

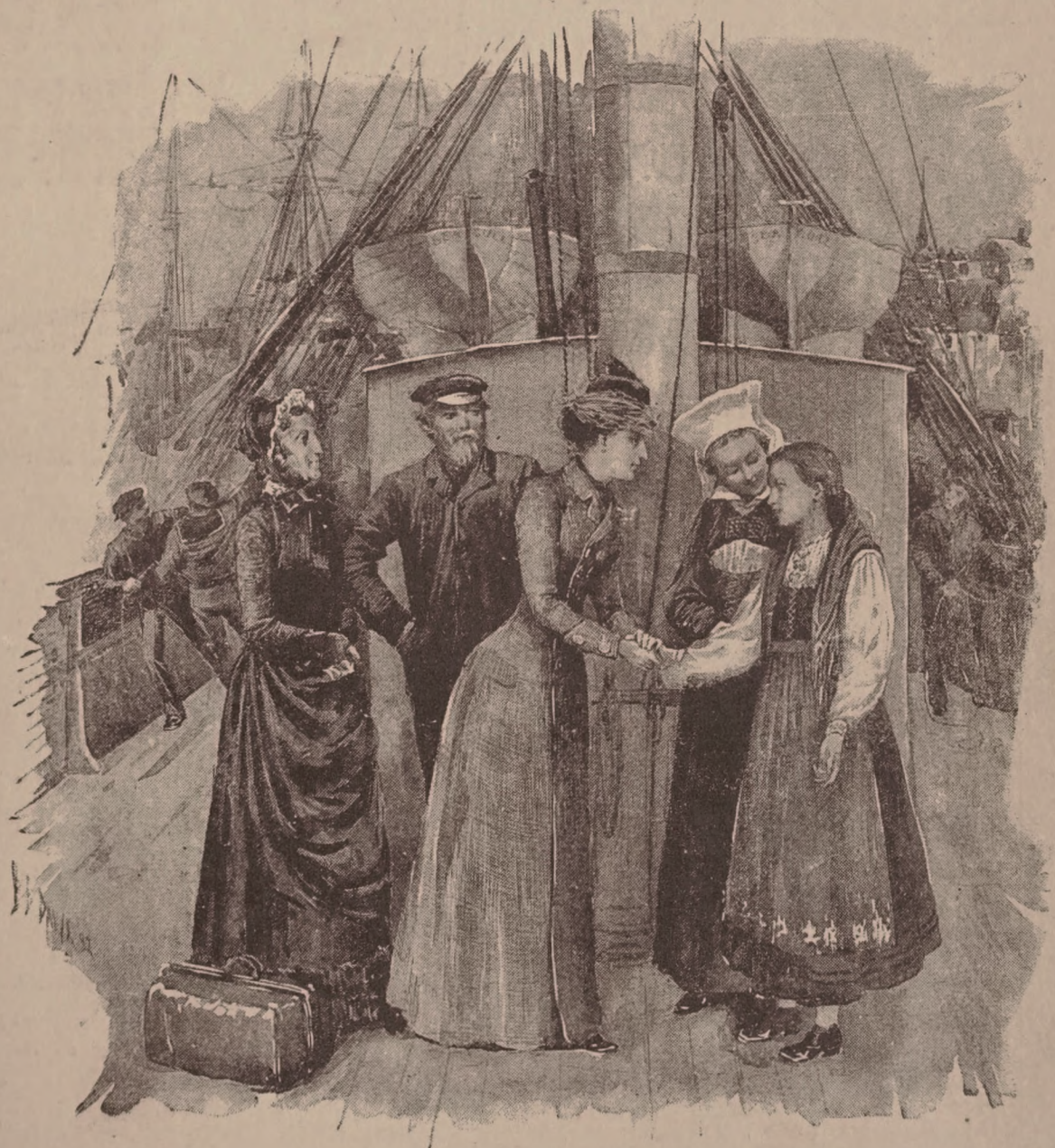


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Morris Julian's Wife

By Elizabeth Olmis.

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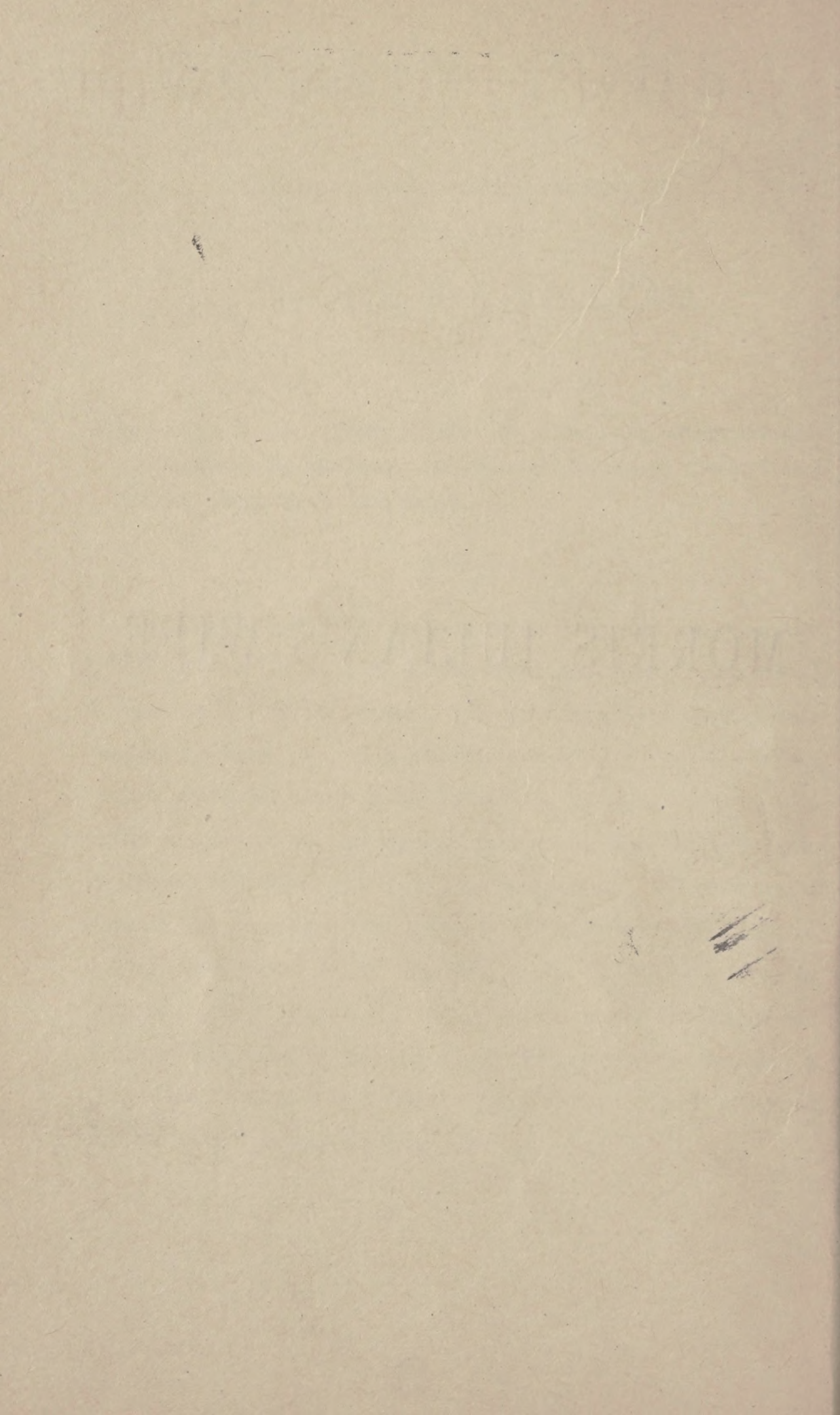
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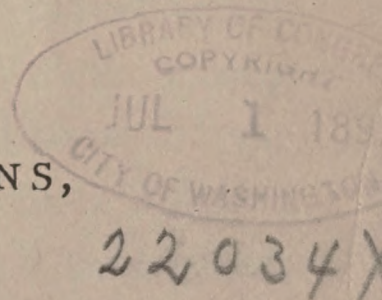
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MORRIS JULIAN'S WIFE.

CHAPTER I

A SCHOOLGIRL.



MORRIS JULIAN was a man of the world. At thirty-five his clear blue eyes—eyes that could be steely cold and also melt to tenderest softness—had looked upon most places worth that trouble; his cool, strong hands had clasped those of the fairest women on both sides of

the Atlantic; his critical taste had been cultivated, satisfied, sated.

In business matters he was keen and shrewd.

Those who feared him said : "Hard and close." He compassed all his ends in a quiet, self-confident way, exasperating to the very souls of those less far-seeing.

He had formed no close ties. With a few men he was on terms of good-comradeship. To none did he reveal the real thoughts and purposes of his heart. With women he had many friendships.

It was his delight to study the characteristics, the caprices, the weaknesses, the noblenesses of the feminine nature. He adored the sex; he enjoyed it; but he never trusted it.

Indelibly branded into his innermost self was the suffering he endured when, a hot-headed boy, he was played with by a beautiful woman many years his senior. It had pleased her to be flattered, for the hour, by his worship. Stunned, bewildered, crushed by her smiling duplicity, he had left confidence in womankind behind when, at a bound, he entered manhood's estate.

He became an expert in the art of carrying his delicately chivalrous attentions to women to the extreme verge of loverlikeness, adroitly leaving open a decorous path of return to cordial amity. He anticipated with pleasurable excitement the dear delight these conquests gave him. For he never

failed to gain the citadel of love, when once he undertook its capture. With wealth, leisure, culture, the generous impulses of a kindly, if selfish, heart and an intimate knowledge of the nature with which he had to do, is it any wonder that he succeeded?

The pathway was a familiar one to him—from formal politeness to the thoughtful consideration of a friend; from confidential intimacy to the tender devotion of a lover. Each step merged so gradually into the other as to be almost unperceived until his swift retreat, silent and courteous, leaving behind no binding word, no tangible token of all that the eyes, the tones, the actions had spoken with such eloquence, revealed to the startled captive its silken bonds. With self-centered complacency, he ignored all consequences of his cruel kindness.

“I make them happy while it lasts,” he said. “And after? Oh, well, they may miss me for a day.”

The shrug of the shoulder and uplifting of the eyebrow told even more plainly how skeptical he was as to any serious result of his trifling. Such a man was Morris Julian at the age of thirty-five. But at that time he had never seen Satia Maynard.

Satia Locke Maynard was the name which he found himself saying over softly to himself as he watched her. It was at the commencement exercises of a girl's school—the place of all others where

he would least have expected to meet his fate. He sat idly fingering his programme, feeling immensely bored, and wishing that he had not, in an evil, amiable moment, suffered his sister to persuade him that family obligations required his attendance at the graduation of his only niece.

Suddenly the tones of a bell-clear voice thrilled him through and through. He glanced up toward the rostrum and beheld a dark-eyed maiden, whose winsome grace was good to look upon. He glanced downward to the paper he held in his hand; and then he sat there repeating her name beneath his breath and feeling a vivid impatience for the "thing" to be over with, that he might speak to her. Slowly the moments passed. He smiled somewhat grimly to feel again in his veins the fever which had so often run its course before. He cared nothing for the words she read. Those he considered artificial—the work of her teachers, doubtless. He was eager to get at the girl herself; to catch the modulations of her voice; to watch the play of expression on her features; to study the motives which lay behind her speech and action.

In the course of time all things must end. Presently he found himself making his way through the crowd toward the reception parlor, where Clover Fielding, his niece should present him to the new

and beautiful star which had arisen on his horizon. But his progress was much too slow. He looked about and discovered a passage-way which he at once explored. He came soon into a dimly lighted study-room. Scarcely had he crossed the threshold, when he heard quick steps, and a white-robed figure brushed by him, turned up the gas, and began rummaging in a table drawer, without perceiving that she was not alone. It was Satia, and Morris, delighted, stood motionless.

“Not one to be seen, of course,” she exclaimed with girlish impatience. “Dear! I’d give anybody a kiss for a pencil.”

Instantly she saw one, a dainty, gold-tipped affair, held out to her. Looking up amazed, she met the amused, admiring regard of a pair of expressive dark-blue eyes.

The blood rushed over her cheeks and brow in a rich flood. Who was this elegant gentleman appearing so mysteriously, and, horrors, what had she said? She raised her eyes again to find his still bent upon her and the pencil still extended. Should she take it? But at what price? Each thought was clearly mirrored in her speaking countenance, to be plainly read by the man beside her. He could not tell which charmed him most—the frank pride of the lovely mouth, which would be as good

as its word, the spirit of daring and mischief which the tell-tale dimples revealed, the womanly shyness which veiled the eyes. At last, after what seemed to him an eternity of waiting, the dimples deepened. With an impulsive little gesture, she half turned away, but before she could put out her hand, as he could have sworn she was about to do, a tumult of laughter and voices was heard approaching. Her fingers closed instinctively around the pencil, which she felt gently pushed beneath them. She heard murmured in her ear these words:

“The future holds our sweetest joys.”

Morris had hoped to escape unseen. But he had waited an instant too long.

“Satia Maynard, where have you been?”

“Did you get one?”

“Why, Uncle Morris, how did you come here?” burst from the group of merry girls who filled the little room.

“I was trying to find you, Clover,” he replied, greeting his pretty niece affectionately.

“It was so good of you to come!” cried Clover. “Now let me introduce you to my friends. Girls, this is my uncle Morris; Sara Brand, Julie Everett, Faith Gilmor, and my very dearest crony of all, Satia Maynard.”

Morris bowed low to each in turn, reserving a

smile for the last-named, who blushed divinely. He then chattered with the one nearest him, in his easy, graceful way, as they returned to the reception-hall. But his glance dwelt on the slender figure and fair face of the girl who held his pencil and, for the time, his fancy in her keeping.

“Confound these chattering magpies!” he was saying to himself. “Why couldn’t they have stayed away?”

He saw ever before him the sweet, flushed face, demurely arch. He asked himself continually the tantalizing question: “What was she going to say?” He vowed that she should tell him ere many days went by.

Very soon he was seized upon by his sister and carried off to be introduced to a lot of people, and it was an hour or more before he was free to seek his charmer. While surveying the crowded rooms, in the hope of seeing her, he heard again the voice close beside him. She was offering him the pencil.

“Thank you very much,” she was saying, with a mischievous smile.

He smiled in return, but did not take the pencil.

“It is yours,” he said, significantly.

How it pleased him to see her blush and struggle with embarrassment, and conquer it, and say, with a spirited flash now in the bright, dark eyes:

"You are unfair to take advantage. I am sure that you cannot be Clover's uncle at all."

How he laughed then—a low, hearty laugh of pure amusement.

"You jump to conclusions with the swiftness of your sex, Miss Maynard. But your logic is excellent, too. Come, now. Shall we not make a bargain? I am not to exact payment for the pencil. You can remember me as the most generous of men. And you are to keep it with you always, so that never, never under any possible circumstances, will you be tempted to make such an offer to anyone else."

Satia laughed merrily.

"Oh, that will be easy enough," she said. "I shall not be very likely to think aloud again."

"Except with me, please. And now, am I Clover's uncle?"

She gave him a long look, as frank as a child's, which he bore with grave composure.

"Yes," she said, at length; "I believe in you now."

"I want you to believe in me always," he replied, hurriedly. Then, in his usual courteous way, he added: "It is very warm in these rooms this evening. Shall we not go outside?"

He offered her his arm as though she were a

duchess. She was even more than that in his estimation. She was the woman to whom he was giving his devotion.

They found the long porch on one side of the house almost deserted. As they walked slowly down its dusky length, he said :

“ I must no longer delay my congratulations on your escape from durance vile, Miss Maynard.”

“ You mean from school? Oh, I am not through. I only read the essay of one of the graduates, who is sick. Did you think I could write as well as that? And didn't you notice on the programme: ‘ Read by Satia Maynard ? ’ ”

He was thrilled again by her flute-like tones. He thought her name, as uttered by herself, the sweetest one he had ever heard.

“ To tell you the truth,” he said, softly, “ I could not tell one word you read. I was conscious only of the music of your voice. It is needless to ask if you sing ? ”

Satia's cheeks grew suddenly hot. She could not have told why.

“ Oh, yes, I love dearly to sing; but I hate to practice all the scales and exercises,” she confessed, with charming candor.

“ I should think you would,” replied Morris, sympathetically. “ I should imagine that it is not

real fun, either, to be shut up here all these lovely days."

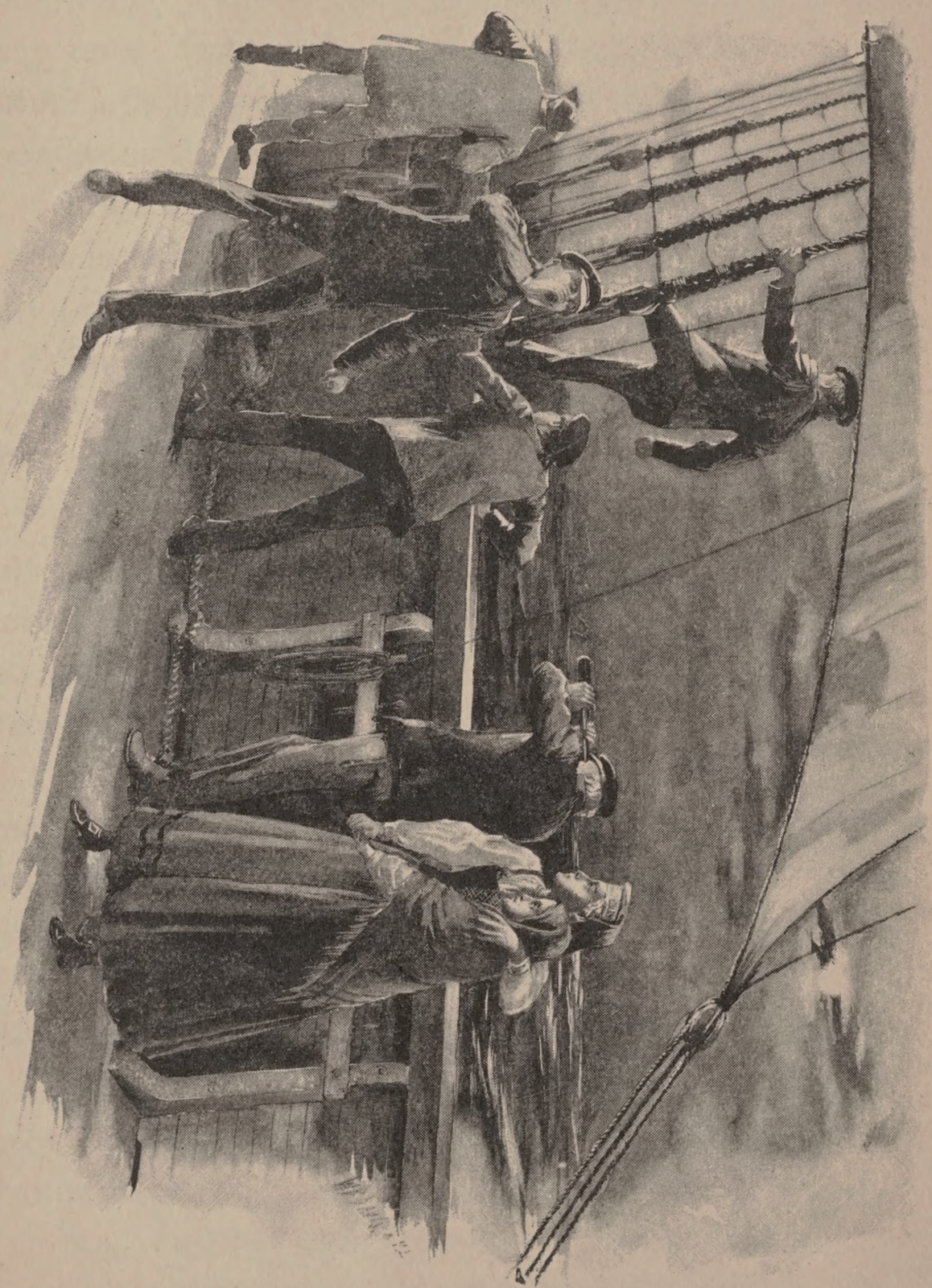
The girl looked at him with her heart in her eyes.

"Oh, how kind of you to say that! I didn't know that anybody so old—I mean—" She stopped in embarrassment pretty to see. "I did not mean—well, anybody like you or papa," she went on, with an air of having gotten out of her dilemma in a satisfactory way, "thought that it was horrid to be sent off to boarding-school. I'm so glad you know just how it is."

Morris was hiding a smile and smothering an execration. Was he, then, such a patriarch to this girl, whose face and figure were those of a young goddess, but whose heart and life were as innocent as a child's? In those clear eyes he read absolute ignorance of the wiles and deceits which the world so soon teaches its children—ignorance as enchanting as it is rare. He read, too, a beautiful confidence, boundless devotion, unswerving loyalty.

"What do you find here by way of amusement?" he inquired, as they made a turn at the lower end of the porch.

"Not much of anything," was the rueful response. "Of course we can walk all over the place, and it takes in those woods beyond the gate; we can play croquet, and—oh, I hardly know—the girls have



A STEAMER ON FIRE.—See Page 72.

spreads sometimes. Those are jolly ; but I wish so much that I could have my boat here and go rowing on a dear little lake over behind the woods. But madame said ‘ No,’ and so it is locked up in the boat-house at Elm Ridge—that is my home.”

“ Then you are fond of rowing ?”

“ I love it better than anything except being on my pony’s back,” she replied, enthusiastically.

“ He is not here either, I presume ?”

“ Oh, no, indeed ; and it nearly breaks my heart. Poor Don ! I know he misses me.”

“ I have not a doubt of it,” Morris said, with an emphasis which brought the flush again to Satia’s cheek. “ Do you think you would enjoy a gallop in the morning with Clover and me, even if you cannot have Don’s company, too ?”

“ Oh, how delightful that will be !” was her glad exclamation. “ Thank you very much, Mr. Julian, for asking me. But I’m afraid that madame will not let me go. You are not *my* uncle, you know.”

“ Thank heaven !” he ejaculated, fervently, to himself. Aloud, he said : “ Madame is quite right to be so particular ; but I think there will be no trouble in arranging it. Have you and Clover your habits here ?”

“ No,” and her tones expressed disappointment as frankly as they had pleasure a moment before. “ I

hadn't thought of that. It is too bad, and there is not time to send for them. Papa is coming for me to-morrow afternoon, and we leave for home the next morning."

"I see. It is quite possible that I may be in the vicinity of Elm Ridge next week on business," remarked this truthful gentleman, without a blush. "If you would be kind enough to allow me to call, and if your papa had no objections, perhaps we might have the ride with Don."

"We shall be glad to see you, Mr. Julian," she said, simply; "and I wish you could bring Clover. I do want her to see all the lovely places about Elm Ridge. Papa will take her everywhere. I think I must go in now," she added, after a little silence. "Madame will be telling me that I have stayed too long with one guest."

Just then they came out into the light, and Morris caught again the expression of demure archness which had so charmed him in the study-room.

"That could scarcely be with this guest, at any rate," he said, gravely. "I trust that at Elm Ridge one is not so soon banished to outer darkness."

"You must come and see," she replied, with shy grace. "Good night, Mr. Julian."

"Thank you." He said it as he might have done

or a precious gift. "I shall dream of—Don;" and a laughing flash from his brilliant eyes went far down into her own. "Good night."

CHAPTER II.

WOODY AND WON.

Clover Fielding was both surprised and delighted to receive a letter from her uncle Morris early in the following week, telling her that important business called him to the vicinity of Elm Ridge, and that if she would like to go with him and spend a few days with her "dearest crony of all," it would give him a great deal of pleasure to escort her.

"Isn't Uncle Morris just the most thoughtful and generous man in the world, mamma? It is so lovely of him to think that I might like to go. I always feel as though I were a princess royal at the very least, when I travel with him. Don't you remember the summer that he took us through Switzerland?"

"Yes, dear. Uncle Morris is very kind. I wish he had some girls and boys of his own to be good to, though."

Clover laughed.

"You want everybody else to have as beautiful

and perfect a white crow as you have, don't you, mamma dear? But they don't grow on every family tree, I assure you. And not many crows have such a dear little mother as this one has. Aren't we lucky?"

Mrs. Fielding disengaged herself from the rapturous but rather demoralizing embrace in which she found herself smothered.

"You had better be getting your gowns together, my dear," she said, patting the round cheek lovingly. "Doesn't Morris say that he will be up on the morning express?"

"Yes. And I must get Robert to send him a telegram right away."

It was just at sunset on an exquisite June evening that Satia and her father drove to the station to meet their guests. She had received a short note from Morris saying that he had gladly complied with her request to bring Clover with him on his business trip. They should arrive on the seven o'clock limited, Thursday. On Friday morning he begged the pleasure of paying his respects to her and of being presented to her father.

The train was in promptly, and after the introductions and greetings were over, Mr. Maynard said to Morris, with hearty cordiality:

“My daughter tells me, Mr. Julian, that you are Mary Fielding’s brother. That can mean nothing else than that my home must be yours so long as you are in this part of the country. My wife and she were dear friends—but all that was while you were off in Europe, like a very bad American,” he went on in his bluff fashion. “I remember hearing them lament over your infatuation for every country but your own, so long ago as when this child was in her cradle;” and he laid his hand affectionately on Satia’s shoulder.

Morris looked as though he found all this extremely entertaining. He even felt that he could have endured to be compared with Methuselah, to that worthy’s disadvantage in the matter of age, by the father of the girl, who looked lovelier than ever in her simple dress of dark blue, and whom he was to have the delight of seeing in the informality of her own home, for he had no mind to refuse the good gifts the gods were thrusting upon him. With gentle courtesy he accepted Mr. Maynard’s invitation, and was soon rolling swiftly along toward Elysium.

His stay of four days at Elm Ridge was a revelation to Satia. Never before had she known what it was to have her wishes anticipated and fulfilled almost sooner than she was aware of them, nor

dreamed of her power to make or to mar the happiness of another, nor learned of her own loveliness. How all this knowledge had come to her, it would have been difficult for her to have told. The polished, affable gentleman whom Mr. Maynard found so delightful a companion; the devoted and congenial friend of whom Satia was frankly fond; the worldly-wise, subtle man, who saw the end from the beginning and laid his plans with the artfulness of a courtier, might have explained it all to her.

On the morning of his departure he had an interview with Mr. Maynard. To say that its nature was surprising to this most unsuspecting of fathers, is to state the case mildly.

“Why, my dear sir, Satia is only a little schoolgirl yet. Can I have misunderstood you? Is it really your wish to make her your wife at once?”

Morris smiled.

“You express my feelings exactly, Mr. Maynard. But I know that the heart of a young girl must be wooed delicately. Perhaps it will be better to say ‘six months’ instead of ‘at once.’”

Mr. Maynard regarded Morris somewhat keenly.

“You seem to be very confident in this matter. What assurance have you that my daughter will be ready to leave her father’s house to go to the

world's end with a stranger, at the end of six months?"

A quick flush rose to the brow of the younger man. He did not reply for a few moments, during which time the eyes of the elder never left his face.

"Love like mine knows no obstacles," he said at length. "With your permission, I do not despair of winning the great blessing of Miss Maynard's love, which, I freely confess, is far beyond my deserts."

There was no mistaking the sincerity of these words. At last the ruthless invader of so many hearts was thoroughly in earnest!

"And if I do not give my permission? If I say that the union between an experienced man of the world like yourself—unexceptionable as you may be personally—and a child like my Satia would be most unsuitable, and could result only in the misery of you both? If I request you to discontinue the acquaintance?"

"I beg that you will not force me to reply to these questions, my dear sir," said Morris, with winning sweetness. "Let me demonstrate my ability to make your daughter happy as a lover. If I succeed, will you not accept it as proof of my ability to do as much as a husband?"

"There is but one thing to be considered, Mr.

Julian," said Mr. Maynard, after a long silence. "My girl is my all. Her happiness is the one wish of my life. Win her love, and you have my consent to the marriage. She is very young, but, after all, not more so than her mother was when she came to be the light and joy of my home. But there is to be no trifling, you understand?"

He had risen, and stood near Morris, looking him through and through with eyes that had not lost their youthful fire.

"I trust to your honor as a gentleman," he said.

Morris raised his right hand. He returned the piercing glance he met with one just as clear and steady.

"May the Lord do so to me, and more, also," he said, using unconsciously the words of the Hebrew oath—words that sounded strangely enough from his lips—"if I deal not with her as with that which is dearer to me than my own life."

They clasped hands. Morris felt that a long step had been taken toward his longed-for haven.

It was with exceeding satisfaction that he learned of Satia's promise to spend the month of July with Clover, at the lovely Fielding home on on the Hudson.

A dozen reasons were at once discovered why it was proper, imperative even, that he also should

pay a visit to his sister at this very time. Mrs. Fielding, possessed of no small share of the Julian keenness of perception, very soon became aware of her brother's infatuation. She did not hesitate to express her opinion of it with the utmost candor.

She chose for the occasion one evening when a dozen or more of Clover's friends had grouped themselves picturesquely on one of the wide porches, and were chattering as merrily as only happy young men and maidens can. At a little distance sat Mrs. Fielding and Morris. She was looking with a mother's fondness at her daughter's bright face, and admiring the sparkling eyes and rosy cheeks of all the other girls. He saw but one. Presently she glanced at him and was half amused, half vexed, to notice his absorption.

"It is perfectly ridiculous of you, Morris, to make such a fuss over Satia Maynard."

He turned his eyes to hers. They were no longer glowing. They were keen and cool.

"Oh, you needn't look at me in that lordly way," she said, laughing. "You know very well what I mean. You don't gush as those boys do, but you are every bit as 'spoony.'"

He laughed, too, but he did not speak.

"Satia is a mere child," she went on, "and probably considers you quite an old gentleman. You

are, you know, comparatively." And she nodded her comely head toward the slim young fellows who were being so delightfully entertained.

Morris colored.

"It will go hard if I cannot distance them," he said, rather contemptuously.

Mary Fielding looked in silence at the brother she loved so well. It was true. All the advantage lay with him. She realized, more than ever before, the indescribable fascination of his manner toward women. How thorough was his knowledge of every step to be taken! how unlimited the resources at his command! She knew it all, alas! too well. She knew, too, how impossible it had always been to dissuade him when once his mind was set to gain an end.

She looked again at Satia, whose mother had been a dear friend of her own, and who, dying, had said to her: "Be good to my darling, Mary; shield her from sorrow so long as it is possible." She saw in her a bright, affectionate, impulsive girl, willful, capricious, immature, but whose strength and piquancy of character gave promise of brilliant womanhood. She felt that capacity for great joy and intense suffering lay undeveloped beneath the sunny light-heartedness of seventeen.

It was some time before she spoke again. Her eyes were full of tears and her voice trembled.

“Morris,” she said, laying her hand lovingly on her brother’s arm, “I beg you to go away. It is not too late. Leave me this girl who is scarcely less dear to me than my own sweet Clover. Do not disturb the maiden serenity of her young heart. The whole world full of women is before you. Go and choose whom you will, but leave Satia free.”

Morris did not reply. His face was white, his lips compressed.

“Forgive me, dear, if I wound you,” his sister said, gently. “We need not disguise the truth. This is not the first time I have asked you to spare a girlish heart, and asked in vain. But, Morris, I must have this one—I will!” she sat erect with sudden energy; her soft features took on a sternness equal to his own. “I will take her away and put the world between you and us. I will not have her robbed of her peace of mind even for you.”

Again there was a long silence. It was broken by Mr. Julian.

“Mary,” he said, and his face had regained its composure, “has it never occurred to you that I could marry, as other men do? Why am I, of all others, to be denied the joys of wife and home?”

“It is what I have often wished for and long

despaired of," she replied. Then, turning quickly toward him as a thought flashed upon her—a strange, impossible thought: "Do you, can you mean Satia?"

"I do," was the quiet answer, which filled her with the utmost astonishment. Married—and to Satia! A man who had only to choose among the beauties of two continents and a girl who was, as yet, nothing more than a lovely child! It was utter folly; but what could she do? What could she say?

"You take away my breath, Morris," she exclaimed. "Do you think—are you sure—does she—?"

Morris laughed a laugh which it was not wholly pleasant to hear.

"You do not know your sex, oh, sister mine, incomparable! 'Do I think? Am I sure? Does she?' Well, no, not yet. But I shall think. I shall be sure. She will—she shall, by heaven!"

He jumped up and walked the length of the veranda two or three times, while she endeavored to adjust herself as best she might to this most unlooked-for turn in affairs. Presently he came back and stretched himself comfortably in the low, bamboo cha

"Can you imagine, Mary," he began, "no, you cannot—for there were never two beings more entirely unlike than your sweet, womanly self and a

man of the world like me—a fellow not bad at heart, but one who has been taught by the circumstances of his life to distrust all seeming virtue, and who is tired of everything under the sun? So, my dearest of sisters, I must tell you that there is a charm beyond expression to such a man in the very thought of teaching a young, loving, lovely child the unsuspected possibilities of her own nature. If Satia were less artless, frank, innocent, I could, for your sake, deny myself and accept your cordial invitation to go away.”

“Oh, no, Morris!” she interrupted, in dismay at hearing her words interpreted so inhospitably. “I did not.”

“Oh, yes, Mary, but you did,” he answered, giving her a comical glance, “nothing more nor less could be made of your ‘I beg you to go away.’ Now, seriously, that is just what I cannot do. This dear girl—child, if you will—has crept into my very heart of hearts, where never woman has entered before. She shall be my wife, and I shall see to it that she learns nothing of the vanities and deceits of the world. Shielded by my love, she shall be the beloved and revered mistress of my home, the solace of my life; please God, the mother of my children.”

Again Mary Fielding looked silently at the brother she had thought she knew. His strong features had

lost their cynical expression; in the eyes which had so often looked a transient passion, burned the light of lasting love; about the lips, skilled in speaking honeyed words, hovered a smile to which they were unused. She followed his gaze which again rested on the girl who alone had touched his inner life. Very fair and sweet she surely was. A vision of promise lovely enough to tempt any man to woo her. Now, in her youthful simplicity, she might satisfy the world-weary man, who found in her the rest and comfort he sought; but how would it be in the future? How would the coming years develop her—years that would leave but little impression on his already settled character, but which might make almost anything of hers?

The question filled her with forebodings which she could not utter and which she tried to banish. Since it was to be, she would make the best of it; and there was, deep in her heart the unexpressed hope that, for once, Morris might fail; that, after all, her fears might be for naught.

When the visit was ended, Mr. Maynard came to take Satia home. Mr. Julian, having more business in the neighborhood of Elm Ridge, went up with them. He was a frequent guest at Satia's home and soon made himself a loved one to her father and Aunt Hester. This lady had lived with her

brother since the death of his wife. She was a spinster of the real old-fashioned kind, and had little use for "man" in any capacity. With his unflinching tact, however, Morris set himself to win her over, and succeeded to perfection.

"If the men had been like Mr. Julian when I was a girl," she said once to Satia, "I'd never have lived all my life alone, you may be sure."

Satia smiled. She, too, thought her new friend all that could be desired. And she was led so gently across the borderland between friendship and love, that it scarcely startled her when she discovered that henceforth her life and his were to be one.

The day came, before the early snow, when Morris stood beside his sister and no words were needed to tell her that he had won the jewel he coveted.

CHAPTER III.

THE SHADOW OF A CLOUD.

The first two years of their married life were spent abroad. It was a never-ending delight to Morris to witness Satia's enthusiastic enjoyment; to note the rapid development of her bright mind under circumstances so favorable; to feel that she turned

to him as the loving giver of each pleasure ; above all to have and to hold her as the very apple of his eye, the source of the purest joy he had ever experienced.

With less satisfaction he beheld her personal triumphs. Their route of travel could not always be chosen along sequestered by-ways, and Morris was too well known from the Atlantic to the Bosphorus to escape social obligations. Especially was this true now that he was accompanied by a beautiful and charming wife. Others were as quick to see and be captivated by the grace of her girlish loveliness as he himself had been, and Satia soon became the object of an homage which well might have turned her head. But she received it all with a frank delight in which was no thought of self. Morris guarded her closely. None knew so well as he the dangers to which she was exposed, or was more familiar with the weaknesses of the feminine nature. His old life-long distrust of her sex threatened to poison his confidence in her. While he gloried in her guilelessness and candor of spirit, and believed that he alone possessed her heart, he was tormented by the thought that any day might bring a cloud into his fair sky ; that self-consciousness might spring to life, with its attendant vanities and deceits ; that the perfection of the happiness in

which he revelled, albeit with secret fear and trembling, might pass away like all things else in this changeful world.

It was, therefore, with a deep-drawn breath of relief that he stood by Satia's side on the steamer's deck, and saw the green shores of the old world recede from view.

He glanced down at her. Keenly he read the dear face, which had grown more lovely than when he first beheld it. As he looked, eagerly searching for the faintest shadow of a regret for something left behind, she raised her eyes to his.

Very like those of Satia Maynard were these of Satia Julian. Just as crystal-clear and childlike were their untroubled depths. They were true mirrors of a heart whose innermost recesses were yet fast locked. But of this he, with all his insight, was ignorant. Blinded by the mighty shining of his own love, he failed rightly to understand that which she gave him.

"Why do you look at me so, Morris?" she asked.

He drew her arm more closely within his own with a quick, involuntary movement, and bending nearer, replied:

"Because I love you, dear."

The words were few, but they stood for the heart, the soul, the strength, the very life of the man who

uttered them. Never, it seemed to him, had he been so completely happy as now when they two were hastening to their home. For he was coming back to the land of his birth to make, for the first time, a home.

Another year, and this wish, this longing of his, was gratified. Retired somewhat from the rush and whirl of a great city, yet within easy reach of its attractions, as perfect and beautiful as money and artistic taste could make it, at his bidding had risen the home of which Satia was sweet mistress. Here, at last, was the realization of the dream of his life. Beneath his own roof, surrounded by every luxury, his fastidious nature craved, alone with the wife he idolized, and whom he believed to be the one woman of the world, he bade adieu to every fear. He forgot the past, he ignored the future, he sipped with supreme content the overflowing cup of the present.

Satia, too, was happy. With the natural impulse of her generous, loving nature, she longed to share her beautiful home with her girl friends; to invite them for long visits; to entertain them with a round of gayeties.

“ We will have Clover and Julie and the Gilmor girls come for the Christmas holidays, and give them a ball on New-Year Eve, won't we, Morris?” she asked, one morning.

They were in the library, and Morris had just finished writing some letters. Satia came and sat on his knee and pushed her fingers through his hair with the same coaxing caress often bestowed upon her father when seeking childish favors. Morris drew her other hand within his own and softly stroked the pliant fingers. He did not reply to her question, and she continued:

“If we wish to make Clover perfectly happy, I suppose we ought to ask Will Raymond, too. And, Morris, if this good sleighing lasts, let us drive over to the Glen some day and stay all night. It is lovely there in the winter time, and the girls have never seen it. Don't you think Mr. Dodge and Phil would come up from New York and go with us?”

“If you ask them, I am sure they will,” Morris said, with a glance of loving admiration at the eager face before him. Satia flushed the least bit.

“Oh! but you must ask them, and I'll write to the girls. And we will go down to the city to-morrow and select the draperies for the pink room. Those that Ponet sent up are not the right shade; then there are lists to be made out for the ball, and the caterer to see and the flowers to order and—”

She stopped and considered a moment.

“I believe I will ask Auntie Fielding to come with Clover and help me. Don't you think that

will be the best plan, Morris? She knows just how to manage everything, and I want it all to go off perfectly. You don't say a word, Morris. Don't you want them to come?" she asked, a little cloud coming over her brightness.

Morris smiled, as he said, dryly :

"I think you have not given me much of a chance to say a word for the last ten minutes, Mrs. Julian."

Then, very gently, he drew her face down close to his, and put both arms tenderly about her.

"I want nothing but your own sweet self," he murmured; "nothing can make me happier than to be here alone with you in our dear home."

"But, Morris," she said, sitting erect and looking earnestly into his eyes; "think how much the girls will enjoy it. Don't you want to make them happy?"

"I can't say that I am thinking very much about the happiness of anyone but the woman I love best; and I am very sure that she does not need our home filled with giggling girls and sentimental boys in order to be happy."

In spite of the tender tone in which these words were spoken, they jarred a little, but Satia replied, quickly :

"No, Morris, of course not; but I would really like to have them come, and to give the ball."

“Very well, then, little wife, come they shall, an’ my heart break for it!”

She thanked him warmly, and from that moment was busily engaged for the comfort of her expected guests. Everything was arranged to her complete satisfaction. All the girls and the men accepted her invitations. Mrs. Fielding promised to come in ample time to give all required assistance. The last touches were put to the dainty guest-rooms, and Satia was looking forward with real pleasure to her first experience as hostess.

The evening before his sister was to arrive, Morris came to his wife with a telegram in his hand.

“No ill news, I hope!” she exclaimed.

“I’m afraid you will think so,” he said, gently, “for it means that we must start to-morrow night for San Francisco.”

“O Morris! How can we!”

Dismay and disappointment were plainly evident in her tones.

Morris did not answer. He simply smiled as he held the telegram toward her. She took it, and read:

“Cannot delay longer. Be here by Dec. 29.

“CARTER.”

“It is some business, dear. I must go, and I cannot leave you here alone.”

“But I shall not be alone, Morris. Auntie—”

“Auntie is not your husband, Satia, darling,” he replied, his hands caressing her hair. “It would never do for Mrs. Julian to entertain for the first time without Mr. Julian by her side. You do not understand all these things yet, little girl. I am sorry that you will be disappointed, but we can have the girls here some other time. Now shall we ask Clover to go with us to California? Would it make you happier?”

Satia could not help laughing, notwithstanding her annoyance.

“You know very well that no money could hire Clover to go without Will, and if he should go, we might as well be alone.”

Morris laughed, too.

“I believe you are right. Well, then, we will go alone, to start with. Thank you very much for giving up all your plans so sweetly, dear child.”

He immediately engaged her in a discussion as to the best way of withdrawing their invitations, cancelling their orders and arranging for an absence of three or four weeks. He was so energetic, so considerate, so capable, that almost before Satia realized it, everything had been managed without the

least trouble to herself, nor the slightest wounding of anyone's feelings.

Before sunset the next day she and Morris were seated side by side in the train, whirling away toward the Alleghanies. Just before leaving the hotel for the station he had brought to her four velvet boxes. On opening them she saw four beautiful diamond bracelets, and read upon four cards the names of the friends she had invited to spend the holidays with her.

"I believe you are the most generous man in the whole world, Morris," she exclaimed, looking up at her husband with glowing eyes.

"No, dear, the most selfish," he replied.

Satia did not understand these words until long afterward; but Mary Fielding read between the lines of the telegram which bade her defer her visit until a more convenient season.

"A more convenient season will never come," she said to herself half sadly, as she went to tell Clover of the change of plans. "I truly believe Morris never intended to have us all at Julianheim. I hope Satia—dear girl!—will never know him as I do."

Satia did not once suspect that her husband was not entirely honest and sincere. The trip to California was a happy one, and she fully expected to have her friends with her after her return. But one thing

after another occurred to prevent it. They had gone very little into society since their return from Europe. To Morris it was an old story, of which he was heartily weary, and he had not yet found it difficult to persuade Satia to please him by remaining at home with him. There had been an occasional visit from Mary Fielding and Clover, and Mr. Maynard came often to see his darling; but there had been no interchange of social courtesies other than the most formal.

And so the weeks and months slipped by, and one bright summer day Morris held in his arms his first-born son. Who shall tell the emotions which surged through his quickly beating heart as he looked down upon that tiny face and into the brown eyes so like to Satia's own? An overwhelming sense of his unworthiness to mould and guide this young life, fresh from the hands of its Creator; a realization of the measureless distance from the purity of this little soul which his own world-worn spirit had traveled; a tender yearning over the baby helplessness, each in turn possessed him. Tears filled his eyes, and a feeling akin to awe thrilled his heart as he pressed his lips to the velvety cheek, murmuring:

“God bless you, my boy!”

A new ambition now animated him; it was to pro-

vide more abundantly for the future of the son who should succeed him. He again engaged in active business, investing his large revenues with the shrewd foresight which had already acquired a fortune. At the same time he attended personally to the needs and pleasures of little Maynard as though he had been a prince-royal. His devotion to and fondness for his wife were increased, rather than diminished, by these added occupations. Never before had she been so dear to him as now, when she appeared a veritable Madonna, but fairer far than any ever put on canvas.

It was not until Maynard was nearly a year old that a change came. Much to Morris' surprise, Satia, about this time, accepted an invitation to a large party to be given by a friend, and insisted upon his accompanying her.

Society eagerly welcomed the beautiful Mrs. Julian, and Morris had the satisfaction of seeing her surpass every other woman present in elegance of costume and manner. This suited him far better than a few words which he was fated to overhear while hemmed in by a crowd at a turn of a staircase.

“Who is that lovely woman talking with Jack Francis? A new face, surely.”

“That is Morris Julian's wife. You know him?”

A regular nabob, and no end selfish, besides. These quiet sort of fellows often are. Keeps her mewed up at home all the time. But he'd better have a care. She's too confoundedly pretty not to know it, and she has plenty of spirit, too, with those eyes. Some fine day—"

The crowd gave way, and Morris moved quickly on, disgusted and indignant. His first impulse was to thrash the impertinent speaker, but that would only bring his wife's name into unenviable notoriety. Better ignore the whole matter as beneath his notice. True to his habit with all things unpleasant, he resolutely put the matter out of his mind. But he recalled the hateful words long afterward.

Having broken their seclusion, Mr. and Mrs. Julian were deluged with invitations. To her husband's renewed surprise, Satia was disposed to accept them. She also expressed, not now her wish, but her intention, of entertaining in return. Morris remonstrated. The manner of life which would thus be forced upon them was most distasteful to him. Neither did he consider it a proper one for the mother of his boy.

He expressed himself gently but decidedly. Satia heard him through without remark.

"Perhaps you are right, Morris," was all she said then. But she gave him a look which he remem-

bered to his dying day. The great brown eyes were filled with mute pleading and unrest. He was startled out of his usual composure. He sprang to her side.

“What is it, dear? Why do you look so strangely? What have I done? What can I do?”

He spoke quickly. His heart was beating with alarm. His arm was about her. He softly stroked her hair.

Suddenly she clung to him, sobbing like a little child.

“Oh, Morris! I want my father! Let me go home.”

“Yes, dear child,” he replied at once. “We will go to-morrow. The weather is lovely, and the change will do you and Maynard both good.” And he smiled tenderly as he looked down at her.

Satia twined her fingers around his.

“I—I want to go alone,” she murmured, a soft color flushing her face.

His clasp tightened.

“Whatever put such a notion into your pretty head?” he replied. “By no means. All I live for is to care for you and Maynard, dear child. I could not see you start off alone, even on such a little journey as that to Elm Ridge, while I am in the world to go with you.”

Satia said no more. The visit was made, and Morris saw his dearest treasures safely at home again before he was obliged to go off on a longer business trip than usual. He was absent nearly a month. Daily letters were written and constant messages and gifts sent to little Maynard and his mamma. The hours seemed days until he should be with them once more. At length, late one evening he returned. He entered the house unnoticed and went directly to their room. Satia was not there, and he stepped into the one adjoining where Maynard slept. As he stood in the shadow of the heavy *portière* Satia entered from the opposite side. She did not perceive him. Instantly his thoughts went back to the first time he saw her.

But how unlike the fair young girl was this brilliant, gracious woman whose dazzling beauty chained him to the spot, and hushed upon his lips the words he was about to utter. He had never seen his wife like this. What transformation had been wrought during his absence?

It was as though a half-opened bud had burst into rich fullness of blossom, and stood serenely conscious of its exquisite perfection. The man's heart thrilled with love and pride as he beheld the slim, graceful figure in its trailing silken robes; the slender throat, fairer than the pearls that encircled it; the soft, dark

hair framing a face whose every lovely line was so dear to him; and yet it contracted with pain. For this was not the Satia he had known.

She moved toward the crib. She bent above it, kissing the rosy sleeper, and murmuring words of endearment. As she turned away, she caught sight of her husband. The radiance faded from her face. As with a filmy, but impenetrable mask, all the joyous buoyancy and freedom of spirit which had been so apparent in every motion was hidden beneath a quiet self-repression.

She raised her face for the accustomed kiss and caress, as he came quickly to her side. She seemed glad to see him.

“You surpass yourself to-night, my queen,” he said, fondly. Then, after a little silence: “I am sure there is yet time for me to dress.”

“Oh, please not,” she replied. “You are tired, I know. It is only a reception at Mrs. Hunting’s. I really do not care about it. Let us have a cosy time together here, instead.”

Morris was nothing loath. To tell the truth, he scarcely heard what she said. He was conscious that she left him for a while, returning like a silvery shadow of her recent loveliness, but sweeter far to his thinking, in this softly clinging garment of palest gray. He knew that she brought his dressing-gown

and slippers and drew nearer to the fire his special easy-chair ; that she rang for the chocolate service, and with her own hands prepared for him a delicious cup of his favorite beverage ; that, the maid departing, they were left alone together. He could have named nothing which he missed from many another evening just like this one. She was the same gentle, affectionate, charming Satia she had always been. But his thoughts were busy with that other woman who had flashed across his vision by the bedside of his son. Who was she ? Where was she now ? He regarded Satia covertly. Nothing in that fair exterior explained the mystery. He dared not ask the questions which trembled on his lips. He was conscious of a curious timidity, a feeling that, after all, he did not truly know his wife.

Once it would have delighted him beyond measure to observe, to study, to discover the cause of a change so great, so subtle in any woman as this which he had seen in Satia ; but, now the inmost fibers of his heart were too closely interwoven about the object of his scrutiny to permit of it. Days passed, and weeks. Maynard thrived and was soon toddling all about the house. He was a fine, handsome boy, the pride of his father's life. Satia loved him too, dearly ; but Morris noticed, with an increase of the uneasiness of which he could not rid himself,

in spite of the fact that their daily intercourse was in no way unchanged, that she seldom took him in her arms and cuddled him in the sweet way mothers have of taking comfort with their babies.

They were startled, one day, by news of Mr. Maynard's serious illness. They scarcely reached his side in time for farewell words. Satia's grief was inconsolable. She begged Morris to allow her to stay for a while at Elm Ridge, amid the scenes of her girlhood's days. It was decided that she and Maynard should remain there for the summer, Morris coming whenever business permitted.

It was nearly the last of October when he came to their own home for a day or two before going to bring them there. He had taken much pleasure in arranging some surprises for Satia—little things which he remembered to have heard her wish to have done. As he walked through the beautiful rooms, when everything was ready for the dear mistress, he longed eagerly for her presence. He determined to throw off the reluctance he had felt in regard to speaking plainly with her about the barrier which he knew only too well was silently growing up between them.

He recalled with keenest pain that she was pale and worn. Each time he had seen her during the summer she looked more frail. But she always said that she was quite well. Could she be slipping from

him? He banished the thought with horror. In his preoccupation, he did not notice the approach of a maid. She handed him a sealed packet.

“It just now came, sir,” she said.

Absently he broke it open. He saw Satia's familiar characters on the numerous sheets. With quickened interest, he began reading the words she had written.

The hour was at hand when even the hearts most deeply outraged and humiliated by Morris Julian might have pitied him.

CHAPTER IV.

A LETTER.

This is the letter which Satia had written to her husband:

“MORRIS: I cannot come back to live with you again in our home. It seems almost impossible to find words with which to explain to you why this must be. For a long time I have hoped that you would see and understand; but you have not done so.

“I know quite well that dreadful things are said and thought of women who leave their husbands and little babies, and that it will be a disgrace to you;

for I cannot expect that any one but you will believe the true reason of my going.

“It is because of something in me, Morris, something which impels me—something which is stronger than myself, almost, which drives me to break away from the bondage I am in, and be free to live my own life. Can you imagine what it would be to have all your own self, even your very thoughts, controlled by another; to feel hampered and fettered at every turn; to be all smothered up in love and kindness and devotion such as yours has been to me, until you feel that you must have a long deep breath of your own breathing or die? If you can, then you know what my life with you has been to me.

“Perhaps you do not realize how entirely I have yielded to your will, thought your thoughts, been absorbed by you, even in very little things. But if you will look back upon the years we have spent together, I am sure that you will see that it has been so, especially since we came to our home.

“I have tried to believe that this was right; to think of it and to accept it as the usual condition of wifhood; to be submissive; to stifle my individuality; to love the ‘hand of steel beneath the velvet glove.’ Perhaps I could have done this in time if my child had not been born. Now, I can no longer look into his eyes, and feel that his mother is living a lie with every heart-beat. For I am not happy, nor contented, nor satisfied. I must be true to myself, to what I believe to be right and honest. I think I

cannot love you, Morris, as I ought. For we read that with true wifely love comes a sense of oneness, of completeness which would render this feeling of mine impossible. It must be that our marriage was a mistake. I was not wise and good enough for you. I ought to wish for nothing more than a love, a devotion such as you have given me. Surely no other woman could have more. But it burdens me. I am crushed out of myself by the very weight of your indulgence. Sometimes I have longed for harshness, for actual want, as a relief from the cloying sweetness of a living that oppresses the real Satia, whom I have thought you do not truly know, nor ever did.

“Can you—do you understand me yet, Morris? Can you believe that it is not easy for me to say all this to one who has meant to be so kind and generous a friend? If I could bear the pain which I know this will bring to your loving heart, I would gladly do so. But that is as impossible as it is for me to return to you.

“So long as my father lived I could not go, for it would have killed him to know that I was unhappy. But now I am going far away, across the waters. Aunt Hester will go with me, and, in some quiet spot, with only nature about us, perhaps I can find the freedom to live my own life, which I so eagerly desire, and can make my way out of the confusion and distress which overwhelm me now.

“Try to forget me, Morris. I am all wrong, and never deserved your love. Put me out of your life.

But be kind to our boy. Make him as true and good a man as you are. Do not tell him of the mother who could leave him and go to the other side of the world.

“I am very grateful to you, Morris, for all that you have done, and it is much, to make my life outwardly happy. It is not your fault that you could not make it truly so within.

“SATIA.”

The paper slipped from his nerveless fingers. He sat stunned, stupefied by the thunderbolt which had fallen from a clear sky, shivering his happiness to atoms. His heart quivered with pain. In anguish of spirit he groaned aloud. The simple, pathetic words burned themselves upon his brain in letters of fire. How true they were! Over and over again they rang in his ears, torturing him beyond endurance. “The hand of steel beneath the velvet glove.” What could better describe the imperious, even though kindly, will which had transformed the impulsive, glad-natured, capricious girl into the quiet, outwardly yielding wife, of whom he was so truly and fondly proud?

He understood now her restlessness, her timid appeal to his generosity, her strange beauty that night by Maynard's cot. Then she was herself, strong in the dignity of her own royal womanhood, not a creature of his fashioning.

Scene after scene from memory's page flashed across his mental vision. Far back, from remoter years, other pictures came. Upon them all, in characters of living flame, was branded the one word—"self."

It was not a pleasant retrospect, nor was he long able to contemplate the real nature with which, for the first time in his life, he stood face to face. Conscious thought was swallowed up in the agony of knowing that he had lost her. He felt nothing but a grief, a helplessness, a crushing sense of bereavement and suffering. The hours passed unheeded. At last he was aroused by a knock at the door. Looking around, half bewildered, he saw the red dawn faintly breaking. He felt chilled and desolate.

He answered the summons. Kelsie, the faithful Scotchwoman, who had been the nurse of his own childhood, and who had cared for little Maynard with scarcely less affection, stood before him, with his son in her arms. Her eyes were red with weeping.

Silently Morris drew her within. She placed the sleeping boy on the sofa; then came to the man, who had thrown himself down in fresh despair at this mute confirmation of the sorrow he had wildly hoped might prove to be a dream. As though he

were a child again, she drew his head to her kind and loving breast, smoothing the hair from his burning brow, fondling him and crooning softly.

“My puir laddie!” she murmured, lapsing into the broad speech of her youth. “The heart o’ your old Kelsie grieves sair for ye this day. ’Tis a sad mornin’ for ye, my own dear bairn. But the Lord above He lo’es ye, Master Morris. He’ll gi’e ye strength and help.”

Morris clasped his hands closely about hers. He felt like a child, in very truth, who should cling to a sure refuge in time of trouble. For a long time they sat without speaking. The misery which oppressed him was eased by the sympathy of this “mother” heart.

At last he rose and went to Maynard. He took him gently in his arms. The boy awoke and looked up into his father’s face with his mother’s soft, dark eyes. Tears rolled down the father’s cheeks. Great sobs shook him head to foot. He came back to Kelsie.

“Where is she?” he asked hoarsely.

The woman’s steady eye searched the haggard face before her. How much of the knowledge which had come to her during the past few weeks should she share with the “bairn” whose weakness

and whose strength had been to her as an open book all his life long? She hesitated a moment.

“We came to New York together, yesterday, Master Morris. The steamer sailed last night. May the gude God be near to ye baith, dear laddie, for the bonnie lassie has a sair heart as weel as yoursel’.”

Morris grew ashy pale.

“Take him away,” he said.

CHAPTER V.

GRIEVOUS TIDINGS.

Mary Fielding sat busily sewing, one bright October morning. She had attained the dignity of grandmotherhood several months before, and she was now fashioning a dainty garment for the wee maiden who was the pride and joy of Clover's Southern home.

It always appeared absurd to Mrs. Fielding that Clover, her own “little girl,” should have a daughter, too. It seemed but yesterday that she was making frocks for the matronly young mother who so calmly gave “grandma” points on the

management of infants. Often, during the visit, from which she had only recently returned, she had scarcely known whether to be vexed or amused at Clover's assumption of superior wisdom and judgment. Having brought her own three children safely through the entire list of juvenile maladies, she naturally felt that her experience might be helpful. But Clover's pleasant "Oh, that was all very well for those days, but now, mamma dear, we have learned better," left nothing more to be said. Happily, the small Dorothy was in perfect health, else the old-fashioned ways might have been adopted with eager haste.

Dorothy was also a little beauty, and so sweet and darling withal, that she won grandma's heart completely. With the stitches taken by her deft fingers this lovely autumn morning, many tender thoughts of the little one, and prayers too, were interwoven. As she raised her eyes and looked abroad over the fair expanse of the Hudson and the beautiful bit of world beyond, she said to herself: "Who could be unhappy on so perfect a day as this?"

Almost as if in answer to her silent question, her brother stood beside her.

"Morris!" she cried, springing up, and scattering

her work all about; "where did you come from? I had no idea of seeing you."

"No. I—I forgot to telegraph."

"Are you alone? Where is—"

She stopped suddenly. Her heart sank within her. Morris had raised his hand imperatively. She saw his paleness, his exhaustion, as he leaned back against the chair into which he had dropped. She flew to him.

Was Satia dead, she wondered, or little Maynard.

She felt the hard, quick throbbing of the veins in his forehead; she heard the heavy sighs which told of a sorrow-laden heart. Silently she tried to comfort him; patiently she waited for him to speak.

After a long time he looked up at her. He took her hand and pressed it to his lips.

"I—I cannot tell you, Mary," he said, brokenly. "Read this."

He handed her Satia's letter. She crossed to the other side of the room, where he could not see her face, and read the touching message which the far-away wife had written.

In vain she tried to maintain her composure, to be calm for his sake. Her heart was melted within her at the sight of his suffering and at the thought of that which the proud, sensitive girl must have endured before she could have taken such a step.

With her arms about him now, and her tears mingled with his, she showed him her sympathy, she endeavored to console him, to help him bear this exceeding bitter grief.

Reaction soon set in from the strain of the past thirty-six hours, and he became very ill. For days she thought and almost hoped that his spirit would slip away, and be freed from the burden which awaited its return to health and strength. But this was not to be. Slowly he came up from the valley of the shadow of death, back to the world which was to know a new Morris Julian.

Many times as she sat by his bedside during the long days of his convalescence, Mary thought of her forebodings when he told her of his purpose to make Satia his wife. How happy and light-hearted a girl she was then! How she must have developed and matured before she could have written that letter! What strength of character she showed, in spite of the mistake she had made in supposing herself free from her marriage vow "for better and for worse." An ordinary woman would have accepted her life as a matter of course, have made her husband miserable with her whims and disregard of his wishes, and drowned her discontent in the whirl of gay, luxurious living. Satia was too true to do this. When such an existence as she led

became intolerable, with child-like candor she told him the simple truth, and slipped away from what she thought it hopeless to expect to change. Her strong young spirit had rebelled from the bondage in which it found itself, a bondage as intangible, as impossible to define or to elude, as to grasp in one's hand the air one breathes; but just as real. She was conscious of the high integrity of her purpose; but how ignorant of the cost of liberty purchased on such terms. The world is seldom kind to women who have voluntarily left the shelter of their husband's homes, and Mary felt a great pity for the girl who had always been so dear to her.

She thought, too, of other lives whose shattered hopes and marred happiness lay at her brother's door. She recalled how, in the times long past, she had often rebuked him and pleaded with him, indignant and angry that he could be so cruel and so false. But now, as she looked at the pale face, at the new lines about the brow and mouth, into the sad eyes, she felt only love and pity, divine pity, which forgave and forgot, and longed to bring back the sunshine to the darkened life.

And, besides this, there was something else which called forth toward him all her tenderness. One day she took up the morning paper and saw an account of the burning at sea of a large steamer, the

Rochester. The circumstances were more than usually thrilling, and she read the long columns, feeling thankful that no one dear to her was on the ship.

Suddenly she thought of Satia. She looked through the passenger-list, and was horrified to read the names:

“Mrs. Morris Julian.”

“Miss Hester Maynard.”

Only one passenger, Doctor Jarvis, and three of the crew had been saved. All the others were lost. Several boats filled with women and children had been lowered, but they were soon swamped in the high seas which were running.

This, then, was the end of the bright young life which had given such promise, and of the elder one, devoted and unselfish. How should she tell him? She knew with what tenacity the human heart clings to Pandora's precious gift. The past had been disastrous, the present was clouded, but who could foresee what the future might not bring forth? How could she take this hope from him? No way seemed to her to be loving and gentle enough for the breaking of such tidings. Satia was much beloved by her, aside from being her brother's wife,

and she found it difficult to conceal her personal grief from him as he grew stronger.

One afternoon they were sitting on the porch. Indian summer came late that year, and the day was as warm and golden as though the calendar marked June instead of late November. Morris, well wrapped up, sat, or, rather, reclined, in a low steamer-chair, enjoying the balmy air and a fine view. Maynard, with Kelsie near at hand, was playing at a little distance. Mary was by her brother's side.

"Do you not think, Mary," he asked, "that I shall soon be strong enough for a journey—a sea voyage?"

She looked up, surprised.

"What did you suppose?" he went on, smiling a little. "That I should sit still and let that dear girl find out how cruel the world can be to one who has taken the step to which she has been driven? She is my wife, in spite of everything, thank God, and she shall have my protection wherever she may choose to go.

"It have thought much during these days and weeks, Mary. I have seen myself as you have seen me all these years. I am rightfully punished for my pride, my presumption, which dared to confine within the walls of my own will a personality so

much purer and nobler than mine. I see how wrong I was. I am going to tell her so; to woo again, to try to win the love of my precious Satia. There is but the shadow of a hope that I shall succeed, for she is as far above me as though she were already an angel in heaven. But I am living on that hope, Mary. I feel that it may yet be ours to make our boy a better man than the father whose place he shall one day fill."

Mary did not answer. Suddenly she left him. He heard her sobbing as she went away. Presently he went in to find her; she did not answer his call. When he entered his room, not long after, he found upon his table the newspapers containing various accounts of the disaster.

CHAPTER VI.

A NORWEGIAN FAMILY.

Long before the earliest sunbeams had shone upon the spires and chimneys of the good old Norwegian town of Bergen, one frosty morning of this same November, the household of Lars Nissen was stirring.

In a little chamber beneath the roof, his eldest

daughter, Christine, was deftly plaiting long strands of her yellow hair, and at the same time chatting merrily with her cousin Erika.

It was an eventful daybreak for the two girls ; by noon, at the farthest, they expected to sail away over the blue sea for the first time in their lives.

“Is the wind fair for us, do you think?” asked Erika, glancing anxiously out of the window, as she laced her tight-fitting bodice.

She was a mountain-bred maiden, who had come down from her home only the day before.

“Look ! Tell me which way the smoke from that bunch of red chimneys is going. Old Henrik is sure to have his fire alight by this time.”

Erika threw open the window and thrust her head far out.

“It goes over toward the cathedral,” she announced, after a long survey.

Christine laughed.

“That is good ; it means smooth seas for us. But Erika, dear,” she said, with a roguish look in her bright blue eyes, “why didn’t you say the wind was going toward Romsdal or the North Pole or some other little thing like that ?”

Erika’s rosy cheeks grew redder yet.

“Why—it was going over towards the cathedral,” she said, slowly.

“And towards the apple-tree yonder, too, goosie.” Then Christine went over and put both arms around her cousin, kissing her heartily. “Don’t mind my teasing, Rika, dear. I never can tell half how much I love you, nor how much I thank Uncle Jan for letting you go with me. Shall we not have the best time two girls ever had?”

Erika returned the embrace affectionately. She was half a head shorter and a year younger than tall, straight Christine, but both had the same long, fair hair, clear skins and deep blue eyes.

“I am glad, too, Tina. It seems wonderful to me to be even here in Bergen. What will it be to go across the water to the beautiful lands we have heard so much about?”

“I am sure,” began Christine; but she was interrupted by the entrance of a little girl whose frock was not buttoned, and who looked scarcely awake.

“Please, sister, help me dress. Aunt Katrin said I could get up when I heard you.”

“In one moment, Tula,” said Christine, good-naturedly.

Tula sat down on a low stool and watched the girls as they wound their long plaits snugly about their heads, fastened their warm, blue jackets and put on their stout shoes. Christine, unobserved, tied about her neck a large silver locket, which she

hid in her bosom of her dress. It contained the portrait of Ole Jansen, to whom she was to be married in the spring.

They were ready at last; then the child's dress was buttoned, her shining hair was plaited, and after a long farewell look around the little room where she had slept almost every night of her twenty years, the older sister led the way down a narrow stairway, closely followed by Erika and Tula.

As they entered the large living-room below, they were greeted first by an odor of frying fish and boiling coffee, next by the cheery words of Aunt Katrin, a comely, jolly-looking woman, who was bustling busily around.

"Good morning, girls!" she cried. "And there is little Tula, too, up before the sun. Sit right down there and warm yourselves before you eat. There's a sharp frost this morning, your father says. He'll be up presently from the wharf."

Christine went to the other side of the room, and began dressing a little girl smaller than Tula; but Erika sat down on the long wooden bench, and looked about with much interest at the unwonted scene. There were so many things here unlike those of her country home. The shelves on which were ranged dishes and candlesticks, for instance, were quite different from those she was used to see;

also the little cabinet in one corner, filled with strange and beautiful curiosities brought by her sailor-uncle from all parts of the world. Her eyes were recalled from surveying these various objects by the opening of the outer door. A slender girl, about sixteen, with a bright scarlet shawl over her head, came in. She had in her hand a great pitcher of foaming milk, which she put on the table before coming to speak to Erika. This was Elsa, next younger than Christine. She had barely seated herself on the bench, when there were heard outside a stamping of feet and the sound of voices. The door again opened and five tall men entered.

First was Lars Nissen himself, the head of the household, and master of the good bark *Sea Gull*. Christine always thought that there was not a man who stood up in church on Sundays who was half so straight, so strong or so handsome as her father. His kindly face was weather-beaten, and his hair was growing white; but his smile was pleasant, and his blue eyes, which could be stern enough at times, were nearly always full of fun.

Close behind him came his oldest son, Eric, the first-mate of the *Sea Gull*, a stalwart young fellow, strong of limb and slow of speech, who thought his cousin Erika the dearest girl in all the land. He glanced over at her, smiling shyly, as he made room

for his twin brothers, Lars and Jan, whose close-cropped heads were nearly on a level with his own. They were big, clumsy lads, whose hands and feet seemed to be always in the way, but whom little Tula knew to be kind and gentle.

Last, but, to Christine's thinking, not the least of the incomers, was Ole Jansen, just home from his first fishing voyage in his own vessel. He was a young captain, but had proved himself to be a good master of the staunch little craft left to him by an uncle the year before. He had been especially invited by genial Captain Lars to come and eat breakfast with them all on the morning of Christine's departure. He looked around the room, as he stood, a trifle awkwardly, just within the door; but there was nothing awkward in the way in which he went toward Christine and clasped her hand in both of his, speaking to her in a low tone.

Presently the last steaming dish was ready and in its place. At a signal from Aunt Katrin, whose heated face looked out from her close, white cap redder than ever, they all took their seats around the long table. The father sat at the head; on his left hand the four young men and ten-year-old Henrik, who had slipped in at the last minute. On his right, Christine, Erika, Elsa, Tula and little

Truda. Baby Ola was asleep in a great wooden cradle over in the corner.

They all bowed their heads while their father asked a blessing upon the meal before them. He added to the usual words a few of petition that they might each be safely kept during the approaching separation.

Elsa's eyes filled with tears. She was a tender, sensitive girl, not strong and self-reliant like Christine, and since the death of the gentle mother two years before, she had leaned heavily upon her sister. The thought of a long winter without her was almost more than she could bear. To be sure, Aunt Katrin was there to take care of them, and Aunt Katrin was their father's own dear sister and as kind and nice as she could be; but she was not Christine. Elsa knew that it was true, as her father had explained to them, that Christine had worked very hard to fill their mother's place, and that it was right that she should have this change and rest before going to her own home in the spring. She had tried to be brave about it; but her father's words made it hard to keep the tears from falling.

It was not quite so easy this morning for any of them to laugh and talk. Anyone unless it was Eric. He could not help being happy, for was not Erika, the dear cousin from the far hill country,

going out with him in the *Sea Gull*? Were there not long days in store for him when they could be no further apart than the length of the trim bark? He smiled across at her, thinking that she grew sweeter and prettier with every sunrise.

Breakfast over, Lars took affectionate leave of the younger children and of his sister.

“Be ready to come down, girls, by nine o'clock. We must be off by ten. The lads will come to fetch you.”

The small blue chests which contained the simple wardrobes of the girls had been taken on board the day before. Aunt Katrin said that they should not help about the household tasks this morning, so nothing remained but the farewells.

The girls ran about to the neighbors' houses bidding good-bye to the elder ones who were not coming down to see them off. Then they came home, and Christine gathered the little ones around her. This was the hardest part of her going away, harder even than leaving Ole. She was used to not seeing him for months at a time, but these dear children had been her very life ever since her mother had left them. How they clung to her: Baby Ola, little Truda, bright Tula and even Elsa, tall, slender Elsa, already above her shoulder. She sat with Ola on her lap, one arm about Tula, one hand clasped by both

Truda's fat fists and Elsa leaning against her knees.

"I declare," cried Erika, laughing, "you look just like the old woman in her shoe."

"Oh Tina!" exclaimed Tula. "That makes me remember—you haven't told us a story to think of."

They all laughed then. No matter where Tula was going or what was about to happen, she always wanted "a story to think of."

So Christine told one, more beautiful than any she had ever told them. When the tale was ended she very gently put the baby, who was asleep, in its big cradle, and kissed each loved face many times.

Then it was time to go. The thick outer jackets were closely buttoned, warm caps were pulled snugly down over the golden braids; long scarfs were wrapped about their throats. This was scarcely done when Eric and Ole came for them. They, too, were warmly dressed in their thick jackets buttoned all the way down. Their caps were pulled over their ears, and they wore big boots.

A fresh wind was blowing, and they found the *Sea Gull* dancing about on the sparkling waves as though impatient to be off!

Tula, who had begged to be allowed to go down with them, clung fast to Aunt Katrin's hand as she crossed the plank. She wondered how Christine

could be willing to go away from home in a vessel. She felt quite sure that she never should.

A goodly company of the young friends were already on board. Merry adieux were exchanged. Christine and Ole found a moment for a more quiet good-bye; but the last of all to leave her sister's side was Elsa.

Presently Captain Lars came to the vessel's side and lifted his cap. Then they were off. The girls stood near him, waving their handkerchiefs and looking eagerly into the familiar faces, which seemed slowly moving backward. The buildings, the wharves, the vessels, also, receded, and soon the *Sea Gull* was far out in the harbor.

Erika smiled up at Eric, who stood beside her, but Christine looked back towards the dear home from which she was hastening.

CHAPTER VII.

RESCUED.

Life on board ship was a great novelty to the two girls. To Christine, familiar as she had always been with the ways of seafaring people, it seemed strange to stow her possessions away in the snug but capa-

cious lockers which appeared to be hidden in every corner of their tiny cabin ; to see how cleverly Eric could produce unexpected treasures from the most extraordinary places of concealment ; to notice the deft and handy fashion in which their meals were prepared down in the cook's domains ; to watch the sailors at their various duties ; to smell the strong, salt sea-air so delightful and invigorating ; to feel the cool, fresh breezes blow over her ; to count the huge waves which rolled past in a never-ending procession, sometimes white-capped and merry, sometimes dark and cold, always coming from the ocean beyond, so vast and so mysterious ; to stand by her father's side and admire and wonder at the skill with which he so easily managed his ship. She thought then of the words of the Bible : " Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, withersoever the governor listeth."

If all these things were new and interesting to Christine, they seemed little short of magic to Erika, who found something new to delight in each day.

The weather was fine, and they sped swiftly over the billowy highway. Day after day went by. Other ships were passed, sometimes within hailing distance, oftener far off on the horizon.

One clear night, Christine and Eric sat watching

the foamy track which the bark left behind it in the moonlight. They had been talking of their home and of the little ones so constantly in Christine's thoughts. She looked off suddenly to the right. A ruddy glow was spreading over the sky, coming up apparently from the water's edge. Great tongues of light streaked up against the dark heavens.

"See, Eric!" she cried, pointing toward the strange sight, "what can it be?"

Eric sprang up in excitement.

"That can mean but one thing, Tina!" he said quickly, "some ship on fire, and may heaven help her!"

"It must be one of the big steamers, to make such a light as that," said Captain Lars, who had come to look.

"How far away are we, father?" asked Christine.

"I can hardly tell, but I think we may reach her by daylight."

"Is she on our course?"

"Almost directly in our path, daughter. I wish that we were nearer. I hope that some other ship may be near to save the poor, terror-stricken creatures."

He spoke more gravely than his wont, and Erika, who had come up on deck, hearing the unusual

sound of voices at that hour, shivered at the picture his words brought before her.

“Come, Tina, let us go down,” she whispered. “We can do no good watching, and I am cold.”

Christine put her arm around the trembling figure, and they went below. Erika was soon asleep, but the elder girl did not close her eyes. She could not forget the horror and dreadful death this lovely night was bringing to people who had, without doubt, set out on their ocean journey as happily as she had done. She was safe; but they? She, too, shivered at the thought of their peril. This was another side of “life on the ocean wave,” and it made her heart ache.

After a long time she stole from Erika’s side, dressed herself warmly, wrapped a heavy shawl about her, and went on deck.

No one was there but her father and a couple of the men. They did not see her. The moon had gone down, and it was quite dark except in the quarter to which a freshly risen wind was hurrying them. There it was lighter than when she last looked in that direction. Slender spires of flame shot up toward the stars, and a glow came and went like a great wave of brightness.

There was a fascination in the scene. Christine gazed at it for a long time. By and by she felt a

hand on her shoulder. Her father had seen the tall, straight figure standing so erect and motionless.

“You had better go below, Christine,” he said, kindly. “It is only three o’clock. By daybreak we shall be there, and you may need all your strength, if by good fortune any have been spared till then. I will wake you myself. Go down now, and try to sleep.”

Christine laid her face against his shoulder.

“Oh, father,” she said, “it is so hard!”

“Yes, my child. But remember what the Psalmist says of those who ‘go down to the sea in ships:’ ‘Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and He bringeth them out of their distresses.’”

They stood for a little while without speaking again. Then he walked with her to the stairway.

She took off her outer clothing and crept in beside Erika, whose gentle, regular breathing showed her to be slumbering sweetly. The beautiful words her father had spoken had calmed her troubled spirit, and soon she, too, was sleeping.

It seemed to her that she had scarcely closed her eyes when she heard her father calling:

“Come now, Tina. Wrap up well, for the morning is cold.”

She sprang to her feet instantly. When she was

again on deck, she saw floating on the water bits of wreckage, and, apparently quite near, larger masses of blackened and smoking timbers. The main body of the ship was nowhere to be seen. Far away a steamer could be seen going from them.

“That steamer has evidently picked up the survivors. Probably she was here before the ship sank. But she may have overlooked some one. I am going in among this stuff, and we must all keep a sharp lookout.”

Christine leaned over the vessel's side, and peered down at the dark waters. In half an hour they were in the midst of the *debris*, but nothing could be seen at all resembling anything of the human kind.

They passed slowly along. The sun had risen now, and shone as brightly across the ocean as though a gallant ship and many bodies were not lying beneath the *Sea Gull's* track. It seemed to Christine almost cruel in its splendor. She felt as though she hated the dancing waves, white-tipped now and lovely in the morning light, which bore upon their crests such pitiful reminders of the night's calamity.

Suddenly she thought she heard a faint cry. She listened intently. Surely, there it came again, a far-away “Halloo!” weak and strange. She was too

excited to speak. She ran to her father, to Eric, and pointed wildly in the direction from which the sound had come. They heard it again, and they saw a white object waving in the air. So far away that it looked like a mere speck, they could also see something. Was it a man? a boat? They could not tell. They did not stop to see. They called and shouted and waved back again. The next hour on the *Sea Gull* was a busy one. Christine had seized her father's glass, and as they came nearer she saw that they were approaching a boat in which there were several people.

"Some of them are women. Come, Erika, let us go down and get things ready."

Presently she heard a call:

"Tina!"

She ran up, to find that the boat was alongside, and that the women had already been brought on board. There were four of them—Satia, Miss Hester and two young girls. They were all thoroughly chilled by their long exposure, faint and worn out. They were at once taken below, and made as comfortable as possible in Christine's little cabin and Captain Lars' quarters. The five sailors were being attended to by Eric and the crew.

When at length their guests were sleeping, Christine and Erika came out to rest in their own special

nook on deck. They were tired and excited. Never before in their simple lives had they spent such a morning. Presently Eric joined them. He, too, seemed weary. He threw himself down on a pile of ropes.

“These poor fellows are pretty badly used up,” he said. “Think of being out in that boat eight hours! They were the last to leave the ship, and drifted so far away that they were neither seen nor heard by the steamer. That is about all they have been able to tell me yet. Can’t you find a place somewhere to sleep, too?” he asked, noticing their pale faces. “Come.”

But they shook their heads.

“No, Eric,” Christine said. “It is only because of the strangeness and horror of it all. We shall feel better out here in the air. We never realized before how dreadful such an experience could be.”

By the next morning everyone felt brighter. The *Sea Gull* had been adapted as best it might to the needs of its increased family. No one minded being crowded.

Satia was still unable to leave her berth, but Miss Hester came on deck frequently, and seemed none the worse for her perilous adventure. The young girls were well, too, and, although at first a bit shy,

they soon responded to the kindly advances of their kind-hearted hostesses.

They were French girls, twins, and about Elsa's age, and in personal appearance presented the greatest possible contrast to Christine and Erika. Slight and willowy in figure, with smooth brown skin and the blackest of hair and eyes, they flitted about over the *Sea Gull*, as though they were veritable birds themselves.

At first conversation between the four flagged somewhat, for Erika knew only a very few English words, learned mostly from Eric and Christine since she left Bergen; Christine understood English quite well but did not speak fluently, while the other girls, Marie and Madeleine Fontenelle by name, poured forth a swift jumble of excellent French and halting English. They were all quick-witted, however, and it was not long before they could be heard chattering away in an international idiom, strange and confusing to the listener, but apparently clear to themselves.

Captain Lars and Eric had picked up considerable knowledge of many languages in the course of their travels over the world, and they good-naturedly came to the rescue whenever the girls found themselves hopelessly adrift on a sea of words.

Eric, alone, looked rather askance at the red-

lipped, slim-waisted strangers who absorbed so much of Erika's attention. There were now no more cozy chats nor long walks up and down the deck during his leisure hours, nor happy moments standing side by side looking over at the gleaming waters. He missed sorely the winsome companion of whom he was so fond, and one morning, when he chanced to find her alone, his full heart overflowed in what sounded to her very like reproaches.

She regarded him with grave surprise.

"I did not think that you could ever be so hard-hearted," she said at last.

"Hard-hearted—and to you!" exclaimed he, amazed and indignant.

"Oh, no; not to me, but to these poor girls. How do you think it would seem to be nearly burned to death and then almost drowned and then brought to a vessel full of strange people who wouldn't even speak to you?"

"But, Erika, they were not—"

"What do you call that but being heart-hearted, I should like to know, just like a stone?"

Eric did not try again to defend himself. He stood there feeling like a brute under the look of serious disapproval which she bent upon him, and which made him wretched.

"I like them, too, besides. Marie is a dear, and

you would think so yourself, if you would not always go off like a bear."

He moved his feet uneasily and glanced away across the water, trying not to see that Marie and Madeleine had come up and were not far off. They, however, could make nothing of the queer-sounding syllables Erika was speaking so quickly.

"They have been in New—New— Oh, I forget. New—something, in America, to see their grandmother, and were on their way home to France. When we get to Fernandina they are going back to her for more money and clothes, and then will start again. Are they not brave to go about so alone? Why, I was afraid just to come to Bergen, and old Jan Thomassen was in the cars, too, from our village."

Eric had a very decided opinion of young ladies who go wandering about the world with no one to look after them; but he dared not express it at this time. He was not as heavy-hearted, either, as he had been half an hour before. Erika had forgotten to be displeased with him. She was chattering away and pulling at one of the big buttons on his jacket in the dear old fashion. The wind was fair, and they could not be forever getting to Fernandina. He began to be ashamed of himself, and to think that, after all, he had been rather unkind.

He strolled, after awhile, over to the girls and joined in the conversation.

And when he presently took his father's place, and Erika found a chance to whisper in his ear: "I like you for that, Eric. I wanted them to know how nice you are," he felt as though the *Sea Gull* had spread its wings and was flying through the air.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE "SEA GULL."

To Satia these days were passing wearily. She was weakened and depressed by the shock she had sustained. The confinement within so tiny a place, the absence of her personal belongings and of the luxurious surroundings to which she was accustomed, and the minor inconveniences of the place wore upon her as they would not have done under happier circumstances.

She really felt too ill to rise from her berth, or to see anyone but Aunt Hester, who, good soul, would have remained constantly in the little cabin with her. But Satia remonstrated.

"No, auntie dear, I cannot let you. I'm a

regular good-for-nothing, but that must not keep you from enjoying all you can. I didn't dream that I was bringing you to such hardships."

She looked up lovingly into the kind face which bent above her.

"Hush, I will not hear another word. You know we promised each other not to speak of that night of horror. Now, you must promise not to think me unhappy or uncomfortable, for I am neither. I never felt better in my life. This little ship is as neat as a pin, from one end to the other, and the people are kindness itself. I wish you would only pluck up courage and come out on deck. You would feel like another girl after a few breaths of this delicious air."

Satia tried to smile.

"Some day, auntie," she said, languidly.

One morning, soon after, Miss Hester held a long consultation with Captain Lars. At first he shook his head; but finally he nodded and smiled, and Miss Hester immediately disappeared. Then Christine brought out several pillows and shawls and made a comfortable nest in a sheltered place.

"See!" cried Marie, "I believe madame is coming."

"Ah, *oui!*" exclaimed Madeleine, "I am glad. She is lovely; *belle charmante*. She was so kind to

us on de *Rochestare*. It was she who saw that we were alone, and who made us come in de boat with her. We shall always pray to de Sainte Vierge for her."

"*Moi, aussi, je crois,*" began Marie, quickly; but just at that moment Captain Lars was seen emerging above the stairway with a shapeless bundle in his arms, which he deposited carefully on the cushions. Miss Hester and Christine followed closely. Both looked rather anxious, but they were speedily reassured.

Satia threw the shawl in which she was wrapped back from her face. She did not speak, but shook a finger at the conspirators. Then she drank deeply of the soft, balmy air, and from that moment continued to grow stronger and better. All day long, every day, she lay there, seldom speaking, scarcely thinking, simply letting the hours slip by.

Marie and Madeleine almost worshipped the lovely, sweet-voiced lady to whom they believed they owed their lives. With all the ardor of their warm Southern natures, they lavished a wealth of devotion upon her, content if she but smiled in return. Satia was deeply touched by their affectionate gratitude. She was reminded of her own free and happy girlhood.

Christine seemed to her like a youthful Freya,

calm and serene, a pillar of strength in time of need, but too cold and distant to love. Erika she scarcely noticed; but these other two, with their dainty ways, their prettily turned phrases of endearment, their adoring eyes—she loved to have them near her. She was sorry that the time for separation was so close at hand.

Every day now the air grew warmer; the sunshine was more golden; the sky took on a blue of more exquisite tint. Far away to the right they could see the green shores of Georgia, and one morning the rays of the rising sun were reflected from the windows of Amelia Lighthouse. A few hours more would bring them into port, if wind and tide served well. By the time breakfast was eaten, the grim, solid walls of Fort Clinch, keeping guard over the entrance to Fernandina harbor, were in sight. As they crossed the bar, Cumberland Island lay not a mile to the right, and they could see St. Mary's River, broad and dark, in its winding, westward way between Florida and Georgia. Slowly they came in around the end of Amelia Island, past quaint, grass-grown Spanish Old Town, over to Tiger Island, for a brief stay at the quarantine station there, then across the quiet water to find a landing-place at Fernandina docks. They were all on deck, looking with curious eyes at the sandy

streets, the low-built, rambling houses; the great, moss-draped live-oak trees; the picturesque palmettoes, standing straight and tall; the crowd of capering little negroes which thronged the wharves, black and comical.

The pretty town looked fair and peaceful in the morning sunlight, and they were all impatient to explore it more fully. It was found, however, that there was barely time for Marie and Madeleine to catch the southern-bound train. So their farewells were said while the *Sea Gull* was being made fast to its moorings.

"*Le bon Dieu vous benisse !*" murmured Madeleine, clasping Captain Lars' big hand in both of her slim, brown ones, and pressing it to her lips. "*Le bon Dieu vous benisse toujours, Monsieur le Capitaine.*"

Eric watched this procedure with a good deal of secret alarm, fearing lest his turn should come next. But he received only shy, grateful glances from the deep-lashed, dark eyes, and a low-spoken "Good-bye and thank you, Mr. Eric," while he held for an instant the soft, small hand.

From the girls they parted affectionately. To Satia they clung with tears and kisses. At last Miss Hester got them away, and with Captain Lars, took them to the station and saw them safely off for New Orleans.

Before returning to the vessel, she walked about the town and discovered a comfortable hotel, where she engaged rooms for Satia and herself.

Eric had in the meantime gone to the New York steamer with the five sailors, and it really seemed quite lonely on board until Miss Hester came back in a carriage for Satia.

“We will not say good-bye yet, ladies, if you please,” said Captain Lars. “We shall be in port for several days.”

“Oh, that is pleasant news,” said Satia, with more animation than she had before shown. “Come around, all of you, and dine with us to-morrow at the——” She looked inquiringly at Miss Hester. “What is the hotel, auntie?”

“The Egmont. Anyone can direct you. It is a pleasant-looking place. We shall surely expect you,” replied Miss Hester.

“I thank you,” answered the tall captain, heartily. “The girls will like to see a bit of life ashore, I know. So the lads and I will fetch them.”

Christine and Erika stood side by side and watched the carriage out of sight. It seemed to them that they had lived years instead of days since they left Bergen. They felt that the hours were coming to them full-laden with much that was strange and delightful.

It was not more than an hour or two before Miss Hester returned.

"Where is your father, Christine," she asked. "I want to borrow you and Erika until to-morrow."

Captain Lars was found and listened attentively.

"You see, Captain," began Miss Hester, in her direct fashion, "my niece and myself need to have our wardrobes replenished, and I find that I shall have to go to Jacksonville, a city twenty or thirty miles inland, to get what we wish, and the trains run so that I shall be obliged to remain all night. Now I have come to ask you to allow Erika to go with me, and Christine to stay at the hotel with my niece. We will take good care of them, and they may find it pleasant to see something of the ways of us Americans."

Erika's blue eyes were sparkling as she listened, and even quiet Christine's cheeks flushed a little.

Her father looked at them before he replied :

"You are very kind, madame. I can see no reason why they should not accept your invitation, if they wish to do so. How is it, daughter? Should you like a day of hotel life? And you, Rika, do you not need some new ribbons?" he asked, pulling her long plaits.

"I should like much to go," answered Christine.

"Also I," said Erika, who, when excited, forgot the English phrases she had learned.

They were soon ready and on their way up Center street to the Egmont. Miss Hester saw that Satia and Christine were quite comfortable in their pleasant rooms.

"Good-bye, dear," she said to the former; then: "I dislike to leave you even for so short a time; but the hours will soon pass, I am sure."

"Oh, yes; Christine and I will manage nicely. Don't try to buy out the whole of Jacksonville; and let nothing keep you from coming on the morning train."

Christine stood at the window and watched them until they turned the corner. A strange feeling came over her then. She could not see even the masts of any vessels, not a glimpse of the water, but only the odd-looking palmetto-trees in the small park opposite, the tall Spanish bayonet with its stiff, straight leaves, the golden globes of the dark, shining-leaved orange-trees and the unfamiliar landscape. How different it was from the narrow, closely-built streets, the steep-roofed houses, the ancient, substantial appearance of her own northern home! Her thoughts dwelt especially with the

inmates of one well-appointed house. What were they doing in that sunny room where she had last seen her dear ones? What had been happening to them during all these days?

She felt a light touch on her arm, and, turning hastily, saw Satia, whom she had for the moment wholly forgotten.

"Pardon, madame!" she cried, blushing deeply. "I did not remember. I was rude. I was thinking of my home."

Satia smiled as she drew the girl to a seat beside her. The simple words touched her. Perhaps, after all, Freya had a heart.

"That is just what I wanted to ask you to tell me about—your home. It is in Norway, is it not? Would you mind talking to me of it?"

Christine needed no second bidding. She felt the winning charm of Satia's gracious presence. Besides, who could help being glad to hear of Baby Ola and cunning Truda, and especially dear, gentle Elsa? The mother-sister's heart was opened, and Satia listened with genuine interest to all that was told of these far-away people.

"But, my dear, what a hard life it has been for you. So young a girl should not be so closely confined. Could not some other arrangement have been made?"

Satia regretted these words as soon as they were spoken. They sounded critical and intrusive when she had no such thought. But Christine was too candid and straightforward to interpret them in any such way. She looked with her clear eyes full into the brown ones so near her.

“Oh, no. Not while the children were so little. Who could love them so well as I? I did not feel it a hardship to try to fill our mother’s place. I could not have been happy anywhere else.”

The brown eyes fell. What would this steadfast child think if she knew that she was talking to a mother who, when rescued from a dreadful death, was putting the ocean between herself and her only little child?

But Christine did not know, and Satia banished the unwelcome thought. She asked many questions about Bergen and the country around it.

“The mountains are grand. Father says there are none like them in the whole world. And in the summer-time it is beautiful to go to the *saeters*, the mountain dairies, which the farmers have far up above the villages and farms. It is peaceful and silent there, like another lovely world, where nothing wicked or unhappy ever comes.”

Satia listened eagerly. Was this not the very place for which she was seeking? Where she might in soli-

tude and in quiet find the peace of mind and freedom of spirit for which she longed?

"But could I, a stranger, be permitted to visit one of these *saeters* and stay for many weeks? How is it? There are, of course, no hotels near?"

"Oh, no, madame. They are far up on the mountain-side, often miles from any other house. Our uncle Jan, Erika's father, has several. It is the custom for the eldest daughter to take the cattle up there in the early spring. They get restless and uneasy from being shut up in the barns all through the winter. My cousin Jenne takes a maid to help her and two or three lads, and sometimes they stay up there all summer long. Once I went for three weeks. It was beautiful; it seemed to me almost as if I had been in heaven. It was so high and the air was as sweet and pure as air could be. There was no sound except the wind and the cattle; nothing to see but the great, grand mountains, the trees, the grass, the clouds."

"It must be lovely, indeed, Christine. I should like to go some time," said Satia.

Directly after breakfast the next morning, they took a carriage and drove about the town, out to the unsurpassed Amelia Beach, which is twenty miles long and as level and hard as a floor, and back to the station by the time the train from Jacksonville

was due. Then to the hotel for dinner. Captain Lars and Eric were already there, and joined with them in admiration of the pretty purchases.

As Satia and Miss Hester sat together when their guests had departed, the former said :

“ Auntie, would you mind going to Norway with Captain Nissen, if he will take us ? ”

Miss Hester had become somewhat accustomed to surprising questions from Satia, during the past few months, but she could scarcely conceal her astonishment now. Fortunately, Satia was gazing out of the window, with a far-away expression on her face, as though she might be already surveying the distant land of which she had spoken.

“ You know, dear child, ” said Miss Hester, “ that I am willing to go anywhere with you. ”

Satia looked at her and smiled a little.

“ But when you said that at Elm Ridge, you did not think of Florida or Norway, I am sure. ”

Miss Hester smiled, too.

“ No, I cannot say that I did. But Florida is pleasant enough. I dare say that Norway will be. ”

Satia rose and came around behind her auntie. She put one hand on either side of her face, and gently turned it towards her own. Stooping, she pressed her lips to cheeks and forehead.

“ What should I do without you, you dear, sweet,

unselfish old auntie? I know just how much you are giving up in coming away with me. It is one of those things we cannot speak of, but which we never forget."

She brought a low stool, and sat on it, laying her head in Miss Hester's lap.

"I'm all wrong, auntie. I know it; and must fight it out somehow. You know we were going to hunt a quiet spot, away out of the world. Let us go up to some of the wide, still places Christine tells me can be found in her country. She is true and strong. It may be that I, too, shall become so, living there."

Miss Hester passed her hand over the soft, dark hair. Her warm, sympathetic nature felt deeply for the unsatisfied, questioning, restless spirit of this girl. She knew even better than Satia herself how full of unhappiness and self reproach the coming days were to be. She yearned tenderly over the darling of her childless life; but she possessed the rare, priceless gift of silence in the presence of the heart's most profound experiences. It was this quality of soul that had made it possible for Satia to bear her companionship in her self-imposed exile. It was comfort inexpressible to feel that she would be loved and borne with without need of explanation or excuse.

"But have you thought," said Miss Hester, in

reply, "what a long, tedious voyage it will be in the *Sea Gull*? Would it not be better to go by rail to New York and take a steamer? Lightning, you know, seldom strikes twice in the same place; so we could not reasonably expect another disaster."

"I'd rather go with Captain Nissen, auntie. I like these simple-hearted, sincere people, and their ship is so clean and nice, if it is little."

"Well, dear, I'm willing enough. I like them too; and there will be more room going back."

"Then will you ask him in the morning?"

"Yes; but if he refuses me, I'll send him up to you," replied Miss Hester, laughing. "I never knew anyone who could equal you for coaxing."

Captain Lars was naturally much surprised at such a request from the ladies.

"But we are not going direct to Norway," he said. "In a few days we leave here for the West Indies, and it is more than likely that we shall visit the Brazilian shores before going home."

"That does not matter at all, captain. My niece desires a long sea-voyage."

"I have no objections, madame, to taking you, so far as I am concerned, but I must consult my girls. You know," he added, with a humorous twinkle in his eyes, "they are really the 'captains' this trip."

They were delighted, and the matter was soon

settled. Plans were at once made for the comfort of their "passengers," in which Miss Hester joined. All three were busily occupied in refitting the little cabins and laying in stores for the long journey.

One beautiful fair morning they sailed away out over the bar and into the golden sheen of Southern waters. Steadily they kept their course, with brief sojourns here and there, until one day they turned about and set their faces homeward.

Plunging over rough seas, riding smoothly on rolling waves, driven and tossed by stormy winds, hurried along by favoring breezes, they saw, at last, far, far away in the distance, a tiny black speck which Captain Lars assured them was Bergen.

Christine was too excited to stand still. She walked up and down the deck, straining her eyes as she looked through the glass and tried to make out at least one familiar object.

"When shall we get in, father? Do you think they will be expecting us? How much nearer are we?" she asked over and over again. Now that they were so near, it seemed to her that they were farther away than ever, and the hours appeared endless until they should be there.

But they passed somehow, and the little group of friends, for they now felt themselves to be truly

such, stood together upon the *Sea Gull's* deck and saw the quaint Norwegian town lying full and fair before them in the afternoon sunlight.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BERGEN HOME.

The twilight shadows were fast deepening as they approached Nissen's Wharf, which looked deserted. But Christine's searching eyes discovered a slight figure standing at the very edge of the huge timbers. She could not see the well-known scarlet shawl in which it was wrapped, nor the eagerness with which every nerve was being strained to pierce the gathering dusk, but her heart told her who the watcher was.

"Elsa!" she cried, waving her handkerchief and bending over the side of the bark.

Instantly an answering signal fluttered in the breeze, and a glad cry was heard. They saw her speed away to tell the good news, but she seemed scarcely to have gone before she was back again. Lights gleamed here and there; they moved nearer; dark figures gathered; hearty greetings were halloed across the gradually lessening distance; the

"I WELCOME YOU, THISS ISS HOME FOR YOU NOW."—See Page 99.



water plashed gently against the pier; amid the creaking of ropes and the hoarse shouting of sailors, the *Sea Gull* came slowly in and was made fast to its familiar moorings.

Elsa was the first on board. She was well known and loved by every one of the brawny-handed men, who made way while she flew lightly across the plank. She was soon clasped in the dear arms for which she had so yearned. She breathed a long sigh of content as her head nestled against her sister's shoulder. Captain Lars laid his hand affectionately upon the golden head, from which the scarlet shawl had fallen.

"It is late for little ones like you to be down here," he said.

Elsa looked up at him without stirring.

"But, father, I could not wait quietly at the house. All day long I could see out of the window, but when it grew dark I had to come down here. All the men were kind to me. I was not afraid. I could not bear for anyone else to see you first, you know."

She was twisting her little fingers about his big ones as she spoke. Captain Lars looked down at the coaxing eyes, at the pretty face which lay so close to Christine's sheltering arm. He glanced at the strong, erect figure of his eldest daughter; then

at the one which seemed, in contrast, so slight. He smiled and stooped to kiss again the smooth, fair cheek. Elsa laughed softly and stroked his beard.

Presently he came over to Satia and Miss Hester, to arrange for their going to a hotel. But Satia scarcely heard what he said. She left it all to Miss Hester. Her thoughts had gone back to the days of sweet companionship between her own dear father and herself. She had, of course, understood nothing of the swiftly spoken, strange-sounding words which these two had exchanged; but the tones, the looks, the caresses had filled her heart with a great longing for the past, which could not come again. She turned away, and with tear-dimmed eyes looked off across the now dark waters. She felt as lonely and forlorn as though she were tossing on the furthest wave. She had not realized while out on the broad ocean, in the sunlight, enjoying the delight of simply existing in the great, free expanse of space all about her, how it would seem to come to a strange land, where no familiar face waited to greet her, where even the language was unintelligible. There was an inexpressible dreariness about it which weighed her down, from whose oppression she could not liberate herself. She was aroused from her gloomy thoughts by a touch on her arm. Christine and Elsa stood near.

“Dear madame,” the former said, “this is my little sister Elsa.”

Elsa looked up with the shy, sweet glance that few could resist, and said, in slow, careful English, to which she gave a quaint accent charming to hear:

“I welcome you. Thiss iss home for you now.”

The simple, half-hesitating words touched Satia's already full heart. She threw her arms about the girl and kissed her tenderly.

“Thank you, dear child,” was all she said, but she never forgot the moment nor ceased to love the gentle maiden who had thrown the first gleam of sunshine over her pathway through this new land.

The next few weeks were busy ones for all the home-comers.

Captain Lars had decided to remain in Bergen through the summer, contrary to his usual custom. Eric was to take the *Sea Gull* on a cruise along the African coast, when he should have returned from a visit to his uncle's mountain home. He felt it to be his bounden duty to see that “Cousin Erika” arrived safely beneath her father's roof, and he need not come directly back, since he was not to start off until after Christine's wedding in June.

Aunt Katrin had returned to her Swedish home, and Christine was again happy in the midst of her

beloved flock. She was also making the last things to put into the great blue chest, now nearly full of snowy linen.

Satia and Miss Hester were cozily settled in a tiny cottage, scarcely beyond call from Christine's front door. They had taken this step most unexpectedly. Satia's wish had been to go at once to the interior, and to seek among the mountains a quiet spot; but she was so charmed with the old seaport town, and so delighted with the simplicity of Norwegian life, that she was seized with a desire to make here for a while a little home of her own. It happened most opportunely that some neighbors of the Nissens starting for America about this time, left vacant a small house, which Satia declared to be "just the thing for us, auntie."

Miss Hester made no objection, and they were soon comfortably settled in their new quarters. The services of a brisk, rosy-cheeked maid-servant, Annetje by name, left them abundant leisure.

Satia at once threw herself heart and soul into the study of the Norwegian language, under the direction of a competent instructor. She also hired a piano and began again the training of her voice. She took long walks every day. She arranged her various and numerous employments so that there were no idle hours, and she believed herself to be

happy in the enjoyment of the freedom she had so greatly desired. She felt it a joyous thing to be released from the silent but irresistible dominion of another's will. She breathed more freely; she grew strong and vigorous; she did not lose the brilliant color which her long rest on old Ocean's bosom had painted on cheek and lip. Apparently she was as light-hearted and glad as the birds who came to her door each morning for the crumbs she loved to throw to them.

But she never spoke of the past. She did not allow herself to think of it; she seldom ever went across to the broad-roofed house which sheltered Captain Lars and his numerous family; she was ill at ease with Christine, and felt a strange shrinking from the sight of the little ones who were always close about her. When, sometimes, they came over with Miss Hester, they stared with round eyes of curious interest at all the pretty things they saw; they remembered to speak politely to the lovely lady, but they would as soon have thought of climbing upon the beautiful, shining piano as of leaning against her knees and chattering to her about all which their little heads and hearts were full of.

Elsa alone was the exception. She loved the dainty appointments of Satia's temporary home. To Elsa she was a revelation, not only of personal

loveliness and charm, but also of the capabilities of her own inmost self. Longings and aspirations hitherto unknown awoke within her. As she listened to Satia's singing, the rich, sweet voice pouring forth wondrous strains of melody, interpreting the tone-thoughts of music's greatest masters, carried upon its full volume the whole soul of this child in silent yearnings toward something higher than herself. She became conscious of that within her which clamored for expression. Especially was this so when she looked at the few excellent prints and photographs which hung on the walls of the sunny sitting-room where she spent much of her time with Satia. She was very fond of a fine copy of Sir Joshua Reynolds' "Strawberry Girl." She never tired of gazing into the sweet, artless face of the little maid until she felt that she could see almost to the very depths of the haunting eyes, far down into the childish soul which looked out from them.

One morning, as she lay curled up on the rug, listening as Satia sang, and, as usual, with her eyes fixed upon this picture, the music suddenly changed into a minor strain; it seemed to sob and moan and refuse to be comforted. All at once she fancied that the clasped hands before her fell apart, the quaint, pointed basket slipped from the round arm,

the berries rolled into the dust. And what a transformation came over the face of the girl! Her lips quivered, great tears overflowed the dark eyes and ran down her cheeks; all the sunshine of a few minutes before was clouded in grief and dismay.

Elsa looked earnestly. She closed her eyes; still she could see the woe-begone countenance; still the music sounded in her ears, sad, heart-breaking. A strange impulse seized her. Springing up noiselessly, she found pencil and paper, and began to draw there the image which had impressed her so vividly. She became so absorbed in her work that she did not notice when Satia stopped singing and came softly behind her. Surprised and delighted at what she saw, Satia watched in silence the quick pencil strokes and the flushing, paling face of the excited girl; but only for a moment. Elsa felt her presence; she glanced up, startled, embarrassed, half-frightened to have her work seen by Satia; she thrust it under her apron and burst into tears.

“Take care, dear, do not injure it,” were Satia’s first words; and it was not until she had put the drawing safely away that she tried to comfort the trembling little artist.

Satia was fond of Elsa’s quiet, affectionate ways; she liked to have her about and quite enjoyed the lesson in “American,” as Elsa called it, which they

had fallen into the fashion of having every morning, as well as their reading together the simple tales and ballads which formed a part of her own studies in the strange northern tongue.

But, absorbed in herself and her work, she had not given to the real Elsa—the personality whose outer self she found so attractive—much more attention than she would have done to a roly-poly kitten on her lap. So she was both surprised and touched by the confidences which her loving sympathy now called forth. Elsa's full heart needed but a tender touch to open wide its gates. Satia listened patiently to the outpouring; she heard the whole history of the drawing, over which she was inwardly marveling. They talked long and earnestly, and when, at last, Elsa went dancing home, Satia's kiss was warm upon her lips and a new worship of her idolized friend glowed within her breast.

No sooner had she closed the door behind her, than Satia took the bit of paper and regarded it carefully. Although herself unskilled in the use of the pencil, she had a true eye and a cultivated taste. She saw that the child who had drawn the little sketch possessed no common gift. The picture was, of course, crude and faulty; its whole merit lay in the wonderful change in the expression of the face.

Satia sang over, softly, the strains of her song; she could see how they had wrought this fancy in Elsa's sensitive brain; she realized, too, how utterly powerless she herself was to express it in any such way as this.

"Elsa must have some lessons," she said. "She will be able to do something worth while, one of these days. There are sure to be good masters here."

She acted with her usual promptness, going first to Captain Lars for permission. This he readily gave her.

"Elsa is not like the rest of our children," he told her, also. "Her mother used to say so when she was a tiny little creature."

Arrangements were at once completed, and every morning, while Satia sang, Elsa, the happiest girl in the whole kingdom, sat near by, busy with her drawing.

And so the days flew quickly on, until June was close at hand.



CHAPTER X.

ELSA.

Miss Hester, in the meantime, neither sang nor drew, nor had she Satia's disinclination to visit the roomy, well-filled house across the way. On the contrary, she was very fond of doing so, and had fallen quite into the habit of paying long visits there, when the two in her own home were too much absorbed to notice her absence. It was, in fact, no uncommon thing to see her sitting in a low rocker in the pleasant Nissen living-room, knitting industriously on stockings for smaller feet than her own, or sewing a long, white seam, while two or three of the children crowded around, listening breathlessly to some marvelous tale fresh from her brain.

Sometimes she made them rag dolls; sometimes cut beauties from scraps of gay paper; once she surprised them all and herself, too, by manufacturing a whole Noah's ark full of animals. It happened that Satia, on this occasion, entered the room just as

the last unicorn had been set up in line with the long procession of hippopotami, rhinoceri, elephants, hyenas, camels and other remarkable-looking beasts, birds and fishes which stretched itself across the carpet. Truda, Ola and Tula sat on the floor, watching with admiring eyes the fast-growing train. Miss Hester, with ruffled hair and flushed cheeks, her glasses pushed up on her forehead, her apron askew, was also kneeling on the floor, and bending with half-impatient determination over the refractory unicorn who refused to stand upon his feet, but toppled over against the camel in a weak and helpless way. He was no match for Miss Hester, however. With a last twist and pinch of his paper feet, he was placed firmly in position.

“There!” cried she, “you stupid thing! Don’t you dare to fall over again!”

Just then Satia came in. She heard the words. She looked at the scene before her in utter amazement. Could this be dignified Aunt Hester? Her surprise was soon swallowed up in amusement. She could not help laughing.

“Why, auntie! did you make all these?” she exclaimed, coming nearer.

Miss Hester blushed. She felt, and indeed, looked, foolish; but she was equal to the emergency.

“Yes, Satia,” she replied, promptly, as she got

upon her feet and straightened her apron. "I made every one of them, and I expect to go on making them. I didn't know it was in me before. Perhaps I've reached my second childhood."

Here she was interrupted by a wail from Ola, who was pointing her fat finger at a big black bear who had tumbled over. Miss Hester hastened to the rescue, and Satia stole away. She felt a curious tightening about her heart, as though some one had laid violent hands upon it.

It seemed to her as though she was fated never to come beneath this roof without being reminded of her own motherhood and its neglected duties. The sight of Christine always reproached her, and now it was Aunt Hester—Aunt Hester, who had always loved her quiet, elegant life of ease and self-culture, apparently satisfied and happy, but who now sat upon the floor, with two or three babies, cutting out paper oxen and whales, and looked happier than ever before. She thought of a dear little fellow far away, who had neither mother nor aunt to amuse him, and she felt a vague, unreasoning impatience against the blue-eyed girl who had so imperatively demanded Aunt Hester's services in behalf of the prostrate bear.

She had walked rapidly away from the house when she left it. She felt too thoroughly disturbed

to go back to her music. But she soon found that all these disquieting thoughts were crowding upon her too thickly. She had kept them rigidly under control ever since she had turned her back upon her native land. They must be kept down now. She went quickly home, resolved to commence at once upon a difficult translation she had on hand.

Entering her cozy sitting-room, she was surprised to see Elsa lying on the lounge asleep. She was startled, too, to notice how pale and thin the girl had grown. Her slender hands were very thin; her blue-veined temples were hollow; her cheeks had lost their rounded outlines; she looked old and worn.

As Satia stood regarding her with distress and alarm, Elsa stirred uneasily and opened her eyes. She sprang up at once.

“I did not mean to sleep, madame!” she exclaimed. “But I was tired, and thought I would rest awhile. You haf had a pleasant walk?”

She busied herself about Satia, as she was so fond of doing, removing her hat and wraps, bringing her slippers and making her thoroughly comfortable. Satia leaned back in her chair, and received these ministrations in silence. The color had come back brightly to Elsa's cheeks; her beautiful, large eyes were softly brilliant; she seemed the very picture

of health. But the woman, who was covertly regarding her, saw beneath the fair, animated exterior, the real image, which truthful slumber had revealed. Her heart smote her that she had never before noticed these signs of failing health. She wondered how she could have been so blind, and she felt a new tenderness toward the child,

For a long time Satia sat there without speaking. She observed that Elsa, having discharged her self-imposed duties of love, had quietly seated herself at the drawing-table and taken up her pencil. As she worked she grew pale again, and once or twice sighed wearily.

“Come here, Elsa,” said Satia.

The girl brought a low stool and sat quite near.

“Do you not feel well to-day, dear child?” she asked, pushing the shining hair back from her forehead and looking closely at the sharpened outlines thus revealed.

“Oh, yes, madame; only a little tired.”

“I am afraid you have been working too steadily, Elsa. How would you like to take a holiday and go with me to see Erika and her wonderful mountains?”

A look of eager delight overspread her face for an instant; but it quickly faded.

“Oh, please, madame,” she cried, “do not take me

away from my lessons. You know I must stay at home with the little ones when Tina goes, and that will be so soon now. I'm quite well—indeed I am—only a pain here sometimes, but it soon goes away.”

She pressed her hands to her breast as she spoke. “Have you had this pain long, Elsa?”

“Only thiss spring, madame.”

“And the wedding—when is it to be?”

“In June, madame. Ole will soon be here now, and Tina iss all ready for him.”

“That is good. Come, lie down now and I will sing for you, and you can finish your drawing to-morrow. Do you know that Professor Elberg says very nice things of your work?”

The quick color again glowed on Elsa's cheek. Words of praise from her loved friend were rare.

In spite of objections, the excursion to the country was arranged. Satia said nothing, even to Miss Hester, of her fears concerning the girl's health. She tried to convince herself that there could be nothing serious—nothing but what a few weeks of rest and change would remedy—so she made her own caprice the excuse for going. She was glad when she learned that Miss Hester really preferred to remain behind, as she wished much to be alone with Elsa.

“It will be for only a few days, auntie. I hope to find just the place for our summer home. Then I’ll come and fetch you and our household gods.”

They set off by train bright and early one morning, and a few hours later Miss Hester went across the way to see how it fared with her small friends there. To her surprise she found traces of tears on Christine’s face. She noticed, also, that the blue chest had been removed. She said nothing, however, but sat down as usual with the children gathered about her. It was not until they had all run out to play in the yard, some time later, that Christine brought her work and sat near. She was making a dress for Tula, and sewed in silence. Miss Hester saw, presently, that tears were dropping one by one on the pretty blue cashmere. She leaned over and drew it gently away.

“Do not grieve so over Elsa’s absence, dear,” she said. “She will soon be at home again. And see, all this salt water is not good for Tula’s gown.”

Miss Hester smiled half-playfully, half chidingly, but there was no answering smile on Christine’s face. Instead, the tears came faster, and were mingled with sobs.

“It is not that she has gone away,” she said presently, “but oh! do you not see how white and thin she is? I would never let myself think of it, or

speak of it before, even to our father. But I must now, or my heart will break. You did not know, of course, but I did when I first looked into her face, the night we came home, that she was not well. She had grown so slight and so like our own dear mother before she went away from us. I noticed, too, that she was always tired, and I managed to take from her, one by one, the household tasks she had always done. She never seemed to know this, for her whole heart was taken up with the beautiful new friend who had come to her from across the water. Once, I am sure, I could not have borne that, for Elsa had loved no one so well as she did me. But now I am glad, for I know she is so happy, and I have hoped that she might in some way grow stronger, by means of all her new pleasures and occupations. Every night she would come and nestle in my arms just as baby Ola does, and tell me of her drawings, the songs she had heard, the loveliness and kindness of madame, and I never let her see how hard it was for me."

She paused, and Miss Hester clasped her hands in both her own.

"I am glad that you have spoken so freely to me, dear Tina. It will be a relief, I know. Elsa does seem far from well, but I think there is no ground for serious uneasiness in regard to her. This trip

to the mountains will do her a great deal of good, without doubt. If it does not, then she ought to have the best medical advice immediately. But we must not be needlessly anxious, you know."

"Oh, yes, and I do not mean to be; only—only—Well, never mind. We will not speak of it any more, and I will try not to be such a baby again."

"You are not a baby at all," remonstrated Miss Hester, warmly, "but a brave, loving sister. I do not blame you the least bit for feeling worried, especially just now when the time is drawing so near for your marriage."

Christine changed color. Then she said, speaking in low, hurried tones, as though she could not trust herself:

"I decided, some weeks ago, Miss Hester, that I could not be married this summer. I wanted to keep it from Elsa until the very last; but now that she has gone, I cannot pretend any longer. I have packed away all the things, and to-night I am going to tell father. To-morrow—to-morrow—Ole is expected. His vessel is already down the harbor. He would not wish me to go and leave the little ones. Ole is too good for that. But, oh, he will be so disappointed! We have been looking forward to this time for so long. I cannot bear to think that I must tell him how it is. It seems—"

Here the children came running in. She withdrew her hands from Miss Hester's, and went to attend to their wants.

CHAPTER XI.

“AN OLD SIMPLETON.”

Very soon after she had finished her supper that evening, Miss Hester had a caller—none other than Captain Lars. She was expecting him; in fact, had sent for him to come, and she greeted him as one who is right welcome.

As they drew their chairs before the light wood-fire, her heart thrilled with a sense of his strength, his manliness, his gentleness.

Miss Hester's heart had been experiencing a great variety of hitherto unknown sensations ever since that eventful night on the ocean. During the forty years of her earthly life, it had throbbed on in peaceful, regular fashion, undisturbed by the close proximity of the sex she had always secretly considered vastly her inferior. She had become confirmed in the belief that her brother was the only man worthy the name.

Had anyone told her, an hour before the burning

of the *Rochester*, that she was about to meet her fate in the person of a Norwegian captain, who, at that moment, was hurrying towards her as fast as wind and wave could bear him, she would have scouted the idea as an insane vagary.

But such was the case. During the long days when Satia rested dreamily among her cushions; when Eric and Erika looked off together over the crested billows; when Christine's thoughts were with Ole and the little ones at home—these two, so widely separated by birth, education and experience were discovering a common possession in that mysterious attraction which binds two lives into one.

Good Miss Hester was at first bewildered, amazed and even alarmed at this sudden uprising on the part of her long-quiet emotions. She tried to restore her unruly self to its wonted order; but all in vain. Before the spires and towers of Bergen came in sight, she was forced to acknowledge, with a blush of true womanly shame, that her heart had proved a traitor, and that she had no desire to free herself from fetters which grew dearer every hour.

Sometimes, as she stood by the side of her tall, stalwart captain, and realized something of the protecting strength and tenderness which had come about her life, she wondered how she could have lived so long without it. She marvelled, too, at

Satia, who could leave the shelter of her husband's home. She had never understood her niece. She did so now less than ever, and she resolved that she could be a party to her willful absence from Morris' side no longer than absolutely necessary. Miss Hester had been long in awaking to woman's true sphere, but she now appreciated it most fully. Morris she had always admired; now she beheld him, and, indeed, all men, through rose-colored glasses of Cupid's own make. When she had consented to come away with Satia, she had hoped and believed that a few weeks, or, at farthest, months, of separation from her home and child would find her anxious to return. She knew, of course, that there was some trouble, but any detailed explanation of her singular conduct had never been given. Miss Hester had simply indulged her, as she had always done. But now she took a different view of the matter. It seemed to her a dreadful and unhallowed thing that a wife and mother should be wandering in such fashion over the earth.

In compliance with Satia's earnest wish, no letters had yet been written home. This had seemed to Miss Hester both unkind and unwise; but, as usual, she had yielded. She did so the more readily, perhaps, because there were no near family connections. Now, however, she was less under the sway of the

younger woman's will. Her own independence of purpose was developing rapidly, and she had not hesitated to send, on the very morning of Satia's departure for the mountains, a cablegram to Morris:

"We were rescued from the *Rochester*. Come, at once, to Bergen, Norway. Bring Maynard.

"HESTER MAYNARD."

She now felt more free to make her own plans, which had not yet been definitely decided upon. Since her conversation with Christine, she had become convinced that she ought to delay no longer in fixing the date of her marriage, and letting the children know of the coming change in her relations to them. They were, as yet, entirely ignorant of their father's intentions in the matter.

"Have you had any talk with Christine, to-day, Lars?" she asked, when they had conversed of other things for a time.

"No; not specially," he replied.

"I hoped that you might be able to see me first. She is going to tell you that she cannot marry Ole when he comes."

He turned to her in great surprise.

"Not marry Ole?" he repeated, as though it was only by hearing the words again that he could comprehend them. "Why not, pray?"

"Because she thinks Elsa too feeble to take her place."

"Ah," he exclaimed, with a long, slow intonation, "that is just like my noble Christine. What other girl would do such a thing?"

He sat looking into the fire for some time. Then he glanced at the figure by his side. Miss Hester was gazing at the fire, too. Something in her attitude and in the expression of her face that he had never seen there before, attracted his attention. There was a new, womanly charm about her. He regarded earnestly the dark, bright eyes, the crown of soft, abundant hair, the small, capable hands clasped upon her lap. He reached out his broad palm and covered them in a gentle clasp.

"Our little Elsa is not strong," he said, "and ought not to have the care of the home. Tina's marriage must not be put off on any account. Perhaps it would be best to send for Katrin again. What do you think about it, my friend?"

His tone was quite grave, but there was a mischievous twinkle in his eyes. The color crept slowly up into Miss Hester's cheeks, and presently a smile curved her lips. Looking up, at last, and meeting the unspoken entreaty of his face, she laughed softly.

“Katrin is so far away. Suppose you try me for awhile.”

Satia and Elsa were gone nearly two weeks. The latter had not benefitted much, if any, by the trip. The drawing lessons were put off for the present, and everyone was busy preparing for the wedding—Christine’s wedding—which was to take place very early in June.

Satia had been at home but a few hours, when her attention was drawn to the unaccountable behavior of her aunt. She replied to her questions almost at random, and seemed so entirely absent-minded that Satia began to wonder what could be the matter. She said nothing, however, until Miss Hester, taking up the watering-pot, began sprinkling the carpet instead of the flowers.

“Auntie, have you lost your mind?” she exclaimed then, amazed.

“No, dear, only my heart,” replied Miss Hester, so quickly that Satia’s astonishment turned to alarm. This was increased by seeing her aunt blush and smile in the oddest way.

In truth, that lady had taken herself by surprise. Her answer to Satia’s inquiry had flashed out of its own accord, apparently. Miss Hester had been greatly dreading the breaking of this news; and

now she congratulated herself on having gotten well over it. But she soon perceived that her niece had utterly failed to understand her.

"Why don't you go and lie down, auntie?" she said gently, coming and taking the watering-pot from her hand. "I'll do this."

"Lie down?" cried Miss Hester, half-vexed that the whole thing had to be gone over with again. "What for, I should like to know?"

"Why, do—do you—do you feel—quite well this morning, auntie?" asked Satia, cautiously. She remembered having read that insane people were extremely suspicious, and she really believed that something was wrong with Miss Hester's brain.

"I'm perfectly well, Satia," said Miss Hester then. "I know that I am acting like an old simpleton; but the truth is, I have something to tell you, and I don't know how to do it."

Satia could only gaze at her in silent wonder.

"You turn that chair around so I can't see your face and I'll try to begin," said the elder lady.

Satia obeyed, more than ever convinced that serious trouble was near at hand, and trying to remember whether or not there were any knives or scissors within her aunt's reach. She carelessly moved her chair towards the door, as she sat down, and noticed with thankfulness that the key was on

the outside, so that she might spring and turn it quickly, if worse came to worst.

After one or two preliminary coughs, Miss Hester asked :

“Have you ever thought that Captain Lars had beautiful eyes?”

“I have never noticed them, auntie.”

“Did you ever think that he might marry the Widow Lansteen, who lives in the yellow house around the corner?”

“I never have, auntie.”

“I have heard that he is to be married when Christine is.”

Miss Hester had seized upon this remark as an inspiration, thinking that, of course, Satia would naturally ask to whom. But she did not.

She only said she hoped the new wife would be good to the children.

“I have seen the lady, Satia.”

“And did you like her, auntie?” asked Satia, with difficulty following this peculiar train of thought. She was trying to decide what to do.

“I—I think you do,” was the hesitating reply.

“I?” exclaimed Satia, aroused now to closer attention and turning around in her chair. “Why, I don’t know any of the people here.”

“But you know me, don’t you?” cried poor Miss

Hester, in desperation. “Satia Julian, sometimes you can certainly be the *stupidest* girl I ever saw. Anybody else would have known what I meant long ago.”

Satia had never before seen her auntie so excited and so disturbed. She went to her and tried to soothe her, still without comprehending the purport of her words. Miss Hester, in turn, began to wonder if anything were the trouble with Satia. She looked at her a moment, and said:

“Why is it, dear, that you cannot understand that I am to marry Captain Lars?”

Satia grew pale. There were assuredly no signs of mental disturbance in the gentle, kindly face. But—could this thing be possible?

“You—you didn’t say so before, auntie,” she stammered, at length.

“No, not in so many words,” said Miss Hester, smiling. “I told you I was acting like a simpleton.”

It was true, then. Satia hardly knew whether to laugh or cry. She did neither, fortunately, but threw her arms around her auntie’s neck and kissed her heartily.

“I surely hope that you will be very happy, auntie. No one deserves it more than you do. But what,” she asked, with a sudden thought of

herself, "is to become of me, in this unlooked-for overturn of all our plans, you naughty body?"

Miss Hester blushed guiltily. She was daily, almost hourly, looking for a reply to her cablegram. But she dared not hint to Satia of what she had done.

"Oh, we will stow you away somewhere," she answered playfully, "or we will lend you Elsa in my place."

"'We will!'" repeated Satia, laughing. "That sounds very fine, does it not? I ought to have know better than to go off and leave you here alone. I might have suspected that you would get into mischief."

"The 'mischief,' as you call it, was all done long before we set foot in Bergen," replied Miss Hester, much amused at Satia's astonishment.

But though Satia could laugh about the matter, and tried to enter heartily into all Miss Hester's plans, she was really filled with dismay and regret at this most unexpected step.

Personally, it did not make so much difference to her as it would have done six months earlier. With renewed bodily vigor, she felt entirely capable of attending to the details of living, as she could not have done at first. But she considered it a

most disastrous choice, so far as Miss Hester's own happiness was concerned.

How she could consent to exchange her beautiful American home, enriched with all that money and taste could procure, her life of ease, her independence, for the care of this big family of Norwegian children, and the companionship of the big captain, and the limitations of the crowded, old-fashioned house, was to her a mystery of mysteries. Satia did not yet possess the key to this truly the greatest of all mysteries, the fact that love makes all things possible and beautiful. Far, far in the future, across many years of pain and tears, the precious secret waited for her coming. Now, she could only marvel, in sorrowful regret, at the choice which seemed to her so inexplicable.

The next few days passed quickly. Ole returned, proud of a successful voyage and happy as a king as he assisted Christine in the preparation of their new home. The children were told of the mother who was to come to them in Christine's place. She had already won their hearts, and they welcomed her joyfully.

One pleasant afternoon the two weddings took place.

The younger bride, amid tears and blessings and loving farewells, went with her husband to the home

not far away, where they were to begin their life together. The elder, not less truly content, leaned upon the arm of her chosen lord, and gathered their little ones about her.

Satia, who, forgetting her personal prejudices, had made the old home a bower of beauty and the day a joyous one for them all, came at dusk and begged for Elsa to keep her company.

“You have a houseful left,” she said, with winsome grace, to Captain Lars, whom she was beginning to like in spite of herself; “you can spare me this one.”

“Yes,” he answered, smiling, “so long as you live within sound of my voice.”

It happened that he was soon asked to trust her with Satia far beyond this limit. Elsa did not improve in health. At last a physician's advice was sought. He advised change of climate, and Satia at once suggested Switzerland. Their arrangements were quickly made, and by the last of June letters were received from them saying that they were comfortably settled in a charming Swiss village, and that the roses were already coming back to Elsa's cheeks.

Meantime Morris had neither been seen nor heard from.



CHAPTER XII.

MARIE'S STORY.

A second serious illness followed closely upon Morris' reading of the burning of the *Rochester*, and the loss of nearly all on board.

The March winds were blowing bleak and cold before he was able to communicate with Doctor Jarvis, to try, if possible, to discover something of the actual fate and the last hours of his wife.

Through the steamship office he learned the gentleman's address, and by correspondence with him, found that he made frequent trips to New York. Upon one of these occasions he stopped over at the Fielding home, and Morris had the consolation of hearing of Satia from one who had seen her very shortly before leaving the ship. Doctor Jarvis remembered her perfectly, although he had never spoken with her. His attention had been attracted by her calmness during the terrifying scenes immediately following the outbreak of the fire. He noticed,

also, her special kindness to two young girls who seemed to be alone, and he saw that they were preparing to be lowered in one of the boats, when he had left the ship.

All the boats were swamped almost at once, he said. The sea was running very high, and there was so much confusion as to prevent the maintenance of discipline. He himself had been thrown into the water, but managed to get hold of a floating timber to which he clung, for ages it seemed, until picked up by a steamer which came near about daybreak.

As soon as he could travel, Morris went to New York, and tried in every way to gain additional information regarding the catastrophe. But none was forthcoming. "So far as we know," they told him at the steamship office, "no one else was rescued. It is possible, of course, that some may have been carried beyond sound of this particular steamer, but it is not likely. And even if it were so, surely there has been more than ample time for communication with friends."

Morris could but admit the truth of this, and was obliged, at last, to accept the certainty of Satia's death as absolute.

The blow was a terrible one. Coming so soon after that which had utterly unmanned him, he had no strength with which to resist it.

To his sister's great distress, she saw him settling into a state of profound melancholy, from which even the sight and companionship of little Maynard could not always arouse him. He would sit for hours with bowed head and nerveless hands, gazing mournfully into space, seldom speaking. He was gentle, too, and thoughtful of her, but so hopeless and so sad that her heart ached to see him. At times she could scarcely believe that this sorrowful, silent man was her brother.

One morning she came and sat near him.

"Morris," she said, "I have been thinking that I ought to go and see Clover this spring. Suppose we all make her a little visit?"

He looked at her thoughtfully for a moment.

"Yes," he answered then, "you ought surely to go. You have had a lonesome, hard winter here with me. Go, by all means, Mary."

"But not without you, Morris. I could not leave you alone."

"I shall always be alone," he murmured, quickly; then, laying his hand on hers, he added: "Forgive me, dear. Never mind what I say. You know that what little there is left of my poor heart is all yours and Maynard's. Kelsie will be here. We shall get on nicely. Do not, I beg of you, Mary, make me feel that my wretched life is shadowing

yours when you want and ought to be with Clover, by keeping you here. And do not ask me to go. Quiet and silence are my only comforts. With them I can live in the past again without disturbance."

"But, Morris, have you not noticed that Maynard does not seem as robust as usual this spring? He does not get over the hard cold he took a month ago, and I really think a milder climate will be better for him."

This aroused him even more than she had hoped. He at once decided to go, and in less than a week they were on their way to the sunny land of the South.

Clover's home was as bright and cheery as her own sweet self, and the two children filled it to overflowing with sunshine. Dorothy was running all around by this time, and Maynard at once constituted himself the devoted attendant of his tiny and altogether charming little cousin. Whatever delighted him pleased his father also; consequently these two small persons soon discovered in Morris a most obedient subject, and they were not slow in demanding his constant compliance with their wishes.

At first he was rather absent-minded, and it required a good deal of persuasion and many remon-

stances on the part of his youthful tyrants to transform him into a satisfactory coach-horse, a first-class locomotive, an agile monkey or a two-humped camel. But he learned to adapt himself to their needs, and Mary saw, with gladness, that all this romping with them was doing him a world of good. There were now several hours, at least, during the day when he forgot himself and his grief.

One day, as she and Clover sat sewing, they heard a light step on the stairs, and presently a bright face peeped in at the door.

Clover sprang up. "Why, Marie Fontenelle," she exclaimed, with the greatest surprise and delight, as she greeted the young girl affectionately, "I thought you were thousands of miles from here."

"And so I was, dear Mrs. Raymond. But now I'm here, and so glad to see you once more. Where is my little pet, Dolly?"

"She is out in the garden with Uncle Morris and Maynard, and sweeter than ever, of course."

Marie laughed as she kissed Clover on both cheeks in pretty, French fashion.

"Of course you think so," she said, archly. "I think I must go to see for myself."

"Presently. Let me now introduce you to my mother. Mamma, you have often heard us speak of Marie Fontenelle."

“And now,” she continued, when they were all seated again, “how have you been all this time, and where is Madeleine?”

“Did you not receive my letter, then?” asked Marie, in surprise.

“No. None has ever come, and I thought you were so busy having a delightful time that you had forgotten all about your promise to write.”

“Ah, never, dear Mrs. Raymond. It is too bad that it never came. Then you do not know of our misfortune and that we came back to America before we got home?”

“Not one word,” replied Clover, greatly interested. “What was it?”

“You surely heard of the burning of the *Rochester* last October?”

Clover turned pale.

“Oh, yes, Marie. My dear friend, Satia, was on it; and—but—why—” she stammered, as a thought flashed across her mind, “were you on the same steamer, Marie? And did you not see her? Do you know if she was saved, too?”

“Satia!” repeated Marie, slowly. “Yes, surely that is the strange, pretty name madame’s aunt called her.”

“Her aunt!” cried Mrs. Fielding, excitedly.

“That must be Miss Hester! Oh, Miss Marie, you bring us precious news!”

“I am glad,” said Maria, excited, too, forgetting her usual careful English. “I will then tell you all of it which I can.”

Clover and her mother drew quite near and listened breathlessly.

“Madeleine and I went to New York from here, and you remember that our *grandmère* was soon going to California. On the steamer we spoke to no one. But madame, she saw we were alone, and she was so kind to us. One night the fire came; everybody scream and run about, and it grew hotter all the time. Oh, Sainte Vierge, but it was horrible! Madeleine and I crept to the corner of our cabin and prayed. We could not tell where to go nor what to do. Nobody thought of the two poor French girls. But presently the sweet madame she came to find us and make us get in the little boat with her and the *tante*. I can only tell that we were dropped over the side of the ship and tossed all about on the waves a long time; and then a small, little ship came along and took us up. We came on this ship—they call it a bark, I think—to a place what you call Fernandeenah, in Florida.

“The captain and his two *filles* were from Norway, on the other side; they were so good and kind to

us, but the dearest of all was our sweet madame. She wrote her name on a card and gave to us when we left Fernandeenah to come back here; but I not know how I lost it; but I can be sure that one name was Satia, and—”

She was interrupted by screams from both the ladies, and she looked up to see Morris, deathly pale, standing in the doorway.

Mary sprang toward him. But he did not fall, as she thought he was about to do. He waved her off and came directly to Marie.

“Will you tell me again about all this, please? I think—I think you must be speaking of my wife, whom we have thought lost. There can scarcely be two Satias. Where did you see her?”

Mary quickly told him of all that they had heard, and they waited impatiently for Marie to continue. Morris felt his heart thrill and bound within him as she described “madame’s” appearance.

“She was tall and slender, with lovely, graceful manners, but very quiet and sad all the time. She had beautiful, large, brown eyes and the prettiest soft hair. Her voice was low and very sweet.”

“Can you recall any article of her dress?” asked Mary.

“No, not specially. But I do remember a tiny ring of twisted gold set with sapphires, which she

wore above her wedding ring. I saw the stones sparkle in the light of the flames, while we were in the little boat."

How his thoughts went back with a bound, to the night in Venice, when she had seen and fancied the quaint circlet!

"But you and Madeleine," asked Clover, when Marie had told over and over again all she could recollect concerning Satia, "what did you do?"

"Oh, Mees Hester put us on the train in Fernandeenah, and we started to come here to the *grand-mère* for more money and clothes. We telegraphed to her from Tallahassee. She had already left New Orleans on the way to our uncle's in California, and was in St. Louis, where our telegram was forwarded to her. She sent for us to join her there, and after awhile she went to France with us. She said she would not let us go alone again."

"And Madeleine—is she here with you now?"

"*Non, pas du tout.* She was married last month, and I was so lonesome that I came back with our grandmother. And I am going to be here all summer. Isn't that fine?"

"It is, indeed. And I hope you will have the pleasure of seeing Aunt Satia here before long, too."

Morris had left the room, and already begun his preparations for going to Fernandina.

“I cannot tell when I shall see you again, Mary,” he said, as he bade her good-bye. “I shall trace that ship and find Satia, if it takes me around the world. For the present, I shall leave Maynard with you. I will let you hear from me frequently. Think of me often, my dearest and most devoted of sisters, and pray for my success. It is the prayers and the love of women like you that make life possible for men like me.”

He stroked her hair tenderly, and Mary, as she looked up into his face with eyes alight with love and sympathy, did not need to speak any words to assure him of her promise.

With Maynard in her arms, she stood watching him as he walked away. He had seemed more like his old self, since hearing Marie's story, than she had ever expected to see him again. She hoped, oh, so earnestly, that when she next saw him, Satia would be with him, bringing a mother's love and care to the dear little son, who needed them so greatly, and a wife's companionship to the lonely man. Her eyes had filled with tears unconsciously to herself; she first became aware of this by Maynard's trying to wipe them away.

“Dee mamma gone. Dee papa gone. Auntie ky. Mayna kiss auntie.”

He threw his arms around her neck and pressed his soft lips to her cheek.

“Auntie laugh now,” he cried, joyfully, as she smiled. “Come le’s find Dorty now and pay horse; please, dee auntie.”

Arriving at Fernandina, Morris had no trouble in finding on the shipping records the arrival of the bark *Sea Gull*, Captain Lars Nissen, Bergen, Norway, on November 27th, and its departure for Jamaica on December 4th. But he had no means of knowing whether she had reached home. Neither could he find anyone who remembered her passengers. Marie having gone directly to the railway station, had, of course, told him nothing of their having stayed at the hotel. Fortunately, the idea of examining the different registers occurred to Morris, and he had the satisfaction of reading the following entries at the “Egmont:”

Miss Hester Maynard	Nov. 27.
Mrs. Morris Julian	Nov. 27.
Miss Christine Nissen	Nov. 27.

Upon inquiry, he also discovered that they had left the hotel on the same day that the *Sea Gull* left port, and at last found the porter who recollected that their trunks were sent to the vessel. But whether they had gone to Jamaica only, or to Nor-

way, or elsewhere, he was unable even to conjecture. While trying to decide what was best to do, he saw in the shipping news column of the *Fernandina Mirror* the arrival of another Norwegian bark, the *Odo*, Captain Fienstein, Bergen, Norway.

He at once sought out this captain, and learned from him that the *Sea Gull* had cleared for Oporto, Spain, on the same day the *Odo* left for Fernandina; also, that she expected to go as far south as Sierra Leone before returning home. When Morris asked if her captain was still Nissen, Fienstein replied in the affirmative, without explaining that it was the son and not the father.

So Morris set off for Oporto, calculating that he would catch the *Sea Gull* there, and at last be able to learn something definite of Satia's whereabouts. To his unspeakable delight he did so. At first he was rather disappointed at not finding Captain Lars himself, but Eric told him even more than Marie could do of the fire at sea, the rescue, the days in Fernandina. He was also able to add to this the history of the weeks and months following until they were all safely in Bergen. Further than this he knew very little, for he had left almost immediately with Erika for her mountain home, and had not returned until a day or two before Christine's wedding and his taking command of the *Sea Gull*.

But Morris was, for the present, satisfied to know where his wife had been only two weeks before. He could now almost count the hours before he should see her. In London he found Miss Hester's cablegram, which had been forwarded from America, and had been awaiting him for some time. This made assurance doubly sure, and he hastened on his northward journey full of joy at the meeting so soon to be, full of impatience at the slowly crawling train and the more snail-like steamers.

At last, however, the chimney-tops and steep, gabled roofs of Bergen came within range of his eager eyes, and his feet pressed the pavements which had already known Satia's light tread.

CHAPTER XIII.

MORRIS IN BERGEN.

Mrs. Hester Nissen was playing with Baby Ola. She was instructing that small person in the story of her pink toes, and had gotten as far as "this little pig stays at home," when, instead of a gentle tweak, the poor toe got a sudden pinch, and Baby Ola came nearer than ever before to being

dropped upon the floor. Mrs. Nissen had seen Morris descending from a carriage at her gate.

Before he was fairly in, the front door flew open and Aunt Hester was clinging to his arm, laughing and crying in the same breath. In spite of his self-command, Morris felt his brain whirling. Longborne suspense and a suspicion of he hardly knew what direful news, all combined to unnerve him. He managed, however, to preserve an outward calmness as he followed her into the house, asking, but being apparently unheard: "Where is Satia?"

Mrs. Hester, scarcely less excited than he at seeing a familiar face, and this one in particular, from home, took him directly into the living room. Morris looked eagerly around to discover, perhaps, some silent answer to his question. But he could not imagine Satia even being in such a room as this, much less leaving there any of her personal belongings. He gazed at the quaint and ancient furniture, the prim, snowy curtains, and finally, at Aunt Hester herself. She seemed, somehow, oddly in keeping with the apartment. With a bewildered sense of being in the midst of a dream, he noticed that she wore the short, blue skirt, the spotless white waist with full, puffed sleeves, the trim velvet bodice, and even the picturesque cap which he had observed on the women as he drove through the streets. His

thoughts went back to the last time he had seen her in the beautiful Elm Ridge home. He recalled her appearance perfectly, for it had suited well his fastidious taste in matters of ladies' dress. He could see, as though it were here before him, the robe of richest silk, trailing its elegant length along the velvet carpet; the exquisite lace at the throat and wrists; the coil of soft brown hair surmounted by an airy puff of the same delicate fabric; the small hands, glittering with jewels; the high-bred, aristocratic bearing of the figure; the gentle courtesy of manner.

In a few seconds, during which all these impressions had been made upon the highly sensitive plate of his brain-camera, Tina and Truda had come running in, and his mystification was complete, for he heard them address her as "mother."

She spoke to them in a low tone, and they took Ola and disappeared, giving many curious looks at the stranger. Then she turned to Morris, laughing in spite of herself at his blank face.

"You poor fellow!" she said affectionately, "it all seems queer enough to you, and I do not wonder at it. I'm afraid, too, that you will be sadly disappointed to know that Satia is not here. She has been in Switzerland for some time. Here is the key to her little home, just across there," and she

showed him the cottage. "Now, if you will go over and make yourself comfortable for a few minutes, I will come and tell you all you want to hear, and I will look rather more like the Aunt Hester you have known. My husband," she added blushing, "likes to have me wear the Norwegian dress at home, sometimes."

Morris, man of the world as he was, found himself actually unable to say one word in reply. He took the key, as though in obedience to some irresistible spell, and walked away, wondering vaguely to what further magic transformations it would lead him. Was it really Aunt Hester he had seen? And did she tell him that Satia was not here? Or was he under some weird, witch-like power? He could scarcely tell, as he made his way through the narrow entry to the outer door. Once in the cool, fresh air, the sunshine seemed to dispel the mists of unreality which had enveloped him. He breathed more freely, and was sure now that Aunt Hester had spoken of the tiny cottage as Satia's home.

Quickened by the thought, he hurried across the pleasant street and turned the key in the lock. Once inside, he doubted no longer. He stood almost reverently in the little sitting-room and he saw everywhere her favorite pictures, books and all the various things she had gathered about her here

many of which were duplicates of those still in their far-away home. Much of her music was on the piano. As he turned the leaves, he fancied he could again hear the sweet voice which had so often delighted him.

In her work-basket lay a forgotten glove, the half-finished translation of a Norwegian poem, and a note from her singing-master postponing a lesson. In everything he read of her—her tastes, her pleasures, her occupations. But, alas! he found in them all not one hint or shadow of a trace of either himself or Maynard. Had she shut them out forever? He could not endure the thought, and quickly picked up a book of songs. Half a dozen loose sheets fell to the floor. Stooping to pick them up, he was confronted by Satia's features. Eagerly he seized the papers and spread them out before him. They were some half-finished sketches of Elsa's, and with them a couple of photographs which Satia had had taken about the time of Christine's marriage. Elsa had, with unerring exactness, caught and reproduced the expression of the face she loved. Morris felt instinctively that this was so, and he saw, too, that the photographs were excellent in workmanship and undoubtedly correct likenesses.

He compared them with three which he carried with him. One of these was taken when he first

knew Satia, the second in Venice, and the third shortly after Maynard's birth. They marked three distinct epochs in the girl's life. The face which he now placed beside them showed that another and a longer step had been taken along the highway of her life. He saw now a maturity of character, a steadfastness of purpose, which the others did not reveal. This woman might be led; she could never again be driven. And her husband wondered whether the guiding lines would ever again be within his grasp. He doubted it. He saw, too late, his mistake. With all his boasted and real skill in reading human nature, and that of womankind especially, he had failed utterly to understand this, the one most dear to him. But if it were not for him to win back the treasure he had lost, might it not be restored to him through the little child for whom he believed that she was already, in her secret heart, longing? He fancied that he detected in the haunting beauty of the great, dark eyes a yearning for the only thing which can satisfy the mother-nature—a craving for the little face, the tiny hands, the loving caresses of the baby which has lain in her bosom. Morris knew that however this strong instinct of a womanly woman like Satia might have been stifled, that, once free from the restraint imposed by his all-absorbing and selfish, even though sincere, passion,

it must necessarily assert itself. In this certainty lay his only hope. To see her again; to bring Maynard once more to her arms; this was his plan, the object of his living.

He was aroused from his musings by the opening of the door. Looking up, he saw Aunt Hester entering the room. She was again the lady of abundant means and leisure, but his eye was quick to see that, with her unaccustomed attire, she had not lain aside the quietly contented and happy expression which had so strongly impressed him an hour before.

“Now, Morris,” she said, brightly, as he stepped toward her, “come sit down by me and I will talk to you for an hour. Then you must go over and have some dinner and meet my husband and our little ones.”

He smiled with a somewhat quizzical look in his handsome eyes, as he placed her chair and seated himself.

“This is a hurrying age, it seems, Aunt Hester,” he said.

Mrs. Nissen colored, but she laughed, too, as she replied very frankly :

“It does seem so, I suppose. And it really is not a long time from October to June. I might truthfully say, and to you I will say it, from October to April; for in less than that time I met and learned

to know and discovered that I loved my husband. You are, of course, surprised, as Satia was, as everybody naturally would be, and as no one could possibly be more than I myself am, to see that I am perfectly happy and satisfied in this home and with this life. I never dreamed, in the old days, that I needed all these children to fill my heart completely full; but it is so. Dear as my husband is to me, and as entirely as he realizes my ideal of all a life-companion should be, I could not spare one of these dear little ones, which already seem like my very own."

Morris regarded her earnestly. This woman, whom he had always thought rather narrow in her capabilities, had reached that high plane of living, where the truest, holiest love consists in giving, not receiving; while his wife was wandering who knew where in search of a happiness which did not include him, and lavishing her fondest care upon a stranger maiden. The dark shadow of sadness, which had lifted for a little while, settled down on his face again.

He reached over and took up the glove which lay in Satia's work-basket, softly stretching the yielding fingers and holding them gently between his palms, as though the hand which it had encased could still feel the loving pressure. Aunt Hester saw the

motion, and her kind heart prompted her to wait no longer for him to ask of Satia. She told him of all the details of her daily life—the singing lessons, the instruction in the Norwegian language, the walks, the rides, the trip to Switzerland.

“And you do not know where she is now?” he asked, when she had finished.

“Not exactly, Morris, as you will see by this letter, the last one I have received. You will see that she speaks of making a change, so that the drawing-lessons may be resumed.”

He almost snatched the sheet from her hands, and his heart beat quickly as he devoured the closely written pages. They contained chiefly a bright, interesting description of their life in Lucerne. One sentence only had a deeper significance for him :

“Oh, auntie, it is so lovely to be here, with only this dear child, who helps and does not hinder me !”

Hinder her ! That was what he had done. By ruthlessly forcing the delicate petals of the bud, he had hindered the perfect opening of the flower.

He crushed the glove within his hand. At length he said :

“Thank you for all you have done for her ; and

for me, too, in telling me all this. I cannot speak of it further. To-morrow morning I must start for London."

CHAPTER XIV.

A BUNCH OF ROSES.

Elsa was walking, one pleasant July morning, across the bridge of Mont Blanc at Geneva. The air blew fresh and cool from the lake, and the dancing waters sparkled in the sunshine. The girl stepped quickly, exhilarated by the scene around her and a sense of renewed health; also by the remembrance of the successful completion of her last drawing.

It had been finished but an hour before, and Satia had sent her out for a bit of exercise before going to her regular lesson. This bridge was a favorite spot with Elsa, and she often crossed it. She stopped now as she came opposite the little island. She knew nothing of the strange and gifted man whose name it bears, but she always liked to stand a moment and look at the solitary statue, with its row of tall, stately Lombardy poplars, guardians, apparently, of the figure sitting so silent beneath them;

at the quaint landing-steps and the luxuriant verdure of the tiny place.

“Pardon me, mademoiselle, but are these not your flowers?”

She turned quickly, and saw the bunch of blossoms she had bought for Satia scattered at her feet and blowing along the bridge. A gentleman was picking them up. In thinking of her sketch she had quite forgotten them. She uttered an exclamation of dismay, and began speaking rapidly in Norwegian. Then, suddenly recollecting where she was, she said, blushing deeply as she took the now gathered flowers from the hand of their rescuer:

“I thank you much. I was very careless.”

Morris raised his hat. He had suspected for some moments that his surmise was correct, and that the girl he had been following was the maiden Satia loved so well. Something in her bearing—a certain freedom of movement and erectness of carriage—had struck him when he first observed her. He had at that moment, just emerged from his hotel, and his thoughts were naturally occupied with the persons he had come to find. As his eyes fell upon Elsa, he felt sure that she was no Southern-born child of sunny skies, but a true daughter of the Northern land. Although so much more slender and dainty of mould, she reminded him of Christine,

whom he had studied closely during the hour she spent with him at her father's house. He foresaw then that there might be difficulties in his way, and he had forearmed himself as fully as possible. So now, as he walked near the sister in Geneva, he was able to compare her, point by point, with her sister in Bergen.

The dropping of the flowers seemed to him most opportune, for he wished much to acquaint himself somewhat with Satia's surroundings before presenting himself to her.

As Elsa spoke her few words of thanks she started on, and Morris stepped immediately beside her, grateful that she had added to them the still newer ones of self-accusation; for it made it quite natural for him to say in the most friendly, pleasant way imaginable:

“Oh, no; not careless, but only thinking of something else—your Norway home, perhaps.”

Elsa at first looked up in surprise that he should again address her. She drew herself up somewhat haughtily. But no woman could long remain haughty when Morris Julian chose to envelop her in the sunshine of his glance. It was more than a glance, a look, full, eager, melting, respectful—aye, almost reverential; for so this most complex, contradictorily-natured man truly felt in the presence

of all womankind. Elsa, child as she was, felt the influence of this half-laughing, compelling regard. In spite of herself she smiled, just the very least little bit, as she heard his transparent excuse for her negligence; but her whole soul flashed forth instantly from her beautiful blue eyes as he spoke the word "Norway." The man was charmed, and at the same time his lip curled in something very like contempt. How easy it was to play upon this wonderful instrument of the human soul—to produce just the effect he chose! Surely, all women were alike, from icy steppes to torrid plain. All but one, alas!

He answered the girl's unspoken question before she had time to frame it in words.

"If I mistake not, Miss Elsa, I dined at your father's house in Bergen two weeks ago. I am quite sure that you have a sister Tina."

Her heart throbbed violently; the color came and went in her cheeks; a mist clouded her eyes. "A sister Tina!" How the words brought before her with a rush, a vision of the dear, distant home and all the loved faces which must have gathered around the board when this stranger sat there, only two short weeks ago! Was he, indeed, a stranger? She stole another glance at the kindly, smiling face. It seemed as though she must have known him always. She hesitated no longer, but asked the questions which

rushed to her lips as frankly and gladly as she would have done of Ole.

Morris answered them as well as he could and as patiently. Then it was his turn, and he skillfully discovered all that he wished to know of her life with "Madame;" at last he ventured to add that he was an old friend of hers, and had been much disappointed at not seeing her in Bergen.

"How very good it iss, then, that you happened to come here!" she exclaimed, raising her clear, truthful eyes to his.

"I fear," he returned, gently, "that you are forgetting your flowers again and holding them too closely. See, they are drooping. Let us go to the florist's just yonder, and get another bunch. Then, perhaps, you will take me to Madame Julian."

"Oh, thank you. They were for her. Yes, it iss time that I wass at home long ago."

They entered the florist's shop, and Elsa looked on in amazement as he ordered a beautiful basket of rare, exquisite blossoms to be made up and sent to the address she gave. He selected a handful of the most lovely rosebuds, and gave them to Elsa.

"Come," he said.

Now that he was near enough to Satia to be buying her flowers, as he had done before in this very

place, he could scarcely restrain his impatience to be with her.

They walked rapidly, and very soon Elsa said :

“ We live here. Will you please to sit down in the parlor while I tell madame that you are here ? ”

She led the way and took from his hand the folded paper he extended.

“ This will tell her who I am,” he said, smiling ; “ and do not forget that it was I who have made you so late.”

Elsa smiled brightly in return, and flew up the long flight of steps as though she had wings. She entered their little sitting-room so much more quickly than usual that Satia, who was singing, looked around in surprise.

The hungry-hearted man below heard the well-known tones as the door was opened. He sprang to his feet, and found himself hastening towards the stairway, before he was conscious of having risen. “ But she is mine,” he said to himself, as he slowly made his way back to the farthest corner of the room ; “ I have a right to go.” He knew, however, that this was not true, and he shut his teeth hard. The moments seemed cruelly long.

Satia looked in astonishment at the girl’s flushed cheeks and shining eyes, also at the rosebuds in her hand. What made her think of bunches just

like this that had been brought to her before here in Geneva? What made her feel faint with apprehension even before Elsa began her wondrous tale?

“Oh, madame,” she cried, throwing off her hat, and bringing the roses to Satia, “you can never believe! I have seen a friend of yours from America. He iss—oh, I do not know his name—but he wass in Bergen—at our dear home, madame—only think—just the week before the last one! He wass so kind, to tell me of every one of the dear people, and he said to give you thiss, madame. He wass so sorry not to see you there. He gave me these roses for you, and there is coming a basket, which—”

But she did not finish. There was a sudden terror in her brown eyes, a pallor on the beautiful face, an involuntary shrinking and a hurried, furtive glance at the door. Satia stood a moment irresolute, still clasping the bit of paper.

“Elsa, dear child,” she said, in low, hurried tones, “please go to your sleeping-room and stay there until I call you. It will be but a few minutes.”

Elsa hesitated almost imperceptibly.

“Go, Elsa, if you love me.”

As soon as she had left the room, Satia turned the

key in the lock. She then read the line hastily written on the folded card :

“ Satia, I was wrong. Let me atone.

“ MORRIS.”

Trembling in every limb, she seized a pencil and wrote beneath, these words :

“ I cannot now, nor ever again, see you.

“ SATIA.”

She put the card into an envelope, sealed and addressed it, then rang for a servant and bade him take it to the gentleman in the parlor.

Locking the door again, she waited breathlessly. One minute passed—two—five ; steps approached ; some one knocked.

“ How perfectly childish I am,” she said, laughing hysterically. “ Morris is a gentleman ; he will not force himself upon me. I did not know that I could be so nervous.”

Still trembling, she opened the door, half dreading, half hoping to be once more face to face with Morris Julian.



CHAPTER XV.

A PLEASANT WINTER.

As Satia opened the door she received an envelope from the servant. Opening it she found this message:

“Whenever you will, Satia, my heart and my home are open to you. They never were and never can be to anyone else. Until you wish it, I will not try to see you again. A word to our New York address will reach me wherever I am. Do not forget that I am still your husband, your legal protector and your devoted lover,

“MORRIS JULIAN.”

Satia was startled to find that her eyes filled with tears as she read, that her heart was touched by the gentle, loving, reproachless words. She read, too, between the lines, and she knew how much they meant—the written and the unwritten words—to the man who wrote them. For one swift, fleeting

instant, she felt impelled to fly to him, to comfort him, to gladden him as she knew that she alone could do. But with the impulse came a vivid memory of the silent, absolute dominion which this same man had exercised over her life. Could she go back to it again? Would it be possible for him ever to "atone?" She started to her feet and threw wide open all the windows in the room. She drew long, deep breaths of the pure, sweet air. Her lips closed firmly and the soft light, which had for a moment kindled in her eyes, died away.

"Never!" she said. "We can neither of us change our natures. Never! It cannot be!"

When Morris had read and replied to Satia's message, he sat as if changed to stone. Time passed unheeded. At length he became conscious that the servant had returned and stood near. He raised his head.

"You are ill, sir!" exclaimed the man, quickly. "Let me bring you something."

"No; it is nothing," murmured Morris. "There is no answer?"

"None, sir."

He looked vaguely around; then taking his hat, he left the house.

He went directly to the telegraph office, and cabled to Mary Fielding:

“Send Maynard, with Kelsie, to Liverpool by the first Cunarder. I will meet them there.

“MORRIS JULIAN.”

The next morning, while Elsa was gone to her drawing master, Satia again considered the exciting events of the previous day.

The whirl and shock and excitement produced by Morris' most unexpected appearance, and their attendant reaction, had, in a measure, passed away, and she was better able to think of her situation.

That her husband might follow her, she had at first thought to be possible, though not probable: for she knew how very high and strict his notions of wifely loyalty were, and she believed that the step she had voluntarily taken could never be forgiven. And as the weeks and months slipped by one by one, she became finally convinced that he had ceased to care for her. Now, as she sat with his flowers before her, their fragrance and beauty bore mute testimony to his continued affection—testimony which was corroborated by the few penciled lines, which she had not destroyed. They seemed, indeed, to exercise a strange fascination for her. She read them over and over, until they seemed to be ever before her eyes. At last, annoyed, she locked them away in her desk, determined to forget them, once for all. Her eyes were drawn

irresistibly toward a fine photograph of the Sistine Madonna on the mantel. They met those of the beautiful, serene mother, large and calm, gazing down at her with wondering reproach. The perfume of the flowers made the air heavy and difficult to breathe. The words, "Your husband, your legal protector, your devoted lover," rang in her ears.

She presently sought her never-failing refuge, the open air. She walked long and rapidly, and when she returned her rebellious thoughts were under control and she had reached several conclusions.

One of these concerned Elsa, and she lost no time in making it known to her. When they came up from dinner, the photograph, the glass of roses and the basket of flowers had been removed.

"Come, Elsa dear," said Satia; "before we go driving to-day, I want to have a little talk with you. First, though, let me take a good look at you, to see how well you are."

Elsa, laughing, came and stood in front of her, with her hands demurely folded. Satia regarded her closely. She tried to compare her with the girl who had bade her welcome to Bergen not four months ago. The result amazed her. Elsa was just at the age when development takes place most rapidly under favorable conditions, and the change of climate from Norway to Switzerland had been

made at exactly the right time for her. From a slender slip of a girl, shy and child-like, she had grown into a tall, graceful maiden, self-possessed and womanly. She was in excellent health, too, and in just the frame of mind and body to thoroughly enjoy her new life.

All of these things Satia noted in her critical survey.

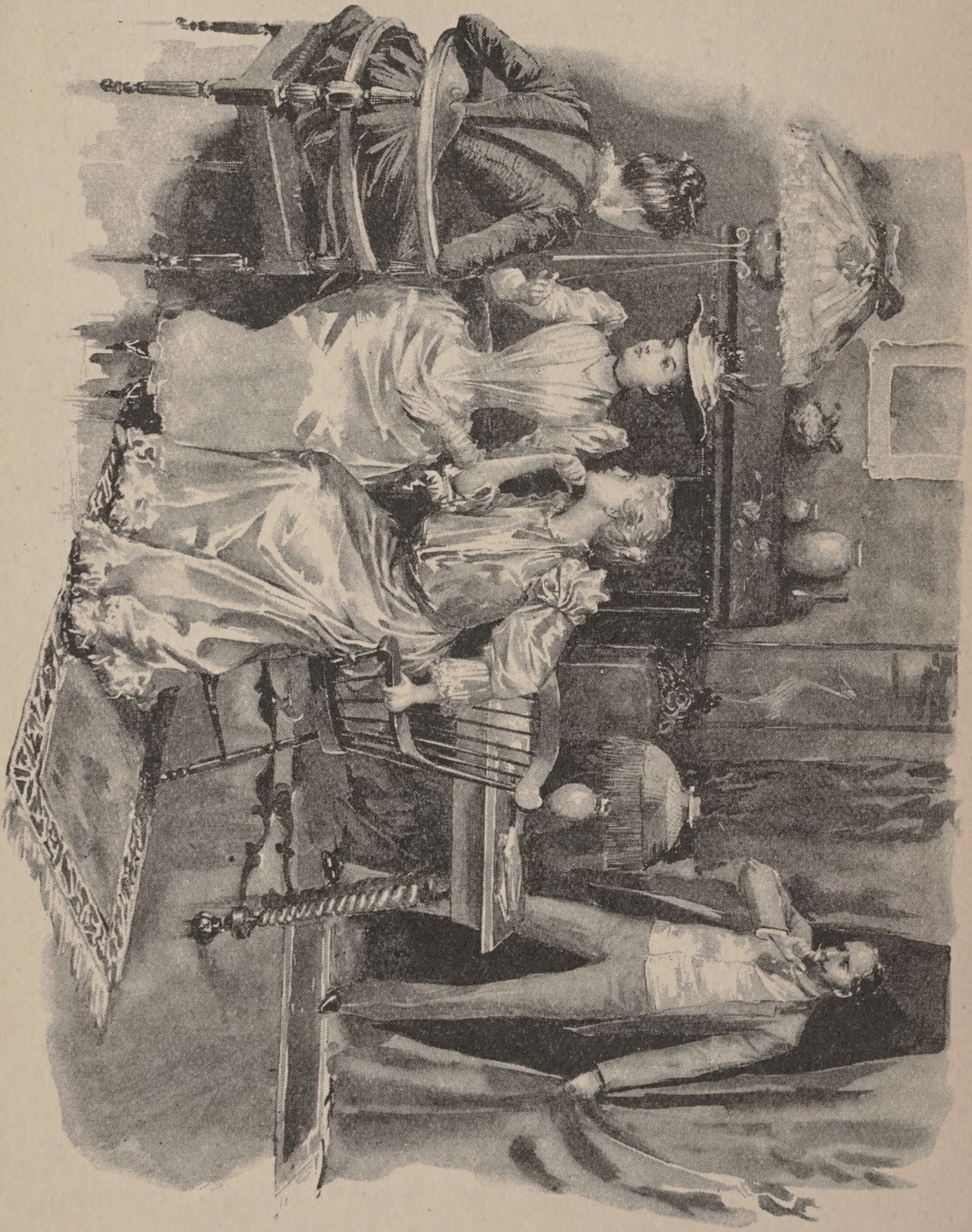
"That will do, *mignonne*," she said, smiling, as she drew the girl beside her. "Now, listen to me, Elsa. I want you to understand perfectly what I am about to say. You are almost a woman now, you know, and must begin to be wise."

"Yes, madame," replied the girl, gravely. "I shall be sixteen in September."

"So old as that?" laughed Satia, patting the round cheek. "Well, then, it is high time that this small head is getting packed with knowledge. How much have you ever been to school, Elsa?"

"All my life, until last winter, when Tina went away. I could not bear to go then," she answered, promptly. Satia looked rather surprised.

"So?" she said. "Ah, yes; I remember now. You Norwegians believe in newspapers and schools just as energetically as you do in churches. And that is what makes you such brave, lovely people, too. Well, my dear, in all these years of your



"ONE NAME WAS SATIA".—See Page 134.

going to school, have you learned French history? For instance, can you tell me what important event occurred in the reign of Charles VII.?"

Elsa blushed and shook her head. She cast down her eyes in embarrassment, and did not see Satia's laughing glance.

"I'm only funning, dear; do not mind my teasing. I don't know much about French history myself, and I've been thinking that it would be pleasant for us to study it together. And we won't have just the dry old books to study from, but the whole country of France itself. When we read of a place where any great or interesting event happened, or where any important person lived, we'll get on a train or into a *diligence*, and go there and explore and poke about for ourselves. How would you like that?"

Elsa's eyes were sparkling now. No need of words to answer for her.

"But, Elsa, this will take a good while—all the fall and winter, maybe. Are you willing to stay away from home so long? To be my own girl all that time? My plan is to make a little journey through Switzerland now. I want you to see it when it is at its prettiest. Then, say in September, we will go to Paris and make ourselves there a pleasant home, where our singing and drawing

lessons can go on, with some in French, too, and to which we can return after our various trips in the pursuit of historical knowledge. I shall enjoy this very greatly, Elsa, and I think you would, too. Now, I want you to think it all over very carefully, and let me know your decision. Take a day or two to consider well; for, you know, it will be a long time to wait until next spring before seeing the dear home people."

Elsa was more grave than usual for some days after this conversation. Satia, awaited her conclusion in the matter with a good deal of secret anxiety. Although so yielding and gentle as a general thing, Elsa possessed a quiet strength of character quite remarkable in one so young, and Satia believed her capable of putting aside all the attractions of the winter of travel and study if she thought it her duty to do so. Satia herself had set her heart upon the project, so it was with great satisfaction that she heard Elsa say:

"I will stay with you, dear madame, and thank you with all my heart. I am always happy to be with you," and she gave Satia one of her sweet, shy looks; "and I know it will be much for my good. At first, it seemed selfish for me to stay so long, but the kind Mother Hester is there to care for all at my home, and Tina does not need me now; so—"

“So you will be my dear comforter!” cried Satia, interrupting her and clasping her in her arms. “They do not need you now, truly, and I—oh, I do!” A sob choked her voice for a moment. She pressed her lips to the girl’s soft cheek. “You do not know how happy you have made me, Elsa,” she said. “And now I’m going to write directly to your father for permission to keep you, and I feel quite sure that he will not refuse it; so we can begin at once to plan out our route through this lovely mountain-land.”

The letter was written, and a dozen guide-books procured. Satia set herself about this pleasant task with characteristic energy. At every step she was reminded of the days when she and Morris had amused themselves in just this same way. She was reminded, too, by Elsa’s eager delight, as the prospective weeks of enjoyment and novelty spread themselves before her, of her own girlish enthusiasm. She found herself unconsciously imitating her husband’s thoughtfulness, his careful provision for every possible need.

It was not many days until the expected letter came. It not only gave the hoped-for consent, but hearty approval of the plan. Aunt Hester alluded to it at the end of her share of the epistle:

“I quite envy you, too. I shouldn't be one bit surprised if, when you get to Rouen or Chartres, or some of those other lovely places, you would find me and Papa Lars, and Jan and Lars, and Henrik and Tula, and Truda and Baby Ola, and the big black cat and her seven little kittens, all sitting in a row on the cathedral steps, trying to improve our minds, too!”

“Now,” said Satia, when they had laughed over this and enjoyed the whole newsy, entertaining budget, “now, Elsa darling, you belong to me for six long months, at least. And I'm not going to be ‘madame’ to you any longer. I am really not madame at all. Marie and Madeleine began calling me so, and Christine took it up. My name is Satia Julian, and I want you to call me ‘Satia,’ please, just as though you were truly my own real little sister. Will you not?”

Elsa hesitated. It seemed too long a step for her to take; too wonderful a thing to be so near as sister to the friend who had made her life so beautiful, whom she loved with so full and grateful a heart.

“If you will let me, please, may I not say—is it not ‘cousin’ that you call it, when one is more than friend and not quite sister? I think ‘Cousin Satia’ is a sweet name.”

“So it is,” replied Satia, divining her thought and touched by her humility. “Then I am ‘Cousin

Satia' in future, and I will try to be a very kind and loving one."

The tour of Switzerland occupied the entire month of August, and was most delightful. Then came the pleasant task of choosing a home in Paris and fitting it up for several months of living in it. It was the last of September before they were fairly settled and had had enough sight-seeing to be ready to get to work. Teachers were then engaged, and the days until Christmas were full to overflowing. Then came a rest from these labors, and the first of the history trips was taken. The royal chateau of Amboise was selected as the objective point and several days spent in reviewing beneath its walls the tragic events which they had witnessed from the time when Cæsar's Roman legions found lodgment there to the Huguenot massacres which Catherine de Medicis overlooked from the neighboring balconies. In strong contrast to this blood-stained fortress was another chateau, royal and beautiful, which they visited at this time. At Chenonceaux they found only gentle, smiling memories—only pictures of grace and leisure and gallantry; for this enchanting spot was devoted to the sports and to the happy days of French royalty. Elsa was both bright and appreciative, and Satia found the task of directing her studies more pleasant than she had

anticipated. Especially did they both enjoy this novel method of learning history. The first "object lesson" proved so satisfactory that a second was determined on for the last of January. They were made very happy about this time by Elsa's bearing off the highest honors at an exhibition of drawings from casts given by her class. Satia declared that a couple of weeks at Nice, stopping at intermediate points as they liked, should be her reward for this. They had scarcely arrived at the charming summer resort, when a letter came from Norway which upset all their arrangements in a twinkling, and gave Satia, in particular, the deepest disappointment. It was from Aunt Hester.

. . . . "And now, my dear Satia, I have some great news for you. Nothing else than that we, the entire Nissen family, are preparing to leave Bergen for America in April. We have been talking of it for the last two or three weeks, and now it is positively decided. You know that Lars has given over all his shipping interests here to Eric.

"He thinks, and so do I, that he has followed the sea long enough. And we feel that the children can be educated so much more satisfactorily in the United States than here in Bergen, although there are good schools here.

"I want, if possible, to rent the Stanley place, next to our Elm Ridge home, you remember, for the present. As soon as suitable we shall build.

“Of course, this means that Elsa must come home before long. I know that you will be grievously disappointed, dear, for I can see that you have set your heart on keeping her for some time to come. And if we remained here, I think her father would be willing enough ; but he will not listen a moment to leaving her on this side. It is almost more than he can do to leave Christine. So prepare to bring her home in three or four weeks.

“I wish it were possible to induce you to go with us, dear. I feel sure that you will never be truly happy until you have returned to the home you have left. Forgive me if I have wounded you. I could not help saying it, Satia.”

The letter dropped from her hands, and she bowed her head upon them. Deep down in her very secret self, she knew those words to be true, and that wherever she might turn she could not escape them. But she struggled hard to keep them down—should she *now* surrender?



CHAPTER XVI.

IN THE EDINBURGH GALLERY.

Since assuming the charge of Elsa's education, Satia had, in a measure, succeeded in tranquilizing herself, but now how had her hopes come crashing down! No more hours of sweet companionship! Instead, Elsa was to go a thousand leagues away, across the Atlantic to Satia's old home. Was there really nothing more in life for Satia? Yes; she had a vision of a little yellow-haired lad, as loving, as bright as Elsa herself, as needy of instruction and care. One, too, who could never be taken from her clasping arms, because she had the first and highest claim upon him. It required more than her ordinary resolution to banish this small image. It clung to her; mutely it demanded her attention. At last, sorrowfully, slowly, it faded away, and she was free to tell Elsa of the coming changes in their affairs.

Elsa was disappointed at first; but the magic

word "America" had great charms for her, and Satia soon saw that she was anticipating the journey.

"If you and Tina could only come, too! Won't you, Cousin Satia? Nobody can love you better than we do. Please say yes."

"Perhaps some day," said Satia, looking somewhat sadly into the bright, pleading face; "but not now. In the meantime, though, I shall expect to hear that you are getting on famously in our American schools."

"I will certainly try very hard. But I shall miss you—always."

She passed her hand over Satia's soft, dark hair—a favorite caress—little dreaming of her loved friend's aching, longing, heavy heart.

It was during the first week of March that they set their faces northward. They went slowly, stopping in London and in half a dozen of the beautiful old English cathedral towns, as well as in Edinburgh, for a few days each. While in the latter city, they went one morning to the studio of a celebrated artist, where a number of fine paintings were on exhibition. Satia was always careful to give Elsa every advantage of this kind, and was herself fast acquiring a genuine love for pictures, as well as considerable skill as a critic. She was enjoying a

marine view, the gem of the collection, when Elsa, who had been wandering about, came quickly to her and said, while at the same time she drew her toward a large easel :

“ Oh, Cousin Satia, do come and see this lovely boy—his portrait, I mean. Isn't he the dearest little fellow? And his eyes are exactly like yours.”

Satia, smiling at the young girl's enthusiasm, looked up. And what did she see on the canvas before her? The features of her own son!

They were older than when she saw them last, and more clearly cut, but they belonged to none other than Maynard Julian.

Faint and giddy, she sank upon a chair behind her. As in a dream, she heard herself speak to Elsa a word or two of admiration, then say that she was tired and would rest awhile, bidding her make the round of the studio alone. Then, with her hungry gaze fixed upon the dimpled, beautiful face of her boy, she first tasted the true bitterness of her self-imposed exile. Why had she left him? What spirit of evil prompted her? She was unable to answer these and a hundred other questions which rushed through her brain. Soon she was recalled to her surroundings by hearing some one say :

“ He is indeed, a fine child, madame, the young laird of Glen Cairlie. His father, the wealthy Mr.

Julian of America, of whom you have doubtless heard, has just become, by the death of a distant relative of his mother, the head of the family here. 'Tis a good old one, and a fine, though somewhat neglected, estate."

"Will Mr. Julian live at the castle?" was asked.

"That I cannot tell you. He came a couple of weeks ago, and brought his son to me to have his portrait painted for the picture-gallery there; and a fine addition it would be to any collection."

"I've heard that Mr. Julian is a widower—that is, his wife has left him; but I don't see how she could give up such a child."

"Oh, she was very gay," said another, voice, in a lower tone, quite near Satia. "He kept her almost in seclusion, for she is a great beauty, and he the most jealous man alive. But at last she rebelled, and there was a dreadful scene, I've been told, and one day she just packed up and went off, without even saying good-bye."

"Did she go alone?" some one else asked, still more softly.

"Oh, yes, of course; but everybody knows that Jack Francis sailed on the very next steamer, and—"

"Why, the *Rochester* was burned, and Mrs. Julian was among the lost. I remember seeing her name in the list; don't you, Maud?"

“It was so reported; but she was really rescued by some steamer and carried to Brazil or somewhere, and got around to Geneva after awhile. My sister-in-law saw her there last summer; but, of course, she did not make herself known. I suppose that Jack—— Oh, there is Mr. Grant, one of our New York artists. I must introduce him to Mr. Ogilvie.”

The party moved on, and poor Satia sat dazed, stung, overwhelmed.

But she saw the next comers staring strangely at her; and after one long, devouring look at the little fellow in his Highland dress, she sought Elsa, and they left the place.

Happily for her they had arranged to leave Edinburgh the next morning for Stirling and the Trossach. She kept herself constantly occupied with the sightseeing and the showing of all points of interest to Elsa; and it was not until on the little steamer crossing Loch Lomond that her trouble was allowed to come uppermost. Elsa was chatting with some young girls whose acquaintance she had made the day before. Satia sat motionless, her hands clasped tightly, her eyes fixed on the opposite shore, but they did not see the lovely pictures which were brought before them at every turn; they were full of horror and an unutterable longing to get far away beyond sight and sound of every human being.

A lady, seated in a large wicker-chair at only a short distance, had been observing her closely for some time—a lady whose fine, high-bred face, from which the snowy hair was brushed plainly back, bore the stamp of a sweet, kindly nature. She turned at last and looked around toward a gentleman who, at that moment, started to approach her from the opposite side of the steamer.

“Here we are, mother,” he said, as he came quite near. “Are you ready? We’ll be at Tarbet landing in five minutes.”

“Yes, Kenneth. I was just wishing for you. I’m as sure as I can be that the bonnie, sad-eyed lassie I’ve been looking at for these fifteen minutes can be none other than the child of my dear old friend, Jeanie Sutherland. Look, my son; she sits yonder by the guard. Now, while Sandy is taking my chair and Margie looks after the bags, give me your arm and I’ll just speak a word to her.”

Kenneth Cameron barely glanced at Satia. He obediently assisted his mother to rise, and they made their way slowly across the deck. The little steamer was almost at the landing, and everybody rushed to the opposite side, leaving them comparatively alone. Not until she felt a light touch on her arm did Satia stir. She looked up quickly, then

full into a pair of large, beautifully luminous eyes, fixed searchingly upon her own.

“You’ll pardon an old woman; but, my dear, was your mother not Jeanie Sutherland?” she heard a gentle voice saying.

Her mother! Satia was on her feet instantly, and felt her hands clasped closely.

“I knew it—I was sure!” the delighted lady exclaimed. “And you must be the little Satia she used to write me of. How stupid of me not to have spoken to you before! Now, we are going to get off here at Tarbet Inn. But I must see more of you. Where can I address you? Yes, Kenneth; I am coming now.”

It was the work of but a moment for Satia to give her Bergen address. Then she felt a soft kiss on her forehead, and saw the two making their way off the steamer. She had been vaguely conscious that the gentleman had lifted his hat on approaching and held it in his hand while his mother spoke with her; that the low, quiet tones of the lady had fallen soothingly upon her distracted spirit; but she needed, after all, to take up and to read the cards which she found on her lap to fully convince herself that the interview was not a fancy.

ALISAN CAMERON

Dunnoch Cragg.

KENNETH CAMERON, M. D.

Erlalach.

St. Luke's Children's Hospital.

was what she saw upon the pasteboard cards. And "Alisan Cameron" was her mother's friend, far back in her girlhood's days. Satia could imagine, from the little she remembered of her mother, what a lovely, gentle girl she must have been. She was a lovely, gentle mother, too—not faithless like her daughter, she thought, with a keen pang of self-condemnation.

The Highland trip was over at last, enjoyed beyond expression by Elsa; endured as best she was able by Satia, whose one desire now was to get away, up to the wide, still mountain pastures of which she had dreamed in the spring.

"If I had gone there then, I might have been spared all this," she said to herself. But she well knew that she had sown the seeds of her present misery when she left her baby's cradle, and that,

flee where she would, she could not have escaped the bitter harvest.

They were fortunate in reaching Hull just in time for the Bergen steamer. The *Domino* was on the point of starting, and made the passage more quickly than usual. It was Christine this time who stood at the pier to welcome them.

At first glance, she could hardly believe that the tall, stylish young lady beside Satia was really Elsa, the pale, languid girl whom she had kissed good-bye with so many forbodings. But one long look into the happy face told her that it was, indeed, her own precious little sister, the very same, in spite of added stature and Paris gown.

She claimed her for every moment of the brief time remaining before the family started for America. Satia found Aunt Hester not so busy as she had anticipated; for they were taking very few household articles. Nearly all was left for Eric and Erika, who were to be married in the summer and to come to live in the old home.

Just before time for the very last "good-byes," Satia went to her auntie. She put her arms about her neck and laid her head in its old resting-place.

"Auntie," she said, "I want to thank you for your silence. I think there is not another woman in the whole world who could have kept from asking me

whether or not I saw Morris. But your loving, silent sympathy has helped me to bear these heavy days more than you will ever know, I hope. And I feel that it is right that I should tell you that he came to Geneva. But I did not see him. You are surprised? And disappointed, too, I know. It is not given to every woman to have so happy and congenial a marriage as yours, auntie dear. I made many mistakes in my life with Morris, I am sure; but I tried to please him so long as I could conscientiously, and I thought I was right in leaving him."

She stopped, and Mrs. Nissen felt her tremble. She stroked the soft hair and said, gently:

"I am sorry, and disappointed, too, Satia, that you did not see Morris. I think that if you had done so, this most unhappy state of things between you would have been ended. He acknowledged to me his own short-comings, and is most anxious for a reconciliation. Surely, my dear, if not for his sake, for Maynard's—"

Satia stirred quickly, moaning as if in pain.

"Don't speak of him—not now. I can't bear it," she said, imploringly. She raised her head and pushed her hair back from a face so wan and haggard that Aunt Hester was shocked at sight of it.

“I didn't mean to speak of it; I cannot now. But, auntie, I saw his picture in Edinburgh, and I heard—oh, I heard dreadful things about myself—horrible!” she cried, shuddering; “and they will keep me forever from seeing him again. Oh, auntie, my heart will break! Oh, my boy—my baby!”

She walked the room in her misery, wringing her hands and groaning aloud. At last, exhausted, she threw herself, half-fainting, on a couch. Distressed and alarmed, Aunt Hester could only apply restoratives. She could not find one word of comfort for the girl she loved and pitied so truly that would not seem to reproach her, too. But her tender, silent ministrations brought relief to the overstrained nerves, and gradually Satia grew calm.

“I am going to-morrow,” she said, after a time, “to Erika's home, and ask to go with Jenne to the Saeter. Away up there, in the pure, quiet freshness of the mountain air, I shall rest and think out what to do with my poor, broken life. I am young and strong, and shall probably live many years. I have plenty of money, and I can, perhaps, be able to help somebody in some way. I do not know yet. I cannot think now.”

She closed her eyes and lay quite still. Aunt Hester felt the tears falling upon her cheeks. To

her, this calm, hopeless way of speaking of herself was infinitely sadder than her violent grief. Whatever had happened in Edinburgh had evidently pierced her heart through and through. In this stricken, pallid woman there was scarcely a trace of the vigorous, rosy-hued Satia who had taken Elsa to Switzerland ten months before. Satia, herself, was surprised to find how weak and changed she was after this breaking over of the severe restraint she had imposed upon herself. She was glad that but a few hours remained during which she needed to assume a cheerfulness she was far from feeling.

It was about sunset of a clear April day that she stood on the now familiar pier and watched the faces of the Nissen family slowly passing from her sight. So long as she could see the last flutter of Elsa's handkerchief, she stood there, waving her own. Then, with a long, choking sob, she turned away.



CHAPTER XVII.

ABOVE THE CLOUDS.

When Erika met Satia at the post-station nearest her father's farm, she exclaimed :

"Oh, madame is ill! Last summer it was Elsa, but now yourself!"

"And I've come to beg a corner of your high mountain dairy to get well in," replied Satia.

Erika, grown by this time to blooming womanhood, laughed gladly, showing her pretty white teeth just as of old.

"You do not, then, forget! Last year you said that some day you go there. Next week Jenne goes with the maids and the lads and the cattle. - She will willingly take you, too. I certain am."

Satia smiled then. She remembered that this odd, transposed phrase had been one of Erika's favorite expressions when trying to learn English on board the *Sea Gull*. It reminded her also to speak of Eric.

"Thank you," she said. "I saw Eric the morn-

ing I left, Erika. In fact, he put me on the train, and he bade me give his best love to you."

Erika blushed, and asked shyly, while pretending to arrange the wagon-robe :

"And was he quite well, madame?"

"Very well, Erika; and so busy getting the home ready for you. I suppose you are busy, too?"

Thus encouraged, Erika chatted happily of her goodly stores and all the pretty work yet to be done.

All this while they were slowly climbing up hills which grew constantly longer and steeper. Now and then they came to a stretch of road lying level along the valley, over which the stout horses trotted at full speed. Then another pull, and another, until the mountains seemed fairly closing in behind, beside, before them. They crossed rushing streams; they caught sight of white, spray-veiled waterfalls; they had glimpses of foaming cascades, dashing down over the rocks; they drove beneath far-spreading branches of tall evergreen trees, somber and stately; they went on and up until, at last, not far away to the left, the broad fields and the farm-building of the Nissen homestead were to be seen.

Satia was pleasantly remembered there from her

visit the year before, and she received a welcome whose hearty cordiality was grateful, indeed, to her. Even more than that of Lars Nissen and his children and their Bergen friends, she enjoyed the simple, sincere hospitality of his brother's mountain-bred family. But she longed to be away, farther yet above the dark ridges which bounded her present horizon. And she was glad when she mounted the stout cart, built for their rough, jolting journey, beside Jenne, who, as eldest daughter, true to the traditions of her country, was to take charge of the impatient cattle, already sniffing from afar the green, delicious fodder of their summer home.

The herd this year was larger than usual, and several maids were taken besides the lads. It was a merry, chattering party that set off at daybreak for the long ride across the valley and up, up to the Saeter. They made their way slowly, but at length a white-capped peak burst upon their view, then another, and presently, far, far above them, they could discern the grassy stretch of their own mountain meadows.

It was hours after this first glimpse that they reached the simply built cottages.

Satia wandered just beyond sight and sound of the busy maids, and could easily fancy herself to be the only living being in the vast, solitary place.

Hour after hour and day after day she spent lying at full length upon the grass, letting herself be engulfed by the great waves of remorse, anguish and humiliation which rolled over her in a flood. Powerless, unresisting, she could not buffet them. The few but terribly significant words overheard in the Edinburgh gallery were ever before her in letters of fire, burning themselves into her innocent, grieved, indignant heart with scorching insistence. She knew them to be utterly false ; but she knew, too, that she had voluntarily placed herself where it was impossible to deny them. In the singleness of purpose with which she had left her husband—although she had thought, in a vague way, that gossip would come of it—she had not dreamed of the poisonous effect which the lightest word against a wife's name must have.

She writhed now in helpless agony beneath the breath of slander which had not failed to follow her ; which had interposed a forever impassable barrier between herself and the son in whom now her whole life was enwrapped. For, like Cæsar's wife, her boy's mother must be "above suspicion."

But there came an hour when the towering peaks, the frowning crags, the tree-crowned hills, the crystal waters, the smiling pastures, each sent their gift of peace to her troubled spirit ; and from the

very heart of Nature itself there fell upon her the noiseless benediction of perfect, golden stillness. She rested now, as a child might, upon the bosom of this blessed silence, she felt herself refreshed and strengthened by its mystery, its strange power.

The depths of her suffering had been reached ; slowly she came back to the thoughts and interests of daily life ; she began to long for human companionship. Until now, her meals, what little she had taken, had been prepared and served to her apart, by Jenne, quietly and with a gentle sympathy which Satia was quick to perceive and to appreciate.

One morning she said :

“ I am nearly well now, Jenne, and should like, if I may, to come out and make one at your long, jolly tableful.”

Jenne looked at the pale cheeks and thin hands a moment. She shook her head, although she smiled, too.

“ Madame not look well at all, but she be welcome.”

“ Thank you, Jenne. And now may I see where you are so busy all the day long ?”

“ Yes, madame. Here.”

She led the way to the great, sweet-smelling room where the pails of foaming milk brought in

night and morning by the lads were transformed into dozens of rolls of fragrant, golden butter and piles of spicy cheeses. At long tables the big, round-armed dairy-maids, in spotless caps and aprons, stood chattering merrily in their strange sounding language, while they deftly manipulated the yellow balls and packed them snugly away to be taken down to the farmhouse by and by.

In another part of the room was a row of tidy-looking churns and a great cheese press, and, on still another side, the table around which all the busy workers gathered for the three abundant meals, which, it seemed to Satia, were no small part of the day's labor to prepare.

She wondered, as she watched the girls, and admired the skillful turn of wrist and arm by which they accomplished what they wished, whether she, too, could not make one of the pretty rolls. She begged to be allowed to try. But she found that the wooden paddles which appeared but toys in the strong, practiced hands of the buxom maids, and which yielded so readily to their wills, were suddenly changed into big, obstinate sticks within her slender grasp, and refused to do anything except what she did not intend. After a few unsuccessful attempts which ended in sending the butter upon the table most disastrously, she gave the tantalizing

tools back to the amused Jenne, and put her hands behind her.

This pantomime was perfectly understood by them all, and a merry laugh went round.

Jenne took Satia's fingers and spread them out on her own broad, firm palm.

“Too small, madame; they not make butter. Write in book—with pen.”

Jenne's English was very limited, but she had given Satia something to think of. She went away from the dairy out to a favorite nook, turning over the Norwegian girl's suggestion. Why should she not “write in a book—with pen?” Her native energy was reasserting itself, and this, combined with the restless desire for constant occupation, nearly always induced by great sorrow as a relief from its burden, made her anxious to be no longer idle. She had thought of many ways in which to employ herself, and in turn rejected each. Not until now had the resources of so many people of all estates and in all moods—authorship—occurred to her.

Should she write? Could she? Might she not? Perhaps the story of her life, simply, truthfully told, with all its mistakes and all its miseries, might keep some other girl from shipwreck on the rocks where her own ill-fated craft had gone down.

The idea pleased her. Full of excitement, she

went at once for a book and pencil and paper. She hastily sketched an outline for her story, and beginning with her happy, care-free girlhood, she wrote rapidly until she had covered the few sheets of paper she had brought with her. As she turned the last, with an exclamation of impatience that it was the last, the book slipped from her lap. Stooping to pick it up from the grass, she saw that a card had dropped from it. She took this in her hand and read:

.....
: KENNETH CAMERON, M. D. :
: Erlallach. :
: *St. Luke's Children's Hospital.* :
.....

A children's hospital! In such a place there must be nurses. Instantly there came an answer to her question. She saw her future life mapped out before her clearly and unmistakably. With a feeling akin to awe, she raised her eyes to the clear blue of the heavens above her. Had this message come straight to her from the all-wise, loving heart of the Great Creator, the tender Father, who had fashioned her life, together with all the wondrous beauty and grandeur spread out before her? Had He, in the fullness of His compassion, opened before her

this pathway, by walking humbly, faithfully, in which she might atone for her great sin?

As nurse in a children's hospital, trained, skillful, experienced, might she not bring to other little ones the care, the devotion, nay, the very mother-love itself, which she could never now give to her own?

She fell upon her knees, gratefully, devoutly, and her whole heart went up to her God in a petition for strength and courage and wisdom in the life to which she now consecrated herself.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AT ST. LUKE'S.

Kenneth Cameron, coming back to his office from his morning rounds of the wards, about three weeks after Satia's decision to devote her life to ministration to the sick in a children's hospital, found a lady waiting to see him. He had a faint impression of having seen the earnest brown eyes, the slight, graceful figure before, but he tried in vain to remember where, as he courteously greeted her.

"Can you give me a few minutes of your time, Doctor Cameron?" she asked.

A quick smile broke over his rather grave face, lighting it up pleasantly. He laid down the card at which he had been looking, and came at once toward Satia, extending his hand.

“I know you now. I remember your voice,” he said, with boyish directness. “You are my mother’s friend, whom we met on the steamer at Tarbet last spring. She has so often regretted that she could not have seen more of you then.”

“The regret is mutual, I assure you, Doctor Cameron. I have been in the mountains of Norway for some weeks, and when I came to Bergen ten days ago, I found a pleasant letter from your mother begging me to visit her. I wish,” she went on rapidly, “I wish you to tell me truthfully if you think I could become a hospital nurse for little children.”

Surprised, he glanced involuntarily at her simple but costly dress of dark blue, at her dainty gloves, and at other details of her attire, which bore the unmistakable stamp of fashionable, luxurious life. He hesitated a moment before answering her.

“Let me understand you fully, Mrs. Julian. Do you wish to take this position temporarily or permanently?”

“Permanently,” she replied at once.

Again he regarded keenly the pale, worn face, the sad eyes.

“But, pardon me, the duties of such a life are very exacting. It would be necessary for you to devote your whole time to them.”

“I have no home ties, Doctor Cameron,” she said. “But you do not answer my question. Do you think that I can learn to be a nurse, skillful, competent? I have plenty of money for the most thorough training. I am willing to work hard. I am strong—”

She paused, stopped by his rather incredulous look and his half-smile, instantly checked.

“Oh, do not judge of me as you see me now, I beg of you! I have been ill, but it was mental trouble. I am always well, perfectly so, and strong. You need have no fears, doctor, of my breaking down.”

She had pulled off her gloves while speaking, and stretched out her slim hands that he might see their strength. He looked at them a moment, and then at her again. Smiling broadly now, he said:

“You have one very strong recommendation, Mrs. Julian, which might easily outweigh far graver shortcomings than yours. You are thoroughly in earnest.”

“Oh, thank you for seeing that! I am in earnest,” she cried, her cheeks flushed with excitement. “I want to give my whole life and all my energies to

this work. It is everything to me. And I know of no one but yourself who can tell me where to go to learn all that I need to know. In London or Paris, perhaps."

"You need not go so far away unless you choose. In Edinburgh there are excellent training schools."

He saw her shudder and turn pale at mention of Edinburgh.

"Oh, no, not there," he heard her murmur.

"Well—" he considered a few minutes, "suppose you stay here for a month, and make St. Luke's a sort of object lesson. We have excellent nurses, and every modern method and appliance. And while we do not, as a rule, employ untrained service, I am willing to make an exception of you, Mrs. Julian. I will arrange with Mrs. McDonel, our head nurse, that every opportunity be given you for becoming familiar with our routine of work, and at the same time you will assist her as she may require."

Satia arose and walked to the window, her full heart overflowing with gratitude for his kindness. She felt herself physically unable to conceal her emotion. She waited until she was quite sure of herself before she turned to him again. She found him at his desk, busy with his morning mail. He arose at once and took her extended hand.

“I cannot thank you, Doctor Cameron. Let my work show you how truly grateful I am, and shall always be to you.”

The grave doctor flushed. The words simply spoken in the same sweet tones that had so charmed Morris Julian the first night he saw her, thrilled him, too. But he said in a half-comical, half-serious fashion, which Satia learned to know well :

“Just wait a bit, Mrs. Julian, until you see what a hard task-master you’re getting. I rule here wi’ a rod o’ iron, so mind yo’sel’, an’ dinna forget that my eye is on ye.”

As he lapsed into broad dialect, his rather rugged face lighted up again with its peculiarly sunny smile, and Satia felt as though she had met an old friend rather than a stranger.

Doctor Cameron rang the bell and sent for Mrs. McDonel, who proved to be the most delightful, motherly Scotchwoman imaginable. Satia was immediately reminded of Kelsie.

“Mrs. Julian,” he said, “let me introduce to you Mrs. McDonel, our best of mothers here, the queen bee of our busy hive. Mrs. Julian wishes,” he continued, speaking to the elder woman, “to learn something of our work here. Will you kindly send one of the nurses to ward B with her this morning ; and if you will come to the office at one

o'clock, I will then arrange with you for her regular duties."

And so Satia began her new life.

* * * * *

Satia proved herself an apt pupil. She won the hearts of nurses and children alike, and though often wearied with her unaccustomed duties, she never once regretted having undertaken them. If, as Doctor Cameron had said, his "eagle eye" was on her, she never knew when. Her work did not take her to him for advice or help, and he always seemed too busy for more than a friendly nod. Sometimes, as her month approached its close, she wondered if he had forgotten all about her. But one morning she was summoned to his office.

"Pray be seated, Mrs. Julian," he said, "and excuse me one moment."

She sat down and watched him as he wrote swiftly, exactly, a large characteristic hand, which she could have read half a dozen feet away, had she chosen to do so. She noted his well-shaped head covered with wavy brown hair, close-cropped, his clear-cut features, square, full forehead, kindly, keen blue-gray eyes, the short, brown beard which concealed his mouth and chin; his broad shoulders and massive figure. It was a personality denoting

energy, resolution, character. She found herself comparing him with Morris, whose soft, dark hair, pale complexion, blue eyes and slender build seemed almost girlish in contrast with the vigor of the sturdy Scotsman. His moment lengthened to five—ten. Satia wondered which of the two men had the stronger will; which would sooner yield if one were pitted against the other. She wondered, too, if Doctor Cameron had a wife, and what sort of a body she was. Suddenly he turned to her.

“Mrs. Julian,” he began, in his quick, decided way, “you have done nobly. Here is your ticket and card of admission to the X— Training School in London. I remember that you preferred not to go to Edinburgh. Here, also, is a letter to Doctor Renwick, surgeon-in-charge. He is a good friend of mine. Doctor Dallas, from here, leaves for London to-morrow morning on the express. Please be ready to go with him. I expect to come down in a month or so, and will be sure to look in and see how you are getting on.”

He placed the cards in her hands, and was about to say more, when a hasty summons interrupted him.

Satia walked down the hall, feeling breathless and bewildered with the suddenness and the import of the

interview. Surely, here was a man of deeds, not words.

Work in earnest now began for her. The next six months were busy ones, indeed. Doctor Cameron's promised trip was not taken, and it was spring again before she saw him. He came quite unexpectedly one morning.

"I've come for you, Mrs. Julian," he began at once. "Mrs. McDonel is down with an ugly fever, which was brought in a month ago, and two other nurses are on the way to it. I've come here for a couple in their places, and I want you, too. It seems a pity to break in on your fine record here; but you'll do the bairns more good than anyone else I know of. They miss you sadly. Will you come to them?"

Kenneth Cameron could not understand the look of intense joy and thankfulness which illuminated Satia's face as she listened. She bowed her head; her lips moved. He fancied he heard her murmur, "Father, I thank thee," before she said to him:

"Yes, doctor, I will come."

She saw him now every day. In her humility and gratitude that she was able to do so much for the comfort of the children she loved, and in each of whom she saw her own beloved boy, she little dreamed how greatly the quiet, busy doctor was

learning to depend upon her. She was so intelligent, so untiring, so gentle, so sweet and so womanly that he often wondered how he had ever gotten along without her. But there was little time for anyone to think of other things than the work which each day brought. It was midsummer before the fever had run its course and the usual routine of hospital work could be again resumed.

And then came an imperative summons from Mrs. Cameron for the long-delayed visit from Satia.

“It is a sin and a shame,” that lady wrote her, “that the daughter of Jeanie Sutherland has been in Scotland a whole year and never yet stepped foot across my threshold! For the wee bairnies’ sake I’ve tried to be patient; but now I’ll have my way—and if you’ve seen much of Kenneth you’ve learned that the Cameron way always wins. I’ll have my way now, I say, if I’ve to come and fetch you in my arms. So, Satia, my bonnie lassie, just tell the big doctor that you’re comin’, and never wait to hear what he says! I’ll meet you at Dunnoch Fields Station Thursday, at the noon train. Dinna forget, or ye’ll bring doon on ye the everlastin’ wrath o’ your lovin’ friend,

“ALISAN CAMERON.”

Satia felt a warm glow about her heart as she read this little letter. It was so sweet to feel that somebody really wanted her; so long since any

dear personal companionship had enriched her life ; so lovely to know that it was the dear girl-friend of her own mother who extended so cordial a welcome to her coming.

She sprang up and ran down to the doctor's office, to show him the note and to ask him to go, as impulsively as she might have done ten years before. In her haste and pleasure she forgot the tiny, close-fitting cap of the nurse's uniform. A clear, glad song overflowed from her happy heart.

Kenneth heard this before he did her light foot-step, and he stopped his hurrying pen to listen. The quick, pleased smile which softened beautifully his often stern features, played over them ; he raised his eyes, full now of a tender glow, and upon what vision did they rest ?

Not the Mrs. Julian he had known, winning and lovely as she was, but the Satia he had never seen, matured, chastened, ennobled by the sorrows of her young life. Utterly forgetful of self, she came to him with her happiness simply as a child might. And the man who beheld her, admiring, reverencing, loving her as he knew from this moment that he did, knew also that he had no part nor place in her gladness.

With the generosity of a great nature, he veiled his eyes. He would not spoil, even by a look, the

pleasure, whatever it might be, making her a girl again.

“Are you very busy, doctor?” she asked, coming toward him. “Here is a letter that I think you will like to read.”

She handed it to him and sat down near by, in the friendly fashion which had come from their weeks of companionship.

Doctor Cameron's hand shook as he took the sheet, but the sight of his mother's familiar writing reassured him. His sudden fear that she might be about to leave them was changed to satisfaction when he found that it was his own home which would receive her. He read the letter through slowly. It was so pleasant to know that she was sitting there quite near, waiting for him to give permission for the holiday. He longed to tell her of all else which he hoped some day to give her—his love, his care, the devotion of his whole life. The words rushed eagerly to his lips, but he stayed them. The time was not yet. She was learning to know and to trust him as a friend. He would wait patiently until the flower of that perfect love which is only possible between two friends—in the highest sense of the word—should have time for its full blossoming.

Satia, meantime, was waiting, and wondering how

he could possibly be such a long while getting through with the short letter. She reached over and took a pair of spectacles—left there by Mrs. McDonel—from the table and handed them to him, smiling demurely.

He received them with a grave bow, but eyes flashing with mischief, put them on, and peered comically over at her.

“Ye’re lookin’ varra ill to-day, Mrs. Julian. I’m sure that nothin’ less than a couple o’ weeks at Dunnoch Craggs ’ll build ye oop again. So just bundle yesel’ off by t’ marnin’ express, an I’ll mak’ it all right wi’ t’ big doctor.”

Satia thanked him, and got up to leave.

“Aren’t you going to say good-bye?” he asked, quickly, putting down the spectacles and stepping to her side.

“Why, I’ll see you again a dozen times to-day, doctor,” she said surprised.

“To be sure—to be sure,” he replied; “but nobody knows how many chattering folks will be about; so I’ll just say good-bye now, Mrs. Julian, if you please.”

Satia thought of his mother’s words, “the Cameron way always wins,” as she shook hands with him and heard him say that he should miss her every hour while she was gone.



CHAPTER XIX.

A VISIT.

When Satia left the train at Dunnoch Fields the next day, it was with a lighter heart than she had known for many months. In the first place, it was a perfect day. Beautiful Scotland was never more fair; the skies never more blue; the sunshine never more golden. Simply to be alive in such a world gave her keen delight.

It was pleasant, too, to have laid aside the nurse's costume and be wearing again one of her own more dainty gowns. Satia possessed exquisite taste in dress, and she enjoyed indulging it. So, on this morning, the consciousness of being suitably appareled, although not uppermost in her mind—as, indeed, it seldom was—added to her serenity.

Besides this, she was anticipating with no little eagerness the near acquaintance with her mother's friend, and all the other pleasures of her well-earned holiday.

But a greater source of happiness than all these combined, was the thought of her success in the work she had undertaken.

The weeks and months of the past year had been full to the uttermost of constantly recurring duties. Many of them were distasteful, many fatiguing ; all required continual thought, patience, forbearance. But, like all labor conscientiously done, hers had brought its rich reward to body and spirit alike. She had grown strong, and was capable of more endurance than she would have thought possible. The roses of health again bloomed upon cheek and lip, and every movement showed abounding vigor.

The piercing sharpness of her grief had passed away. The touch of baby hands, the clinging clasp of tiny fingers, the helpless dependence of her little charges, the wealth of love they poured into her sore and wounded heart, all had soothed its consuming pain and brought her peace of mind. Not that she loved Maynard less ; on the contrary, she longed for him more and more ; but she performed each service as to him, penitentially, in atonement for her sin against him. So, although bearing marks of ever-present sorrow, she looked in harmony with the lovely day, as she stood upon the

platform and saw Mrs. Cameron smiling at her from a wagonette which at that moment came up.

“I’ll ask you to excuse me for not getting down to meet you, my dear. I’m a bit stiff this morning. And how are you?”

“I’m as well as can be,” said Satia, returning her affectionate greeting; “and so glad to be here with you, dear Mrs. Cameron.”

“Not any more than I am to have you, dear girl—be sure of that. An’ did you leave my boy well? I’ve been jealous of you the whole year, that you could see him every day,” she went on, without waiting for a reply. “It’s no small cross to me to have him off there in the hospital, though I never tell him so. He’s all I’ve left in the world, my dear, and the best son that ever was born.”

“Everybody at St. Luke’s thinks there is nobody like ‘the doctor.’ He was quite well when I left, Mrs. Cameron, and he is as busy always as two men ought to be.”

“Else he would not be my Kenneth,” said the old lady, proudly. “Do you know I’ve sometimes to coax and really to scold him to get him off wi’ me for a bit of a trip like the one you found us takin’ last spring; an’ he my own little lad, too, that I’ve carried in my arms for many an hour when he was a wee baby an’ the toothies comin’.”

Satia's smile broadened and deepened into a little low laugh of pure amusement.

"An' now you're laughin' at the silly mither, you naughty lass!" cried Mrs. Cameron, laughing herself. "Well, 'tis better to laugh than to cry. So laugh, an' you will, but dinna stop short o' lovin' me a bit, too. 'Twill be a glad sight to see a bonnie young face in the old house that's been silent so long, an' to feel that a lovin' young heart is beatin' close to mine. Here we are. Welcome, Satia; right gladly welcome to Dunnoch Crag."

As she spoke the wagonette stopped. With a good deal of difficulty, Mrs. Cameron alighted, and, leaning on Satia's arm, led the way along a flower-bordered walk to a gray-stone cottage, set well back among the trees. It was old-fashioned and many-gabled, but roomy, in its rambling quaintness, with sunny nooks.

Satia was taken at once to her room.

"Now, my dear, you are at home, an' free to do as you like. You're not 'company' for one minute, mind," said this most charming of hostesses. "So I'm just goin' to send you up a bit o' lunch, an' then I'll take my afternoon nap earlier to-day than common, as I've a meeting at three in Dunnoch village. I'm just like an old lady in a novel, you'll see, wi' my poor people, an' flannels, an' cottage improve-

ments," she said, with a droll, bright glance exactly like that Kenneth sometimes flashed from his keen eyes. "Another time I'll take you along, but to-day I'll just leave you to rest yourself. An' so good-bye now until dinner at six."

She patted the hand she was holding, and drew Satia's face down for a motherly kiss before she went away.

The next morning, thoroughly rested and refreshed, Satia was down stairs very early. She had passed through the wide hall out on to the long veranda which ran along the east side of the house. As she stood there—a charming figure in her fresh, white dress—for the first time since she left him, she missed her husband. On shipboard, in Fernandina, in Bergen, in Geneva, at St. Luke's, she had seldom thought of him except with a sense of gladness for her freedom. But here, in this house, with its dainty, luxurious appointments, its indescribable air of homelikeness and refinement, she missed him. Very few mornings had passed, during the five years of their life together, when she had not received from his hand a flower or tiny bunch of blossoms. This was a small courtesy, but it was followed all the day by numberless others, showing her how constantly and lovingly she was in his thoughts. And she had tired of them; had wearied of a cease-

less devotion which, it seemed to her, was but a fragrant garland covering her chains. Of her own accord she had freed herself from what then seemed insupportable bondage, and had since lived her own life, just as she had so ardently longed to do. And yet—oh, who can read the riddle of a woman's heart?—on this dewy summer morning, Satia Julian found, in the very center of her secret self, a wish that Morris were by her side, offering to her the bunch of roses which she now broke off and fastened in her gown.

She was startled to discover this ; half-frightened to realize the presence of this strange, shy longing which possessed her. Whence did it come? What did it mean?

Into the midst of these disturbing thoughts came Mrs. Cameron's pleasant voice.

“The top o' the mornin' to you, my dear Satia, as our cousins across the channel say. I've no need to ask if you rested weel. Come now, an' have some breakfast ; then I want you to drive me across the country a few miles. I've a trim little pony that'll give you no trouble.”

They set out while the dew was yet glistening along the roadside, and Satia enjoyed every moment, for besides the lovely landscape and the

delightful mountain air, she was hearing of her mother.

“You are quite right,” said Mrs. Cameron, in answer to her question, “in thinking that your mother never lived in Scotland. Her grandmother was a true Scotswoman, a Ramsey of brave, blue blood. She went to America when she married, and none of her family ever returned to the old home. My father, a life-long friend of hers, moved there when I was a girl, and for more than five years Jeanie Sutherland and I were seldom separated. I married young and came to live in this very house. She married late—an American gentleman—and different circumstances kept her from ever making me the visit we both looked forward to with so much delight. Your mother was one of the sweetest, truest-natured women the good Lord ever made. You have her own bonnie face over again, and her laugh, and her pretty ways, and I doubt not her gentle spirit, too. It is a great thing, my dear, to have had a good, Christian mother—a blessed and a holy thing.”

Satia did not reply ; she could not. She was glad that Mrs. Cameron did not appear to expect it, but kept on telling this and that reminiscence during the whole of the pleasant drive to Cairlie.

She with difficulty repressed the cry which rose

to her lips as she heard the name of the village to which Mrs. Cameron's errand had brought her. She longed, yet found it impossible, to ask if Castle Cairlie was in the neighborhood. Even to see the place where Maynard's picture hung, without daring to fancy his actual presence so near, set every pulse throbbing. Imagine her breathless interest, her almost overpowering emotion, when her friend, pointing off to the right, said, presently :

“Yonder you can see the towers and turrets of Cairlie Castle. 'Tis a grim old spot and a lonely one, the scene of much revelry in the long gone years, but ever since my day nearly uninhabited. Old Laird Cairlie, as he called himself, was a queer soul. He died last year while I was away, an' I'm told that the estate passed to the son of a very distant relative in America. I never heard his name. We'll drive over there some day, if you like. It's worth goin' many a mile to see the Cairlie forests.”

Satia strained her eyes to catch a glimpse of the gray old pile, but the road made an abrupt turn and they went in another direction.

She found it very hard to control her thoughts for the rest of the morning. After luncheon they went to a small tea-party given in Dunnoch village by some of Mrs. Cameron's old ladies, and in the even-

ing neighbors called to see her and to greet her guest, in the good, old-fashioned way.

Satia charmed them all by her beauty and gentleness, but her self-control was put to a severe test by the frequent allusions she heard made to the new lord of Castle Cairlie and the various changes there. She was in terror lest some one should notice the similarity of their names and ask some of the questions which even well-bred people do not always refrain from. She drew a long breath of relief when the last of them departed.

To-morrow brought pouring rain, and the two settled down for a long, undisturbed day together.

Satia had resolved to take the first opportunity to tell the whole unhappy story of her married life to the friend whom she believed would love her none the less for doing so. She had felt, since the first hour beneath her roof, like a false pretender; as though she could not meet without faltering, Mrs. Cameron's trustful eyes. She divined, with sure instinct, that her hostess reposed perfect confidence in her, as her mother's daughter, and she was so much the more anxious not to deceive her in regard to her present position. This had seemed the more necessary in view of her unexpected nearness to Castle Cairlie, and the likelihood of constantly

meeting people who would gossip concerning matters there.

Moreover, Satia felt the need of a strong arm and a loving heart on which to lean in the midst of the distracting influences by which she was so suddenly surrounded. All the peace of mind she had brought to Dunnoch Crag had been changed to unrest and self-distrust. She was tossed about upon a flood of conflicting desires. She yearned unutterably for her child, yet deemed herself unworthy to look into his innocent face. She longed for Morris with a personal tenderness and affection never before felt for him. She wished with all her heart that she was back again at St. Luke's, as she had been one short week before, contentedly at work; that she had never left its sheltering walls, to be plunged into such a maze of perplexity; and at the same time she dreaded the very thought of leaving this home.

The resolution, the fearlessness, the ability to decide for herself, upon which she had relied so unflinchingly for the past three years, deserted her now. She was unable to see her way clearly, or, indeed, at all. And she turned, in her helplessness, to the friend of only two short days, but a friend who already seemed more like a mother than Aunt

Hester, with all her unselfish devotion, could ever have done.

It is given to some women to possess the true mother-heart, which, in its large, loving sympathy and an indescribable something which wins confidence as the sunshine wins the dew, attracts every heavy-burdened—yea, even every sinning heart—to pour out there the sorry tale of all its woes. Such a woman was Alisan Cameron, and Satia knew this from almost the first hour of seeing her.

They were sitting in a pleasant room, where Mrs. Cameron was in the habit of attending to her accounts and her correspondence immediately after breakfast. She was busy at her desk, and Satia, under pretense of reading, was trying to reduce the chaos of her thoughts to some sort of order. But she found her eyes continually straying in the direction of Castle Cairlie, and seeing only the dear features of its little laird.

At length Mrs. Cameron came over to her favorite easy-chair, and drew toward her a large basket of wools, from which she took a bit of bright knitting.

“Put down your book, my bonnie,” she said, “and come over here and talk to me. I’ve not yet heard half enough of the famous place where you and Kenneth find so much to do.”

Satia made no answer. The tears were running

down her cheeks, in spite of her efforts to restrain them. She tried to shield her face with her book until she could leave the room, but it was useless. Her overtaxed nerves refused to obey her. She broke into uncontrollable weeping.

Mrs. Cameron glanced up in surprise. Then she opened her arms, and Satia, drawn irresistibly, sought their shelter as a little child might have done. Resting there, feeling a caressing touch on cheek and brow, hearing low-spoken words of soothing sympathy, she sobbed away the bitterness of her distress.

“My bairnie! my poor, wee bairnie! my bonnie lassie!” fell over and over again upon her hungry ears, as she knelt there. The sweetness of being so loved and so comforted at last stilled the tempest of her emotion.

“May I tell you all about it?” she whispered.

“Yes, darlin’.”

She drew a low chair close beside the larger one, and, holding fast to Mrs. Cameron’s hand, looking into her clear, loving eyes, she told the whole miserable story of the past few years. She told it truthfully, exactly, and her friend heard it in silence. When she had finished, she was again drawn to her close embrace.

“My puir, mitherless bairn!” she murmured, cov-

ering Satia's hot cheek with kisses; "my puir, sair-hearted lassie! my brave, bonnie girl!" Then, after a few minutes, she added: "Come, my child, you will be ill with all this excitement. Come and rest now, and we'll talk together again by and by. There'll be a way out o' all this darkness, my bonnie, never fear."

Satia suffered herself to be led away to the cool silence of her pretty room, and Mrs. Cameron sat down to think of the pitiful tale which had stirred her sympathy and her indignation by turns.

The sun was well down behind the western hills when she went softly in, and after opening the blinds to admit the fragrant breezes, lay down beside Satia. She put one arm about her, and passed her hand caressingly over her hair.

"My dear child," she began, presently, "you were wrong. Hush!"—as Satia would have spoken. "Listen, and let me talk to you just as though you were my own sweet daughter Jessie, who has so often lain beside me here as you are doing now.

"You were wrong, Satia. Your marriage vows said—'for better or for worse.' You made them solemnly in the presence of God himself; and what He has joined together man may not put asunder. There was a grievous burden laid upon you, and I cannot blame you for resenting your husband's self-

ish absorption of your whole being ; but, Satia, I am an old woman ; I have seen great joys and great sorrows during the years of my life. I've seen much o' the world, an' have been led in many ways not o' my own seeking ; but I have yet to see the person who found happiness or contentment by the neglect of plain duty.

“ Dinna think me harsh, my darlin', the daughter of my sweet friend, Jeanie Sutherland. My old heart would gladly ache to bring joy back to yours ; but I canna say aught else to you but what I believe. You've erred through ignorance. In the innocence o' your young heart, crushed and stifled as it was, you did what you thought was right ; but Satia, a wife's place is by her husband's side ; a mother's by her child's. The gude Father bound you to them by ties which you cannot sever. When you left your home, you turned your feet into a path which can only lead you to misery. There is but one thing to be done. Go back to your rightful place in this big world. Does it seem hard—impossible ? I doubt it not ; I doubt it not. But the gude Father will give you strength, an' you ask Him. You are older an' wiser now ; an' if I mistake not, your husband has not missed you all these months for nothin.' The new life you will live together will not be like the old ; an' you will have

your boy, your precious little lad. Think o' that, Satia."

Satia's heart again thrilled with the sweet, timid joy she now felt in thinking of Morris, and it bounded as though Maynard was at that moment in her arms. But, like a hateful echo, she heard the never-to-be-forgotten words of the Edinburgh gallery. With a moan, she exclaimed :

"Oh, no, it can never be! I cannot take to them a dishonored name."

"Nonsense, my child," said Mrs. Cameron, decidedly. "Never trouble your head about that miserable gossip. It'll amount to less than the tip o' a thistle when once your husband's roof shelters you. Dinna you mind the least bit i' the world what the whole o' the triflin' crowd o' busybodies say, so long as he believes in you. An' you know right weel that he does, I'm as sure as need be."

"Oh, yes," replied Satia, surprised that she had never thought of this before.

"Then rise above it all. Leave all these wretched months behin' you, and write your husband a word that'll bring him to you here, an' make you my own light-hearted, happy darlin' again."

Satia was sitting up now. Her eyes were like stars; the color came and went in her cheeks. Already she seemed to see Morris beside her and

their son upon her breast. She hid her face on Mrs. Cameron's shoulder and promised to do what she had bidden.

CHAPTER XX.

A SUMMONS.

It was harder than she had thought for Satia to write the letter to Morris. Pride kept insisting on having its way and its say, in spite of the promptings of emotion. Sheet after sheet was written, only to be destroyed. At last, in despair, she simply wrote:

“DEAR MORRIS: Will you come to me at Mrs. Cameron's, Dunnoch Craggs?”

“SATIA.”

The rest was left to be said when he should be there. She sent the note to Castle Cairlie by a trusty messenger, and then she waited—waited impatiently, longingly, as a girl does for her lover. In some mysterious way, the intervening years seemed blotted out, and she was again the maiden whom he sought to win. She was an enigma to her-

self. His faults were just as clearly as ever before her, and yet she discovered herself excusing them; finding ways, in her imagination, of conquering them; of forbearing and of forgiving such as she had never dreamed of. Morris Julian was in very many ways the most winning and lovable of men. His wife, looking back over their acquaintance, saw this, and was now willing—nay, eager—to give him his due. She thought again and again of his written words: “Remember that I am your husband, your legal protector, and your devoted lover.” That they were as true that day as when he sent them to her, she never for a moment doubted.

She went a dozen times to see if the messenger was returning; she flitted from house to garden, from garden to house; she made no pretense of concealing her excitement and her eagerness from Mrs. Cameron.

At last she heard a horse's hoofs. She sprang up trembling. Was he here? How should she meet him? Or was it only a message? She had told herself not to expect too much; that he might be far away from Scotland. At the same time she had lived on the hope of seeing him before the sun went down.

The messenger came in alone. He brought her

letter back with the information that Lord Cairlie was gone to Paris to remain six weeks.

Satia turned to Mrs. Cameron, pale with disappointment.

“It is an omen,” she said; “my little olive-branch has come back to me unseen.”

“Unseen, but not unaccepted,” replied her friend, who could not help being sorry for her. “We’ll send over to-morrow and get the Paris address, and he’ll be sure to get the letter within a week.”

The next morning she proposed that they themselves drive to Castle Cairlie; but Satia said, rather proudly:

“No. Now that Morris has his home there I will not go until I have seen him.”

The little “olive-branch” was again sent off. A week passed—ten days, and no reply. Satia, worn out with the suspense of waiting, at length said to Mrs. Cameron:

“I must go back and get to work. Forgive me if I shorten my stay with you.”

“Do just as seems best to you. You know how gladly I would keep you here always, as my own dear daughter, and you will remember, I know, that this is your home, as much as though you were a Cameron born. Come when you will. But go back to your work now if your heart will be

lighter there. The dear babies will cheer it, if anything on God's earth can. May He bless you, darlin', an' bring you back to you own."

So Satia returned to St. Luke's before her holiday was over. Her brain was in a whirl which nothing but the regular routine of duties and the presence of the little ones could quiet.

She did not see Doctor Cameron for some hours after her arrival. She had gone to work at once, and he came upon her unexpectedly at the bedside of a dear child whose short life was near its close. Had Satia looked up in time to catch the first expression of his face as he saw her, she would have learned the secret which, indeed, was a secret to him no longer. She replied pleasantly to his brief greeting, and then they were both busy with the little sufferer. But the "big doctor" was thrilling through and through with a sense of her nearness. He watched with tender pride her gentle ministrations; he rejoiced in her beauty, her charm of manner, her sweetness of nature; she seemed to him more than ever the one woman of the world. He also noticed, when at last nothing more remained to be done for the little one, that she was looking ill. The gladsome, girlish presence which he had sent to Dunnoch Crag had not returned to him. In its stead he saw an older woman; restless, nervously

busy and preoccupied. He could get from her but the most meager accounts of her visit with his mother, of whom she spoke with warmest love, and (foolish fellow that he was!) his glad heart argued from this happy things for itself.

True love is humility itself, and Kenneth's was of the truest sort. But it was not of the narrow, selfish kind which can see nothing outside of its own gratification. So, not long after her return, he received an urgent request to send the best possible nurse at once to Castle Cairlie. He went directly to her with the telegram.

"Can you be ready to start for Castle Cairlie in half an hour? A little fellow there, the son of the present Lord Cairlie, has been hurt by a runaway. His father is on the Continent somewhere (about to be married, I understand,) and Doctor Murray has sent for a nurse. I'd rather he were in your hands than any others I know of."

Satia did not reply immediately. The doctor noticed both her extreme pallor and her hesitation.

"Murray will be in constant attendance, and he is a fine physician," he said, as if to reassure her.

But she was not thinking of the responsibilities of her position. Kenneth's remark about Morris struck terror to her very soul. Could it be possible that Morris had at last wearied of his lonely life,

taken legal steps for a separation, and was to be married again? Men had done such things. Like a flash then came the thought of her unanswered letter. How plain that now was in the light of this possible solution! She stood like a statue, until she remembered that her boy was suffering and needed her. The blood came back in a flood to cheek and brow. Her scruples in regard to going to Castle Cairlie before seeing Morris, vanished. She consented to go.

Doctor Cameron recalled afterwards with what feverish eagerness she received his instructions and made her preparations for leaving. He was haunted for days by the despairing, imploring expression in her eyes as she bade him good-bye. As he watched the train out of sight around the curve of Erlallach Hill, he wished, with a vague apprehension of he knew not what, that he had gone with her.

Satia was met at Glen Cairlie station by Doctor Murray. Their drive of nearly two miles, through a wild, picturesque country, was almost a silent one. She found it beyond her power to be more than politely civil. At length they turned into the noted Cairlie Forest and drove apparently to its heart. Here, upon a rather high hill, which had been cleared on every side but one, and up which wound a broad carriage-way, stood the castle. Truly, as

Mrs. Cameron had said, it was "a grim old place and a lonely one." Towers, turrets, battlements, arches, crumbling walls and those more recently built, all combined in what seemed to her inextricable confusion as she followed Doctor Murray through a massive gateway. Before they reached the door, it opened, and a neatly dressed, white-capped maid came toward them. She courtesied to Satia and spoke to the doctor.

"Aleck had to go for more liniment for Mrs. Kelsie. She's took bad again. He said to tell you he'd be back as soon as ever he could, sir."

"Very well, Janet. How is the little master?" replied the doctor, making the pony fast.

"Oh, he's no worse, sir, I think. He's still sleeping nicely."

"This is his new nurse, Janet—Miss Julia. Will you take her to her room? She may like to rest a bit. Then bring her to the library and I'll take her in to see him."

Once left alone, Satia threw herself upon the bed and tried to calm the tumult of her brain. She realized the great necessity of controlling herself. She wished that Doctor Murray and the rosy-cheeked Janet and everybody else were miles away, and that she might be alone with Maynard. She recalled, so vividly, the morning she had last seen him. He lay

sleeping in Kelsie's arms in the New York hotel ; and she, about to go on board the *Rochester*, had calmly kissed him good-bye without a quiver of heart or lip. She looked back upon that self with horror and amazement. Under what spell of evil could she have been? What strange, benumbing power? Whatever it might have been, she was freed from it now, and she thrilled with love and longing at the very thought of seeing again the features of her boy. He was a baby no longer, but five years old and more. Would he—could it be possible that any faint remembrance of her had lingered within his little brain—any image which the sight of her might start out from its shadowy corners and bring into the clear light of recollection? And if he should know her, what then? She sprang up and hastily prepared herself for her duties. She wore the simple dress and close-fitting cap of the St. Luke's nurses. Her quickly-bounding pulses and repressed excitement, gave color and beauty to her pale face. Doctor Murray noticed the change in her appearance as she came down to him, but he little suspected its cause. Before leaving the library, he gave her a detailed account of Maynard's injuries and the care he would require.

“ Lord Cairlie tells me,” he said then, as he opened the door and followed her from the room, “ that he

intends making extensive additions, or rather, renovations here. Things now are pretty much as the old laird left them. You'll find three or four of the old family servants on the place, and that's about all. Janet and Aleck are the grandchildren of Mrs. Boyd, the housekeeper."

They crossed an immense hall and entered a narrower passage, from which doors opened to the right and left. Passing through one of these, they entered a lofty apartment, in the center of which was a high-posted, old-fashioned bedstead. On this lay the little laird of Castle Cairlie.

His large, brown eyes turned wistfully toward the door as it opened, and a faint smile lighted them as he saw Doctor Murray. He put out a small, hot hand.

"I'm so glad you've come back, doctor. I've just waked up."

"You have had a good nap, then, my boy. That will do you good, I am sure. See, Maynard, I have brought you a new nurse. Her name is Miss Julia, and she's going to help you get well very fast."

The brown eyes turned quickly now toward Satia who came immediately forward, and bending over the bed, looked down into the sweet, upturned face of her son. She smiled in answer to his earnest scrutiny.

Who shall say from what hidden recess of his memory, what long-forgotten impressions of his baby days, came the unexpected question, asked in a weak voice :

“ Can you sing ‘ Birdies in their pretty nests ? ’ ”

“ Yes, Maynard,” she replied at once.

“ Please do,” came more faintly.

Satia glanced toward the doctor, and read permission in his scarcely perceptible nod. Then, breathing a fervent prayer for strength, she began, very softly.

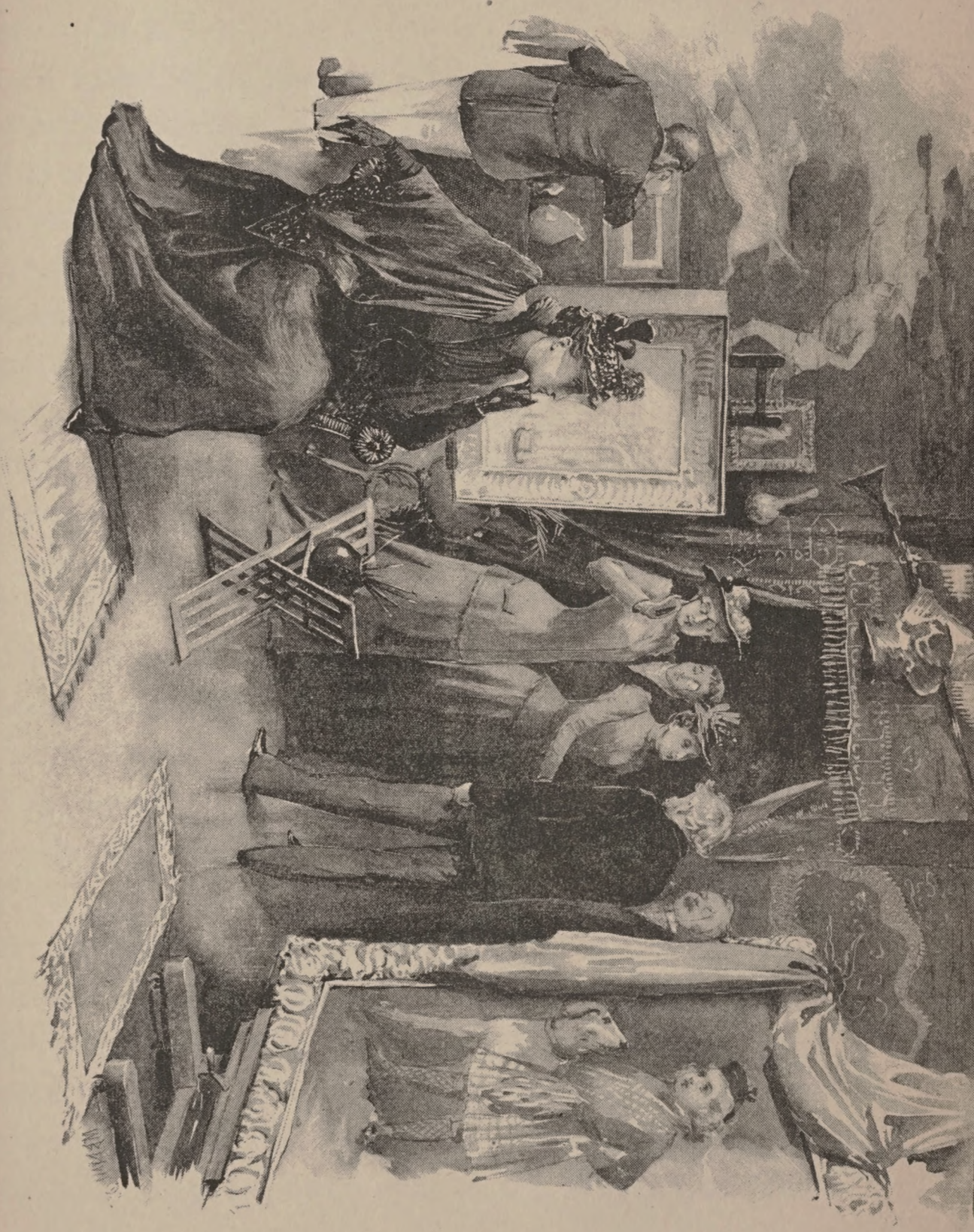
She had not sung a note since the day in Edinburgh, and she trembled for fear she should not be able to do so now ; but the clear tones came forth at her bidding, sweet and strong. Never had she been more thankful for her beautiful voice than now ; never had she used it with more skill ; never had she received greater praise than Maynard’s delighted listening.

“ More, please,” he said, when she had finished the last verse.

She sang another song, and another, until presently the heavy lids closed, and he was asleep. Doctor Murray laid down, very gently, the hand which had all the time been clinging fast to his.

“ You have done him good already, Miss Julia,”

SATIA RECOGNIZES THE PORTRAIT.—See Page 172.



he said. "This is the first time he has slept without opiates."

After a few days more of excessive weakness and suffering, during which she hardly left his side, Maynard began to improve. Then Satia determined upon a step which she had been considering ever since her arrival at the castle. She took advantage of his morning nap one day to explore the ancient place. Only a few rooms had been kept in repair. These were high and dark and gloomy in spite of their handsome furnishings. She regarded them as most unfit for Maynard's occupancy even in health, and resolved to make a change. She found on the south side of the castle, overlooking a broad, sloping lawn which Aleck took great pride in keeping in beautiful condition, an apartment of considerable size, and well-lighted. It projected from the main building, and was evidently a recent addition. Upon questioning Mrs. Boyd, she learned that the old laird built it for a sort of reading-room. As his sight failed, he complained of the darkness of his favorite library. But his books had never been moved there, and it had come to be used since his death, as a lumber room. It was here that Satia decided to establish Maynard. She had not yet spoken of it to Dr. Murray, and she

was not a little relieved when he came to her and asked :

“Are you willing to be left in charge of Maynard for a couple of days ? I have a call across the mountain from a patient who is also an old friend, and I ought to go at once.”

“By all means, doctor,” she said ; “I am quite sure I can do all for him that is necessary.”

“I’ve not the least doubt of that, Miss Julia,” he returned, heartily. “It was only if you would undertake it. If anything unforeseen occurs, send for Doctor Craig over at Dunnoch Fields.”

Satia watched him drive away with a glad heart. Now she was free to do as she liked. She kept Janet and Aleck busy in the lumber-room, and the latter also drove to and from the village several times on various errands. Mrs. Boyd was called in frequently, but she could not be spared long from Kelsie’s bedside. She, faithful soul, had been badly bruised in the overturn of the carriage, and was getting well very slowly. In common with all the rest of the household, she knew of the new nurse only as “Miss Julia.” This had been a mistake of Dr. Murray’s, which Satia had at first been too much preoccupied and was afterward disinclined to correct. It was, perhaps, just as well, she thought.

While attending to the removal of an old desk,

she found on the floor behind it an envelope. It was addressed in Morris' familiar hand to

.....
: M^{lle}. MARIE FONTENELLE, :
:

: Hotel de Longueville, :
:

: *Paris, France.* :
.....

She felt a strange contraction in her throat as she read this. Was it, then, Marie—pretty, girlish, graceful Marie—who was to be the second mother of her boy, the wife of her husband? Had Morris, in the course of his efforts to trace her from the *Rochester's* burning side, been charmed by the French girl's beauty and her sunny nature into giving her the vacant place in his home? It would be no wonder. At that moment she felt inexpressibly old and worn. Perhaps at that very hour he was with Marie. Any day might bring them home. She recalled stray bits of gossip which she had overheard about the house. She thought of her unanswered letter. She looked forward to the future, which promised to be dark enough. But she would not let its shadow fall on the precious present. She sprang to work with redoubled energy during the golden hours which yet were hers.



CHAPTER XXI.

“MY DEE FAIRY.”

When Doctor Murray returned on the third morning after his trip to the mountains, it happened that no one saw him. He went quietly into the room where he had last seen Maynard. To his amazement he found it empty. The stately bed was neatly made up; everything was in order. For an instant he stood aghast. Could it be, he thought, with dread, that Maynard had——But just at that moment the soft, clear notes of a song fell upon his ear. Guided by them, he made his way along the hall until he reached the threshold of a bright and cheerful place which appeared to have dropped there from some other region of the world.

Large, white-curtained windows, through which the sunshine streamed in; a low, comfortable bed, spread with a snowy counterpane; two or three wicker rockers and a long steamer-chair, piled with gay cushions; a small bookcase, filled with books;

a few pictures on the walls; some bright-hued plants, and a golden-throated canary singing in its cage, made a pleasing scene. But best sight of all was the little laird himself, lying in Satia's arms, drinking in every word she sang to him. Her cap was off, and her pretty, soft hair was coiled loosely on her neck.

Neither of them saw the doctor, who whistled below his breath as he made good use of his eyes. Surely, he thought, there are nurses and nurses. He waited until the song was finished, then stepped in before them.

“ Oh, doctor,” cried the boy, sitting erect, “ I'm so glad you've come! I've been wanting you to see my new room. Isn't it just bonnie?”

“ It is bonnie, indeed, my boy. I hardly know whether I'm myself or not in such a fine place,” said the doctor, drawing a chair quite close and looking keenly at the child. Maynard laughed happily, delighted with this praise.

“ But you, yourself, sir, how have you been behaving? None too well, I'll be bound,” he went on, shaking his head as he took the small hand in his.

“ Oh, doctor,” cried Satia, her heart in her throat, “ he surely is no worse?”

“ So much so, Miss Julia,” he said, with undiminished gravity, “ that I think I'll leave him altogether

in your care in the future. I begin to feel that I have mistaken my calling."

How she laughed then. She felt so relieved from the horrible fear with which his first words had filled her.

Doctor Murray walked all about the room before he left, examining and approving everything, to Maynard's infinite delight.

"And my dee Fairy did it all for me," the little fellow said. "I call Miss Julia Fairy 'cause she can do fings just the way Cind'ella's fairy did. You know all 'bout that, don't you, doctor?"

"Oh, yes, Maynard, very well indeed."

"My Fairy made this booful room for me out of the place where papa kept his guns and fings. I just want to see how he looks when he sees it now. Won't he be s'prised?"

"I should think so. Your fairy is a very good one, Maynard."

"I fink she is," said he, passing his hand lovingly over Satia's cheek. "I love her deely."

Doctor Murray declared that it would be necessary now for him to come but once a day. But he was back again in less than an hour. He found Satia sitting near Maynard's bedside, sewing. The child was asleep.

"I've news from our runaway laird at last," he

said, speaking in low tones. "It seems that he was off yachting, and instead of going to Genoa, as his Paris agents thought likely, he went across to Alexandria. I found a whole batch of telegrams at my office just now. Tell Maynard his papa sends a great deal of love, and promises letters often. Unless there is some change for the worse here, he will not return just yet."

After that, telegrams and letters came every day, with many messages and expressions of gratitude for Miss Julia. And how Satia counted the days now before Morris would come—and not alone, as she was confident by this time—before she would be shut out from this little heaven on earth. She treasured each moment and made every one as bright and as happy as it was possible for her to do for the child whose whole heart she had won. Sometimes she reproached herself for having done this; and then she thought: "He is young. He will soon forget me when he has others to love; but I—I must live on these precious hours all the rest of my life."

Sometimes she thought with bitterness that she had descended to the level of the heroine of a well-known, old-fashioned play, who, after having left her home, returned as governess to her own children, and wrought the feelings of the audience

to the highest pitch by the various pathetic, nay, even tragic situations brought about by these peculiar relations. But Satja had no mind for scenes nor dramatic episodes. She had no wish to remain unmasked beneath Morris' roof, even if it had been possible to do so, unknown, after his return. She felt stung and humiliated that she had sent her unfortunate little letter trusting so fully in his continued love. She called herself hard names for having done so. She tried, however, to keep all these thoughts in abeyance for the present.

One afternoon, as she sat with Maynard in her arms, he said, earnestly, looking up into her face :

“ I want to whispy you a secret.”

“ Very well,” she replied, putting her ear down close to his mouth.

“ Papa's gone to bring my mamma home.”

Involuntarily she clasped him tightly to her breast. It was Nature's protest against giving him to another.

“ Oh ! oh ! you hurt me, Fairy !” he cried out.
“ Don't hug me so big, please.”

She kissed him again and again, but she could not speak.

“ I fought you'd be glad to know this secret. Papa telled me one time, and Janet, she telled me, too, 'fore you came.”

“You must try and grow very strong and well for papa, Maynard. He will want to find you quite a little man.”

“I’ll try much hard, dee Fairy. My papa is a splendid one, and he’ll love you a great lot; oh, a great big lot; I know he will. And I’m doin’ to ask him to bring you a pony, just like my Rob Roy, and then we’ll ride all frew the park, and, oh, we’ll have — Why, what makes you cry, dee Fairy? Do your head ache? I’m so sorry.”

He rubbed her forehead with his soft, little hands.

“There, don’t it feel weller now, dee Fairy?” he asked, anxiously.

“Yes, darling,” said the poor mother, whose heartache dwindled all other pain to insignificance.

A day or two after this she took him out for a short walk. It was a lovely morning and they both enjoyed stepping upon the velvety turf and breathing the delicious air. They sat down on one of the benches which were scattered about under the magnificent old trees. Soon they heard the sound of a horse’s hoofs. A rider appeared, dismounted, and came across the lawn toward them.

“Doctor Cameron!” cried Satia, springing up.

“I spied you out over here among all the greenery,” he said, holding her hand for an instant, and

looking down at her with glad eyes. "And this, I suppose, is our little laird?" he continued, turning to Maynard, who stood regarding him with childish gravity.

Satia smiled.

"Yes. Maynard, let me introduce you to my good friend, Doctor Kenneth Cameron, of St. Luke's. You remember I have told you of all his little children there."

Any mother might have been proud of the ease and grace with which the boy lifted his cap from his sunny curls and extended his hand to the tall doctor.

"How do you do, doctor?" he said, politely. "I hope all the little boys are getting well."

"I hope so, too, Maynard," replied Kenneth, taking the proffered hand. "They miss you, Mrs. Julian." He turned to Satia. "When do you think you'll be getting back again?"

"I can hardly tell yet," she said, hastily. "But I am forgetting to be hospitable. Will you not come over to the house?"

He hesitated. He was on his way home by way of Glen Cairlie Station and a ten-mile horseback ride. He glanced at the sky.

"Thank you," he answered. "I'll not deny myself the pleasure of a bit of friendly chat; but I must be getting to the little mother by sunset."

“Oh, then,” exclaimed Satia, “you are going to Dunnoch Crag? How glad Mrs. Cameron will be to see you! Maynard and I are going over to call on her in a few days. We had our first short drive yesterday.”

They strolled back to the house, and the doctor passed a happy hour. They went over the castle, from the quaint old picture-gallery—where Morris’ portrait and Maynard’s, in its childish freshness, formed a striking contrast to the rest of the ancient lords and ladies—to the pretty room which he needed not to be told was Satia’s handiwork.

She did tell him all about it, however, with a pride and interest pretty to see, and he listened as though his lifelong happiness depended on each word. The sun was fast nearing the topmost tree-twigs when he said good-bye and rode away.

After this the days passed quietly but very delightfully for Satia and her son, until one morning Janet came in, flushed and round-eyed with the news she brought.

“Oh, Miss Julia, whatever do you think? Grandmother has a letter from Lord Cairlie, and he’s comin’ home to-morrow on the Edinburgh express, an’ he’s bringin’ Miss Fielding and another leddy wi’ him, an’ says the tower-room is to be made ready; an’ granny says when could you please to

let her come an' consoolt wi' ye, if ye'd be so kind, miss ; an', oh, do ye think it's the bride he's fetchin' now?" asked the girl, gasping with curiosity.

Satia sat down suddenly. She felt as if the breath was leaving her body.

"Tell Mrs. Boyd I'll come to her room very soon," she managed to say.

She locked the door after Janet and went to the low couch where Maynard lay. Perfectly motionless she stood watching him. The time, then, had come when she must look her last at the dear face ; must press a farewell kiss upon the sweet lips.

All day long she assisted Mrs. Boyd, working with her own hands in feverish excitement. All night long she held Maynard in her arms.

The next morning, just before his nap, she said to him :

"Maynard, kiss Fairy good-bye now. She is going to the village while you are asleep."

"Good-bye, dee, darling Fairy!" he cried, throwing his arms around her neck and covering her face with kisses. "Good-bye, and come back quick."

She sang him to sleep and laid him down. But she could not now stay to watch him, lest to leave him should become impossible.

She packed her small trunk then, and after

saying to Mrs. Boyd that she was obliged to return immediately to St. Luke's, she bade them adieu, and went to the station with Aleck when he drove down to meet the expected party. She had consulted a time-table, and knew that a train passed up just before the Edinburgh express came in. She boarded this, and was soon well on her way to Erlallach.

CHAPTER XXII.

KENNETH CAMERON.

Kenneth Cameron galloped quickly along toward his mother's home that evening with a heart as light as air. He had found Satia looking much better and happier, too, than when she left St. Luke's, and he judged by Maynard's appearance that she would soon be back there again.

"I'll bring the mother over to see her to-morrow, if it's a fine day, and we'll take her for a drive—my sweet lassie."

Mrs. Cameron was cutting roses in her pleasant garden when she heard a well-known footstep behind her. The scissors and the roses flew unheeded to the ground, and the little white-haired

mother was clasped in the arms of her beloved "laddie." They sat down together on a bench near by, with his arm still around her, and she passed her hands softly over his face and hair. At length, with a sigh of contentment, she laid her head against his breast.

"Ah, Kenneth, my son, ye little know the gladness the very sight o' ye brings to your mother. Ye've your father's face, my lad, and just his big, faithful heart again. I only wish ye'd bring a bonnie wifie to the old home before I'm gone. I canna bide the thought o' leavin' ye alone, lad, and I'm getting an old woman now."

She felt his heart leap as she spoke, and she looked up quickly, to see a flush fading from his brow. He dropped his eyes, but he smiled consciously.

"Now confess this very minute, ye sly rascal!" she cried. "Is it this that ye've come home to tell me? Dinna be afraid, my boy. Ye'd never choose a maid that I couldna love."

Her cheeks were pink with excitement and pleasure, her large eyes alight.

Kenneth hesitated. How could he speak, even to his mother, of the dearest wishes of his heart? And yet how could he bear to disappoint her fond impatience?

"Yes, mother," he said after a few minutes, "I

have found the only woman I have ever wished to make my wife. But I've not told her that I love her. I—I—think she does not know me well enough yet."

He could not help smiling at the incredulous look which overspread his mother's face.

"You must remember, mother, that I seem like just a big, rough fellow to everybody but you. And she—oh, she is the gentlest, sweetest, dearest lassie that walks the earth. But, mother," he added, with a change of tone, "you know her already. I quite forgot it for the moment. You know, and I'm sure that you must love Mrs. Julian. How could you help—"

He stopped, startled by her look of consternation.

"Oh, no, Kenneth," she cried, putting out her hand as if to ward off from him some impending misfortune, "not Satia."

He regarded her in silent astonishment, unable to understand her words or her dismay. He waited for her to speak again. But she did not.

"Why do you say that, mother?" he asked then, sternly, the displeasure of the man clearly visible beneath the respect of the son.

"Do not ask me, Kenneth," she replied, fairly

groaning in her distress at this most unlooked-for and unfortunate state of affairs.

“But I must know, mother.”

“Oh, my boy, why has no one told you that Satia is the wife of Lord Cairlie?”

He stared at her as though hearing but not comprehending.

“The wife of Morris Julian, mother?” he said, at last. “It is incredible; it cannot be. You surely are mistaken.”

But, as he spoke, he recalled her unaccountable agitation when asked to go to the castle. If this was so, then Maynard must be her son! What strange, tangled web of circumstance was this that seemed closing in around him and blotting all the sunshine from his life?

“It is true, Kenneth. Satia told me so herself. Oh, my son, my son!”

He did not reply. He bore in silence and with outward composure this crushing blow. After a long time, he said, gently raising the small figure resting motionless against him: “Poor little mother!” He carried her to the house and laid her on her bed. He busied himself about her, doing all that he could for her physical comfort. Then he kissed her and went away.

In the morning she found, pinned to her pillow, a note from him :

“ I’m off for a tramp across the moors, my best of mothers. I’ll be back in a week or so. Dinna worry your dear heart about me.

“ KENNETH.”

“ My brave lad !” she murmured, pressing the paper to her lips ; “ my poor, sair-hearted boy !”

She tried to be brave, too ; but she felt that it would have been far easier to bear this terrible wrench at the happiness of her son had there been anything she could do to relieve his disappointment.

It was ten days before Kenneth returned. Both mother and son bore marks of what they had been through with during that time, but each, for the other’s sake, tried to be cheerful. Kenneth spoke very soon of the matter that was uppermost in both their minds.

“ Mother,” he said, “ Will you tell me all you can about it ? I—I used to know Julian well, and it may be that something can be done to—to mend this wretched state of things between them.”

Mrs. Cameron told him the whole of Satia’s pathetic story, with as much exactness as possible, and she felt that if she were violating a confidence in so doing, the act was justifiable in this case. Ken-

neth's strong features glowed with various emotions as he listened.

"Poor little lassie!" he said, softly; "poor, brave little woman!"

Then he told his mother how he himself, all unknowing, had sent Satia to Castle Cairlie to nurse her own son in the person of the little laird; how he had seen them together there; how happy she seemed. To this he added the rumors he had repeatedly heard of the bride who was about to be brought there. Whether they had any foundation in fact, he did not know.

"And this may account for her unanswered letter. Oh, Kenneth, how will she bear it?"

"It may not be true, mother. God grant it is not, if she still loves him. Morris Julian, when I knew him ten years ago in Vienna, was the very incarnation of selfishness. He made the elements themselves subserve his purposes, and apparently thought that the earth turned on its axis only to bring him day and night. He wooed and won every woman's heart he chose, just for the pure love of showing his power over them, flinging them away as carelessly as one might a faded flower. He was not the least bit of a profligate, though; on the contrary, he scorned excesses of any kind, and prided himself on being a cultured, polished moralist. I used

to think sometimes that he had but this one fault ; but it was an unpardonable one. I know him well, mother, and I'm going to see him and tell him all you've told me to-day. He must have loved Satia—his wife with his whole soul, to have submitted to the chains of marriage for her sake—and you may be sure he's ready to atone, so far as a man can, for the wrong he has done her. He never should have married any woman."

"But he is not at Cairlie, Kenneth."

"I heard in the village that he is expected to-day, with guests."

"Then where is Satia?" asked Mrs. Cameron.

"That is what I must find out. If she is there, all will be well, you need not doubt. If she went back to Erlallach before he came, and he is not married again, I'll send him to her. If there's a new wife—God help my sweet lassie—I'll bring her to you, mother."

"Oh, Kenneth," she faltered, "you ask too much of me. I love Satia dearly ; but you, Kenneth, are my all."

"Then do what I ask of you, mother. Give her a home in your heart and beneath your roof. Shield her from the prying, gossiping world of busybodies. Comfort and help and cherish her as no one but you can."

“But, you Kenneth; even if I could do this for her, I cannot keep you from me as this surely would do.”

“No, mother; but it would not be for always. There is nothing selfish or belittling in such a love as Satia Julian has inspired in my heart. I already am more of a man, and I shall be a better son to you, mother, for loving her.”

He rose to his feet, and stood, erect and proud, before her.

“If she comes to you, and I warn you that I shall bring her if need be, I could not yet stay often near her. But I should be happier in knowing that she was here than anywhere else in the wide world.”

His mother looked at him with kindling eyes. It was worth some suffering to see the nobleness of such a son. In her inmost self she considered him a far fitter mate for Satia than the narrow-souled man who had made her his wife. Although she devoutly hoped that the necessity would not just yet be thrown upon her, she could not refuse him the promise he desired.

“Thank you, mother,” he said, coming close beside her. “Now I must go to St. Luke’s. But as soon as I can get away, to-morrow, if possible, I shall see Julian. And I’ll come around this way afterward and let you know what has been done.”

Mrs. Cameron saw him start for the train; then she sat down to mature a plan which she had been revolving in her mind for some time.

She dreaded to think of the coming interview between the two men, and she determined to render it unnecessary by herself seeing Morris and telegraphing the result of her visit to Kenneth. She ordered the wagonette to be brought around immediately. Just as she was on the point of leaving the house, she thought of Maynard and stepped to the garden to cut him a bunch of flowers. It was while there that a card bearing the name of Morris Julian was brought to her.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CHRISTINE.

After leaving Geneva, Morris had kept close watch of Satia's movements while awaiting the arrival of Maynard and Kelsie, an event delayed for several reasons.

In the first place, both Dorothy and Maynard were exposed to the scarlet fever the very week that Morris' telegram reached New Orleans, and,

of course, the little fellow could not be sent until the time for coming down with it should elapse. Both children fell ill, but not dangerously so. Still, their convalescence was extremely slow. Maynard, especially, did not regain his usual robust health, and his physician forbade his taking the long ocean journey during the winter. When, at length, the time for setting off drew near, Mrs. Fielding decided that she could better take him to his father herself.

Morris had chafed impatiently under these repeated postponements of Maynard's coming. He was more nearly provoked with his sister than ever before for what seemed to him her needless precautions. But Mary Fielding was every bit as determined as Morris when need be, and he knew that she would do exactly as she thought best, in spite of his imperious telegrams. He had, moreover, the utmost confidence in her judgment, independently of its present conflict with his wishes, and he found the months as they passed much less tedious than they otherwise would have been, by reason of his nearness to Satia.

He shadowed her, during that winter in Paris, like a detective; he lived upon the frequent glimpses which he had of her, he became accomplished in the matter of disguises, and even ventured, in the character of a blonde-wigged, spectacled German artist,

to wander about the Chateau of Chenonceau almost at her side.

But he did not at all enjoy this sort of thing. The novel experience of being forced to such clap-trap masquerading by reason of another's will, and that other his own wife, was exasperating in the extreme to a man of his temperament. He wondered at himself that he did it; but, at the same time, he could not deny himself the unsatisfactory satisfaction of seeing her whenever it was possible.

It was, therefore, with feelings of the greatest relief and gladness that he received a telegram from Mary, saying that they had taken passage for Havre and should arrive there early in March. He was on the dock to meet them, and took them at once to Paris. He detailed to his sister his plans for winning Satia through her son; and she, entering into them heartily, declared herself willing to do everything in her power to aid him.

Morris had made himself familiar with the neighborhood where Satia lived, and had engaged rooms for his party not far away. He had also learned the various masters who came to the house, and those to whom both she and Elsa went for lessons.

It was arranged that Maynard should be taken out every day by Kelsie, under Morris' direction, and that the route selected should be that over

which Satia passed most frequently. Maynard was now in perfect health, and so beautiful a child as to attract attention anywhere.

Morris had high hopes of the success of this scheme; but, alas! on the very first morning after their arrival in Paris he discovered, to his unbounded chagrin and bitter disappointment, that "madame and mademoiselle" had left the city. The polite, regretful *concierge* "thought" that they had gone to England, but could not be sure.

Morris more than half suspected that Satia had been conscious of his espionage, having "shadowed" him in turn, and had taken immediate advantage of his brief absence.

He went back to Mary, disconsolate, with his unwelcome tidings. By her advice he visited everyone who had been in any way connected with Satia, in the hope of finding some clue to her whereabouts. The singing-master was the only one who had the least bit of information. He remembered having heard madame say that she wished to take mademoiselle to Algiers. This was but a straw, to be sure, but Morris seized it promptly, and left next day for that place, rather against his sister's advice.

"Why don't you telegraph to the hotels?" she asked him.

"As though she were an escaped adventuress?"

No, no; I cannot do that, Mary. It will take but a few days to run over there."

She said no more. She saw plainly that he had reached a stage where inaction was impossible. While he had gone she wrote to Aunt Hester. She had heard, of course, all about that lady's marriage, and she felt quite sure of getting direct news from Satia through her. An answer reached her the morning of Morris' return from a fruitless journey. It told them of the prospective departure of the Nissen family for America.

"Satia is bringing Elsa home now, but I have no idea where they are at present. Our last letter was from Paris. Do use all your influence, dear Mrs. Fielding, to see our unhappy girl personally, and to induce her to return to her home. I have never realized, until my own happy marriage, what such a life as she is now living must mean."

Morris smiled as he handed the letter back to Mary.

"Your head is worth two of mine, dear. Let us go to Norway."

"No, Morris; let us write again to Mrs. Nissen. She will know by that time what Satia is going to do. We might have our long journey for nothing. Remember that you are not at all sure of persuading her to see you, even through Maynard."

He consented to this, reluctantly. While waiting for a reply to this second letter, he received the most unexpected information of his succession to the seldom-thought-of house and estate of Cairlie. Matters in connection with this required his presence at once in Edinburgh. He arrived there some time in advance of Satia, and took advantage of a good opportunity to have Maynard's portrait painted. He had already conceived the idea of sending one to Satia, in case she could or would not be reached by the child himself. It was ordered, however, ostensibly for the family gallery at Cairlie. Soon after their arrival at the castle, in early April, they received the expected letter from Aunt Hester.

She gave the following week as their sailing date, and she had no notion of what Satia was going to do. She wrote very briefly, which Morris and Mary ascribed to her busy last days; but, in reality, she was determined to keep them from pursuit of Satia. She had just passed through the trying scene in which the misery of the heart-broken woman had turned the tide of her sympathy. Before going on board the steamer, she took Christine aside and charged her over and over again to tell no one where Satia had gone.

"She needs rest: she is ill and she must not be disturbed. When she wishes, she will let her

friends hear from her. This is very important, dear Tina, and I am going to ask you to see that the boys, Ole and Eric, give no information if anyone should come seeking her.

Christine promised readily enough. She had always admired Satia, although she could not help perceiving that she avoided her as much as possible. In consequence of this precaution of Aunt Hester's, for which she afterward suffered more than one twinge of conscience, when Morris arrived in Bergen shortly after her departure he was unable to find out anything concerning Satia. Eric and Ole, happening to see him leave the train, went off on a fishing trip. Christine could not help smiling at the little note her husband sent her. "A man can run away so easily, but a woman must meet trouble face to face," she thought.

Almost at that very moment a knock was heard, and she opened the door to find herself looking into Morris' well-remembered countenance.

They exchanged cordial greetings, and she invited him to enter.

As he did so, and during the few minutes of general conversation which followed, he studied her even more closely than he had done on his previous visit to her father's house. He was trying to dis-

cover the best way to win her over, in case, as he thought very likely, Satia had forewarned her.

“Simple-hearted and sincere; easily worked upon,” was his conclusion.

“I have come to Bergen, Mrs. Jansen,” he began, courteously, “to see Mrs. Julian. I find that she has moved from her cottage, and I feel sure that you can direct me to her present home.”

“I am not able to do so, Mr. Julian,” she replied.

“But she—do you mean?—surely she did not go to America with your father’s family?” he asked, with ill-concealed anxiety.

“Oh, no, sir!”

“I understood as much from your—from Mrs. Nissen,” he remarked. “I think that Mrs. Julian was here last week, when they sailed, was she not?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Is she at this time in Bergen?” he next inquired, beginning to be rather annoyed at these brief answers.

“She is not, sir.”

“Do you know where she had gone?”

“Yes, sir,” said Christine.

Morris jumped up and walked to the window, biting his lip with vexation. Was this stupidity or stubbornness? He turned to her again.

“I beg that you will pardon my persistence, my

dear Mrs. Jansen," he began, suavely, "but it is really very important that I see Mrs. Julian; important for her best interests, I mean. Please be kind enough to tell me where I can find her."

"I cannot do that, Mr. Julian."

A dangerous gleam shot from his eyes, which were showing their steel very plainly now. He glanced sharply at her, making no secret of his impatience.

"Let me understand you, if you please. You mean that you know where Mrs. Julian is and yet refuse to tell me?"

"Yes, sir," answered Christine, composedly.

"Did she ask you to do this?" he questioned, after a short silence.

"Oh, no, sir."

Morris was white by this time. Mingled with his disappointment was a quick sense of anger that this girl should dare to brave him so.

"Then why," he cried hotly, "do you not tell me what I wish so much to know?"

Christine did not reply. She was looking out of the window. A small, white-headed boy was passing. She threw up the sash and called to him. Speaking rapidly a few words in Norwegian, she tore a scrap of paper from a sheet on the table near by, wrote a line or two on it, and handed it to the

lad. He nodded, on hearing her directions, and ran off down the street.

Then she turned to Morris, who had been watching the proceeding with a good deal of curiosity, not unmingled with suspicion.

“I have promised, but not madame,” she said.

“Who then?” he demanded, instantly.

Christine hesitated. She had not been asked by Mrs. Nissen to keep this a secret; but she felt instinctively that she had better do so.

“I do not wish to tell you, sir.”

“But,” exclaimed Morris, springing from his chair in great excitement, “do you not understand? Girl, I am her husband—I have a right to know these things.”

Christine arose instantly. Her cheeks were white, too.

“Please to remember, Mr. Julian, to whom you are speaking.”

Morris was at her side at once, contrite, ashamed.

“I do beg your pardon with my whole heart, Mrs. Jansen. I forgot myself completely for the moment. You would surely forgive me, if—if you knew—how long—how much—how much I want to see her.”

Christine made no reply.

He suddenly remembered the note she had written. His suspicions were again aroused.

“To whom did you send that note?” he asked.

“To my husband,” Christine answered.

“And did you tell him to keep out of my reach?” came quickly from his lips.

“I did,” she said, with the tiniest bit of a smile.

Again he walked to the window.

“And you did well, by Jove,” he was saying to himself. “There’s not a man alive who could baffle me as you do, confound you.”

In spite of his excessive irritation, however, he could but admire the courage and skill which, with all her simplicity, she had shown during the interview. She answered every question truthfully, and yet she told him nothing. He felt his old instinct of conquest rising hot within him. He longed to lay siege to the strong, determined will of this blue-eyed maiden, so serene and dauntless; to win it over, step by step, slowly, delightfully, until she should no longer be able to look at him so steadfastly and refuse him what he asked. But his love for his wife was more potent than even this life-long habit. He came and seated himself quite near Christine once more.

“I will be entirely frank with you, Mrs. Jansen. Some time ago there were unfortunate differences between my wife and myself, all of which were my own fault. I—I have not seen her for some months,

and I am most anxious to do so in order to beg her forgiveness."

Christine was listening attentively. This, then, was the reason why the beautiful madame was always so sad. Her affectionate heart swelled with sympathy. How truly dreadful it must be not to feel kindly toward one's own dear husband! She could not imagine such a state of things between Ole and herself. She said nothing, however, and Morris continued:

"But it is not only I. Our little boy—he needs his mother."

Christine looked up quickly now. "Our little boy." Ah! that was sad, indeed. Some day, some happy day before the Christmas snows should fall, there might be one lying in her arms of whom she and Ole could say: "Our little boy."

Morris had, all unconsciously, touched a chord which vibrated tenderly beneath his words. His companion trembled and grew pale. Her eyes were raised to his just as unflinchingly, but they were full of tears.

"I am sorry for you, Mr. Julian, and for madame. For the—little lad—my heart aches. But I cannot tell you where his mother is, for I have given my word, and Norwegian girls are taught to keep a promise. Please to go away now, Mr. Julian. I

cannot help you, even though I wish it. Ask the good Father to direct you. Good-bye!"

Morris stood in silence before her simple dignity. He took her hand and pressed it to his lips in humble reverence. Then, still without a word, he left her.

CHAPTER XXIV.

KELSIE'S DISCOVERY.

He waited about Bergen for several days but saw nothing of either Eric or Ole, and finally concluded to return to Edinburgh. He was at his wits' end to know what to do next.

His sister suggested that a letter be sent to Aunt Hester asking for Satia's address, and that they all go to the Continent while the needed repairs were being made at Castle Cairlie, preparatory to their occupancy in the fall.

They did so, but after a few weeks Morris became restless and went again to Bergen. This time he had the great good fortune to find Erika, upon whom no conditions of silence had been imposed. Christine and Ole were away for a sort of visit to the hill country. So Morris had the delight of hear-

ing from another pair of lips the history of those eventful days on board the *Sea Gull*; and—more precious knowledge still—of learning where Satia had gone from Bergen; also, that she had come down from the mountain scarcely two weeks before, and had left Bergen on the Hull steamer. He lost no time in following her to that place. Further than that he could not trace her. But it was something to have got such recent tidings as these. Several weeks and months now passed without hearing of her in any way. Even Aunt Hester, from whom a number of letters had been received since her return to America, could tell him nothing. Satia no longer wrote to her.

In early winter Kelsie and Maynard returned to Castle Cairlie, but Mrs. Fielding remained abroad with Clover, who was spending a year in Europe with her husband and little Dorothy. Morris spent his time largely in Edinburgh, in the hope of getting some clue to Satia's whereabouts; for he had heard of a lady's looking at Maynard's portrait with much emotion, and he had no doubt that she was his mother. He still clung tenaciously to his theory of winning her through Maynard; he was also confident that she must have learned of his residence in Scotland, and he tried to wait patiently for the betrayal of her presence which he believed she

would surely make. The spring and the summer days followed but slowly. Then came an urgent invitation from Clover and Mary to join them in a yachting expedition on the Mediterranean. He had so often refused requests similar to this that he had not the heart to decline this one. He was the more inclined to accept it from the fact that Marie Fontenelle had returned to Paris, and he hoped to learn something of Satia from her. Several letters which he had written to her had remained unanswered, and he was anxious to see her in person. So he went, and it was during this time that Satia's little "olive-branch" went wandering from place to place, following its intended recipient all the way around to his Scottish home.

The Edinburgh express rolled up to the Glen Cairlie station promptly at noon of the day that Satia left the castle. The party drove home quickly. Morris, although assured by Doctor Murray's daily telegrams of Maynard's progress toward recovery, was extremely impatient to see him. He was met by Janet, who led the way to the new room, slipping off then to attend to the wants of the ladies. He stepped to the bedside and looked at his son. The glow of health was on cheek and lip; his gentle, regular breathing told of sweet sleep.

Then the father gazed about the room in amaze-

ment. Whose work was this? Surely a woman's hand had been busy here. He called Janet, and asked that the new nurse be sent to him.

"Oh, if you please, sir, Miss Julia went away this morning."

"Why did she go to-day? Who is here in her place? Murray should not have allowed it. I—— Send Boyd to me, Janet. I do not understand this at all."

He walked about the room again while waiting. Nothing had been disturbed since Satia left it scarcely two hours before. Everywhere he saw evidences of loving thoughtfulness, of exquisite taste. Again he stood by Maynard's side. Stopping, he pressed a soft kiss upon his boy's rosy cheek, and no whisper came to him of the lips that had last rested there. As yet no faint suspicion of "Miss Julia's" identity had dawned upon him. Still he felt a vague impression of mystery in connection with the transformation of his lumber-room into this charming apartment. Mrs. Boyd came in soon. She told him that "Miss Julia" had, indeed, done all the wonderful work, and, in addition, she related much in her praise.

"But why did she leave this morning? Surely she knew that we were coming?"

"Oh, yes, sir. She helped me get everything

ready ; an' then she came all sudden-like an' told us she had to go back to the hospital, an' she told us good-bye like the real leddy she is, an' went off wi' Aleck when he went doon for you."

Just then Maynard opened his eyes. He screamed with delight at sight of his father.

Wrapped in a pretty dressing-gown, the work of Satia's fingers, he was soon cuddled down in Morris' arms, feeling very happy to be again in his loved resting-place. Presently he sat up and looked inquiringly around.

"Where is Fairy, papa?"

"Who is Fairy, my son?" asked Morris, in surprise.

"Why, Fairy is my dee nurse—don't you know? Her truly name is Miss Julia, but I call her Fairy, 'cause she made me this lovely room just the way Cind'ella's fairy made her such booful fings out of a big pumpkin. Don't you 'member, papa, and don't you fink it is nice in here now?"

"Yes, Maynard, your Fairy is certainly a very kind and skillful one."

"But papa, why don't she come? I want her. Oh, I 'member now. She went to the village, but she'll come back pitty soon."

He rested his head contentedly against his father's breast and softly patted his hand. Before long he

sat up again, his eyes sparkling with the question which had just entered his active little brain.

"Papa, did you find my dee mamma?"

Morris pressed him to his heart.

"No, my son."

"I telled Fairy 'bout it one day, an' she said I must be a good boy to you an' my new mamma——"

"Your 'new mamma?'" cried Morris, amazed.

"That is what Fairy telled me—I 'member 'zackly that was the time she cried so hard 'cause her head ached. But I made it well adain for her. Fairy is just as nice as a mamma, an' she sings all the times I ask her. Don't you fink she'll come pitty soon now, papa?"

"I cannot tell, Maynard, but I hope so. I want to thank her for all this that she has done for my little boy. What do you suppose I have brought you, Maynard? Something alive and very nice."

"Oh, I know; a dog."

"No."

"A pony, papa?"

"No."

"A—a—not a kitty-puss?"

"No. It has only two feet."

"A hen," said the child, promptly.

"No," replied Morris, laughing. "It has no feathers, but long, golden hair."

Maynard's look of eagerness and curiosity were charming to see.

"Oh, papa, I can't imagine. A dolly?"

"No, dear, not a dolly doll, but a true little dolly—your cousin Dorothy."

"Oh, my dee Dolly, my dee Dolly!" he exclaimed, using the name he had first given her. Just at that moment "dee Dolly" came running in, as fresh and sweet as a rose. The two children greeted each other with delight, and were soon playing about the floor. Janet came in to look after them, and Morris went to see Kelsie. The meeting between them was almost like that of mother and son. After a little talk about the accident, she asked:

"Master Morris, did ye see our bonnie leddy?"

"No, Kelsie. Sometimes I think that I never shall again."

"Come sit close here by me, laddie," she whispered; then: "I've not seen her either, but unless my auld ears have deceived me sair, I've heard her sweet voice under this very roof less than twelve hours ago."

Morris sprang to his feet.

"Hush ye, my bairn," said the old woman, seizing his hand, "sit ye doon agen an' listen to me. When I 'gan to get eased o' the cuttin' pains, an' to have a grain o' sense in my auld head agen, I heerd

o' the wonderfu' doin's o' Master Maynard's new fangled nurse fro' the big hospital, but I'd not the least notion o' her bein' his own blessed mother until las' night. It was still, an' the win' a-comin' fair in these windows, an' I heerd a soft, sweet singin'. I kenned that voice in a minute, an' I kenned in a flash why she would never come to see me an' let me take her by the han' an' thank her for all her kindness to our little lad. I tried my verra best to get up an' go in there, but my poor auld bones wouldna move. So I jus' lay an' listened, an' thanked the good Lord that He'd brought her back agen. An' when 'twas broad day I fell asleep, an' when I woke up agen, Master Morris, they told me that she had gone back to the hospital. For how could she stay here even for the bairnie's sake, when she's heerd all this meserable gossip aboot the new bride you're bringing home wi' ye?"

Morris listened eagerly, intently, incredulously. Could it be? Maynard's Fairy and his mother one and the same? And yet, could it be any other hand than hers who had wrought so much for him? The man's pulses beat heavily; his brain seemed on fire. He rushed from the room, saddled his horse, and rode at full speed to Dr. Murray's office to get from him what information he might regarding Miss Julia. Luckily, that gentleman was at home.

“ I really know nothing, Mr. Julian, excepting that she came from St. Luke's, highly recommended by Dr. Cameron. And you have reason to be grateful to her, if ever a man did. If she had been Maynard's own mother, she could not have done more for him. Why she went off in this fashion, I have not the least idea. You'll doubtless find her at Erlallach.”

Morris endeavored to conceal, so far as he was able, the strong excitement under which he was laboring. He returned to Castle Cairlie to arrange for leaving immediately for Erlallach. His promise never to seek Satia, unsummoned, was forgotten. He thought of nothing but her presence that very day beneath his roof, and his determination to bring her back again without delay. He found dinner on the table.

“ We did not wait for you, Morris,” Mary said. “ Wherever have you been in such a hurry ?”

He did not answer her. He was reading a little travel-stained missive, covered with post-marks and re-directions.

Ten minutes later he was on his way to Dunnoch Crag.



CHAPTER XXV.

VAIN SEARCHINGS.

Mrs. Cameron, in coming in from the garden, found Morris Julian impatiently pacing the veranda. He came directly to her, hat in hand.

“My wife, Mrs. Julian,” he said at once, forgetting conventionalities in his eagerness—“is she here?”

He read her reply in her face before she spoke.

“No, Mr. Julian. Your wife left here several weeks ago, to return to St. Luke’s hospital at Erlallach.”

“And she left Cairlie only this morning? Would to God I had come down from Edinburgh last night, as I at first intended. Perhaps you will tell me when the first train leaves for Erlallach, Mrs. Cameron. I must lose no time in getting there.”

“There is no train until evening. I will send you to the station in ample time. Come in now, Mr. Julian, and rest awhile.”

She saw that he was faint and unnerved. He

followed her into her pleasant sitting-room, and partook of the cordial and other refreshments she offered him.

“You are very kind,” he said, when he could control the tremble in his voice.

“I love your wife, Mr. Julian.” She saw his lips quiver. “Her mother was my dearest friend when we were girls, and Satia, in her trouble, came to me as she might have gone to that mother. She told me the whole unhappy history of her married life, and here, at that desk, she wrote a letter to you, bidding you come to her.”

“It is that that brought me,” interrupted Morris, quickly. “I only received it an hour ago. It has been chasing me half over Europe, with most unaccountable delays.”

Mrs. Cameron hesitated. She hardly knew how much or how little to tell him; whether gentle measures or harsher ones were best. She was moved by pity for him, indignation against him, sympathy for Satia, and a great flood of tender yearning over her own suffering boy.

At length she said :

“Mr. Julian, did you know that rumors of your approaching marriage are all through the country here, especially in the neighborhood of Castle Cairlie?”

"To my infinite annoyance, I do. There will be little more of it from those over whom I have authority, you may be sure. Do you think, Mrs. Cameron, can it be that this is the cause of Satia's leaving?"

"Without doubt; that, together with her unanswered letter. She was here until she could endure the suspense no longer. Then she went back to her work; work, Mr. Julian, that she undertook in expiation of the wrong she did to her own child. My son, who is physician-in-charge at St. Luke's sent her to nurse Maynard, in ignorance of her relations to him."

"Your son! Is Kenneth Cameron your son, madame? I used to know him well in Vienna, years ago. He was a fine fellow," said Morris, warmly.

"He is a fine fellow now," said his mother, with a pathetic little break in her voice.

"I heard last spring that he was at St. Luke's, and came very near going over to see him."

"Oh, if you only had," she groaned in spirit, "all this sad business might have been prevented." Aloud she said :

"You will find him there now, and I pray that you may find Satia, too. She needs a great deal of love and tender devotion to make up for all that she has been through with, Mr. Julian."

“No man can give her more than I offer her, and no man is more unworthy her least favor,” he replied, so humbly that Mrs. Cameron’s heart was touched. “For her sake and our boy’s, I am willing to efface myself so far as possible, if she will only consent to come back to us.”

She could not forbear saying:

“I think you will find her ready to meet you more than half-way. She, as well as you, made mistakes. I am quite sure, too, that she was not thinking wholly of herself, nor yet of Maynard, when she wrote to you.”

She smiled, and Morris seized her hands in a transport of joy.

“God bless you for those words,” he exclaimed. “They are the first cheering ones I have heard in all this weary time.”

It was quite late that evening when a card was brought in to Doctor Cameron, at his office at St. Luke’s. He read it, then straightened himself, and set his lips firmly.

“It has come sooner than I expected,” he thought, as he opened the door of the reception-room, where Morris waited.

The greeting was cordial on the part of Morris; courteous on the part of Kenneth. The latter led

the way back to the office, and when they were seated, Morris said :

“I have just come from your mother, Cameron. I hoped to find my wife, who left Castle Cairlie shortly before my arrival there to-day, at Dunnoch Craggs. But she was not there. I—I hope—is—is she here, Cameron?”

He spoke quietly, but his excitement was plainly visible.

“Mrs. Julian had been gone from here some time when I returned late this afternoon,” answered Kenneth. “I found this note on my desk.”

He took a paper from the table, and handed it to Morris, who read as follows :

“DEAR DOCTOR CAMERON: With this I leave for you my resignation as nurse at St. Luke's hospital. I thank you with all my heart for your exceeding kindness. It will always be remembered by your grateful friend,

“SATIA MAYNARD JULIAN.”

The note fell from Morris' hand. He looked piteously at Kenneth.

“Can you tell me where she has gone?” he asked.

“I cannot,” said Kenneth, slowly, bending an ivory paper-knife until it snapped. “Mrs. Julian left no other word than this. I found, however, in

the evening post-bag, a letter addressed to my mother. That may possibly tell of her intended movements."

"Thank you. I will go to Dunnock Crag immediately."

Both men arose. They shook hands in silence. Words were difficult for each of them.

Morris reached the pretty stone cottage early next morning. The brief note which Mrs. Cameron had received gave him no information, and he set out for home with a face so sad that his kind hostess pitied him.

By the next train Kenneth came. Tears filled his eyes as he read the few touching words Satia had hurriedly written to his mother.

"DEAR, DEAR FRIEND: You know already, perhaps, why I can no longer stay in Scotland. I will let you hear from me some time, but do not expect it very soon. Your loving

"*St. Luke's, Oct. 20, 1881.*

"SATIA."

He sat for some time in deep thought. Then he said:

"We must find her, mother. I believe she will sail for America. I can catch the steamer which leaves Glasgow to-morrow, and the chances are that she will be on it. But you will telegraph to Liver-

pool, will you not, and to Queenstown, in case she has gone there? We can reach her even there, I think. If there's such a thing possible, we'll not let her out of the kingdom without trying to bring her back to happiness."

"But, Kenneth, she may have gone to the Norway mountains she loves so well."

"Yes; then telegraph to the Wilsons, at Hull; but I think we'll not find her there. She's not the woman to sit down idly now, she'll be in some good work somewhere, bless her heart."

Alisan Cameron went to her son. She took his head between her hands, and looked deep into the steady eyes which returned her gaze so frankly.

"Ah, my laddie," she said, "how will ye bear it an' ye find her?"

"How will she bear it an' I do not, mother?" he answered, instantly. "Where it is question between her happiness and mine, I can endure anything."

He made inquiries at the steamship-office immediately on reaching Glasgow. The *Circassia* had but just left the dock. The clerk ran over the passenger-list.

"No, sir. I see no such name as Mrs. Satia Julian."

"Will you kindly wire me if she takes passage within a week or two?"

“Certainly, sir. Address, please.”

“Kenneth Cameron, St. Luke’s, Erlallach.”

As he turned away from the desk, he glanced for the first time at a gentleman who had stood close beside him during this conversation.

It was Morris, and Kenneth knew that he must have overheard every word. He flushed quickly and made his way out of the room on to the now deserted wharf. He walked rapidly to the very end. Immediately he became aware that Morris was following him.

“Why are you here, Cameron?” that gentleman asked him, haughtily. “What right have you to be pursuing my wife in such a way as this?”

Kenneth, big of stature and big of heart, looked down at the slight figure, the pale, excited face, the eyes now flashing fire of the man whom he had never respected, whom he scarcely, even now, pitied, but who, after all, was Satia’s husband and who must have something admirable and noble in his nature since she loved him. For her dear sake, he could, he would, endure anything.

So he said quietly :

“I hoped to prevent her leaving Scotland.”

“But why—why, I should like to ask, have you any right to interfere with her goings and comings?” he demanded, furious with anger at Ken-

neth's coolness, and a suspicion of something more than met the eye in his unaccountable presence here at this time.

"I have no right to interfere in any way with Mrs. Julian."

His tones were quiet enough; but the expression of his face as he spoke her name betrayed him.

Morris started as though he had been shot.

"You!" he cried—"you love her!"

Kenneth bared his head; he looked Morris full in the face and smiled.

"And she?" gasped Morris, trembling, his hand clenched.

"My mother tells me that she loves her husband," replied Kenneth, steadily.

"And yet you are trying to keep her here? Men are not usually so magnanimous," said Morris, scornfully.

It was now Kenneth's turn to feel the hot blood rush in a torrent to his cheeks. The sneer in Morris' words and manner aroused all his hot temper. He looked off across the water, and could he have known whose eyes were looking back toward Scotland, from the deck of the fast-disappearing *Circassia*, his loving heart would have beat with mightier throbs than those which now shook him from head to foot. He did not know; but he thought of her

and of the beautiful boy he had seen with her under the trees of the Cairlie forest. And his anger died away. Only love and pity and great sorrow filled his breast. He turned to Morris and said, quite gently :

“ I think that Mrs. Julian has a son at Castle Cairlie.”

The face of his boy rose before Morris. He heard again his wistful words—“ I want my Fairy.” His jealous passion cooled before the noble spirit of Kenneth's reply. The strong impulse to pitch Kenneth over into the water, which he had barely resisted, subsided. He looked into the fine, strong face ; he felt suddenly drawn to this man who loved Satia, but could never even hope to win her. All that was noble in his own nature—and there was much—came uppermost now. The “ Cameron way ” had won. He extended his hand, saying, with a sincerity which could not be mistaken :

“ Forgive me. You alone of us two are worthy of her.”

And as they stood there, hand in hand in a hearty clasp, the *Circassia* passed beyond their sight, bearing Satia far from Scottish shores.

The next six months were spent by them both in trying to find her. Morris was willing now to advertise openly, though in terms which would be

intelligible to her alone ; he also caused an explicit denial of his rumored marriage to be published extensively both in Europe and America ; he wrote personally to every one whom he thought likely to have the least knowledge of her movements. But all his efforts were fruitless. Month after month went by until a year had rolled around since the precious little letter had made its tardy way to his hand. Mary Fielding had returned to New Orleans with Clover and little Dorothy, and one day Morris took Maynard over to Dunnoch Crag, to bid Mrs. Cameron good-bye. He had been, during all this weary time, a frequent and a welcome visitor to the sweet old lady, who had become very fond of him.

Out of the selfishness, the egotism, the narrow-heartedness of his former self a new and nobler character was being evolved. He was growing to be a manly man, whom a woman like Kenneth's mother could respect and love. She had been the greatest possible help and comfort to him, and it was with the deepest regret that he came to take his leave of her.

" I have arranged," he told her, " to lease Castle Cairlie for a term of years. Young Harold Ramsay will be your neighbor, and he is a fine fellow, I believe."

“Indeed he is. I know him well and all his family before him. But, Morris, I’ll miss ye sair.”

The simple words, simply spoken, meant a great deal, and Morris knew it. Tears filled his eyes—a rare thing with him, and a sign of keen emotion.

“Yes,” he replied; “but I must go. If I cannot share my life with Satia, I can at least try to make it worthy of her. So far I have been a trifler, except for the few first months after Maynard came. Now I am going to work in an earnest way out in the wilds of our Western country. There is every opportunity in that region for a man to make something of himself. I shall brush up my legal lore—perhaps you will not believe that I studied law in my youthful days—and hang out my shingle with the rest.”

He spoke lightly at the last, but he did not mean what he said in any light spirit. Mrs. Cameron invited them to spend the last day or two with her, and Kenneth came home. A firm friendship had grown up between the two men, to Morris’ never-ending surprise. Once he would have been ready to tear in pieces any man who dared to raise even so much as an admiring glance toward his wife; but there was something so frank, so high, so pure about Kenneth’s love for her that so petty a thing as jealousy could not live in the same atmosphere.

The farewell words between the three were few. Nearly all fell to Maynard's share. The child had never ceased to mourn for his "dee Fairy." He often prayed that he might find her again in the new home for which he and his father set sail one beautiful October morning.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"UNSERHEIM."

When "Miss Julia" left Castle Cairlie, she felt an instinctive desire which increased with each mile travelled, to get as far as possible from Maynard, and to bury herself somewhere beyond reach of discovery by anyone ever connected with her past. She determined to catch the first westward-bound steamer, and was fortunate to find the *Circassia* on the point of leaving. It was when she stood in the steamship office that the thought of taking her mother's name first occurred to her. After she had spoken it, and seen it written down, she drew a long breath of relief. The first step, and a long one, had been taken toward the effacement of Satia Julian and all her unhappy memories.

As Jeanie Sutherland she would assume the burden of life anew ; but she did not yet know how nor where. She had made no plans, not even so far as to decide where to go on reaching New York. She had simply obeyed a hurrying, overmastering impulse to get away, far away from Scotland. She believed that she had descended to the very farthest depths of suffering. Whatever the future years might have in store, no moment could exceed in bitterness the one in which she left her boy's bedside, and the roof to which her husband was, even then, returning.

Day after day she lay in her low steamer-chair, paying slight heed to what was passing around her. But one morning something occurred to break the monotony of the voyage, and to give direction to her thoughts. One of the ship's officers came quite near her with a neatly but poorly-dressed little girl, perhaps four years old, in his arms, and Satia learned, from his conversation with some ladies, that her mother was in the steerage, lying at the point of death. Interested at once, she went to the captain, and asked permission to go below, explaining that she was a nurse of some experience.

One glance at the drawn, pallid face told her that but a few hours of life, at most, remained to the sufferer. With gentle hands she ministered to all

her needs. As she sat near, fanning her and constantly moistening her parched lips, the great, dark-circled eyes of the mother were fixed upon Satia's face with the strangely searching, earnest gaze, which is only seen in those who are very near to the borders of the Shadowy Valley. She seemed to be reading her through and through. Presently she laid her hand on Satia's, and tried to draw her closer:

“My little girl,” she whispered.

“She is here,” said Satia, pointing to an adjacent berth, “sleeping nicely.”

“Yes, but—that is—what—I——”

Here she was overcome by faintness, and it some time before she could speak again.

“You wished to say something,” Satia said to her then.

“Oh, ma'am—my little Daisy—there is—no one—to send her back to—I—her father.” She waited some minutes. “I was going—to—him—in New York—he is——”

Her strength failed her once more. It was evidently going fast.

“What is your husband's name?” asked Satia, bending over her.

“John——” Her lips still moved, but no sound was heard. Her lids closed heavily. Just then the

child awoke. "Mamma," she cried. The mother's eyes opened at sound of the loved voice. They brightened at sight of the rosy little face; they filled with unutterable longing as she glanced from her up to Satia. Summoning all her strength, she murmured: "John—McNeil—mechan—ic." And still she looked up imploringly.

Satia lifted the child, so that her mother could see her plainly. She took the hot, thin hand in her own. She leaned down, and spoke with distinctness:

"I will take your little girl, and find her father, if possible. If I cannot find him, I will keep her for my own, and, God helping me, I will be a good mother to her. Can you hear me?"

There was little need to ask this; the expression of gratitude and relief which illuminated the wan features was more eloquent than words. To her dying day Satia never forgot it.

Very soon after this she closed the sightless eyes, and helped prepare the body for its last, long rest. At sunset that afternoon there came a sudden hush of the great ship's engines; midway of the sea, it stopped at the command of the silent monarch, Death. A little group gathered about the white, sail-wrapped object which rested on the deck waiting to be slipped into its watery grave. Other

groups stood silently, with bared heads and reverent mien. The chaplain, in his robes, read the burial service of the Church of England. The beautiful words floated out upon the quiet evening air like a benediction. They descended with healing and with consolation into the heart of the desolate woman who, standing nearest to the earthly remains of Margaret McNeil, held her child in her arms.

“Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts; shut not Thy merciful ears to our prayer,” was truly her petition.

Arriving at New York, she set herself to find “John McNeil, mechanic.” In the course of several days her search was rewarded. She learned from his landlady that he had gone to California with a half-dozen of his fellow-workmen, only a few days before, having evidently no idea of his wife’s coming out to him so soon.

Satia thought likely that she had been induced to do so by her rapidly failing health, and her wish to leave the child with him. She now felt free to assume the charge of little Daisy until her father should be heard from. Daisy was an affectionate, healthy child, evidently the offspring of respectable, refined, though humble, parents. Already Satia had become much attached to her. Her hungry, aching

heart had found something to which to cling. But she now longed to do more than she had done for the little ones at St. Luke's. It was indeed a great and blessed duty to care for the dear bodies, either in sickness or in health; but how much more so to educate the incessantly active brains, to train the immortal souls! She had passed, in her own development, far beyond the limit she had set for herself beneath the clear sky of the Norwegian Saeter. The ambition which then satisfied her, and whose attainment had brought comfort to her broken heart, was not enough now. She would be not only a nurse, competent, devoted, but a mother in the highest, holiest sense.

So, with curly-haired Daisy playing at her feet, she thought out the ways and means to this high end. Away upon the crest of the Alleghanies, in the pine-scented depths of the forest primeval, was a small estate which she held in her own right, through her mother. She had visited the place often during her childhood, and well remembered the delightful location of the rambling farmhouse, its healthful situation, its seclusion.

It seemed the very spot in which to gather the little family of children of which she already saw herself the head. Having once decided upon this work, she entered into it heart and soul. From a

city asylum she selected three little girls, all orphans. Then she hunted up one of her own childhood's nurses, a faithful creature, now well past middle life, who was overjoyed at sight of her former beloved charge, and entered enthusiastically into Satia's scheme. Ellen was a trusty soul, else she had not been chosen, for Satia wished above all things to preserve her *incognita* as long as possible.

They reached Pleasant Pines, the mountain station nearest the farm, very early one winter morning. A deep snow had fallen a few days before, and it was with difficulty that their heavy sled was pulled along. A silence equalling that of the Norway forests was over everything, but it did not seem a dreary place to Satia.

She was busy enough now. The old couple who had occupied the farm ever since her recollection were glad to give it over into younger hands.

She planned extensive improvements in the old house, and when spring came these were made. From the broad porches, running all around, to the tiny doll-house built for Daisy's special use, everything was substantial, comfortable and attractive, and arranged with reference to the well-being and pleasure of the little ones.

A visit to New York, late in the summer, brought six more girls to the dainty, delightful home which

“Sister Jean” had made ready for them. With her servants, maids, and the two old people, Satia had now a family of twenty on her hands, besides the men and farm hands. She knew no idle moments. Head and heart and hand were alike constantly employed in the “home-keeping.”

Her children were all girls. There was, and would ever be, but one boy in the world for her. They were of various ages, from three to ten years. Some of them were attractive, intelligent, some ignorant and bearing the taint of evil ancestry. All were cared for alike and, so far as possible, equally loved. Satia saw in each an embryo woman, whom she was resolved to train in such a way that she would be true to all responsibilities which might be placed upon her. So far as she was able to prevent it, there would be no more Maynards left motherless as her boy had been left.

The weeks and months and years slipped by until nearly five years had passed since she came to *Unserheim*, as she called this home. She had in this time heard nothing directly from those who had hitherto peopled her little world. Occasionally she saw Aunt Hester’s name or Mrs. Fielding’s in a newspaper—never that of Morris. Neither had the promised letter to Mrs. Cameron been written. Satia’s conscience troubled her not a little in regard to this.

Many times she made up her mind that she would not put it off another moment ; but, with her pen between her fingers, she found herself each time strangely reluctant to write down the few words she knew she ought to send to the one whom she believed to be her best friend. She shrank, unconquerably, from going back into the past, from which she was now so completely cut off. As a burnt child dreads the fire, so she dreaded, with trembling and anguish of spirit, even so slight a touch as this upon the never-healed wound she so carefully concealed. And the pen was laid away. "Some day," she would say to her conscience.

She had been prospered in whatever she had undertaken. Her little family was growing apace in health and happiness. Her band of helpers was so well trained that she often thought her work could go on just as well without her. And now came a time when she began to ask : "What next?" Should she stay here always? Some of her girls were in their teens ; soon they would need more education than she could give them there. Should she enlarge her borders, and add a school, with every modern appliance and the best teachers, to the home-nest? Or should she send the girls, one by one, to some established institution, and gather in other little maidens to fill their places?

Another question gave her some anxiety. Not very far away, on the line of the railroad, a beautiful spot had been selected for a summer resort. Each year added to its popularity, and the country round about was being fast opened up. How long before her jealously guarded acres would be in the midst of a curious, inquisitive public?

She thought of all these things during the one part of the twenty-four hours which she had from the first reserved to herself. Every evening, when the children were safely in bed, she wrapped up warmly from the keen mountain air and walked on the long veranda for an hour.

If, in the course of these sixty minutes, the calm cheerfulness, the unruffled serenity of her daily walk and conversation was changed to bitter weeping, or to hopeless lamentation, or to the passionate clamoring of her lonely heart for its own beloved, none but the pitying eye of her Father in heaven knew it. Sometimes, as she walked, her thoughts went back to those last days in Scotland, where, indeed, they ever quickest turned, and she wondered if she might not have been over-hasty to believe the gossiping tongues. Might she not, after all, be mistaken? Ought she to let anything but the statement from Morris' own lips separate her from Maynard? Over and over again she tormented

herself with these doubts and queries. She could not answer them. The stars and the trees and the great arch of the bending sky gave back to her imploring gaze the comfort of their restful silence; but they did not tell her whether she had done right or wrong. It was only when she left them and went inside and stood by the bedside of her sleeping children, that she could feel, "Here is my place, now." And yet there came a whisper: "You surely can be spared. Others are fitted to do your work for these. Why not find, beyond shadow of doubt, if Maynard does not need you?"

At all times this thought haunted her, disturbing, perplexing. She was growing thin and weak and unable to perform her usual duties. Whether the cares and sorrows of the last few years were telling upon her health, and so making her mind an easy prey to harassing questions, or whether her long-repressed, silently borne trouble was wearing out her bodily vigor, she did not know. It scarcely mattered, since the result was the same in either case. Her strength was slipping away from her, and something must be done to bring it back.

One day, just about this time, Nurse Ellen told her of a letter she had recently received from an old friend of hers.

"Jes' to think, mem, of a dillikit speck of a



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woman like her a-goin' out there an' prayimptin' a whole quarter-section of land all by her lone silf. She jes' built her a wee shanty of a house, an' she lived there widout a soul to spake to, less than a mile away, where her cousin, Tom O'Donegan, lives. She's got all over the consimpshin which was a-rakin' her to payces like a gallopin' horse, and whin she has stayed there six months she will own a big farm wid a forest all over it, exipt where the trees won't grow, mem. Oh, that's what I call a wonderful country, that'll give a poor woman a chance like that, an' all widout a penny scarcely."

As Satia listened to this and a great deal more in regard to the astonishing "luck" of Maggie Reilly, an idea was slowly forming in her mind. It formed slowly, but it grew rapidly. Why could not she, too, "prayimpt" a quarter-section? Might she not, also, in the boundless Western wilds regain her health of body and her peace of mind, even as she had done on the high, clear mountain side far away across the water?

A month later she bade good-bye to all at Unserheim. She only told them that she was going away for awhile for a change, and that they would hear from her often.

"An' sure an' the blissid child looks like she needs a change of more than air," said faithful Ellen to

herself, as she watched her drive away. "The saints knows what troubles has turned her pretty hair all white afore its time, an' kapes her shut up here from one year's ind to the nixt. Heaven bless her swate heart wheriver she goes!"

Two months more saw Satia the sole occupant of a small cabin just within sight of, though a quarter of a mile away from, Maggie Reilly's abode. She had chosen her land along the edge of one of Dakota's prettiest valleys. It was remote, wild, primitive; but she settled down for her six months' stay with cheerfulness. Already she felt stronger from breathing the delicious air. She felt safe with friendly Maggie and her neighborly cousins so near, and a bright little Deringer in her belt. She reveled in the solitude; she was busy with her books, her long rambles, her plans for clearing, cultivating and improving her wide domain. She even began to think of the new and commodious "Unserheim" which should one day rise upon the knoll which seemed to have been created on purpose for it. She wrote long, entertaining letters to the children, telling them of the strange and interesting things around her.

And so the time sped on, until a day came—a fateful day—which was never to be forgotten.



CHAPTER XXVII.

AN EVENTFUL AFTERNOON.

Mrs. Sutherland's house was on one corner of her land. Outside the limits of the opposite corner diagonally, was a bit of country where she was fond of wandering. From one point there was a particularly fine view; and among the bushes she often found blossoms which did not show themselves elsewhere in the vicinity.

One afternoon she put on her hat, a broad-brimmed affair tied securely down, took a stout staff, a flat basket and a trowel, and went over to Prospect Point, as she had named her favorite nook. After some search, she found several roots of a little plant she was anxious to make grow near her cabin. She was very busily engaged in taking up some of these with great care, when she heard voices just on the other side of the thick hedge. Surprised at this, for she had never seen a human being in this region, she peeped through the bushes.

Merciful heaven! Could she believe her eyes?

did her ears deceive her? Or was it really Morris who sat there on horseback, not a dozen feet away, and did she actually hear once again his well-known voice?

For a moment she could not tell. Her whole being seemed projected into the devouring gaze which she bent upon him. Then she heard him say in the quick, decided way customary with him when annoyed:

“Have done, or it will be worse for you! You cannot have my horse for any money! Stand aside, there!”

He waved his hand authoritatively; and Satia, following his glance, saw a tall, roughly-dressed fellow with one hand on the bridle, the other extended toward Morris full of shining gold pieces.

He did not stir.

“It’s a case of life or death, boss,” he said, his eyes wandering furtively around the horizon. “My poor pony fell with me a couple of miles back. Her and my ankle’s done for. Let me have yours, or——”

The gold pieces fell rattling to the ground, and Morris was looking down the barrel of a rifle. Instantly a pistol flashed from his belt. Both men fired, but the swerving of the horse sent both bullets wide of the mark.

“Come, Duke!” said Morris, making his spurs felt, and he was out of sight behind the trees.

As if fascinated, Satia sat motionless on the ground, watching each movement of the man. Every feature of his face was indelibly stamped upon her memory, from his small, evil eyes to the long, red scar which lay across his left cheek. He stood gaping after Morris, the color coming and going in his swarthy face, and she could have sworn that she saw his fingers tremble as he still held his rifle. Presently a tear fell slowly down upon his ragged, matted beard. He rubbed his big, brown hand over his eyes. He stooped and gathered the coins from the grass. She heard him mutter, as, after another searching glance across the country and carefully placing his ear to the ground, he limped away in the same direction Morris had taken:

“Poor leetle Duke!”

How was she to know that once, long years before this, the red-handed robber, murderer and fugitive from justice had been an innocent man, with a loving wife and one only child—a son? A son of whom any father might well have been proud, a bright-eyed, manly little fellow, whose lordly ways had given him the pet name of “Duke.” Into this house disease came suddenly, and both the mother and the idolized boy were buried in the

same grave. James Wilson's moral nature was not strong enough to bear this great bereavement. He took to drink to drown the memories which pierced his bleeding heart, and went from bad to worse, until now he was a criminal of deepest dye, pursued by a band of officers who were determined to have him, dead or alive.

Satia could not know all this, nor imagine that the name of Morris' horse had been a magic shield to save his life. For years, James Wilson had not heard this old, fond love-word. He seldom thought of it; he tried to bury it beneath drunkenness, debauchery, crime, anything which would keep it and all connected with that innocent, happy time far away. But now, spoken by the man whose life he was about to take, it softened his callous heart; it rendered his murderous arm powerless; it brought tears to eyes long unused to weeping.

Left alone, Satia sat for a long time stupefied. She seemed incapable of continuous thought. Mechanically, at last, she gathered up her things and went home. She did not go by the disused trail which Morris and the man had followed, but across her own land. Once she thought she heard a shot, but she could not be sure of it. She seemed sure of nothing. As she drew near her cabin, she saw marks of horses' feet; the bushes were trampled

down; a bundle tied in a dirty handkerchief was outside the door; a riding glove of handsome make lay on the grass quite near. Her heart throbbed violently. This glove must surely belong to Morris; she remembered seeing such a pair upon his hands. Was he inside? Had he come to see her? Scarcely knowing what she did, she went timidly forward, entering the little room. Hardly had she done so when she sprang back in horror. For there, stretched across the floor, lay the dead body of the man at whom she had seen her husband fire a pistol-shot not an hour before. Like a flash, she seized the glove; she pressed it to her lips, then thrust it securely within the bosom of her dress.

Drawing a long, shuddering sigh, and compelling herself to be calm, she went into the room again and looked more closely at the prostrate figure. A small, round hole in his temple told the story. Did it come there by the hand of Morris? She could not believe that it did. She recalled the altercation. No doubt Morris had stopped at her cabin, possibly, probably to see her—for what else could have brought him to this unpeopled country?—and while lingering, waiting for her return, he had been again overtaken by the ruffian. Perhaps the fellow had tried to steal the horse; perhaps—but who could tell what had passed between them? What mat-

tered it? Here lay one man dead; the other, she hoped, was far away out of danger of pursuit or recognition.

Satia had little idea of the lawlessness, the rough-handed justice of the region to which she had come. A murder was to her a murder, and a murderer a hideous thing; and yet, was not Morris one? The two words sounded strangely together—Morris a murderer!

She ran over rapidly in her mind the chances against the probability of this, and she was obliged to confess that they were few. Did she not well know his inborn and inbred aversion to all men of the class of this one lying at her feet? His aristocratic withdrawing of himself from contact with the masses? His impatient intolerance of anything like insistence upon the part of one of them against his spoken word? Had she not seen him fire upon this very fellow? She could not mistake the crime-marked visage, the scarred cheek, the three-fingered hand which had groped for the golden coins. And had she not found her husband's glove at the very threshold of the house where the importunate vagrant now lay? Could she reasonably doubt the chain of circumstantial evidence which seemed to be winding inevitably about him? She could not; she did not; and she determined, as she stood there,

looking down with white face upon the man whom she would have given her life to bring again to the land of the living, that no other mortal save herself should ever have the faintest shadow of a reason for suspecting him of the murder.

She had but the vaguest notion of legal proceedings; but she felt sure that some one would come to search for this man. Did they not always do so for missing people? And had she not read of persons who had committed such deeds hiding all traces of their dreadful work?

Could she hide away this horrible object? She bent down and pulled at the ragged coat with all her strength. As well might she have attempted to stir the earth. Disappointed, but not yet discouraged, she abandoned her first idea of burying him. Again she stood looking down and considering. But she began to feel faint; a sickening sense of the thing which lay across the floor of her pure, peaceful little home came over her with frightful reality. She turned to get out into the air. As she did so, her eyes fell upon a small object—a box of matches. Like a flash, she saw her way clear. It was a desperate alternative, whose details she could not bear even so much as to imagine, and it meant entire change of her plans. But that, and more, were gladly done. Anything, she thought, was bet-

ter than that the father of her boy be branded as a murderer.

She quickly selected a few necessary articles and packed them in a satchel. She dressed herself afresh, for traveling. Her purpose was to spend the night with Maggie Reilly, after having watched the burning of her cabin to be sure that every trace of it was destroyed. It would be very easy to make some excuse for the accident. Then, next day, she would get one of the friendly cousins to take her to Zadoc, where she would give up her claim and think what it was best to do in the future.

When all her arrangements had been completed, she thrust her hand within the coarse shirt, to satisfy herself that the man's heart had stopped beating; then she poured over his clothes a bottle of alcohol, her only inflammable.

She made a little pile of dry kindlings and newspapers at one corner of the house, outside, for she could not stay one moment longer within. Then, with a calmness at which she afterward marveled, she struck a match, and a bright tongue of flame ran swiftly along the paper; the chips caught and crackled; slowly and then more rapidly, the fire spread. As she watched the licking blaze greedily making its way, her thoughts went back to the burning *Rochester*. She experienced anew the miser-

ies of that night. She thought of the dark ocean, on which they had tossed through the long hours until daybreak; beneath those dashing waves, how still it was, how peaceful! Day and night they were undisturbed by the sorrows, the turmoil, the passions of the lives of the sons of men. With a sob, she buried her face in her hands; she wished that she lay there, forever at rest; that she had never been saved from the tranquil embrace of the great deep.

But scarcely had the thought passed through her mind than she banished it. This was no time for weak repinings, for useless regret.

The fire was making some headway by this time, but not enough for her impatient eagerness. Seizing a long stick, she lighted it and went around to start a blaze at another corner of the house. As she did so, she saw a horseman just in front of her. Was it Morris? Terrified, she turned to run back. Another horseman confronted her. From all directions they seemed to come, their big, dark figures looming up against the clear afterglow in the sunset sky.

Quickly they surrounded her; as quickly, it seemed to her, they brought water from the brook close by and put out the flames. They entered the house, and she heard their excited exclamations,

their rough words of disappointment at having been baffled of their prey, their threats of dire vengeance against the one who had killed the fugitive.

Satia sat on the grass in the midst of it all, speechless. She had eagerly scanned each face, as she had opportunity, and she breathed more freely when she found that Morris was not of the number. The man who kept near her as a guard did not speak to her; but, presently, after a low-toned conference out in the bushes, the men came toward her. They stood leaning on their rifles—tall, heavily-built, booted and spurred, keen of eye and shrewd of face, rough of speech and resolute of nature.

One of them stepped from the group and addressed Satia.

She pressed her hands against her breast; she felt the glove which rested there; she was determined to say nothing concerning Morris, come what might.

“Is this your home?”

“Yes.”

“Do you live here alone?”

“Yes.”

“What is your name?”

No answer.

The question was repeated. Still she did not

reply. A black-browed fellow said, after changing a quid of tobacco from one cheek to the other :

“ Her name’s Jane Suthlun. I wuz over to Zadoc when she took up her claim.”

Her interrogator made a note of this. Satia glanced gratefully toward the speaker. Morris surely could never imagine any connection between herself and “ Jane Suthlun.”

“ When did this man come here?” was asked next.

“ I do not know.”

“ Hev you been here all day ?”

“ No.”

“ Where hev you been ?”

“ Over there,” she pointed her hand off indefinitely.

“ Was you alone ?”

“ Yes—no—yes,” she stammered.

“ Which der you mean ?” inquired the man, with a knowing look at his comrades.

No answer.

“ Don’t ye be afeerd of us,” he said, with an awkward attempt at kindness ; “ we’re not a-goin’ to hurt ye, but we’ve found our man dead in yer house, an’ the law must take its course. Ef ye can’t account fer him, ye’ll hev to be tuk to jail.”

“What for?” she asked, looking up at him for the first time.

He chuckled, and turning to the man next him, said :

“The old woman is a fool, sure.”

To Satia, he answered :

“For killing this 'ere feller an' then for settin' fire to the shanty. We seed ye a-runnin' around with yer torches. Yer mighty cute to think o' thet, but we was a leetle too spry for ye. Now, le's hev it out fair an' square. What do ye know about this 'ere bizness?”

She listened to all this with a mind suddenly freed from the mists which had obscured it, with a heart strong for whatever lay before it. If she were the murderer, then Morris would go free.

She rose to her feet and took up her satchel.

“I have nothing to say. I am ready to go with you,” she said.

The men looked at her in amazement. They had thought her, as she sat there, an old woman. She stood before them now, erect and vigorous. Her white hair gleamed in the dusk, her great brown eyes were full of somber fire.

Again the men consulted ; then two of them prepared to remain at the cabin, the others to go on. One of the saddles was arranged so that Satia might

ride comfortably. When all was ready she mounted the horse, and, surrounded by her grim escort, she rode away into the moonlight.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

“JEDGE JULIAN.”

It was court-week in the brisk young town of Zadoc, and unusual excitement throughout its length and breadth. The streets were full of stalwart, sun-browned men, galloping about upon tough little ponies; boarding-houses were over-flowing; store-keepers wore broad smiles of invitation and satisfaction, for this was one of their richest harvest-times; an occasional wagon clattered along the chief thoroughfare; everywhere there was bustle and activity, but nowhere was it more noticeable than around the modest building in which justice was wont to be dispensed.

The handsome new court-house, which is now the pride of Zadoc and all the country for many miles around, was at that time only a yawning, cavernous opening in the earth, surrounded by numerous suggestive piles of building material. Court was still held just across the way, in a rough

wooden hall, once considered a thing of beauty by the Zadoese, but now left far behind in the march of progressive architecture.

A new judge was about to take his seat. Old Judge French, beloved of all, and a most "righteous judge," had gone the way of all the earth a few weeks before, and in his place Lawyer Julian had been appointed.

Now Morris Julian was not unknown to these sturdy citizens of Dakota. He had been practicing law in Zadoc for nearly five years. At first he was looked upon with a good deal of mistrust. In spite of his wearing flannel shirts (imported), and trying to conform in other scarcely less trying ways to the requirements of life in this hurrying, hard-headed, no-nonsense-about-it part of the world, the shrewd sons of the West detected a difference between him and themselves. At the least display of his old imperiousness or the indulgence beyond a very certain moderate limit of his sybaritic tastes, his influence would have been forever destroyed. But Morris Julian had been learning some lessons of his dearly bought experience. He was careful to conceal every evidence of wealth in his daily living; little by little he invested in real estate; he established small industries, and he attended successfully to his rapidly increasing legal business. Gradually

he gained the confidence of his townsmen, and especially of the farmers in the neighboring country. He made himself useful to them ; in time, necessary to them. By degrees, too, he improved and beautified the modest home he had at first built. It came to be pointed to with pride by the people of Zadoc as "Lawyer Julian's handsome place," and the speaker was often heard to add :

"He is one of us, sir ; grew up with the town. He knows a good thing when he sees it, and he knows how to spend his money, too. He don't invest it in all sorts of wildcat schemes, but puts it right down here in Zadoc, sir, every cent of it. And he's no fool of a lawyer either, let me tell you."

Zadoc was only six years old, but by this time other capital had come in, other handsome public and private buildings were being erected, other lawyers had opened offices and found plenty of work. But Morris easily kept the lead in everything ; he did not mean to yield one jot nor one tittle of his advantage in having "grown up with the town." He worked hard. Never had his extraordinary foresight and shrewdness in business affairs, nor his unflinching skill in reading human nature been more actively employed ; and so, when, by the unanimous wish of all the people, not only in Zadoc, but in the whole of Kadesh county, he was

appointed judge, he felt that he had earned the honor honestly.

When he told Kelsie, who still had the care of Maynard, of his new title, her pride and delight knew no bounds. He was amused and touched by her affectionate rejoicing in what she considered the greatest glory to which he could ever attain.

“An’ will ye wear a big, white, woolly wig, Master Morris, an’ a long black gownd o’ thick silk, stiff as a board, lak the judges I saw once years ago in Lunnon?” she inquired.

Kelsie watched him as he started off for his afternoon gallop on the day before the opening of the court.

“Would to heaven our bonny leddy could know o’ this day! I doubt me not that my bairn’s heart be heavy, even though his tongue be merry.”

She drew a long sigh, as she always did at thought of Satia. She shook her head anew over the mystery of her unaccountable doings.

Morris, too, was thinking of his wife as he turned his horse into a new trail, winding through a region hitherto unexplored. These long rides, taken whenever it was possible to get away, were his only recreation. Sometimes they were full of quiet pleasure and undisturbed meditation; sometimes they were break-neck dashes, as he rushed madly

along in the vain hope of escaping distracting memories.

To-day these memories came crowding thick and fast, but his mood was a placid one. It seemed as though he thought of every pleasant word that Satia had ever spoken to him; as though he saw again every beautiful picture which she, in her girlish loveliness and her womanly beauty, had ever made. One after another they appeared to him until he felt surrounded by her presence—almost sure that by taking one step more he could put out his hand and lay it upon her very self.

From these delightful visions he was rudely recalled by a violent touch upon his horse's bridle. After firing the shot which missed its aim, but served to shake off the detaining grasp, he galloped rapidly along the trail for some distance. Then, catching sight of Satia's cabin, he turned aside to beg for a drink of water. Riding quite to the door, he halloed to whoever might be within. Receiving no response, he dismounted and entered. He found a glass and quenched his thirst; then, struck by the extreme tidiness of the place, he looked about more closely. Everything was of the simplest, but arranged with such a dainty neatness that he said, half aloud:

"This is a woman's home, I know,"

He walked over to the rude book-shelf and read the titles of the few volumes standing there.

“‘Middlemarch’—‘German Dictionary’—Schiller’s ‘Maria Stuart.’ Some school-ma’am tired of teaching; likely,” was his comment, as he turned away. Had he read also the name written on the fly-leaves, he would have been startled out of his serenity. For, beneath the words “Jeanie Sutherland,” written in Satia’s unmistakable hand, were the two significant letters “S. J.” But he did not look there; nor did he linger longer at the cabin. The sun was already well down toward setting and many miles still lay between him and his supper.

As the hour for the opening of the court drew near the next day, the crowd increased. About the doors of the court-house and lounging on the benches considerably placed beneath the few trees gracing its front walk, groups of men were gathered. These groups were composed of many nationalities, of all sorts and conditions, of all ages and types, from the newly fledged college graduate in search of fame and fortune, to the latest arrival from foreign shores; both equally ignorant of practical life in nineteenth-century America.

They were all talking of the new judge.

“The judge is er leetle feller,” a big, orawny countryman remarked, while a sly grin overspread

his broad face; "he's one o' the leetle kind; but ye've noticed mebbe thet cattridges ain't often so big ez cheeses."

A loud laugh greeted this witty effort, during which the man chuckled audibly:

"Yes, he hev got the sand an' no mistake," said another. "Do ye mind the time, Tim, when he busted ole Dave Smith's deed higher'n a kite fer tryin' ter cheat your paw out o' his share o' thet valley farm? Land o' liberty, warn't Dave mad enough to eat him!"

"I reckon," drawled a sallow-faced, yellow-whiskered young fellow whose soft, slow speech betokened Southern rearing, "I reckon we kin never forgit what th' jedge done las' summer fer brother Will."

There was silence for some minutes after this allusion to one of the kind—tenderly kind—deeds which Morris now lost no opportunity of doing for his fellows. The circumstances of this lad's injury and death were unusually touching, and Morris' brotherly attentions could never be forgotten by these men who had witnessed them.

Then some one who had sauntered up to the group, asked:

"What yer reckon our new jedge 'll do with old woman Suthlun?" and straightway they were launched into a second topic of absorbing interest.

Interchange of opinion, comment and query went on until Morris came riding down the street. Instantly every man was on his feet; they stood silently, hats and caps in hand, until he had dismounted; then one of them took the pony in charge, and all burst into a deafening cheer. Shout after shout went up, caught by one and another farther away, until it seemed that all Zadoc was welcoming its new judge with one mighty acclamation.

Morris stood, uncovered, bowing to the right and the left. It was the proudest moment of his late life.

His lips quivered with pleasure, pride, gratified ambition, but most of all with joy at this evidence that he had won the hearts of his fellow-citizens. He looked around at them. Almost without exception they were diamonds in the rough. No "store clothes" nor "company manners" met his eye or pleased his sensibilities. But sturdy, honest, toiling manhood was there; and he had learned to recognize it and love it, because he had himself become a sturdy, honest, toiling-man. His face grew pale as he looked, still silently, into the faces of the crowd. Then he smiled, bowed again, and went inside the building—ere long to face a surprise that sent the blood rushing to his heart.



CHAPTER XXIX.

“ JANE SUTHLUN.”

For several days the usual run of cases was brought before the court, and were speedily disposed of. Last of all upon the docket was one in which centered all the picturesqueness, if it may be so expressed, of the session.

As the majority of Zadoc's worthies put it :

“ Ole woman Suthlun's got ter show her hand now.”

Red Bill's vicious, blood-stained career had for many months made him an object of unenviable notoriety even in those days of frequent crimes; but the last search for him, his death, and the mystery of the woman in whose cabin his body had been found, the narrative of all of which had grown no less thrilling by its frequent repetition during the fortnight of Satia's detention in the sheriff's house, had wrought public curiosity up to the very highest pitch.

When Morris entered the court-room at the hour

for Jane Sutherland's trial, he found it packed. There was no standing room. Even upon the window sills men were perched. As he glanced around at the throng, he thought he saw the face of everyone he had ever known in Dakota. The country for miles around had poured itself into Zadoc, and all Zadoc was in the court-house. He wondered at the unusual interest manifested in this particular case. He recalled, too, what Kelsie had that very morning said to him in regard to the prisoner. She had recounted much of the gossip of which the little town was full, but especially what the sheriff's wife had told her personally.

"An I don't believe, Master Morris, that she had anything to do with the killin' o' that man, unless maybe to protect hersel'. But I mean, I think she was above associatin' wi' the likes o' him. Sarah says she is as gentle an' sweet as she can be, a lady, every inch o' her. Be good to her, won't ye, now, Master Morris? Sarah says she looks as though she carried a sad heart, an' she's no old woman, for all her white hair."

Just then she was brought in. Her chair was not ten feet from the judge's elevated "bench." He looked with sudden interest at the slender, erect figure. His cheek flushed as he noticed its resemblance to another equally slender and erect. Satia

turned slightly—he had not seen her face before—and looked directly at him.

At last the moment had come for which he had so incessantly longed! He saw his wife again. All his heart blazed forth from his eyes in that one astounding, awful moment. Her eyes, after that first startled, incredulous glance, were cast down. She had the advantage over him, for she knew, at least, that he had been in the vicinity only a few days before, although never dreaming of seeing him here in the capacity of her judge. So she was not as entirely petrified with astonishment as he was. Recalled to himself and his surroundings by the sound of the clerk's voice, he endeavored to regain his self-command.

“Jane Sutherland, for the murder of one Red Bill on the afternoon of June 10th, and for setting fire to the house where his body lay,” was all that he heard of the formal indictment which was being read. Over and over these words rang in his ears, mingling and intermingling in the most confusing way with the thousand surmises as to what could have brought her to such a place on such a charge.

Morris felt as though he was in the clutches of a horrible nightmare; his agitation increased, and his pallor was noticed by more than one person present. It was not until the first witness was called that the

lawyer in him, as well as the "husband, legal protector and devoted lover," was aroused and he listened to the testimony with every faculty strained to keen, critical attention.

The first witness was one of the sheriff's *posse*. He gave a clear, straightforward account of what he saw and all that happened at the little cabin after his arrival there. He described the position of the body; Satia's attempts to set fire to the house— attempts which would have succeeded but for the prompt coming of the pursuing party; her refusal to answer questions put to her; her absolute silence during the long night ride to Zadoc.

From his description of the place, Morris knew that it was his wife's home which he had entered, and he cursed the stupidity which had prevented him from discovering it at the time. For then, in all probability, this affair would never have happened.

Just as the second witness was being called, a loud, shrill voice was heard at the door, and a stout, comely Irishwoman entered the court-room. She gave one quick glance around, then limped slowly down the length of the room, not heeding the curious and inquiring looks which followed her. Her shoes were dusty and her dress drabbled; but her face was determined and her intelligent blue eyes were fixed on Morris.

Turning toward him, she clasped her hands, saying earnestly :

"Och, an' may it plaze your honor, I want to tell ye somethin'."

The marshal had already stepped forward to remove her ; as he came nearer and she divined his intention, she darted across the intervening space and caught hold of the arm of Morris' chair.

"No, ye don't," she cried ; "not until I've told his honor how it was. I've not walked ivery step o' the sixteen miles from me cabin to this place for nothin' at all at all ! Sind the man away, judge, darlin', and listen while I till ye who killed Red Bill. That blissid child a-sittin' there ain't no more to do wid it than your honor."

Satia rose to her feet, terrified, as she heard this. What could the woman be about to say ? In her zeal for her neighbor, was she about to denounce the judge to his very face ?

She had at first refused counsel ; but by advice of the kind-hearted wife of the sheriff, at whose house she had been kept in default of a suitable jail, she had named a lawyer of the place. He sat beside her now and drew her back into her chair.

"Oh, do not let her speak ! She does not know ! She is insane," she whispered, frantically.

But Morris had motioned the marshal away, and was speaking to Maggie :

“ You shall tell me all you wish, my good woman. Step quietly over there with this gentleman, and answer truthfully all that is asked you,” he said, and his voice sounded strangely to him ; in spite of his efforts, he could not keep it steady.

Much excitement had been created by the arrival of an eye-witness of the crime ; after a short consultation, it was decided to suspend the regular proceedings to hear her testimony.

She was sworn to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

“ What is your name ?”

“ Maggie Reilly, sur.”

“ What is your age ?”

Maggie looked toward Morris with a sly twinkle in her eye.

“ An' sure, your honor, whatever do the gintleman want to ask me that for ? I kin see just as well whither—”

“ Answer the question without any more remarks,” interrupted the lawyer, sternly.

“ I'll be thirty-sivin years old on the nixt day afther the first day of nixt Siptimber, sur,” responded Maggie then, with the utmost promptness.

"Where do you live?"

"Sixteen miles from here, near the Crooked River, sur, just beyant where me cousin Tom O'Donegan lives. Ye'll be knowin' Tom by one squint eye, the twin ter that gintlemin's," pointing to the lawyer for the prosecution, who got very red in the face at this personality, "an' by—"

"That will do for Tom. Tell us how far your house is from Jane Sutherland's."

"Whin I stands in me front-parlor door an' hollers right hearty, Jane kin hear me, sur."

"How long have you lived there?"

"It will be three months come nixt Chewsday since I prayimpted, sur."

Another consultation took place between the lawyers.

"Now, then, Maggie," said her interrogator, "tell us plainly and exactly all you know about this matter."

"An' plaze, sur, kin I till it right along, widout bein' bothered wid so many o' yer questions?"

"That is just what we want you to do, Maggie."

She seemed much relieved at this. She arranged her brilliantly plaided blanket-shawl more comfortably around her shoulders, smoothed down her glossy, black hair with both hands, and began her story.



CHAPTER XXX.

ACQUITTED.

“ Last Winsdy, afther I'd finished me ironin', I sez to mesilf, sez I: ' I'll run over an' sit wid Jane for an hour.' Jane's not been long out here, yer honor, an' anny wan kin see that she's a leddy born an' not used ter rough ways like the rist o' us, an' I often goes over an' does little things for her, an' which it ain't the place ter spake of here. Whin I got there this time I finds Jane gone away—out fer a walk ter git some o' thim posies she's so fond of, I sez ter mesilf—an' I sez to mesilf, too: ' Now, Maggie, me gurrul, here's yer chance ter scrub up thim kittles an' pans.' So, as I was a wurrukin' as hard as could be, all of a suddint I see a man a comin'. I tuk notice that he was that lame he could barely walk, an' I thought ter see him fall down ivery minit. He was a evil-looking blaggard, an' I run ter shut the door; but when he come nearer, he looked that sick he'd a softened a heart o' stone. So I jes' opined the door wide, an' the first thing he did was ter flop

down on the floor like a log o' wood. I fetched him some water, but he jes' lay an' groaned, an' kep' a calling for his leetle Juke, whatever that might be. Bymebye he kinder roused up, an' said :

“ Thank ye, marm ; 'tain't no use fer ter do nothin' more fer Red Bill. Thet darned pony must a broke my leg when she throwed me ; anyway, it's all up wid me this time ;' an' thin he tuk out his pistol, an' afore I knowed a thing, he'd put it up ter his head and shot hissself dead.”

Maggie paused. Everyone had listened breathlessly, none more so than Morris and Satia. The latter's color came back in a flood when she heard that the man had killed himself. The tense, repressed look passed from her face, the nameless terror of the last few days from her heart.

A low murmur filled the court-room, hushed at once, as the lawyer asked Maggie :

“ What did you do then ?”

“ An' sure an' didn't I run home as fast as me legs 'ud carry me an' jump into bid wid the clothes pulled over me head, an' I prayin' ter ivery one o' the blissid saints.”

“ When did you see Jane Sutherland again ?”

“ Niver at all until the blissid minit whin I coom in here, yer honor. Whin me teeth stopped from chatterin', an' me fate an' me knees didn't trimble so

bad, I wint back there to fetch Jane home wid me, for I know'd she could niver sthay there no more, annyway 'til the corps hed hed a daycent burial. The moon was a-shinin' that bright you'd a thought it was day, an' I seed the min an' the horses long for-ninst I got there, an' whin I coom they said as how Jane had been tuk off ter the jail, an' I sot down on the grass an' jes' cried me eyes out, fer I know'd she'd no more ter do wid it than the burruuds in the sky. But I says to mesilf, sez I: Maggie, me girrul, jus' kape yer tongue atween yer teeth till yer gits ter the jedge hisself, an' thin ye won't git tuk up yersilf; an' sez I, yes, Maggie Reilly, an' I will that. An' I coom as quick as iver I could, but me knee is that lame I could only git along slow. An' now, yer honor, I wants ter be takin' Jane back home wid me. Yer'll not be wantin' her here no more, will ye, jedge? an' I must be gittin' back to me farrum."

"We'll see about that presently, Maggie," replied the lawyer.

A rigid cross-examination followed, during which she adhered closely to the narrative she had already given. When this was ended, Satia's counsel arose and said that the prisoner wished to make a statement. All eyes were at once turned toward her. She arose in her place and stood with her hands resting on a small table in front of her. She was

entirely self-possessed and spoke in a low, clear tone.

“Now that there is no longer any reason for silence, I think it may be best to explain my actions to the court. During my walk across the fields on the afternoon of June 10th, I, being concealed by a thick hedge, overheard an altercation between Red Bill and a—a gentleman. In self-defense, the gentleman fired at Red Bill, but missed on account of his horse’s jumping. He then rode quickly away, and in a few minutes Red Bill limped slowly after him. Arriving at my cabin soon, I found his dead body there, in my room, and—and—I found a glove belonging to the gentleman just outside my door, I naturally thought that there had again been trouble between the two, and that this time the bullet had not missed its destination. It was to protect this—this—gentleman, who used to be a kind friend to me, that I decided to burn the cabin.”

She sat down amidst intense excitement. Her beauty, her grace, and all that might easily be imagined to lie behind her simple statement took the hearts of her hearers by storm. And what words can describe the emotions that were surging through the breast of the pale, statue-still judge, as he drank in every word which fell from her lips?

“I telled ye she be no common ’ooman to a’ held

her tongue all that time," whispered one old man, loudly, to his neighbor, wagging his head the while. "Le's gi' her three rousin' cheers when they git through."

The sheriff now arose and asked to be sworn. He testified to finding a small pistol beside Red Bill, and corroborated several points in Maggie's story. After a brief charge to the jurymen, the case was given to them. Without leaving their seats, they brought in a unanimous verdict of "Not guilty."

Immediately the old man sprang to his feet shouting :

"Three cheers fer Jane Suthlun!"

And before they could be given some one else cried :

"Three cheers fer Maggie Reilly!"

The old hall fairly shook with the outburst. No attempt was made to quiet the uproarious crowd, which yelled itself hoarse. In the midst of the unprecedented excitement, the court adjourned and the judge slipped away. Satia, under escort of her counsel, had already left the building and only Maggie Reilly remained to receive an ovation at the hands of her admirers.



CHAPTER XXXI.

HUSBAND AND WIFE.

The sheriff's house was but a short distance from the court-house. Morris went there at once, at the same time sending a messenger for his horse and buggy. Satia had taken a step or two on the stairs leading to her room, when he came quickly into the small front entry. Turning, she looked down at him from her slight elevation. Never, it seemed to him, had he seen her so beautiful. The intense joy and thankfulness she felt at finding him innocent of another man's blood, even though shed in self-defence, still shone upon her face, and, added to this, was her own rejoicing at the sight of him again, at his nearness, at the assurance which his one flashing glance had given that she was dear to him. She experienced the sensation of being suddenly taken from the horror of a darkness so great as to have shrouded her whole being in gloom, and being plunged into the midst of glad anticipations too

bright to be expressed. The charming timidity of a maiden, the trustfulness of a friend, the devotion of a wife, the exquisite tenderness of a loving woman, all spoke to him silently, eloquently, in the look she gave him as she stood there. Morris did not attempt to approach her; he knew there were listening ears not far away. He only said, trying to steady his voice, every vibration of which told of his happiness:

“Mrs. Sutherland, my carriage will be at the door in five minutes. Can you be ready in so short a time?”

“Thank you, yes, Judge Julian,” she answered him.

The five minutes were scarcely gone before she had taken leave of the kind-hearted woman who had made her stay as comfortable as she possibly could; and, sitting beside her husband, was being driven rapidly through Zadoc and out into the open country.

They could not entirely escape the crowd, who agreed that “our judge” had the kindest heart in the world.

“There goes Judge Julian now, taking Jane Sutherland home,” said one to another.

Morris was quite willing that the good people of Zadoc should think this; but nothing was further

from his intentions than ever allowing Satia to visit or even to see her cabin again. His one desire just at present was to get her away from everything and everybody but himself, where he might look at her, and see and feel her dear presence, and convince himself that it was a blessed reality, and not a too happy dream from which he should presently awake more lonely than ever.

They scarcely spoke for many miles. It was enough simply to be together. All the past seemed forgotten. Other hours might know their interchange of confidences, their self-reproaches, their mutual tender excuses, the recital of all which had happened during the long years of their separation. Many hours and days would not suffice for these, but this hour, this day was completely filled by happy, almost silent companionship.

At length Morris turned the pony's head. Satia looked up in surprise.

"No, my wife," he said, meeting her inquiring glance with a look full of decision, "we are not going anywhere now but to our home. And never do I mean to let you see again that little cabin. I wish, if possible, to shield you from the gossip and publicity of being known in Zadoc as other than Mrs. Sutherland. As that lady you will be my guest until to-morrow. By then we will have

arranged our plans. But you are never again to stay under other roof than mine, my darling."

Satia thrilled beneath the words and tone in which they were uttered. He had expressed himself in almost the very manner which used to be so unendurable, and which she once braved everything to escape from. But now he had given voice to the dearest wish of her own heart and she yielded gladly. Moreover, she saw even in this brief time a difference between the husband she had left and the one to whom she had returned—a difference which was to be more perceptible as their reunited lives continued. His old, quiet, never-swerving willfulness had given place to a more thoughtful consideration, not merely of the external comfort of others, but of their wishes, rights and requirements as human beings.

As they came in toward the town, he chose a more unfrequented street by which to reach his home. Satia was trembling now, in her eagerness to be with Maynard, of whom they had been speaking. They decided that he should not be told of her close relation to him until after leaving Zadoc. He was at the window with Kelsie, as they drove up.

"The blessed Lord in heaven be praised!" that good woman cried, clasping her hands as she caught

sight of Satia. "He has brought our dear lamb home to us again." She needed but one glimpse of the faces of the two to know that all was right between them.

Maynard saw only his father and flew to meet him. He looked a moment, surprised, at the lady who was coming in the gate and who stepped quickly forward toward him. Then he sprang into her outstretched arms, with a glad cry:

"My dee, darling Fairy! Oh, I thought you never were coming."

Satia could not say one word in return. She only kissed him over and over again, pressed him to her heart as though she could never let him go. With her arms still around him, and Morris close upon the other side, she came into her home.

Kelsie's beaming countenance made any speech on her part quite unnecessary, and she soon understood, from Morris' brief explanation, the fiction of "Mrs. Sutherland." There were no happier people in the whole world than these four that afternoon.

It was found impossible to keep the glad truth from Maynard. His delight knew no bounds when he learned that his beloved "Fairy" and the beautiful mamma, who, though unseen, had always been the idol of his childish heart, had come to him in one and the same person.

Maynard was a slender lad, tall for his age, and as bright and manly as he was handsome. His golden hair and large brown eyes were a picture of his mother's when a little girl, but he had his father's clear-cut features. As he stood before Satia, comparing her real self with the photograph of her which his papa had given him for his own, her heart thrilled with pride and thankfulness that she was blessed with such a son.

"You are just the same, mamma—just the same, except your hair, and I think it is so much prettier this way." He laid his hand upon the soft white coils. "This looks so lovely; like a picture, mamma."

Satia laughed happily. She was thinking the same of him.

She and Morris talked late that night. There was much to be arranged for the immediate future. She told him of her home at "Unserheim," and her plans concerning it.

"You will have to give that up, dear," he said, very gently, yet with unmistakable meaning. "At least, you cannot live there now, because——"

"Because why, milord?" she asked, as he hesitated. Her lips were curving with a mischievous smile.

“Because I am going back to our old home to live, and you——”

“And I—— Well?” Her smile of amusement deepened into a low laugh.

“Do you want to hear me say it?” he asked, smiling, too, then. “Well, you are to come with me, of course.”

“Of course I am; and I want to have Christine Jansen take my place at Unserheim. I think you said that they are on a little farm near Omaha, did you not?”

“Yes; they have been there for the last three years or more.”

“Do you think it will be possible to induce them to leave and go to Unserheim?”

“I am quite sure she will do anything for you, Satia,” her husband replied.

“And don't you think she will do well there? She is so gentle and kind-hearted, and yet she has plenty of firmness, too.”

“Yes, answered Morris, with a peculiar smile; “I have no doubt of Mrs. Jansen's firmness.”



CHAPTER XXXII.

CONCLUSION.

The next morning, Morris, with Satia and Maynard, took the early train East, leaving Zadoc in blissful ignorance of "Jane Suthlun's" departure. They found Christine very happy in a tiny home of her own, with two flaxen-haired boys, whom she displayed with true motherly pride.

"I always thought when I used to see you in your father's home in Bergen," said Satia, when she found opportunity to speak of the matter she had at heart, "that you were born to be a mother. And now I've come to ask you to be a mother to my ten little girls in Virginia."

Christine's blue eyes opened to their widest extent. She glanced from Satia to Morris and then to Maynard.

"Oh, of course," laughed Satia. "They are not my very own. I have only this tall fellow," laying her hand affectionately on the boy's shoulder. "But they are my little girls, too."

Then she unfolded her plans and told Christine what had already been done. Ole was consulted, and both he and his wife decided to accept Satia's liberal offer and to take charge of the farm and the home at Unserheim.

Arriving at Pleasant Pines, Satia found that everything had been prospering during her absence. Her appearance as Mrs. Sutherland no longer, but as Mrs. Julian, with so aristocratic a looking husband and so handsome a son, naturally created a great deal of astonishment among her devoted and simple-hearted assistants. In her own gracious way, she told them all that it was necessary for them to know, and that she should now give the care of the place to some dear friends of hers.

"You will find Mrs. Jansen the kindest, sweetest woman in the world, especially to little children, and you all will love her very much, I am sure. I shall come often from New York to see you, so we will only say good-bye for a short time."

Morris had soon returned to Zadoc and resigned his judgeship, to the great disappointment of his warm supporters there. He found it difficult to give them any satisfactory reason for doing this. The truth he could not tell; so he simply said that his own private and personal affairs required his permanent removal to the East.

“Wa'al, jedge,” said the spokesman of a crowd who came to his home to bid him good-bye, “wa'al, jedge, ef ye say ye've got ter go, we've got ter grin an' bear it; but it comes tough, jedge—it comes tough. Ye've bin er good friend ter Zadoc an' she'll not forgit ye, jedge, not ef ye don't come back fer a thousand years—oh, pshaw!—I don't mean thet air,” as a roar of laughter interrupted him. “I mean ef it is er thousand years before ye—darn it all, fellers, I told ye I couldn't make no speech! Here, jedge, shake, an' God bless ye.”

Morris wished that Satia could have heard these words and seen the hearty good-will which showed itself in the mighty grasp with which each of these rough fellows shook his hand at parting.

This was almost his last act in Zadoc. The little cabin in the valley had given Satia's things to Kelsie's safe-keeping, and then gone up to the winds in mounting flame. Morris felt that he could breathe easier if it were out of existence. His house had been sold as it stood, for he knew that Satia could never be brought there to live so long as anyone remembered “Jane Suthlun.”

His trunks and Kelsie's were packed and ready for their homeward journey; for such the happy man felt this setting forth to truly be.

He could not keep his joy to himself; he shared it with the faithful soul beside him.

“Kelsie,” he said, turning to her with a glad smile, as the train pulled away from Zadoc’s glaring new station—“Kelsie, we are going home.”

“Praise the Lord, Master Morris!” fervently answered she.

It was but a few days before Christmas when they reached Unserheim. Christine was already there, and Satia remained to give her children a right royal Christmas festivity. Then, with Morris and Maynard and little Daisy, she started for the home which had so long missed her presence.

Daisy had been legally adopted by her, upon her father’s death, two or three years previously. So Maynard regarded her as his sister. She was not a pretty child, but had one of those happy, healthy, sunny natures which gladden everyone they meet, as the sunbeams do.

It was upon the last day of the old year that the husband and wife crossed the threshold of their former home. It had been put in perfect order, and Kelsie had gone on before them, to be there to welcome back the honored master and mistress.

It was a trying moment for Satia. Until now she had not been with Morris in any of their accustomed places. Old memories, old sorrows, and old joys.

too, rushed over her in a flood. As she stood beside him in their own room, she realized as she had not done before the enormity of her action in leaving him. She flushed and paled. She tried in vain to still the tumultuous throbbing of her heart. Morris was very near her, scarcely less agitated than she. He knew that it was a crucial moment. After what seemed like an eternity of suspense, she turned to him.

“Oh, Morris!” she cried, “can you ever forgive me?”

He did not answer her in words; but as she rested in his embrace, and felt his kisses upon her hair, her brow, her lips, she knew that they were for the first time truly united.

And so their new life began. It is not now a life of pleasure simply, but one filled with many responsibilities. Morris has his business cares; Satia those of her home and children; while together they attend to social, benevolent, religious duties. They have many interests outside of their own home-circle. Chief among these is the little family at Unserheim. The older girls, as they come East to school, come also from time to time into this home enriched with all that is beautiful and refining and artistic, and into

a domestic circle where they see a true manhood and a lovely, gracious womanhood.

Elsa, too, has been borrowed for an indefinite period from Aunt Hester's numerous brood up in the country. She has more than fulfilled the rich promise of her maidenhood, both in personal beauty and brightness of mind. Her old love for and admiration of Satia is as strong as ever, and she can never begin to express her joy at being with her once more.

"You are our sister now, Elsa, in very truth, forever," said Satia, one day. "We are never going to let her go, are we, Morris?" she asked, as he joined them.

"I don't know about 'forever,' Satia," he replied, looking down at the fair, sweet face of the girl; "somebody might think we were very selfish."

Elsa blushed and ran away, and Morris held out a letter and a package to his wife.

"From Mrs. Cameron!" she exclaimed, delighted. "And what can this be?" She quickly took off the wrappings from which he had already cut the string.

"Doctor Cameron!" both said at the same time, as she held up a large photograph.

Morris looked at the well-remembered face with an unusual gravity upon his own. The clear, steady

eyes of the picture met his frankly, just as he knew their owner's would, were he at that moment with them in the flesh. He made no comment on the photograph. Satia, noticing this, turned to him.

"Is it not a perfect likeness, Morris?"

"Yes," he answered, absently. He was thinking of Kenneth as he stood upon the Glasgow pier. Satia glanced at her husband again. She had never seen such an expression on his face.

"What is it, dear?" she asked gently. "Don't you like Doctor Cameron? Would you rather I did not have this picture of him?"

"Like him!" cried Morris, the blood rushing to his face as he sprang to his feet and walked excitedly up and down the room—"like him! Why, Satia, Kenneth Cameron is the noblest man God ever made!"

He came presently and stood beside her. He stroked her hair tenderly, and she knew that in some way he had been deeply moved. She guessed that it had some reference to the year during which he had already said that he had been much with Kenneth; but she never asked him what it was, and he never told her.

Mrs. Cameron's letter was like a glimpse of her own dear self. After several pages of bright chat, she wrote:

“I canna forbear sendin’ you one o’ Kenneth’s new pictures. They are much the best I have ever seen, an’ I want you to have one o’ them. But dinna let the proud fellow ken o’ it, my bonnie; he’s just as modest as he is good, an’ he’d scold me roundly for bein’ sae silly, as he’d say, as to send his printed face across the sea. Sae hang it somewhere in your pretty home, Satia, an’ when ye look at it, think that you’re lookin’ at a gude an’ faithfu’ friend.”

Satia did as she was bidden, and oftentimes in the months which followed she found herself gazing into those deep, earnest eyes and wishing, she scarcely knew why, that she could bring a smile to them.

The next Christmas brought to her arms another little son. He was not a duplicate of Maynard, but a blue-eyed Julian through and through.

“God grant that he may be a better man than I,” prayed his father, as he regarded the tiny face so curiously like his own. Satia was scarcely surprised when he said to her :

“Let us call him Kenneth Cameron, dear. He is the one man in all the world that I want him to be like.”

The eyes of the wife plainly expressed a different opinion; but Morris did not see them. He was looking at the photograph which hung just above the baby’s cradle. She made no objection, how-

ever, and straightway a letter went across the water bearing news of the coming to this world of Kenneth Cameron Julian.

And the "noblest man God ever made?" He read this letter with a full heart. If there is an abiding pain mingled with his gladness, no one ever knows it. He still works faithfully, lovingly, at St. Luke's. He goes more often than formerly to the little white-haired mother, who sometimes silently puts her arms about him and draws his head to its childhood's pillow. She never speaks at such times, but each knows of what the other is thinking. He tries to be to her, as her beautiful life draws near its close, both son and daughter, for he has never brought a daughter to the old home.

Sometimes, as she reads to him the long, delightful letters which Satia often writes of her home, her husband, her little ones, and the many-sided, happy life which is rounding up her character into the fullness of a perfect maturity, he thinks that he will take a holiday and run over to see her.

But he does not come. Some day, perhaps, he will; but he cannot yet—not yet.

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