

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY



A MODERN VERSION BY
MARTHA BAKER DUNN

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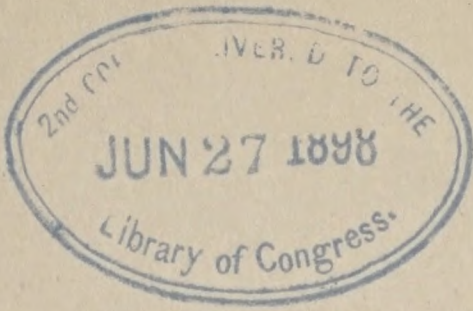
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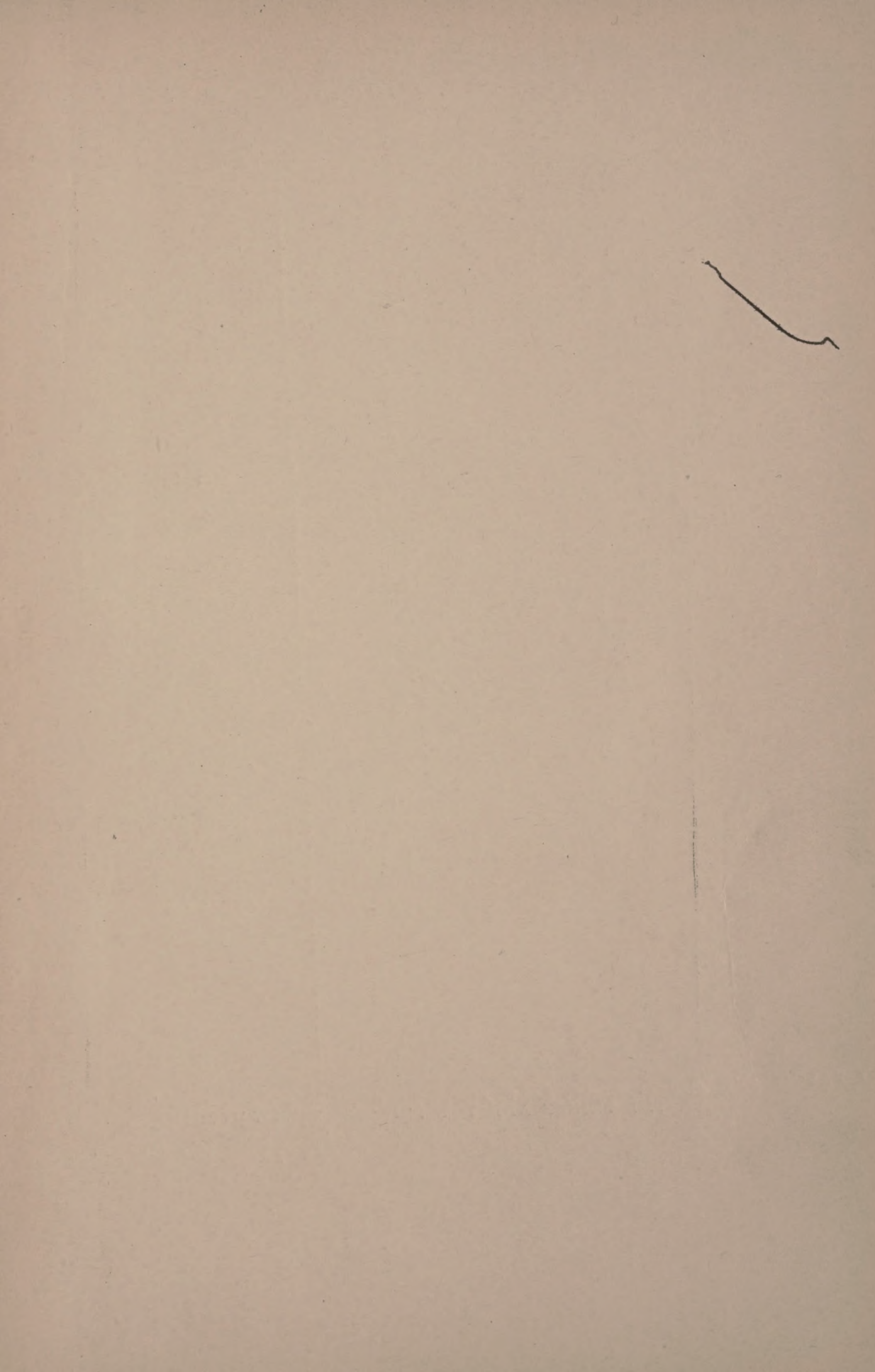
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THE PRINCE AND THE PRINCESS SEEK ADVENTURES.

(See page 32.)

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

A Modern Version

BY

MARTHA BAKER DUNN

Illustrated by

ETHELDRED B. BARRY



BOSTON

L. C. PAGE AND COMPANY

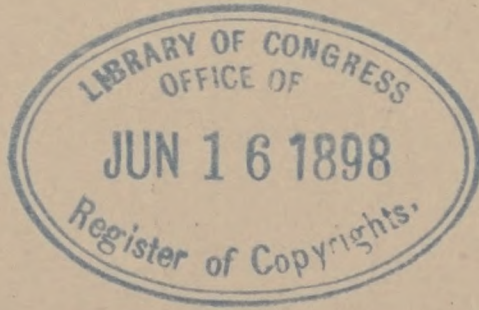
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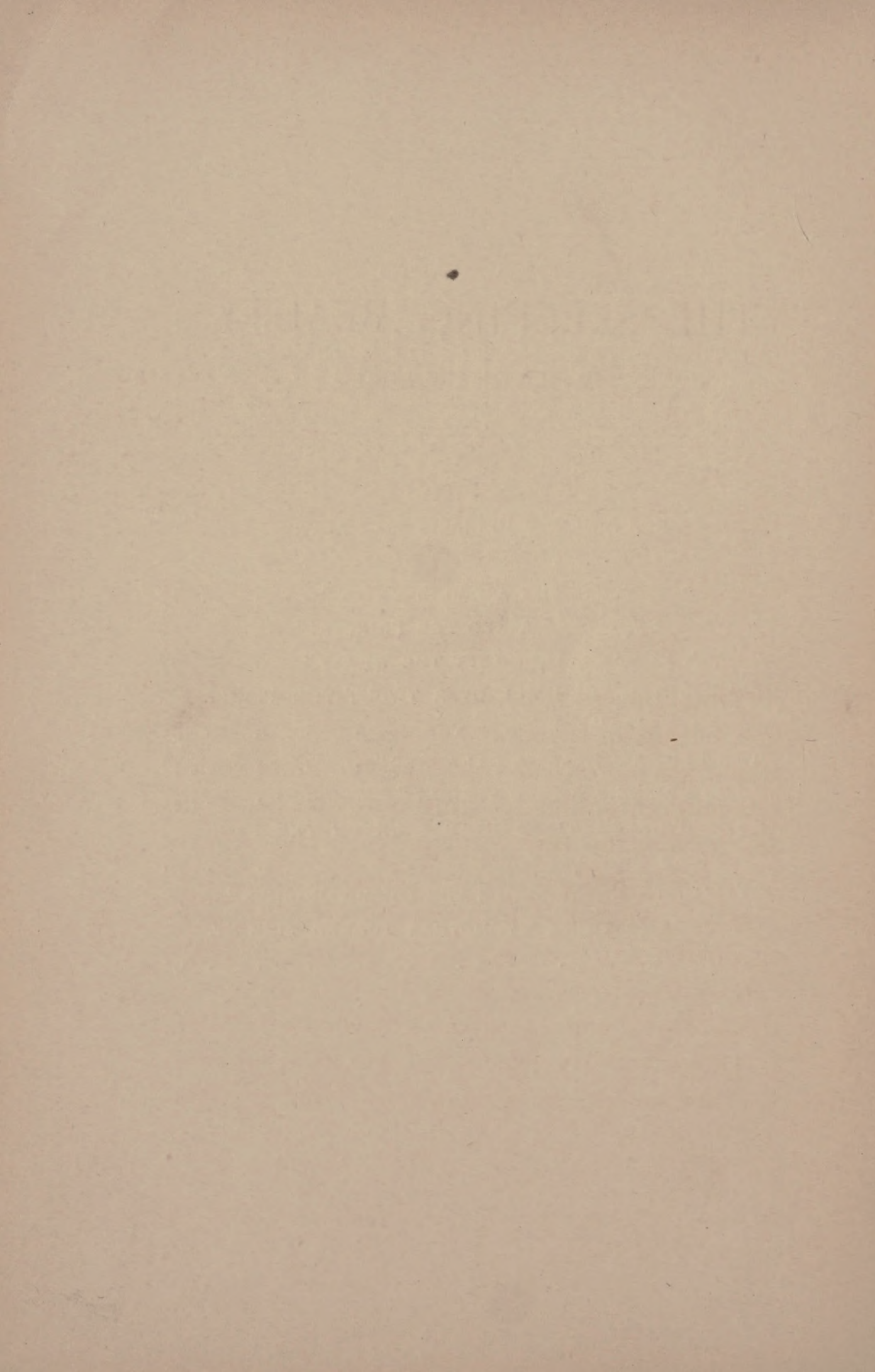
“ And I too dream’d, until at last
 Across my fancy, brooding warm,
The reflex of a legend passed
 And loosely settled into form.”



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THE SLEEPING BEAUTY.

A MODERN VERSION.

CHAPTER I.

THE ARRIVAL.

“COME, Care and Pleasure, Hope and Pain,
And bring the fated fairy Prince.”

THE Princess lived, not in an enchanted palace, but on an island in Penobscot Bay, a small island not more than a mile or two in its entire circumference, and boasting only one house in its domain, the tiny cottage which had always been the Princess's home. She was a healthy, hearty, red-cheeked little creature, who, during the eight years of her brief existence, had accepted her narrow life as she found it, with little thought or dream of anything beyond.

The island lay green and beautiful around her, but her eye knew naught of beauty. The

wide, tossing sea was to her a convenient place for the setting of lobster-pots, a reservoir for merchantable fish, a highway for uncle Eph, in his voyages to "the Banks." The splendid constellations, wheeling above her head by night, brought no message to her. The lights of Summerport twinkled only four miles away, marking the beginning of that great, throbbing world of which the Princess knew nothing, for during all the eight years of her life she had never once set foot upon the mainland.

It was a mighty world, — there was pulsing, happy life in it, and love and sorrow in it, — but the Princess knew as little of one as of the other.

She ran wild over the rocks, grew tanned and healthy under summer suns, tended uncle Eph's lobster-pots, managed a boat like a sailor, did her humble tasks, and slept at night the dreamless sleep of healthy childhood. Love, in its demonstration, was to her an unrevealed mystery. Uncle Eph and aunt Lizy were uniformly kind to her, but kisses and caresses held no part in their rough philosophy. God was a being occasionally hinted at in the moments of uncle Eph's rare profanity. Yet, withal, the

Princess felt neither loss nor lack. Life, thus far, had answered all her needs. Mind and heart were wholly unawakened, and no vague yearnings perplexed her healthy nature.

The only dream that ever reached beyond the narrow limits of her life was a lively desire to behold a certain mysterious object called a "pianner," which aunt Lizy had seen during one of her infrequent visits to "the Main," and which, according to her report, gave forth music "fit for the angels." Who the angels might be, the Princess had little idea. Her only conception of music was the wild shrilling of uncle Eph's fife, but she fully intended, if she ever made her long-promised "v'yge" to the distant mainland, to seek out the angels' headquarters, and listen with them to a performance which could so arouse aunt Lizy's enthusiasm.

One day, when uncle Eph returned from a trip to Summerport, he brought a passenger home with him. This was an unheard-of happening, and the Princess looked at the slender, delicate boy, who stepped on shore, with wide, surprised eyes. She never dreamed that this was the Fairy Prince who had come to awaken her.

"Who be you?" she asked, bluntly.

“My name is Arthur Heathcote Lenox,” the Prince replied. “What is yours?”

“Oh, my name’s ’Lizabeth Eaton. What ye goin’ to do here? What’s uncle Eph brought ye for?”

“He brought me because mamma is so very sick at Mrs. Hyde’s boarding-place, — though she’s better now,” added the little Prince, looking very sober. “And they thought if I came here with your uncle, I might grow stronger, too.”

“Can you tend lobster-traps?” asked the Princess, judicially.

“I don’t think so. I never tried.”

“Can you manage a boat?”

“Your uncle’s going to teach me, — he said he would,” the Prince said, eagerly.

“Ever dug any clams?”

“No-o,” slowly and reluctantly.

“Can you jibe, or reef the mains’l, or slack the sheets, or —”

“Oh, dear me, no!” cried the poor Prince, aghast at his ignorance of useful accomplishments.

“Have you ever seen a pi-anner?” asked the Princess, as a final test.



“‘WHO BE YOU?’ SHE ASKED, BLUNTLY.”

“Why, of course,” the Prince said, glad to reach something familiar at last; “mamma has one in the music-room at home, and she plays on it, too, just dandy.”

“Does she play to the angels?” the Princess inquired, much interested.

“The angels!” the Prince exclaimed. “Why, the angels are in heaven.”

“Heaven, — where’s that? Oh, let’s come and see my boat,” cried the Princess, and in their absorbing interest in the *Polly* and her perfections, heaven and the angels were for the time forgotten.

That night, however, when the Princess, clad in her little, coarse nightdress, peeped for a moment into the adjoining chamber, and saw a small, white-robed figure kneeling by the bedside in the starlight, she was fain to inquire, curiously:

“What ye scootchin’ down there for?”

“Why, I’m saying my prayers,” answered the surprised Prince. “Don’t you say yours?”

“What’s prayers?” the Princess asked, concisely.

“Oh, asking God to take care of you, and thanking him, — why, just — praying, you know.”

“Oh, sho! I can ta’ care of myself. Aunt Lizy says she’ll resk me anywheres.”

“But nights, when you are asleep, and when you are sick or feel bad, and to cure mamma and make her well —”

“Can God do all that?” the Princess interrupted. “I should be kinder sca’t of him. How is it you say prayers?”

“I’ll show you.” The Prince slipped his small arm around her sturdy shoulders, and they knelt side by side in the white starlight, while he murmured to the accompaniment of the sighing sea :

“Dear Father in heaven, please take care of us poor little children, and bless mamma and make her well,” — here a little sob came in the Prince’s voice, and the Princess, moved unconsciously by the old, divine instinct that prompts the heart to give love for love, nestled closer and drew her chubby arm about the Prince, — “bless ’Lizabeth’s uncle Eph and aunt Lizy, and the *Polly*, and keep my Fourth o’ July cannon safe till I get home, and help us to be good. Amen.”

Then the Prince, used all his life to good-night kisses, pressed his innocent lips to those of the Princess, and crept into his bed.

Poor little Princess! there were vague stirrings in her breast before she slept. Rich little Princess! to whom came in one night the first story of God, the first sweet intuition of human love, the first caress of friendship. No wonder that the strangeness and mystery of it brought her only a vague consciousness of a new warmth and comfort, and no wonder that she dreamed that night of angels and "pi-annners" and the *Polly* apotheosized into a sailboat.

With the Prince's kiss began a new era for the little Princess. Now, for the first time, she knew the joy of companionship. She had hitherto accepted all and questioned nothing; the Prince, on the contrary, accepted naught and questioned all. His eager, imaginative mind, formed in an atmosphere of culture and inquiry, continually sought the reason of things, reached out into the future, and confronted the Princess with new and undreamed-of worlds; and while he worked and raced and rowed with her, and grew daily brown and healthier and stronger, all unconsciously the while he was teaching her little fluttering soul to plume its wings and fly.

There was one rocky headland on the island, where, twenty years before, a Norse vessel had

been wrecked. The bodies of the crew, washed ashore by the morning tide, had been buried on the summit of the cliff. Here the Prince loved to sit among these unnamed mounds, which, somehow, he vaguely associated in his mind with vikings and dragon-ships, and wild Norse tales of adventure, and weave endless romances for the benefit of the listening Princess.

“I wonder how all those wives felt when the husbands they loved never came back,” the Prince said, meditatively, one day.

“Do wives gener’ly love their husbands?” the Princess asked.

“Why, of course they do,” answered the Prince, much shocked at such a question.

“What is it to love people, anyway?” pursued the Princess.

“Why, when papa loves mamma, there’s a kind of a shine in his eyes, and when she’s dressed up all beautiful, he puts his arms around her, and says, ‘Darling, how sweet you are!’ When she was so awful sick, I saw him cry, and put his head down on her pillow, and say, ‘Oh, live for me, love! I can’t live without you.’”

“And do you s’pose all them women went around cryin’, and callin’ names like that?”

asked the Princess, awestruck at such unheard-of demonstrations. "I don't b'lieve aunt Lizy would, — but, p'r'aps she and uncle Eph don't know about lovin' each other."

"I'm glad a Norway pine grew out of this one's heart," the Prince went on. "It seems more proper."

"Why, the's Norway pines all around here."

"Yes, but he came from Norway, so this was his home tree, and it's more like poetry."

"What's poetry?" asked the Princess, who in these days was little more than an animated interrogation point.

"Poetry, — why, it's just poetry," said the Prince. "Didn't you ever hear 'Ratius at the Bridge,' and 'The Old Major climbed the Belfry Tower,' and those things?"

"I don't know nothin' about what things they be," the poor Princess answered, anxiously. "Can't you tell 'em?"

"I'll say some," the Prince said. He was sitting upon one of the nameless mounds; there was a soft gray sky overhead, and a low, sighing wind was just rising to blend with the sighing of the sea. The Prince began:

“It was the schooner *Hesperus*,
That sailed the wintry sea,
And the skipper had taken his little daughter
To bear him company.”

The Princess listened more and more intently, as the poem went on. The sea was in it, and the wild wind and wintry blast; all these she knew, and the power and pathos that she did not know took hold of her, and moved her wonderfully.

“If uncle Eph had been there,” she said, “I guess he’d ’a’ known some way so’t she needn’t friz to the mast.”

Many a time after that, during their long rambles, or rocking in the little boat upon the summer sea, the Prince was called on to go through his repertory of poems, and the Princess listened, and pondered many things in her heart.

“Where do you keep your Bible, uncle Eph?” the Prince asked, one stormy Sunday evening, when the roaring fire on the cottage hearth could not drown the roaring of the angry sea without.

“I do’ know scurcely ef so be we hev a Bible,” uncle Eph replied. “How is it, wife?”



“WHAT’S POETRY?” ASKED THE PRINCESS.”

“Wal, I guess we hain’t got a whole Bible,” aunt Lizy explained. “When marm died, the’ was five of us gals that all wanted the old family Bible, so Huldy, bein’ the oldest, jest divided it into five parts, an’ she kep’ the cover an’ the book o’ Genesis, an’ give each one o’ the rest of us her share, accordin’ to. I’ve alwers kep’ mine wropped up, an’ never used it common, to kinder remember marm by.”

“Wal, wal, the Bible’s a good book for them that has time to read,” uncle Eph said, with the air of one making a concession, “an’ prayin’ arnswers well enough in its season. Yes,” he went on, meditatively, “I’ve seen times when I reely thought prayin’ done good. Naterally, when men is well and hearty, an’ able to take care o’ themselves, I don’t hold to their hangin’ ’round the Almighty an’ botherin’ of him, but in times o’ trouble when ye can’t do nothin’ yerself, it’s well enough to take holt on him. ’Member one time when I was cap’n o’ the *Almiry Jane*, an’ we was a-cruisin’ off the Med’terranean coast, — dretful troublous waters, them is, — an’ there came up one o’ them sud-dint squalls they has there. Can’t do nothin’ at all in them squalls but jest scud under bare

poles an' wait for the vessel to turn bottom eend up an' put a finish into ye. Wal, Elnathan Staples, he was a kinder pious feller by streaks, an' he says, 'Boys,' he says, 'I think we'd oughter pray', an' then he sorter laid it on fust one an' then 'nother of us, and we didn't nary one on us think we was the fittin' ones to 'tend to it; so then Elnathan gut a leetle huffed, — he was pooty tempery — one o' these red-headed fellers thet strikes fire like a match. Matches *is* red-headed, ye know. Wal, Elnathan, he says, 'O God Almighty,' he says, 'we berseech thee to save the crew o' this 'ere *Almiry Jane*,' he says, 'not because they're wuth savin', fer they hain't, but thou knowest,' he says, 'thet men thet hain't fittin' to pray hain't fittin' to die.' Wal, I guess the Lord seen the jestice of it, for the wind quieted ri' down, an' the *Almiry Jane* rid into harbor jest as quiet an' peaceful as a bird. Shows ye the valoo o' prayer in its 'propriate season,'" uncle Eph concluded, piously.

During the long, quiet evenings uncle Eph told many another story of adventure under the fire of the Prince's eager questions, and the Prince himself related to his curious listeners

the daily experience of life in his city home, until, gradually, even on her lonely island, the influence of the great, throbbing world began to press upon the Princess, a world of hurrying life, of strange happenings, of wonderful, mysterious interests.

The wide ocean around her lost its commonplaceness, and became a highway to fortune, a field of peril and adventure, where, far off, in mystic, unknown seas, lurked a mighty and strange country, a land of occult and dimly imagined mystery, known to the initiated by the curious title of Yurupnasianafriky. To go to that land would be to attain the summit of human desire.

Sometimes, too, aunt Lizy brought out her cherished fragment of the family Bible, and the Prince read aloud to the little circle the sweet old story, so familiar to us, so new to them, of the Christ who consorted with fishermen, who calmed the troubled waters of Galilee, the Christ who loved and died for men.

“I’ll bate he knew how to tend them nets himself,” uncle Eph said, admiringly.

“What’s the matter, ’Lizabeth?” the Prince called through the darkness, one night, alarmed

at the unwonted sound of the Princess crying in her little bed.

“Oh, I didn't want Jesus to die for me!” she sobbed. “I could 'a' gut along without it.”

CHAPTER II.

THE DEPARTURE.

IN the beautiful fairy tale there came a day when the Princess followed the Prince away from the sleeping palace out into the great world that waited beyond :

Across the hills and far away
Beyond their utmost purple rim,
Beyond the night, across the day
The happy princess followed him.

There came a day, too, when our little Prince and Princess went out into the world together, but their way thither lay, not across the hills, but over the laughing, morning sea. It was one of those mornings when all nature seems to awake with a smile. The great dome of the sky was brilliantly blue, and had a look of bending down low as if it were almost within reach. There was a laughing riot in the morn-

ing breeze, and the little waves danced and chased each other like children at play. The twinkling panes of the distant mainland city caught the sunlight, and flashed it forth again in gleaming, prismatic hues.

“Just see how Summerport shines this morning,” the Prince said. “Let’s play it is an enchanted city, and you and I are going to find the old magician who has cast a spell over it, and kill him.”

“All right,” the Princess answered. “That’ll be a good game. Then I s’pose they’ll take us both into the King’s palace and give us gold rings and purple dresses and things same’s they did in the story you was tellin’ last night, — and I shall ask ’em to play on the pi-anner.”

They were sitting in the *Polly*, rocking idly to and fro on the shallow waters of the little cove. Now the Princess took the oars, and, with a few vigorous strokes, sent the boat out of the sheltered harbor towards the spot where those distant lights were gleaming. Uncle Eph and aunt Lizy were busy, as usual, with their daily toil; besides, they were too much accustomed to seeing the children row themselves about in the *Polly*, sometimes visit-

ing the nearer islands, sometimes voyaging from point to point of their own island kingdom, to have noticed so common an occurrence as their departure from the little cove.

It was a morning when all the world seemed to be on its travels; the white sails of little yachts shone everywhere; rowboats were putting out from the islands which the children passed; the sound of far-off voices and laughter came floating over the waters; out of Summerport harbor came a procession of sloops and schooners with sails filling out and creaking in the stress of the breeze. Once they ran across the course of a great, square-rigged ship, bearing down on them like some majestic living creature, and the Prince and Princess gave hail and farewell to the sailors leaning over her bows. It was a day and hour not for turning back, but for going on forever, following that sunlit track which led across the shining bay, straight into the heart of the enchanted city. Almost before the children knew it, the shore of the mainland began to take shape before their eyes. The gay awnings of the cottages along the water's edge grew more and more distinct. There were flags fluttering here and there on the

shore, and bright pennants streaming from the yachts lying at anchor.

Wind and tide were with them now, hurrying them on. When they reached the lighthouse in the outer bay, the lighthouse whose light had risen like a star on the Princess's vision every night of her short life, the Prince, with a mighty effort of conscience, asked, faintly :

“'Lizabeth, don't you think we ought to turn back now?’”

The Princess set her small mouth firmly. “No, I don't. I ain't never b'en to the Main in my life. And I'm goin' to see a pi-anner.”

The float where they fastened the *Polly* was fringed with pretty rowboats, and young men and women, sometimes accompanied by groups of pretty children, were coming and going on the wharf and landing stairs. Some of them looked curiously at the red-cheeked, bright-eyed little Princess in her coarse, clumsy dress, contrasting so strangely with the fashionably made clothes of the handsome boy who accompanied her.

The Princess herself, awed by the closely grouped houses of the little city, the vistas of the streets, which seemed endless to her unac-

customed eyes, and the presence of so many more people than she had ever dreamed of in the seclusion of her island, clung closer to the



Prince, and slipped her hand in his, yet did not for a moment falter in her purpose.

So, hand in hand, a quaintly mated pair, they

left the wharf behind them, and walked slowly up the tree-arcaded street, pausing frequently to look at the many wonders which the shop windows displayed to the Princess's unaccustomed eyes. Summerport is a city of trees, and sudden, precipitous heights. Trees grow everywhere, even in the business streets, shading the picturesque-looking stores, where trade seems to be at once brisk and leisurely. In the heart of the town, rocky hills crowned by cottages loom steeply above the streets, reached by interminable flights of steps. Flower gardens are on every side, — planted in clumps among the rocks, in ordered rows by the wayside, in many-colored beds dotting the green lawns, the breath of flowers mingling everywhere with the breath of the sea.

Notwithstanding the warmth of the day, a fresh breeze blowing off the bay tempered the air to coolness. It was a breeze that made one feel at the same time joyful and hungry, and the Prince and Princess, whose breakfast had been an early one, and who had made unwonted exertions since that meal, began to realize the pangs of hunger.

“I've only got my littlest purse, with fifty

cents in it, so we can't go to a restaurant," the prince explained, soberly.

"What's a restaurant?" the Princess asked, thirsting, as usual, for information.

"A restaurant is a place where they have little tables, and you can sit down and eat your dinner same's you could at home, only the tablecloth isn't always as clean as the home one," the candid Prince answered. "But we haven't got money enough, so we shall have to find a baker's shop, and buy some buns or something. A baker is a man who bakes," forestalling the question trembling on the Princess's tongue.

"What's buns?" asked the insatiable Princess.

This question was never answered, because at that moment the Prince espied, close by, a window where brown-cruled loaves, sheets of puffy rolls, jars of cookies, and other masterpieces of the baker's art were temptingly displayed. Still holding the Princess's hand in a close clasp, he opened the door and entered a little front room, sweet with the fragrance of newly baked bread. The Princess gave a sigh of delight as she looked around. Aunt Lizy was an excellent cook, but her list of recipes

was a limited one, and the Princess had never in her life dreamed of so many currant cakes and sponge cakes and dainties, for which her past experience furnished no name, as were displayed in this delightful room. It was a spot, too, where everything shone with cleanliness, and a little window, opening on one side, was gay with blossoming plants. After waiting a few moments vainly for the shopman to appear, the Prince led the way to a larger room, opening at the back, where tables and chairs and every available receptacle were covered with pies of all sorts and sizes, baked and unbaked. In the midst of this confusion of richness, a frantic-looking little man, with a fuzz of red hair, which surrounded his forehead like a halo, was skipping wildly about, endeavoring to count his treasures.

“Eighteen, nineteen, twenty, — twenty, did I say? I declare to man, I don’ know but it ought to ’a’ b’en thirty, — there, now, I’ve lost my count again! I never did see anything so pesky as a bakin’ o’ pies for misleadin’ a man. Now, I’m goin’ to begin all over at this table an’ go right ’round in a circle.”

At this point the little man caught sight of

the Prince and Princess, and became more frantic than ever.

“Go right out, little boy an’ girl,” he wailed, despairingly; “I ain’t goin’ to sell you anything. Can’t you see’t I’m bakin’ pies, an’ drove wild with it now? One, two, three, four, five, — there, now, you’ve made me skip the corner one ag’in. I’ve b’en since ten o’clock countin’ of ’em now. Can’t ye go away? You had your breakfast, I s’pose, an’ children hadn’t ought to eat between meals.”

He turned once more, as if to begin his counting, but the Prince clutched him resolutely by the arm. “If you please, sir,” he said, “we’ve rowed way over from the island, and we have to row back again. We’re *so* hungry. If you will only stop long enough to sell us some buns and cakes, we will go away at once and not disturb you any more.”

“The island, — what island?” the little man asked, crossly, as he followed the children into the front room. “If you was on an island, why didn’t you have sense enough to stay there? I declare to man, I wish they was *all* on islands till I git my pies baked.” He stopped in the midst of counting out the change from the fifty

cents which the Prince had given him in payment for sundry paper bags of delicacies, to say, wildly, "The insane hospital's what I'm comin' to with the life I lead! Now, may I ask what *you* want?"

These last words were addressed to a gentleman who had just entered the door, and who now inquired, politely: "You have a restaurant up-stairs, have you not?"

"I've got a dinin'-room up-stairs," the little man answered, savagely; "but if I have, or whether I have, I don' know what business 'tis of yours."

"I hope it is some business of yours," the newcomer said, with the air of one determined not to notice eccentricities of temper. "I would like to order dinner at one o'clock for a party of six, who are coming to Summerport on purpose to enjoy your famous cookery."

"A party of six!" screamed the little man, "how do you s'pose I'm goin' to git dinner for a party of six, pie-bakin' day? I s'pose they're summer folks, too, ain't they?"

"They are people who are boarding at Oak Point," the gentleman reluctantly admitted.

"Jest what I thought," the baker said, tri-

umphantly: "I don't want nothin' to do with summer folks, anyway. I wish't they'd all go back where they belong, an' stay there. I've gut all I c'n do to supply the people that lives here the year 'round."

"Why don't you hire an assistant?" the gentleman asked.

"I never had one yet that warn't worse'n a moth on me. Lazy, wasteful, gadabout creatures, every one of 'em."

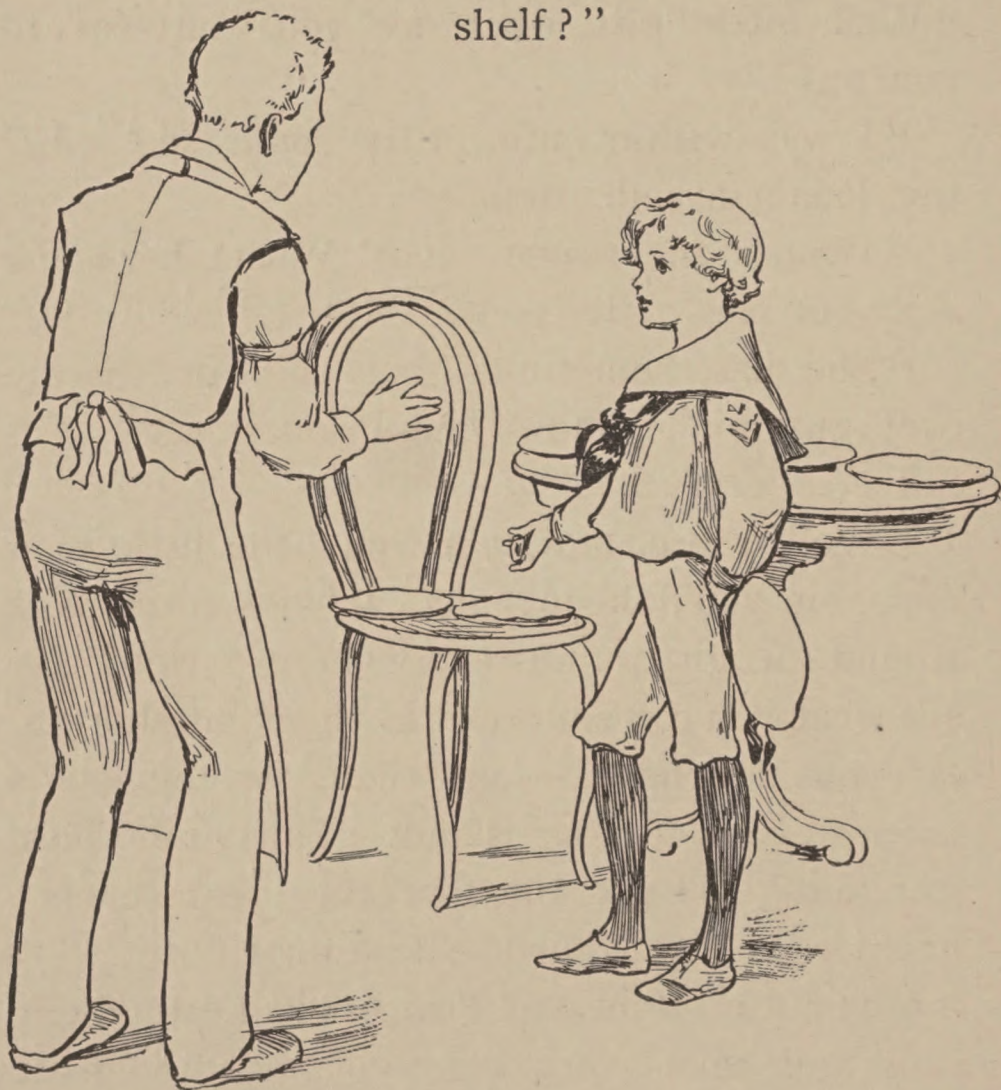
"Why don't you marry a wife?"

"Why don't I make a bigger fool o' myself'n I be now? Look here, young man, Monday is pie-bakin' day, an' Mondays I don't git no dinners for no parties, residents nor boarders. An' I ain't gut no more time to waste on you."

When the little baker dashed into his back room again, he found the Prince and Princess wandering among the rows of pies. "Here, here!" he exclaimed, growing frantic once more; "I thought you said you'd go away. I declare to man, you won't none of you be satisfied till I'm stark, starin' crazy."

"I beg your pardon, sir," the little Prince said, calmly. "I thought you would like to know that there are thirty-nine pies."

“Thirty-nine? Are you sure’t you didn’t leave out that big one in the corner, an’ the crinkled one under the shelf?”



“I counted them all over twice,” the Prince answered, “and there are just thirty-nine.”

The baker mopped his forehead with his

handkerchief, and heaved a sigh of relief. "I won't say but it's a comfort to git that settled, — that is, if you're sure?" The Prince nodded. "Well, little girl, what are you mutterin' to yourself?"

"I was wishin' aunt Lizy could see' em," the Princess said, timidly.

"What's the reason aunt What's-her-name ain't gut pies o' her own?"

"She has, sometimes, but she ain't hardly ever gut mince ones," the Princess said, wistfully.

"Well, there, now, children," the little man said, "if you'll keep quiet, an' not scrimmage around an' git crumbs everywhere, I won't say but what you can set down in the front shop an' eat your luncheon, — and then, for the land's sake, go back to your island. Thirty-nine pies, you said? That's one for every year sence I was born. Next year the'll be forty."

When the Prince and Princess had eaten their buns and cakes very quietly, and with great enjoyment, the little baker appeared from the back room just as they were about to bid him good-by, carrying a neatly packed bundle. "There," he said, -handing it to the Princess,

“give that to your aunt, an’ tell her it’ll be the best pie she ever e’t. An’ when you git to your island, stay there. Don’t stare so, child. It won’t cost ye nothin’. It’s a present.”

“I’ll carry it,” the Prince said, gallantly, when they emerged into the street once more, but the Princess clung to the precious package.

“I guess I’d ruther carry it,” she said. “Won’t aunt Lizy be pleased?”

“I s’pose we’ll go back now?” the Prince suggested. The Princess set her lips again. “I’m a-goin’ to see a pi-anner,” she said.

While the Prince was trying to dissuade her from her purpose, a tall, slender girl was coming down the street, a young man in a golf suit loitering by her side. She was a girl with curling tendrils of fair hair clustering about her face, the faintest rose-bloom on her smooth cheek, and a sunny smile in her eyes. She was dressed all in white, and looked like a dream of fair young womanhood. All at once, as she walked, she felt a small hand pull at her gown, and looked down into the face of a rosy-cheeked little girl, with great brown eyes that had a wistful look in them. “Have you gut a pi-anner?” the childish voice asked.

“A piano?” Anne Seton said. “Why, yes, child. Why do you ask?”

“I live over on uncle Eph’s island,” the Princess explained. “I ain’t never b’en on the Main before, an’ I want to see a pi-anner jest awful.”

The Prince came forward, lifting his small cap politely. “She hates so to go back without seeing a piano,” he said. “Aunt Lizy told her about it, and ever since she has wanted to see one.”

The young man stood by, looking on with an amused air. “Some more missionary work for you, Nan. You were sent to the oppressed and afflicted, you know. She’s a wholesome-looking little maid, isn’t she?”

The Prince walked on beside Anne Seton, gravely answering her questions in regard to himself and his companion. George Varick took the warm little hand of the Princess in his own. “Come, my little lass,” he said, smiling, “I always follow that lady wherever she goes. She has led me many a chase over land and sea.”

Presently they began to climb a steep flight of steps leading to a pretty cottage perched on a rocky cliff. Patches of gay flowers blossomed around it, and flowers and vines grew profusely in the long boxes which were fastened to the

railings of the broad piazzas. There were bright awnings, and hammocks hung here and there, and a profusion of cushions of every hue were lying about, adding to the dazzle of color. From the piazza one looked far out over the sea, now blue as the dome of heaven itself, the nearer islands vivid with mosslike verdure, — on one side the purple lines of hills melting into the horizon, on the other the limitless stretch of the open ocean. The Prince and Princess felt, without realizing it, the color and charm of all this, but it was not the sight of the sea, her familiar playmate since childhood, that could make the heart of the Princess beat with so wild a pulse, as, still pressing the pie to her bosom, she followed George Varick into the pretty, flower-scented music-room. Afterwards she dimly remembered the pictures on the walls, the light and graceful shapes of the furniture, the great bowls and vases of flowers setting about everywhere. Now her eyes were fastened upon the beautiful upright piano, which she had instantly recognized from the many descriptions which the Prince had given her. She looked at the silent keys as if some spirit of magic lingered there to wake to life at a touch.

Anne Seton loitered a moment to pluck a rose from a climbing bush near the door, carelessly and without apparent thought placing it in her hair. It was a rose of a clear, faint, pink color, and it blended with the tender rose-bloom of her complexion, and gave the last touch to her fair beauty.

“You dear children,” Anne said, taking the Princess’s little hand in her own, “aren’t you hungry? Don’t you want some lunch before I play to you?”

“Oh,” the Princess answered, with a great sigh of impatience, “we’ve had our noonin’, and I want to hear you play music on the pi-anner.”

The room was shaded from the outdoor glare. There were flower scents everywhere, and through the open doors and windows came from afar the ceaseless thunder of the sea. The slender figure at the piano, and the white fingers stealing over the keys, wove themselves into a dream which made all things a part of itself. The little Prince listening eagerly in his dim corner, George Varick leaning a little forward, looking at the musician through the shading fingers of the hand above his eyes, the Princess in her small chair, clasping the pie to her throb-

bing breast, — all were part and parcel of the dream that stole over them like a mist from the sea. What was real among them was the carol of the birds rising from their nests in the purple of the dawn, clearing the ether in their flight, and pouring out notes that died away in the far clearness of the sky. Then came the dash and gurgle and drip of water, the very song of the little island runlet that the Princess knew so well; and now the rose-leaves were falling in the garden and the breeze was beginning to rise in the pine-tree tops, and, afar off, voices were singing, ay, singing to break one's heart.

“Don't, Nan!” George Varick said, and for a moment the music paused.

The Princess whispered, very, very softly: “Is this heaven?”

“No,” Mr. Varick said, speaking low; “this isn't heaven, but I've been mighty near heaven here sometimes.”

“But she's an angel, ain't she?”

“Oh, well, — she's an angel all right, — an angel with just enough of the leaven of humanity to keep her from flying away. I've heard her wings rustle, though,” the young man said, more to himself than to the Princess.



THE PRINCESS HEARS A "PI-ANNER."

But now the heart of the Princess thrilled once more, for over the face of the waters came a voice, the voice that the heart has waited for always, and faintly, and in vibrating tones that the ear vainly strove to interpret, it told the secret that holds in itself the whole meaning of life. There were tears in the secret, and love and longing and triumph in it; there was struggle and despair and joy, and the very wildness of glory; and still, like an undertone running through all, sounded the ceaseless drip, drip, drip of water falling from living fountains that played in the sun.

The little Princess did not know that she felt all this, — she was hardly conscious that her breath was coming fast, and that her poor little heart was bursting, so lost was she in the dream that held them all in its spell, and which even George Varick could only vaguely interpret; but when, presently, the strain hesitated, then jangled harshly, and at last ended with a shower of silvery notes like sweetest laughter, the Princess gave a great sob that almost rent the precious pie in twain, and gasped, convulsively, “Oh, there must be lots an’ lots of pi-anners in heaven!”

It was just at this moment that the door-bell rang, and a bevy of young girls in light summer dresses came in, and began to flutter here and there, and chirp like a flock of pretty birds. In the momentary confusion the little Prince and Princess stole shyly away. "Please tell the young lady," the Prince said, earnestly, "that it was *so* beautiful, and we shall never forget it. She must be very happy to know how to make music like that."

"Where are you going now, children?" the young man asked, holding a hand of each in a gentle clasp.

"Oh, we came in the boat, and we are going back the same way," the Prince said.

The young man stood for a moment watching them, as, two quaint little pilgrims, hand in hand they disappeared down the quiet street. "I didn't know any of the steamers touched at these islands," he said, vaguely. "Perhaps I ought to have seen them safely off." Then, as one scarce knowing what he did, he strolled into the garden, and, throwing himself on the ground, looked long, long, at the sea, — for the spell of the music was upon him still.

CHAPTER III.

THE RETURN.

“OH, to what uses shall we put the wildwood flower that simply blows?
And is there any moral shut within the bosom of the rose?”

THE Prince and Princess were very silent as they walked to the wharf where they had left the *Polly*. It was not until they were once more afloat, and had steered their way safely through the small craft in the inner harbor, that the cool breath of the sea on their faces seemed to bring them back to every-day life again. Even then, their thoughts were still with the music and the emotions it had awakened.

“There was one time when she was playing,” the Prince said, confidentially, “when I truly thought I saw mamma kneeling in the moonlight with her long white dress on, just as I’ve seen her lots of times, when she’s asking God to take care of papa and me.”

“I heard that bird that sings in the tallest pine-tree, where the sailors are buried,” the Princess answered; “the one that sings kinder sweet and solemn, you know,—and it was tryin’ to tell me something. Then there was that little brook that runs down Signal Hill,—you heard that, I s’pose?”

Soon, however, the necessity for constant exertion made them forget everything else. The sky was growing gray, now, a soft brooding gray, that settled over the whole landscape. The wind was against them, and their arms were already tired with the labors of the morning. It had been easy enough to find their way from the island to the mainland, but they presently realized that it was much more difficult to retrace their course. There were so many islands, and, to the untrained eyes of the Prince and Princess, they differed from each other very little except in size. They lost time in rowing hither and thither, fancying they recognized familiar landmarks, which on nearer view disappointed them. At last the Princess, with her usual vigor of action, resolved on a decisive step.

“I’m goin’ to land on this island, anyway,”

she said. "The's a little beach there, where we can land, and pull the boat way up so'st the tide can't reach it. And we'll go to that house over in the field, and ask 'em where we be."

From the pebbly beach, a narrow footpath bordered with fringing grass and wild flowers led to the door of a long, low, brown cottage, facing a semicircular cove. Behind the house there was a garden where vegetables grew in trim rows. In a sheltered angle, roses bloomed in profusion, the old-fashioned single rose with its vivid red blossoms, and small white roses that starred the dark green of the foliage with their profuse bloom. There were flower borders at the ends of the house, and the path to the side door which the children approached lay through rows of pinks and pansies and gay-blooming nasturtiums. The door stood invitingly open into a small, square entry, and the children lingered for a moment on the honeysuckle-shaded step, listening for some sign of life or movement within. Presently the Prince knocked timidly, and then again with more boldness, but all remained hushed and still, with no answering voice or step. After a few minutes of waiting, the children stepped into

the little entry, and stood in the open doorway, which led into a good-sized front room, awed and bewildered at what they saw. It was a poor enough room in its ordinary state, this humble cottage parlor, but to-day some tender hand had touched it, and transformed it into a shrine of sacredness and beauty. The roughly plastered walls were whitewashed to brilliant whiteness, there was a cheap white matting on the floor, and spotless muslin curtains fluttered at the open windows. Two old-fashioned easy chairs were draped in the white dimity covers which our grandmothers used to delight in, and a sheet had been carefully folded to hide the gay chintz cover of the lounge. There was only one picture on the wall, a print of Jesus blessing little children, but the simple frame of stained wood had been hidden in wreathing white flowers. There were white flowers everywhere, great bunches of white peonies, clusters of phlox and sweet-williams, the spicy sweetness of white pinks, and white roses massed in profusion, breathing their incense upon the air.

The heart and centre of all this whiteness was the low, white-draped table in the middle of the room, where a baby's coffin rested, the



“THE PRINCE KNOCKED TIMIDLY.”

coffin in which the baby lay hushed into such deep, such endless sleep. It was a round and chubby baby, and it lay turned a little as if in natural repose, the waxen cheek resting upon the dimpled hand. There were little rings of soft, fair hair clustering around the brow, and the dark eyelashes lay, oh, so quiet upon the roundness of the cheek. Yet there was no sign of illness except the shadowy traces of pathetic circles around the eyes. It seemed that at any moment the baby might awake, might stir the sculptured baby hands one longed to kiss, and throw off the coverlet of white roses that had been woven so fair around the tiny form.

Step by step the children had drawn nearer, till they stood at the coffin side. To the little Princess, living her narrow life upon her lonely island, death had been almost less than a name. She knew nothing but life, — the full, material life of nature and of man. She could not tell why her heart beat fast, or why this sleeping baby awed her so.

“What makes it so awful sound asleep?” she whispered, scarcely above her breath.

“Oh, 'Lizabeth!” the Prince said, with a

sob in his throat, "it isn't asleep, — it's dead. Don't you see the baby's dead?" Yet his words brought little meaning to her dulled consciousness. What is it, then, to be dead, — to lie in the full semblance of life, with dreams shut under the closed eyelids, with that sweet look of rest upon the hushed face?

Slowly, as one scarce knowing what she did, the Princess stretched out her hand, and laid it just a second's breath upon the baby's face, and the marble coldness of it smote her to the heart. Bursting into convulsive weeping, she flung herself upon the Prince: "Oh, don't let it be dead!" she sobbed. "It's freezin' all up. Oh, I didn't know dyin' was like that!"

The Prince smoothed the dark head against his shoulder tenderly. Sometimes it is hard to be a man and a protector when there is such a lump in one's own throat.

"Hush, dear!" he said, gently. "It was a dear, dear baby," and here he choked a little in his manful attempt at comfort, "but it has gone to Jesus. Everybody that has gone to heaven is warm and happy and comforted. Maybe Jesus is singing it to sleep this minute."

It was a simple child's speech, but it brought

a balm to another hearer besides the Princess, for the baby's father and mother had entered the room unperceived while the children were talking, and, for the first time since the baby had been folded away into his dreamless sleep, the slender, dark-eyed young mother burst into tears. Oh, little, little, tender child, whom no mother will ever again rock to rest when the twilight shuts down over the murmuring sea, is it true that across the dark waters of death the loving arms of Jesus waited for you? The lump of ice in the mother's breast melted, and the bronzed, stalwart husband held her tenderly, and soothed her sobs with the healing magic of love.

The Prince and Princess stole out of the house as unobserved as they came. As they looked around, hardly knowing where to go, they saw that across the gray sea, from the nearer islands, and from the mainland, boats were coming towards the little cove. It was a still afternoon. The water lapped softly against the shore, and gurgled against the oars of the boats as they drew near. Presently the newcomers began to land and gather at the house, — plain, primitive folk, in simple garb, and bearing

themselves stiffly with the unwonted solemnity of the occasion ; but when they entered the low cottage room, and saw the baby lying there amid the whiteness, tears shone on many a weather-beaten cheek. So many fathers and mothers have known what it is to have the little, clinging arms drop away, and the hush of eternal silence fall on the sealed lips !

One of the boats from the mainland brought the minister, a gray-haired, worn-looking man in threadbare black, but with a great kindness in his face. And then, through the open window, came the sound of a voice reading the sweet old story of Christ and the little children, and the solemn tones of prayer.

Then, softly and tenderly, they bore the little coffin through the open cottage door, along the grassy slopes of the meadow to the spot where a tiny grave had been hollowed, — so short, so narrow, to shut away so much of springing hope ; and when they had lowered the baby to his resting-place, and showered upon the coffin-lid the white blossoms that wrapped him in a coverlet of snow, while amidst the sobs of those that mourned the clods fell and shut the flowers from sight, there came a sound over

the face of the deep as if some hand smote the great harp of the sea with a solemn and vibrating note.

Quiet and silent, the Prince and Princess had seen and heard it all. It was like a pageant that passed before them, not like a scene in which they had a part. When the funeral was over, the neighbor-folks lingered a little to gossip together. Their opportunities for meeting were so few, and so few excitements came into their lives except the ever threatening tragedies of the sea.

“It was tasty, warn’t it, the way ’Melia’d fixed that room up?” one woman said to another. “She always was a master-hand to kinder trim things.”

“I don’ know, hardly, what she’s goin’ to do,” the next speaker said, pityingly. “She sot so by that baby.”

“Almiry’s goin’ to stay with her for a spell, — you know Ezry won’t be home for quite a period yet, — an’ then ’Lezur’s goin’ to hang ’round home all he can, till ’Melia gits kinder wonted to her loss. Well, she’s gut a good home.”

“Yes, but that ain’t everything. I know

what 'tis to have an island all to yerself, by my sojourn over on Pine Island when me an' John lived there a year, once. Sometimes I'd git so hungry to speak with a livin' cretur, that the sound o' the clock tickin' so stiddy and oncon-sarned a'most drove me wild. Once I hove her out o' the winder, I gut so wrought up. I was 'shamed enough after I done it, but 't didn't hurt her any. She jest kep' on a-tickin'."

The Prince and Princess loitered timidly here and there, hoping to attract attention from some one of the groups and seek advice concerning their homeward voyage; but though one or two people noticed them curiously, and wondered "what them children was hangin' 'round for," nobody addressed them, and a curiously forlorn feeling of being outside the pale of everybody's interest kept them from intruding themselves. Once they almost gained courage to inquire of a cluster of women who looked at them, pleasantly, but, when they drew near, the attention of the group was engrossed in the contemplation of a fleshy young woman who stood near, accompanied by an awkward-looking man evidently her husband.

"Hain't Ariadne stylish?" one of the women

asked, admiringly, of the others, as the children approached.

“She makes out to be,” was the hearty reply.

“I never see anything like the way Jim sets by her. She jest expressed a wish for a plaid dress, an’ he went over to Summerport, ’thout a word said, and fetched her that one she’s gut on. It’s lovely, I think.”

The children looked dubiously at the stylish Ariadne, over whose stout person plaids of the very largest pattern were diverging wildly in every direction.

“Look!” said one of the women, nudging another in joy at the spectacle of such devotion, “he’s carryin’ her umbrell’!”

One by one, the little groups were melting away. Some of the rowboats were already mere black dots in the distance, and the Prince and Princess in their turn took their way to the spot where the *Polly* waited, just above the line of the turning tide.

“We won’t stay to bother the baby’s folks,” the Prince said, simply.

During all that had passed, the Princess had held fast to the pie as to an anchor. “We won’t eat it, unless we’re starvin’,” she now

said, wistfully, "because it'll please aunt Lizy so, if we ever git home to give it to her."

"Do you see that island with only one house on it, 'Lizabeth?'" the Prince asked. "I think that's uncle Eph's island. The hill behind the house looks like Signal Hill, don't you think so? There's a little pale moon in the sky now, and when the sun has really set, it'll be bright moonlight. I think we had better try to get home."

So once more the *Polly* was launched, this time upon a sunset sea, — a pale sunset, just tinging the gray with gold. At first, as the dusk of the twilight shut down over the waters, they lost sight of the little house which was the goal of their hopes, and could only vaguely calculate the direction in which to steer their course. But, after a time, the star of the evening lamp shone in the distant cottage window to guide the weary little mariners on their way. Then, when the dying light of day had faded from the west, the moon that had been such a pale phantom in the sunset sky rose high in the heavens, serene and silver-clear, and flooded the wide waste of the sea with the white dazzle of moonlight. The children were not so lonely

now, for far-away sounds came to them across the waters, — the echo of sailors' voices on distant ships, faint vibrating notes of laughter from merry sailing parties in the bay, — but their poor little arms were weary from the long strain at the oars, and they only spoke now and then to cheer each other, or to mark the distance which still intervened between them and the friendly light.

A little to one side of the course they were steering, a black rock rose sharply from the dark water that swirled around it, but the Prince and Princess, straining their eyes for the gleam of the signal lamp, did not see the white line of foam that marked the long reef, of which the rock was a part, covered now with a shallow depth of water, for the tide was almost at the full. All in a moment it happened; out of the gray quietness of the sea came a swift, furious, resistless wave that seized the *Polly*, bore it against the black, yawning rocks that uncovered their sharp teeth to meet it and grind it to fragments, and breathless, panting, scarce knowing what had befallen them, the children found themselves clinging to the jagged projections of the slippery ledge which yet

remained uncovered by the tide. By some strange chance, when the *Polly* went from under them, the force of the wave had cast them upon the only refuge which remained to them in the cruel waste of the sea.

It was only by a supreme effort that the Princess succeeded in drawing the exhausted Prince far enough on to the rock to shield him from the fierce wash of the tide. He had not her sturdy training, and his arms had grown nerveless and weak. A cleft in the rock at the same time served as a projection to cling to, and a defence against the rush of the waves. There was just room for the children to draw close together, awed and trembling with fear of the moment when those dark waters might rise higher still and sweep them into the awful deeps below.

Presently, when a fuller consciousness began to come back to her, the Princess whispered, in a momentary hush of the tumult of waters, "Don't you think we'd ought to say our prayers?"

They were too frightened and confused to frame any new petitions, and the only words which seemed to come to their wearied remem-

brance were those of the old, familiar prayer of childhood. So, nestling closer together, clinging with bleeding hands to the sharp teeth of the ledge, they raised their childish voices, amid the fierce murmur of the hungry tides that clamored to seize and tear them, in that same oft-repeated prayer which many a child had said that night, kneeling in quiet homes at mothers' knees: "Now I lay me down to sleep."

The Prince's tired head sank on the Princess's shoulder. "There's — something — about — Our Father, — isn't there?" he said, faintly; then he knew no more.

The Princess struggled hard against the torpor that was stealing over her. The waves that broke over her feet seemed to be rocking her into slumber. Vaguely, in the dimness of her mind came the thought of the dead baby that had gone to Jesus, and then all the snarling tongues of the sea seemed to turn themselves into music, and to be singing over and over, oh, so sweetly:

"Jesus is rock-ing me to sleep,
Jesus is rock-ing me to sleep."

It always seemed to her afterwards that when

she woke in uncle Eph's boat, with aunt Lizy's face anxiously bending over her, she came out of the profoundest depths of unconsciousness.



So how could it have been her voice, as uncle Eph said it was, that guided him to find and rescue them?

When she dimly recognized aunt Lizy look-

ing very white in the moonlight, and felt the reviving touch of her warm hands upon her forehead, the Princess said, sleepily, "I'm awful — sorry — I couldn't 'a' saved the — pie. For Jesus' sake — Amen," and then dropped off into unconsciousness again.

The story of the Prince and Princess, which came very near ending with their first voyage into the world together, is not ended yet. The little dead baby had gone forth alone into that unknown mystery from which no hand has ever lifted the shrouding curtain, but the young boy and girl came back into the warm, every-day shelter of the world of this life, — and, perchance, to those who remained as to him who went, the halting words of the Princess, dimly struggling back to mortal breath, held the true solution of the mystery, — "for Jesus sake!" The one shall be taken, and the other left, and death, no less than life, is of God.

When the Prince went away, in the early autumn, healthy, and bronzed, and broadened, the work of the awakening of the Princess was accomplished. Dimly, as a child may comprehend them, the meanings of life were dawning in her soul, the meanings that make joy sweeter,

and sorrow keener, and have power to expand the boundaries even of a lonely island, until they touch the whole limitless horizon of thought.

There came a day, too, when she went away to the mainland to school, and the life of the throbbing world became to her something more than a name. At first, in her new surroundings, she was like a wild sea-bird shut in a cage, but gradually the quiet influence of the pleasant home where she was placed, and the craving of her own awakened mind for knowledge, made her content.

In the summers she lived the same free life on her green island, and she grew up a comely, vigorous maiden, with a rich color in her rounded cheeks, a clear light in her wide, brown eyes, and lengths of jet black tresses luxuriant as those of the Sleeping Beauty of the old legend.

For the first year or two after the Prince's departure from the island a childish correspondence was kept up between himself and the Princess, but gradually, with the lapse of time and the weakening of old associations, the letters became more infrequent, and then ceased altogether.

The Prince remembered the Princess only

as a red-cheeked, sturdy little island girl, whose energetic companionship during one childhood summer had helped to deepen all the springs of his physical being, and to lay the foundation for a healthy and stalwart manhood. What she had done for his mind and spirit he knew not, because he had not yet grown to the realization of the truth that there are some gifts which enrich the giver, no less than the receiver.

The Princess, in her new life, with the widening of all life's horizons, thought of the Prince as of one who had first brought her the key to an undreamed-of and illimitable world, and she sometimes wondered how it had fared with him, what new wisdom the years had taught him, what the cultivation and the luxury and the subtle social influences of this great world had done for his manhood. Out of what he had done for her grew the one ambition of her life, — that of becoming a teacher for other girls brought up like herself, on lonely islands, carrying to them the message which she had herself received, of a larger life and a deeper significance in all its meanings.

CHAPTER IV.

L'ENVOI.

“FOR love, in sequel, works with fate.”

THERE was a laughing wind stirring the summer air that swept all the tall swaying grasses till they rustled softly like an undertone of the breeze. It brought out the spicy, pungent odors of the sweet bay bushes, and the breath of myriads of brier roses, so tender and delicate that the fragrance stole through the air like a dream of perfume.

The little curling waves ran up the beach and jostled each other and lapped and gurgled in very buoyancy of glee, so that the tall, blooming young woman who watched them stamped her pretty foot at the wantonness of their sport, and exclaimed, indignantly:

“I declare, you are fairly giggling at me, now that you’ve put me in this dilemma!

There is certainly something uncanny about this island."

She was a slender, yet vigorous-looking maiden, with an affluence of color which is rarely a product of the New England climate, and she wore her simple serge gown with an air of distinction. She was looking, with eyes that sparkled with vexation, at a pretty row-boat which had evidently been carried away by the tide, and had now lodged among the rocks bordering a tiny island only a few rods distant. The boat was still near enough so that one might read the gilt letters which ran like a frieze around the stern, and decipher the name "Elizabeth Eaton," but the channel between the two islands was both deep and dangerous, and Elizabeth Eaton on the shore sat down upon a convenient rock and looked in despair at her namesake in the distance bobbing up and down placidly with the tide.

"It isn't the least comfort in the world," she soliloquized, "to remember that it is all my own fault. Why did I go mooning around, sentimentalizing and maundering poetry, and forgetting that the tide was coming in? And why, when I came ashore on this unlucky

island, didn't I remember that I was inevitably going to forget, and pull that boat up where it would be safe?" Then turning suddenly to a bird who was pouring his heart out in a gush of melody from a neighboring bush, she said, with energy, "You're a spiteful little thing!"

Presently she rose from her seat and looked with searching glance over the sunny island meadows and the wide blue sea lying beyond; but the land was silent and deserted, and the white sails flecking the ocean here and there were distant specks in the broad expanse of blue. It was the same island where she had landed with the Prince on that childhood day when she had made her first journey into the great world, and, half involuntarily, her feet began to follow the narrow footpath through the meadows, which led to the old brown cottage on the farther shore. The house was deserted now, and falling into decay. She had already visited it once that day and looked into the curtainless windows of the room where the baby had lain in his frozen sleep. The rose-bushes had grown wild and straggling, but she had gathered a bunch of vivid crimson blooms to wear at her belt. Now, in her perplexity,

she turned to the place where human inhabitants had once lived, as though to find some assistance in the mere association.

She sat down on the sun-warmed doorstone of that side door where the honeysuckle still waved its long pennons in the breeze, and saw that a path, oft trodden, led through the orchard to the baby's grave. On that former day she remembered that when the rude procession took its way from the house, the feet of those who followed the little coffin to its resting-place had bent down the springing grasses as they walked. Following a sudden impulse, she heaped her arms with starry sprays of the white rose, and sought the spot where she had first seen death shut away into the heart of life. There was another, larger mound now beside the smaller one, a mound unmarked except by a swaying white rose-bush which had been planted at its head. Both had been neglected by man, but nature had spread her soft mosses over them, and tangling grasses grew there, and wild flowers bent over and shed their perfume like balm. Every now and then the loosening petals of the rose-leaves dropped their snow among the grasses, and close by was

heard the solemn sound of the sea, as if it went on forever, singing of immortality. Elizabeth knelt beside the lonely mounds lying so tranquil in the sun, and, as she softly laid the rose sprays on their mossy surface, she began chant-



ing slowly to herself the song which to her imagination the sea seemed to be singing over and over :

“ When the last trump shall sound,
And the dead, both small and great,
Shall rise — shall rise — ”

Just beyond the spot where she was kneeling, there rose a knoll, covered with scattered pine-trees, and as she turned to look in that direction, she made a discovery which brought her song to a sudden termination. On the smooth slope behind the nearest tree reposed a pair of stout legs encased in heather-mixture stockings, and, as she rose to her feet and crept nearer to this astonishing sight, she saw that these stalwart limbs belonged to a young man, who had lain down, book in hand, under the shadow of the pines, and, lulled by the breeze and the sea, had fallen into deepest slumber. His face was turned away from her, but she could see a mass of brown hair curling in those close waves one sees in Greek statues, a pair of broad shoulders, and an outstretched hand, strong yet fine, from which the book had fallen.

From the point where she stood she now saw a small boat, like a yacht's tender, moored at a crumbling wharf near the cottage.

“Behold, a deliverer!” she murmured, dramatically, to herself, then, with a woman's involuntary instinct, began to pull the bits of clinging grass from her gown, and put her

hand to the close braids of her hair, to feel if the shining mass was yet smooth and compact.

Next she began to realize that there was embarrassment in the situation. She smiled mischievously. "Shall I watch him from afar, and rush to pounce upon him when he wakes," she mused, "or shall I sit here and discover myself to his astonished sight, as a new Miranda waiting for Ferdinand to materialize?"

The sleeper lay prone and immovable, and, moved by curiosity, Elizabeth crept a little nearer. "What thick soles they wear on their shoes," she thought. "Those things would be hideous on any one but a man. I wonder where he came from. I can't see anything that looks like a yacht nearer than Summerport harbor. How tranquilly he lies there, unconscious of his doom, — and I wait here like the Ancient Mariner: 'I know the man that must hear me.' Why doesn't he wake up, — stupid creature!"

Then, seized with a sudden panic at the mere thought of his waking and finding her so near to him, she rose and gathered up her draperies as a bird plumes itself for flight. In the very moment of flying, however, she hesitated. "I might have the book," she said. "He is so

sound asleep he would never know it. I may have to wait an hour."

Cautiously she drew nearer. It seemed to her that in his sleep this young man must hear her heart beat. Her hand was almost on the book, when she checked herself in another panic, but even at that supreme moment she noticed that his brows and curling lashes were much darker than his hair, and that the moist rings lying upon his broad forehead gave a boyish look to the repose of his face.

"He is like a shut book," she thought, clutching her breast as if to still her heart-beats. "I wonder what color his eyes are."

At this moment the object of her curiosity opened his eyes, and by that act alone might have resolved some of her questionings had she but retained sufficient presence of mind to look at him. She longed to fly, but her strength seemed to have deserted her. She could only sit with her eyes riveted on the ground, and a more wonderful crimson rising in her cheeks than that of the roses at her belt. The young man looked at her incredulously. He closed his eyes again, then opened them, looked solemnly at Elizabeth, as at a vision, and said, in a

dreamy voice, "It does not move. I saw it in a dream, and now it appears to be real."

The vision now changed the situation a little by putting its hands over its face, with an effect as if the bloom of roses was suddenly obscured.

"Don't!" the half-awakened sleeper pleaded. Then sitting up with an effort, he put on his glasses and surveyed the young woman before him with the serious air of one resolved to know the truth.

"I beg your pardon," he said, after a moment. "I see that if I am awake, you are real. *I am* awake, am I not?"

Elizabeth removed her hands from her face for a moment's space. "Yes," she said, indignantly, "you are awake, — but if you had had any real gentlemanly feeling, you would have stayed asleep five minutes longer."

A moment later, as the young man remained persistently silent, she saw from behind her screening fingers that he was struggling with a wild desire to laugh, and with one of the quick transitions which were a part of her charm, she burst into a ripple of merriment at the sight of his embarrassed face.

With the laugh the awkwardness of the posi-

tion melted away. It is always easy for two young creatures to break down barriers which are purely conventional.

“I was trying to get the book without waking you,” she explained. “I had to wait till you woke because I couldn’t get off the island without your help, and you seemed so awfully sound asleep.”

“I acknowledge,” he said, humbly, “that a man ought to know when to wake up. It’s odd, too, I was dreaming, you know, that I saw a rose-bush spring up from the ground, just a little shoot at first, and then it grew tall and slender, and blossomed all over with crimson roses like those you have in your belt, — and all in a moment, while I was looking at it, it changed into a beautiful girl, with cheeks redder than any rose. When I opened my eyes, and saw you, you know, I couldn’t tell whether you were a dream or a reality, and I had an aggrieved sense that it was going to be a pretty mean thing if you faded away.”

Elizabeth rose to her feet suddenly. “I must tell you,” she said, “my summer home is on that island where you see a house, — there, in the distance, in the direction of the light-

house. I rowed over here this morning, and landed, intending to stay only a short time, and so I did not pull my boat far enough up the beach to ensure its not being carried off at high tide. I had been on this island once before, years ago, on the day when the baby, whose grave you see just below there, was buried. For some reasons it was a memorable day in my life. I wandered over here this morning, and visited the deserted house and the baby's grave, and I found some orchids in the swamp of a kind I had never seen before; and then I sat down in the tall grass on the edge of that cliff, and thought about it all, — all the chances and changes of life, and that sort of thing, — and quoted poetry, and made plans for the future; and, while I mused, the tide rose. Now my boat is caught among the rocks on Gull Island, and if you will not help me, I shall be forced to become a female Robinson Crusoe."

The young man had risen and stood beside her. "I wish I knew what poetry you quoted," he said, irrelevantly.

"It was nothing, — just fragments that came back to me through old association with these seashore places, and then :

“ A-floating, a-floating
Across the sleeping sea,
All night I heard a singing bird
Upon the topmost tree.
Oh, sing, and wake the dawning,
Oh, whistle for the wind ;
The night is long, the current strong,
My boat it lags behind.

It wasn't particularly appropriate, you see, because, after all, my boat was up and doing, and I was the laggard. Don't you think, though, that this is a time rather for action than for poetry ? ”

The young man led the way down the slope and stood for a moment, cap in hand, beside the baby's grave. The wind ruffled the masses of waving hair upon his bared head. He looked at Elizabeth reflectively. “ Do you find in your mind a curious impression that you and I have stood side by side at this same place on a former occasion ? ” he asked.

“ Certainly not,” Elizabeth replied, with decision. “ There is not the slightest impression in my mind that I ever stood anywhere with you until five minutes ago.”

The boat was unmoored and they pushed off

from the wharf. "You will have to row around the island through the south channel," Elizabeth told her companion. "My boat is caught between the rocks just opposite the landing beach on that side. Shall I take an oar?"

The young man smiled. "It will hardly be necessary. I have rowed now and then on the 'varsity crew, and I fancy my muscles will stand the strain of the present occasion, especially if you will allow me to go easy for a few moments while I tell you something."

"Why shouldn't I allow you to manage your own boat in your own way?" Elizabeth asked, a little haughtily.

"Well, you impress me as rather an energetic person, with small sympathy for any laggards except those who sit on cliffs and recite poetry. What I was going to say was this: like yourself, I have been on this island once before, on the day when the baby whose grave we saw was buried. It was a memorable day to me, also. I was only a youngster, then, and was spending the summer on one of the islands in this bay. On that day I had accompanied my little playmate—she was a rosy-cheeked child, and you have an odd, haunting

look now and then, that recalls her — on the first trip to the mainland which she had ever made in all the eight years of her life.”

The color had been mounting higher and higher in Elizabeth's cheek. “Arthur Lenox!” she exclaimed, incredulously.

“At your service, Elizabeth Eaton,” the young man answered, laying down his oars while their hands met in a cordial, lingering clasp.

“But you have changed so,” she objected. “I can't see the least trace of my old playmate.”

“Perhaps you will, 'Lizabeth,” he said, returning to the old childhood name, “when you get a little more used to me, and aren't so afraid to look a fellow in the face.”

“The idea of being afraid of Arthur Lenox!” Elizabeth said, scornfully, but, even as she spoke, her glance fell before the warmth of his gaze. “I am, though, a little. It is because you are no longer *Arthur* Lenox. One must remember your years and dignity, and say *Mr.* Lenox, now.”

“I do not see the necessity, *Miss* Eaton. There is your boat. May I speak of it by the

name which is engraved thereon, or must that, too, be referred to as *Miss Eaton*?"

"As you please," Elizabeth answered, demurely. "Swing around a little, please, so I can get at the tow-line. Shall I fasten it to this one, or do you leave me now to my own devices?"

"I know my manners better than that. I propose to take Elizabeth Eaton in tow. What a dignified name for a rowboat! Why don't you ask me some questions? Don't you want to know where I came from, and whither I am going, and why I fall asleep on solitary islands, and what sort of a fellow I have grown into since you kissed me good-by?"

"I didn't!" Elizabeth began, indignantly; "or if I did, you have no business to remember it."

"Very well, you didn't, then. But if you did not, it was outrageously mean of you, for, if I remember aright, I was weeping copiously and swearing eternal friendship, and this day proves how I have kept that vow."

"By falling tranquilly asleep on a distant island, and waiting until I row across to waken you from your slumbers."

“I came into Penobscot Bay yesterday afternoon on the *Psyche*. There's a camp on Wood Island, where some of the boys come every summer. This morning I was sent out to get the lay of the land and forage for supplies. I remembered the vegetable garden on the island we have just left, and it seemed to me a noble opportunity to acquire corn and potatoes, and at the same time bind the chain of old associations. I found the island deserted and the vegetables a minus quantity, so I mooned around just as you did, and 'looked before and after, and pined for what is not ;' and at last, the day being warm, I fell sweetly asleep, as a man of clear conscience is justified in doing. The rest you know. What you do not know is, that I had set apart to-morrow to visit uncle Eph's island and try to seek out my old friends. I had made some inquiries in Summerport and knew that uncle Eph and aunt Lizy lived there still.”

“You are doing rather a poor job at rowing, for a member of the 'varsity crew,” Elizabeth suggested, mischievously.

“I am not in haste, Miss Elizabeth Eaton. Do you see that black line of rocks just off the bow? Once, on a summer evening long ago, I

clung to those jagged teeth, weak and despairing enough, and had it not been for the little playmate who gave her strength to save mine, my bones would be whitening down in the sea-caves somewhere at this moment. There have been sad things and mistaken things in my life since that day, but never anything so unworthy that I cannot look into her face and tell her that I have tried to live in manhood and honor the life she gave back to me."

There were tears in Elizabeth's eyes as she returned the brave sweetness of his clear glance. "That is something to thank God for, Arthur. Do you know, there has always been a strange sense of peace mingled with my recollections of that awful time. It almost seemed to my childish heart that Jesus was so close by I heard him speak. I have often longed to feel that assurance of personal nearness again."

"There have been some hard things in my life since then," the young man said. "I have never been able to make myself speak of these things much, but somehow it is easy to talk to you. The years seem to roll away, and I have my little playmate again. You remember my beautiful mother, and how I loved her? She

was terribly ill that summer, you know, but she recovered, and it seemed to me that no other woman could ever be so lovely, so joyous, so sweet as she was. Three years after I went away from here, my father had to go abroad on business, and she went with him. They left me at school in New York, because I had already lost so much time in my studies. I went to the dock to see them off, and I remember that I loved and admired them so much in my boyish heart, that I wondered why all the people did not turn to look at my brave, beautiful father and mother. That was the last time I ever saw them. No one knows the fate of that steamer, but she never came into port. I have had money and luxury, and external abundance, but nothing can ever make up to me for that loss."

"Some of the girls at school had such lovely mothers," Elizabeth said, softly. "Many a night I have lain in the dark and cried because I never knew mine. You are richer than I."

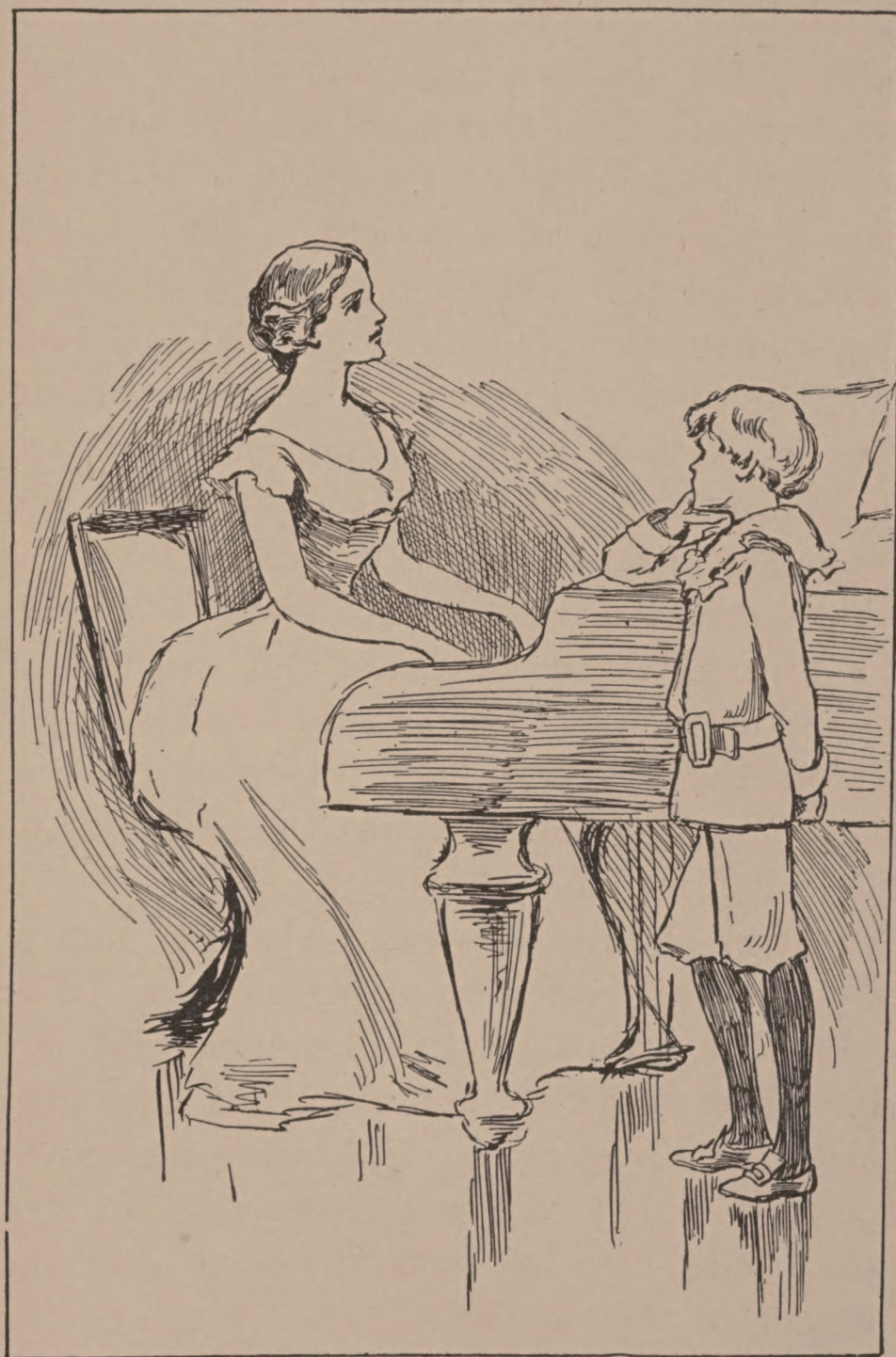
"I used to think my mother looked like the pictures of St. Cecilia. I told her so once, and assured her solemnly that I should always, always love her best. I have never forgotten what she said to me: 'The women a man loves

best should always be his saints. Some day, my dear little boy, I think, if you live, you will add another saint to your calendar.' I think I have found my saint, Elizabeth."

They had been talking together as simply as they had used to do in the old childhood relation, but when she raised her beautiful sincere eyes to his, there stole into the glance of each the dawning shadow of an emotion which the childhood friendship had never known.

The Prince had come once more to awaken the Princess to the mightiest and sweetest of all the meanings of life, and the shadow which rose in their eyes was not the shadow of the old boy and girl love; it was the beginning of the love of man and woman.

Neither of them knew just what the miracle was which was being wrought for them. The world had grown strangely brighter, that was all. The vistas of life were full of sunny places. The renewing of old ties seemed to open a fountain of happiness in the heart of each. So, little by little, they filled out the interrupted story of the past, and presaged the future with the sanguine expectations of youth, and the most trivial confidences, the idlest



“ I USED TO THINK MY MOTHER LOOKED LIKE
ST. CECILIA.”

laughter and jesting, became sweet with the new magic that cast a glamour over all things. Because she was a woman, all womanhood became more sacred, and because he was a man all manhood grew nobler, for this love of theirs was to be no fever fit of passion, no scorpion-growth stung to death by its own fire, but the pure, constant affection of one man for one woman.

The sweet beginnings of love are nearer to laughter than to tears, so the Prince and Princess talked lightly to each other.

“Does the same bird sing still, Elizabeth, in the tall pine that grows out of the Norse sailor’s grave?”

“The song is just the same. In the nature of things I imagine the singer must have changed. Do you know, Arthur, I have a ‘pi-anner’ of my own now? How little I thought in the old days that I should ever attain such glory! I earned it myself, too. But you haven’t told me what prizes you have earned for yourself in life.”

“I mentioned that I sometimes rowed on the ‘varsity crew.’”

“Is that all?”

“One or two other little matters, which I shall probably bring to light sooner or later. A fellow doesn’t like to do all his bragging in the first half hour. I am a graduate and a post-graduate, Elizabeth. I got through two months ago, and now I have to find out what I’m good for. How long do you propose to go missionarying around on remote islands?”

“A whole life would be none too long,” the Princess said. “Think of the gospel of hope you brought me, and the change it made.”

“I will think of it, because it reminds me that you must owe me a good deal in return. In some things I’m not generous. I shall demand payment to the uttermost farthing.”

They were nearing uncle Eph’s island now, and as the boat swung around the point, shutting out the sight of the long, dark reef in the distance, the Prince said, with a sudden change in his voice, “I suppose that black rock will always seem to me like the boundary-line between time and eternity. Do you remember, Elizabeth, how we said our prayers there? I wasn’t much of a chap in those days. You had to hold my head on your shoulder.”

He saw that tears had gathered in the

Princess's dark eyes, and knew that his own heart was melting within him, so, because he could not put his arm about her and comfort her, as he would have done in that childhood day, he added, with seeming lightness :

“One of these days I shall build a monument on that reef to commemorate the spot where the pie went down.”

Then they looked at each other and laughed, for the child-heart lived in them still ; and the wind stealing over the summer sea, and the sunbeams dancing on the dancing wave, and the far-away bird singing in the tree that had its root in a grave, all had one song, — “Oh, the world will always be sweet, sweet, sweet, so long as youth and love are in it !”

THE END.

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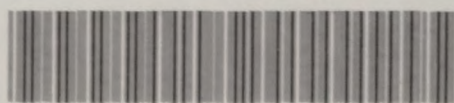
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