copy of the *Paris Herald* that the ship *Albacore* was two weeks over-

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due and that nothing had been heard of her. The *Albacore* was John's new ship, and Edward was so startled that his heart almost stopped beating . . . But then of course nothing could happen to John. John was an institution. He was the first institution in the family. But at the end of a few hours Edward was so worried that he got Anne's permission—he always had to have that—to cross the river and visit the office of the *Herald*.

The *Albacore* was still missing.

Edward returned to Anne and told her all of his anxieties. He told her about John being married and having a child—but without any reference to James—and he said that he didn't know what was going to become of them if anything happened to John.

"And Anne, darling," he said, "if anything *has* happened to John, you'll just have to let me go back to New York to help straighten things out. And I ought to see my father, who is sick. I've got to go. You see that, don't you?"

But Anne, when she wished, could see more than the truth in any statement.

"You wish to go to New York," she said, "so that you can save that Alice from your brother James—so that you can save her for yourself."

"You *know* that I love you, and not anybody

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else! Why do you always want to make trouble? It's months since I saw her. Have I behaved like a man who is unhappy because some young woman has gone away? Haven't I made love to you all the time?" He had—almost. He had behaved like a young man who was still on his honeymoon. "But if anything *has* happened to John, I've got to go. And nothing that you can say or do will stop me."

And something had happened to John. Nobody was ever to know just what. The *Albacore* had vanished into the seas together with her officers and her crew.

Edward's distress became so poignant that Anne no longer had the heart to quarrel with him or find fault with him. And she even urged him to do the thing that he wished to do. There was money enough for his journey and to keep Anne during his absence, and there was more money owing which he would be able to collect in New York. And, more valuable still, he would be able to make personal connections with his editors and to arrange for the future.

The day before his departure, Anne and Edward went to the cathedral of Notre Dame and burned a candle for his safe voyage. She made him swear that he would come back to her. He did not need to swear that. His heart would bring him. She

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had her faults—terrible faults—but she loved him. Faults or no faults, he could not see life without her. No other woman had any attraction for him.

And she made him swear that he would not see Alice. He swore that oath too, for the sake of peace, but he had no intention of keeping it.

From the docks he went straight to Bartow-on-the-Sound. The rectory was a house of mourning. You might have thought that no mother and son had ever been closer or more deeply in each other's confidence, sympathy and trust than Dear Mother and John. The Reverend Mr. Eaton was more gentle and silent than ever. But his extraordinary black eyes had a haunted look. He took Edward in his arms and kissed him on both cheeks—just as if Edward had been a daughter. The young man was deeply affected and kept back his tears with difficulty.

And that night, after Dear Mother had gone to bed, he sat up late with his father and told him about Anne. It wasn't an easy telling at first, but as the Reverend Mr. Eaton made no comments, it became easier.

When Edward had finished, Mr. Eaton, who had been leaning attentively forward, leaned back and clasped his fine white hands over his right knee, swinging his right foot to and fro, and said:

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"I understand very well how these things start, but I want to know what your heart and mind tell you now that the first glamour is over."

Edward considered for some moments. Then he said: "Truthfully, father, I think I feel just the way any man feels about his wife—that I must be kind to her, and faithful, and take good care of her. I feel that I have lots and lots of other duties and considerations, but that she just naturally comes first. Was there *always* marriage?"

"Probably not," said Mr. Eaton, "but we don't know. . . . I had rather a thousand times that you came back from abroad with this story of the one young woman than with a worldly wise expression upon your face—and no story at all. I am disturbed by what you have told me, a little aghast and horrified perhaps; from a moral point of view I disapprove strongly of what you have done. But I am very proud that you had enough confidence in me to tell me about it."

"Even if Ruth hadn't gossiped," said Edward, "I had made up my mind to tell you. But I'd rather mother didn't know."

"Can the secret be kept?"

"I don't know," said Edward, "but getting a divorce for Anne is only a question of money. If I can earn enough, soon enough, then we can be

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married, and mother need never know any more than just that much."

"It would be nice," said Mr. Eaton, "if your poor mother didn't even have to know about the divorce. She puts all the moralities into pigeon-holes, you know . . . Have you heard about Mark?"

"What about him? No, sir, I haven't."

"I thought some member of the family would have written. I hadn't the heart."

"I heard that his wife made him a lot of trouble."

"He shot a man because of her."

"No!" exclaimed Edward, his face lighting with anxiety and interest.

"Mark appears to stand very well in his community and the case did not get into the courts. It appears also that Mark is cool-headed and that he did not shoot to kill . . . The interloper was so wounded that for some weeks—well, he had to eat off the mantlepice, and the neighbors have poked so much fun at him that he has been obliged to leave town. Mark's wife is, I am afraid, one of those wives who really ought to be divorced. But because of the baby Mark will not divorce her. He has sold his interests, at a great sacrifice, I am afraid, and has moved farther West—some-where where the story will not be known. She

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must have another chance, he says; but she is very tired of Mark, and she will never tire of flattery."

"And Mark was doing so well, and now he has to start all over again. What does mother think about all this?"

Mr. Eaton simply lifted his hands in a gesture which clearly indicated the hopelessness of trying to explain Dear Mother's thoughts on the subject. But he did say: "She has given Mark up for lost. He knows that his wife is a wicked woman and by his failure to punish her has made himself equally culpable. That, I believe, is a small part of your mother's mental attitude."

"It's altogether different in Europe," said Edward, "but American men, whether they are husbands or juries, don't ever seem to like to punish women."

"That is true," said Mr. Eaton, "we don't. We have destroyed the buffalo and the forest and the Indian. We are beginning to destroy the whole edifice of liberty which our ancestors worked so hard to build up for us. But to our women we have been fatuously kind and indulgent. Historians will come, perhaps, to the conclusion that that has been our greatest and our most destructive mistake."

"But we are not going to change?" said Edward.

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"Certainly not," said his father, "though the heavens fall . . . And now, my dear boy, it is getting late, and I am supposed to keep early hours."

"You haven't told me anything about yourself."

"There is so little to tell . . . John, our strong man is gone, and I shall probably live to be as old as Methuselah!"

Edward looked into his father's eyes, and seemed to see death in them—death not very far off. He tried to smile cheerfully, but succeeded only in twitching the corners of his mouth.

There was a difficulty about going to town early the next morning. Dear Mother seemed to think that business, owing to darling John's recent death, ought to be postponed; but since the business related to John's wife and the child, and since they might be in real need, Edward did not feel that it ought to be delayed on any account. A delay might result in the sudden appearance of the young woman and the offspring at the rectory, and Edward dreaded anything of that kind, not only for his mother's sake but for the young woman's.

So he said that the business really involved his financial future—it did, more than he realized at the time—and he was sorry, and he would do anything in the world that was reasonable to please

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Dear Mother, but this particular trip could not possibly be foregone.

It seemed horribly "heartless" to Dear Mother, and "people will be sure to talk." But Edward held to his resolution and caught the eight twenty-two.

He found the old blind woman, and James's child, in the charge of a cross-voiced slattern, but the blind woman's daughter, John's wife, and the child's mother, had very recently departed with a traveling salesman for parts unknown.

"Your brother," said the old blind woman, when Edward's identity had been made clear to her, "didn't do right by her. And I don't blame her for what she done. But if she'd 'a' knowed John was going to be drowned, she might have waited."

"Have you any plans?" asked Edward. "Any money?"

"We've been living on the last money your brother sent—and now"—here she began to sniffle—"there ain't going to be any more."

"Yes, there will," said Edward. "There will be enough money to keep you and someone to look after you, but"—and one last look at the ugly, squalid surroundings and the faces of the two women determined his duty—"I don't want John's—my brother's little boy—— Well, I think he will be better off with me. I will take him back

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to France with me. He will be better off there."

The child's grandmother—and it was astonishing what a resemblance the child bore to James—sniffled a little at this and pretended to an affection which it was obvious that she did not feel, but in the end she conceded that the boy would be better off with his uncle.

"Then that is settled," said Edward. "But you may keep him, if you will, until I sail."

Edward reached home in time for dinner. He was childishly pleased with himself. He felt that he had met a difficult situation and mastered it.

And he felt very proud to think that at his age he could make himself financially responsible for the keep of an old blind woman and the proper rearing and education of his nephew. He felt that he had done just what dear old John would have wished him to do.

A week later came the first letter that he had ever received from Anne. She missed him so that her heart was breaking. She would never be bad again. And he must love her more than he had ever loved her before, because—well, she could have told him before he sailed, but she hadn't been perfectly sure, and she hadn't wanted to worry him. But she was sure now. There was no doubt. She had been to an old woman who knew all about such things . . .

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In plain English, Anne was going to have a baby.

Dearest James had told Dear Mother that he would come to the country at once to see Edward. But he did not come at once and Dear Mother was distressed. What would people think? A brother not coming to see a brother who had been away in France for a long time!

For once Edward wished to see James—but not for pleasure. He wished to talk with James about James's little son, and he wished if possible to make him break off his engagement with Alice Ruggles.

But James himself had done that, and very recently.

He came to the country at last looking very handsome and attractive. He did not come alone. There was a young woman with him.

She was extraordinarily beautiful and gentle. She wore the richest and quietest clothes, and a marquise diamond big enough to have supported the entire Eaton family for the rest of their lives.

"Ellen," said James in his most beguiling voice, "this is my Dear Mother. Mother Dear—my wife."

Dear Mother shambled forward as if her legs had been suddenly stiffened. Her upper lip drew back from her projecting shelf of upper teeth.

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She was smiling. Some intuition had told her that her favorite son had done very well by himself.

He had. Miss Hepwing, to whom he had been quietly married three days before, was a well-born New York girl, all of whose relatives were rich and most of whom were dead. The dead included her parents. There had been nobody to save her from James, and he had managed to make her love him almost at once.

Edward stood in a corner unobserved while Dear Mother "made over" the newly married pair.

"A mother," she cried, "can never have enough daughters . . . How beautiful you are, my dear! How proud I am to have such a beautiful daughter . . ."

"How about Alice?" thought Edward.

At this moment the handsome roving eye of James detected him.

"Eddie!" shouted James. "Dear old Eddie. Ellen, this is Edward—the old rascal—the young prodigal. Come forward, Edward, and kiss your new sister!"

Edward came forward. The sweetness of her face and the honesty and candor of her eyes thrilled him.

"What a perfectly lovely new sister you are," he said, and he kissed her. From that moment to this day he has felt that his sister-in-law is much

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the loveliest person in the world and has the most beautiful character. He racks his brain sometimes and twists all his theories of God inside out trying to explain to himself why she should have been given to a man like James.

When presently the Reverend Mr. Eaton came in, he too fell in love with Mrs. James, and his brains too were well racked and his theories about God were twisted and tousled in trying to explain to himself how she happened to have been allowed to cast herself away upon that desert island of a son of his—where all that was deserving in her of happiness must come to grief.

But perhaps that great goodness of hers, the which there was no mistaking, would prove contagious. Perhaps James would come down with it in time—if only with a mild case. He didn't.

Finally Dear Mother carried the new daughter off to the upper regions of the house, the Reverend Mr. Eaton retreated into his workroom, and the two brothers were left together.

"Charming—isn't she?" said James.

"I think she is wonderful," said Edward. "She has the sweetest expression I ever saw."

"She is like her expression through and through," said James. "I don't deserve her."

"Right you are!" exclaimed Edward cheerfully. But James frowned. It was all right for him

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to depreciate himself, but it was no proper work for any other member of the family. There was a silence between them. Then Edward, drawing a quick breath, said:

"How about Alice Ruggles? What does she think about all this?"

"I'm sure I don't know," said James coldly. "She hasn't heard about it yet."

"She probably still thinks she is engaged to be married to you."

"I never said I'd marry her," said James.

And Edward blushed. He blushed to think that he could have a brother who should make such a speech as that.

"So if you still want Alice," said James, "you can probably have her."

Edward fought down his rage. "What," he asked, "are you going to do about your little boy?"

"What little boy?"

"You know."

"I do *not* know."

"He looks precisely like the pictures of you at the same age. And his mother said that you were his father. She ought to know."

"Young Edward," said James, "would it inconvenience you too much to concentrate your attention on your own affairs?"

"John shielded us from the scandal and relieved

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you of your responsibility. But there was something noble about John. There is nothing noble about me."

"Right you are!" put in James smartly.

But Edward went right on. "It's your child and it's your affair. Father will tell you so when he hears about it, and so will mother, and so will Ellen."

"If you say anything to hurt Ellen," exclaimed James, "I'll wring your young neck."

"To blazes with my young neck!" said Edward, his rage rising again. "And, anyway, you've led such a soft life that if you so much as touched me I'd knock the daylights out of you. But do right—and I won't tell."

"How do you mean—*do* right?"

"The child has to live."

"I don't want to hear anything about that particular child or any other."

"The child has to live," continued Edward steadily. "I will look after the details and Ellen need never know, but you'll have to put up two hundred dollars a month."

"The devil I will! And how do I know the brat's mine? That girl was——"

"Oh, shut up!" exclaimed Edward. "Will you find that money or shall I ask Ellen for it?"

James could never be made to acknowledge that

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the child was his; but under the pretense that it was really John's and that he could not bear to see it starve, he agreed finally to pay over to Edward two hundred dollars on the first of each and every month. He made these payments regularly for a while, then irregularly, and finally he stopped making them altogether.

The fact that he had upon his hands a young woman of uncertain temper who was not his wife, a child that was not his, and a child of his own on the way did not daunt Edward's spirit. On the contrary he felt rather important and broad-shouldered and self-sufficient. He had agreed to do regular illustrating for a rich and widely circulated magazine, and had no doubt about his financial responsibility. He did wonder a little about when he should find time to paint and pursue art seriously; but he did not worry. The manly thing, he felt, was to support those who were dependent upon him and to think about himself afterward. So he wrote rapturous letters to Anne, and in the midst of the raptures explained about his brother's little boy, whom he would bring back to France with him. He would always let Anne and all the rest of the world believe that the boy was legitimately John's. It couldn't hurt poor old John any, and it would be of advantage to the boy. Edward was going to try very hard to like that boy. But

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he wished that he did not so strongly resemble brother James.

Dear Mother, who knew nothing of these complications and responsibilities, had made up her mind to keep Edward at home. So many people had spoken to her about his illustrations, his talent, or his genius—at the option of the individual enthusiasm—and his good looks (this particular praise was a matter of sex) that she began to approve of the course that Edward had steered with his young life. She admitted that she had wished him to enter the Church; but she had also encouraged him to draw, helped him in his choice of subjects and bought him a fine box of paints. Of course he had always been *her* boy—her baby.

Now daily she worked upon his feelings. She made him her confidant, told him that his darling, precious, sainted father had not long to live and that she herself had no one to lean on or confide in. James? Well, he had been away so much—not callous, you know—but very intent upon his own personal fortune—and what a success he was! She had always expected great things of James; but this brilliant marriage, to this exquisite young fatherless and motherless creature—for whom one's heart ached—with all her money and so forth and so forth. It was really overwhelming!

She was steadily kind, admiring and indulgent.

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She almost succeeded in winning his confidence. But not quite. He observed that her judgments about unsuccessful people, unless they were painfully religious and hypocritical, were just as bitter as ever.

At this time there returned to Westchester from Paris a rich Mrs. Ludlow. And she made it an immediate point to call upon her pastor and Mrs. Eaton to tell them all the wonderful things she had been hearing about their youngest son.

"All Paris is talking about him," she said. "I did my best to get hold of him so that I could bring you news direct; but he had gone out of town. I went to his studio, but he had rented it to a young woman and her mother—painters also, I gathered."

"Edward's here," said Mr. Eaton, "right here in this house."

Ever since her marriage to a large fortune, and especially since the decease of her husband, Mrs. Ludlow had hunted lions. Her eyelids fluttered. Her nostrils dilated. She was on the trail of still another.

"Oh, but I must see him! I must tell him myself what everybody is saying."

"I'll fetch him," said Mr. Eaton.

He took his time with the stairs—he always had to now—and found Edward in John's rooms.

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Edward's hands were all a mess with oil and emery powder. He had been cleaning the rust from the pair of Revolutionary sabers that John had always valued so highly.

"John always kept them bright till he went to sea," he said. "After that I took care of them. And I thought I'd better have one more whack at the old things."

"I don't like to interrupt," said Mr. Eaton, "but there are ladies below who demand your presence. Your mother and Mrs. Ludlow."

"The Mrs. Ludlow?"

"The very woman!"

"She used to be rather good looking."

"I should have said opulent looking—opulent in its physical rather than its financial sense."

"What do they want with me?"

Mr. Eaton wrinkled up his eyes and smiled. "The last lion that ventured into Mrs. Ludlow's drawing-room never came out. She is said to have devoured him alive."

"But——" Then Edward broke into a broad grin. "Am I a lion? Me? Has she never seen a lion so very little that she had pity for it?"

"Never!" said Mr. Eaton.

Edward finished washing his hands and said that he would be down in a minute.

"Thank you," said his father. At the door he

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turned and said: "I think it might be effective if you began to roar when you reached the foot of the stairs and entered the parlor on all fours."

Edward put the sabers aside with the intention of giving them a final polishing later, had a look at himself in the mirror, not to admire himself but to see if there was any oil and emery on his face, and went slowly down to the parlor.

"You nice boy!" exclaimed Mrs. Ludlow. "You must come and sit down right beside me and hear all about yourself."

Edward did as he was told.

"I am just back from Paris," said Mrs. Ludlow. "I even did myself the honor of calling on you at your studio——"

Edward could not help changing color. Good Lord, what was the woman going to say next!

"But of course you were gone. Your tenants were very nice and friendly. They let me come in and look at all the paintings. The girl was really very sweet and pretty—and the mother must have been pretty before her mustache became so pronounced. But have you heard?"

No, Edward hadn't.

"Not that two of your pictures have been hung on the line and that all Paris is talking?"

No, Edward had not heard that. But it was wonderful news. He was no longer bored and

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indifferent. Mrs. Lion Hunter was transformed in the twinkling of an eye into a most wise, entertaining, witty and agreeable person.

"The picture called Ogre's House——"

"Brigand's House?" Edward suggested.

"How stupid of me!—the Brigand's House—is a sensation—but for my part I simply adored those three lovely young girls fading into the mists of the river."

Edward smiled gaily. "It was too hot to sleep," he explained, "so they all went for a swim."

"But where did you find such lovely models?"

At this point Mrs. Eaton, who had been drinking in the praise with immense satisfaction, broke into the conversation.

"Models!" she exclaimed. "Do you have to have models?"

"For the human form divine, mother?" said Edward. "Well, I should rather think so!"

"Do you mean to tell me," said Mrs. Eaton, and her horror was genuine, "that young women come to your studio and undress themselves?"

"Not unless I ask them to," said Edward demurely.

Mrs. Ludlow laughed nervously.

"I should think," said Mrs. Eaton, "that you could find plenty of other objects to paint."

"I could," said Edward patiently, "and do—

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often. But this picture was of three tired little shop-girls who, after working all day, couldn't sleep in their hot garret and went swimming in the river."

"All Paris," said Mrs. Ludlow, "is saying that it is one of the loveliest pictures ever painted."

"The tough part was the stars and the mist," said Edward. "I worked my head off over that."

"But what a subject!" exclaimed Mrs. Eaton.

"A subject comes into your head, mother dear," said Edward, "and you have to paint it. There is no way out."

"What is the other painting?"

"Just an old house in Corsica—with a green tile roof, and a fig tree, and a tremendous wine-colored shadow on one side."

"That," said Mrs. Eaton, "I should conceive to be a far more suitable subject for a painting."

"Maybe it is," said Edward, "but I love to paint figures. And it is not so easy as you might think."

"The Pirate's House," said Mrs. Ludlow, "is being considered by the Luxembourg."

"What!" exclaimed Edward.

Mrs. Ludlow nodded. And then, feeling sure that she had thrown a net around her lion, she rose and said her good-bys. She invited Edward, quite casually, to call upon her. He promised that he would do so. He escorted her to her carriage,

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and on the way they named a day—the next day but one, at five o'clock.

"I want to talk to you about a lot of things," she said. "A portrait of myself—if you would care for the commission—and your—well, your younger tenant."

Her eyes were fixed sharply upon his. And he knew at once that she knew about Anne. He lowered his voice.

"What about her?" he asked anxiously. "She's all right, isn't she?"

But Mrs. Ludlow only smiled, stepped nimbly into her carriage and said: "Home—Robbins."

Edward was beginning to wonder why he heard nothing of Alice Ruggles—she must know that he was in Westchester—and he wrote to her and received no answer. He determined, therefore—in spite of his promise to Anne—to call upon her at the earliest opportunity, but in the meanwhile the portrait of Mrs. Ludlow, for which she was to pay him five hundred dollars, occupied his mind to the exclusion of everything else.

He had called upon Mrs. Ludlow, and together they looked over all the dresses in her wardrobe. They had chosen the dress for her to be painted in, and they decided that she should be painted behind a tea table with a handsome service of Georgian silver-fluted column behind her and in

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the middle distance a willow tree and beyond the wooded shore of the bay.

During the first sittings Edward liked Mrs. Ludlow. But as time passed his liking changed almost to aversion. She proved to him that no woman is too old to hope that some young man will make love to her. She made herself ridiculous with her hints and her advances and her languishing looks, and she made Edward miserably uncomfortable. The night he stayed to dinner she tried to make him drink too much and didn't succeed. The day the portrait was finished she flung her arms around him and hugged him with astonishing strength and declared her passion for him. She begged him to marry her. She boasted of her money and her influence. She could make him the most famous painter in the world.

Poor Edward, who hated to hurt anybody's feelings! He tried so hard to be kind and affectionate. He patted her shoulders clumsily. He even kissed her. And he lied to her. He said that her love was a wonderful thing to him, wonderful and precious . . . Unfortunately—well—what she suggested was impossible. The girl in Paris—well, he and that girl were husband and wife.

He escaped finally. And spent the next week in dodging and evading the woman's attentions.

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He hated her. He wrote to Anne that he had painted a portrait of an old friend of his mother's and that as soon as he had received the money he would sail for France. He sailed without the money. No love, no money. The rich Mrs. Ludlow never did pay for her portrait.

One afternoon found Edward alone in the rectory. His father and his Dear Mother had gone to pay a round of parish calls. He thought that it would be a good opportunity to sneak off to New Rochelle and see Alice Ruggles. The walk would do him good. He went to his room to change his shoes, and when he had changed them and was coming down the stairs the parlor-maid had just answered a ring at the front door. And the clear boyish voice which Edward heard asking if Mr. James were at home was the voice of Alice Ruggles herself.

"Mr. James is in the city."

"But I'm here, Alice," cried Edward, and he descended the remaining steps in two jumps.

The pallor of Alice's face and the woe in her eyes was like a blow to him. He simply stood and stared at her.

The parlor-maid left them.

"Is it true that James is married?"

"Yes, Alice, it *is* true. Come into the parlor and sit down. You look sick."

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"Married!" she said, and stood her ground.

"Oh, you are terribly hurt. I know *that!*" exclaimed Edward. "But you have had a lucky escape. I tell you, you have had a lucky escape."

"You don't know what you are talking about," said Alice sharply, "and I don't know what is going to become of me."

Suspicion sickened into certainty. After a long silence Edward said: "The dirty dog! He ought to be lynched." Then he said, "Do your father and mother know?"

"Mother knows that there is something all wrong—but she doesn't dare suspect. She knows it would kill her—and father. Poor father and his theories! They don't work out when it comes to me."

"What are you going to do?"

"What can I do? I'm not going to go on living. That's certain."

"But Alice—don't talk like that!"

"Where is your mother? I'll ask her what I'd better do. Maybe *she* would like to take me in. Anything that has ever belonged to her blessed James ought to be sacred to her."

"Mother's out," said Edward, "and don't talk so wildly. Are you still in love with James?"

"I hate him! I could kill him."

"So could I—slow torture, and all that kind of

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thing. But what's the use? Let's be practical. Come in here." He slid an arm around her waist and half carried her into the parlor. Then he fetched her a glass of wine from his father's study. It was communion wine. *Lacrimæ Christi*—tears of Christ. The alcoholic content was low, but it brought some color into her cheeks. He made her take the easiest chair. He put some cushions back of her and one under her feet.

"Feel better?"

"I always feel better when I'm with you."

Her words warmed his heart.

"And safe?"

"Safe."

"That's good. Then listen, you poor little kid, and let's see if we can't find some way to make life worth living."

First he told her about John's marriage to the girl that James had ruined and how it had devolved upon him to take charge and custody of the child of that ruination. Then he told her about Anne and the baby that Anne was going to have; and about Anne's jealousy and his love for Anne.

"I'll always love Anne," he said, "and I'll always be faithful to her. But we can't be married because she is married, and it wouldn't complicate matters much if I were married too, and it would protect you—and I'd give my painting hand to

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protect you. We could be married and you could come to France to live. And although Anne would be terribly furious at first, why, in the end I could make her understand. She wouldn't let me see you—ever—I don't suppose. But you'd be my wife, and the baby would have a chance—and I'd help you in every way that I possibly could. Now there's the only sane practical way that there is out of this mess."

Alice wept very bitterly. She wept, she said, because Edward was so noble. But when he had put her in her carriage, there was a twinkle of hope in her woeful eyes. And they had arranged to be married.

Of course it was the memory of what John had done that inspired Edward to do the same for another lady in distress. He had thought only about the noble aspect of John's conduct—never about the foolish one. But he did realize now that he had made his own life, which ought to have been simple, direct and carefree, about as complicated as possible. He acknowledged freely to himself that he was a hopeless idiot. And there were certain aspects of this affair which were much too awful to think about at all.

Could he keep his marriage to Alice a secret from Anne? His own people would have to know

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after the fact, and so would hers. What would Anne do if she found out? He shuddered at that thought. He remembered that he had never succeeded in explaining anything to Anne.

Would he be able to feed so many hungry mouths—two women and three children? He doubted if the Ruggles would be able to give their daughter more than enough to dress on.

But he was young and strong and affectionate and full of courage. The moralities of his situation did not affect him. For already he had seen enough of this best of all possible worlds to realize that as often as not it is the bad man who succeeds and the good man who perishes. Look at James! Look at John!

Dear Mother made countless difficulties about his going back to Paris. Just because she carried a stiff upper lip and continued to make unheard-of sacrifices for everybody, did he realize that she was old and had used up her strength? Did he realize that his precious father had not long to live? She succeeded in making Edward feel like a perfect brute, and for two days prior to his sailing she hardly spoke to him. And for once his father wasn't much help to him.

"Can't you see your way of staying at home with us, Edward?"

"How about Anne, father?"

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"She isn't your wife."

"Doesn't that bind me all the tighter to her?"

"Your mother and I need you."

"Oh, father——"

"You must do what you think is right."

"Father, I *am* doing what I think is right. It means hard work. It means giving up lots of things and it means all kinds of complications and difficulties. I would be glad if I could be a little boy again and begin all over. But I can't, and I have to go on. I didn't stay on the safe bank. I jumped into the river and I've got to swim."

Mr. Eaton said no more.

That night a carriage drove swiftly up to the rectory, and there was a quick patter of feet on the brick walk and an insistent ringing of the front door bell.

"How perfectly outrageous!" exclaimed Mrs. Eaton. "Edward! See who that person is."

The person was Mr. Ruggles. His face was white and stern.

"Alice is desperately sick," he said. "She wants to see you."

Edward thrust a white face into the parlor. He said simply: "I am going with Mr. Ruggles, mother. I don't know when I'll be back."

He shut the door quickly so as not to hear what

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his mother might have to say to that. He snatched up his hat from the hall table.

They drove in silence for a long way. Then Mr. Ruggles spoke.

"The doctor thinks that we are going to lose her," he said. "She had a fall . . . I know that you are not to blame, Eddie; but you will have to forgive me if at the moment I can't feel kindly towards any member of your family."

"I don't blame you."

"If I could lay my hands on your brother James, I would strangle him."

"So would I," said Edward.

"Poor little Alice trusted him," said Mr. Ruggles. "She trusted him."

"I know."

"She told you?"

"She told me. But she'll get well and then we can be married . . ."

"Married—you and Alice?"

"When she told me about James—and he married to somebody else—it seemed the only way to make things look right for her. She was to meet me in town tomorrow. I have the license in my pocket."

There was another long silence, during which Mr. Ruggles continually flicked his flagging horse with the whip. He said at last:

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"I *do* feel kindly toward you, Eddie."

As they passed through the little gate in the wall, Edward's eyes took in the old motto, printed upon it in iron letters:

"They say. What say they? Let them say."

And for some reason or other a great lump rose in his throat. Until that moment he had not believed that any creature so filled with life as Alice could die. He had the premonition that she was not going to live.

And it seemed to him that he had never really loved Anne, but only Alice, and Alice always. It seemed to him that he could not bear to have her die.

How should he look when he entered the sick-room? What should he say? The poor boy was so eager to do just the right thing—that he did it. At the sight of her all thought of self left him, and he advanced quickly to the bed with his face filled with concern and affection. Mr. Ruggles was the first to speak.

"I've brought Eddie, Alice," he said. His voice was quite steady, and he added, "You'll probably want to have a little visit together—such old friends."

He took his wife by the arm and led her out of the room.

"Feeling a little better?" asked Edward.

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"Maybe. I think so. But I'm going to die."

"No, you're not." He took one of her hands and held it in both his.

"I'm only sorry for mother and father," she said.

"*Think* that you'll get well and you will."

"Don't let's argue, Eddie. Hold my hand tight. When you went away I was hurt. And I guess I did everything I've done out of spite . . . I never really liked anybody but you, and when I thought you didn't care . . ."

"I did care. I do care. It was always you. I've made a mess of things too."

"You don't really love that girl in Paris, do you? Say you don't, anyway."

At that moment he didn't love Anne. He said: "I never loved anybody but you."

He leaned forward and cuddled his cheek against hers. With her free hand she caressed his hair.

"Now I can go to sleep," she said, "without any danger of bad dreams. Everything's all right now." A minute later she said: "I'd give anything if we could just stay like this till the finish, but father and mother would feel so horribly hurt and jealous. Will you please tell them to come, darling? . . . Kiss me good-bye first."

She held up her pretty mouth and he kissed it

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with all the tenderness that was in him. Then he rose and walked quietly out of the room.

Mr. and Mrs. Ruggles and the doctor were waiting in the hall. Edward managed to say:

"She wants her father and mother." And then his power of speech failed him. He went downstairs and paced from the old grandfather clock in the hall to the pot of ferns in the bay window of the drawing-room and back again—to and fro—until he knew by a sound of sobbing that she had died.

A very pale and sick-looking Edward joined his father and his Dear Mother at breakfast.

"When did you get home, Edward?" asked Dear Mother in the old peremptory voice.

"About ten minutes ago," said Edward, "and I'd rather not be scolded about it. Alice is dead."

"That lovely child?" exclaimed Mr. Eaton.
"How terrible!"

Dear Mother was shocked too—more than she would have cared to confess, but she was determined to have her say and point a moral.

"That is what comes to those," she said, "who are without faith in their divine Maker."

"That is what comes to everybody sooner or later," said Edward sharply. "Cripples and idiots are sometimes born into the most pious families."

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His anger rose. "Alice didn't die because she was a pagan. Do you want to know why she died? I'll tell you. She died because when you gave birth to my brother James you brought a moral degenerate into the world."

He banged his fist upon the table so that all the dishes leaped, and then he rose and stormed out of the room.

Dear Mother never forgave those cruel and unchristian words about brother James. From the scorned Mrs. Ludlow she learned all about Anne, and of her poor, darling, wayward Edward's destination after he leaves this best of all possible worlds she is morally certain. Alice was never worthy of her James, anyway.

Edward took his nephew abroad and explained him to Anne. Sometimes she believes the explanation; but when it suits her temper she pretends that the child is one of Edward's many early indiscretions.

They took a little house in Versailles with a studio attached, and there Anne's baby was born. She made a great fuss about her sufferings, and was never the same ardent young woman afterward. Her dread of having another is one of the many little crosses that Edward has to carry. He has a whole sheaf of crosses—some little and some big.

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There is his young nephew. The evil James seems to be looking at you out of the boy's eyes. Such affection as he shows is all to gain some end or other. But of course he has to be kept alive, and it costs a lot of money. James has long since ceased to contribute, and there is no way of compelling him except to write Ellen a letter and tell her the whole story. Ellen is so rich and so kind that she would help, of course; but Edward will never ask.

Edward's and Anne's little daughter takes after Anne. In her cradle she showed the same tempers and jealousies. Edward adores her and pities the poor man she will some day marry.

Edward succeeded in getting a divorce for Anne, and long after her tempers and her cruelties and her habit of washing soiled clothes in public had killed his love for her, they were married.

It isn't so easy to make a living as he thought it was going to be. He has regular illustrating to do, but if he stops long enough to paint a picture his income drops to nothing and Anne upbraids him for his selfishness.

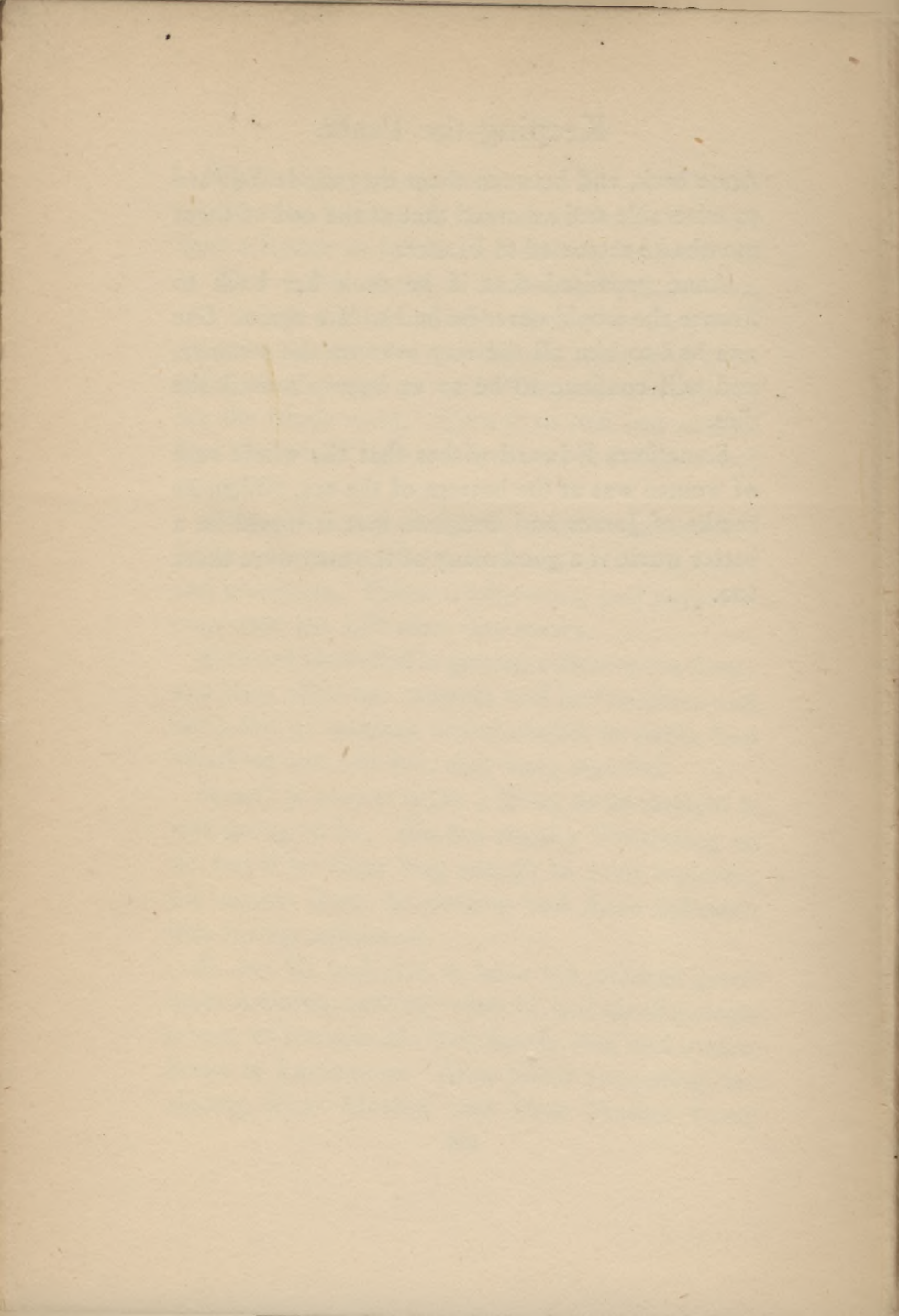
It was his ambition to have the children grow up in America, and once when he had saved enough money he brought his little family over and took a house in Larchmont. Anne hated everything, including Dear Mother, and Dear Mother hated

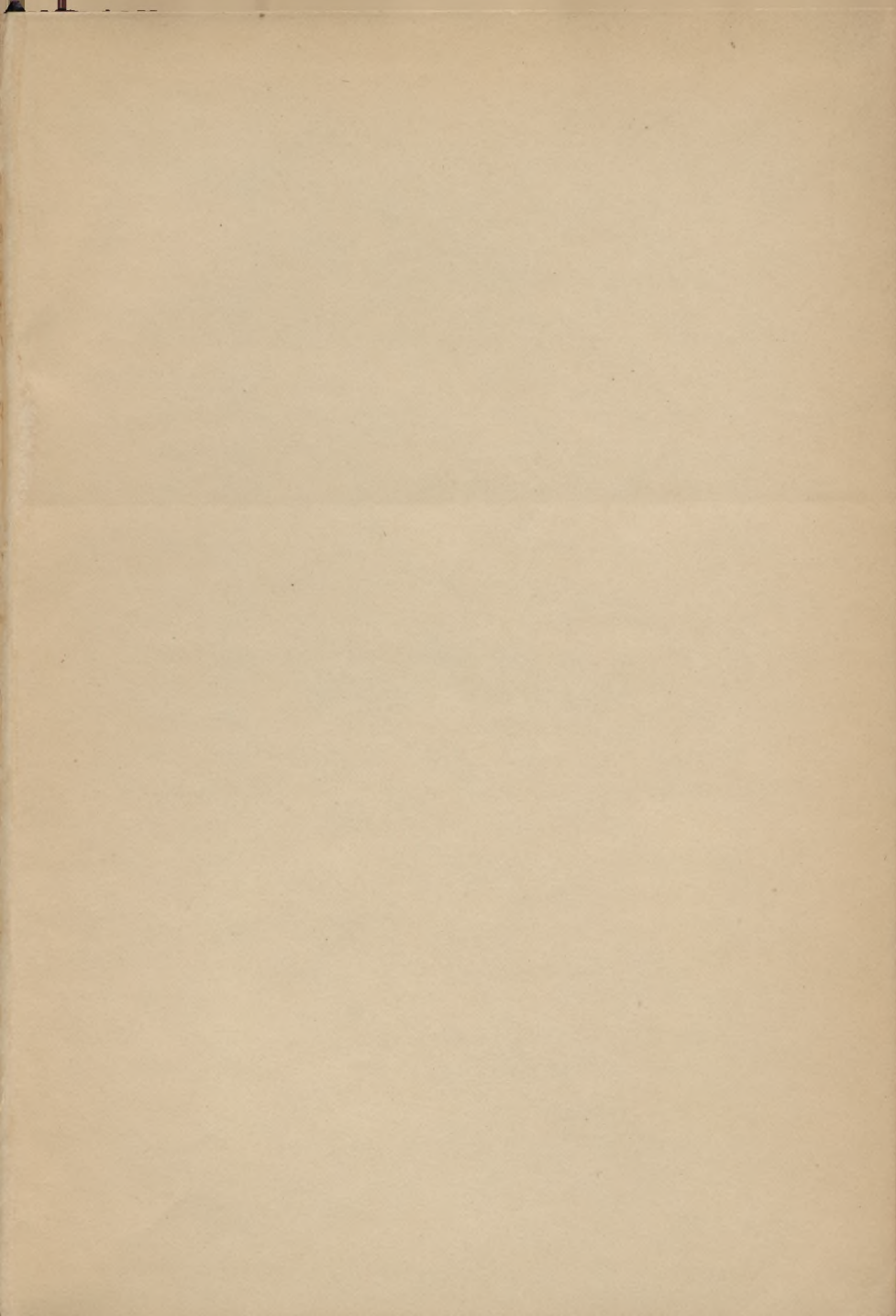
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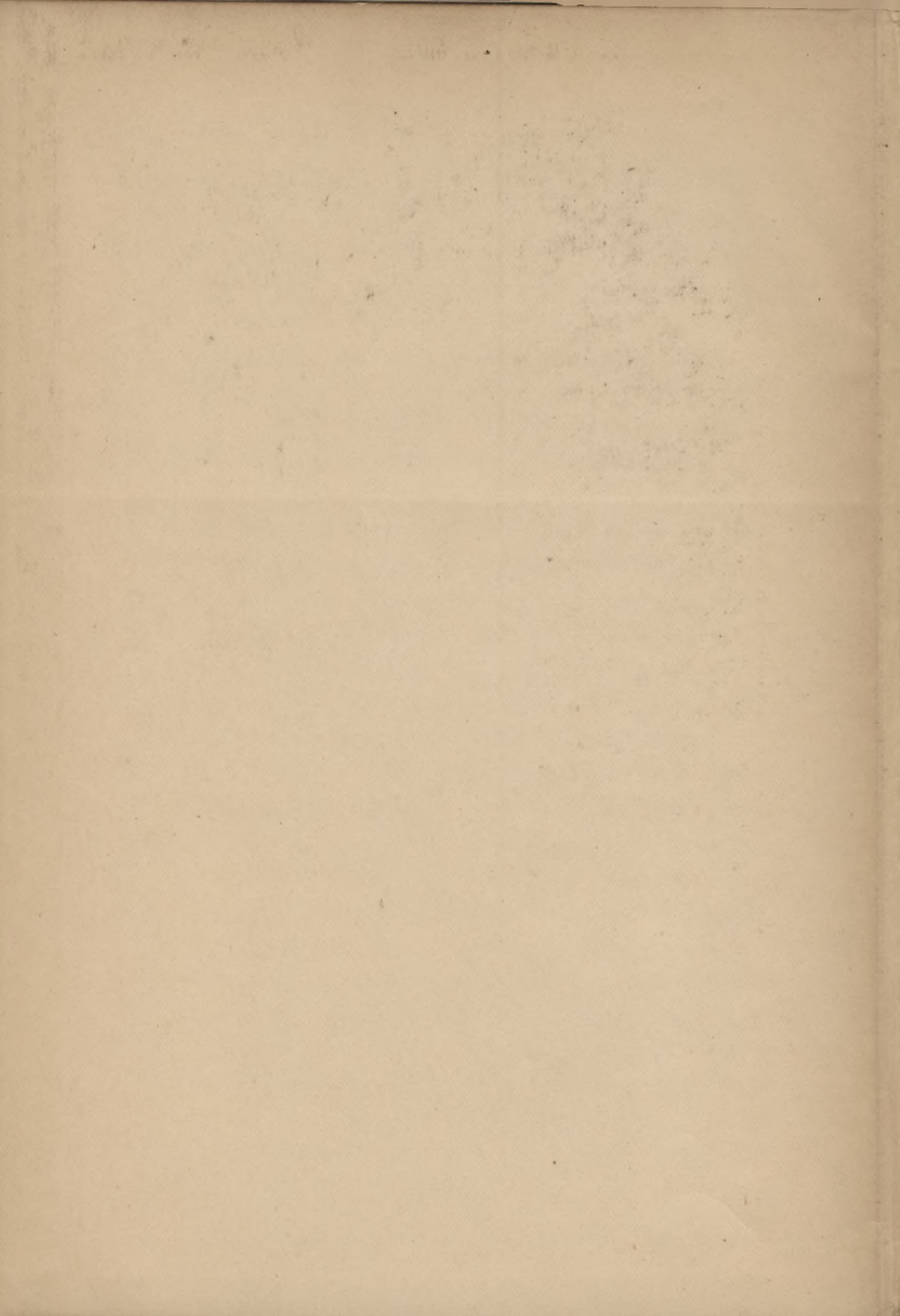
Anne back, and between them they made Edward so miserable and ashamed that at the end of three months he retreated to France.

Anne promised that if he took her back to France she would never be bad to him again. She was bad to him all the way over on the steamer, and will continue to be so at intervals until she dies.

Sometimes Edward wishes that the whole race of women was at the bottom of the sea. Then he thinks of James and imagines that it would be a better world if a good many of the men were there too.







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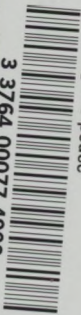
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